

13.1 Notice of Motion - Flood Mitigation

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**Councillor** Cr Smith

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I move

That Council receive a report for options to enable alternative flood mitigation measures (e.g. stilts) for dwellings in rural areas.

**Councillor Comments**

Currently in rural areas across the shire the only option for building a dwelling involves filling the site to mitigate against flood events e.g. 1 in 100 storm events etc.

Filling such sites can often be seen as excessive, disrupts the floodplain more broadly and is often very costly.

Other housing design options such as Queenslanders are a practical way to mitigate against flood events, provide more affordable housing and not interfere with water flows by creating artificial mounds across rural areas.

The objective of this motion is to therefore receive options for council to enable this type of development, where reasonable, in rural areas across the shire.

**Staff Comments**

During the development and preparation of the Ballina Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan and the associated DCP, the issue of isolated rural dwellings located on the floodplain was considered.

Flood risk mapping was undertaken for the floodplain, and this is shown as Figure 1 in the DCP. This figure shows that most of the lower riverine floodplain is categorised as Extreme or High Flood Risk. This is due to the predicted velocity and depth of flood waters in these locations, and these factors are considered as dangerous flood conditions.

During the briefing sessions to prepare the above documents, it was recommended that a more secure and robust protection is desirable where isolated families may be surrounded by dangerous flood conditions. The fill solution offers additional protection around the dwelling and allows for other additional storage for vehicles and the like.

A "stilt" solution would require a structural support system to withstand the flood loading, and the safe refuge would only be provided by the dwelling alone. Another issue with stilt construction is the potential for unapproved building amendments associated with enclosing the ground level space. This can increase the risks of property damage from flood debris. Therefore the fill solution was recommended for this scenario.

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For Wardell village the circumstances are such that only part of the village is flood prone, and the dwellings where "stilt" construction is available are not remote or isolated. In a flood event the village would be actively under the view of emergency services and any necessary responses would likely be at hand compared to an isolated rural dwelling.

The Council has prepared the Floodplain Risk Management Plan following a process established by the NSW Government. This process included the preparation of a management study to consider the options which in turn informed the management plan. Both the study and plan were issued for public consultation.

The Council needs to be mindful that any amendments to the plan should follow the same process to prepare the plan and where any changes would likely to be considered to increase the risk to public safety or property damage, Council would need to carefully substantiate and document the reasons why such amendments were supported.

The Ballina Floodplain Risk Management Plan contains a number of actions to be implemented. As reported in each quarterly review, staff have been attempting to secure grant funding to investigate alternate options to the fill arrangements that are the current policy position of Council. This investigation responds directly to a Council resolution and is reported elsewhere in this agenda.

To date we have been unsuccessful in attracting grant funds and therefore staff have modified the scope of works and will shortly commence the delivery of a revised project. This work will take substantial senior staff time and is considered a priority.

Work in response to the report suggested above would either divert resources away from this existing resolution or be programmed according to the priority of Council.

In light of the information above, it is recommended that no further action be taken in respect of this issue at this point in time. The Council will review the Floodplain Risk Management Plan on a regular basis, with new flood data and contemporary risk practice in mind and this would be the preferred time to examine the need to set a different policy direction.

**COUNCILLOR RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive a report for options to enable alternative flood mitigation measures (e.g. stilts) for dwellings in rural areas.

**Attachment(s)**

Nil

11.1 **Flood Mitigation Options for Dwellings in Rural Areas.DOC**

