



Guidelines for applicants 2024–25

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This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Cover photo: Goulburn November 2021 flood. Shaza Raini/DCCEEW

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ISBN 978-1-923200-04-3

EH 2024/0096 April 2024

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Introduction

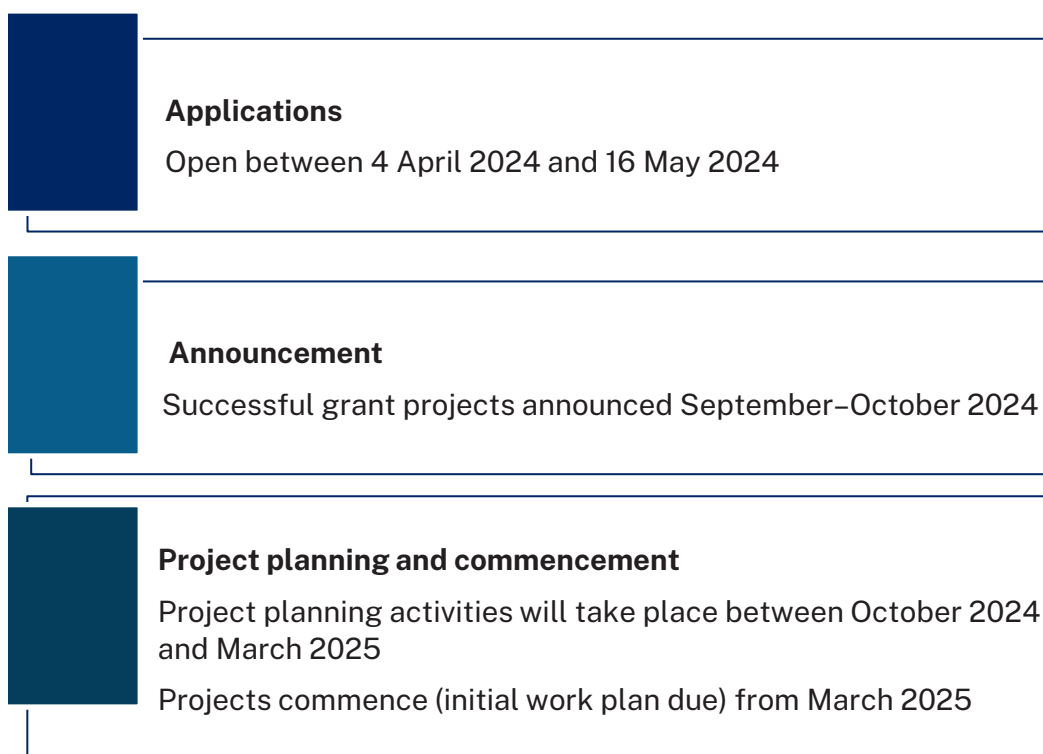
The NSW Government provides technical and financial support to local government under the Floodplain Management Program (the program) to manage flood risk. The program's primary objective is to support the implementation of the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy, which aims to reduce the impacts of existing 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 flood risk management process outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023).

Applications for this round of the program will open on 4 April 2024 and close at 5 pm on 16 May 2024.

Important timeframes for this round



Program objectives

The program objectives are to provide technical and financial support to councils and eligible public land managers to:

- reduce the impacts of existing flooding and flood liability on communities and to reduce private and public losses resulting from floods
- make informed decisions on managing flood risk by preparing flood risk management plans (and associated background studies) under the flood risk management process
- implement flood risk management plans to reduce flood risk to both existing and future development, and reduce losses through a range of property, flood and response modification measures as outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023)
- provide essential information to the NSW State Emergency Service to enable the effective preparation and implementation of local flood plans to deal with flood emergency response.

Projects which cannot demonstrate that they meet the objectives of the program will be considered ineligible for funding.

Eligibility

The following organisations are eligible to apply.

- local councils
- county councils
- other government bodies with equivalent flood risk management responsibilities to local councils (e.g. Lord Howe Island Board, Hunter Local Land Services).

