

Ninety Mile Beach Plan

FORM 2 - Revised May 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

Voluntary Assistance Scheme - Between Settlements and Coastal Dune Lots

Q1. What is the Voluntary Assistance Scheme?

The voluntary assistance scheme has been in operation since July 2011 for land along the Wellington Ninety Mile Beach coastal area known as the "Between Settlements Area".

The voluntary assistance scheme was extended in 2017 to include the "coastal dune" lots. The coastal dune lots were included in a "Beach Dune Buy Back Scheme" in the 1980's and 1990's. Owners were offered \$700 to sell each lot to the Crown and whilst many people transferred their lots many are still privately owned. The new scheme is being managed by Council.

Planning controls prohibit or prevent development on all lots in this area so that the ecological and landscape values and the fragile nature of the dunes and lakes environment can be protected.

The voluntary assistance scheme is available to owners of vacant land in the "Between Settlements Area" and "Coastal Dune Areas" that cannot be developed. It provides the opportunity for landowners to voluntarily transfer their land to Council in exchange for a financial assistance payment.

Q2. How do I know if my land is included in the "Between Settlements Area" or "Coastal Dunes Area"?

The "Between Settlements Area" applies to Restructure Plan Stages 7- 22 from Firefly Road at Golden Beach and along the coast for 10.8 kilometres to just past Glomar Beach at Vegas Way. The "Coastal Dunes Area" applies to Stages 25 -32 and a triangle area north of The Honeysuckles. These lots are generally on the primary sand dunes in coastal strips between Shoreline Drive and the beach from Golden Beach to The Honeysuckles.

The Restructure Plan Stage maps are on the Council website.

Q3. What if my land is not in the "Between Settlements Area" or "Coastal Dune Areas" but is still on the Ninety Mile Beach?

If your land is included in the following areas, the voluntary assistance scheme does not apply because the planning controls have not changed:

Settlements: *Golden Beach, Paradise Beach and The Honeysuckles.*

Flood prone lots: *Paradise Beach North, Lake Reeve Islands and land next to Lake Reeve in Golden Beach and The Honeysuckles.*

If you want to find out more information about these areas, you can visit the Wellington Shire Council website or contact the Planning Department on 1300 366 244.

Q4. Why should I transfer my land to Council?

The benefit for landowners is that once the title has been transferred into Council's name, owners will no longer receive rates notices or other letters from Council and will no longer be responsible for land that cannot be developed.

In recognition of the fact that the land cannot be developed, Council is giving owners the opportunity to exchange their land for an assistance payment. It has been calculated to recompense owners for the inconvenience and effort in transferring the land. It is a voluntary scheme.

If you transfer the land you will finally resolve this issue. Transfer of land to Council is entirely voluntary.

If you agree, you can complete a Form 2A (Between Settlements) or Form 2D (Coastal Dunes) Expression of Interest to indicate a willingness to participate. We will then send you transfer of land paperwork and information about what you need to provide to Council to process the land transfer.

Q5. If I decide to transfer my land will I have any more costs to pay?

No. Council will prepare the transfer of land paperwork for you to sign and pay for the title transfer costs.

Landowners with outstanding rates and charges will have those amounts deducted from the assistance payment.

Landowners with no outstanding rates and charges will receive the full amount of the assistance payment.

Landowners with outstanding rates and charges greater than the amount of the assistance payment will have their outstanding rates and charges waived.

Q6. What if I can't find my Certificate of Title?

You should make every effort to look for it. If you still can't find it, please circle "No" to the question "Do you have an original duplicate title that you can hand in when requested?" on the Form 2A or 2D Expression of Interest.

If you do not have a title it will not prevent you from transferring your land or receiving an assistance payment. However, if you do have a title you will need to send it in when you transfer the land.

Q7. What happens once I transfer my land?

After the transfer is completed, the rated owner will receive a letter and an assistance payment cheque (if applicable once outstanding rates and charges have been deducted). We will then update Council rate records to remove the rated owner's name.

Q8. What if I don't transfer my land to Council?

The voluntary assistance scheme is still open while funding is available and currently the project is due to end by 2021. If you don't transfer your land well before this date you will miss out on an assistance payment.

You can keep your land but you must understand that it can never be developed and you will still be liable for rates and other charges. You can only camp on the land for a maximum of 28 days in a calendar year provided you comply with the relevant Local Law. You cannot remove any native vegetation on the land or in the road, you cannot build anything or store anything on the land and you must comply with all requirements of the Wellington Planning Scheme

Q9. Why is the assistance payment \$1,500 per lot?

Council received independent advice from the Valuer-General Victoria about an appropriate amount for an assistance payment. Each lot has limited nominal value and the amount of assistance payment has been calculated to recompense you for the inconvenience and effort in transferring your land.

Rates and charges owed on the property at the time Council receives your transfer of land form will be deducted from the assistance payment. This is a once-off payment and funding is limited due to the large number of lots involved.

\$1,500 is much more than the typical Council valuation of a single lot in the affected areas.

Q10. What if I don't agree with the amount of the assistance payment?

This is a once-off offer and Council has accepted the Valuer-General's advice. The amount is a set amount and is non-negotiable and will not be increased. Even if you don't agree with the amount, you should still complete a Form 2A (Between Settlements) or Form 2D (Coastal Dunes) Expression of Interest. You would answer "No" to the first question to indicate that you are not prepared to transfer your land. Council will keep your response on file and give you an opportunity to change your mind and transfer your land up until the scheme closes.

Q11. What if I own more than one lot?

The assistance payment is per lot, so if you have no rates debt and own 2 lots it will be \$3,000, if you have no rates debt and own 3 lots it will be \$4,500 and so on.

Q12. What if I have paid my rates and do not owe anything to Council?

You will receive the full assistance payment of \$1,500 per lot if you transfer your land.

Q13. What if I have paid some rates and owe less than \$1,500?

The rates and charges owed at the time Council receives your transfer of land form will be deducted from the \$1,500 and you will receive a lesser amount when you transfer your land. You will then have no further liability to Council.

Q14. What if I have not paid rates for a long time or at all and I owe more than \$1,500?

When you transfer your land, Council will waive the rates and charges you owe so you will then have no further liability to pay to Council but you will not receive an assistance payment.

Q15. What if I don't know if any rates and charges are due?

It will be on your latest Wellington Shire Council rates notice or you can contact Council and we will look it up for you.

Q16. What will Council do with the land?

Council will let the land regenerate with natural bush. Council will develop a management plan to ensure the land is managed in conjunction with the adjoining Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. The planning controls do not allow Council or any owner to develop the land for commercial purposes or derive any financial benefit from the land.

Q17. What if I have a caravan, shed or other building on my land?

You must remove all sheds and structures, caravans, vehicles, any stored items and rubbish before you transfer your land. The assistance payment applies to vacant land only.

Q18. What if I have already developed my land and have a dwelling?

If your dwelling is lawful (i.e. you have the appropriate permits) you will be able to keep the dwelling and continue to enjoy existing use rights. If it is unlawful, Council may take planning enforcement action.

How can I find out more?

You can find out more information by going to the Council website www.wellington.vic.gov.au

Or you can contact Wellington Shire Council on telephone 1300 366 244 and ask to speak to an officer about the Ninety Mile Beach Plan.