



Looking after Country Grant Program

Department of Environment and Science

2023 Guidelines



**Queensland
Government**

Prepared by: Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers Program, QPWS and Partnerships, Department of Environment and Science

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The Department of Environment and Science acknowledges Aboriginal peoples 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.

June 2023

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Introduction

The Looking after Country Grant Program (LACGP) provides funding to First Nations communities to conserve and manage environmental and cultural heritage on country. The program supports the delivery of on-ground conservation projects. It aims to build First Nations communities' capacity to deliver projects and to encourage collaborative partnerships in caring for country.

The LACGP complements the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program, which provides longer-term funding to employ Indigenous rangers. The LACGP enables organisations and communities that do not receive ranger funding to carry out land and sea management activities.

These guidelines provide information for organisations interested in applying for the 2023 round of the LACGP.

Grants are provided through a competitive application process and are awarded for applications assessed as eligible, and most strongly meeting the assessment criteria outlined in these guidelines.

Who can apply?

Organisations that operate in Queensland and meet the following requirements are eligible to apply for funding under the LACGP:

- Not-for-profit organisations incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* or *Torres Strait Islander Act 1991*
- Not-for-profit organisations with a majority membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their governance and incorporated under other legislation including the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* or *Corporations Act 2001*
- Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) community councils or Aboriginal Shire Councils that are applying on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

Applicants will need to provide evidence demonstrating that they meet one of the above criteria.

Applicants can partner with other organisations in the management of project funds, but only eligible organisations can enter into a grant agreement for LACGP funds.

The following organisations are not eligible to apply for funding through the LACGP:

- Organisations that receive funding for the employment of Indigenous rangers under the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program, or the Indigenous Ranger Program funded through the National Indigenous Australians Agency, unless they can demonstrate that the application is made on behalf of Traditional Owner groups that are not engaged in the organisation's existing ranger program
- Organisations that currently have overdue acquittals or reports in relation to any grant funding provided by the Department of Environment and Science (DES).

Eligible organisations can submit a limit of one application each funding round, other than where applications are being submitted on behalf of different Traditional Owner groups.

What projects and activities are eligible for funding?

Projects that increase the capacity of First Nations communities to achieve environmental and cultural conservation outcomes will be considered for funding.

Projects can include a wide range of activities. These can include (but are not limited to):

- cultural heritage site management (including recording, protection and training)
- habitat restoration
- fire management
- threatened species monitoring and conservation
- feral animal management (including exclusion fencing)
- erosion control
- the development of country plans or management plans to guide future on-ground conservation
- activities to support inter-generational cultural knowledge transfer.

How much can organisations apply for?

Project funding of up to \$75,000 (GST exclusive) is available.

The project expenditure can include:

- wages and on-costs
- contractor costs
- materials and equipment
- training
- project administration
- incidental expenses.

What will not be funded?

Project expenditure that will not be considered for funding includes:

- administration fees of more than 15 per cent of total project costs
- infrastructure or assets costs of more than \$15,000 or 20% of the total project value (including contributions from other sources), whichever is the greater
- infrastructure costs, where the infrastructure would require significant ongoing maintenance
- long term lease or purchase of motor vehicles
- overseas travel
- conference or seminar attendance.

What is the application process?

There are some important steps to consider when applying for a Looking after Country grant.

Step 1

Read these guidelines carefully to see if your organisation and project are eligible.

Step 2

Engage with the Traditional Owners and landholders relevant to the project location to ensure that you have their support. Talk with established partners and with other organisations that might be able to provide financial or in-kind support. Working alongside a range of people and/or organisations can often have broader benefits, and this can strengthen an application.

Step 3

If you decide to apply:

- Go to the [Looking after Country Grant Program](#) page at the Queensland Government website for a link to the stage 1 application form on the Smarty Grants platform (this will require you to create a log-in which enables you to save and submit an application).
- Read over the complete application form first to familiarise yourself with the information you will need to gather and provide. The application form will require you to identify key milestones and a budget for your proposed project, along with other supporting information.
- Make sure you have provided all necessary supporting documents and submit your stage 1 application before the closing date of **Thursday 17 August 2023**.

