

NORTH CENTRAL CMA

Caring for our Country (CfoC) Community Bushfire Recovery Natural Resource Management Grants

GUIDELINES



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority

These Guidelines include:

- **Overview of the Community Bushfire Recovery Grant process**
- **A guide for landholders/groups completing the application form**

Applications *strictly* close: 5pm Friday 4 December 2009.

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Overview

1.1 Introduction

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is currently implementing a program to assist private landholders and /or registered community organisations with the recovery, protection and maintenance of natural assets affected by bushfires which occurred in 2009.

Access to funding will be limited to landholders and/or registered community organisations that own or manage property in the following fire affected areas only.

- Redesdale
- Muskvale/Daylesford
- Bendigo/Eaglehawk

1.2 Priorities and eligible activities

Applications addressing the following priorities and activities are eligible to receive funding;

Priorities	Activities
<p>Community Skills, Knowledge and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting regional groups, Landcare groups, traditional land owner groups and aboriginal communities • foster partnerships with corporations and the philanthropic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice and support to the community and other Landcare and community organisations • Landscape rehabilitation and associated training • Biodiversity conservation • Building community engagement including coordinating large scale volunteers in a safe and efficient manner • Identifying and protecting exposed Indigenous sites
<p>Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced impact of invasive species • Enhanced connectivity of native habitats and ecological communities • Improved protection of nationally threatened species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing(limited to cost of materials only) to protect native habitats, populations of threatened species and ecological communities including replacement of fencing previously funded that is still necessary to meet program objectives • Pest animal control activities to protect native wildlife and plant communities vulnerable to predation • Strategic control and containment of new and emerging or high risk environmental weed infestations • Restoration of woodland and riparian corridors • Activities that support affected nationally threatened and endangered species
<p>Waterways and critical aquatic habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved protection of environmental values of RAMSAR sites and high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing(limited to cost of materials only) of river reaches, riparian areas and wetlands to protect important remnant vegetation areas now under threat from

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conservation value aquatic ecosystems Reduced sediment and nutrient discharge into waterways and RAMSAR sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> animals such as wandering stock, deer etc including replacement previously funded fencing Activities that minimise declining water quality including fencing (limited to cost of materials only) and bank stabilisation work- Erosion control associated with stream banks and wetlands Weed control activities
<p>Sustainable Farm Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved protection of natural assets including soil, water and biodiversity Reduced impact of invasive species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing (limited to cost of materials only) for improving natural resource management assets such as protecting and conserving fragile soils or natural regrowth which is integral to implementing more sustainable management practices; to protect remnant vegetation allowing for the re-establishment of wildlife corridors including replacement previously funded fencing Activities that address the potential weed outbreaks of fodder sites Soil stabilisation that address hillslope and gully erosion Weeds and pest animal control

1.3 The Grants Process

1.3.1 Timeframe and Ranking

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is now accepting applications for the 2009/10 Caring for our Country (CfoC) Bushfire Recovery Community Natural Resource Management Grants. The closing date for all applications is **5pm Friday 4 December 2009**.

Applications will be assessed, ranked and approved by a Technical Assessment Panel (TAP) following the closure of applications. Ranking will be on the basis of how well the application meets the stated criteria in these guidelines. Where there are more applications than funds available, some projects that receive a lower ranking may not be funded. The North Central CMA reserves the right to fund projects from sources other than this grants program, including negotiating changes to the project outputs and delivery.

