




CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Community Landcare Grants 2013-14

Applicant guidelines



Sustainable Agriculture stream



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The Sustainable Agriculture stream is delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as part of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Community Landcare Grants 2013–14

Applicant guidelines

Applicant guidelines

Grants from \$5000 to \$50 000 to help local community groups in their delivery of natural resource management

Online applications close at 5pm AEDT* 20 March 2013

Electronic applications are preferred. If you are unable to submit your application online, you can submit a hardcopy application

Hardcopy applications must be postmarked by 20 March 2013.

LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED

For more information visit the Caring for our Country website at

www.nrm.gov.au or call the Caring for our Country hotline on **1800 552 008**.

* Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time

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1 Introduction

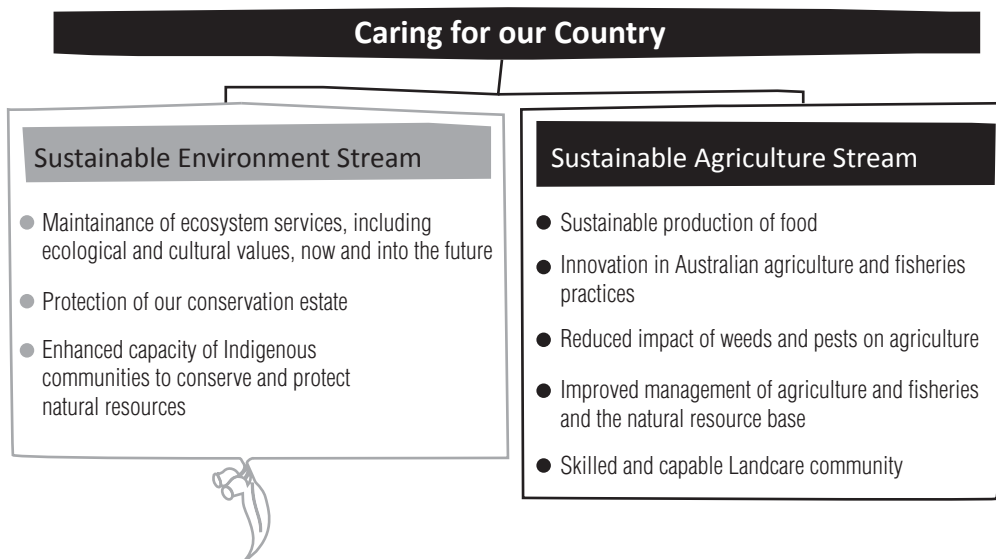
1.1 Sustainable Agriculture stream

Caring for our Country is an ongoing Australian Government initiative that seeks to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well-managed, resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

From 2013–14, Caring for our Country will operate under two streams and feature strategic objectives that are specific to each stream (refer to Figure 1).

- Sustainable Agriculture (managed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry), and
- Sustainable Environment (managed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities).

These guidelines relate to the Community Landcare Grants under the Sustainable Agriculture stream. Support for local community groups will also be available through the Sustainable Environment stream and further information is available from the Caring for our Country website www.nrm.gov.au. In developing your application consider whether your project will address the strategic objectives under the Sustainable Agriculture or Sustainable Environment stream.



These 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. In the context of sustainable agriculture, separate streams allows for greater emphasis on the role farming communities play in keeping our land productive, and the projects that are needed to support their efforts.

Almost one third of the \$2 billion allocated to Caring for our Country from 2013–14 to 2017–18 will be invested under the Sustainable Agriculture stream to increase the uptake of sustainable farm and fisheries practices and increase the capacity of land managers for improved natural resource management through a variety of delivery mechanisms.



This funding will support regional natural resource management groups, local, state and territory governments, Indigenous groups, industry bodies, land managers, farmers, fishers, Landcare groups and communities to improve the management of natural resources for sustainable agricultural and environmental outcomes.

The Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream focuses on food security, managing natural resources sustainably and addressing key issues that impact on agricultural production such as weed and pest management. It will also invest in building the capacity of the natural resource management community to ensure that it continues to deliver successful outcomes for sustainable agriculture and healthy, productive landscapes.

1.2 About Community Landcare Grants

The Community Landcare Grants are a small grants component of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative and are designed to support the natural resource management community to ensure Australia's agricultural base is sustainable, productive and resilient.

