



## Selling flood mapping results to a sceptical public

Mr Stephen D'Agata<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>City of Boroondara

### **Biography:**

Stephen is a Civil Engineer, Author and performer. He has over 30 years experience in stormwater, water supply and sewerage infrastructure planning and asset management. Starting at the MMBW in the late 80s, Stephen progressed to sewerage network planning at YVW before coordinating infrastructure planning at Goulburn Valley Water. A successful consulting career followed providing infrastructure planning, GIS and asset management services to utilities and local government. In recent years Stephen has worked in local government managing stormwater drainage issues and community consultation on flood mapping. He currently works as Drainage Team Leader for the City of Boroondara.

*Steve is one of the authors of "Live Your Truth", a book of 10 inspirational true life stories and has completed an un-published satirical novel about the pope. He regularly performs readings of his work and stand-up comedy at open mic events. He lives in Greensborough Victoria with 3 frustratingly fabulous children.*

The use of flood mapping to identify risks within highly urbanised environments results in some marginal risks being identified on many properties. The adopted practice of designating risks as low as 50mm in depth means that forecast overland flows, that will be imperceptible from the expected effects of torrential rainfall, will result in a property being designated as subject to flooding.

Understandably, such a designation comes as a shock to Council residents who may have lived at the property for decades without any concerns about flooding in the past. Furthermore, they see the impending inclusion of their property in a planning scheme flood overlay as totally unjustified. In fact, in their eyes, the perceived consequences of the flood overlay, such as loss in property value and increased insurance premiums, are a far greater threat than any potential flood. Although Council has evidence to challenge these perceptions, many property owners know that they would have thought twice about their original purchase had they known of a flood risk.

In such cases, Council can agree that there is no real consequence of the flood risk to the existing property. So, in order to introduce flood overlay, Council must demonstrate that the risk needs to be managed by planning controls in order to prevent the consequences that will result if the property was redeveloped in a way that does not mitigate the risk.

This presentation looks at the reasons why it is important to assess such seemingly insignificant flood risks and the ways and means of addressing the valid concerns raised by residents. I will be drawing upon case studies from my recent work of addressing individual challenges to flood mapping results in the City of Boroondara. I will also touch upon the pros and cons of using building regulations alone to manage flood risk and the issues arising from relaxing designation criteria.