



Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program: Large Grants

Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	25 August 2021
Closing date and time:	9:00 pm AEDT on 6 October 2021
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Administering entity:	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5:00 pm AEST on 29 September 2021
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1. Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program: Large Grants processes

The Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Outcome 5 – Improve the health of rivers and freshwater ecosystems and water use efficiency. The department works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the

[Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 \(CGRGs\)](#).



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



You complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant.



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. If you are eligible, we then assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and compare it to other applications.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice, through the selection advisory panel to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The Minister for Resources and Water (decision maker) decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program: Large Grants.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department).

1.2 Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID–19)

Applicants need to consider the effect of COVID–19 when preparing their applications, especially in relation to timeframes and delivery.

2. About the grant program

The Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program (the program) will run over 2 years from 2020–21 to 2021–22.

The program forms part of the Australian Government’s \$269.6 million Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package, which seeks to re-engage communities in the work to restore the ecological health of the Murray–Darling Basin whilst also supporting economic development and jobs. The package was announced by the Hon Keith Pitt MP, Minister for Resources and Water, on 4 September 2020. The media release is available on the [Minister for Resource and Water’s website](#).

The program also partially addresses Recommendations 1b, 2c and 7 of the *Final Report: Independent assessment of social and economic conditions in the Murray–Darling Basin* (the Sefton Report) relating to community engagement with complementary river health programs. The Sefton Report is available on the [Murray–Darling Basin Authority website](#).

The objectives of the program are to support community-led, on-ground projects to improve the health and ecological condition of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin, whilst also supporting economic development and jobs.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- improved health and ecological condition of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin
- improved community involvement in restoring the environmental health of the Murray–Darling Basin
- increased economic activity and employment in Basin communities as a result of grant funding.

The program will be delivered through 2 open competitive grant streams administered by the Community Grants Hub, including:

1. the small grants stream, with up to \$10 million in total funding available
2. the large grants stream to a larger pool of eligible entities, with up to \$10 million in total funding available.

The Community Grants Hub administers the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017](#) (CGRGs).

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$20 million GST exclusive over 2 years for the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program.

- Up to \$10 million GST exclusive is available for the small grants stream over 2 separate rounds, of which \$7,141,058 is available under Round 2.
- Up to \$10 million GST exclusive is available for the large grants stream in this round.

These are notional allocations, and the Minister for Resources and Water reserves the right to change these allocations depending on the quality and quantity of grants received in his sole discretion.

The application period for this round is from 25 August 2021 to 6 October 2021.

- The minimum grant amount is \$100,001 GST exclusive.
- The maximum grant amount is \$2 million GST exclusive.

These are the guidelines for the large grants round. There are separate guidelines for the second small grants round.

3.2 Grant period

The maximum grant period is 12 months from the date of execution of your grant agreement.

Following the grant period, an evaluation period of 12 months will commence.

The department may approve a further 12 months extension provided you can demonstrate there were factors outside your control which prevented you from completing the project (for example, extreme weather events).

4. Eligibility criteria

The Minister for Resources and Water can choose to waive the eligibility criteria; however, he must be made aware of the risks.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible, you must be one of the following entity types:

- Indigenous Corporation
- Company¹

¹ Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- Local Government²
- Cooperative
- Incorporated Association
- Sole Trader
- Statutory Entity
- Partnership³
- Person⁴
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust⁵
- Unincorporated Association.

Applications from consortia are acceptable, as long as you have a lead applicant who is solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities and is an eligible entity as per the list above⁶. The maximum grant size remains \$2 million for applications from consortia.

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- Commonwealth Company
- International Entity
- political parties, political organisations and lobbyists
- an organisation, or your project partner is 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'](#).

The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Grant Connected Policy makes non-government institutions named in applications to the Scheme, or in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, that do not join the Scheme ineligible for future Australian Government grant funding. The National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy came into effect on 1 January 2021.

² Includes New South Wales local governments created as body politics.

³ Partnership – the individual partners will enter into the agreement with the agency. A Partnership Agreement or a list of all individual partners of the Partnership may be requested.

