



Government of Western Australia
Energy Policy WA

Pilbara Energy Transition

Traditional Owner Participation Support Fund

Pilot Guidelines

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Working together for a **brighter** energy future.

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Terms and definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant	The Prescribed Body Corporate completing the application.
Grants	Pilbara Energy Transition Traditional Owner Participation Support Fund Grants
GST	Goods and Services Tax
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
Pilot	A small-scale, short-term program to inform the design of larger program or scheme.
Plan	Pilbara Energy Transition Plan
Service Provider	A consultant, or other person who provides professional advice and expertise.
TOPS Fund	Traditional Owner Participation Support Fund – a pilot program to support Traditional Owner participation in the Pilbara energy transition.
WA	Western Australia

1. Background

Energy Policy WA, a group within the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is coordinating delivery of the Pilbara Energy Transition Plan (Plan).

The key goals of the Plan are to:

- Empower Traditional Owners groups and local communities with meaningful and lasting benefit from the energy transition.
- Ensure that the regulatory and policy frameworks appropriately support and facilitate the necessary evolution of the Pilbara electricity system.
- Encourage and facilitate common-use transmission infrastructure with the view to enable development of a larger integrated network in the region.
- Support timely decarbonisation of the Pilbara to assist industry in meeting State and Federal clean energy goals.
- Facilitate ready access to Commonwealth funding to drive private investment in the Pilbara energy transition.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The Pilbara Energy Transition Traditional Owner Participation Support (TOPS) Fund is a pilot program intended to inform the design and implementation of long term, ongoing support for Aboriginal organisations and businesses to:

- identify and progress energy transition opportunities, and
- engage with renewable generation developers.

The TOPS Fund is to support the following types of activities in the Pilbara:

- assessment of opportunities as well as preferred sites for renewable generation and transmission infrastructure;
- renewable energy resource assessments and monitoring;
- renewable generation feasibility studies;
- renewable generation grid-connection studies;
- expert advice on contract negotiations with renewable generation developers; and
- training, skills and information activities related to the Plan.

The TOPS Fund will not fund:

- research and development or commercialisation activities, such as the demonstration of unproven technologies, or deployments of renewable generation and batteries;
- administration and start-up costs;
- Applicant staffing salaries and wages;
- capital expenditure (including equipment, tools, and vehicles);
- international travel; and
- administration costs greater than 10 per cent of the total grant value.

Reading and understanding these guidelines will assist you to:

- address the eligibility requirements of the TOPS Fund; and
- prepare stronger case for funding against the merit criteria.

3. Fund overview

The TOPS Fund is a pilot program designed to support PBCs to participate in the Pilbara energy transition.

The guidelines have been developed by Energy Policy WA based on the [Pilbara Roundtable](#) consultations undertaken for the Australian Government's First Nations Clean Energy Strategy.

Energy Policy WA will use the information from the pilot to design long term, ongoing support(s) in collaboration with Aboriginal corporations and businesses.

3.1 Funding amounts and availability

The TOPS Fund will support approved Applicants with a grant of up to \$100,000 (GST exclusive).

While the TOPS Fund is expected to remain open to 30 June 2025, Energy Policy WA may close the Fund earlier if available funding is fully committed.

Applications can be submitted at any time and will be assessed on a rolling basis. The TOPS Fund does not have competitive funding rounds.

3.2 Knowledge sharing

The TOPS Fund is intended to support broader Aboriginal participation in the Pilbara energy transition through sharing information. Summary information of successful applications will be made available on the Energy Policy WA website, in line with the Western Australian Grant Administration Guidelines.

Noting Merit criteria 4, Applicants are encouraged to describe what other information they would consider making publicly available.

Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of the Applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights.

4. Criteria

TOPS Fund applications will be considered for eligibility and assessed based on the outlined merit criteria. Applications must meet all eligibility criteria to proceed to merit assessment.

Applicants are advised to carefully consider the eligibility and merit criteria before developing an application.

4.1 Eligibility criteria

All applicants for the TOPS Fund must meet the following eligibility criteria.

E1 Applicants must be one of the following Prescribed Body Corporates under the *Native Title Act 1993* and/or incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act) 2006*:

- Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation;
- Budina Aboriginal Corporation;
- Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation;
- Gobawarra Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation;
- Jamukurnu Yapalikumu Aboriginal Corporation;
- Jidi Jidi Aboriginal Corporation;
- Jurruru Aboriginal Corporation;
- Kariyarra Aboriginal Corporation;
- Kariyarra Pirnthurrana Native Title Group
- Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation;
- Kulyamba Aboriginal Corporation;
- Kulyakartu Aboriginal Corporation;
- Marputu Aboriginal Corporation;
- Mungarlu Ngurrarankatja Rirraunkaja Aboriginal Corporation;
- Ngarlawangga Aboriginal Corporation;
- Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation;
- Nyamal Aboriginal Corporation ;
- Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation;
- Nyangumarta Karajarri Aboriginal Corporation;
- Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation;
- Palyku-Jartayi Aboriginal Corporation;
- Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation;
- The Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura Aboriginal Corporation;
- Wajarri Yamaji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
- Wanparta Aboriginal Corporation;
- Wintawari Guruma Aboriginal Corporation;
- Wirrawandi Aboriginal Corporation;
- Woodgoomungooh Aboriginal Corporation;
- Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation;
- Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation;
- Yinggarda Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation.

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- E2** Applicants must have a current Australian Business Number, be registered for GST and have an account with an Australian financial institution.
- E3** Applicants must have rectified, or be in the process of rectifying, any issues of previous non-compliance with existing Western Australian Government funding agreements.

