2023-24 Environmental Recovery Package: Local Conservation and Clean-up

Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding 13 – 28 December 2023

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Overview

2023-24 Environmental Recovery Package: Local Conservation and Clean-up program is providing funding to support locally-based environmental conservation projects to restore and rehabilitate those natural environments that were heavily impacted by Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding, 13 – 28 December 2023.

This program aims to enable on-ground projects that support the clean-up of debris resulting from the cyclone from public spaces, nature reserves, marine areas (including beaches and mangroves) and waterways, creeks, rivers and streams. The program will also fund projects that aim to rehabilitate and conserve natural environments and key wildlife habitats.

A total of $1.5 million (GST excl) is available.

These guidelines provide further details, 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 13 March 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@des.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 read other supporting documentation before starting the process.

Program objective

This grant program provides funding to enable eligible community groups to undertake on-ground activities which aim to:

- remove and dispose of severe event debris from natural assets and community, cultural and recreational assets
- undertake environmental conservation activities, such as revegetation, to rehabilitate cyclone-affected landscapes, restore the habitat of impacted native flora and fauna and improve the natural environment's resilience to future disaster events.

Application eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Eligible Queensland Local Government Authorities (LGAs)
- Local Natural Resource Management bodies
- Local Land and Sea Rangers
- Indigenous corporations incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cwlth)
- Not-for-profit organisations registered under the *Corporations Act 2001*
- Research/tertiary education institution administered by the Commonwealth or State.

Ineligible applicants

The following applicants are ineligible to apply for funding:

- Individuals
- Statutory bodies and authorities (except for those identified as eligible above)
- Australian Government agencies
- Queensland Government agencies
- Political parties or lobbyists
- Schools.

Eligible locations

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

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional 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. Organisations are able to submit multiple applications. However, consideration may be given to the number of grants approved for any one organisation.

Applications and GST

Applicants registered for GST will not be provided funding to account for costs directly associated with GST and must provide the GST exclusive amount in their budget.

Recipients registered for GST can claim the GST component for any expenditure 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.

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

Project timeframes

Project activities must be completed by 30 April 2026, and all reporting and financial acquittals due by 30 May 2026. Please refer to the "Grants terms and conditions" section of this document for more information about grant agreements.

Eligible projects and activities

Eligible activities:
- Removal and disposal of severe event debris from:
  - natural assets including, but not limited to, nature reserves, marine areas including beaches and mangroves, riparian areas and waterways, creeks, rivers and streams
  - community, cultural and recreational assets and facilities including boardwalks, walkways, walking tracks, playgrounds, beach access points, picnic areas, car park facilities, and associated amenities and infrastructure.
- Environmental conservation activities undertaken on natural landscapes affected by the severe event. Activities may include, but is not limited to, those that seek to rehabilitate local reserves, bushland and parks, restore native species habitat, and/or activities that improve the resilience of the environment to future disaster events.

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with relevant Traditional Custodians and other stakeholders to ensure that projects complement activities undertaken by the relevant Local Government or Natural Resource Management groups.

Revegetation activities should focus on planting trees that are endemic to the project area.

Applicants can seek funding for a project that aims to cleanup flood debris and undertake environmental conservation activities. Funding for such projects will not exceed the maximum amount available per grant as specified above.

Ineligible projects and activities

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

- projects primarily or entirely focused on weed and pest control
- works on private or public roads
- repairing private farm infrastructure, including dams
- grazing land soil conservation
- 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 you have any doubts about ineligible projects/activities, please contact the department.

Weed and pest control projects

Projects primarily or entirely focused on pest and weed control are ineligible to receive funding under this round.

However, environmental conservation projects that involve weed control may be eligible for funding. In such instances, weeding should not be the primary focus of the project but should only be included as a requirement to ensure the intended outcomes of the project are achieved.

