Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development
GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Protect
Grow
Innovate

2024 COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP GRANTS

Guidelines for Applicants

Acknowledgement of Country

DPIRD acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country, the Aboriginal people of the many lands that we work on and their language groups throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waters.

We respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our regions, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sensitivity disclaimer

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that these guidelines may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs, or printed material.

Content disclaimer

While DPIRD has used all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the information in these guidelines is as accurate as possible, it does not guarantee and accepts no legal liability arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency, or completeness of any material contained in any linked sites.

Links to external websites are inserted for convenience and do not constitute endorsement of material within those sites, or any associated organisation, product, or service. The owners of these external websites are solely responsible for the operation and information found on their sites.

Contents

1. Natural Resource Management in Western Australia

Natural resource management (NRM) is the sustainable management of the land, water, atmosphere, and biodiversity resources for the benefit of existing and future generations, and for the maintenance of life support capability of the biosphere.

By taking a landscape approach, the management of production and conservation can be integrated across land and water boundaries. This recognises the importance of managing our natural resources to deliver economic and social wellbeing for people and industry for the long term, while maintaining integral habitat for the plethora of native species that rely on that habitat for their survival.

Natural resources include soil, water and marine resources, geological features and landscapes, native vegetation, native animals, and other native organisms and ecosystems.

A significant cause of natural resource degradation is unsustainable human use and management practices. This arises from our socio-cultural systems where frequently there is inadequate understanding of the importance of natural resources and a lack of knowledge concerning their use and management.

Western Australia's future long-term prosperity is intrinsically linked with the sustainable use of our natural resources and effective management of our natural landscapes.

To achieve ongoing prosperity, community, industry, and government will need to work together in partnership to ensure that we have a balanced approach to conserving and developing our natural resources for the long term. We will need to work across ecosystems and communities, cultures, and practices, to maximise the outcomes that we can achieve together. Consideration of the cumulative impacts upon the environment and natural resources will require ongoing collaboration at all scales of planning and across all tiers of government. Decisions need to account for the economic, social, and environmental values of natural resources and assets in the public interest.

The Western Australian Natural Resource Management Framework outlines the Western Australian Government's direction for working together in partnership to manage Western Australia's natural resources for the future. Further information on the framework can be found at https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/western-australian-natural-resource-framework-2018.

2. Community Stewardship Grants

The Community Stewardship Grants are an initiative of the Western Australian Government managed though the State NRM Program at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). The grants are designed to facilitate the conservation and sustainable management of the State's natural resources by supporting local community groups to undertake stewardship of natural resources in their local area.

Community-based NRM is directed and driven by local, catchment, or regional scale needs and priorities. It recognises the value of local knowledge, volunteer efforts and strong partnerships. The Community Stewardship Grants prioritise the direct involvement of local community groups in all project stages of design, planning and implementation, through which efficient and effective partnerships between government, industry, and community can be fostered.

Over the past 6 years, $45.5 million worth of Community Stewardship Grants, including $34.9 million in Royalties for Regions funding, has supported over 400 grassroots not-for-profit and volunteer groups that care for the State's diverse and valuable natural assets, from the Kimberley to the South Coast.

The Western Australia Natural Resource Management Framework sets out the priorities that guide the Community Stewardship Grants. These priorities are further defined in the Community Stewardship Grants Outcomes below.

2.1. Community Stewardship Grant Outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Priority 1 Sustainable management of land resources	Agricultural landscapes will be maintained or improved by driving sustainable and/or regenerative agricultural practices, focusing on soil biology and landscape management, to produce healthier food, a healthier environment, and improved bottom line to enable enduring prosperity.
Priority 2 Maintain and enhance water assets	Water assets will be maintained, improved, and protected through activities that support ecosystem health, water availability, biodiversity, and spiritual and cultural values for Aboriginal people. Water assets include estuaries, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater systems.
Priority 3 Protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment	Marine and coastal environments, species, and habitats will be maintained, improved, and protected from biological and physical threats including the declining numbers of some species, introduction of pests and diseases, and the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.
Priority 4 Conserve and recover biodiversity	Western Australia's rich, diverse, and unique biodiversity and its economic, cultural, scientific, educational, and recreational values will be maintained, improved, and protected from biological

	and physical threats and processes including the declining numbers of some species, introduction of pests and diseases, and the impacts of climate change.
Priority 5 Enhance skills, capacity, and engagement	The capacity, knowledge, skills, engagement, and participation of stakeholders including volunteers, community groups, Aboriginal people, and the broader community will be maintained or improved. Values, beliefs, and behaviours of stakeholders will be respected.
Priority 6 Deliver high quality planning that leads to effective action	High quality and strategic planning that leads to coordinated and effective actions will be facilitated and delivered to conserve, prevent further deterioration of condition and provide opportunities for remediation of our natural resources.

2.2 Available funding

In 2024, $7 million in funding support from the Western Australian Government is available to support community-driven natural resource management projects across the State.

The 2024 Community Stewardship Grants involves two rounds:

1. Small grants
   - valued between $1,000 - $50,000
   - up to 18 months duration.
2. Large grants
   - intended for more strategic, complex projects
   - valued between $50,001 and $450,000
   - up to 36 months duration.

3. Eligibility

3.1. Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply, applicants must be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation with an ABN.

Applicants from the following groups or organisations are encouraged to apply:

- Aboriginal community organisations including Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBC)
- incorporated associations and not-for profit companies or trusts, including most community, landcare, and NRM groups, Recognised Biosecurity Groups and grower groups
- Land Conservation District Committees
- local government authorities (LGA)
- primary and secondary schools.

The following groups are not eligible to apply:

- for profit organisations, partnerships or companies including sole traders
- individuals
- organisations that do not have a branch or base of operation in Western Australia
- tertiary education institutions such as universities (government or privately funded), monotechnics, polytechnics or colleges
- unincorporated associations*
- Western Australian or Australian Government agencies.

*Unincorporated associations can seek funding via a project sponsor (an eligible organisation that applies on behalf of the unincorporated association). Refer to Section 4 below for further information.

3.2. How many grants can I apply for and how many could be successful?

There is no limit to the number of applications an organisation can submit to the current grant round (2024 Community Stewardship Grants).

However, only one (1) large and two (2) small 2024 applications from an organisation can be successful in receiving funding. Please note that successful applications as a Sponsor on behalf of an unincorporated group (see Section 4.2 below) do not count toward the maximum number of successful applications that an organisation can have.

3.3. Applicants must be up to date with reporting

Applicants with existing State NRM Program grants must be up to date with all reporting and contractual requirements by the closing date of this grant round to be eligible to apply for new funds through the State NRM Program.

This includes progress reports, variation requests, and final reports/financial acquittals. The status of these requirements can be checked through your DPIRD State NRM Program grants login (https://dpird.smartygrants.com.au/applicant/login).

3.4. Project location must be in Western Australia

Projects must be based within the state of Western Australia. Applications for project activities in Australian territories such as Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are ineligible.

3.5. Eligible activities

Grants can be used to fund a wide range of NRM activities that will achieve on-ground environmental outcomes directly or improve community capacity and capability to achieve positive NRM outcomes.

Activities must deliver outcomes that align with the Community Stewardship Grant Outcomes, and must be in addition to business as usual.

A breakdown of eligible activities is provided in Appendix B, although this list is not exhaustive and some activities are subject to limitations.

3.6. Ineligible activities

Community Stewardship Grant funding cannot be used for activities or items that are already funded or resourced, including under business as usual; these can form part of the project – but must be included as in-kind co-contributions.