Grants of \$5000 to \$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 manage their natural environment and productive lands, while contributing towards program outcomes to:

- increase the percentage and area of farming entities that have adopted sustainable land management practices to increase productivity and improve the quality of ecosystem services delivered to the broader community from their land, whilst building their resilience to climate change
- increase the percentage of fishing and aquaculture entities that have adopted sustainable and low environmental impact management practices to increase productivity
- increase the number and area of farming and fishing entities that have trialled innovative practices for improved natural resources management
- increase the percentage of farming and fishing entities and land managers improving their knowledge and skills in managing our natural resources to deliver ecosystem services.
- increase the capacity and confidence of regional community leaders, including women, young people, Indigenous Australians and culturally diverse communities involved in agriculture or fisheries production and the protection of natural resources, and
- increase engagement and participation by regional communities, including Landcare, professional farming, industry and other community groups or individuals, in activities to manage natural resources.

The Community Landcare Grants aim to help build a skilled and capable Landcare community; encourage community participation and engagement in Landcare; share information and learnings in sustainable agricultural techniques; reduce the spread of pest species; and adopt improved sustainable land management practices.

Proposals may focus on on-ground activities and/or capacity building in the natural resource management community. Successful projects will likely receive initial funding in August 2013 and projects should be completed within 18 months of funding deed execution.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

Groups that can apply for the Community Landcare Grants include but are not limited to the following:

- local Landcare groups
- professional farming systems groups
- networks operating in the agricultural landscape
- friends-of organisations and other community-based groups
- groups whose membership is predominantly made up of Indigenous Australians or people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- women and youth groups who have been operating in the sustainable agriculture landscape
- state or peak bodies of community organisations representing the groups as outlined above. these applicants must demonstrate how the outcomes of their project will directly benefit the community at the local level.

Groups working across all geographic areas and land tenures are encouraged to apply.

To be eligible, groups must meet all of the following criteria that apply. Applicants must address all the requirements of these guidelines and submit an application using the Community Landcare Grants application form.

1. The group must have either:

- voting and/or financial membership of at least five individuals, or
- in the case of a trust, demonstrated community support including information about the extent of volunteer involvement (at least five volunteers).

2. Groups should be able to demonstrate that they are working towards Australia's agricultural base being sustainable and resilient and/or delivering projects that increase the skills and capacity of community groups as relating to the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream strategic objectives.

Emerging and new groups that cannot demonstrate the above must demonstrate that they have broad community support for and/or technical expertise to deliver the project. The group must be a legal entity in its own right or be sponsored by a legal entity that can apply on their behalf. Legal entities include:

- 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

Where a community group is required to be sponsored by a legal entity, the sponsor is legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant. The applicant should only seek a sponsor if the applicant's group is not a legal entity. An organisation may sponsor more than one community group but must submit a separate application for each group.



2.2 Which groups are not eligible to apply?

The following organisations are not eligible to apply for Community Landcare Grants other than as a sponsor:

- regional natural resource management organisations identified at www.nrm.gov.au
- all levels of government (Commonwealth, state/territory and local), and
- organisations currently operating directly under state legislation, such as livestock health and pest authorities, and committees of management for crown land reserves.

The above organisations are encouraged to support or sponsor an eligible community group, including where applicable any eligible groups that fall under their organisation.

The following are not eligible to apply for, or sponsor, any Community Landcare Grants project:

- individuals
- groups that, at the application closing date, have overdue reports or acquittals for previous Australian Government natural resource management funding, and
- political parties or lobbyists¹.

2.3 What is an eligible project?

To be eligible, a project must meet all of the following criteria:

- funding sought must be between \$5000 and \$50 000 (GST exclusive)
- funded project activities must occur after 1 July 2013 and be completed within an 18-month period
- funding cannot be used for ineligible activities identified under Part 2.4, and
- project activities must contribute to ensuring that the agricultural base (including fisheries resources) is productive and resilient.

Examples of eligible projects as well as eligible budget activities and items are provided below.

Eligible projects must address one or more of the Sustainable Agriculture stream strategic objectives, listed under Part 1.1 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

1 As defined by the Australian Government's Lobbying Code of Conduct. Available at http://lobbyists.pmc.gov.au/conduct_code.cfm



- 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.

