



Guidelines for applicants 2023–24

NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program



Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water

Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Introduction

The record-breaking severe weather events and flooding from February 2022 onwards have had catastrophic impacts on communities across parts of New South Wales. There has been extensive damage to residential properties, public infrastructure, agriculture, businesses and the environment.

NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program

In response to the catastrophic flooding, the Australian Government has provided New South Wales with \$40 million in grant funding for 62 local government areas.

The NSW Government, with the financial support provided by the Australian Government, will offer technical and financial support through this program to the eligible local government areas to manage flood risk. This program will support the implementation of the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy, which aims to reduce the impacts of existing flooding and flood liability on communities and reduce private and public losses resulting from floods, using ecologically positive methods wherever possible.

The program is administered by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department). The NSW Government recommends that local government manage its flood risk by following the floodplain risk management process outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023).

Applications for this round of the program will open on 15 February 2024 and close at 5 pm on 13 March 2024.

List of eligible local government areas

- Armidale
- Ballina
- Bankstown
- Bayside
- Bega
- Bellingen
- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Byron
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley

- Coffs Harbour
- Dungog
- Eurobodalla
- Fairfield
- Georges River
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Hawkesbury
- Hornsby
- Inner West
- Kempsey
- Kiama
- Ku-Ring-Gai
- Kyogle
- Lake Macquarie
- Lismore
- Lithgow
- Liverpool
- Maitland
- MidCoast
- Mid-Western
- Muswellbrook
- Nambucca
- Newcastle
- Northern Beaches
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Port Macquarie/Hastings
- Port Stephens
- Queanbeyan Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Ryde
- Shellharbour
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Strathfield
- Sutherland

- Tenterfield
- The Hills
- Tweed
- Upper Hunter
- Waverley
- Willoughby
- Wingecaribee
- Wollondilly
- Wollongong

Program scope and objectives

Funding is available through this program for:

- investigation and design
- construction of new or upgraded flood mitigation infrastructure
- the scoping and implementation of voluntary house raising (VHR) projects. Program objectives (see organisations that are ineligible for VHR funding through this program under 'What will not be funded'). Please refer to the Floodplain Management Program's *Guidelines for voluntary house raising schemes* as they are applicable to this program.

The program objectives are to:

- reduce flood risk and build long-term community resilience in areas that are at risk from floods
- reduce the impacts of flooding and flood liability on communities and reduce private and public losses resulting from floods
- reduce flood risk and losses through a range of property, flood and response modification measures as outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023).

Projects that cannot demonstrate that they meet the program's objectives will not be eligible for funding.

Eligibility

Councils, county councils and other government bodies with equivalent floodplain risk management responsibilities to local councils (e.g. Hunter Local Land Services), and that are within the 62 local government areas listed, are eligible to apply.

What will be funded

Applications can be made for the projects outlined in Table 1 below. Categories are drawn from the *Flood risk management manual* (2023).

Table 1 **Application categories**

Category	Projects
Investigation and design	<p>Investigation, design and/or feasibility study (where required) for works identified in a council floodplain risk management plan or another comparable document.</p> <p>This stage must be undertaken for all works projects that are likely to exceed a total implementation cost of \$500,000, excluding GST.</p>
Implementation	<p>Implementing actions that are identified in a floodplain risk management plan or another comparable document.</p> <p>Note: Projects must have completed the requirements of investigation and design, where applicable.</p> <p>Suitable implementation actions include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• structural works such as levees, detention basins, floodgates and flow conveyance improvements• upgrades of flood assets that have reached the end of their design life• upgrade of flood evacuation routes• VHR schemes.

Lodging an application for financial assistance does not guarantee assistance will be offered.

A separate application must be completed for each project through the online Grants Management System. Multiple projects cannot be included in one application.

When submitting multiple applications, applicants must identify the relative priority of their applications to assist with the project evaluation process; refer to 'Prioritisation of projects by applicants'.

Project management costs are available for councils that are eligible to receive enhanced funding through this program and are capped at 10% of the total grant budget. These costs may include:

- a project manager or staff member employed specifically for the project, who is selected by a competitive process. Payment for staff already employed by the organisation who will be supervising/project managing or working on the project as part of their usual duties is not included, unless approved in writing by the Manager Contestable Grants – Flood at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au

- administrative costs directly related to the funded project that are approved in writing by the Manager Contestable Grants – Flood at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Prioritisation of projects by applicants

Applicants should carefully consider their relative priorities for individual applications and may wish to consider the following.

When prioritising between applications for implementing recommendations outlined in floodplain risk management plans or another equivalent document, applicants may wish to consider the relative priority for implementation within the plan as well as priorities between different plans, where the council has multiple management plans to implement across their local government area.

They may wish to consider factors such as the relative effectiveness of the work in addressing flood risk, the benefit–cost ratio, and the scale of the population benefitting.