The following items and activities are ineligible for Community Stewardship Grant funding:

- activities that are a statutory or regulatory responsibility of the landholder (such as boundary fencing)
- activities that are directly related to income generation under another program or scheme (such as carbon credits)
- activities to beautify, improve amenity, or improve access that cannot be directly linked to an NRM outcome (such as construction of new roads, tracks or car parks, or the resurfacing of existing infrastructure)
- expenses/costs that are already funded or resourced, either through another grant or under business as usual, including coordination, supervision or officer 'time' (such as existing salaries or on-costs) and existing overheads and administration costs (such as HR, finance, and office space)
- mine or quarry rehabilitation (including removal of waste)
- play equipment or areas that do not have a direct link to an NRM outcome
- purchase of equipment or materials that is ordinarily a landholder's responsibility as part of the day-to-day management of a property
- purchase, lease, or acquisition of land
- purchase of clothing, excluding items necessary for personal safety
- purchase of information available free of charge and/or development of data and information that is readily available
- removal of old infrastructure (such as fences, roads, buildings or car parks)
- retroactive projects, activities, or events, including works, planning or site assessment completed prior to the grant being awarded

- revegetation with species that are not endemic to the region
- revegetation that is predominantly for feed or fodder purposes
- roadside weed control, unless it is to control a Weed of National Significance (https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/weeds/weeds-national-significance) or a Western Australian Declared Plant (https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/weeds/declared-plants)
- salaries or on-costs of tertiary institution employees (such as researchers or PhD students)
- salaries or on-costs of Western Australian or Australian Government employees
- sitting, board or committee fees or reimbursements
- student scholarships, stipends, or subsidies
- sustainable or regenerative agriculture activities that are already established as standard practice in the region
- volunteer payments, stipends or subsidies.

4. Sponsorship

4.1. Do I need a sponsor?

Unincorporated groups, with or without an ABN, must be sponsored (auspiced) by an eligible organisation (see Section 3.1 above) in order to seek funding through a Community Stewardship Grant.

The Sponsor organisation applies for and receives the grant funding (if successful) on behalf of the unincorporated group which undertakes the project activities. The nature of the arrangement is detailed in a Sponsorship Agreement, and must also be reflected in the application and workplan.

Applicants must use the **Sponsorship Agreement** template which can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'.

Organisations registered as an Incorporated Association or Company Limited by Guarantee are not able to be sponsored and must apply in their own right.

4.2. How many projects can an organisation sponsor?

There is no limit to the number of projects an organisation can sponsor, either as stand-alone applications or as a collective of multiple groups under a single application.

Successful applications made by a Sponsor do not count toward the maximum number of successful applications that the sponsoring organisation can have.

4.3. Sponsorship fees

A Sponsor can charge up to an additional 10 per cent of the requested State NRM Program funding (for all other activities) for their services. If the Sponsor is charging a fee, then the amount and services to be provided must be clearly identified in the workplan and signed Sponsorship Agreement.

If the Sponsor does not charge a fee, the value of these services can be included as an in-kind co-contribution to the project.

Sponsors cannot request funding directly for project coordination expenses (see Section 8.3) as this is usually a core project activity undertaken by the unincorporated organisation.

If a Sponsor organisation intends to provide consulting or contracting services to the project, such as project coordination, then this should be noted in the 'conflict of interest' section of the application. In the 'contractors and consultant' section of the application, Sponsors must justify why they should be considered the preferred provider of that service.

5. Assessment

5.1. Assessment criteria

The merit of each application is assessed against the following criteria:

- clear NRM outcomes that align with the Community Stewardship Grant Outcomes (30%)
- evidence of local community involvement in each phase of the project lifecycle at design, planning and implementation, including engagement with Aboriginal people (30%)
- a reasonable and well justified funding request that demonstrates value for money (30%)
- sound planning and ability to manage the project (10%).

5.2. Assessment process

The assessment is based on the information contained in the submitted application form and supporting documents provided. The assessment process will also consider the geographical distribution and capacity of applicants to ensure equity across the state.

The key stages in the assessment process are:

- Initial assessment: each assessment panel member individually reviews each application
- Panel convenes: all projects are assessed and prioritised by the panel as a group, seeking technical advice as required, resulting in a shortlist of recommended applications which is presented to Western Australian NRM Ministers
- Western Australian NRM Ministerial approval: it is anticipated that successful applications will be announced in October 2024 by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, as lead Minister for NRM
- Notification: all successful grants will be published on the State NRM Program website (https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/conservation/apply-community-stewardship-grant) with applicants notified by email on the outcome of their grant application.

6. Application

6.1. Application forms

Applications must be submitted using the online application form in SmartyGrants available at https://dpird.smartygrants.com.au/. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. SmartyGrants is the online grants management tool used by DPIRD and the State NRM Program.

You will find each of the Community Stewardship Grants rounds on the DPIRD SmartyGrants page under Current Rounds as:

- Community Stewardship Grants 2024 – Large
- Community Stewardship Grants 2024 – Small

Once you have found and selected the round you wish to apply for, you may begin an application by selecting Fill Out Now. There are also options to Preview the form (in a new page) or Download the preview form.

Remember to save your progress as you go. You may save and close the application, then re-enter at a later time using *My Submissions* at the top of the landing page once you have logged in. To download a PDF of your application at any time, go to the 'Review and Submit' page in Form Navigation and select Download PDF, or do this from the My Submissions page.

A Microsoft Word version of the application form can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'. This may assist applicants in drafting responses to the application questions prior to entering information into the online application form. Please note that formatting such as dot points will transfer into the online form as Plain Text, so may not appear as expected.

Previous applicants have advised that the application process is quite time intensive, so please allow plenty of time to gather supporting evidence and complete your submission.

Please contact the State NRM Program on 6551 4428 or at snrmo@dpird.wa.gov.au for assistance with planning or preparing an application.

6.2. Application deadline

All applications, together with any supporting documentation, must be **submitted by 12 noon AWST on Monday 20 May 2024**. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

6.3. Supporting documentation

Applicants should pay close attention to attachments and evidence that support the application.

Applications must include:

- The workplan: this is an essential component of the application and must be completed in Microsoft Excel format using the new 2024 workplan template (see Section 6.9)
- Letters of commitment: a letter or similar from each organisation that will co-contribute cash, other resources, or effort to the project that provides the details of what is being contributed, and the total value of that co-contribution (see Section 8.2)

- Land access permission: written confirmation that land access permission from all relevant land owners/managers has been obtained at the time of applying (see Section 7.1)
- Maps of on-ground activity: which show the works planned and the landscape scale context, if relevant
- Signed Sponsorship Agreement: this is required if the application is made under a sponsorship arrangement (see Section 4).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include the following as these assist the assessment panel in their decision making:

- indicative quotes for any services provided by a third party, such as contractors, consultants or presenters*
- indicative quotes for purchase of assets*
- plans, diagrams, or other evidence of the strategic importance of the project
- copies of any documents that are referenced in the body of the application
- additional written information which can provide further context or detail to support the application.

*If not provided with the application, successful applicants will be required to provide these during the contracting process prior to funds being released.

Please ensure attachments are labelled meaningfully so it is clear what the file contains.

6.4. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation arising from a conflict between the performance of duties or activities as a member of an applicant organisation, sponsored organisation, or contractor, and an individual's private or personal interests, including financial gain. These interests can also be indirect such as those involving family, friends, or associates.

Applicants must declare and describe any conflict of interest (actual, perceived or potential) in the appropriate section of the application form.

Declarations help to ensure conflict of interest can be managed openly and transparently. They do not rule out a project from consideration.

If you are unsure whether you have a conflict of interest, please call the State NRM team on 6551 4428, and we can discuss your situation.