⁴ A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

⁵ Trusts are not legal entities in their own right – to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply by providing the signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations with the application form. Trustees must be an eligible entity type as stated in section 4.1

⁶ The Australian Government recognises that some organisations may seek to form consortia in order to apply for a grant under the program. Consortia are eligible to apply and the relevant conditions applicable to consortia are in section 7.2.

4.2.1 Unincorporated Associations

Non-legal entities such as an Unincorporated Association may be able to receive funding where a legal parent organisation, or a legal entity connected to the Unincorporated Association can enter into a legally binding agreement on its behalf. Alternatively, a person representing the Unincorporated Association can enter into the agreement and assume the legal liability.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible, your grant activity must be directed to one or more of the following in the Murray–Darling Basin, including:

- the conservation and protection of biodiversity (diversity of native plant and animal species), including [species and communities](#) listed under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act 1999)
- the protection of rivers or wetlands⁷ as listed on the [department's website](#)
- the protection of listed migratory species⁸ and their habitats as listed on the [department's website](#)
- the sustainable management or conservation and enhancement of water resources⁹
- combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought on natural systems¹⁰.

To be eligible, your projects must have at least \$100,001 in eligible expenditure (see section 5.3).

A list of eligible activities is in **Appendix A**. The list is not exhaustive and other activities may be considered on merit provided they contribute toward one or more of the program objectives/outcomes. Applications must include sufficient information. The program assessment will consider grant activities that expand, or supplement existing activities or programs funded by other government entities or programs.

5.2 Eligible locations

Your grant activities must be delivered within the Murray–Darling Basin. Information on the Murray–Darling Basin can be found on the [Murray–Darling Basin Authority website](#). If you are uncertain if you are eligible, there is a map of the Murray–Darling Basin provided with the grant opportunity documents on the [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

As part of the assessment process, we will consider the extent that a reasonable spread of grant activities is achieved across the whole Basin. However, there are no specific allocations of funding per:

- state or territory
- catchment
- sustainable diversion limit resource unit.

⁷ Including declared Ramsar wetlands under section 17 of the EPBC Act.

⁸ As provided for under section 209 of the EPBC Act.

⁹ As defined under section 4 of the [Water Act 2007](#).

¹⁰ As per the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa](#) (UNCCD).

Note: You will be required to provide mapping of project areas in your application using the mapping tool provided. Please refer to the application instructions for further guidance.

5.3 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on eligible grant activities.

Eligible expenditure items are eligible costs you incur on agreed grant activities specified in your grant agreement (that is, the program does not fund expenses incurred before the grant agreement is signed). The grant agreement may include:

- purchase or hire of equipment and supplies to support project activities
- building materials for the construction of infrastructure
- administrative support and overheads additional to the normal day-to-day running costs of the organisation (maximum 10% of project costs)
- reporting on project progress and outcomes in the form advised by the department (maximum 5% of the project costs).

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

Not all expenditure on your grant activity may be eligible for grant funding. The Minister for Resources and Water makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure.

You must incur the expenditure on your grant activities between the start date and end or completion date for your grant agreement for it to be eligible.

We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your grant activity.

5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities, including:

- purchase of land
- purchase of water entitlements or allocations
- retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone or rent expenses
- overseas travel
- research
- activities required to be undertaken as part of an approval under environment or planning legislation
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

You can apply for grants for your project under any Commonwealth program, but if your applications are successful, you must choose either the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program grant or the other Commonwealth grant.

6. The assessment criteria

You must address all of the following assessment criteria in the application.

All the assessment criteria are equally weighted.

The application form includes character limits – up to 6,000 characters (approximately 900 words) per criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond this limit. Please note, spaces are included in the character limit.

6.1 Criterion 1

The extent to which the on-ground activities will improve health and ecological condition of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin that builds on water recovered through the Basin Plan.

When addressing the criterion, applicants will:

- provide details about how the activity will directly improve the health of rivers, wetlands, and/or floodplains
- demonstrate relevant community support and show evidence of involving local communities during project delivery and/or following project completion
- indicate the extent to which the project is consistent with any existing plans and objectives. For example:
 - your local catchment management plan
 - local environment management plans
 - the Commonwealth Environment Water Holder's [water management plan](#)
 - state environmental watering plans
 - the Native Fish Recovery Strategy outlined on the [Murray–Darling Basin Authority website](#)
 - recovery plans for threatened fauna, threatened flora and threatened ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act (if your activities are focussed on a specific species or community) which can be found on the [department's website](#).
- show how the project builds upon previous natural resource management investments (for example, Landcare grants)
- seek to protect matters of national environmental significance, including:
 - listed threatened species and ecological communities
 - listed migratory species
 - declared Ramsar Wetlands.

