



# Fact Sheet

## Byron Shire voluntary house raising scheme

The Byron Shire contains many flood-prone houses that are subject to over-floor flooding even in minor and moderate flood events.

The economic and social burden of flooding on the community can be reduced by raising these dwellings to increase their flood immunity.

Voluntary House Raising (VHR) is aimed at reducing the flood damage to houses by raising the habitable floor level of individual buildings.

Recent flood events continue to highlight the need for a VHR scheme with many dwellings experiencing over floor flooding or being damaged by flooding, and many more experiencing “near misses”.

Unfortunately, there is currently no funding available for Byron Shire eligible houses, however, Council will be seeking funds under the upcoming [Department of Planning and Environment 2022 Floodplain Management Grant](#).

If Council is successful in being awarded funding, the following information will help guide Byron Shire’s VHR scheme and the process for the owners of identified properties to access the scheme.

### What is Voluntary House Raising

VHR is aimed at reducing the flood damage to houses by raising the habitable floor level of individual buildings.

The primary aim of a VHR scheme is to reduce the economic and social burden of

flooding on the community by avoiding property damage.

Benefits of VHR include:

- reduced flood damage to houses and their contents
- reduced personal loss, stress and post-flood trauma
- reduced frequency of household disruption
- reduced clean up after floods
- improved safety (if isolated)

A VHR scheme is part of an overall floodplain risk management strategy for the Byron Shire rather than a stand-alone program.

VHR schemes in NSW are supported by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (formerly the Office of Environment and Heritage). Refer to the [Guidelines for voluntary house raising schemes](#)

The Byron Shire VHR Scheme incorporates recommendations from the:

- [North Byron Floodplain Risk Management Plan](#).
- [Belongil Creek Floodplain](#)
- [Tallow Creek Floodplain](#)

Staff have used Council’s latest flood studies, topography data, floor level survey, historic flood records and dwelling type information to complete an assessment of properties for the VHR scheme.

To be eligible for consideration under the VHR scheme properties need to be:



- With floor heights below the Flood Planning Level (0.5 metres above the 1% predicted flood level)
- Not identified in a designated Voluntary House Purchase area
- Constructed prior to 1986
- Constructed of a material that is suitable for raising (i.e., wood, not brick)

Shortlisted properties from the above prioritisation have been ground-truthed to confirm their suitability for the VHR scheme. The prioritised, VHR eligible property list is confidential and kept internally at Council due to the sensitive, property specific information it contains.

### What is the fund application process?

Council will apply for funding through the NSW Floodplain Management Program each year and, if access to the funding pool is granted, will enter into an agreement with the homeowners. As funding is limited, those dwellings higher on the priority list will be given priority over those lower on the list. The 2021-2023 funding round is currently open.

### How do I access the funding?

There is no application process as Council identifies the priority list for the VHR scheme and will contact priority list property owners directly. However, if you would like to lodge an Expression of Interest, email Council on [council@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@byron.nsw.gov.au) with your property and contact details.

Council will contact you requesting your interest when funding is available. This will depend on where your dwelling is located on the priority list and how much funding the NSW Department of Planning and Environment has granted Byron Shire.

### How much is the VHR subsidy?

Generally, the subsidy is a ratio of 2:1 (the standard grant offered by the department).

The amount will vary from house to house depending on the location and the minimum height.

However, Councils can also elect to 'cap' the subsidy to support equitable access to landowners.

As per the program, grant payments can be claimed in three stages.

- Stage 1 - House raised, foundations and columns in place.
- Stage 2 - All steel work completed, and façade completed.
- Stage 3 - all works required by the Development Application have been completed and signed off by Principal Certifying Authority.

### Who organises the quotes?

It is the responsibility of the property owner to arrange three quotes for the works and provide to Council together with a statement of which one is their preferred one and why (if it is not the lowest quote).

### What does Council do?

Council supports owners with obtaining the grant funding, managing the payments, and ensuring the works are completed in accordance with the grant requirements.

### As a homeowner what do I have to do?

Council is only a facilitator of the grant. It is the owner's responsibility to:

- Obtain three quotes for the work,
- Once an agreement has been signed by Council and the owner, the owner is to engage the approved contractor.
- It is the owner's or their contractor's responsibility to obtain development consent and have Construction Certificate issued prior to work commencing,
- Obtain a surveyor's certificate showing the floor has been built in accordance with the approvals and Flood Planning Level.

### What costs are eligible for funding?

- Plan and document preparation, including surveying costs.
- Development application costs,
- Site preparation,
- Disconnection of services and provisions of temporary services,
- Preparation for and raising of the floor to at least the Flood Planning Level.
- Installation of supporting structure for the elevated floor,
- Reconnection of Services,
- Installation of front and back doorsteps or ramp and associated safety rails,
- Costs associated with inspections and approval by the Council.

### What costs are not eligible for funding?

- Additional features, improvements, renovations, and substitutions of services requested by the homeowner such as landscaping and concrete floor to the understorey,
- Any relocation costs incurred during work,
- Remedial works to the house if the house needs to be brought up to a standard to allow it to be raised.
- Retrospective works

### What if my property is not identified as part of the VHR scheme?

If your property does not meet the criteria and is not on the priority list it is unable to

access VHR grant funds. In this instance, owner initiated and funded house raising can occur subject to development approvals from Council being obtained.

### What if I don't want to wait for funding under the VHR scheme?

In this instance, owner initiated and funded house raising can occur subject to development approvals from Council being obtained. VHRs funding cannot be sought retrospectively.

### Need help?

Should you require further information or wish to discuss the above, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Flood and Drainage Engineer on 02 6626 7000.

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