



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment**

**Community  
Grants Hub**  
Improving your grant experience



## Future Drought Fund: Natural Resource Management Drought Resilience Program – Grants

<b>Opening date:</b>	<b>29 September 2020</b>
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	<b>11.00pm AEDT on 30 October 2020</b>
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
<b>Administering entity:</b>	Community Grants Hub
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub <b>Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1)</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a></b> Questions should be sent no later than 5:00pm AEDT on <b>23 October 2020</b>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	<b>29 September 2020</b>
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Open competitive

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## 1 Future Drought Fund: NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants processes

The Future Drought Fund’s NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives to build long-term drought resilience and preparedness.

This grant opportunity is part of the above program, which contributes to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment’s Outcome 3<sup>1</sup>. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the

[Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#)  
[Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)  
[Future Drought Fund Act 2019](#)

Future Drought Fund (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024) Determination 2020 (the Funding Plan)



### The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on [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. All eligible applications are assessed against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with relevant money. They are also compared to other applications.



### We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the Drought Minister (or delegate) on the merits of each application. The Drought Minister (or delegate) must seek and consider advice from the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board on the consistency of the proposed expenditure with the Funding Plan.



### Grant decisions are made

The Drought Minister 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 the successful applicants.



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<sup>1</sup> Outcome 3: More sustainable, productive, and internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.

### **We enter into a grant agreement**

We will enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be 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 NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants**

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants and Future Drought Fund as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

## **1.1 Introduction**

These guidelines contain information for the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Drought Resilience Program – Grants. The guidelines for subsequent grant rounds (if any) are subject to change.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the 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 (CGH) on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department).

## **2 About the grant program**

### **2.1 About the Future Drought Fund**

The Future Drought Fund (the Fund) is a long-term investment fund that provides a sustainable source of funding to help Australian farmers and communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought. Established under the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* in September 2019, the Fund began with a \$3.9 billion investment, with earnings to be reinvested by the Future Fund Board until the balance reaches \$5 billion. The Fund is part of the Government's Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

From July 2020, \$100 million will be available annually from the Fund to invest in drought resilience programs. The programs will support farm businesses to be better informed, more productive, profitable and adaptable, and to adopt more resilient land and natural resource management practices. The programs will also build capacity in rural, regional and remote communities to be less vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of drought. Through grants or other arrangements, the Fund will support a range of initiatives including research and adoption of new and existing

knowledge and technology; improved farm business planning and decision-making; improved environmental and natural resource management; and a range of community resilience initiatives.

The Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020-2024 (the Funding Plan) sets out an approach for making arrangements, including grants, in relation to drought resilience, or entering into agreements in relation to such arrangements. The Funding Plan serves as a framework for all expenditure from the Fund.

The Funding Plan has three inter-connected strategic priorities:

- economic resilience for an innovative and profitable agricultural sector
- environmental resilience for sustainable and improved functioning of farming landscapes, and
- social resilience for resourceful and adaptable communities.

## 2.2 About NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants

The NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants (the program) will provide up to \$10 million to support organisations, farmer groups and individuals undertake projects that contribute to improved drought resilience of agricultural landscapes. The program is focused on support for experimentation in NRM practices, systems and approaches that go beyond current best practice. This aims to foster innovation and transformational change in the management of Natural Capital.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- Outcome 1: NRM is improved in Australian agricultural landscapes in ways that support primary producers' capacity to prepare for and respond to future droughts and climate change.
- Outcome 2: Primary producers and other land managers are enabled to experiment with adaptive or transformative<sup>2</sup> NRM practices, systems and approaches that can build drought resilience in agricultural landscapes.
- Outcome 3: Increased uptake of 'whole-of-system' natural resource management thinking and practices – that is, approaches that acknowledge the linkages between the ecosystem services on which agriculture depends; environmental and economic aspects of drought resilience on farms; and the social drought resilience of communities in agricultural areas.
- Outcome 4: Networks are established or strengthened between stakeholders who partner and share responsibility for managing natural resources (including public and private land managers), which improves connectedness and diversity of approaches across the landscape.