2.3.1 Eligible budget activities and items

Items included in the budget table must contribute directly to the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream strategic objectives. Project budget items may include, but are not limited to:

- materials, equipment hire and labour
- advertising, website development, printing and publication costs
- expert advice, and
- administration support including 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. Projects 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.

2.4 What activities will not be funded?

The following activities and items will not be funded under the Community Landcare Grants in 2013–14:

- 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 \$1000 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, 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 be considered a landholder's responsibility
- 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 that are a part of a landholder's responsibility for the management of their property
- activities that include planting species that are known to be, or could become agricultural weeds
- 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 (e.g. protesting against a development), and
- on-ground activities outside Australia.

Note:

Applicants must consider all aspects of their project and ensure they include all relevant costs within their application. Funding will only be paid for work outlined in the funding deed and undertaken as part of Community Landcare Grants program. Additional funds are not available to meet costs that may have increased after the application has been submitted.

No changes are permitted to the application once the application has been submitted. However, if an applicant discovers that a submitted application contains incorrect or misleading information, they must immediately bring it to the attention of the department by emailing communitylandcaregrants@daff.gov.au or by calling 1800 552 008.

3 Conditions and instructions for applying

3.1 What are the conditions of receiving a grant?

Successful applicants will be responsible for managing the project within agreed timelines, which includes monitoring and reporting on the project (see Part 3.1.2). For groups that are not legal entities, the organisation that has applied on a group's behalf (the sponsor) is legally responsible for ensuring all contractual requirements are met.

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 including GST must not exceed \$50 000. Your GST status must be accurate against the organisation's details identified on the Australian Business Register at www.abr.business.gov.au.

Applicants should be aware that if their application is successful, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry expects to publish the application on the Internet to increase the transparency and communication about the projects funded, and the outcomes and achievements of the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream.

By submitting an application for funding under this grant program, the applicant consents to publication of the above information if awarded funding.

All information in the application will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Information may also be provided to other Commonwealth departments, government organisations, assessors, regional natural resource management organisations, members of parliament, the media and other stakeholders for the purposes of assessment, information dissemination or publicising projects.

Applicants are required 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.

Successful applicants undertaking on-ground works are required to adopt best practice approaches to prevent the spread of invasive plants and diseases of plants and animals. Potential high risk pathways for the spread of weeds and diseases of plants and animals include:

- contaminated clothing and footwear
- contaminated vehicles
- contaminated machinery, and
- contaminated goods (e.g. gravel, mulch, soil, potting mix, plant material, water).

Successful applicants are expected to have the necessary levels of insurance in place for their project. We recommend at least \$5 million public liability insurance for the period of the grant.

3.1.1 Will I need to acknowledge Caring for our Country?

Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge the grant provided by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Community Landcare Grants program in accordance with the recognition of Caring for our Country Guidelines.

3.1.2 What are the monitoring and reporting requirements?

The Australian Government places a high priority on monitoring and reporting for all Caring for our Country projects and as a recipient of public monies, one of the most important obligations of successful applicants is to report on the progress and completion of the project undertaken with the funds received. Monitoring and reporting requirements for the Community Landcare Grants are:

- tracking of expenditure for acquittal
- recording of project achievements as outlined in your application
- provision of data collected during the project for incorporation into relevant national databases
- a simple progress report on your project at eight months that outlines the activities that have been completed to date. A progress report template will be available from the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au, and
- a final report on the project's outcomes and financial expenditure, including a financial statement signed by the Grantee verifying the Grant was spent in accordance with the Grant Details. The final report template will be available from the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au.
- All applications will be required to produce a program logic. This is a simple project plan on one page that captures the rationale behind a project, outlining the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and longer term desired outcomes. A program logic is usually represented as a diagram or matrix that shows a series of expected consequences, not just a sequence of events. Program logic expresses how change is expected to occur. A guide and a number of examples are provided at www.nrm.gov.au/funding/meri/meri-toolkit.html which provides a step-by-step process for developing program logic in the context of natural resource management (NRM).