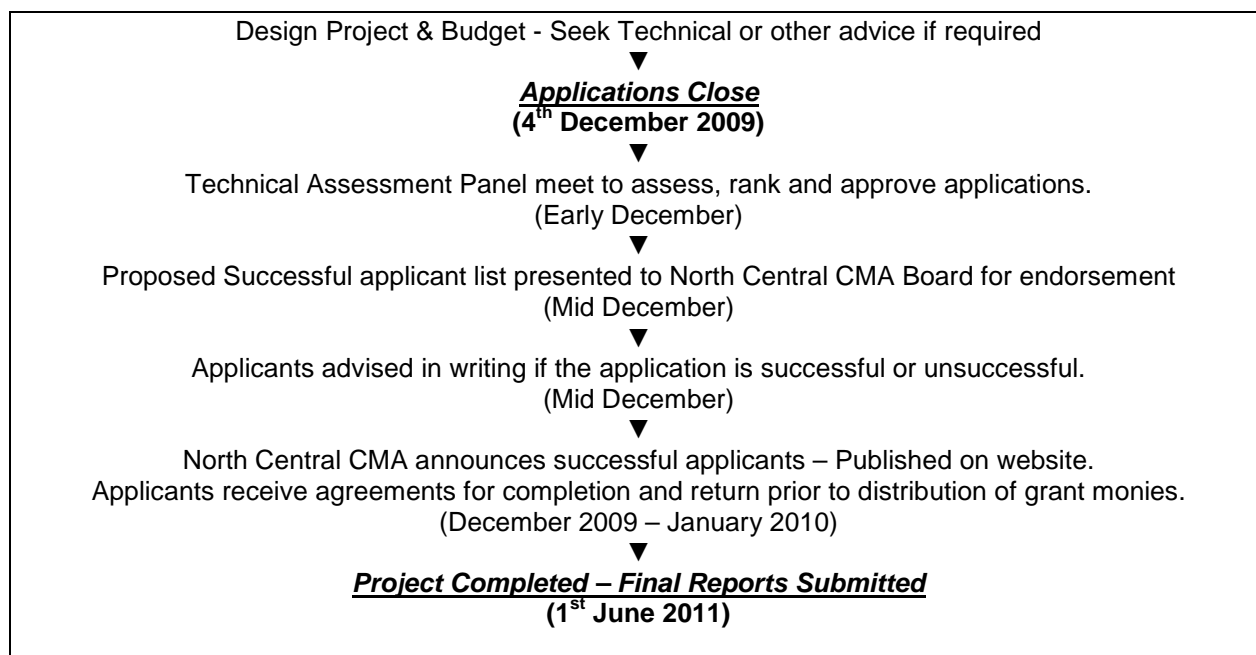
The North Central CMA Board will sign off on the successful applications, announce the sign-off via advertisements, and post successful applicants' names on the North Central CMA website. All applicants, successful or unsuccessful, will be notified in writing by the North Central CMA after Board approval. An agreement form will accompany the letter to successful applicants, asking applicants to sign, date and return to the North Central CMA. **Failure to return this form in a timely manner may result in the funding being reallocated.** Upon receipt of the agreement form the relevant funds will then be distributed.

Projects must be capable of completion, including submission of the Final Report, by the **end of June 2011**.

2009/2010 Bushfire Recovery Timeline

Applications open
(26th October 2009)





1.3.2 Reporting

Groups receiving a Grant will be required to lodge a **Final Report as soon as the project has been completed**. If your project is successfully funded we will advise you at the time of funding what information is required to enable you to complete the final report. The information required in the application form to develop your project and the budget are a good guide.

The Final Report **must** be lodged with the North Central CMA by the **1st of June 2011**. This form allows the North Central CMA to fulfil its obligations to report to the Federal Government. If the North Central CMA is unable to report on your project to the Federal Government, it will jeopardise the CMA's ability to obtain future funding for similar projects. **Random audits of projects will be conducted to ensure that reporting has been accurate**. Unspent funds must be returned to the North Central CMA and may only be carried over to the next year with prior written approval from the North Central CMA.

Guide for Applicants

2.1 General Criteria

Grants are only available to individual landholders and/or incorporated, non-profit community groups (or groups sponsored by an incorporated organisation) that are involved in natural resource management for community benefit on private land or leased Crown Land. 'Community Groups' include Landcare, Committees of Management, 'Friends of' groups, Indigenous Communities, Field Naturalists/Plant groups, golf clubs and sporting associations. Schools and local governments are eligible where they can demonstrate that they are partnering an individual landholder and/or incorporated non-profit incorporated community group.

The total pool of funding available to individual landholders and/or incorporated, non-profit community groups is \$217,000. Applications that demonstrate value for money which meet the priorities and activities outlined in these guidelines will be considered up to a maximum amount of \$15,000 for individuals. Group applications have no upper limit but will be viewed favourably if they demonstrate value for money.

Group and individual applicants should assess and consider their capabilities and resources to effectively deliver projects when completing an application for funding.

The North Central CMA reserves the right to negotiate project amendments with the applicant and align projects with additional funding available beyond the Community Bushfire Recovery grants.