Eligible expenses

Activities funded may include but are not limited to:

- labour costs of staff (and their on-costs such as superannuation, annual leave and other entitlements) to undertake eligible on-ground activities
- costs associated with staff travel expenses, allowances, and accommodation to undertake eligible activities
- provision of training activities as required to deliver the project
- employment costs for third-party suppliers where required to support delivery, including temporary employees, agency staff, contractors and/or consultants associated with program delivery (such as qualified specialists and contractor costs to undertake specialist services for the activities), including travel expenses, allowances, accommodation and associated on-costs such as superannuation entitlements and workers compensation
- 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 (e.g. fuel, oil, maintenance, etc.) consumed while undertaking eligible activities
- purchase of materials and low-cost items required to complete eligible activities where it is unviable to hire the items (e.g. hardware tools and minor equipment)
- costs of eligible works completed post the eligible event but before program funding is released would be deemed eligible for reimbursement
- overhead costs for Non-Government and not-for-profit organisations that meet the following criteria:
    - the entity must be a registered not-for-profit organisation
    - the entity must have an employee count of 1-199 employees (in line with the Australia Bureau of Statistics definition of small and medium-sized business)
    - the entity is engaged to deliver an exceptional circumstances package (Category C and D of the DRFA only)
    - the overhead costs incurred are apportioned in accordance with the percentage of DRFA revenue
    - overhead costs do not exceed 20% of the awarded contract value
    - overhead costs include but are not limited to:
        - leasing of office space
        - corporate service costs
        - governance arrangement costs
        - IT costs.

Costs incurred prior to program funding

Costs of eligible activities and eligible expenses that occurred and/or were completed after the eligible event (Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding, 13 – 28 December 2023), but before program funding was released, may be deemed eligible for reimbursement.

Information in relation to these activities and expenses will need to be included in the application.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- non-specific or un-supported indirect and overhead costs (excluding NGO/NFP eligible costs outlined above)
- legal expenses
- land and/or building acquisition costs
- profit margins of the 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) except for activities that involve pest/plant control
- costs of activities that are deemed to be landscaping for private or scenic amenity
- costs of activities that are commercial in nature
- costs that are reimbursable under other funding sources (e.g., business continuity and insurance, alternative DRFA relief measures, and costs recouped through the sale of salvaged assets)
- costs of works/activities completed prior to the eligible events (*Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding, 13 – 28 December 2023*)
- costs of works/activities completed after 30 April 2026.

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

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 log in 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 of the terms and conditions as specified in these guidelines.

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 (GST excl)
- 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 30 April 2026
- a project area map clearly defining the location and extent of the project. Maps can be created using an online program such as Queensland Globe. Refer to **Appendix 2** for an example project map

- the applicant must inform the department if the land or part of the land on which the proposed project is undertaken is going to be sold or transferred during the time in which the proposed project is planned to be delivered
- details in relation to eligible activities and expenses that occurred after the event (Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding, 13 – 28 December 2023), and prior to the grant funding being released, if the applicant wishes to access grant funding for these activities and expenses
- If seeking reimbursement of commenced or completed work invoices, proof of payment (e.g. receipts or zero balance invoices) must be attached to the application along with before and after photos (or evidence that the work has occurred).

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 (e.g. temporary fencing) assist the recovery along the coastlines and within environmentally sensitive areas inland
- the project can be realistically completed prior to 30 April 2026.

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).

Assessment criteria

All applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. **Meets the program objective** (as outlined on page 5 of these guidelines)

Taking into consideration the extent the application will undertake on-ground activities that will:

- remove and dispose of severe event debris from natural assets and community, cultural and recreational assets
- undertake environmental conservation activities, such as revegetation, to rehabilitate cyclone-affected landscapes, restore the habitat of impacted native flora and fauna and improve the natural environment's resilience to future disaster events.