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<sup>2</sup> Transformation refers to changes in the way the system functions (for example, from crop production to ecosystem services) as a result of implementing these practices, systems or approaches which can be completely novel and innovative or existing ones adapted from different industries, geographic areas or systems.

### **3 Grant amount and grant period**

#### **3.1 Project funding available**

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$10 million available.

- \$4 million (GST exclusive) of this is available for smaller projects (between \$20,000 to \$50,000).
- \$6 million of this (GST exclusive) is available for larger projects (between \$50,001 to \$200,000).

The department reserves the right to, at its discretion, transfer any remaining unallocated funding between these two allocations in the event one is undersubscribed.

Eligibility and assessment criteria for smaller and larger grants are described in sections 4.5 and 6 respectively. The scope and scale of activities under each of the smaller and larger projects may differ.

##### **3.1.1 Smaller projects**

- The minimum grant amount is \$20,000 (GST exclusive).
- The maximum grant amount is \$50,000 (GST exclusive).

##### **3.1.2 Larger projects**

- The minimum grant amount is \$50,001 (GST exclusive).
- The maximum grant amount is \$200,000 (GST exclusive).

##### **3.1.3 Grant period**

This grant round will run up to the end of the 2021-2022 financial year. For both smaller and larger projects, you will receive funding in 2020-2021 and must complete your project activities by 30 June 2022.

### **4 Eligibility criteria**

Eligibility criteria apply to both the applicant and to the proposed project. You must provide the information we need to assess your eligibility and the eligibility of your proposed project in your application.

If you, or your proposed project, do not meet all the eligibility criteria, your application will not undergo merit assessment.

## 4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?<sup>3</sup>

To be eligible to apply for a grant you must be an individual, farming group or organisation based in Australia and capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. This includes the following entity types:

- Commonwealth Company
- Company<sup>4</sup>
- Cooperative
- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- International Entity
- Local Government<sup>5</sup>
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- Partnership<sup>6</sup>
- Person<sup>7</sup>
- Sole Trader
- Statutory Entity
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust<sup>8</sup>.

Applications from consortia are eligible, as long as you have a lead applicant who is solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities and who is an eligible entity as per the list above<sup>9</sup>. Eligible organisations can form a consortium with ineligible organisations.

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<sup>3</sup> If you are a Trustee applying on behalf of a Trust, please select the next most appropriate eligible entity from the above list.

<sup>4</sup> Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

<sup>5</sup> Includes New South Wales local governments created as Body Politics.

<sup>6</sup> Partnership – In a legally binding partnership, the executing partner must have authorisation from all other partners to execute the grant agreement. A Partnership Agreement or a list of all individual partners of the Partnership may be requested. All members of the Partnership must be an eligible entity type.

<sup>7</sup> A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

<sup>8</sup> The Commonwealth will not execute grant agreements with trusts – only trustees are eligible to execute grant agreements. In a legally binding partnership, the executing partner must have authorisation from all other partners to execute the grant agreement.

<sup>9</sup> 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 at Section 7.2 'Joint (Consortia) applications'.



## 4.2 Additional eligibility requirements

You must meet the following additional eligibility requirements before you apply:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the purposes of GST
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- for individuals, be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia
- for international entities, be registered with ASIC to carry on business in Australia.

If you do not meet these additional requirements you will not be eligible.

## 4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply, even if you are included in the list of eligible entities under section 4.1, if you are one of the following types:

- Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- Unincorporated Association (refer to section 4.4 below).

## 4.4 Project sponsorship

If a group is not a legal entity able to contract with the Australian Government (for example, an unincorporated association), it can still participate in the NRM Drought Resilience Program - Grants through a sponsorship arrangement. This is where an eligible entity applies on the group's or entity's behalf.

This means that the sponsor will be legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant. If successful, the grant funds will be paid into the sponsor's bank account who will be responsible for all reporting obligations and management of grant funds.