6.2 Criterion 2

Your capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project.

When addressing the criterion, applicants will:

- identify what approvals are necessary, the status of approvals (for example, whether approvals have been granted or can be granted in time to enable project completion within the grant period)
- describe your track record carrying out similar projects
- show your access to personnel with the right expertise and experience
- outline your plan for managing the project, including project risks such as delivery in the required time and work health and safety, where relevant

- describe how you will buy goods and services, where possible from local businesses, including Australian made goods
- describe how your project's outcomes will be maintained beyond the term of grant funding.

Whilst projects do not have to be 'shovel-ready', more developed projects will have a competitive advantage as they are more likely to be able to be delivered within the program's timeframes.

6.3 Criterion 3

Community ownership of the project, and community involvement in the delivery of the project.

When addressing the criterion, applicants will:

- demonstrate relevant community support and show evidence of involving local communities during project delivery and/or following project completion. Key stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, relevant local governments, community stakeholders and indigenous communities
- discuss how the project will improve community involvement in restoring the environmental health of the Murray–Darling Basin, and help in restoring confidence in the achievement of the Basin Plan's environmental outcomes
- indicate any additional community benefits from the project such as improved amenity.

6.4 Criterion 4

The extent to which the project will increase economic activity and employment in Basin communities.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- increase job opportunities (for example, number of jobs created, including whether full or part-time, number of apprenticeships or traineeships, targeting disadvantaged groups)
- identify how jobs created will be supported or transition after the completion of the project
- generate economic stimulus (for example, estimate of flow-on economic activity impact)
- describe linkages to relevant local economic development strategies, including the plans, priorities or challenges outlined in any relevant local/regional plans
- articulate a purchasing strategy that prioritises local business and Australian made goods.

6.5 Other information for you to consider when responding to selection criteria

The following guidance was provided for applicants following the delivery of the Small Grants (Round 1).

6.5.1 Best-practice natural resource and land management

Applicants should show consideration of best-practice natural resource and land management when describing activities to be undertaken with grant funding, such as:

- removal of pest plant species being undertaken in a staggered manner to ensure that ground cover is not removed over a large area at once
- fencing having wildlife-friendly design
- installation of fish screens on any new pumps purchased with funding under the program
- plans and qualifications for using hazardous substances (such as herbicides) – or engagement of a suitably qualified contractor – when undertaking such work.

6.5.2 Co-contributions

Financial or in-kind contributions from you or a third party are not required. However, financial contributions will be highly regarded and should be clearly identified in the budget provided as part of your application. The Community Grants Hub or the department may contact third-parties to verify their intention and capacity to provide nominated financial or in-kind contributions.

6.5.3 Cost shifting

Applications from entities that receive recurring funding from state, territory or local governments will be subject to review for the possibility of 'cost shifting' to the Commonwealth by another level of government, or 'substitution of effort' by another level of government. Cost shifting occurs where, for example, the Commonwealth funds a grant activity that should be paid for by a state, territory or local government. Applicants in this situation should:

- clearly state that the funding will not be used for grant activities that would normally be paid for by a state, territory or local government
- demonstrate that the activities for which funding is sought is clearly additional to those previously or currently funded by a state, territory or local government.

6.5.4 On-ground works

The focus of the program is supporting practical, on-ground works. Examples of eligible activities are in **Appendix A**.

The following activities are likely to be funded only if most of the grant funding is going to on-ground works and there is a clear connection between those on-ground works and the proposed activity, including:

- water quality measurement and assessment before and after on-ground activities to assess the efficacy of the activities
- flora and/or fauna surveys before and after on-ground activities to assess the efficacy of the activities
- community engagement and capacity building
- interpretative signage, for example, to inform visitors about the ecological values of the site and on-ground actions undertaken.

7. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the terms and conditions, sample grant agreement, and questions and answers.