6.5. Acknowledgement of funding

All organisations receiving funding through the State NRM Program must correctly acknowledge the funding provided to the project by the Western Australian Government as a condition of funding, as outlined in the **Acknowledgement Guide**, which can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'. This also applies to Sponsored organisations and recipients of devolved grant funding.

6.6. Continuing projects

The State NRM Program will consider funding projects that are a continuation of, or an addition to, previously funded State NRM Program grants.

Evidence of the area, scope, and success of previous works will be required to justify why a continuation of funding should be considered.

6.7. Devolved grants

State NRM Program funding can be used to run devolved grants.

In a devolved grant, a lump sum of money is awarded to the applicant organisation. The applicant then runs their own expression of interest or grant application and assessment process prior to awarding funds or materials to private landholders to deliver the proposed works.

Applications for devolved grant activities must include the following details:

- the purpose of the devolved grants
- why devolved grants are the most suitable approach
- the criteria that will be (or has been) used to guide the assessment/approval process; a draft version of the guidelines or assessment criteria is an essential attachment (this includes awarding funds to preselected participants)
- how the applicant will ensure a public benefit is achieved on private land
- confirmation that the applicant will provide a signed **Landholder Agreement** from each participating landholder prior to the release of any funds. The Landholder Agreement template can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'.

Devolved grants: expectations of private landholders undertaking revegetation or fencing

Landholders that receive funding from the State NRM Program through a devolved grant must be made aware of, and are required to adhere to, the following conditions:

- landholders are responsible for their own site preparation
- stock must be excluded from revegetation areas for a minimum of 5 years after planting
- if stock have access, revegetation must be protected with stock exclusion fencing
- landholders are responsible for the upkeep of fencing for a minimum of 10 years after installation.

6.8. Mapping

Applicants are required to provide detail on the location/s of their proposed project activities.

Mapping involves a two-step process:

1. The online application form requires applicants to enter the address of the project's primary location; this will automatically populate. The primary location could be:
   - the place where the majority of project activities will take place,
   - a central point if the project activities are equally dispersed across a large area.

2. If the project involves on-ground activity, applicants are required to upload and submit a map for each project site. Each site map should clearly identify:
   - the type of activity or activities that will be undertaken
   - the extent or area of each activity, for example:
     - length of fencing

– area of revegetation or weed control

– area of vegetation survey.

If there are multiple sites, an overarching project map that locates these sites in a regional landscape setting is also required.

Applicants must:

- provide each map in either Word, pdf, jpg or png format; shape files will not be accepted
- label the map appropriately to identify the project activities and site/s
- provide a short description of each map in the box provided in the application form.

6.9. The workplan

The workplan is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and must be used. The **2024 workplan template**, including a worked example, can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'.

Without a completed workplan on the correct template, your application will not be considered. If you do not have access to Microsoft Excel, please contact the State NRM Office on 6551 4428.

All project costs, co-contributions, and calculations must be provided excluding GST.

The workplan is a valuable planning tool to set out what resources and budget will be required to undertake project activities, and who will be funding those resources. It is also a critical component of the application that helps the assessment panel determine if the project is properly planned and costed and shows the project's overall value for money (see Section 8 for more detail).

6.10. Assets

Grant funding can be used to purchase a specific asset if it is essential to project delivery. The State NRM Program considers an asset to be any single item that is:

- of a transferrable physical nature (that is, it can be moved from one place to another)
- valued at $2,500 or more.

Permanent infrastructure, seedlings and fencing are not considered assets.

Each asset must be listed in the workplan budget and, if the application is approved, up to three quotes may be required before making the purchase.

At the end of the project, the asset will remain with the grant recipient, however, it must continue to be used for the purpose for which it was originally approved, or made available to the wider NRM community in that area.

Please contact the State NRM Office for further information about items that should be considered as assets.

6.11. Intellectual property

Intellectual Property (IP) includes all copyright, (including rights in relation to phonograms and broadcasts), all rights in relation to inventions (including patent rights), plant varieties, registered and unregistered trademarks (including service marks), registered designs, and circuit layouts, and all other rights resulting from intellectual

activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields but <u>excludes</u> Traditional Knowledge and Moral Rights;

Traditional Knowledge means the rights of Indigenous peoples (whether or not recognised by Law) in respect of the whole body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous peoples and transferred and maintained as part of expressing and maintaining cultural identity, including scientific, agricultural, technical and ecological knowledge (including cultigens, medicines and sustainable use of flora and fauna), language, spiritual knowledge and cultural environmental resources.

DPIRD agrees that it will not disclose any project or reporting material which incorporates Traditional Knowledge without the prior and informed written consent of the Proponent and of the relevant Traditional Owners.

Should an application involving the creation of IP be successful, the IP created by a project is owned by DPIRD, on behalf of the WA Government. This also applies to IP created by a contracted third party and this should be recognised in any contract for services.

Examples of IP you may produce as part of your project include:

- digital media creations, such as applications, software and audio/video clips that can be purchased online
- publications, such as books and journal articles
- methodology, such as a new way to collect and store native seed.

6.12. Insurances

Successful Applicants, including Sponsor organisations, must have insurance coverage that is appropriate to the nature of the project, as part of the terms and conditions of funding. Grant recipients will be asked to provide details about the following types of insurances during contracting, as relevant to the project:

- public liability
- professional indemnity
- personal accident/workers compensation for grant funded staff.

The costs of acquiring appropriate insurance (that is, the cost of insurance premiums) can be requested for State NRM Program funding as an item within 'administration and overhead expenses' (see <u>Section 8.4</u>. below).

6.13. Other grant applications

If the applicant organisation is successful in attracting other grant funding for a similar purpose, the applicant must notify the State NRM Office immediately. In such cases, the applicant may be required to provide evidence that the multiple funding sources are undertaking different, and additional activities, and/or working in different areas.

7. Stakeholder engagement

One of the key assessment criteria is evidence of local community involvement in each phase of the project lifecycle at design, planning and implementation, including

consultation with Aboriginal people. Including evidence of stakeholder engagement shows the assessment panel that the project is well planned and supported by the community.

Stakeholders include people or groups in the community that may influence or be affected by your project. They can include:

- Aboriginal people
- landholders and land managers in the project area
- local government authorities
- neighbouring groups and landholders
- Recognised Biosecurity Groups
- regional NRM groups
- relevant Western Australian government departments
- other organisations conducting similar or complementary work.

The State NRM Program encourages projects which address issues at a landscape scale, and it is important that consultation occurs with any other groups in the area who may have an interest in the proposed activities. It is important that all stakeholders are engaged with or consulted during the project planning process. Stakeholders may be able to help you design a project which has better outcomes and more support.

Applicants should keep a record of consultations, including who, when and where the contact occurred and the result of the discussion.

7.1. Landholder permissions and agreements

Applicants must obtain written permission (such as a letter or email) from the landowner and/or manager of each site with project activities to include with the application.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a signed landholder agreement with each participating private landholder prior to the release of grant funds. Landholder agreements are used to clarify and formalise the roles and responsibilities of any private landholders participating in your project, including where and when any work will take place, and outlining expectations of the landholder after the work is complete.

The State NRM Program **Landholder Agreement** template contains all of the relevant terms and conditions that need to be complied with and can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'.

7.2. Consultation with Aboriginal people

DPIRD respects the Traditional Knowledge of Traditional Custodians of the land and sea; the intangible and tangible aspects of the whole body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured, and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them from generation to generation as part of expressing their cultural identity.

All applicants are required to contact representatives of the Aboriginal community relevant to the Country on which they are working. This engagement must occur irrespective of land tenure (public or private). It is the responsibility of the Applicant to comply with Native Title and Aboriginal Heritage legislation.

