

Grant Program Guidelines

2024-25 Environmental Recovery Package: Environmental Cleanup and Local Conservation Program

North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January 2025 – 28 February 2025



Queensland
Government

Prepared by: the Grants Administration Unit,
Department of the Environment, Tourism
Science and Innovation.

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The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

Cover artwork by Navada Currie, Mununjali and Kabi Kabi woman at Gilimbaa.

August 2025

Disclaimer

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Table of contents

Overview.....	4
Guidelines	5
Program objective.....	5
Application eligibility	5
Ineligible applicants.....	5
Eligible locations	6
Available funding	7
Applications and GST.....	7
Project timeframes	7
Eligible projects and activities	7
Ineligible projects and activities	8
Eligible costs	8
Overhead costs.....	9
Ineligible expenses	10
Purchase of new assets.....	10
Application requirements	11
Application process.....	12
Application assessment	12
Assessment criteria.....	12
Application outcome.....	14
Funding availability.....	14
Tips for a successful project	14
Grants terms and conditions.....	15
Announcement of successful applicants	17
Privacy.....	18
Contact information	19
Appendix 1—Example of budget breakdown.....	20
Appendix 2 – Example of project map – identifying project site	20

Overview

The '2024-25 Environmental Recovery Package: Environmental Cleanup and Local Conservation Program' is providing funding to support community environmental restoration activities in those regions which were heavily impacted by the ***North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January 2025 – 28 February 2025*** event (the event).

This program aims to provide grants of up to \$100,000 (GST excl) to eligible recipients for on-ground projects which engage impacted communities to clean up debris and support the restoration of natural landscapes and key habitats.

A total of \$2 million (GST excl) is available.

Activities must be undertaken within eligible local government areas which are listed in these guidelines below.

Further details are provided in these guidelines, including information about eligibility and assessment criteria, project timeframes and reporting requirements, and advice about how to apply and what makes a good application.

Applications close at 4pm 24 September 2025.

The Environmental Recovery Program is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

For more information, please email grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au or contact the grants program office on (07) 3330 6360.

Guidelines

Applicants must read these guidelines in full before applying for funding and are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the SmartyGrants online application system, and to read other supporting documentation before starting the process.

Program objective

This grant program provides funding to enable eligible recipients to engage impacted communities to undertake on-ground activities within local government areas affected by the **North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January 2025 – 28 February 2025** event (the event) which aim to support community environmental restoration:

- remove and dispose of organic and inorganic debris resulting from the event from natural assets including nature reserves, private protected areas, marine areas including coastlines, beaches and mangroves, riparian areas and in waterways, creeks, rivers and streams
- restore natural landscapes and key habitats impacted by the event.

Application eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- properly established incorporated associations (incorporated under the **Associations Incorporation Act 1981**)
- Australian charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
- properly established not-for-profit organisations including those registered under the **Corporations Act 2001** or the Co-operatives National Law Act (Queensland) (must include evidence attached of constitution for not-for-profit organisations)
- Indigenous corporations incorporated under the **Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006** (Cwlth)
- River Improvement Trusts
- Private Protected Area landholders
- local governments established under the **Local Government Act 2009** impacted by the eligible disaster event
- Natural Resource Management organisations.

Ineligible applicants

The following applicants are ineligible to apply for funding:

- individuals, with the exception of Private Protected Area landholders
- statutory bodies and authorities (except for those identified as eligible above)

- Australian Government agencies
- Queensland Government agencies
- political parties or lobbyists
- tertiary education institutions
- schools (government and non-government)
- an organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au).

Eligible locations

Project activities must be based in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Cloncurry Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Townsville City Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Winton Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

Available funding

Applicants may seek funding for grants of up to \$100,000 (GST excl).

Funding is provided as a GST exclusive amount.

Applicants may submit multiple grant applications and receive more than one grant. However, consideration may be given to the number of grants approved for any one applicant.