All applications must:

- Demonstrate a positive contribution to the key priorities and eligible activities listed above
- Provide measurable public benefit rather than individual private benefit
- Have a nominated project manager if submitted as a group project
- Demonstrate that relevant statutory requirements have been complied with
- Demonstrate value for money. In kind or cash contributions are relevant **only** where specified in these guidelines e.g. fencing labour, weed control, planting
- All materials and publicity associated with the program must have reference to the 'Federal Government Caring for our Country (CfoC) program' and North Central CMA (information and logos can be supplied on request by phoning North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.
- Any activity that will involve ground disturbance may require an inspection by a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) and the North Central CMA Indigenous Facilitator
- The land manager must agree to grant permission for access by the North Central CMA (by prior arrangement) for future monitoring purposes

Funding cannot be spent on:

- Project administration
- Labour costs (excluding pest plant and animal activities undertaken by registered contractors)
- The purchase of capital item/s greater than \$3000 in total (to be eligible capital items must be less than \$3000 and contribute directly to the delivery of the project)
- Primarily commercial tree crops e.g. agroforests or plantations (except for demonstration purposes where there is a clear public benefit)
- Provision of incentives where statutory requirements exist and the primary benefit is private e.g. where a notice has been served to comply with a legislative requirement
- The hire of equipment owned by organisations or group members (this can be shown as in-kind contribution)

2.1.1 Landholder/Group Contributions

In kind or cash contributions are relevant **only** where specified in these guidelines. Applicants wanting to contribute an equal to or greater than contribution of the grant sought may wish to do so. Contributions may be cash or in-kind:

- In-kind contributions are those that are other than cash. For example, labour associated with on-ground works; or time spent on project implementation (e.g. organising/coordinating/liasing; paperwork; etc).
- Cash is the actual cash contribution that landowners will provide to match grant funds. Project management, coordination, fencing and vegetation establishment can be matched with in-kind, cash or a combination of both.

2.1.2 Standard rates for budget items and in-kind contributions

The following indicative costings should be used in your application:

- Landholder/group labour – \$25 per person per hour;
- Fencing materials – up to \$4.50 per metre;
- Tubestock plus guard – \$1.50;
- Other items not listed here will be considered in terms of cost effectiveness. Cost effectiveness may affect the ranking of an application.

The following is a guide to assist in calculating the in-kind labour hours associated with project activities:

- Tree planting: approximately eighty trees per person per day on flat terrain with mattocks and hand watering (without ripping)
- Fencing: approximately one kilometre of plain or hinge joint wire (not including end assemblies or gates) per team of two or three people per day.

N.B. These figures are intended as a guide only; labour hours will vary depending on factors such as equipment, skill level, terrain etc.

3.1 Specific Criteria

Fencing

Applications involving fencing will be restricted to the cost of fencing materials **only** and must clearly demonstrate that it is for the purpose of protecting priority environmental assets. Standard boundary and internal fencing will be ineligible for funding. Fencing activities that are replacing fencing that was previously funded for protection of an asset must show that the fence is still necessary for protection of the priority environmental asset.

The cost of fence erection and maintenance **must** be met by the landowner or group; this will be the in-kind contribution. Fencing materials will be funded up to \$4.50/metre. As a general guide to calculating in-kind labour hours, a two to three person team could complete approximately one kilometre of fencing per day, on flat terrain and not including end assemblies – this figure will vary according to equipment, skill level, terrain etc.

Payments to fence waterways will only be considered if the setback (that is, the distance from the top of stream bank to the fence) is a **minimum of 10 metres** (on average). Fencing costs for biodiversity corridors will only be considered if the corridor is a **minimum of 30 metres** wide.

Vegetation enhancement or establishment

Vegetation enhancement or establishment must be in accordance with current best practice management. Generally this means planting species consistent to a Bioregional Ecological Vegetation Class (BioEVC) Benchmark. If your application includes revegetation, a species list must be attached to the application, including the proposed number of seedlings/ kilos of seed of each species to be used.

Information about Bioregional EVCs, individual species, revegetation lists and other resources when planning revegetation can be found at www.vicveg.net.au

Further information regarding native vegetation and its management can be found in the *North Central Native Vegetation Plan*. A copy of the Plan will be available either via the website at www.nccma.vic.gov.au or by contacting the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

The cost of planting is the **responsibility** of the landowner/group; this can be the in-kind contribution. The cost of resources and/or materials associated with the coordination of group planting days will be considered if there is demonstrable community benefit e.g. BBQ lunches, potable toilet facilities etc.

The following must be considered (where applicable) in regard to vegetation projects:

- Ensure other vegetation communities are not adversely impacted upon.
- Projects must use indigenous (naturally occurring in the area) species – both plants & seed – must be used, except in situations where changed conditions (e.g. salinity) necessitate the use of non-indigenous species.
- Projects that involve corridors for wildlife **must have a minimum width of 30 metres**. Anything less is unlikely to be funded through this program.
- As a general rule amenity plantings will not be funded.
- Ongoing monitoring and management of projects is essential. Where possible a vegetation and faunal assessment of the site should be undertaken at the beginning and completion of the project and incorporated into the final report.

- To be successful applications must demonstrate that pest plant and pest animal issues have been considered.

Take on only what you can achieve within your group's capacity, considering time constraints and ongoing management.