Engagement is based on the principles of **free, prior, and informed consent.** The outcome of free, prior and informed consent is providing the right and opportunity for Aboriginal organisations to say 'yes' or 'no' to the use of their land based on comprehensive, accurate, timely, and easy-to-understand information.

The State NRM Program extends across various land tenures as well as lands covered by Native Title, lands where Native Title has not been determined, and lands where Native Title has been extinguished.

Native Title is governed by the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. Any land that is a site of an approved or pending Native Title Claim, is bound by that law. Where Native title exists, approval for works in this area must be appropriately evidenced with permissions from the relevant Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC).

In the South West Native Title Settlement region, the Noongar people were recognised, through an Act of the WA Parliament, as the Traditional Owners of the south west region of Western Australia. Six Noongar Regional Corporations were appointed by the Noongar Boodja Trust to represent the six ILUA Agreement Groups, with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) appointed as the supporting Central Services Corporation.

For more information, please see https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/south-west-native-title-settlement

To determine if Native Title exists in the area you wish to work, go to the National Native Title Tribunal Native Title Vision website located at https://nntt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=914b1bbc7ea74786910674eb86324326

The State NRM Program also recognises the importance of Western Australia's vast Aboriginal cultural heritage that is protected by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

For this reason, all applicants must:

- Conduct a search of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/find-aboriginal-cultural-heritage-wa) to check if whether there are known heritage sites in or around the project area. For further information contact the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) at AboriginalHeritage@dplh.wa.gov.au or to launch the map viewer directly, go to https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/ACHIS/index.html?viewer=ACHIS
- Reach out to Traditional Owners and/or Native Title holders/claimants to consult/engage with them about the project. This consultation should occur irrespective of land tenure (public or private).

Further information on Engaging with Aboriginal people is provided in Appendix A.

8. Value for money

Value for money is one of the key criteria of the grant assessment process. The following information is provided to assist applicants in developing their workplan, and to assist with demonstrating the value for money aspect of their project.

8.1. Co-contributions (cash and in-kind)

Co-contributions are resources donated to the project or provided through other funding sources and usually take the form of either 'cash' (such as income or capital purchases) or 'in-kind' (such as labour, time, machinery hire, equipment use, consumables, or materials).

Applicants should clearly identify, accurately describe, and value all co-contributions in the application and workplan and must provide evidence from the contributing organisation (see Section 8.2 below).

Applications that demonstrate a greater value of co-contributions are preferred because they:

- indicate the project has good support from stakeholders
- demonstrate that considerable planning and effort that has already gone into the project
- illustrate the leveraging power of each dollar of State NRM grant investment.

The Volunteering WA calculator (https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/resources/volunteer-benefits-calculator) for individuals and organisations is a useful tool to help determine the full value of volunteer effort.

8.2. Letters of commitment

Applicants must include a letter from each contributing organisation that provides confirmation of the value of the co-contribution offered and details the resources and/or services it will contribute directly to the project which are in addition to business as usual. Letters of commitment must be signed by a representative of the organisation with the authority to commit the cash or in-kind co-contributions.

If not provided with the application, successful applicants will be required to provide these during the contracting process prior to funds being released.

8.3. Project coordination expenses

Project coordination and management are eligible activities for Community Stewardship Grant funding, subject to the following conditions:

- The request for any grant funded salary must not exceed $95,000 per annum pro rata (excluding GST and on-costs).
- Salary on-costs (superannuation, leave expenses, payroll tax and workers compensation insurance) must not exceed 20% of the grant funded salary expenses (excluding GST).
- The total of all grant funded positions must not exceed 1.0 FTE (full time equivalent) in any calendar or financial year of the project.
- Applicants must provide a sufficient level of detail on the work the grant funded positions will be doing to justify the request (this can be provided in the workplan or separately).

- Salary and salary on-costs should be itemised separately in the workplan.

Project coordination and management expenses must be commensurate with the nature and scope of the project, as well as the work the positions will be doing, to be considered value for money. Grant requests that are not considered to be commensurate with the activities and work proposed may be reduced.

8.4. Administration and overhead expenses

Applicants may seek administration funding to cover general project and operational costs which are not already resourced/funded, such as:

- office expenses (phone, internet, printing)
- general communications
- general travel
- insurance (volunteer, public liability and personal accident/workers compensation)
- a single, end of project financial audit for projects valued at or over $50,001 (for grants equal to or under $50,000, this is not required, and a funding request will not be supported).

Applicants can request a maximum of 10% of the project's total proposed grant funded budget (for all other activities) for administration and overhead expenses. Administration and overhead requests that are not considered to be commensurate with the activities proposed may be reduced.

The following is an example of how to calculate the maximum administration grant request.

Example Budget	
Grant activity:	
Coordination and on-costs	$10,000
Seedlings	$30,000
Workshop	$5,000
Grant activity sub-total	$45,000
Administration:	
+10% of grant activity subtotal	$4,500
Total grant request	**$49,500**

8.5. Sponsorship fee

Applications submitted under a sponsorship arrangement are entitled to request a sponsorship fee of up to 10% of all other funded activities, as outlined at Section 4.3 above. This should be clearly identified and detailed in the workplan. As the sponsor usually provides administration activities, an additional request for administration costs is unlikely to be considered.

8.6. Project specific travel

The nature of some projects, particularly where large distances are involved, may require specific travel arrangements (such as to on-ground sites or events in a remote location).

Applicants may seek grant funding to cover the costs of travel that is specifically related to the delivery of a particular project activity. This must be itemised and described separately in the workplan. Project specific travel expenses should be shown in the workplan at the actual cost, up to a maximum of 85c per kilometre.

8.7. Purchase of materials

If you plan to request funding to purchase materials, such as seedlings or fencing materials, quotes are not required unless you exceed any maximum allowable rates set out in Appendix B.

8.8. Contractors and consultants

Grant funding can be used to engage consultants and contractors. The costs for engaging contractors or consultants must be commensurate with the nature and scope of the project. It is essential to provide sufficient detail to show value for money.

Applicants requesting funding must:

- itemise services provided by the consultant or contractor in the workplan (using separate lines)
- provide a description in the relevant section of the application form including:
  - why it is essential to the project to engage a contractor/consultant
  - the name and qualifications of the preferred service provider/s
  - what services are being provided.

Indicative quotes from service providers demonstrate that the project budget is well-researched, and that the applicant has considered value for money when choosing their preferred provider. Quotes should specify the cost of the service and provide a detailed breakdown of what will be delivered.

If not supplied at application, successful applicants may be required to provide detailed written quotes as a condition of funding.

If an applicant's organisation, its members, or an affiliate intend to provide consulting or contracting services to the project, this should be noted in the 'conflict of interest' section of the application. In the 'contractors and consultant' section of the application, applicants must also justify why they should be considered the preferred provider of the service. This can include evidence about the competitive rate or advantage that is offered over other providers (for example, location, or prior experience).

8.9. Aboriginal Rangers, Elders and Traditional Owners

State NRM Program funding can be used to support projects that contract Aboriginal Ranger groups to deliver project activities. Applicants planning to work with Aboriginal Rangers must:

- clearly outline how the services provided to the project consist of new or additional work outputs that are not funded through other means

- confirm whether or not the Aboriginal Ranger team has already secured funding to cover its employment costs:
  - if employment costs are already funded, these can be included as in-kind contributions to the project
  - if employment costs are not already funded, these can be included in the State NRM Program grant request.

Applicants are encouraged to refer to the *Rangers (National Parks) General Agreement 2020* available at https://www.wairc.wa.gov.au/resources/agreements/?id=RAN016 which provides the award rates for Ranger employment.

State NRM Program funding can be used to support Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Owners to participate in NRM events and work activities on Country that relate directly to an NRM outcome, however, their inclusion will need to be fully justified and excludes sitting fees for boards or committees.