Applicants may seek funding for both debris cleanup activities and activities that restore natural landscapes and key habitats impacted by the event in the one application, however, only \$100,000 (GST excl) will be available per application.

Applications and GST

Applicants registered for GST will not be provided with funding to account for costs directly associated with GST and are required to provide the GST exclusive amount in their budget. Recipients registered for GST can claim the GST component for any expenditure that they incur back from the ATO.

Where an applicant is not registered for GST, the budget may include the GST as a cost component of the grant.

For advice on GST, please seek assistance from the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

For more information, please email grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au or contact the grants program office on (07) 3330 6360.

Project timeframes

Project activities must be completed by 31 March 2027 with all reporting and financial acquittals due by 30 April 2027. Please refer to the Grants terms and conditions section of this document for more information about grant agreements.

Eligible projects and activities

The following activities are eligible:

- removal and disposal of event-related organic and inorganic debris from natural assets including, but not limited to, nature reserves, private protected areas (nature refuges and special wildlife reserves), marine areas including coastlines, beaches and mangroves, riparian areas and in waterways, creeks, rivers and streams
- restoration of natural landscapes and key habitats impacted by the event through activities such as weeding and revegetation
- aerial surveys, where required to target cleanup of event related debris impacting on the environment

- boat based cleanup activities to remove event related debris from event impacted coastal, island and inland waterways.

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to Traditional Owners, local governments and Natural Resource Management groups to ensure that projects complement other projects and activities being undertaken in the area.

Applicants may also work with other organisations, such as schools, to deliver project activities. In such instances, the applicant would take full legal and financial responsibility for the project.

Ineligible projects and activities

Examples of ineligible projects and activities include but are not limited to:

- projects and activities undertaken outside of the eligible locations
- pre-planning activities, including feasibility studies
- temporary works, other than those required to enable completion of the approved project/activity
- official opening expenses (including permanent signage)
- attendance at conferences and workshops
- duplication of existing initiatives.

The above list identifies the most common examples of ineligible activities and is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive. If there is any doubt about ineligible projects/activities, please contact the department.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs must be directly associated with delivering eligible activities above, delivered within the eligible timeframe and include:

- extraordinary staffing and/or salaries for staff (and their on-costs such as superannuation, annual leave and other entitlements) to undertake eligible activities
- costs associated with staff travel expenses, allowances, and accommodation to undertake eligible activities
- costs associated with removal and disposal of event-related debris including waste levy expenses related to the disposal of debris collected
- fees for engaging specialist contractors to deliver eligible activities (e.g. cleanup of toxic or dangerous materials contractor)
- purchase of consumables used in undertaking the eligible activities (e.g., personal protective equipment, fuel)
- hire of plant, equipment and vehicle/boat and associated operating consumables (fuel, oil, maintenance, etc.) consumed while undertaking eligible activities
- purchase of materials and low-cost items required to complete eligible activities where hiring is not a feasible option (e.g. wheelbarrows, hardware tools, and minor equipment)

- hire costs to undertake an eligible aerial survey activity.

Eligible costs must be linked to an eligible activity and must be supported by detailed evidence of the actual expenditure and dates delivered when claiming payments and acquitting the grant and exclude GST.

Eligible costs include project related costs incurred by the successful applicants after 25 March 2025. These can include costs incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement. Such costs will need to be identified in the application and must be acquitted at conclusion of the project.

Where non-government organisations and not-for-profit organisations are approved for grant funding, they may be eligible to claim overhead costs supported by evidence. See below for further detail.