These documents are found on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any changes to grant documentation are published on both sites and addenda¹¹ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

¹¹ Addenda can include changes to existing grant opportunity documentation and/or publishing additional documents. Changes include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and system outage notices.

You may submit more than one application form for each grant activity. A separate application form must be submitted for each grant activity. If more than one application is submitted for the same grant activity, the latest accepted application form will progress to assessment.

To apply, you must:

- complete the online application form on the [GrantConnect](#) or [Community Grants Hub](#) website
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all requested attachments
- submit your application/s to the Community Grants Hub by 9:00 pm AEDT on 6 October 2021.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by any means other than the online system.

The application form includes help information. You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you need further help with the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information.

This will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your application after the closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

7.1 Attachments to the application

All of the following supporting documents should be attached to your application. Templates are provided for your use with the grant opportunity documents as specified, including:

- Activity Work Plan – an Activity Work Plan documents planned deliverables, milestones and outputs as well as risk management and community engagement relevant to the proposed project
- Trust deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust.

If a mandatory template is not used, your application will be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment.

You must attach supporting documentation according to the instructions provided within the application form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments we have not asked for.

Please note: There is a 2 MB limit for each attachment. The Activity Work Plan must be submitted in either .doc, .docx or .pdf format.

7.2 Joint (Consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a grant activity.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The lead organisation of a consortium must also be an eligible entity type as outlined in section 4.1. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group. All members of the consortium must comply with the National Redress legislation.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

The maximum grant size remains \$2 million for applications from consortia.

7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Late applications

We will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application. Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a late application request to the Community Grants Hub.

The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time. Where appropriate, supporting evidence can be provided to verify the claim of exceptional circumstances.

The late application request form and instructions for how to submit it can be found on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

Written requests to lodge a late application will only be accepted within 3 days after the grant opportunity has closed.

The delegate or their appointed representative¹² will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the delegate will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, the Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant if their request is accepted or declined.

¹² This may be the Community Grants Hub delegate or nominated staff member of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment at the EL2 level or above.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your grant activity around November 2021.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 6 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	November 2021
End date of grant activity	12 months from date of grant agreement execution

7.4 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within 5 working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The question period will close at 12:00 pm AEST on 29 September 2021. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

8. The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

Applications will be assessed based on the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

We will assess all applications for eligibility and compliance against the requirements of the application process. Eligible applications will then be considered through an open competitive grant process.

8.2 Financial viability

Applicants may be subject to a financial viability assessment. The financial viability assessment forms part of the risk mitigation strategy and can include:

- establishing whether relevant persons have any adverse business history (for example, current or past bankruptcy)
- assessment of the financial health of an entity.

8.3 Who will assess and select applications?

The Community Grants Hub will use trained assessors to undertake a preliminary assessment against the selection criteria on behalf of the department. The department may also be involved in undertaking this preliminary assessment. The preliminary assessment will provide an initial ranking of applications to inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel.

A Selection Advisory Panel will be established and may include a mix of employees of the department, experts from the sector, other Commonwealth officers with relevant specialist expertise.

Any expert or advisor, who is not a Commonwealth official, will be required and expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The Community Grants Hub may provide secretariat support to the Selection Advisory Panel but will not participate in deliberations or decision-making. The Community Grants Hub's independent probity advisor attends all Selection Advisory Panel meetings.

The Selection Advisory Panel will assess whether the application represents value with money and will make final recommendations to the decision maker by taking into account the following factors, including:

- the initial preliminary score against the assessment criteria
- the extent that a reasonable spread of grant activities is achieved across the whole Basin
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- whether the proposed project is in scope
- the relative value of the grant sought, including financial or in-kind contributions from you or a third party
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- duplication and overlap of funded activities with other government initiatives, such as the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program
- the risks, financial, fraud and other, that the applicant or project poses for the department
- the risks that the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth.

The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information from the applicant to assist in making its final recommendations.

8.4 Who will approve grants?

The Minister for Resources and Water will be the decision maker for this round. The decision maker decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel and the department, taking into consideration any further information that may become known, including the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Minister for Resources and Water's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9. Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you by email about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you are advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

9.1 Feedback on your application

A feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all organisations with easy access to information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will offer successful applicants a Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement for this grant opportunity.

