

Risk prioritisation notification letter

This list of FAQs answers questions that councils may have about the prioritisation letters we have sent out. Please refer to this list before lodging a query.

1. Our council has a risk ranked 5, when will I get funding confirmation?

Right now, funding has not been approved for any new risks under Stream 1. Councils will be contacted as groups of projects are progressively approved over the lifecycle of the Safe and Secure Water Program (SSWP).

2. What is ERIL?

ERIL stands for the eligible risks and issues list which is a database maintained by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. It has information on all significant known water and sewage risks across regional local water utilities. The department uses ERIL to prioritise potential funding under the SSWP.

3. Why does my council have no risk 5's?

The NSW Government relaunched the SSWP in October 2018 to prioritise the highest risks. The eligible risks and issues list captures information from each council's integrated water cycle management strategy, as well as information from the department, NSW Health and the NSW Environment Protection Authority. All risks are ranked according to the department's Prioritisation Framework by the severity of potential impact on human health and the environment. The Prioritisation Framework has been developed by a multi-agency team.

4. Why doesn't the NSW Government commit further funding to fix lesser risks or all risk 5's?

The SSWP has total approved funding of \$1 billion, and around \$260 million of that is yet to be allocated. This funding is prioritised based on highest risk and highest need.

5. Will there be more funding or programs in the future?

The SSWP cannot make assumptions about future government funding and programs. We will gather information about the positive outcomes of this current program, which may influence future government funding decisions.

6. How do we raise risks in my council area that you have missed?

Councils must provide evidence of thorough strategic analysis that identifies risks. This is best done as part of an integrated water cycle management strategy (IWCM). Risks in the eligible risks and issues list will be updated based on councils' IWCM risk and issues submissions to the department.

7. We don't have the high risks or issues that the department identified in the letter, or they have already been addressed. Can we use allocated funds to fix other issues or risks that we identified ourselves?

The initial prioritisation advice letter **does not confirm any funding**. No funds will be committed even after recommendation by the prioritisation review panel and provisional approval by the minister until:

1. the risk is validated
2. council confirms its commitment to co-fund a project to resolve the risk so any funds allocated for the resolution will be expended on that risk.

If the risk no longer exists no funding will be allocated.

8. How can we fix a risk score that the eligible risks and issues list has scored incorrectly?

Does your council have a current approved IWCM that details the analysis of this risk? Fill out the online form via the link shown below to enquire about the risk.

9. If our planning study / options analysis or business case was funded under the first version of the SSWP (SSWP version 1) but the risk is not in our list or is not ranked 5, will the next stage be funded?

There was no commitment under the earlier version of the SSWP to fund further project phases.

10. How do we apply for SSWP funding for other risks?

Complete the expression of interest (EoI) [online form](#) for funding an IWCM. When that work is completed, we will update the eligible risks and issues list based on the risks analysed as part of that work. If it is flagged as a high risk within the Prioritisation Framework, it may be considered for funding under the SSWP.

11. Our council is not happy with the risk score it received / or, that it will not receive funding for a risk that is not on the list so it will raise this matter with the local member or minister.

The program must have detailed analysis of a risk to prioritise and provide funding for it. Therefore, a current approved IWCM or equivalent is required.

If you are not satisfied with the risk score you have received, the first step is to complete the query form linked at the end of this sheet and we will consider further information with supporting analysis.

12. Who will get back to me about this?

The SSWP, Program Management Office (PMO) is managing all responses and referring them to the relevant person in the Water Utilities Group. The PMO will track issues that are raised and follow up where responses are required.

13. How many projects, risks or issues can be funded with the remaining \$260m budget? When do you expect the \$260m to run out or the program to end?

We do not know yet how many projects will be funded as this depends on the size and complexity of the identified highest ranked risks and issues. The NSW Government is committed to assisting local water utilities to resolve identified risks and issues as soon as possible based on available budget and cashflow. The program is expected to run at least until 2026.

14. Can we see the eligible risks and issues list?

The prioritisation letter contains all the information in the eligible risks and issues list relevant to your risks. The actual order of risks may change as new risks are added or existing risks are re-scored. All funded projects to resolve risks will progressively be updated on our website once those risks and issues have been validated and the local water utility has agreed to co-fund a project to resolve the issues or risks. Click our [website map](#) to see the approved projects

15. Can you tell me where we sit in the eligible risks and issues list compared to the local water utility near us?

You can see where other councils sit on the socio-economic scale from the map in the fact sheet.

16. We believe a risk rated 4 is actually a 5, what chance does it have of moving up?

If you have detailed strategic analysis that you believe provides new information and supports a change, fill out the online form via the link shown at the end of this sheet.