Overhead costs

Non-government organisations (NGO) and not-for-profit (NFP) organisations recipients may claim overhead costs when delivering the project. The following criteria must be met by an NGO and NFP to enable eligibility of overhead costs:

- the entity must be a registered NFP organisation
- the entity must have an employee count of between 1 -199 employees (in line with the Australia Bureau of Statistics definition of small and medium sized business)
- the entity is a recipient under this grant program
- the overhead costs incurred are apportioned in accordance with the percentage of grant value
- overhead costs do not exceed 20 per cent of the eligible component of the awarded contract value
- evidence of the calculation and inclusion of eligible items must be provided.
- overhead costs include but are not limited to:
 - leasing of office space
 - corporate service costs
 - governance arrangement costs
 - IT costs.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- non-specific or un-supported indirect and overhead costs (except NGO/NFP overhead costs outlined above)
- legal expenses
- land and/or building acquisition costs
- profit margins of applicant including (but not limited to) the applicant's supply or use of plant, labour, or materials
- purchase of core business capital equipment such as motor vehicles, phones, and office equipment or furnishings
- ongoing costs related to a grant recipient's administration, operation, maintenance or engineering of the approved project
- remuneration of employees for work not directly related to the approved project
- vehicle leasing, unless directly required for service delivery (and only to that extent)
- costs of preparing the application
- in-kind contributions
- costs of activities that are the normal or legal responsibility of the landholder (e.g. maintenance of buildings)
- costs of activities that are deemed to be landscaping for private or scenic amenity
- costs of activities that are commercial in nature
- costs that would have been incurred should the event not have occurred or budgeted by the applicant (e.g., existing vehicle leases, insurances, rental costs and wages)
- costs that are reimbursable under other funding sources (e.g., business continuity and insurance, alternative DRFA relief measures, and costs recouped through sale of salvaged assets)
- costs of works/activities completed prior to 25 March 2025.

The above list identifies the most common examples of ineligible costs and is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive. If there is any doubt about ineligible projects/activities, please contact the department.

Purchase of new assets

The purchase of new assets to undertake eligible activities is generally ineligible. However, the purchase of assets may be considered eligible where:

- equipment is unable to be hired and must be purchased to meet operational requirements, or
- it is less expensive to purchase the asset than to hire it.

Only the purchase price less the residual/depreciated value of the asset will be considered an eligible expense.

Applicants seeking to purchase an asset as opposed to hire an item must provide the following information with their applications for assessment purposes:

- the operational imperative to purchase the asset versus hiring it including priority and timeframe necessitating the purchase
- evidence of inability to hire from suitable suppliers, i.e., letter or email with company letterhead or logo
- cost benefit rationale including a comparison of purchase cost against actual hire costs over a required timeframe, and the cost to transport hire equipment plus hire costs versus local purchase cost
- details of ongoing maintenance, storage and insurance requirements
- details of safe use/health and safety risk mitigation of asset
- estimated residual value of the purchased asset, including warranty period extending beyond the eligible activities.

The purchase of assets is to be agreed by the National Emergency Management Agency prior to their purchase.

If the purchase of an asset is approved, the applicant must provide the following information with final report and acquittal:

- proof of purchase, and
- the purchase price less the residual/depreciated value at the end of the operational use may be considered eligible.

Definition of an asset

For the purposes of this round of funding, an asset is defined as something that has a usable life beyond the project and would be added to and managed in the applicant's asset register.

Assets **do not** include eligible items consumed during the approved project activities.

Application requirements

All applications must include the following:

- a detailed budget outlining a breakdown of item costs for the funding sought and the details of your contribution (in-kind or financial). Refer to Appendix 1 in this document for an example project budget
- two detailed quotes for the purchase of materials or use of contractors for costs exceeding \$10,000
- validation of all in-kind costings (for example, market evidence of materials, equipment and labour costs)
- evidence of, or commitment to obtain, public liability insurance coverage of at least \$20 million (in total and per incident) that is current and remains current for the duration of the project
- a project timeframe where activities are to be completed by 31 March 2027

- a project area map clearly defining the location and extent of the project. Maps can be hand drawn or created using an online program such as Queensland Globe. Maps should reference relevant information such as fish habitat areas, dugong protection zones. Refer to Appendix 2 for an example project map.