More information on Engaging with Aboriginal People is provided in Appendix A.

8.10. State or Federal Government services

If you are requesting grant funds to purchase government services, then this must be fully justified. Expenses to cover salary or on-costs of Western Australian or Australian Government employees are ineligible for funding.

8.11. Limitations of activities

There are limitations to funding that can be requested for specific activities, or limitations to activities, as follows:

- funding for fencing materials is limited to a maximum of $4,000 per kilometre
- boundary fencing is ineligible for funding
- project specific travel is capped at 85c per kilometre
- a maximum of $5,000 per ha can be requested for weed control
- a maximum of $5,000 per ha can be requested for revegetation
- seedlings must be purchased for no more than $3 per stem
- a minimum of 800 stems per hectare must be planted
- local provenance species are preferred where possible
- watering is considered an in-kind contribution
- funds cannot be requested to pay landholders for site preparation or planting.

Projects which have activities which fall outside these limitations will need additional information and justification, including quotes where necessary.

Further information on Expectations and Limitations of Activities can be found in Appendix B.

9. Grant reporting requirements

9.1 Monitoring, evaluation and evidence for reporting

Monitoring and evaluation activities are critical to being able to tell if your project's activities are addressing the goals of your project. The establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework is an important first step in planning for and verifying if the project has been successful.

Monitoring your project as it progresses also provides essential evidence that the activities of the project have been successfully undertaken and is a requirement of funding. Evidence of achievement is a requirement of reporting under the State NRM Program.

There are many different ways of monitoring, however, the level of monitoring should be consistent with the size and scope of the project. Consider what changes you will need to monitor during your project to show that the activities have been successful, and how you will check that the project is progressing towards the expected change, such as:

- Camera or video footage

- Interviews

- Mapping and imagery

- Photo point (fixed-point) monitoring

- Participant or volunteer registrations

- Site assessments

- Surveys or other assessments

Some important points to consider when preparing your application:

- Basic monitoring activities (such as fixed-point photo monitoring, drone photography or photos and registrations) should be included in any project coordination and management expenses.

- Purchase of equipment for monitoring (such as cameras or tablets) may be considered for funding, especially if this is needed in the longer term to document change.

Photo point (fixed point) monitoring is essential to show change over time, such as for revegetation or weed control activities. Please refer to the Photo Point Monitoring links below for more information on how to set up a fixed-point photo monitoring system:

- Northern Agricultural Catchments Council: https://www.nacc.com.au/photomon/

- NRM South, Tasmania: http://www.nrmsouth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Photo-Monitoring-Fact-Sheet-NRM-South.pdf

Site locations for all on-ground activities such as erosion mitigation, fencing, revegetation, sign installation, weed control, etc. should be mapped, with a minimum of before and after images scheduled (and taken) at each site for comparison. Images should be taken at each location, from the same angle, ideally at the same time of day, and renamed to reflect the site name and date the image was taken to make images easier to compile for future reference.

For more guidance on measures for activities which will inform your monitoring and evaluation framework, please refer to the State NRM Program Project **Activities, Measures and Evidence** document which can be downloaded from the grant round information page 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN'.

9.2 Progress Reports

Grant recipients must provide regular progress report outlining:

- Achievements and deliverables completed within the reporting period (against what was identified in the application)
- Evidence demonstrating the completed project achievements against the deliverables identified in the project application, for example photograph point monitoring of on-ground works
- Actual expenditure reported against the approved amount
- Percentage/progress of activities completed
- Project timeframes, milestones, start and finish dates
- Any variances in activities, cost, or time.

9.3 Final Progress and Acquittal Report

Grant recipients must provide a final progress and financial acquittal report within three months of project completion (Final Progress and Acquittal Report).

A Final Progress and Acquittal Report must be certified by the grant recipient's Chief Executive Officer (or an equivalent delegate) and include:

- Final progress report including an outline of achievement and deliverables against what was identified in the project application
- A full financial acquittal of all funding received:
  - o for grants equal to or less than $50,000, the financial acquittal must be assessed and verified by an independent qualified bookkeeper or accountant; or
  - o for grants of more than $50,001, the financial acquittal must be assessed and verified by an independent qualified Auditor, and the Audit Report provided.
- Final progress and acquittal report audit and compliance costs are eligible for grant funding and may be considered a part of the operational expenses request.

- Evidence demonstrating the completed project achievements against the deliverables identified in the project application, such as photo point monitoring of on-ground works including fencing, revegetation and weed control.

10. Grant funding agreements

In order to receive funds, successful applicants must agree to a legally binding funding agreement with the State (represented by DPIRD) which sets out the requirements and conditions under which the funding is provided, including approved activities and measures, timeframes for completion/milestones, how funds can be spent, accountability and acquittal processes, funding schedule, reporting requirements and acknowledgement of government funding.

A payment schedule will be negotiated with recipients, and payments will be dependent on the successful completion of the reporting requirements.

Appendix A: Engaging with Aboriginal people

Early engagement with local Aboriginal groups during the development of your project is essential. It is required regardless of land tenure (whether the land you are working on is privately owned or public land).

The approach that you take to engaging with Aboriginal people, and what you might ask of the Aboriginal people you engage with, will vary on a case-by-case basis. Factors that influence your approach include: the nature and scope of your project; the cultural heritage values of the areas in which you will be working; and the native title status of the area.

Aboriginal governance processes are complex with extended family networks needing to be kept informed as part of the consultation process. It is important to recognise that meaningful engagement will take time, and sufficient time for proposals will be required for consideration by their community. It is also important to remember that Elders and spokespeople often have competing commitments and are usually engaged in multiple projects.

The purpose of consulting with Aboriginal people is to:

- acknowledge Traditional Knowledge and expertise
- confirm the importance of the area to Aboriginal people including cultural heritage values
- protect cultural heritage and heritage sites
- promote awareness of Traditional Knowledge in NRM and explore opportunities for Aboriginal people to inform land management practices or to be involved in the planning and design of projects
- ensure that free, prior and informed consent has been obtained from Aboriginal people
- ensure compliance with the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth)
- ensure compliance with Western Australia's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

Free, prior and informed consent

Free, prior and informed consent means the consent is:

- **Free from force, intimidation, manipulation, coercion or pressure**
- **Obtained prior to the project starting**
- **Obtained after Indigenous people are fully informed about the costs, benefits, and risks of the project, and provided the opportunity to seek independent advice.**

What to do

If you are unsure of where to start your Aboriginal consultation, we recommend that you read Ask First, an easy-to-read guide produced by the Aboriginal Heritage Commission containing practical information that can be accessed at https://culturalheritage.org.au/resource/ask-first-a-guide-to-respecting-indigenous-heritage-places-and-values/

Then:

1. Undertake a search using the <u>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS)</u> <u>(https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/ACHIS/index.html?viewer=ACHIS)</u> to check if there is Aboriginal heritage relevant to your project location/s. If there is no risk of harm to Aboriginal heritage from your planned activity, no approval is required.

   If in doubt, contact the Aboriginal Heritage section of the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) at <u>AboriginalHeritage@dplh.wa.gov.au</u>.

2. Make contact with representatives of the Aboriginal community relevant to the Country on which you are working. If you are unsure who to contact, some suggestions are provided below.

Native Title

Native Title is governed by the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. Any land that is a site of an approved or pending Native Title Claim, is bound by that law.

To determine if Native Title exists in the area you wish to work, go to the National Native Title Tribunal Native Title Vision website located at <u>https://nntt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=914b1bbc7ea7478691067 4eb86324326</u>

Click on the proposed project location and a box will come up. This box has lots of useful information including:

- the outcome of any Native Title claim
- the Registered Native Title Body Corporate (**RNTBC Name**) that you will need to contact when native title exists.