Local councils can also work together in a group, provided that:

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

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

Project category	
Stage 1	Flood study (including data collection).*
Stage 2	<p>Prepare or review a flood risk management study and plan.*</p> <p>Undertake a review of a range of flood risk management plans consistent with Section 4.6 the <i>Flood risk management manual (2023)</i>.</p> <p>Undertake strategic flood risk management activities consistent with Table 2 of the <i>Flood risk management manual (2023)</i> to inform council’s integrated planning and reporting framework, land-use planning and support NSW State Emergency Service emergency management planning.</p> <p>Produce updated information using existing flood model results across a number of study areas to support management of flood risk consistent with the <i>Flood risk management manual (2023)</i> and toolkit.</p>
Stage 3	Investigation, design and/or feasibility study (where required) for works and new flood warning systems identified in a flood risk management plan.* This stage must be undertaken for all new flood warning systems and for works projects that are likely to exceed a total implementation cost of \$500,000 ex GST.
Stage 4	<p>Implementing actions identified in a flood risk management plan* (noting projects must have completed the requirements of Stage 3 where applicable), this includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structural works such as levees, detention basins, floodgates and flow conveyance improvements (if these are extensive works requiring a high level of funding, they should be broken into stages) • flood warning systems (it is mandatory that investigation and design of flood warning systems is undertaken prior to implementation of the system) • evacuation management • upgrades of flood assets that have reached the end of their design life • voluntary house raising (further information on the eligibility criteria and implementation of voluntary house raising is available in the Floodplain Management Program Guidelines for voluntary house raising schemes)

- voluntary purchase (further information on the eligibility criteria and implementation of voluntary purchase projects is available in the Floodplain Management Program Guidelines for voluntary purchase schemes).

* All reports, datasets and design and work as executed plans collected or created in the development of any flood project completed under this program must be submitted to the NSW Flood Data Portal before acquitting the project.

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 the one application.

Applicants can submit a maximum of 4 applications per funding round; these should be the highest priority projects for funding. An additional 2 applications (maximum 6) will be considered if the applicant can demonstrate the need for all the projects and the ability to effectively manage the projects. Approval to exceed the 4-application limit must be sought prior to submitting the additional applications from the Manager Contestable Grants – Flood at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Where applicants are submitting multiple applications for funding through the program, they are required to identify the relative priority between their applications to assist with the project evaluation process.

Applicants should carefully consider their relative priorities and may wish to consider the following advice.

Prioritising reviews of flood risk management plans and strategic flood risk management activities consistent with Table 2 of the *Flood risk management manual* (2023) as described in Table 1 under Stage 2 projects is encouraged.

Prioritisation between applications for studies and works projects needs to balance the need to have improved information to inform decisions and implementing actions to manage flood risk to the community.

When prioritising between applications that relate to the development of studies and plans under the flood risk management process, council may wish to consider aspects such as:

- the flood risk and the degree of hazard the community is exposed to
- the scale of the population at risk
- gaps in flood information needed to manage flooding
- the potential need for flood mitigation works to reduce risks to the community in the area
- the potential for redevelopment and new development.

When prioritising between applications for implementing recommendations outlined in flood risk management plans, councils may wish to consider the relative priority for implementation within a plan as well as priorities between plans, where council has

multiple management plans to implement across their local government area. They may also wish to consider factors such as the relative effectiveness of the work in addressing flood risk, their benefit cost and the size of the population benefitting.

An implementation project prioritisation information form is to be completed for all stages of all implementation projects, including structural works, flood warning projects, evacuation management project, voluntary purchase and voluntary house raising. This information is required to support prioritisation between implementation projects as part of the assessment process.

This form must be updated and resubmitted at each stage of implementation, e.g. feasibility assessments, investigation and design, and construction or installation.

This form is available on the floodplain management grants webpage and must be uploaded in the online Grants Management System.

What will not be funded

Funding will not be provided for:

- 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 work plan.
- Administration costs – unless otherwise approved in writing by the department, 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 with government agencies. Costs related to the education of residents via mailouts, workshops or other methods will be funded where those costs are deemed to be reasonable and well justified.
- Project management costs – unless specifically approved at the time of application.
- 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.
- the financial co-contribution required for projects funded through other New South Wales or Commonwealth programs.
- Contingencies – should not be included in the application or work plan.
- Projects the applicant can reasonably be expected to undertake without financial assistance from the program, such as local drainage works.
- Maintenance of assets or replacement of assets that have not been appropriately maintained.
- Additional funding of more than 30% of the original amount awarded after commencing the project.
- Road warning signage to address a traffic management issue (note that road warning signage can be funded if it is an important element of broader flood mitigation works).
- Data management within council systems.

