Introduction

The NSW Government provides technical and financial support to local government under the Floodplain Management Program to manage flood risk. The primary objective of the program is to support implementation of the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy, which aims to reduce the impacts of flooding and flood liability on communities as well as private and public losses from floods by using ecologically positive methods wherever possible.

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) administers the Floodplain Management Program. Applications for funding in this round may also be considered for funding under the joint NSW–Commonwealth Natural Disaster Resilience Program.


Who can apply for grants?

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding:

- local councils
- county councils
- other government bodies with floodplain risk management responsibilities equivalent to those of local councils (such as the Hunter–Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Lord Howe Island Board).

Local councils can also work together in a group provided:

- one council is the lead agency in terms of signing of the funding agreement, managing monies and reporting on the project, or
- a relevant Regional Organisation of Councils applies for the funding and manages it.

Applicants must have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).

What will be funded?

Applications can be made for the following separate project stages:

**Stage 1** – preparation of a flood study (including data collection)

**Stage 2** – preparation or review of a floodplain risk management study and plan

**Stage 3** – investigation, design and (where required) completion of a feasibility study for works identified in a floodplain risk management plan (this stage must be undertaken for any works projects that are likely to exceed a total project cost of $500,000)
Stage 4 – implementation of actions identified in a floodplain risk management plan, including but not limited to:

- structural works, such as levees, detention basins, flood gates and improved flow conveyance
- flood warning systems
- evacuation management
- voluntary house raising (see the guidelines on voluntary house raising schemes at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/Floodgrants.htm)
- voluntary purchase (see the guidelines on voluntary purchase schemes at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/Floodgrants.htm).

If it is likely that a project will progress from one stage to the next within the 2013–14 financial year, a separate application needs to be lodged for each stage.

Funding for successful applications may be provided under the NSW Floodplain Management Program or the joint NSW–Commonwealth Natural Disaster Resilience Program (The level of funding available for the latter program is subject to Commonwealth–State negotiations.)

What is not eligible for funding?

Funding will not be provided for:

- GST – The project cost will exclude GST.
- Retrospective projects – Funding is not available for projects currently underway or those that have been completed.
- Administration costs – Unless otherwise approved in writing by OEH, all internal costs (including on-costs) associated with the core activities of the applicant are ineligible for funding. An applicant’s core activities include preparing study briefs, reviewing proposals and tenders, researching and copying records, attending meetings, contract and grant administration, accounting costs, and liaising with the public and government agencies.
- Non-monetary contributions as matching funds – A council’s matching funds must be in the form of monetary contributions and cannot include in-kind or voluntary contributions.
- Contingencies – Contingencies should not be included in the application.
- Projects the applicant can reasonably be expected to undertake without financial assistance from the program.

What are the funding priorities?

Generally, the highest priority will be given to the following projects:

- flood studies or floodplain risk management studies and plans (or reviews), with the highest priority given to those in areas with significant development pressures or where existing communities are exposed to flood risk but where this risk is not fully understood
- the next stage of a mitigation work that is integral to a stage in progress – for example, the next stage of a levee project or works to offset the impacts from a levee project being constructed.
What will applicants need to contribute?

Assistance provided under the program is usually $2 from government for every $1 from the applicant. The sources of the applicant's share of funds should be detailed in the application and cannot include funds received under other NSW or Commonwealth grant programs.

An applicant unable to match the program's funding contribution may apply for special consideration. The application should demonstrate why the issue being addressed is of regional or statewide significance and that the applicant does not have the financial capacity to address it. The applicant's financial capacity will be assessed taking into account their per capita general purpose grants under the Local Government Financial Assistance Grants, as established by the Local Government Grants Commission.

If special consideration is awarded, the applicant will be eligible to:

- an increased government contribution towards the cost of the project
- claim project management costs undertaken either –
  - internally (with the costs used as in-kind contributions to match funding), or
  - externally (selected by a competitive process and funded as a specific cost).

Where a group of local councils is working together in partnership (either under the lead of one of the councils or a relevant Regional Organisation of Councils), the lead council or Regional Organisation is eligible to claim a portion of project management costs applicable to the funded project for the purpose of resourcing either:

- a project manager selected by a competitive process, or
- a staff member from one of the councils or a Regional Organisation of Councils.

The amount eligible for subsidy is to be capped at 10% of the total project cost. Any eligible project management costs (referred to above) must be directly related to the funded project and can include the administrative costs noted under What is not eligible for funding? above.

What is the timeframe for project implementation?