When Native Title exists in the area you wish to conduct your project, you will need to provide written evidence from the relevant Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) that you have permission to conduct activities on this land. The correct evidence is a letter signed by the Chair or two board members.

Once you have the **RNTBC name** go to:

<u>https://nativetitle.org.au/learn/native-title-and-pbcs/native-title-act-and-pbc-regulations</u>

Click on the red Find button and select Western Australia from the drop-down menu.

Find the **RNTBC Name** in the list. Click on the RNTBC name to find the contact details of the RNTBC so you can begin the consultation/engagement process. The RNTBC has the list of members and those who are able to speak for country. Your request will be referred to the correct people in that community.

If there is no Native Title in the area, then you should get into contact with the relevant land and sea council, and they can put you in contact with the right people. If you know an Aboriginal person who can speak for the Country where you wish to work, or have a relationship with local Traditional Owners, then please engage with them.

The following table sets out the requirements for letters of support from the Traditional Owners of the land the FCM Grants will operate on:

Status	Applicant	Letter of support
Native title has been determined and there is a Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), or a	The application is from the Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), or Regional Corporation.	Not required

|		
settlement has been reached and there is a Regional Corporation in place		
Native title has been determined and there is a Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), or a settlement has been reached and there is a Regional Corporation in place	The application is from any organisation other than the Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), or Regional Corporation.	Required from the Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), or Regional Corporation
There is no Prescribed Body Corporate or Regional Corporation in place	The application is from the Native Title claim group/s	Not required
There is no Prescribed Body Corporate or Regional Corporation in place	The application is from any organisation other than the Native Title claim group/s	Required from the Native Title claim group/s
There is no Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) or Regional Corporation (RC) in place, or a Native Title claim group	Application is from the Traditional Owners	Not required
There is no Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) or Regional Corporation (RC) in place, or a Native Title claim group	Application is from any other organisation other than the Traditional Owners	Required from the Traditional Owners

Aboriginal Land and Sea Councils

Aboriginal land and sea councils represent and support Aboriginal people in relation to Native Title matters and on issues affecting their lands, seas and communities. They may also run community, environmental and economic development projects and may be able to assist with engaging with Aboriginal people. A list of contacts can be found at https://www.waitoc.com/culture/land-sea-councils.

Respecting Traditional Knowledge

If Aboriginal people are involved in the planning, design, or implementation of projects, it is important their Traditional Knowledge is protected, and Intellectual Property arrangements are identified.

For example, Aboriginal people remain the owners of any knowledge shared, and this knowledge is treated as confidential unless specified otherwise. Aboriginal people should also be able to access any information generated from the project in an accessible format. Access and Benefit Sharing Agreements and other contracts can be used to ensure any Intellectual Property arrangements are legally binding obligations.
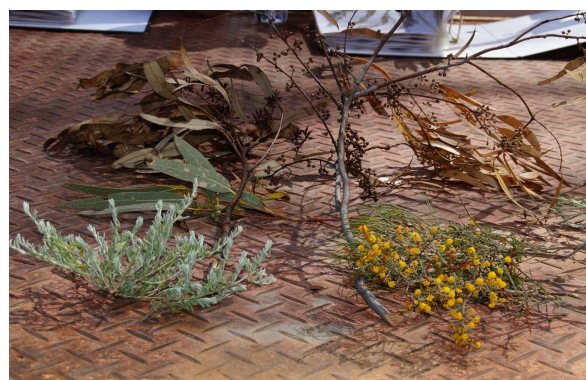
Appendix B:
Eligible activities information

Examples of eligible NRM Activities that align with the Community Stewardship Grant Outcomes

Priority 1: Sustainable management of land resources

Outcome: Agricultural landscapes will be maintained or improved by driving sustainable and/or regenerative agricultural practices, focusing on soil biology and landscape management, to produce healthier food, a healthier environment, and improved bottom line to enable enduring prosperity.

NRM Activities:

- Local and regional landscape scale restoration, rehabilitation and protection activities that also encourage positive economic and social outcomes.
- Implementation of natural techniques to regenerate soil health and increase biodiversity.
- Functional nutrient cycling and ecosystem resilience to support sustainable production.
- Implementation of farm plans.
- Demonstrating innovative techniques that support a regenerative approach which is not already standard practice in a region.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Priority 2: Maintain and enhance water assets

Outcome: Water assets will be maintained, improved, and protected through activities that support ecosystem health, water availability, biodiversity, and spiritual and cultural values for Aboriginal people. Water assets include estuaries, floodplains, wetlands and groundwater systems.

NRM Activities:

- Activities that restore, rehabilitate, manage, and protect natural resource assets and reduce threats and pressures.
- Fencing off waterways for protection and rehabilitation.
- Infrastructure or vehicle/pedestrian access control with clear NRM benefits.
- Erosion control earthworks with clear NRM benefits.
- Sediment removal for water quality improvement.
- Signage for education and protection purposes.
- Assessment or monitoring activities to determine asset condition.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Priority 3: Protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment

Outcome: Marine and coastal environments, species, and habitats will be maintained, improved, and protected from biological and physical threats including the declining numbers of some species, introduction of pests and diseases, and the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

- NRM Activities:
- Activities that restore, rehabilitate, manage, and protect natural resource assets and reduce threats and pressures.
- Infrastructure or vehicle/pedestrian access control with clear NRM benefits.
- Protection of dune systems and biodiversity.
- Pest and weed management.
- Protection of marine resources.
- Education and training that leads to on-ground NRM activities.
- Development of plans that lead to on-ground NRM activities.
- Assessment or monitoring activities to determine resource condition.
- Signage for education and protection purposes.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Priority 4: Conserve and recover biodiversity

Outcome: Western Australia's rich, diverse, and unique biodiversity and its economic, cultural, scientific, educational, and recreational values will be maintained, improved, and protected from biological and physical threats and processes including the declining numbers of some species, introduction of pests and diseases, and the impacts of climate change.

NRM Activities:

- Activities that restore, rehabilitate, and protect biodiversity and threatened species/communities.
- Assessment or monitoring activities to determine species or ecosystem condition.
- Fencing of remnant vegetation for stock exclusion.
- Infrastructure or vehicle/pedestrian access control with clear NRM benefits.
- Pest and weed management.
- Phytophthora Dieback and other disease management and hygiene practices.
- Signage for education and protection purposes.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Priority 5: Enhance skills, capacity, and engagement

Outcome: The capacity, knowledge, skills, engagement, and participation of stakeholders including volunteers, community groups, Aboriginal people, and the broader community will be maintained or improved. Values, beliefs, and behaviours of stakeholders will be respected.