Application process

Applicants are required to submit the application and all supporting documentation in full by the submission deadline. All applications must be submitted using [SmartyGrants](#), the department's online grants administration program.

New users will need to set up a free online SmartyGrants account. If you already have a SmartyGrants account, you can login using your existing details. The [Help Guide for Applicants](#) explains the steps you need to take to complete and submit your form. If you experience technical difficulties creating an account or completing an online form, contact SmartyGrants on (03) 9320 6888.

By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to abide by all terms and conditions as specified in these guidelines.

Application assessment

Applications will initially be assessed by a panel consisting of Queensland Government employees and external representatives. As per the requirements under the Commonwealth and Queensland Government Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, an expert panel comprised of Queensland Government employees will review and endorse the funding recommendations.

Endorsed funding recommendations will be provided to the Director-General, Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, who is the decision-maker for all funding recommendations.

Assessment criteria

All applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Meets the program objective (as per page 5 of these guidelines)

Taking into consideration the extent the proposed project:

- will undertake on-ground activities to remove and dispose of event-related organic and inorganic debris resulting from the **North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January 2025 – 28 February 2025** event from natural assets including nature reserves, private protected areas (nature refuges and special wildlife reserves), marine areas including coastlines, beaches and mangroves, riparian areas and in waterways, creeks, rivers and streams

- will undertake activities which seek to restore natural landscapes and key habitats impacted by the ***North and Far North Tropical Low, 29 January 2025 – 28 February 2025*** event.

2. Demonstrates environmental benefit

Taking into consideration the extent the application clearly details the project's environmental benefit including:

- the current environmental problem that the application seeks to address
- why the project is important to the local environment
- potential environmental outcomes directly resulting from project activities
- any potential environmental risks posed by the project and how these risks will be mitigated.

3. Demonstrates a clear project management approach

Taking into consideration the extent the proposed application:

- clearly explains the proposed project activities and provides a detailed and reasonable timeframe to complete the activities by 31 March 2027
- demonstrates the applicant has capability and capacity for delivering the project and administering the grant funding
- has adequately detailed the risks associated with the project and identified actions to mitigate the risks
- details what stakeholder consultation has been undertaken or is to be undertaken.

4. Represents value for money

Taking into consideration:

- the scale of the proposed project and activities versus the funding sought
- cost of the project versus the time and resources requested
- whether there is a contribution of additional financial or in-kind support
- whether the funding sought, and individual line items identified in the budget, are necessary for successful completion of the project
- whether quotes have been provided for contractor costs and any other expenditure items over \$10,000 (GST excl)
- whether the applicant is a local supplier.

Where relevant, an applicant's past performance under other grant programs managed by the department—including if there are any outstanding reports or acquittals—will be taken into consideration.

The assessment criteria are not weighted.

Application outcome

All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their submission in writing.

Details, including the name of the successful applicants, funding allocated, and project location and description, will be published on the Queensland Government website and may be announced through media including social media.

Successful applicants will be contacted by the grants coordinator regarding funding arrangements, grant agreements and other documentation/approvals that may be required.

Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback on their application by emailing grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au.

Applicants may lodge an appeal with the department for any decisions made relating to their grant application by emailing grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au.

Funding availability

DETSI will require successful applicants to enter into a grant agreement. Under this agreement successful applicants will receive funding in milestone payments.

The first payment of up to 80 percent of the approved grant will be paid upon signing of the funding agreement.

Additional payments will be made on the recipient's completion of milestones as identified in the grant agreement.

A final payment of the remaining grant will be paid upon successful acquittal of the entire grant.

Tips for a successful project

When planning a project, applicants should ensure:

- these guidelines have been read, and all Application requirements and Grant terms and conditions can be met
- project outcomes are clear and well-defined
- the project activities directly or indirectly assist the recovery along the coastlines and within environmentally sensitive areas inland
- the project can be realistically completed prior to 31 March 2027.

