



Looking after Country Grant Program

Department of Environment and Science

2021 Guidelines



Queensland
Government

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

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
Who can apply?	1
How much can groups apply for?.....	1
What projects and activities are eligible for funding?.....	1
What will not be funded?	2
What is the application process?	2
What are the assessment criteria?	3
What is the reporting and project completion process?	3
What are the conditions of funding?	3
Further information	4

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 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 groups 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 2021 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?

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding under the LACGP:

- Not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations incorporated under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981*, *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, *Corporations Act 2001*, or other legislation.
- Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) community councils or Aboriginal Shire Councils that are applying on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, or a group representing these bodies.
- Incorporated, not-for-profit organisations applying on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups that are able to demonstrate that they have the authority of, and will work in partnership with, the Traditional Owners for areas on which they intend to undertake activities with the grant funds.

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

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).

What projects and activities are eligible for funding?

Projects that increase the capacity of First Nations communities to achieve environmental and cultural conservation outcomes through delivering on-ground activities, will be considered for funding.

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

- cultural heritage site management (including recording, protection and training)
- habitat restoration
- fire management
- protected species monitoring and conservation
- feral animal management (including exclusion fencing)
- erosion control
- weed control.

Projects to develop country plans or management plans, aimed at improving the effectiveness of future on-ground management of environmental and cultural heritage, will also be considered for funding.

How much can organisations apply for?

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

The project expenditure can include:

- project administration (includes phone, postage, stationery, printing, bookkeeping, audit costs)
- wages and on-costs and/or some contractor costs
- incidental expenses
- materials and equipment
- training.

What will not be funded?

Project expenditure that will not be considered for funding includes:

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

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

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 4

If you decide to apply:

- Go to the [Looking after Country Grant program](#) page at the Queensland Government website for a link to 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).
- 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 9 August 2021**.

If you have any questions about your application, please contact the 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 5

A limited number of stage 1 applications will be short-listed by an assessment panel. If your stage 1 application is shortlisted, you will be invited to complete a full Stage 2 application which 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 6

All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application. This is expected to occur towards the end of 2021. Applicants will be welcome to email the QILSRP office (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
- 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.

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 periodic project 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 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 of the required information at the time of submitting their application.
2. Applicants must agree to provide other relevant information for their application reasonably requested by DES.
3. Applicants will be asked to indicate any 'commercial-in-confidence' issues associated with the proposal.
4. Successful applicants will be required to complete their funded projects by 30 April 2023.
5. Successful applicants will be required to hold and 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*.

6. Successful applicants must be required to accept the grant in accordance with the terms and conditions in the Grant Deed and legally comply with all requirements. A copy of the standard departmental Grant Deed is available upon request. The funded organisation will be provided with information detailing the financial and operational requirements of the grant.
7. The specific Grant Deed for each successful applicant will be developed using information provided in the relevant application form, and in negotiation with the approved applicant.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Intellectual property rights arising from the project material shall be owned by the applicant.
11. 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.
12. Grant funds must be spent for the purposes stated in the application form and the Grant Deed.
13. Any approved applicant must remain the project host for the duration of the project or until a new host organisation is approved by DES.
14. 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 DES's program contact officer on phone 07 3330 5553 or email landandsea@des.qld.gov.au