Funding priorities

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

- flood studies or flood risk management studies and plans (or reviews) where existing communities are exposed to flood risk, but this risk is not fully understood or managed, or with significant development pressures
- 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
- mitigation works that are identified as a high priority in flood risk management plans adopted by councils.

What applicants will need to contribute

Assistance under the program is \$2 from government for every \$1 provided by the applicant (from council revenue), except where special consideration is provided.

Contributions to the project from other funding sources (not council revenue) must be removed from the whole project cost prior to applying the funding ratio, except for voluntary house raising.

A voluntary house raising scheme involves raising residential properties above a minimum design level and must comply with the council's relevant development control plan.

Special consideration

If an applicant is unable to match the program's funding contribution, they may apply for special consideration.

The applicant's financial capacity will be assessed considering its 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 is eligible to:

- an increased government contribution towards the cost of the project
- claim project management costs (capped at a maximum of 10% of the total project cost) undertaken either:
 - internally (with the costs used as in-kind contributions to match funding)
 - externally (selected by a competitive process and funded as a specific cost).

Partnerships

Where a group of local councils are working together in partnership (either under the lead of one of the councils or a relevant Joint Organisation), then the lead council or Joint Organisation can claim a maximum of 10% of the total project cost for project management.

Eligible project management costs include:

- A project manager or staff member employed specifically for the project, who is selected by a competitive process. It does not include payment for staff already employed by the organisation submitting the application that will be supervising/project managing or working on the project as part of their usual duties unless approved by Grants Branch in writing.
- Administrative costs directly related to the funded project. This can include those costs noted under 'What will not be funded?'

Assessment process

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

Applications will then be reviewed by department technical staff.

An independent panel, which includes expert and stakeholder representation, will assess and prioritise applications on a statewide basis. 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 the Floodplain Management 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 flood risk management process outlined in the *Flood risk management manual* (2023) has been followed.

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

Other criteria

Applications will also be assessed on:

- the extent to which the project is cost-effective in addressing one or more of the program's priorities
- the technical feasibility, effectiveness and efficiency of the risk mitigation solution as examined through scoring of information on projects provided in the implementation project prioritisation form (note, these criteria are specific to investigation and design, works projects and voluntary purchase/voluntary house raising projects. See Instructions on completing the form for more details)
- the level of community support
- the priority of the project stage with regard to the relevant adopted flood risk management plan (if applicable)
- the need to manage flood risk in the area and how effectively the application demonstrates addressing the risks.

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

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

Project implementation timeframe

The department receives an annual funding allocation for the program, with limited capacity to carry over funds to future financial years.

Consequently, projects should be completed within 3 years of the grant offer. If the project is implementing an action and is likely to extend beyond 3 years, the applicant is encouraged to consider staging the project. The Grants Management System will not allow applications to be submitted beyond a 3-year timeframe.

While requests for variations to projects are available, it should be noted that projects which go beyond the approved time can impact funds for future rounds. No additional funding will be considered for projects during implementation unless there are exceptional circumstances, and such requests will be considered on their merits and are typically capped at a maximum of 30%.

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) within 45 days of the formal grant offer.

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure all individuals involved in a project funded under this program are aware of the funding conditions and their responsibility under the terms of the agreement.

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

Pit and pipe survey

Flood risk management is primarily aimed at addressing riverine and local overland flooding.

In a limited number of cases, this may involve an assessment of the capacity and performance of trunk drainage systems. This may require some limited survey of the trunk drainage system, and this is eligible for funding. However, broader surveys of minor and feeder drainage systems are not funded. Surveying for asset management purposes is also ineligible for funding.

The extent of the drainage system surveyed will need to be justified by the applicant commensurate with the risk to ensure that the survey incorporated in the study is fit for purpose. As a guide, trunk drainage systems are considered to involve pipes of a minimum of 0.75 m diameter.

Floor level survey

Floor level surveys may be undertaken using a range of methods depending upon the intended end use of the information and the terrain.