OEH receives an annual funding allocation for the program, with limited capacity to carry over funds to future financial years. Consequently, projects should be staged (as outlined under the section What will be funded? above) and a stage should not extend beyond three years. If the project stage is likely to extend beyond three years, consideration should be given to further staging the project.

What are funding agreements?

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a performance-based funding agreement that stipulates all funding obligations and conditions. The funding agreement will be for the entire project stage and needs to be duly executed by the applicant’s general manager (or delegated authority) within 45 days of the formal grant offer by the Minister for the Environment.

Before submitting an application, consider the conditions in the sample funding agreements available online at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/Floodgrants.htm.
What is the assessment process?
Applications will firstly be checked for completeness and assessed for grant eligibility. Ineligible or incomplete applications will not be assessed.

Applications will then be assessed by technical OEH staff against the assessment criteria listed below. An independent panel, involving representatives from other relevant agencies and stakeholder groups, will then assess and prioritise applications on a statewide basis and consider claims for special consideration.

The Minister for the Environment will approve all grant offers.

Details of successful applications will be placed on the OEH website. All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

What are the criteria for assessing applications?

**Essential criteria**
All applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- the project stage meets the objectives of the Floodplain Management Program
- their capacity to deliver the project stage, with regard to their past grants management history, available resources and financial commitment, proposed timeframe, and whether the project is realistic, based on the completion of prerequisite consultant briefs, preconstruction work or approvals
- their commitment to maintain any works in a condition suitable to meet its design intent for the design life
- the floodplain risk management process outlined in the *Floodplain Development Manual* (2005) has been followed.

Projects need to meet all four essential criteria to be eligible for funding.

**Other criteria**
Applications will also be assessed on:

- the extent to which the project stage is cost-effective in addressing one or more of the program’s priorities
- the technical feasibility, effectiveness and efficiency of risk mitigation solutions
- the level of state or regional significance, including the immediacy of any threats
- the level of community support
- for works, the outcomes of ranking based on the scoring system endorsed by the Floodplain Management Association (see the instructions for completing the grant application form and new works project ranking form below)
- the priority of the project stage with regard to the relevant adopted floodplain risk management plan (if applicable).

An application will be given a reduced ranking if it is not well thought out or has unclear objectives or outcomes.
Contacts for assistance

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project ideas and applications with regional OEH officers early in the application process. Contact details for the regional OEH offices are provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>OEH contact</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Far North Coast (Tweed–Clarence)</td>
<td>Toong Chin</td>
<td>(02) 6627 0233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid North Coast (Coffs Harbour–Port Macquarie)</td>
<td>Rob Kasmarik</td>
<td>(02) 6653 0109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter/Lower North Coast</td>
<td>Peter Evans</td>
<td>(02) 4904 2594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Sue Ribbons</td>
<td>(02) 9895 6471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>Ben Addison</td>
<td>(02) 4224 4164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Neal Albert</td>
<td>(02) 9895 6486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/Far West</td>
<td>Siva Varathan</td>
<td>(02) 6883 6503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray/Murrumbidgee</td>
<td>Peter Nankivell</td>
<td>(03) 5898 3934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For general grant administration inquiries, contact the Grants Program Coordinator on (02) 9895 6472 or via email coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Closing date

Applications must be received by 5 pm Thursday 21 March 2013. Late applications will not be accepted.

Lodging the application

Electronic application forms are preferred. Completed application forms should be emailed to coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au. If you are unable to email your application, post your application to:

Grants Program Coordinator
Floodplain Management Program
Office of Environment and Heritage
PO Box 3720
Parramatta NSW 2124

Other programs

The NSW Environmental Trust offers a range of other environmental grants for local government. For further information, visit www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

The Auxiliary Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme under the Commonwealth Government’s Natural Disaster Resilience Program provides funding for local governments to undertake natural disaster risk assessments, prepare natural disaster risk management plans and undertake natural disaster risk reduction works. For further information, visit www.mpes.nsw.gov.au/content.php/901.html.
The NSW Community Builders website provides a comprehensive list of grants and other funding options available to local government and community-based groups. Visit www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au for more information.
Instructions for completing the application form

Separate application forms should be completed for each project stage.

Applications that are incomplete or do not provide the necessary level of detail to facilitate an adequate assessment of the project against others on a statewide basis will be considered ineligible for funding. Lodging an application for financial assistance does not guarantee assistance will be offered.