Please contact the department if you require clarification or have any questions about the application process, or the suitability of your proposed project. Refer to the Contact information section of these guidelines for details.

Grants terms and conditions

Grant agreements

- Successful applicants must enter into (sign) a grant agreement with the department which outlines the terms and conditions for the funding received.
- The grant agreement is prepared by the department using information provided in the application form and in consultation with the approved recipient.
- The grant agreement will specify the financial and operational requirements of the grant.
- All successful applicants must comply with all terms and conditions in the grant agreement.
- Funding will not be available until both parties have signed the grant agreement, along with the provision of any additional required documentation to the department.
- A 'Project Plan' and a 'Monitoring and Assessment Plan' must be developed for each approved project and will be included as an annexure to the grant agreement.

Successful applicant process

- The applicant must return the signed grant agreement within four weeks of receiving the draft grant agreement, or the offer may be withdrawn.
- Successful applicants will be required to provide the following documentation prior to release of any grant funding:
 - Evidence of public liability insurance coverage of at least \$20 million (in total and per event) that is current and remains current for the project duration.
 - Certificate of Currency for Work Cover insurance (as required by law).
 - A copy of a recent bank statement to confirm the BSB and account details of the recipient. This is the account into which the grant funding will be paid.
 - Copies of appropriate approvals and permits needed for the funded activities.
- Successful applicants must complete a conflict of interest declaration prior to the release of any funding.
 - A conflict of interest exists where a successful applicant has, or could be perceived to have, an interest (whether personal, financial or otherwise) which conflicts or which may reasonably be perceived as conflicting with, the recipient's ability to meet the requirements and obligations of the project fairly, objectively and independently.
- Changes to the agreed project will require the successful applicant to apply for a variation in writing to the department. This includes, but is not limited to changes in:
 - budget and expenditure;
 - changes in project activities including location; and/or
 - milestone descriptions and delivery dates.
- It is at the absolute discretion of the delegated officer to provide approval.
- No variation is to be implemented without the applicant first receiving a notice of approval from the department.

- In the event of cancellation of a funded activity, the department must be notified in writing and all unspent funds returned to the department immediately.
- Funds granted must be spent for the purposes stated in the application form and grant agreement.
- Acceptance of a grant payment indicates the recipient's acceptance of all funding terms and conditions in this guideline and grant agreement.
- Funding may be provided in milestone payments with a final payment withheld until the project has been completed and the department has accepted acquittal documentation.
- All project activities must be completed prior to 31 March 2027.

Reporting requirements

- All grant recipients must complete monthly progress reporting. This is required at the end of every month for the duration of the project. This report will be provided by the department to recipients through SmartyGrants and will include:
 - actual expenditure reported against the grant funding
 - percentage of project completed
 - project milestones achieved to date
 - any forecasted variances in activities, cost or time
 - before (where possible) and after photos
 - report to be signed off by the authorised accountable officer.
- All grant recipients must complete and submit a final report and acquittal within 30 calendar days after the completion date of the project. This reporting form will be provided by the department to recipients through SmartyGrants during the course of the project.
- Income and expenditure statement and tax invoices or other evidence of expenditure must be provided with the completion report as evidence of all grant funding expenditure.
- The applicant must allow departmental officers to conduct site inspections to inspect project progress if requested.
- The applicant must allow departmental officers to use information/images relating to the project for promotional or other purposes. Applicants will be consulted before images are used for promotional materials.

Other requirements

All recipients, where relevant, must:

- Comply with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the **Fisheries Act 1994**.
- Meet the eligibility requirements relating to the National Redress Scheme (www.nationalredress.gov.au) set out under these guidelines, at all times during the term of the grant agreement.
- Inform the local Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol Office within the Department of Primary Industries prior to undertaking the cleanup. Information to be provided includes when the cleanup will occur, how long it will take and where it will take place. Contact details can be found here: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/compliance/queensland-boating-fisheries-patrol/contact>.