An implementation project prioritisation information form is to be completed for all applications. This form is available on the *NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program* webpage and must be uploaded to the online Grants Management System. Refer to ‘Instructions for completing the implementation project prioritisation implementation form’ below.

What will not be funded

Funding will not be provided for:

- voluntary purchase schemes
- flood warning systems
- the purchase of land as part of mitigation works
- preparing a flood study or floodplain risk management study and plan
- GST – the project cost is to exclude GST
- retrospective projects – funding is not available for activities currently underway, completed or contractually committed to prior to the awarding of grants to successful applicants or prior to approval of the project workplan
- the financial co-contribution required for projects funded through other NSW or Commonwealth programs
- administration costs – unless otherwise approved in writing by the Manager Contestable Grants – Flood at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au, 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, staff costs associated with liaising with the public and government agencies. However, costs related to educating residents via mailouts, workshops or other methods will be funded where those costs are deemed to be reasonable and well justified
- project management costs, with the exception of the outlined circumstances in 'What will be funded' above
- non-monetary contributions as matching funds – an applicant's matching funds must be in the form of monetary contributions from council revenue and cannot include in-kind, voluntary contributions or funding from other parties
- contingencies should not be included in the application or workplan
- projects the applicant can reasonably be expected to undertake without financial assistance from the program, such as local drainage works
- maintenance of assets
- additional funding of more than 30% of the original amount awarded after commencing the project
- funding for VHR through this program for the following areas – they should apply under the Resilient Homes Program:
 - Ballina
 - Byron
 - Clarence Valley
 - Kyogle

- Lismore
- Richmond Valley
- Tweed.

Funding priorities

Generally, projects will be prioritised as follows:

1. towns with the greatest level of flood damage following the 2022 floods
2. mitigation works that are identified as a high priority in a floodplain risk management plan or another document that is comparable, that is adopted by council
3. investigation, design and approval projects that can be completed within 12 months
4. mitigation works that can be completed by June 2026.

What applicants will need to contribute

Assistance under the program is \$3 from the government for every \$1 provided by the applicant (from council revenue), except where a council is eligible for enhanced funding.

Enhanced funding

Applicants may apply for enhanced funding under the program.

When applying for enhanced funding, the application should demonstrate the:

- scale of impacts of the early 2022 floods
- socioeconomics of the area
- council's financial capacity.

If enhanced funding is awarded, the applicant is eligible for an increased government contribution towards the project's cost.

Assessment process

Applications will be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible, late or incomplete applications will be considered ineligible for funding.

Eligible applications will then be assessed and prioritised by an independent panel, which includes expert and stakeholder representation. Projects recommended for funding are provided for consideration and approval by the appropriate department delegate.

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

Assessment criteria

Essential criteria

All applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- the project meets the objectives of this NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program
- capacity to deliver the project, past grants management history, available resources and financial commitment, proposed timeframe, and whether the project is realistic, based on completion of prerequisite consultant briefs, preconstruction work or approvals
- commitment to maintain any works in a condition suitable to meet its design intent for the design life
- the project is consistent with the intent of the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy and the floodplain risk management process outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023).

Projects must meet all 4 essential criteria to be eligible for funding.

Other criteria

Applications will also be assessed on the:

- extent to which the project is addressing one or more of the NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program priorities
- technical feasibility, effectiveness and efficiency of the risk mitigation solution, as examined through scoring of information on the project provided in the implementation project prioritisation information form
- priority of the project stage with regard to the relevant adopted floodplain risk management plan or another document that is comparable
- need to manage flood risk in the area and how effectively the application demonstrates addressing the risks
- cost-effectiveness of the project compared to similar projects and for the outcomes delivered.

An application will be awarded a reduced ranking if it is not well thought out, does not provide enough information to clearly demonstrate the need for the project, or has unclear objectives or outcomes.

Mandatory information required in each application

Applications must include:

- an effective summary of what the project will deliver
- quantification of project specific flood mitigation benefits

- the number of properties at risk (in the application form, not in an attachment)
- benefit–cost ratio
- a visual representation of the project location
- copies of reports/plans referred to in the application (including a summary of key text in the application for reference).

Project implementation timeframe

Investigation and design projects are to be completed within 12 months of being awarded funding.

Implementation projects are to be completed by June 2026.

While requests for variations to projects may be made through the Grants Management System, they will only be allowed in limited circumstances.

Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement that stipulates all funding obligations and conditions.

The agreement will need to be signed by the general manager (or someone with delegated authority) and returned to the department within 45 days of the formal grant offer.

The project will be tracked and managed against the workplan, which must be kept current by the grant recipient, in consultation with the department throughout the funded period.

Changes to the agreement will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Additional guidance

Flood detention basin upgrades

Applications for flood detention basin upgrades must demonstrate that the purpose of the work is to address flood risk rather than compliance with dam safety requirements.