Project stages which cannot demonstrate that they meet the objectives of the Floodplain Management Program will be considered ineligible for funding (see Essential criteria and Other criteria above).

These explanatory notes correspond to the items on the application form.

1. Applicant details

The applicant must be a local council, Regional Organisation of Councils, county council or other government bodies with floodplain risk management responsibilities equivalent to those of local councils (such as the Hunter–Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Lord Howe Island Board).

Applicants must have a valid ABN.

Where project partners are involved, a letter of support from each should be attached, which also gives details of the partner’s financial commitment to the project.

2. Project stage name

Provide a title for the project stage in 80 characters or less. If the application is successful, this project name will be used on the grant documentation and for promotional purposes. The title should be self-explanatory and, where possible, include the location name.

3. Project stage and category

The applicant should indicate the stage and category of the project stage they are applying for in accordance with the list on the form. Only one box should be selected.

If it is likely that a project will progress from one stage to the next within the 2013–14 financial year, a separate application should be lodged for each stage.

Note that each individual flood study or plan should be considered a separate stage and therefore a separate application should be made.

If there is any uncertainty about the best category to use, contact the closest OEH regional office listed on page 5.

4. Project stage timeframe

List the expected commencement and completion dates for the project. The proposed commencement date cannot be prior to 1 July 2013. Applicants should be realistic about their timeframe, as this will set the funding term duration for the funding agreement, if a grant is awarded.

Please refer to What is the timeframe for project implementation? above for more information on the maximum project duration.
5. **Project location**
Describe the geographic extent of the project including, for example, town, latitude, longitude, nearby road, beach or other notable landmark. A locality diagram or map may also be attached.

Use the relevant state *and* federal electorates.

Information on the LGA, state electorate boundary, CMA region and catchment are required for program reporting purposes. They will not be considered as part of the assessment process.

6. **Budget overview**
Provide a breakdown of the projected project expenditure on a financial-year basis. This should be consistent with the more detailed budget outlined in the attached preliminary work plan. Refer to point 4 regarding the project stage timeframe.

7. **Special consideration**
Applicants normally contribute $1 for each $2 of grant funding. If an applicant is unable to fund their matching contribution, they can apply for special consideration. Councils need to justify their application for special consideration.

Applications for special consideration should demonstrate why the issue being addressed is of regional or statewide significance and that the applicant does not have the financial capacity to address it. The applicant’s financial capacity will be assessed taking into account their per capita general purpose grants under the Local Government Financial Assistance Grants, as established by the Local Government Grants Commission. Contact the Grants Program Coordinator if more information is needed about funding ratios.

8. **Financial commitment to the project stage and ongoing maintenance**
The applicant should indicate whether they are able to provide the required matching funding for the project stage and if the project stage has been identified in their forward budget.

It is an essential criterion that the applicant also demonstrates their commitment to maintain any works in a condition suitable to meet the design intent for the design life of any works (works projects only). Please refer to *What are the criteria for assessing applications?* above for further information.

9. **Project summary**
Provide a succinct summary of the project (maximum of 150 words) for promotional and media purposes. This should include an overview of the project, including project location, the issues the project will address, expected outcomes and how these will be achieved.

10. **Other grants at this location**
Provide details of any previous grants received for similar projects at this location in the last five years. This should include funding under any NSW or Commonwealth grant programs.

11. **Other funding sources**
Provide details of any current or planned proposals for accessing funds from other funding programs for this project or components of this project. Include information about the funding program, the project scope and budget, the indicative timing of the project and proposal, and any impacts it may have on this application.
12. **Flood history and studies**

Provide a brief description of the flood history of the project area and any information about the severity of previous floods, and the damages and losses incurred (such as evacuation required, essential services at risk of failure).

If applicable, list any relevant studies undertaken to quantify the flood risk or develop the proposed mitigation works or measures (e.g. flood studies, floodplain risk management studies). For implementation project stages, state whether the project stage is identified as a priority on the adopted floodplain risk management plan for the location.

13. **Regional or state significance**

Outline why the project stage is of state or regional significance. Justification may include (but is not limited to) the impact on regionally or state significant infrastructure, the impact on state or nationally significant natural assets, and the implications for significant developments and urban release areas.

14. **Why is funding required?**

Explain why this project could not proceed without funding.

15. **Project stage objective**

The objective should be about the issue or problem you want to overcome and ultimately what you want your project to achieve. A strong objective should be:

- specific about what you want to achieve
- measurable
- achievable
- realistic
- time bound.