Sponsors may sponsor more than one group, but must submit a separate application, and enter into a separate grant agreement if successful, for each group or entity they sponsor. A separate application form must be completed for each grant application.

To be eligible to sponsor another organisation's application, the sponsor must be eligible to apply as per sections 4.1 and 4.2 above.

## 4.5 Project eligibility

To be eligible, your proposed project must also meet all of the following:

- Be in a region within Australia and its territories that has been affected by drought, is being affected by drought or at a significant risk of being affected by drought in the future.
- Contribute to at least two of the four program outcomes listed at section 2.2 above.
- Focused on delivery of public good benefits associated with improved drought resilience. Where a project also delivers direct private benefit, we will consider whether there is an offsetting contribution from the private beneficiary or other third party in the context of assessing the proposal against criterion 3 (see section 6).
- Project administration costs (for both smaller and larger grants) must not exceed 10 per cent of the total project funding
- Total grant funding sought must be between \$20,000 and \$200,000 (\$20,000 to \$50,000 for smaller projects; \$50,001 to \$200,000 for larger grants) (GST exclusive).

- For both the smaller and larger grants, all activities must be completed by 30 June 2022.
- All project activities must be eligible activities (see section 5.1).

## 5 What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1 Eligible grant activities

The following project activities are eligible:

- increasing capacity, sharing knowledge and promoting strategies on NRM skills and techniques (such as managing groundcover, soil health and structure, water, biodiversity etc.) with a focus on delivering drought resilience
- implementing and/or showcasing successful NRM methods that improve management of Natural Capital to deliver drought resilience in agricultural landscapes
- establishing demonstrations or sites that enable experimentation and/or implementation of new practices (for example, introduction of new practices related to rotational grazing, regenerative agriculture (crops or livestock), weed and feral pest management actions) that support transformational change<sup>10</sup> in the management of Natural Capital to deliver drought resilience in agricultural landscapes
- implementing the use of or establishing ecosystem services from Natural Capital as a specific land use activity.

### 5.2 Eligible locations

Your grant activities must be offered in agriculture dependent communities.

Projects can be delivered in any region with any agricultural sector vulnerable to drought, regardless of it being currently affected by drought. In this way it is designed to build resilience to future droughts, not respond to the impacts of current or previous droughts.

The agricultural sector in scope includes food, fibre and fodder (including aquaculture), but does not include forestry or fishing.

### 5.3 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible activities (see section 5.1).

All expenditure must occur between the start date and end or completion date for your grant agreement.

### 5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- business-as-usual activities for the participants or beneficiaries of the project
- activities that are reasonably considered to be the same as ones which are already underway, or activities that are so closely related that they could not be reasonably considered to be additional to those already underway or completed
- activities (including purchases of equipment or materials) that could reasonably be considered part of a land manager's ordinary responsibility unless you demonstrate:

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<sup>10</sup> Transformation refers to changes in the way the system functions (for example from crop production to ecosystem services) as a result of implementing these practices, systems or approaches which can be completely novel and innovative or existing ones adapted from different industries, geographic areas or systems.

- a substantial public benefit that would not occur without the grant
- the private beneficiary's contribution to the cost of the project is at least proportional to the private benefit obtained
- research activities and trials of methods that are already well-established best practice for industries or regions relevant to the project. We will still support new research, trials of methods that extend beyond existing best practice, and trialling of best available research that is yet to be implemented
- hospitality (for example, restaurant dinner with alcohol). You can include business catering as part of the grant (for example, sandwiches and drinks at an all-day field trip)
- grants from you to another entity (this does not apply to sponsorship arrangements)
- activities that are the legal responsibility of the applicant or others, such as managing or controlling certain weeds and pests
- subsidies for commercial operations, business start-ups or where the primary activity is for commercial gain, or activities designed to raise revenue for an organisation or individual
- activities with the potential to adversely impact on a matter of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*
- the introduction of plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become, environmental or agricultural weeds and pests
- subsidy of the general ongoing administration costs of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- capital expenditure or construction (for example, leasing of equipment) valued at more than 10 per cent of the total grant amount or earthworks (for example, to prepare for new shelterbelts, rehabilitate dams which may include fencing) valued at more than 25 per cent of the grant amount sought
- overseas travel
- activities outside of Australia (including outside Australia's maritime zone)
- activities that have commenced before execution of the grant agreement
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