Tip: If existing native vegetation species might be affected by your proposal, check with your local council first to see whether you need a permit or if there are other restrictions/requirements.

Be aware that native fauna may be involved in your project works area. Seek advice from North Central CMA or local DSE office.

Weed Control

Applicants can only generally apply for funding to control weeds listed in the attached weed list, and should target priority weeds across substantial areas of private rural land. However, discretion can be applied if seen as necessary/desirable by the North Central CMA and the Pest Management Officer, where there is a clear public benefit.

A weed's contribution to habitat needs to be considered in order to determine appropriate treatment. For example, Boxthorn, Gorse and Blackberry are often used as nesting sites or protective cover for native birds. In these cases, staged removal and/or stem injection (and left in place) is preferred, and could be planned over a number of consecutive projects. At the very least, in most cases involving woody weed removal, applicants are advised that applications should include an allowance for the cost of revegetation, and specify the revegetation proposed. Your Pest Management Officer can use discretion in this requirement where removal of a small number of woody weeds amongst dense shrubby native cover will not adversely impact on the habitat of the site.

- As a general rule, a minimum of **50%** cash contribution of the total herbicide/ contractor costs must be met by the landholder where works are carried out on private land.
- As with fencing and vegetation establishment, group labour for weed control can be costed at \$25/hr and included in the group's contribution to the project.
- Where groups propose to do their own weed control using chemicals requiring an ACUP, participants **must** hold a current ACUP license.
- Generally, projects should target a maximum of two priority weeds.
- Funding for control of weeds on roadsides will only be considered where adjoining landholders are actively controlling weeds on their private property (in the group control area), and where local councils are involved in the project.
- Group applications for weed control must complete the Participating Landholder List, showing the names, addresses and consensual signatures of those property owners participating in the project. Groups must ensure that at least 80% of property owners within the group control area are willing to participate in the project (NB. a landowner who already has the target species under control and agrees to maintain this level may be included as a participant).

Examples of contribution arrangements:

- Where a registered contractor is hired on private land (costs include labour and herbicides) the landholder will be entitled to an incentive equal to 50% of the total contractor costs.
- Where a landholder hires a spray unit (from a commercial outlet), purchases the herbicide and treats the weeds on the property him/herself, the landowner will be entitled to an incentive equal to 50% of the spray unit hire and the herbicide costs.
- Where a landholder purchases the herbicide and treats his/her weeds using their own spray unit then the landowner is entitled to an incentive equal to 50% of the herbicide costs.

Pest Animal Control

Consideration for pest animal control activities will be given to applications only where areas targeted are substantial in size and scope to address the impacts caused by pest animals.

Pest animals include rabbits and foxes but may include other introduced species where demonstrable impacts occur. Native species cannot be included for pest animal control.

Rabbit and Fox Control

If deemed appropriate, funding assistance will be available for up to 50% of the cost of plant hire for warren and harbor destruction activities where biodiversity and sustainable farm practice benefits can be clearly demonstrated.