The standard format for an objective is: ‘To [action verb and statement reflecting your measurement indicator] by [performance standard] by [deadline].’ An example is ‘To reduce the number of houses affected by a 1-in-20 year flood event by 70% by 2015’.

16. **Project stage outcomes**

The project stage outcome is the broad effect or benefit of the project stage. Outcome statements often use words like: increase, decrease, improve, expand, update, upgrade, maintain, start or complete. Outcomes should be specific, measurable and realistic, such as reduced risk from flooding, engaging the community in floodplain management, improved management of [issue].

17. **Project stage outputs**

The outputs are measures of project stage activities: products created or delivered, people served and activities or services carried out. For example:

- the number of community forums conducted
- the length of levee constructed or rehabilitated
- the number of houses raised or purchased
- the number of flood-prone properties with protection measures in place
- the number of flood-prone properties covered by a floodplain risk management study or plan
- a management plan developed
- guidelines to manage future growth strategies
- flood intelligence for local flood plans.

18. **Program's objectives and priorities**

Applicants *must* demonstrate how the project meets the Floodplain Management Program's objectives and priorities (see *What are the criteria for assessing applications?* above). Applications that cannot demonstrate this will be ineligible for funding.

19. **Floodplain risk management plan**

If this project stage relates to a recommended action in a floodplain risk management plan, the applicant should provide details of the plan, the relative priority of the action or recommendation, and whether or not the council has formally adopted the plan.

20. **Community and other support**

Describe the level of community support and outline the consultation that has been undertaken, or is proposed to be undertaken, to assess the need for, appropriateness of and support for the project stage. For projects dealing with evacuation management or flood warning systems, you must provide written evidence of support from the State Emergency Service or Bureau of Meteorology, respectively.

21. **New works project ranking form**

For new works (including structural works, flood warning, evacuation management, voluntary purchase and voluntary house raising), applicants *must* also complete and submit a New Works Project Ranking Form to enable ranking using the scoring system endorsed by the Floodplain Management Association. Applicants should contact the relevant OEH office for information on this scoring. Note that councils may update this form once the investigation and design stage has been completed.

22. **Preliminary work plan**

The preliminary work plan should outline the project stage's expected milestones, activities, timeline, budget and grant amount sought for each milestone. Applicants should be realistic about their timeframe, as this will set the funding term duration for the funding agreement, if they are awarded a grant.

Please refer to *What is the timeframe for project implementation?* above for information on the maximum project stage duration.


23. **Capacity to deliver the project stage**

Applicants *must* demonstrate that they have the capacity to deliver the project stage as outlined. The justification should outline the applicant’s past grant management performance and their available resources. It needs to show that the proposed timeframe is realistic when completing the prerequisite consultant briefs, preconstruction work or approvals. For studies and management plans, the applicant should describe ways in which the council’s floodplain management committee will implement the project stage. Applications that cannot demonstrate capacity to deliver will be ineligible for funding.
24. Funding agreement

Applicants must enter into a performance-based funding agreement. A sample funding agreement is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/Floodgrants.htm.

25. Discussions with OEH

OEH recommends applicants initially discuss the project with OEH staff including the overall concept, preliminary cost estimate and eligibility for funding. OEH staff can also provide technical advice on draft applications (see Contacts for assistance above).
Instructions for completing the New Works Project Ranking Form

The New Works Project Ranking Form assists with the ranking of project stages for new works only and is the scoring system endorsed by the Floodplain Management Association. It should be completed where applicants are submitting an application for a new works project which has not previously been scored or where the council would like to update a project’s scoring based on improved information.

The form includes a number of project assessment sheets. All applicants must complete Sheets 1 and 2.

In addition, depending on the type of project, they should complete:

- Sheet 3 for integrated schemes and structural works projects
- Sheet 4 for evacuation management improvement projects
- Sheet 5 for flood warning improvement projects
- Sheet 6 for voluntary purchase and house raising projects.

Information should be provided in relation to the flood on which the flood planning level is based or, if this is not available, the largest known historical flood.

Sheet 1 provides preliminary data. This is usually available from the relevant flood study and/or floodplain risk management study and indicates the extent of the flood problem to which a community is exposed.

Sheets 2–6 provide detailed and specific data required for project stages seeking funding for floodplain management works. Works include structural works, flood warning, evacuation management, voluntary purchase and voluntary house raising projects. This data is used to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the project stage in reducing flood problems and meeting associated objectives so these can be compared on a statewide basis.