2. **Demonstrates a clear project management approach**

Taking into consideration the extent that the application:

- clearly details the project's objectives, why the project is important (e.g. the scale of the problem seeking to be resolved under the grant and/or the impacts on the project site's environmental values) and potential outcomes
- clearly explains the proposed project activities and a detailed and reasonable timeframe to complete the activities by 30 April 2026
- demonstrates the applicant has capability and capacity to manage and deliver the project and administer the grant funding
- has adequately detailed the risks associated with the project and identified actions to mitigate the risks
- details of stakeholder consultation undertaken or to be undertaken.

3. **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 and/or in-kind support
- whether the funding sought and individual line items identified in the budget are necessary for the 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 another grant program managed by the department—including if there are any outstanding reports or acquittals—will be taken into consideration.

Application assessment

Applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of Queensland Government employees and external representatives. The panel will make funding recommendations to the Director-General, Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, the decision-maker for all funding recommendations.

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.

The grants coordinator will contact successful applicants regarding funding arrangements, grant agreements and other documentation/approvals that may be required.

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

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

Funding availability

Successful applicants will receive funding once both parties have signed the grant agreement and the department has received all required documentation.

The department reserves the right to determine specific project payment structures on a case-by-case basis and in negotiation with the recipient. In all cases, the department will retain a percentage of funds until project acquittal.

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 successful 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
  - a Certificate of Currency for Work Cover insurance (as required by law)

- o a copy of a recent bank statement to confirm the BSB and account details of the recipient. This is the account the grant funding will be paid into
  - o Copies of appropriate approvals and permits needed for the funded activities.
- Successful applicants may need to complete a conflict of interest declaration prior to the release of any funding:
  - o 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 contact the department and apply for a variation in writing to the department:
  - o it is at the absolute discretion of the delegated officer to provide approval
  - o no variation is to be implemented without the applicant receiving a notice of approval from the department beforehand.
- In the event of cancellation of a funded activity, the department must be notified in writing, and all unspent funds must be 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:
  - o 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
  - o all project activities must be completed prior to 30 April 2026.

Reporting requirements
- Monthly progress reporting will be required under this round of grant funding. These requirements are detailed in the "Additional requirements of this funding" section of these guidelines
- All grant recipients must complete and submit a completion report within 30 calendar days after the project's completion date. This report will be provided by the department to recipients through SmartyGrants during the course of the project
- Income and expenditure statements and tax invoices or other evidence of expenditure (i.e. receipts) must be provided with the completion report as evidence of all grant funding expenditure
- All promotional material relating to the project must be acknowledged as "*jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements*":
  - o this includes promotional flyers, banners and any other promotional material
  - o the department must approve the final draft of any promotional material using the Queensland Government logo before it goes to print.
- 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.

Additional requirements of this funding

- All grant recipients must complete monthly progress reporting. This is required at the end of every month for the projects duration. The department will provide this report 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
  - report to be signed off by the authorised accountable officer.

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
- Eligible applicants must acknowledge DRFA 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
  - 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*".

Privacy

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) is collecting your personal information to assist the Cyclone Jasper Local Conservation and Clean-up grant program assessment panel in reviewing funding applications and, should your application be successful, to prepare a grant agreement.

All information, including your personal information and attachments, provided as part of the application form, will be provided to the following parties for the purpose of assessing your 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 may also be provided to the Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation and the minister's members of staff for reporting purposes.

If your application is successful, the following information will be published on the Queensland Government and Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency websites and potentially on the Queensland Environment and the National Emergency Management Agency social media channels:
- applicant organisation name
- total amount of funding allocated
- project name, suburb location and description.

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.

Applying online using SmartyGrants

DETSI has a contract service arrangement with 'Our Community', which operates SmartyGrants, a secure online grants administration solution. For further information, please read: https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/privacy.

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 emailing rtiservices@des.qld.gov.au.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your personal information, please contact the department's Privacy Services unit by email privacy@des.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@des.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	$100.00	$50.00	$150.00
Contractor – clean-up project site	$45,000.00	$5,000.00	$50,000.00
Volunteer labour		$2,000.00	$2,000.00
Total	**$45,100.00**	**$7,050.00**	**$52,150.00**

Appendix 2 – Example of project map – identifying project site