

# Community Landcare Grants

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General

#### What are Community Landcare Grants?

Community Landcare Grants are the small grants component of the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream. Grants between \$5000 and \$50 000 (GST exclusive) are available to help local community-based organisations and groups take on-ground action as well as build their capacity and skills to support the natural resource management community to ensure Australia's agricultural base is sustainable, productive and resilient .

More detail on the objectives of the Community Landcare Grants as well as examples of projects are available in the guidelines.

The Community Landcare Grants will be complemented by a similar small grants component under the Sustainable Environment stream, called Community Environment Grants. Information about the Community Environment Grants will be available from the Caring for our Country website ([www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au)) over coming months.

#### What are the Caring for our Country 'streams'?

The first phase of Caring for our Country will finish on 30 June 2013.

The second phase of Caring for our Country (2013-2018) will have a stronger focus on building the capacity of the natural resource management community. Program delivery will be through two streams:

- The Sustainable Agriculture stream managed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- The Sustainable Environment stream managed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC)

We are working in a broader environmental and natural resource policy context than when Caring for our Country was initiated in 2008. The separate but complementary streams will allow focused delivery of priorities and ensure effective integration with policies and programs in the Government's broader sustainability agenda. The Sustainable Agriculture stream will allow for greater emphasis on the role that farming communities play in keeping our land productive. For more information about the streams see the Caring for our Country website [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au).

#### Which stream does my group's project fit into?

It is the responsibility of the applicant to read the guidelines to check that the project aligns with the Community Landcare Grants. If your project has a more environmental focus, it may fit more closely with the Community Environment Grants. If you are unsure of which stream best suits the project, it is highly recommended that you call **1800 552 008** or speak with your state based Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator or local Regional Landcare Facilitator. These contacts will be able to provide you with assistance in relation to your application.

## **My group's project fits under both streams, can we apply under both?**

You cannot apply to both streams for the same activities as the objectives of the two streams are different. You must determine which stream your project best aligns with based on the project activities and outcomes.

You may submit separate applications for separate projects to the Community Landcare Grants and Community Environment Grants. These applications however **must not duplicate activities in the one location**.

## **How much funding is available for a Community Landcare Grant?**

- Organisations can apply for grants from \$5000 to \$50 000 (GST exclusive).
- If the applicant organisation is registered for GST, the total budget including GST must not exceed \$55 000.
- If the applicant organisation is not registered for GST, the total budget must not exceed \$50 000. The organisation's GST status must be accurate against the organisation's details identified on the Australian Business Register [www.abr.business.gov.au](http://www.abr.business.gov.au).

## **How long is the term for a successful project?**

All funded projects must be completed within 18-months of project commencement.

# **Who is eligible?**

## **Who can apply for a Community Landcare Grant?**

Community Landcare Grants are designed to support community organisations to ensure that Australia's agricultural base is sustainable, productive and resilient.

Groups applying for a Community Landcare Grant must have voting and/or financial membership of at least five individuals. In the case of a trust, the group must have demonstrated community support, including at least five volunteers.

In addition to the membership requirements, the organisation must be a legal entity, such as:

- an incorporated association
- a body corporate
- a company
- a cooperative society
- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander corporation, council or incorporated association, or
- a duly constituted trust.

## **Some examples of groups that can apply, include:**

- local Landcare groups
- professional farming systems groups
- networks operating in the agricultural landscape
- 'Friends-of' organisations and other community-based groups
- Indigenous groups
- groups engaged in sustainable agricultural activities whose membership is predominantly made up of people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and

- women and youth groups who have been engaged in sustainable agriculture activities.

### **Can newly formed groups apply?**

Yes, newly formed groups are eligible to apply for Community Landcare Grants providing the group meets the eligibility requirements listed in the guidelines. Newly formed Indigenous or culturally diverse groups that have a project they wish to undertake are encouraged to apply.

### **Can unincorporated groups apply?**

Where the group is not a legal entity in its own right, it can be sponsored by a larger incorporated group. In this circumstance, the sponsor is legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant. You should only seek a sponsor if your group is not a legal entity. An organisation may sponsor more than one community group but must submit a separate application for each group.