Stormwater drainage

Applications seeking to undertake stormwater drainage works must demonstrate the works are required to manage flood risks to people and property. This would typically involve trunk drainage works as opposed to upgrading a drainage system for nuisance flooding or to meet a council standard for serviceability or capacity.

Contacts for assistance

Assistance with applications

For assistance with grant applications, contact our offices listed below.

Region	Telephone
Hunter/Central Coast	02 4320 4206
North East	02 8289 6318
South East	02 4224 4153
Greater Sydney	02 8837 6097
North West	02 6883 5352

General administration enquiries

For general grant administration enquiries, contact the Grants Branch – Flood by email at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au or on 02 9895 6494.

General technical enquiries statewide

For general technical information enquiries statewide, contact the Flood Team – Marine, Coastal, Estuaries and Flood at FloodTeam@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Closing date for applications

Applications for the 2023–24 round of funding must be received by 5 pm on 13 March 2024.

More information

- [Flood risk management manual](#)
- [Floodplain management program](#)
- [Floodplain Management Program – Guidelines for voluntary house raisings](#)
- [Grants Management System](#)
- [Implementation project prioritisation information form](#)
- [NSW Flood Recovery and Resilience Grant Program](#)

Appendix A: Instructions for completing the implementation project prioritisation information form

The implementation project prioritisation information form assists in the prioritisation of projects.

It is to be completed when submitting any application under this program.

The form includes a number of project information sheets. All applicants are to complete sheets 1 and 2. In addition:

- sheet 3 should be completed where applicable for integrated schemes and structural works projects
- sheet 4 should be completed where applicable for evacuation management improvement projects
- sheet 5 should be completed where applicable for VHR projects.

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. Questions C2 to C6 provide an outline of the impacts of the flood on the community.

Sheets 2 to 5 provide detailed and specific data required for projects seeking funding for flood risk management works. This includes structural works, evacuation management and VHR projects. This data is used to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in reducing flood problems and meeting associated objectives so these can be compared on a statewide basis.

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, unless otherwise requested.

Project assessment sheet 1: All categories of applications

- C1. Indicate the source of flood information used to answer the questions. Where the department does not have a copy of the relevant 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 an impartial check of the data provided.
- C2. 'Flood behaviour and impacts in area' identifies some important factors affecting the existing flood risk.
- 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' indicate the degree of evacuation problems to which the community is exposed.

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

- C7. 'Community involvement in project' investigates the degree of project development in accordance with the principles of the *Flood risk management manual*.
- 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. 'Community flood awareness' examines the accessibility of flood information to the community and activities undertaken by councils in providing information.
- C11. 'Environmental assessment and enhancement' considers how the project has dealt with environmental impacts and addresses ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles and identifies whether it includes environmental enhancements.

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

Integrated schemes are projects that involve a range of structural works components or measures that work together as an integral scheme to provide flood benefits. Structural works are aimed at reducing the frequency or impacts of floods. The benefits of these works or an integrated scheme would generally significantly outweigh the benefits of individual components.

- C12. 'Average damage per dwelling' examines the existing damage level in the town based on average (determined from 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 of flooding.

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

Evacuation management improvement projects are structural measures that aim to improve the evacuation from an area by increasing the capacity and security of primary evacuation routes from the community or area where there is currently insufficient capacity to evacuate within the available timeframe. The benefits of the improvements would generally outweigh their costs.

- C16. 'Flood behaviour and impacts' examines these aspects in the area serviced by the evacuation route. These include the conditions at the location, the potential for isolation, the logistics of evacuation and the hazard associated with the evacuation route.
- C17. 'Evacuation management improvements resulting from project' examines whether community evacuation arrangements are in place to support self-evacuation, whether external evacuation resources are still required to support evacuation and whether the area will no longer be isolated in the full range of floods.
- 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, such as flood depths over the evacuation route, arrangements to reduce community impacts and warning strategies in place.

Project assessment sheet 5: Specific data – voluntary house raising schemes only

VHR schemes aim to reduce the frequency of above-floor damage due to flooding to reduce the scale of damage to households. Occupants still need to follow community emergency management arrangements, which generally include evacuation prior to being cut off by flood waters. The benefits of the scheme would generally significantly outweigh the benefits of individual components.

- C24. 'Average damage per dwelling' examines the existing damage level in the town based on average (determined from actual rather than potential) damage per dwelling that is likely to occur without the proposed management measures.
- C25. 'Average annual damage (AAD) per dwelling' examines the cost of flooding per dwelling across a range of floods, not just the planning-level flood. This indicates the long-term cost of flooding to the community.
- C26. 'Suitability of location and benefits' examines the area's suitability for voluntary house raising and the benefits it provides.

C27. 'Percentage reduction in AAD per dwelling' examines the efficiency of the project in reducing damage from a range of events on a per dwelling basis.