**Activities that are funded, or are the subject of a funding application, under other programs**

You cannot use the grant for project activities or costs that have been, are being, or will be funded through any other previous or current Australian Government programs.

If any of your proposed activities are also included in an application for funding that is under consideration through another program at the time of submission, you must declare this and identify the program(s) in question.

## **6 The assessment criteria**

You must address all assessment criteria (1 to 4) in the application form.

We will assess your application based on the equal weighting of 25 points given to each criterion.

The amount of information (including supporting evidence) you provide in your application should be relative to your project's size, complexity and the grant amount requested. In completing the application, you must assume that the assessor knows nothing about your project so ensure your

responses to questions are clear and succinct to allow the assessor to score your application against the following criteria.

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.

All applicants must address assessment criterion 1 to 4 in the application.

### **Criterion 1 (all applicants)**

#### **Alignment of the project with the purpose and outcomes of the NRM Drought Resilience Program - Grants [25 points]**

You should demonstrate this by:

- Describing the proposed project and its objectives
  - What do you want to achieve with your project proposal?
  - What is the proposed project's objective?
- Explaining why you want to achieve the objective
  - Why is it important and worthwhile?
  - What will happen if you do not do your proposed project?

### **Criterion 2 (all applicants)**

#### **Effectiveness of the proposed project activities to achieve the proposed project and NRM Drought Resilience Program - Grants outcomes [25 points]**

Your application will be assessed to determine how well your proposed project activities will achieve the outcomes you have identified. When addressing the criterion you will be required to describe the proposed project activities.

You should demonstrate this through identifying the following:

- What are the proposed project activities, what will you do?
- Please identify which grant activities (see section 5.1) will the proposed project activities meet.
- Describe how the proposed project activities contribute to (at least two of) the NRM Drought Resilience Program – Grants outcomes.
- Outline proposed timeframe for grant activities.
- Describe who will participate and undertake the project activities.
- Describe how each proposed project activity will contribute to achieving the overall project outcome(s).

### **Criterion 3 (all applicants)**

#### **Project proposal suitability for public funding [25 points]**

Your application will be assessed to determine the extent to which the project proposal is value for money and is suitable for public funding. We will consider who will benefit from the proposed project and by how much. We will also consider who else will contribute to the cost of the proposed project and the extent of their contribution.

We will consider whether the public benefits to be achieved by the proposed project are additional to those that would otherwise be achieved, and whether the value of those benefits exceed the amount of the grant sought. We will also consider whether any private benefits to be delivered by your proposed project exceed any private contributions. You should demonstrate this by:

- Explaining how the grant amount requested is appropriate to the outcomes that your proposed project will achieve.
- Describing the public benefits that will occur because of the proposed project including:
  - What will be the benefit to the community from achieving your objective?
  - What value will your proposed project add that would not occur without the project?
- Clarifying whether the project will have consequent private and or public benefits. If so, describe these benefits and the beneficiaries.
  - Who will benefit from your proposed project? What benefits will flow to each beneficiary?
  - How is the private benefit proportional to the private contribution to the cost of the proposed project?
- Explaining how your activity will build on, align and complement existing regional NRM drought and climate priorities.
- Demonstrating the need for your grant activity in your chosen location.

### **Criterion 4 (all applicants)**

#### **Applicant suitability [25 points]**

Your application will be assessed to determine your suitability, and that of any project partners, to deliver against the proposed project objective, do the proposed project activities, administer the grant and report on the proposed project. We will consider your capability and capacity to develop, implement, manage, monitor and report on the project activities you will do, on time and within budget. We will also consider your ability to manage the grant funds, and to assess and manage risk.