The following organisations are **not eligible** to apply for Community Landcare Grants in their own right but may support or sponsor an eligible community group, including, where applicable, any eligible groups that fall under their organisation:

- regional natural resource management organisations
- groups with a national or state/territory focus and/or umbrella bodies
- all levels of government (Commonwealth, state/territory and local), and
- organisations currently directly operating under state legislation, such as Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, and Committees of Management for crown land reserves.

### **What are the responsibilities of a sponsor?**

The sponsor is legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant. This includes completing and submitting all progress and final reports as well as ensuring the funding is appropriately managed for the project.

Note: sponsors cannot impose additional costs that would result in administration costs exceeding 15 per cent of the total project budget.

### **Who cannot apply?**

The following are **not eligible to apply** for Community Landcare Grants, and are **not eligible to sponsor** or be sponsored to undertake a project:

- individuals
- groups that have at the application closing date any overdue reports or acquittals for previous Australian Government natural resource management funding, including grants under Caring for our Country, the Natural Heritage Trust, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, the National Landcare Program and Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations, and
- political parties or lobbyists - these are defined by the Australian Government's Lobbying Code of Conduct ([http://lobbyists.pmc.gov.au/conduct\\_code.cfm](http://lobbyists.pmc.gov.au/conduct_code.cfm)).

## **Are groups who received previous funding through Caring for our Country eligible to apply?**

Yes. Groups who previously received funding through Caring for our Country are eligible to apply for Community Landcare Grants funding, providing the group meets the Community Landcare Grants eligibility criteria.

## **Are groups that have an overdue report from a previous Caring for our Country project eligible for funding?**

No. At the time of the application closing date, groups with any overdue reports and/or acquittals for previous Australian Government NRM funding will be ineligible to apply for Community Landcare Grants funding.

## **What can be funded?**

### **What are the eligible activities that groups can seek funding for?**

Activities could include, but are not limited to:

- demonstrating, trialling and adopting management practices that improve soil condition and reduce wind and water erosion
- fencing of riparian zones, wetlands, and native vegetation to reduce impacts of agriculture on the environment
- undertaking weed and pest projects that address issues at the local scale that have been identified in national strategies or demonstrate and promote innovative methods of management, or will result in the eradication of a new or emerging outbreak
- activities to reduce the impact of aquaculture/ commercial fishing on the environment, such as improvements to water quality and by-catch reduction
- developing the leadership and capacity of community organisations, including support for the community to build awareness and share learnings and successes
- hosting field days or conferences show-casing innovative sustainable agricultural practice and associated Landcare or natural resource management group activities
- conducting surveys or other sustainable agriculture awareness raising activities
- building the capacity of Indigenous Australians or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to engage in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and/or Landcare activities, or
- marketing and supply chain-based initiatives that promote sustainable production and support adoption of sustainable farm practices.

### **Can a group apply for funding for projects that are already underway?**

No. Applications may only be submitted for new projects or for further distinct stages of a previous project that has been, or is currently being, completed. There should be no duplication of funding between existing projects and Community Landcare Grants applications.

### **What are some examples of ineligible project activities?**

The following activities and items **will not be funded** under the Community Landcare Grants in 2013-14.

- The purchase of major capital items. Major capital items are defined as building improvements and

items of equipment, furniture, vehicles, computer hardware and software, media equipment and the like with a useful life of three years or more and an individual cost of \$1,000 or more.

- Activities with the potential to adversely impact on any matter of national environmental significance as identified under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- Infrastructure construction is ineligible for funding except for earthwork activities where the applicant can demonstrate that this will deliver sufficient outcomes to justify its cost against alternative options for erosion control, such as revegetation and stock exclusion fencing.
- Standard boundary fencing that would usually be considered a landholder's responsibility.
- The purchase of equipment or materials that are normally part of a landholder's responsibility for the management of their property.
- Weed and pest projects on a single property, or that are a part of a land manager's duty of care or legal responsibility.
- Activities that include planting species that are known to be, or could become, agricultural or environmental weeds in the project region.
- Subsidies for commercial operations.
- Purchase, lease or acquisition of land.
- Activities where the primary purpose is to beautify or improve amenity, such as picnic tables, shelters and paving.
- Labour supplied by the sponsoring organisation and/or community group, other than for project coordination, management and administration.
- Activities designed to raise revenue for the group or individuals.
- Activities that are primarily for political lobbying.
- Activities that are outside Australia.