The intent may vary from assessment of flood damages through to provision of more specific advice to the community.

The applicant should consider the intended purpose and methodology relevant to their situation and include a suitable budgetary allowance as part of the application. If highly specific and detailed floor level survey is required, then strong justification as to why this level of detail is required should be included in the application.

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. Priority for upgrade will be given to flood detention basins that council can demonstrate were originally funded under the program.

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.

Community consultation

Community consultation is an integral part of the flood risk management process.

The methodology used for community consultation will vary depending upon the type and scale of the study, the area of concern, the needs of the community and the general methods council may use to consult the community.

All applications for flood studies and flood risk management studies and plans are to include an appropriate budgetary allowance that considers the scope and scale of consultation appropriate for the study.

Detailed descriptions of what will be involved in the consultation is required for all projects if costs are to be included as a component of the grant funding.

Stakeholder consultation

For projects dealing with evacuation management or flood warning systems, council must provide written evidence of support from the NSW State Emergency Service or Bureau of Meteorology.

Contacts for assistance

Assistance with applications

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

Region	Telephone
Hunter/Central Coast	02 4320 4206
South West	02 6229 7170
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 on 02 9895 6494 or by email at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au.

General technical enquiries state wide

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

Closing date for applications

Applications for the 2024–25 round of funding must be received by 5 pm on 16 May 2024.
Any application that is late, incomplete or ineligible will not be considered.

Other programs

The department also offers a Coastal and Estuary Grants program. For further information, please see the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program's webpage.

The NSW Environmental Trust offers a range of other environmental grants for local government. For further information, please see the NSW Environmental Trust website.

More information

- [Coastal and estuary grants](#)
- [NSW Environmental Trust](#)
- [Flood risk management manual](#)
- [Floodplain management grants](#)
- [Grant Management System](#)
- [Implementation project prioritisation information form](#)

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 flood warning improvement projects
- sheet 6 should be completed where applicable for VHR projects
- sheet 7 should be completed where applicable for VP projects.

Sheet 1 provides preliminary data. This is usually available from the relevant flood study and/or flood 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), environmental impact statement (EIS) or design reports and drawings, or it is not available through the NSW Flood Data Portal, 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.

Project assessment sheet 1: All categories of applications

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 work 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.

Please answer these questions based on the planning flood (typically 1% AEP – one-in-100-year ARI – flood or where no 1% AEP has been determined for the flood of record) for the urban area benefitting from the project unless stated otherwise.

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.

Please answer these questions based on the planning flood (typically 1% AEP – one-in-100-year ARI – flood or, where no 1% AEP has been determined, for the flood of record) for the urban area benefitting from the project unless stated otherwise.

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 – projects to improve flood warning only

Flood warning projects aim to improve a combination of the availability of flood warnings to communities, their reliability, or the potential to and accuracy of flood predictions.

Please answer these questions based on the planning flood (typically 1% AEP – one-in-100-year ARI – flood or, where no 1% AEP has been determined, for the flood of record) for the urban area benefitting from the project unless stated otherwise.

C20. 'Flood behaviour and impacts' in the area where flood warning is proposed.

C21. 'Flood warning' examines the feasibility and likely effectiveness of flood warning projects and identified who will issue the warning.

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 assessment sheet 6: Specific data – voluntary house raising schemes only

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

Please answer these questions based on the planning flood (typically 1% AEP – one-in-100-year ARI – flood or, where no 1% AEP has been determined, for the flood of record) for the urban area benefitting from the project unless stated otherwise.

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.

Project assessment sheet 7: Specific data – voluntary purchase projects only

VP schemes aim to permanently remove at-risk people from high-flood-hazard areas where it may not be feasible or economical to mitigate the effects of flooding.

Please answer these questions based on the planning flood (typically 1% AEP – one-in-100-year ARI – flood or where no 1% AEP has been determined for the flood of record) for the urban area benefitting from the project unless stated otherwise.

C28. 'Flood behaviour and risks' examines the flood behaviour, considers the purpose of purchase and the risks to life in the properties being proposed for purchase.

C29. '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.

C30. 'Suitability of alternatives' examines where other suitable alternatives may exist

C31. 'Social improvements resulting from project' examines the degree to which the project has addressed social impacts.