4.2 Ineligible parties

Applications from the following will not proceed to the merit criteria assessment:

- Applicants who are not included in the previous E1 list; and
- Applicants that are insolvent or have declared bankruptcy.

4.3 Merit criteria

The following table details the merit criteria against which eligible applications will be assessed.

Applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be assessed by the evaluation panel against these criteria.

For an application to be recommended for a grant, it must be assessed as high merit against each merit criteria.

The merit criteria are not ranked, for example criterion four is as important as criterion one.

Merit criteria	Assessment considerations
M1. The application clearly demonstrates how it will support the Applicant to participate in the Pilbara energy transformation.	M1.1 Outputs of the proposed activity are clearly defined.
	M1.2 The proposed activity aligns with the goals of the Plan (see Background).
	M1.3 Application clearly demonstrates how the proposed activity supports the Applicant to identify and progress energy transition opportunities and/or engage with clean energy developers.
M2. The Applicant can complete the proposed activity successfully.	M2.1 The application clearly explains who will make decisions regarding the proposed activity and Grant spending (governance structure).
	M2.2 The Applicant or their chosen Service Provider have included a business case or detailed project plan with information on timelines, milestones, an itemised budget and how risks will be avoided or managed.
	M2.3 The people who will carry out the proposed activity have the necessary skills and expertise, including detailed information on the Service Provider to be engaged by the Applicant (if applicable).
M3. The proposed activity demonstrates value for money	M3.1 The application clearly outlines the economic, environmental or social benefits that will be achieved by the proposed activity.
	M3.2 The benefits align to the goals of the Plan and other government priorities.
	M3.3 The funding requested is reasonable when considering the benefits described.
M4. The proposed activity will support others to participate in the Pilbara energy transformation.	M4.1 Application demonstrates how the support broader Aboriginal participation in the Pilbara energy transition, including through the sharing of information.
	M4.2 Application clearly specifies what information is to be published, shared with WA Government on a confidential basis and is only for the Applicant.

4.4 Application support

Applications should be concise and supporting information may be attached to the application form where relevant.

Applicants may be contacted for further information about an application to support its assessment.

Applicants seeking further information about the TOPS Fund application process, or who would like assistance with their application can contact Energy Policy WA via email at: EPWA-info@dmirs.wa.gov.au

or by phoning Energy Policy WA and asking to speak with a member of the Pilbara Energy Transition team.

Energy Policy WA aims to respond to all written enquiries within three business days.

Please note that Energy Policy WA cannot provide any guidance as to the potential success of an Application.

5. Grant management

5.1 Applications

All applications are to be submitted online using the grant application form.

<https://waresources.smartygrants.com.au/PilbaraFund>

An email confirmation will be provided. If a confirmation email is not received, please contact Energy Policy WA via phone to confirm that your application has been received.

All organisations that apply for funding will be notified via email of the outcome of their application. Feedback can be provided to unsuccessful applicants on request.

Successful applications may become part of the grant agreement. Grant conditions and management protocols will apply to successful applications.

5.2 Application assessment process

Energy Policy WA will appoint an independent, three-member evaluation panel to consider TOPS Fund applications with reference to these Guidelines.

That evaluation panel will make a recommendation to the Coordinator of Energy with secretariat support from Energy Policy WA.

The Coordinator of Energy or the Minister for Energy will make the final determination. Decisions of the Coordinator of Energy and the Minister for Energy are final. Feedback on unsuccessful applications can be provided on request.

Where an application is approved, the Grant Agreement will be formed utilising these Guidelines and the [Community Services Template – Grant Agreements](#) in line with the [Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy](#).

The Grant Agreement will specify the reporting and Knowledge Sharing requirements, as well as the milestone payment schedule.

5.3 Grants management

Energy Policy WA will publish successful applications' summary information and, after completion, the associated public knowledge sharing report on its website.

The Grant Agreement requires all publications relating to the funded activities to carry the following disclaimer:

"This project was funded by the Government of Western Australia (Energy Policy WA) as part of its grants process for the support of support Aboriginal organisations and communities to participate in the Pilbara energy transition.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Western Australia or Energy Policy WA."

Confidential information or information impacting privacy will not be published.

EPWA reserves the right to:

- consult with relevant stakeholders;
- offer funding for only some of the activities for Applications with multiple activities; and
- have a third-party assist with the administration of the TOPS Fund.

Constructive feedback on the TOPS Fund is welcomed. Applicants and potential applicants can submit feedback to Energy Policy WA via email at:

EPWA-info@dmirs.wa.gov.au

All Grant Agreement information is subject to Freedom of Information provisions.

Please ensure any commercial in-confidence information is clearly labelled.

5.4 Tax information

Funding provided to recipients is regarded as payment for a supply. GST-registered grant recipients will therefore be liable for GST in connection with the grant.

The grant will be increased by the amount of GST payable. Recipients must provide a tax invoice for the GST inclusive value of the grant.

Applicants are encouraged to seek tax advice on the potential implications of obtaining funding.

6. Disclaimer

No contractual or other legal relations shall exist between any applicant for funding on the one hand and the State of Western Australia (including any agent, agency, instrumentality or emanation of that State) on the other hand unless and until a formal legally binding Grant Agreement is entered into by and between them.

Neither this document nor anything else shall be creative of or give rise to legal or equitable rights or obligations; such rights or obligations shall only come into being if and when a formal legally binding Grant Agreement, referred to in the previous sentence, comes into existence.

7. Contact details

Enquiries and feedback on the Pilot Guidelines and the Pilbara Renewable Generation Hubs Traditional Owner Participation Support Fund can be directed to:

Pilbara Energy Transition Team

Telephone: 08 6551 4600

Email: EPWA-Info@dmirs.wa.gov.au



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