### **What are some examples of eligible and ineligible administration costs?**

Eligible administration support can include coordination, phone and internet bills and costs associated with legally required documents.

Administration costs should not total more than 15 per cent of total project costs. Applicants requesting more than 15 per cent of administration support must provide a breakdown of costs and identify why this is required. Requests will be considered by the assessment panels and may not in all cases be supported.

Ineligible administration costs are items such as:

- Rent
- Travel unless clearly demonstrated in the application that it is critical to the success of the project
- Purchase of equipment including computer software/hardware and media equipment

### **Can groups apply for funding for labour?**

Community Landcare Grants funding can be used to fund project coordination, management and administration labour costs. However funding **cannot be used** to pay the wages of staff in the community group and/or sponsoring organisation other than for these activities. Payments to volunteers for their labour is **not eligible**.

The focus of Community Landcare Grants is on achieving sustainable agricultural outcomes through community participation. The Government's contribution to projects covers materials, equipment hire and associated costs that enable on ground works and community engagement to be completed. All applicants must demonstrate value for money in the activities and expenses proposed and there is an expectation that groups will also contribute towards the project. This includes volunteer labour or other in-kind contributions.

Contractors can be hired for specialised tasks, for example to operate heavy machinery, erect fencing or use chemicals for weed removal activities. Community Landcare Grants funding can be used for contractors and consultants as part of education activities and raising community awareness, for example paying an expert to speak at a field day or event, to develop a website and/or training course. However, funds cannot be used for participants' travel associated with attending education or community awareness activities (e.g. travelling to a workshop or field day).

### **What type of infrastructure construction work is eligible?**

Infrastructure construction is ineligible for funding, other than for earthworks activities that demonstrate that they will deliver sufficient public benefits to justify its cost against alternative options for erosion control, such as revegetation and stock exclusion fencing.

### **Is fencing an eligible activity?**

Fencing costs will be funded only where the applicant can demonstrate that the fencing will reduce the impact of agriculture on the environment, for example the protection of a riparian area, native vegetation, critical habitat areas or as a means to reduce soil erosion.

Funds cannot be used for standard boundary fencing, for replacing existing fencing, or fencing for paddock subdivision (except where it is used to create a demonstration site or to control soil erosion). The quality of fencing should reflect the issue being addressed and the task for which it is required.

### **What type of revegetation projects can be funded?**

Proposals submitted for revegetation projects must demonstrate how the activities will improve the condition of land, soil and/or water, and provide public benefits such as cleaner air and water. Groups seeking grants to undertake projects with a purely biodiversity focus should consider applying funding under the Community Environmental Grants program.

Community Landcare Grants will not provide funding to plant commercial agricultural species, unless as part of a trial or demonstration.

### **What types of weed and pest control activities are eligible?**

The following weed and pest projects are eligible for Community Landcare Grants.

- Projects which address issues at the local scale that have been identified in national strategies.
- Projects which demonstrate and promote innovative methods of management.
- Projects which will result in the eradication of a new or emerging outbreak.

Note that weed and pest projects on a single property, or that are a part of a land manager's usual or legal responsibilities are **not** eligible.

If your group's project involves weed control, the National Weeds Management Facilitator may also be contacted for advice.

If your group's project involves pest animal control activities, the Australian Pest Animal Strategy National Coordinator may also be contacted for advice.

Contact details for the coordinators are available from [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au) or applicants can call 1800 552 008.

### **Are fisheries, aquaculture and other marine resource management projects eligible?**

Yes, as long as the projects fit within the eligible activities outlined in the applicant guidelines.

### **Are travel and accommodation eligible project costs?**

In general, funding will not be approved to subsidise travel expenses associated with attending workshops or field days. However, funding to support travel in remote areas may be considered where it can be demonstrated as necessary for the success of the project. Funding may be used for costs associated with expert advice for educational and/or raising community awareness purposes. Any travel expenses included in your application will be evaluated by assessors on a value for money basis.

Requests for reasonable travel costs may also be included in proposals seeking to develop the leadership capacity of a community organisation.

