

## **Bridge danger probe**

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THE death of a Reservoir woman in Merri Creek has sparked an investigation into the design of a bridge that has been used across waterways throughout Melbourne.

Theresa Hosri, 73, is believed to have been swept from the bridge over the swollen creek in Reservoir while she was crossing it on her way home from a church service in Fawkner on November 5.

Her son Peter Hosri found his mother's body in the creek the next morning. Her family visited the scene on the morning of her funeral at Sacred Heart Church in Carlton last Friday.

Darebin Council will launch an investigation into the bridges along the creek in a complete risk assessment in the next few days.

Asset management general manager Geoff Glynn said the bridge and similarly designed crossings had been temporarily closed and a complete risk assessment would be carried out in the next few days.

``Our next step will be to do a thorough risk assessment of all the bridges and get a clear idea of what our options are for future management of these crossings," Mr Glynn said.

``This is a bigger issue than just Darebin there are hundreds of bridges of this type in waterways in Melbourne and many of them would be prone to flooding."

Mr Glynn said options including railings and a raised bridge would be considered at the crossings.

Mr Hosri said that although it was too late for his mother, changes to the design of the bridges could prevent further deaths.

``All Mum would want to see would be for a safer bridge to be built," Mr Hosri said. ``Even if she saved one life in the next 10 years, her death would not have been in vain."

Mr Hosri said a new bridge raised above the creek's flood level or safety railings and netting could be installed on the existing bridges.

The existing bridges were designed 20 years ago, with Melbourne Water providing advice to the council on requirements for crossings over Merri Creek. Civil assets manager Rod Clifford said Melbourne Water considered applications for crossings according to criteria including performance in floods.

`` Melbourne Water will not licence use of its land for a waterway path where it cannot provide acceptance of the path design due to safety considerations or other concerns," Mr Clifford said. Merri Creek Management Committee manager Luisa Macmillan said the safety of the bridges would be discussed at the committee's next meeting on Thursday. `` Of course we're all extremely distressed at any injury or death that would occur at the creek," Ms Macmillan said.

Friends of Merri on Parade co-ordinator **Carolyn Lunt** said all six flood-prone bridges across the Merri Creek in Darebin should be closed until they were made safe. She said it was `` illogical and dangerous" to close two bridges and leave the other four open when they were equally prone to flooding.