



Australian Government

**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Communities Combating Pest and Weed Impacts During Drought Program - Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds - Round 2

General feedback for applicants

Overview

As part of our commitment to sharing information with the sector and as an acknowledgement of the time and effort the applicants have put into developing applications, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) is pleased to share this feedback on applications for the Communities Combating Pest and Weed Impacts During Drought Program – Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds - Round 2 (the Program).

The funding round for the Program opened 19 December 2019 and closed on 5 February 2020. Late applications were accepted up until 19 February 2020, for those that experienced exceptional circumstances.

The grant opportunity received 78 eligible applications. Following the Delegate's decision, 23 applications were selected for funding, to a value of just under \$10 million (GST excl.).

There was considerable interest by stakeholders in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. All eligible applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOG) and outlined in the Selection Process below.

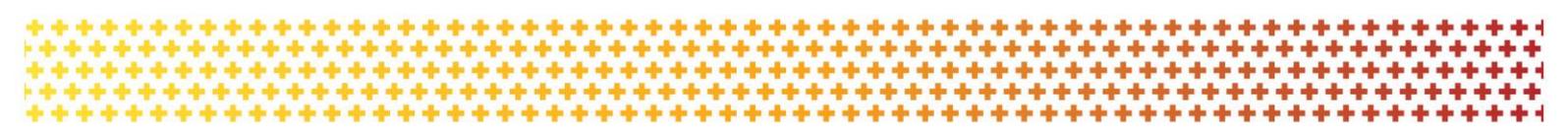
This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant round.

Program background

The Program aims to fund projects that assist communities manage the impact of pests and weeds during drought, limit the negative impact of pests and weeds on agricultural production, stimulate economic activity and facilitate local employment.

This was a restricted competitive grants opportunity offering up to \$10 million over the 2019-20 and 2020-2021 financial years, for the invited eligible local government areas (LGA).

The Program was administered by the Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub (the Hub), on behalf of the DAWE under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.



Selection process

A restricted competitive selection process was undertaken to select a range of quality projects from a variety of organisations.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the GOG.

The Hub undertook preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications, scoring each application in relation to the four equally weighted assessment criteria.

A Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) was convened to consider the outcome of the Hub's preliminary assessment and to make funding recommendations to the Delegate. The SAP was comprised of a Chair and three members with the required expertise and industry knowledge relevant to this grant round.

To do this, the Selection Advisory Panel considered:

- how well applications scored against the assessment criteria
- conformance to the overall project objectives and outcomes in aligning with the eligibility criteria
- the relative merit of an application compared to other applications focussed on the program outcome(s), including overall value for money
- distribution of service providers across all locations
- how the services and/or project will be delivered and alignment with the GOG
- how the project addresses an existing and/or potential market failure
- possible duplication with other known Commonwealth/state/territory government programs/service delivery.

Final approval of funded projects was made by the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management.

General feedback for applicants

Successful applicants included project activities that were eligible, appropriate, aligned with the GOG and the SAP considered they would be effective towards achieving the overall program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding along with value for money and a detailed proposal, project plan, budget and risk assessment, along with meeting the requirements outlined in the GOG. Applications included strong to good responses to all of the assessment criteria.



Writing and providing details

Unfortunately, a number of applications were determined to be unsuccessful as they did not effectively conform to the required information or word limits by either providing too much background or insufficient detail on the proposed project across the four assessment criterion.

Applicants were instructed to clearly and concisely address the assessment criteria. Careful editing is advised for future applications due to the difficulty in assessing and understanding poorly written and verbose applications. The readability of some applications was improved through the use of sub-headings and dot points.

Criteria specific feedback

Criterion 1 – What is the need for the grant activity in the eligible LGA and how will you address the need?

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly provided:
Clearly demonstrated the need for the proposed grant activity in the community with quantitative evidence and outlined how the proposal would address the need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• information and evidence, including quantitative data or anecdotal evidence, to support the importance and need of the proposed activity in the LGA• detail on the impact in the LGA due to pests and weeds• detail on how the proposed activity would address the need and deliver benefits in the LGA.
Demonstrated a detailed understanding of existing pest animal and/or weed management activity in the LGA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed information to demonstrate that the applicant is familiar with and clearly understands what relevant activities are currently underway in the LGA• detailed information to demonstrate their understanding of local challenges and current best practice and control measures that would reduce the impact in the LGA.
Clearly outlined how the LGAs approach to service delivery would achieve the program's outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• evidence to support discussion and consultation with local landholders/management groups on the appropriate approach to address the problem• a clear link between the service delivery approach and achieving the program's outcomes.



Criterion 2 – Describe how the development and implementation of the grant activity will contribute to achieving the program’s objectives.

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly described:
Demonstrated the long-term benefit of the grant activity to the program objectives and the community/communities and agricultural industries on which they depend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the long-term benefits of the activity to the LGA• the long-term benefits to the local community and land managers• how the proposed activity would contribute to increasing productivity and profitability of agriculture in the LGA.
Clearly explained how local community spending would be stimulated as a result of the grant activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the proposed activity would facilitate increased employment in the LGA• the short term and long-term impacts of the proposed activity in stimulating the local economy.
Clearly explained how local resources, businesses and suppliers would be used to implement the grant activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the applicant would engage local businesses and use local resources to deliver the proposed activity• how the project will help local businesses with trades persons from the area engaged to service the project• how the applicant would employ local labour from the community to undertake the proposed activity.



Criterion 3 – What is the capability and capacity of your council (or consortia of councils) to successfully deliver the grant activity?

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly explained:
Clearly demonstrated the organisation’s ability to manage the Commonwealth and/or state government grant funding responsibly and effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• that the applicant is capable of implementing and managing a government funded project and that they have appropriate governance structures in place• their experience, by providing examples of previous projects of similar outcomes and budget• that the applicant has successfully delivered previous projects and provided details of the outcome.
Clearly demonstrated the organisation’s capability to engage relevant expertise, including any technical expertise, required to achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• that the applicant has the appropriate level of skills or access to relevant expertise and skills to implement the proposed activity• that the applicant has the ability to engage with relevant stakeholders, experts and communities to deliver the proposed activity.
Clearly explained how the organisation would measure outcomes and progress towards achieving the objectives of the grant opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• that the applicant has a thorough understanding of how they would measure their progress and success throughout the project• that the applicant has identified key milestones which are measurable and achievable• that the applicant has identified potential project risks and has appropriate processes in place to ensure that the identified risks will be managed and mitigated.



Criterion 4 – Describe your council (or consortia of councils) capability to engage and involve stakeholders to successfully deliver the grant activity.

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly described:
<p>Clearly demonstrated the applicant’s ability to work collaboratively with other government and non-government agencies to ensure high quality service delivery that achieves positive outcomes for the farming community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the applicant has successfully collaborated in the past with government/non-government agencies, including an example of a grant or another type of collaboration• how their collaboration with other agencies, has resulted in positive outcomes for the farming community.
<p>Clearly demonstrated how stakeholders such as local Landcare, farming system or other groups would be engaged, describing the coordination of management where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the applicant would utilise existing working relationships with stakeholders like Landcare or other groups and how they would be managed• how the applicant would further engage and collaborate with relevant stakeholders and communities to implement the proposed activity.
<p>Clearly demonstrated how affected landholders would be consulted and involved as part of the development of the proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the applicant intends to consult with affected stakeholders using appropriate mechanisms and consultation processes• how the affected landholders would be involved in the development of the project.