### **Is training an eligible budget activity?**

Yes, training is an eligible activity. Training is available for activities such as training the local community to participate in protecting the natural resource base, or training for boards and committees to build management and governance skills.

### **Are applicants required to make cash or in-kind contributions?**

Cash and in-kind contributions are not required as part of a Community Landcare Grant project. However, where an application includes these contributions it will usually be assessed as more cost-effective than a similar project that has no other contribution. These contributions should be identified in Section 11 of the application form.

## **Applying for a Community Landcare Grant**

### **What else should my group consider while developing our application?**

Applicants are encouraged to obtain all necessary planning approvals for their project, including the permission of the landowner or land manager for any project on private or public land, before applying for the grant. Indigenous groups undertaking work on traditional lands and/or undertaking Indigenous ecological knowledge projects must also have support from local Traditional Owners.

### **How does a group apply for a Community Landcare Grant?**

To apply for a Community Landcare Grant, all sections of the application form must be completed and submitted online **by 5pm (AEDT) Wednesday 20 March 2013.**

For groups without internet access, hardcopy applications will be accepted, which must be courier slip dated or postmarked **Wednesday 20 March 2013.**

Further information on how to apply for a Community Landcare Grant can be found in the guidelines.

## **What happens if my group does not have internet access to apply online?**

By phoning **1800 552 008**, you can request an application pack which includes the following:

- Community Landcare Grants application form (hard copy version)
- Community Landcare Grants Guidelines 2013-14

## **Can Australian Government staff assist with the development of applications?**

Australian Government staff, including the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators, can clarify any questions or issues you have with the application form. However, they are not able to develop applications on behalf of community groups. Regional Landcare Facilitators can also be of assistance to community groups in the development of their applications.

## **Who is the applicant?**

The applicant is the legal entity (either the community group or the sponsor). The applicant will enter into a funding deed with the Australian Government. If the project is successful the applicant becomes the grantee who receives and administers the grant. If the community group is sponsored by another organisation, the sponsoring organisation becomes the applicant and becomes responsible for receiving and administering the grant. The sponsoring organisation is then responsible for ensuring the agreed project is completed on time and reporting is completed and submitted on time.

## **Does an applicant need to provide supporting information?**

No, supporting documentation and attachments are not required with the application. As part of your application, you may include any support received for the project, history of the group, community links of the group and/or project, etc. Assessors will consider whether verification of statements is required and you may be requested to provide supporting documentation at a later date.

## **Does the applicant need to provide quotes?**

No. By submitting the application, you certify that all details provided are true and accurate. However, we reserve the right to clarify any details provided on your application form.

## **How much detail should be put into the budget and if something is missed can it be put in later?**

You must consider all aspects of your project and ensure all relevant costs are included in the application. Items that were not budgeted for in the original application will not be funded. Additional funds are not available to meet costs that may have increased after the application was submitted.

## **Why does the application form require applicants to include funding for administration?**

We expect that most projects will have administration costs involved and for this reason, the form is set up to ensure you don't miss out on applying for funding in this area. You are not required to enter any costs in these fields - the box is simply available in case it may have been overlooked.

## **Can an applicant make changes to the application after it has been submitted?**

Once you submit your application nothing further can be added nor changes made, unless the group advises that there was incorrect or misleading information included in the application.



# Assessment and approval

## How will applications be assessed?

Community Landcare Grants applications will be assessed on eligibility and merit.

Applications will be assessed by panels comprising both community and Australian Government representatives.

The assessment process is outlined in Part 4 of the guidelines – it is based on the following criteria (all weighted equally):

- The application's contribution towards achieving the strategic objectives of the Sustainable Agriculture stream of Caring for our Country.
- The applicant's level of community engagement.
- The capacity of the applicant to deliver the project.
- The feasibility of the project.
- Value for money.

## How long will it take for my group's application to be assessed?

The Australian Government will assess applications in a timely manner to enable successful projects to start early in the 2013-14 financial year.

## If our project is successful, what are the next stages?

All applicants will receive a letter advising the outcome of their application. Successful applicants will also be sent a funding deed for the applicant to sign and return to the Department for execution. Payment will be made following the execution of the funding deed and the provision of a program logic for the project.