Each agreement has general grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites as part of the grant documentation. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. You must not start any activities until a grant agreement is executed.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. These are identified in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement

We will use a Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement.

You will have 20 business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The grant agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

10.2 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations; however, you may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and/or their state and territory equivalents:

- [EPBC Act](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009](#)
- [Water Act 2007](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

If your grant activities involve pest animals, you must adhere to relevant animal welfare legislation and requirements, and voluntary and/or mandatory Codes of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures for the management of relevant pest animals, as well as adhering to relevant federal and state/territory legislation and regulations.

If your grant activities involve pest plants, you must adhere to relevant federal and state/territory legislation and regulations.

Applications which include the use of pesticides should demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience for their safe use, consistent with any regulatory requirements. If the applicant does not have the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience, consideration must be given to the engagement of a suitably qualified contractor to undertake such work. Pesticides include herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, fumigants, bactericides, rodenticides, baits, lures and repellents.

10.3 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- any financial contributions you must make
- any in-kind contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by a third party

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make an initial payment on execution of the grant agreement. We will make subsequent payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activity.

10.4 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be GST Inclusive. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

If a Government Related Entity is deemed successful, GST will not apply.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website no later than 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.3 of the [CGRGs](#).

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activities or organisation.

We need to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due because of these changes.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of the terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister for Resources and Water or their representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed milestones and outcomes
- expenditure of the grant.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, ask for more information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

Activity Work Plan

You must submit a completed Activity Work Plan on the template provided. An Activity Work Plan will be used to outline the specific grant requirements. The Activity Work Plan documents planned deliverables, milestones and outputs for the funded project. The Activity Work Plan also documents risk management and community engagement relevant to the funded project.

Successful applicants' progress and outcomes against the Activity Work Plan will be monitored throughout the grant through regular reports.

Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress toward completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure
- relevant photographs
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

You must tell us of any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

Final report

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit a final report.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- include photographs of project site/s before, during and after completion of funded activities
- include metrics on project outputs (for example, length of riverbank rehabilitated, length of fencing built, number of species protected, number of pest species removed from a specified area, extent of improved areas, measurable improved prospects for species and ecological communities etc.)
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted by the due date and in the format provided in the grant agreement
- be suitable for publication on the department's website.

12.3 Audited financial acquittal report

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager, Community Grants Hub.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant program to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8 Acknowledgement

The program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth by saying:

'Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers – an Australian Government initiative.'

If you make a public statement about a grant activity funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This [\[name of grant activity or project/services\]](#) received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

These guidelines may be changed by the department. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on the [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Complaints about this grant opportunity

The department's [Client Service Charter](#) applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about this grant opportunity, including grant decisions, must be made in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be emailed to mdhealthyivers@awe.gov.au.

Complaints about the selection process

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub's service/s or the selection process.

Details of what makes an eligible complaint can be provided by asking the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can use the [online complaints form](#) on the [Department of Social Services](#) website, or contact the Department of Social Services' Complaints line.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: complaints@dss.gov.au

Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or the department has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the department's and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later think there is an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the department and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and give out information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the department would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy Act.

13.4 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to give out to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the 3 conditions below.

1. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential.
2. The information is commercially sensitive.
3. Revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Team
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 Department of Social Services
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14. Consultation

Public consultation on the program design, including draft Grant Opportunity Guidelines, was conducted between 18 December 2020 and 22 January 2021. Consultation was important to ensure that communities are re-engaged as per the Australian Government's commitment under

the Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package. Additionally, the consultation provides assurance that the grants will deliver local, as well as broader Basin benefits. Feedback received is published on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [website](#).

In total, 48 responses (including 10 written submissions) and an additional 8 emails providing feedback were received. The responses were from across the Basin noting, however, that 75% were from New South Wales and Victoria. The results show a strong level of engagement within the community for the program.

- 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can identify potential projects that will address river and wetland health in their community.
- 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft guidelines were easy to read and understand, with only 11% disagreeing.
- 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can see a clear linkage between the eligible activities and improving river and wetland health.

15. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the PGPA Act.
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all the grant administration processes.
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
co-sponsoring entity	when 2 or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth entity	a department of state, or a parliamentary department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	the person who decides to award a grant, in this instance he is the Minister for Resources and Water.
department	means the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
EPBC Act	means the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 .