The Australian Government will provide grantees with the required reporting format for the progress and final reports. Successful applicants will also be required to sign a statutory declaration confirming that all funds have been expensed in accordance with the funding deed. Final acquittal is required within eight weeks of the agreed completion date for the project.

The Australian Government may also publish case studies of successful projects, detailing achievements, information about the community group, what has been learnt and how the project will be sustained into the future. This information may also be used to inform the yearly monitoring and evaluation report conducted on Caring for our Country and/or for any final program evaluation following the close of the second phase in June 2018.

Note:

Failure to meet the required reporting obligations within the given timeframe may impact on your eligibility for Caring for our Country funding in the future.

3.2 Preparing your application

The online application form can be accessed and completed at the Caring for our Country website www.nrm.gov.au.

To apply for a Community Landcare Grant, all sections of the application form must be completed and submitted either online by 5pm (AEDT) 20 March 2013 or a hardcopy delivered which includes a courier slip dated, or postmarked, by 20 March 2013.



Projects to be funded under the Community Landcare Grants program will be selected through an open competitive grants process and assessors need all information in the application form to be completed to ensure proposals can be compared equally. To be assessed for funding, every question must be answered appropriately and the budget template provided within the application form must be completed.

Applicants are encouraged to read the application carefully before submitting to ensure that all relevant sections have been completed and the information provided is true and correct.

We encourage applicants proposing weed or pest animal control activities to discuss their application with the National Weeds Management Facilitator and/or the Australian Pest Animal Strategy National Coordinator. Contact details for the coordinators are available from www.nrm.gov.au or applicants can call 1800 552 008.

3.2.1 Tax implications

Grants are subject to normal taxation treatment and no special arrangements will apply. Applicants are advised that funding may have taxation implications and that they should seek independent taxation and financial advice from a suitably qualified professional before submitting their applications.

3.2.2 Conflicts of interest

Applicants are required to advise whether any actual or potential conflicts of interest exist in relation to their application.

If a conflict of interests arises, or appears likely to arise, the applicant must:

- make full disclosure of all relevant information relating to the conflict in their application, or
- bring it to the attention of the assessment panel in writing if the conflict arises after the application has been received; and
- outline the steps the applicant intends to take to resolve or otherwise deal with the conflict.

A register of notified conflicts of interest will be maintained by the department throughout the application process. The register will include applicant's conflicts of interest as well as those of the expert advisory panel and Commonwealth officers. For successful applicants with a noted conflict of interest, the conflict of interest will be managed through the negotiation of the funding deed.

3.2.3 Submitting your application

As each application form has a unique reference number, for multiple applications, applicants will need to download and complete a new form. Modified or reused application forms will not be accepted.

Electronic applications are preferred. Applications can also be submitted by post if internet access is not available.

To request a hardcopy application pack call the Caring for our Country hotline on 1800 552 008.

All hard copy applications must be postmarked by 20 March 2013.

Please do not send hardcopies of applications that were submitted electronically.



Post your application to:

**Caring for our Country
Community Landcare Grants**

GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Courier deliveries to:

**Caring for our Country
Community Landcare Grants**

Ground floor, 18 Marcus Clarke Street
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Applicants should keep a copy of each Community Landcare Grant application and application number for their records.

Note:

If an applicant discovers that a submitted application contains incorrect or misleading information, they must immediately bring it to the attention of the department by emailing communitylandcaregrants@daff.gov.au.

Information you provide in your application will be used to assess your proposal. You are entirely responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted. If you knowingly provide inadequate, false or misleading information, your proposal may be ruled ineligible. Applicants should be aware that the provision of false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

The department may at its sole discretion extend the application period. Any such extension will be communicated to all applicants by email only and published on the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au.

The department may consider the submission of late applications under extenuating circumstances provided an alternative timeframe has been agreed to prior to the closing date. Any requests for an extension of time to lodge an application must be made in writing by emailing communitylandcaregrants@daff.gov.au before the application closing date.

4 Next steps

4.1 How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by community and Australian Government representatives to determine that the community group, sponsor and the activities meet the eligibility criteria as well as aligning with the strategic objectives of the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream.

In addition, applications will be assessed using the following criteria. All criteria are weighted equally.