You should demonstrate this by describing:

- Your experience with projects of comparable outcomes, scope and budget. Explain how you are capable of implementing, monitoring and reporting on your proposed project.
- How you will engage with relevant stakeholders including, where relevant, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities in proposed project activities.
- How you will promote project outcomes to the broader community. How will you maintain proposed project outcomes (in circumstances where they are not experimental) into the future?

## **7 How to apply**

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the sample grant agreement and the Questions and Answers.

These documents may be found at [GrantConnect](#) website. Any alterations and addenda<sup>11</sup> will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified on any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

You may submit more than one application. A separate application form must be submitted for each proposed project. If more than one application is submitted for the same project proposal the latest accepted application form will progress.

To apply you must:

- complete the online grant opportunity application form on GrantConnect
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application(s) to the [Community Grants Hub](#) by 11.00pm AEDT on 30 October 2020.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax, email or mail. You must use the online application form.

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

If you need more help about the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission 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](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Community Grants Hub will not accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing date and time.

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

Late applications will not be accepted in any circumstance.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application 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](#)

We require the following documents with your application:

The following supporting documents must be attached to your application (a maximum of five documents and each document file no larger than 2 megabytes) for it to be considered compliant and proceed to assessment:

- All applicants are required to submit a proposed project budget using the mandatory template provided. If a mandatory template is not used your application may be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment. In the template, you must:

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<sup>11</sup> Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents.

- include information about the cost of each of the proposed project activities and the overall project
- identify the amount and identity of each contributor to the cost of the activity. You must separately identify cash and in-kind contributions. You must say what contributions you, your partners and other private beneficiaries are making to the proposed project.
- Trust Deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust (if applicable).
- Evidence of support from your organisation’s board, CEO or equivalent and your regional Natural Resource Management body.
- A letter of support signed by each of the consortia partners (required for Joint Consortia applicants only – refer to section 7.2 for details) (if applicable).

You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

## 7.2 Joint (Consortia) applications

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

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 application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the partners. Please scan all letters of support into one document that is no bigger than 2 megabytes (refer to section 7.1 above for attachment requirements).

Each letter of support should include:

- details of the partner organisation
- an overview of how the partner organisation will work with the lead organisation and any other partner organisations in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the partner organisation will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities of the partner organisation and the resources they will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

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

## 7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	29 September 2020
Applications close	30 October 2020
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Up to 8 weeks

Activity	Timeframe
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Negotiation of grant agreement	4 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks (after approval of the outcome of the selection process)
End date of grant activity or agreement	30 June 2022

## 7.4 Questions during the application process

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

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions will be posted on [GrantConnect](#).

## 8 The grant selection process

Applications will be assessed by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment based on the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines. If required, you may be contacted to correct or explain any unintentional errors in your application. The assessors may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

### 8.1 Assessment of grant applications

Community Grants Hub staff will assess your compliance against the requirements of the application process, your eligibility, and the eligibility of your proposed project against these Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will have the final say whether an application is removed from the process. Eligible applications will then be considered through an open competitive process.

An assessment committee will then assess each eligible and compliant application on its merit against each of the assessment criteria (see sections 6 and 8.1) and will compare it to other eligible applications. The assessment committee will be made up of Commonwealth staff who will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

When assessing the application we will have regard to the following broad criteria (in addition to the detailed assessment criteria in section 6):

- alignment with both Future Drought Fund's Funding Plan and the NRM Drought Resilience Program - Grants program's objectives
- the overall objective(s) to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought, including any co-contribution
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives.

The assessment committee may seek additional information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The assessment committee may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

This assessment will inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP).