NRM Activities:

- Community engagement and governance activities for environmental, social, economic development, and capacity building outcomes.
- Activities that build knowledge, skills, and capacity to adopt effective NRM practices.
- Activities that increase skills, knowledge, participation, capacity, and employment of the Aboriginal community to achieve NRM outcomes.
- Sharing learning opportunities that support effective NRM practice change and regenerative approaches.
- Planning, observing, and measuring change in skills, capacity, and engagement.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Priority 6: Deliver high quality planning that leads to effective action

Outcome: High quality and strategic planning that leads to coordinated and effective actions will be facilitated and delivered to conserve, prevent further deterioration of the condition, and provide opportunities for remediation of our natural resources.
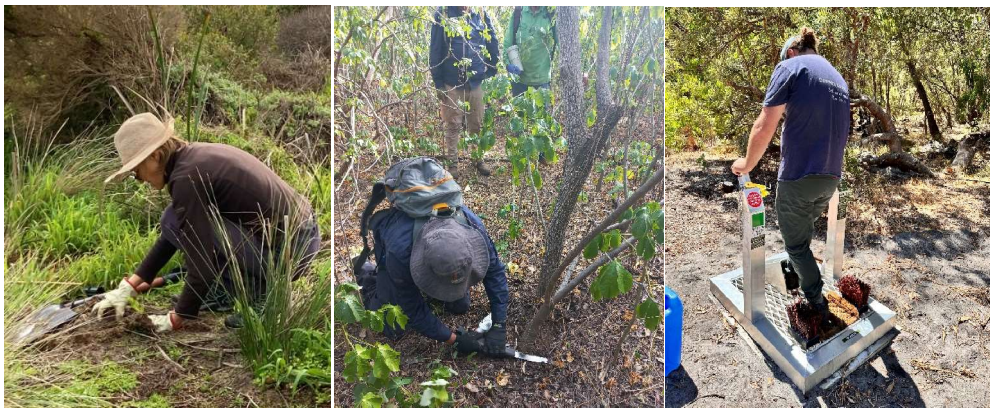
NRM Activities:

- Development of plans that lead to on-ground NRM activities.
- Farm planning that supports sustainable and/or regenerative farm management.
- Assessment or monitoring activities to determine resource condition or change over time to support planning delivery.
- Other activities that achieve this outcome.

Good environmental hygiene

It is your responsibility and a contractual condition of your successful grant that your activities do not contribute to the spread of weeds, pest animals and disease (for example, *Phytophthora* spp. dieback in south-west Western Australia).

The Australian Government website, Arrive Clean Leave Clean, provides resources to enable best practice hygiene measures (https://www.awe.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/invasive-species/publications/arrive-clean-leave-clean).

The Dieback Working Group website provides information on Phytophthora dieback disease and how your project can stop the spread (https://www.dwg.org.au/).

Expectations and Limitations of Activities

On-ground

Fencing

Various fencing activities may be considered for funding, taking into consideration the following guidelines and limitations:

- Funding for materials is limited to a maximum of $4,000 per kilometre. To justify the fencing expense, within the workplan, describe what kind of fence you are intending to install and what its purpose is. If grant funded fencing exceeds the maximum rate, provide quotes as part of your justification.
- Fencing that serves to protect new or remnant vegetation must be stock proof. Landholders must agree to exclude stock from this protected area for a minimum of 5 years.
- Landholders must commit to providing ongoing maintenance of State NRM Program funded fencing for a minimum of 10 years.
- Fencing that occurs along a watercourse should have a minimum 30m buffer from the high-water mark.
- Boundary fencing is ineligible for funding. In accordance with the Dividing Fences Act 1961, it is the statutory responsibility of landholders to fence property boundaries including those bordering crown land. If a boundary fence is to be moved inside your property for NRM purposes, this may be considered, but must be a realignment of at least 30 metres inside the boundary line.
- Funds may be used to employ a contractor to construct fences. If a contractor is required, justification must be provided.

Infrastructure and earthworks

Infrastructure activities may be funded if clear NRM benefits can be demonstrated, such as:

- signage for educational purposes or to highlight conservation areas
- bird hides or bird viewing platforms that are not purely for amenity
- erosion control earthworks that are not purely for amenity
- infrastructure that contains or controls vehicle or pedestrian access (such as bollards) to conservation areas
- nature playgrounds that clearly demonstrate an NRM education benefit
- pathways or trails that assist in access control or disease control for protection or conservation, or can demonstrate another NRM benefit.

Infrastructure considered to be the responsibility of landholders will not be funded, such as road construction and maintenance, directional signage, or car park construction and resurfacing.

Requests for the construction of deep drains or earthworks to alter to the natural flow of water will not be considered without accompanying approvals from the Soils Commissioner.

Invasive species (pest plants, feral animals, and plant diseases)

Invasive species management of a declared species is a landholder responsibility under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*. However, if it can be adequately justified that control is of public benefit, funding will be considered.

Priority will be given to applications which demonstrate public benefit though:

- multiple landholders in an area, and preferably multiple tenures or groups; collaborating with a view to local extermination or long-term management to protect natural resources and assets
- eradication or containment is achievable in a local or regional area, rather than at individual sites
- cooperation and communication between organisations and community members through building stronger partnerships and networks to deliver long-term results
- why the chosen methodology of single species or integrated pest management will give the best value result
- there is a long-term strategy or management plan in place, or are looking to develop a strategy or management plan
- continuing projects that can show their impact over time towards localised eradication or containment, such as through mapping and evaluation.

Permission to work on public lands must be demonstrated.

Consultation with your local Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) is essential, if there is one in your area, to understand how the project will complement or extend the activities already being undertaken by the RBG. If the applicant is an RBG, you will need to clearly articulate how this funding builds on 'business as usual', and what value it adds to your current program.

Pest Plants

Control of weed species will be considered if the need and urgency is sufficiently demonstrated. A maximum of $5,000 per ha can be requested for weed control unless fully justified within your application and attached workplan.

More information on pest plants can be found at:

- Weeds of National Significance (WoNS). The latest list of WoNS is available at https://weeds.org.au/weeds-profiles/.
- Declared Plants of Western Australia. The latest list of declared plants can be found at https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/weeds/declared-plants.

Feral animal management

Things to consider in your application:

- Applications must demonstrate appropriate animal welfare consideration and evidence of understanding for what is required. This includes detailing methodology including specialist skills and tools proposed to ensure humane animal welfare requirements are met at all times.
- The *Animal Welfare Act 2002* and its accompanying regulations provide the legal framework for ensuring that all animals in Western Australia have appropriate standards of care, administered by DPIRD, with information available at https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/animal-welfare-act-2002

- If your project involves feral cat management you may be eligible to apply for funds under the Feral Cat Management grants. More information can be found at https://www.wa.gov.au/service/community-services/grants-and-subsidies/apply-feral-cat-management-grant
- Animal ethics approval is not required to use Felixer grooming traps in toxic mode when used for feral cat management purposes; more information on Felixer grooming traps for feral cat control is available at https://wafcwg.org.au/information/felixer-grooming-traps/
- Use of Eradicat ® must be approved by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Feral Cat Technical Committee; contact ecosystemhealth@dbca.wa.gov.au for more information and the application criteria; more information is available at https://wafcwg.org.au/information/baiting/
- To ensure that funds requested through this program do not duplicate the work of Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs), evidence of the outcome of consultation with the relevant RBG must be included in the application at the relevant section, including information regarding priority species, and how the project will complement or extend the activities already being undertaken by the RBG.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- address landscape scale control
- protect threatened fauna species or threatened ecological communities
- include monitoring to demonstrate control outcomes on invasive species and threatened native fauna
- can produce the relevant licenses, approvals, permits, or other documents to show the proposed activities will be conducted in a way that complies with all required legislation and Codes of Practice
- have a long term, targeted strategy or management plan in place or are looking to develop a long term, targeted strategy or management plan
- include integrated pest species management (such as cats, foxes, rabbits)
- increase community capacity to continue feral animal control past the life of the application
- demonstrate that there will not be adverse effects by implementing control; for example, that by controlling feral cats, rabbit or fox populations won't increase
- provide data for the numbers of both predators and prey
- can describe why the chosen methodology of management will give the best value result.

Plant Diseases

Priority will be given to projects that propose the control of plant pathogens affecting remnant vegetation on public lands, or on private land where control will reduce the risk of spread to public land.

Monitoring

A well-designed monitoring system can answer questions such as:

- Are the populations of individual species of animals declining or increasing?
- Has the management intervention had the intended impact?
- Have new understandings been gained?

Purchase of equipment for monitoring (such as remote sensing cameras) may be considered for funding.