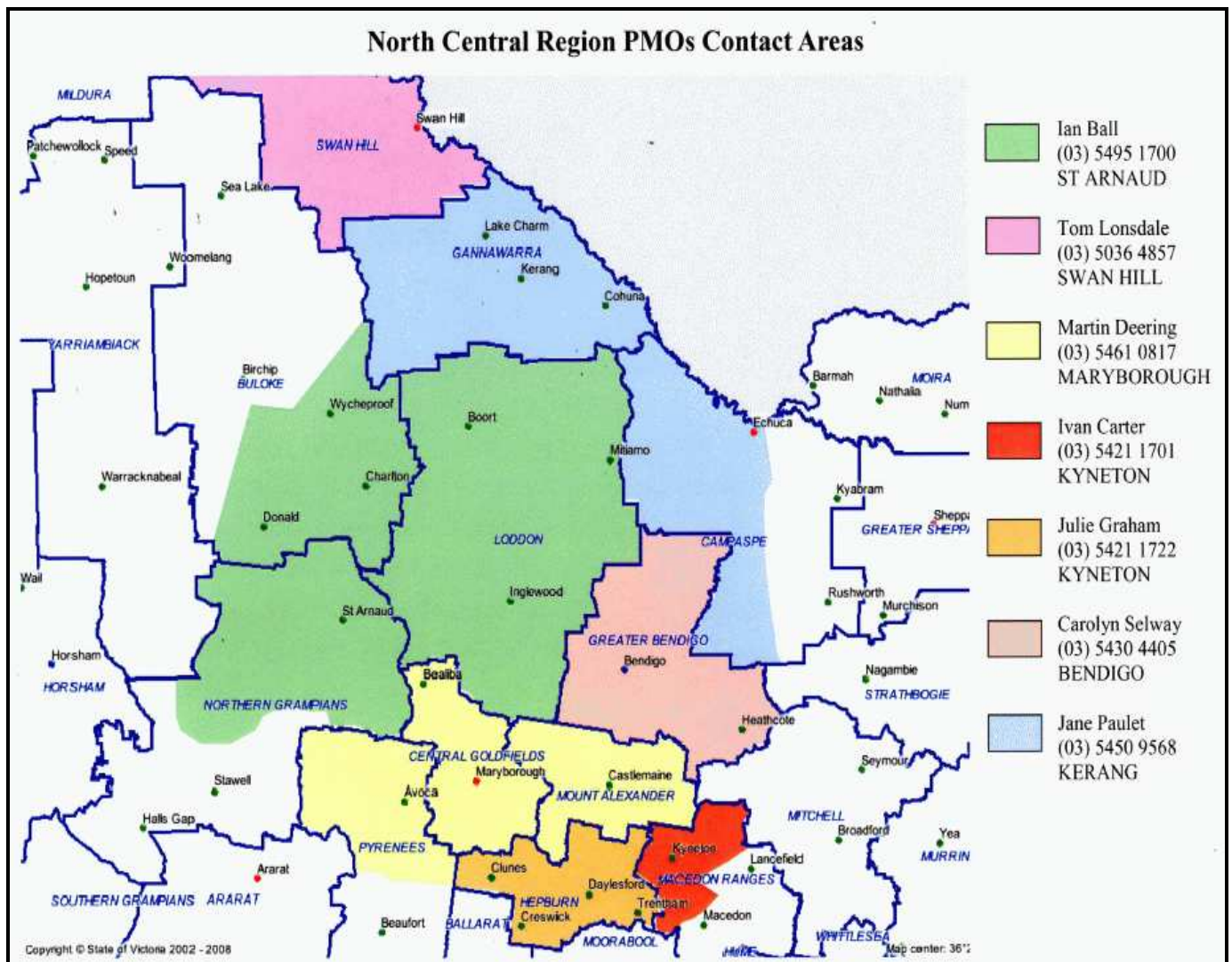
The following **must** be considered in regard to rabbit and fox control projects:

- The use of commercial poisons (e.g. 1080) provides only a short-term reduction in rabbit populations and will generally not be funded as part of a rabbit control program. Fumigation activities will not be funded. However, baiting and fumigation costs can be included as an in-kind contribution to complement works such as warren ripping or harbour removal.
- Groups/ Landholders seeking rabbit and fox control funding may be required to demonstrate the extent of previous works and the commitment of the group/landholder to maintain the control efforts.
- Applications for rabbit and fox control must complete the Participating Landholder List, showing the names, addresses and signatures of those property owners participating in the project. Groups must ensure that at least 80% of property owners within the group control area are willing to participate in the project by initiating new on ground works or by maintaining their current control of rabbits and foxes (i.e. a landowner may have the rabbit population under control or eliminated on their property and so agrees to maintain this level of control for the project).

A complete list of Pest Management Officers appears at the end of these guidelines. Please contact the relevant person for your area if you need questions answered or your project has potential for compliance work to be done in conjunction with it.

Fumigation (using Chlorpicrin®) is not normally supported. However exceptions may be made in circumstances where traditional harbour destruction is not an option (e.g. high biodiversity value or unsuitable terrain).

APPENDIX A – DPI Pest Management Officer Contact Details



PRIORITY WEEDS LIST FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

New and Emerging Weeds

Common Name	Botanical Name
Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria graminea</i>
Californian Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Chilean needle grass	<i>Nassella neesiana</i>

Regional Priority Weeds

Common Name	Botanical Name
Blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> ssp. <i>monilifera</i>
Gorse / Furze	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Serrated tussock	<i>Nassella trichotoma</i>

Local Priority Weeds

Common Name	Botanical Name
Boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>
Bridal creeper	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i>
Cape broom	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>
Cape tulip (1 leaf)	<i>Homeria flaccida</i>
Cape tulip (2 leaf)	<i>Homeria miniata</i>
Hardhead Thistle /Russian knapweed	<i>Acroptilon repens</i>
Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>
Paterson's curse	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>
Prairie Ground Cherry	<i>Physalis viscosa</i>
Silver-leaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>
Spiny burr grass/Gentle Annie	<i>Cenchrus longispinus</i>
Spiny rush	<i>Juncus acutus</i>
St John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Wheel cactus	<i>Opuntia robusta</i>
Wild garlic	<i>Allium vineale</i>