Project stage assessment sheet 1: All categories of applications

C1. The source of flood information used to answer the questions must be indicated. Where OEH does not have a copy of the appropriate studies and other documentation, such as a review of environmental factors (REF) or environmental impact statement (EIS), a copy will be requested to assist in undertaking an impartial check of the data provided.

C2. Hazard level in area assesses important factors in defining the level of flood hazard in the area, as defined in the Floodplain Development Manual (2005).

Questions C3 to C6 provide an outline of the impacts of the flood on the community

C3. Scale of problem – number of dwellings affected provides an indication of the number of people affected by flooding.

C4. Scale of problem – percentage of dwellings flooded provides an indication of the scale of the problem from a local perspective.

C5. Scale of problem – occurrence of over-floor flooding looks at the frequency of damaging flooding and gives an indication of the regularity and therefore the ongoing impact of flooding on the community.
C6. **Scale of problem – evacuation requirements** indicates the degree of evacuation problems to which the community is exposed.

**Project stage assessment sheet 2: Detailed data – all categories of applications**

Detailed data is required for all projects.

C7. **Community involvement in project** investigates the degree of project development in accordance with the principles of the *Floodplain Development Manual* (2005).

C8. **Strategic planning in place** investigates the degree to which strategic planning is being used to control new development and redevelopment in the floodplain.

C9. **Benefit–cost ratio for proposed works** considers the economic efficiency of the project in reducing flood damages.

C10. **Incorporation of environmental considerations and enhancements** examines whether environmental impacts have been considered and incorporated in the project. It also indicates whether opportunities for environmental enhancement have been considered and are being implemented as part of the project.

C11. **Environmental assessment for compatibility with ecologically sustainable development (ESD)** considers how the project has dealt with environmental impacts and addressed ESD principles.

**Project stage assessment sheet 3: Specific data – integrated schemes and structural works only**

Integrated schemes are projects that involved a range of structural work components or measures that work together as an integral scheme to provide flood benefits. The benefits of the schemes would generally significantly outweigh the benefits of individual components.

C12. **Average damage per dwelling** examines the existing damage level in the town and is based on the average actual rather than potential damage per dwelling that is likely to occur without the proposed management measures.

C13. **Average annual damage per dwelling** examines the cost of flooding per dwelling across a range of floods, not just the planning-level flood. This provides an indication of the long-term cost of flooding to the community.

C14. **Percentage reduction in average annual damage per dwelling** examines the efficiency of the project in reducing damage from a range of events on a per dwelling basis.

C15. **Social improvements resulting from project** examines the degree to which the project has addressed the social impacts.

**Project stage assessment sheet 4: Specific data – projects to improve evacuation management only**

C16. **Hazard level in area** (as defined in the *Floodplain Development Manual*) examines the hazard that exists in the township, the potential for isolation, the logistics of evacuation and the hazard associated with the evacuation route.

C17. **Evacuation management** examines whether external evacuation resources are required and flood predictions are available, how flood-ready the community is, whether the State Emergency Service supports the project and whether their support reduces the need for external evacuation resources, that is, there are fewer people to evacuate or they can evacuate themselves unassisted.
C18. **Scale of evacuation problem** indicates the number of people requiring evacuation to provide information on the scale of the problem.

C19. **Social improvements resulting from project** examines the degree to which the project has addressed the social impacts.

**Project stage assessment sheet 5: Specific data – projects to improve flood warning only**

C20. **Hazard level in area** (as defined in the *Floodplain Development Manual*) examines the level of hazard in the community.

C21. **Flood warning** examines the feasibility and likely effectiveness of flood warning projects. These projects must have the support of the Flood Warning Consultative Committee.

C22. **Flood warning – scale of problem** examines the current shortcomings in the existing flood warning system, if any system exists.

C23. **Social improvements resulting from project** examines the degree to which the project has addressed the social impacts.

**Project stage assessment sheet 6: Specific data – voluntary purchase and house raising projects only**

C24. **Average damage per dwelling** examines the existing damage level in the town and is based on the average actual rather than potential damage per dwelling that is likely to occur without the proposed management measures.

C25. **Average annual damage per dwelling** examines the cost of flooding per dwelling across a range of floods, not just the planning-level flood. This provides an indication of the long-term cost of flooding to the community.

C26. **Hazard level in area** (as defined in the *Floodplain Development Manual*) examines the hazard that exists in the township, the potential for isolation, the logistics of evacuation and the hazard associated with the evacuation route.

C27. **Social improvements resulting from project** examines the degree to which the project has addressed social impacts.