

Requirements for lodging an application

Recent events have resulted in increased interest from residents wishing to raise their house to provide increased protection from flooding.

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to assist homeowners in understanding the documents they need to prepare, and what they need to consider early in order to lodge applications on the NSW Planning Portal and gain approval from council for house raising.

Please note that council may have specific requirements for your site or individual proposal.

To avoid unnecessary disappointment in the application and approval process, consider:

- Engaging the services of a professional builder, building designer, engineer, town planner, or building certifier
- Seek pre-lodgement advice from council on any site-specific issues or details.

Plans

All plans must be drawn to scale at either 1:100 or 1:200. They must include a north point and relevant street names and addresses. A building designer, structural engineer, architect, or builder will be able to assist with plan preparation.

LINKS

- ▶ [Richmond Valley Council](#)
- ▶ [NSW planning portal](#)

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The following plans are required to assist with the assessment of the application:

- 1. Site Plan** – Showing location of where the house, driveways and other structures on the site are located in relation to the boundaries.
- 2. Elevations** – All four elevations of the dwelling are required, and should show the proposed floor level height, including that of any garage or other area proposed underneath the house. The elevations should also show the overall height of the dwelling.
- 3. Floor Plans** – Showing the internal layout of the dwelling such as bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry, living areas etc., as well as the location of stairs and balconies or decks.
- 4. Sections** – As a minimum two cross sections should be provided.
- 5. Shadow plans** – May also be required for 9am, 12 noon and 3pm in Midwinter and Mid-Summer.

Statement of Environmental Effects

This is a written description of the proposed development and will provide additional information on how the development complies with the planning controls and what measures are proposed to mitigate against any environmental impacts. You can find templates for this online, or ask the person who prepared your plans to help you with this.

You will also need a Cost Estimate Report for your proposed works that is a worksheet to calculate to the cost of the different components of your building work. Most Councils have a template on their website for this requirement.

Other Issues to consider

- 1. Acid Sulfate Soils** – areas within the flood plain are likely to contain acid sulfate soils which, when disturbed, can result in environmental damage if not managed properly. The depth of excavation for footings and new services will dictate whether any detail is required in your application.
- 2. Ground floor areas** – Infilling the understorey with more living and storage area is discouraged in flood prone areas. The primary aim of raising the house is to provide improved flood immunity, with the understorey left for the parking of vehicles, a laundry and limited storage above the flood planning level. Flooring for such areas should be constructed from concrete and tiles with limited moisture expansion. Although the understorey can be made secure, it must be constructed of flood compatible materials and should generally be left unclad and covered by solid timber slats (or similar) to enable the free flow of flood water. Applications which include large, enclosed storage areas, additional bathrooms, and the like will be carefully assessed, may be delayed, require amendments, and in some circumstances refused.
- 3. Survey Plan** – Prepared by a registered Surveyor. Shows the location of existing dwelling, property boundaries, driveways, sheds, existing infrastructure (including water and sewer mains), power, telecommunication and stormwater, vegetation and height measured to the Australian Height Datum of the existing ground level, height of the floor of the existing house and height of the roof.

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4. **Minimum Floor Levels** – Councils normally require floor levels to be at least 0.5m above the estimated 1 in 100-year flood level, and in some cases may need to be higher. The minimum level is referred to as the Flood Planning Level (FPL) and can be provided by contacting council.

5. **Building Code of Australia** – In order to comply with the Building Code of Australia you will need a structural engineer to design and certify your footings and structural support details for the house raising. Ensuring that your completed house raising is structurally adequate may also require replacement or strengthening of some structural elements. Some older dwellings do not comply with minimum setbacks as required under the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire safety separation. In some instances, eaves and the actual house may encroach into a neighbour's property. Raising the house provides an opportunity to resolve such issues to ensure minimum setbacks (900mm) to the side and rear boundaries are provided.

6. **BASIX** – If your building works have a value of more than \$50,000, you will need a BASIX certificate to lodge with your application on the Planning Portal. The NSW Government Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) assesses water and energy efficiency of new building work, including alterations and additions. Further details on this requirement can be found on the NSW Planning Portal. <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/development-and-assessment/basix>.

7. **Bushfire** – if your property is on Bush Fire Prone Land you may need a Bush Fire Assessment Report depending on the proposed scope of works. Further details on this requirement can be found on the NSW Rural Fire Service website. <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area>

8. **Waste management plan** – if your proposal involves demolition and removal of construction waste you may be required to prepare a waste management plan. There are plenty of resources available from either council or the internet to meet these requirements if required.

Submitting your application

All DAs must be lodged on the NSW Planning Portal. For further information you can refer to the relevant application process, pre-lodgement advice and other details on your local council's website. Once you have addressed all of the above issues, you can determine the approval pathway that applies for the proposal via the NSW Planning Portal.

Other resources:

The NSW Department of Fair Trading website has a lot of advice about information on selecting builders and other contractors, standard building contracts and, building insurance requirements that are a valuable resource to make sure the end product is built to the expected standards and protect building owners. <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/building-and-renovating/preparing-to-build-and-renoate>

Acknowledgement – Thank you to Byron Shire Council for their initiative of a Fact Sheet for House Raising that has formed the basis of this document. For further information please contact our Development Concierge.

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