Term	Definition
Funding Arrangement Manager	is the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement.
grant	for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money¹³ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money¹⁴ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
GrantConnect	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake.
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single departmental Portfolio Budget Statement program.
listed migratory species	means species listed under section 209 of the EPBC Act .
listed species and communities	means nationally threatened native species and ecological communities, native migratory species and marine species listed under the EPBC Act .
National Redress legislation	means the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 .

¹³ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

¹⁴ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
PGPA Act	means the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 .
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant programs. A PBS program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Privacy Act	means the Privacy Act 1988 .
Selection Advisory Panel	provides strategic oversight, advice and recommendations to the decision maker on assessed applications from the program specific, service provider composition and service location perspectives.
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
value with money	<p>refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ quality of the project proposal and activities ▪ fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives ▪ absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved ▪ potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.
water resources	has the same meaning as in section 4 of the Water Act 2007 .
wetlands	includes declared Ramsar wetlands under section 17 of the EPBC Act .

Appendix A. Examples of eligible activities

Eligible activities must directly relate to the project and can include:

- administration, reporting and project management (as provided for in section 5.3 of these guidelines)
- activities that protect or enhance the natural environment and/or support recovery of native species/communities, including:
 - actions identified in recovery plans or conservation advices for threatened species
 - [Native Fish Recovery Strategy](#) Outcomes 1 to 4:
 - recovery and persistence of native fish
 - threats to native fish are identified and mitigated
 - communities are actively involved in native fish recovery
 - recovery actions are informed by best available knowledge and practice
 - [Native Fish Recovery Strategy](#) Investment Areas 1, 3 to 8 and 11:
 - threatened species actions and research
 - continue rehabilitation of fish habitat
 - install fish friendly infrastructure – screening pumps and offtakes
 - improving connectivity and removing barriers
 - promote the management of introduced fish
 - address cold-water pollution
 - understand and adapt to climate change impacts
 - collection and propagation of seed from native species
 - revegetation using locally appropriate native species (for example, to increase suitable habitat and available food sources for native animals, increase biodiversity or provide bio-linkages to reduce the impact of future climate scenarios)
 - removal of barriers to native species traversing landscapes and waterways (for example, fish ladders)
 - habitat support for native species (for example, provision of nesting boxes or artificial burrows)
 - translocation of threatened species to or from a site where it would not pose a biosecurity threat
- control of invasive species such as weeds, carp and other pests that threaten ecosystems, habitat and native species
- protection and/or conservation of plant and animal species at risk
- riverbank stabilisation and/or rehabilitation
- habitat protection and rehabilitation
- revegetation, including with species that are likely to be more tolerant of future, hotter and drier conditions
- native fish breeding and/or re-stocking
- improvement of floodplain ecosystems
- restoration of rivers and wetlands

- boat docking points (for example, jetties, floating pontoons)
- improvement of water access points, such as concrete boat ramps, to replace soil-based access points
- pumps or regulators to enhance flows to wetlands
- upgrading escapes and other infrastructure used for environmental watering
- activities that reduce threats and risks to the natural environment, in natural and constructed water courses (including canals) such as:
 - managing invasive weeds, pest animals or diseases that threaten ecosystems, habitat and native species (for example, weed control activities, construction of wash-down stations which allow plant and equipment to be decontaminated from debris and other material that may lead to the spread of invasive species or otherwise present a biosecurity risk)
 - fencing to support environmental protection and/or restoration (for example, control access to sensitive sites, remnant vegetation or revegetation sites, for the avoidance of doubt this includes grazing exclusion fences)
 - management of access to sensitive areas, including installation of infrastructure, such as boardwalks, sand ladders, visitor access trails, gates and vehicle barriers
 - managing erosion (for example, to reduce impacts on environmentally sensitive areas/waterways and/or to directly improve the ecological condition of a site as well as contour banks to slow water run off that is causing erosion)
 - reducing sediment, contaminant, and nutrient run-off to waterways.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and other activities may be considered on merit provided they contribute toward one or more of the program objectives/outcomes. Applications must include sufficient information. The program assessment will consider grant activities that expand, or supplement existing activities or programs funded by other government entities or programs.