Level of community engagement:

- The community group is assessed on the number of members in the group and any additional community members anticipated to be engaged in project activities. Assessors will consider the level of community engagement and the project's potential to raise community awareness of the project's purpose and outcomes. The ability of the project to enhance the community's skills, including working with Indigenous groups, women, young people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will also be considered where appropriate.

Demonstrated capacity of the community group to deliver the project within an 18-month timeframe:

- Community groups are assessed on their group's longevity, recent activities, funding history and experience in successfully delivering projects. This is a measure of the group's/groups' ability to deliver results and manage contractual obligations. Additional people, groups and/or organisations engaged in the proposed project will also impact favourably on the assessment.
- As detailed in Part 2.1, groups that are in the process of being established will not be assessed on previous successful delivery of projects but must demonstrate that it has broad community support or technical expertise to successfully deliver the project. Emerging Indigenous groups must also demonstrate that they have the support of local Traditional Owners to deliver the project.

Feasibility of the project:

- Expert community assessors will assess how realistic the proposed project is, including how likely it is that the community group will achieve its aims. The technical feasibility of the project will also be assessed.

Value for money of the proposal:

- Assessors will consider how the broader community will benefit from the project and take into account the extent of public and private benefit. The proposal should demonstrate how appropriate delivery mechanisms will be utilised and maintained into the future where relevant. Assessors will also consider whether the budget items are consistent with the activities and/or sites identified in the project description.
- Assessors will consider the alignment of the project with the strategic objectives of the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream as detailed in these guidelines and at www.nrm.gov.au.
- Assessors will consider other anticipated contributions to the project, including financial contributions and/or in kind support. This will help demonstrate the overall value of the project and how the total project will deliver better outcomes.



Your application will be scored and ranked against all other applications received by a panel of assessors. Applications that best align with the assessment criteria will have a greater likelihood of being funded. Given the program aims to reach community groups across the country, consideration will also be given to achieving a reasonable national distribution of projects.

Projects recommended for funding by the assessment panel will then be submitted to an independent moderating panel. Projects recommended for funding by the independent moderating panel will be forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The Minister will consider proposals and will make the final decisions on which applications are successful and will receive funding.

All decisions made by the Minister about successful projects are final and there is no right of appeal, however, the department may, at its discretion, revisit funding recommendation processes in exceptional circumstances. Feedback is important to the Australian Government and these grants will incorporate ongoing business review and improvement into its design, including surveys, stakeholder feedback, assessor forums and other consultative processes.

If your project is unsuccessful, you may resubmit an appropriately revised application in any future rounds of Community Landcare Grants however it is recommended you seek feedback from the department as to why it was unsuccessful in the first instance.

For more tips to improve your application, contact your Regional Landcare Facilitator, visit www.nrm.gov.au or call the Caring for our Country hotline on 1800 552 008.

4.1.1 Management of assessment panels conflict of interests

A register of notified conflicts of interest will be maintained by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry throughout the assessment process. The register will include any perceived conflicts of interest assessors or the moderating panel may have in relation to applicants or applications.

4.1.2 Complaints handling process

If you are dissatisfied with the way your application has been handled by the department, you can lodge a complaint by sending an email to communitylandcaregrants@daff.gov.au.

The complaint will then be reviewed by the department. If you are unhappy with the response you can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will usually not investigate a complaint unless the matter has first been raised with the department and the department has been provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond.

4.2 What about contracting, payments and project commencement?

All applicants will be advised of the outcome in writing. Details of successful projects will be placed on the Caring for our Country website www.nrm.gov.au.

The Australian Government will send all successful applicants a funding deed that will need to be signed and returned with any specified conditions of funding met before full payment for the project can be processed and the project commence.

We will also require you to provide more spatial detail about your project site via an online mapping tool. Further detail on this will be provided in the letter of offer.

If the funding deed is not signed and returned within 30 days from the date the offer is made, the offer of funding may be withdrawn.

All funded projects must be completed within an 18-month period.

4.3 Where do I go for more information?

Website: www.nrm.gov.au

Phone: 1800 552 008

Post: **Caring for our Country**
Community Landcare Grants
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

A copy of these guidelines is available from the Caring for our Country website www.nrm.gov.au or by calling the Caring for our Country hotline on 1800 552 008.