17. Will you inform us when or if our risk rating moves up or down?

If a risk is re-scored based on new or updated data or analysis, your council will receive an updated prioritisation advice letter.

18. We know we are high on the list, should we wait to be offered funding?

The program's budget is limited, so there is no guarantee of funding. If a council has the means to address a risk it rates highly, it should progress the risk resolution investigation in line with its own priorities. While works that are already contracted are not eligible for co-funding, progressing development stage works will ensure the project progresses more quickly to fruition and can potentially step through multiple SSWP assurance gateways simultaneously if NSW Government co-funding becomes available for the implementation stage.

19. Our council has a risk 5 issue on the list as well as high socio-economic score but it cannot proceed with resolving the issue at this stage. Can it suspend its involvement with the SSWP but not lose its spot?

Once a risk is prioritised and funding is confirmed as being available (which the initial prioritisation advice letter does not do) the department will meet with the council to understand its commitment to the project. Given the high risk perceived by the department, we will be keen to understand why the council would want to defer the project.

20. What non-infrastructure solutions are eligible for funding?

The SSWP provides funding for strategic planning under Stream 2.

Under Stream 1 other options to maximise the value of existing assets and resolve a risk without needing to build new assets may include:

1. installation or upgrade to a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system to improve control and monitoring
2. work to replace sand with dual media in existing filter shell.

21. How often will you notify councils of changes to the eligible risks and issues list?

Councils will be notified annually or when their risks are formally updated in the eligible risks and issues list based on new information received.

22. When identifying a new risk does an IWCM hold more weighting than other strategic planning processes? Who defines how 'robust' our strategic planning process is?

An IWCM is the preferred approach, in line with 'best practice', since this is the only way that a council can understand its portfolio of risks and the priority and affordability of a range of scenarios to manage those risks. In certain circumstances it may be acceptable to progress a risk based on more restricted strategic planning, which does not include all aspects of a local water utility's business. However, the department may determine that a project cannot proceed through the SSWP Assurance Gateway 1 until further strategic planning work or an IWCM is completed.

Some water quality risks could be managed with non-infrastructure solutions. Advice from NSW Health or recommendations from Drinking Water Management System implementation may be suitable to identify solutions.

23. How up to date is the information you have in the eligible risks and issues list? Could you not have consulted with us first to see whether the issues are still valid or whether there are additional issues?

The eligible risks and issues list is based on information from councils, NSW Health, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Where councils follow 'best practice' and have a good, current IWCM, this information is consistent with the eligible risks and issues list. Councils have the option to review, update and submit new information based on their own latest strategic planning work.

24. Are there any other funding sources available?

Periodically there are state and federal funding programs that may be able to offer assistance outside of the strict prioritisation framework of the SSWP.

25. Will all high-risk dams listed on the SSWP website as 'above limit of tolerability' and eligible for Stream 3 funding receive a similar letter?

Stream 3, high-risk dams are outside of the Stream 1 risk prioritisation framework and are listed separately on the SSWP website. We have already made all eligible proponents aware of this.

26. I understand the co-funding percentages for the program, but can I apply for higher level of subsidy based on hardship? (The SSWP did this in version 1)

There are no hardship provisions under version 2 of the program but once a risk has been prioritised for funding, the department will engage with the council to understand its financial position in relation to co-funding the project and what timeframe might be appropriate considering affordability factors.

27. I received / am receiving funding for a drought project. This will interlink with a few of my identified risks (ranked 5). Will these projects be ineligible because a contract is signed?

Drought projects are funded at least to the same subsidy level as SSWP. Therefore, a funded project would not get further funding from SSWP. There could be water security risks where drought funded projects do not reduce the overall water security risk below 5 (water carting is a good example). Such risks may remain eligible for funding under SSWP Stream 1.

28. The assessed water security risk does not appear to reflect the most recent drought situation.

Water security deficiencies have been estimated based on existing data and information including secure yield analyses. As local water utilities complete new or updated secure yield analyses as part of an IWCM, you may submit this information for further prioritisation analysis.

29. Is the assessment of chlorine-resistant pathogens, such as *Cryptosporidium*, under SSWP consistent with NSW Health's assessment of *Cryptosporidium* risk?

Yes. NSW Health has prioritised the risks for SSWP to be consistent with the preliminary *Cryptosporidium* risk ranking communicated to water utilities at the end of 2019. Please refer to the NSW Health letter for advice on managing and responding to *Cryptosporidium* risks.

To lodge a risk or issue query, [click here](#)

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