The WAEC will use the Standard operating procedures (SOPs) from DBCA for fauna survey and monitoring activities to assist scientific establishments and environmental scientists in preparing their applications and to ensure projects follow AEC-endorsed guidelines. More information is available at https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/science/animal-ethics-and-use-animals

Native animal management

Projects involving native wildlife will require consultation with DBCA as licences and permissions are required for the taking or release of fauna under the provisions of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Depending on the activities, separate licences may also be required from DPIRD. It is not essential to provide a copy of the licence on application but a copy may be required as a condition of funding.

Remnant vegetation protection

Priority will be given to projects with sites that:

- align with a landscape scale strategy or management plan
- have a high protected area to boundary ratio (that is, large squarer areas are a higher priority than long thin areas)
- deliver connectivity between remnant patches or revegetated corridors
- demonstrate high-quality representative plant communities
- incorporate buffer zones
- incorporate cross-boundary remnant protection.

Replacing or repairing fences to continue to protect remnant vegetation will be considered. Please provide details of any covenants which may apply, as well as mapping and justification for the repairs.

Revegetation

Priority will be given to projects with sites that:

- align with a landscape scale strategy or management plan
- have a high protected area to boundary ratio (that is, large squarer areas are a higher priority than long thin areas)
- deliver connectivity between remnant patches or revegetated corridors
- incorporate buffer zones
- incorporate cross-boundary remnant protection or rehabilitation.

General guidelines and limitations for revegetation activities:

- a maximum of $5,000 per ha can be requested for revegetation
- a minimum of 800 stems per hectare must be planted
- seedlings are purchased for no more than $3 per stem
- local provenance species are preferred where possible
- revegetation efforts should aim for multi-storey plantings; or combining planting with direct seeding
- seedling protection is recommended, and explanation should be provided if not undertaken

- revegetation must be fenced to exclude stock where relevant for a minimum of 5 years
- watering is considered an in-kind contribution.

Things to consider in your application:

- Projects which have activities which exceed these guidelines and limitations will need additional information and justification, including quotes where necessary.
- Funds cannot be requested to pay landholders for site preparation or planting. Where landholders conduct this work, it is considered an in-kind co-contribution towards the project.
- Funds can be requested to employ a contractor for site preparation and planting if the group or landholder is unable to undertake these tasks, but this request must be fully justified.
- Funds can be requested for the purchase or collection of local provenance seeds; however, the seed collection must be carried out by a fully licensed collector in accordance with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and *Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018.*

Sustainable and/or regenerative agriculture

Sustainable and/or regenerative agriculture applications should focus on adoption and practice change. That is, proven sustainable and/or regenerative agricultural practices being implemented under new circumstances or in a new area. Applications must justify how proposed activities help to support the transition from current to regenerative practice. Activities can include on-ground works in demonstration sites but must also include behaviour change practices.

Things to consider in your application:

- priority will be given to applications where the public and private benefit is balanced
- building the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in regenerative land management practices will be highly regarded
- activities must be detailed with clear NRM outcomes
- replicating, trialling, or demonstrating activities already considered standard practice in an area, or that are well researched, will not be considered
- alignment to The Western Australian Soil Health Strategy 2021-2031 (https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/wa-soil-health-strategy) will be viewed favourably.

Capability building

Capturing or implementing Traditional Knowledge

Activities incorporating Traditional Knowledge, including the spiritual and the sacred, should focus on Indigenous biological and ecological knowledge, and how that knowledge is applied to natural resources, plants, animals, and their environments.

Applications must demonstrate how Traditional Owners will be involved in these activities, how their Intellectual Property rights will be managed and protected, how the knowledge will be stored, and how the knowledge will be used in future land and sea management.

For successful applications, it is noted that ownership of Intellectual Property in any Pre-existing Material related to the project (including Traditional Knowledge) vests with the Proponent or any relevant third party. To the extent that Project Material or Pre-existing Material comprises Traditional Knowledge that is culturally sensitive, the Department of

Primary Industries and Regional Development agrees that it will not disclose any material without the prior and informed written consent of the Proponent and of the relevant Traditional Owners.

Data collection

Data collection may be undertaken by the applicant, citizen scientists, consultants, or others, and the methodology for collection should be detailed. Activities that collect data should clearly show how this data will be used to determine or improve the condition of an area or species, how it will add to existing knowledge, how it will be used to improve long-term management, and how it will be stored, managed, and shared.

Information sharing

Funding may be requested for activities to access information to develop capability or to disseminate experiences and learnings to increase the benefit from that information. Grant funds may be requested to develop, improve and/or deliver the following activities:

- events such as seminars, workshops, field trips, citizen science
- information products such as booklets, brochures, websites, GIS systems, and peer-to peer learning systems, noting that the preferred format for products is digital and justification needs to be provided for paper-based production
- skills development and training programs including Aboriginal Ranger Group training
- education programs that focus on environmental education and align with WA curriculum learning areas.

Planning

Applications that include the development of a plan (for example, an action plan or management plan) should clearly demonstrate how the plan will be developed, what consultation is involved, how it will be used in future management of an area or species, and how it will contribute to decision making.

Research and development

Community-led research activities which may be considered for funding include:

- research into implementation of innovative best practice in specific Western Australian land systems where it is relatively untested
- research to extend and enhance existing knowledge
- innovative research into Western Australian specific NRM outcomes and activities.

Research and development activities have the following guidelines and limitations:

- Tertiary education institutions (including employee or student salaries and on-costs, scholarships, stipends or subsidies) are not eligible for direct or sub-contracted funding; involvement in a project can only be as an expert consultant under contract to the successful applicant and may not include project management.
- Funding requests for research should demonstrate how it will assist the local or broader community and how the results or data will be shared more widely to maximise the funding investment. All relevant current research should be formally acknowledged.
- Using animals for scientific purposes is covered by a licence issued under the provisions of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, which is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. It is not essential to provide a copy of the licence on application but a copy may be required as a condition of funding.

Further information is available at https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/using-animals-scientific-purposes

- Before applying for a scientific use licence, applicants are required to obtain an agreement from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) for ethical oversight. In February 2022, DPIRD established a Wildlife Animal Ethics Committee (WAEC), which allows institutions and environmental scientists to operate in accordance with the conditions of their Scientific Use Licence. Further information is available at https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animal-welfare/wildlife-animal-ethics-committee-waec
- Approval from an AEC in accordance with the Scientific Use Code is not essential on application but a copy may be required as a condition of funding.
- If the project involves native animals, licences will also be required from DBCA. Further information is available at https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/licences-and-permits/fauna
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to investigate what is required for your project

Resource condition assessment

The gathering and recording of data about the condition of natural resources such as flora, fauna and ecosystems, is recognised as an important foundational activity enabling sound project planning and strong project outcomes. Resource condition assessments can also be valuable to show the impact of past State NRM Program funded works and contribute to the evaluation of ongoing works.

Applications should demonstrate a clear need for the proposed assessment, and the value of the activity in enabling improved long-term management. The funding request should clearly identify how the assessment information will be collected, stored, managed, and shared.

Licences, permits and authorities are required for a range of activities. These are issued under legislation including the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, *Biodiversity and Conservation Act 2016, Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* and *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*. Other activities, including flying a drone over national parks and other conservation areas, and installing, owning or using moorings in marine parks and reserves, require permission to be obtained from the department. More information can be found at https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/licences-and-permits

Technical advice

There is an increasing amount of technical information available to volunteers and community-based groups in many different formats that may help them improve how they do their NRM work. Grant funding may be used to engage the services of experts or consultants who can help volunteers and community groups access, interpret and better understand technical information.

Training and skills development

Grant funding may be used to build the capacity of an organisation through training and skills development. Applications should describe the target audience, the training need or skills gap, how this was identified, and how the training need or skills-gap will be addressed.

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.