If you have any questions about your application, please contact a DES grants officer (phone 07 3330 5553 or email landandsea@des.qld.gov.au). They will be happy to talk about your project, discuss whether it is eligible for funding, and answer any other questions you may have.

Step 4

A limited number of stage 1 applications will be short-listed by an assessment panel. If your application is shortlisted, you will be invited to complete a full stage 2 application. This will again be assessed by a panel, using the assessment criteria listed below.

All staff involved in the process will be required to operate under the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct. The Director-General of the Department of Environment and Science (DES) will be the final decision-maker for all grants recommended for funding by the assessment panel.

Step 5

All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application. This is expected to occur towards the end of 2023. Applicants will be welcome to email landandsea@des.qld.gov.au to seek feedback on their application.

Applicants should not commence a project until written approval has been obtained and a legal agreement has been signed. Funds shown to be expended before the date of the contract are not able to be acquitted against the grant.

What are the assessment criteria?

The LACGP grants are awarded through a competitive assessment process.

Applications will need to demonstrate the support of relevant Traditional Owners (including the relevant Native Title body, where Native Title rights exist) and landholders.

Applications will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- deliver on-ground environment and cultural heritage conservation outcomes
- build the capacity of First Nations communities to deliver on-country conservation projects, by providing direct experience in on-ground project delivery or by the development of key skills or plans for future delivery
- demonstrate clear governance arrangements and a sound approach to project delivery
- are based on sound cost estimates and represent value for money
- demonstrate a collaborative approach with any partners and identify how these partners will add value to the project.

The application form includes guidance about how to address each of the assessment criteria.

Applicants should address all relevant criteria in their application and provide the supporting documents listed in the checklist within the application.

What is the reporting and project completion process?

Successful recipients will be required to submit progress reports, and a final report and acquittal documentation, using a template provided by DES.

For grants of more than \$50,000 (excluding GST), an Audited Financial Statement verifying project expenditure may be requested.

Payment of funding will be made in accordance with the payment schedule listed in the grant agreement and only once DES is satisfied the organisation has met the obligations for each agreed milestone.

DES staff may also monitor the project progress through on-ground visits, phone and email contact.

What are the conditions of funding?

1. Applicants must provide all required information at the time of submitting their application and agree to provide other relevant information for their application reasonably requested by DES.
2. Applicants will be asked to indicate any 'commercial-in-confidence' issues associated with the proposal.
3. Successful applicants will be required to be complete their funded projects by 30 May 2025.
4. Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of the following insurances prior to the grant being provided: (a) public liability insurance of a minimum of \$20 million; (b) workers' insurance as required under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

5. Successful applicants must be required to accept the grant in accordance with the terms and conditions in the Grant Agreement and legally comply with all requirements. A copy of the standard departmental Grant Agreement is available upon request. The funded organisation will be provided with information detailing the financial and operational requirements of the grant.
6. The specific Grant Agreement for each successful applicant will be developed using information provided in the relevant application form, and in negotiation with the approved applicant.
7. All promotional material for the project must acknowledge funding from the Queensland Government. The final draft of any promotional material using the Queensland Government logo must be approved by DES before going to print.
8. DES will not reveal to any person any confidential operations, dealings or affairs of the applicant that it becomes aware of through this agreement, but for publicity purposes, DES reserves the right to disclose general information about the awarding of grants.
9. Intellectual property rights arising from the project material shall be owned by the applicant.
10. By entering a grant agreement, successful applicants will grant the Queensland Government the right to use, reproduce and adapt the project material for its own purposes with agreement from the applicant, and where culturally appropriate.
11. Grant funds must be spent for the purposes stated in the application form and the Grant Agreement.
12. Any approved applicant must remain the grant manager for the duration of the project or until a new grant manager is approved by DES.
13. DES abides by the Queensland Government's privacy policies regarding the management of personal information.

Further information

For more information about the Looking after Country Grant Program contact a grants officer by calling 07 3330 5553 or by email on landandsea@des.qld.gov.au