- Ensure all volunteers are identified (lanyard with grant number).
- Be mindful of marine plants and protect fish habitats – marine plants in any condition should not be removed or damaged. Any marine plants which need to be moved to gain access to large debris should be returned after the debris has been removed. Further information on fish habitat management can be found here: [Fish habitat management | Department of Primary Industries, Queensland](#).
- Not interfere with fishing equipment, including crab pots, which are below the highwater mark regardless of whether they are marked or unmarked.
- Abandoned crabbing apparatus above high water mark can be collected, as can crabbing apparatus below the high water mark if it can be seen as not being capable of retaining crabs (missing side(s), large hole etc) without the need for lifting the apparatus.
- Align with the principles outlined in the 'Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan'.

Public acknowledgement of joint Australian Government and State Government assistance

All recipients must acknowledge Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding contribution in public materials, which includes but is not limited to:

- media releases, social media, posters, advertising and signage associated with the approved project;
- acknowledgement or statements in project publications and materials; and
- events that use or include reference to the approved project.

To comply with this requirement, all public advice and media releases should refer to the relevant funding source, as being ***“jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements”***.

Prior agreement must be reached with the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority which will oversee approval of media events and associated materials, in consultation with the National Emergency Management Agency.

All publications must also include both the State and Australian Government logos and the following disclaimer: 'Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and Queensland Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.'

For assistance, contact the grants coordinator by phone (07) 3330 6360 or email grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au

Announcement of successful applicants

- Successful recipients are to treat their funding as confidential prior to the announcement by the Australian and Queensland Governments of the successful applicants. This means no media or public announcements of the project until the Australian and Queensland Governments have announced them.

- Following the announcement, successful applicants will be listed on the Queensland Government website.
- All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their submission in writing.

Privacy

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation is collecting personal information to assist the grant program assessment panel review funding applications and to prepare a grant agreement, should your application be successful.

All personal information provided in the application form, including all attachments, will be provided to the following parties for assessing the application:

- Authorised officers from DETSI and other Queensland Government agencies
- Approved external assessment panel members (e.g., industry experts).

Where necessary, information contained in your application, including ongoing project reporting and acquittal documentation for successful projects, will be provided to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency.

Information contained in your application, including ongoing project reporting and acquittal documentation for successful projects, may also be provided to the Minister for the Environment and Tourism and the Minister for Science and Innovation and the minister's members of staff.

If your application is successful, the following information will be published on the Queensland Environment and Australian Government National Emergency Management Agency websites, and potentially on Queensland Environment and National Emergency Management Agency social media channels:

- total amount of funding allocated
- project name, suburb location and description
- project recipient, except in the case of private protected area landholders, where the name of the nature refuge or the special wildlife reserve will be published instead of the recipient's name.

The department will not otherwise use or disclose your personal information unless you provide your consent, or if the use or disclosure is authorised or required by law.

The grant application and associated documentation is subject to the **Right to Information Act 2009**. If you wish to access your personal information that is in the control of the department, please contact the department's Right to Information Services unit by email rtiservices@detsi.qld.gov.au.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the privacy of your personal information, please contact the department's Privacy Services unit by email privacy@detsi.qld.gov.au.

Contact information

If you have any questions relating to grants or these guidelines, please contact the grants coordinator by phone (07) 3330 6360 or email grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au.

The grants coordinator will be able to provide you with the best advice based on the information provided. All decisions relating to a grant application will be made based on the information contained in that application.

Appendix 1—Example of budget breakdown

Activity	Grant funding requested (GST excl)	In-kind contributions (GST excl)	Total project cost (GST excl)
PPE – safety equipment	\$100	\$50	\$150
Contractor – cleanup project site	\$45,000	\$5,000	\$50,000
Volunteer labour		\$2,000	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$45,100	\$7,050	\$52,150

Appendix 2 – Example of project map – identifying project site