## 8.2 Selection Advisory Panel (SAP)

The SAP will recommend which grant application should be awarded a grant. The SAP will be established by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and include a mix of departmental executives and other experts nominated by the department such as expert members from the Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared, and members will either be excluded from the process, or managed in accordance with appropriate probity guidance. The SAP will review the shortlist to provide expert advice and quality assurance, probity and transparency over decisions.

The SAP will consider shortlisted applications for:

- how well an application scored against the assessment criteria
- whether the project proposal provides value with relevant money.<sup>12</sup>

All members of the SAP, including non-government members, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The SAP may seek additional information about you or your application. They may do this from within government, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The assessment committee may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The SAP will make recommendations to the Drought Minister about which application to approve for a grant.

The Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board will advise the Drought Minister in relation to making a grant, in accordance with the requirements of the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019*.

## 8.3 Who will approve the grants?

The Drought Minister (or delegate) decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the SAP, taking into consideration any further information that may become known, including the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Drought Minister's (or delegate) decision is final in all matters, including the:

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

There is no provision in the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* for review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal of decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## 9 Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you (via email) about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you will be advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant. Notifications of successful grants will be embargoed pending the Minister's announcements of the outcomes of the grant round.

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<sup>12</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

## 9.1 Feedback on your application

A Feedback Summary will be published on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website to provide all organisations with easy to access information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

## 10 Successful grant applications

### 10.1 The grant agreement

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will use the Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement.

Each agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your grant activities before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Drought Minister. We will identify these in the agreement.

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

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means 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

The Australian Government's *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy* obliges Australian Government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services - including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners - are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds. For example, service delivery partners may require cultural competency skills. In addition, services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency. Based on an assessment of the client target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications (to assist with identifying these costs see the Translating and Interpreting Services costing tool in the grant opportunity documents).

Whilst you are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, you may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- [Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines](#), paragraph 2.9 refers to third parties who undertake grants administration on behalf of the Australian Government
- *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* (the Act), successful grantee(s) will be engaged to deliver the project in accordance with terms and conditions outlined in a grant agreement agreed to by the Drought Minister (or delegate) under section 21 of the Act.
- Future Drought Fund (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024) Determination 2020
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- [Corporations Act 2001](#)
- [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#).

### 10.3 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state:

- the maximum grant amount to be paid
- the proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contributions you must make
- any in-kind contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by a third party.

For both the smaller and larger projects we will pay 100 per cent of the grant on execution of the grant agreement.

### 10.4 Grants 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.

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 department's website as soon as practicable as required by section 27A of the Future Drought Fund Act
- [GrantConnect](#) website within 21 calendar days of execution of the agreement as required by section 5.3 of the [CGRGs](#).

## 12 How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1 Keeping us informed

You will be asked to provide details of the following strategies in the application form and we may ask for reports of progress with these strategies as part of the normal progress reports (see section 12.2):

- A communications strategy to extend the outcomes from the project, leading to stakeholder capacity building, increasing knowledge about, and understanding of transformational practices used in the project and their application by land managers. It should extend beyond the life of the project to create a project legacy.

You will also be responsible for:

- meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement
- participating in a grant program evaluation(s) as specified in the grant agreement
- managing data collected during the project for potential incorporation into relevant national databases.

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

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

We need to know of any key 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.

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 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 or their representative to attend.

### 12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. You must submit progress and final reports in line with the timeframes in the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports with the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- project activities described in your application
- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- cash and in-kind contributions of participants directly related to the project
- eligible expenditure of grant funds.

For larger projects, a project management plan and a risk management plan will be required using the mandatory templates provided.

### **Progress reports**

Progress reports must be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities) and on the template supplied.

You must inform the Community Grant Hub of any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

### **Final report**

You must submit a final report and a financial declaration by the due date on the template supplied.

## **12.3 Financial statement acquittal**

You must provide a financial statement to acquit the project. This must be accompanied by a signed statutory declaration (if an individual) or a financial statement signed by the chair, treasurer or chief financial officer (if a group organisation). The financial statement must include details of how the grant funding was spent against the budget and if the project involved cash or in-kind co-contributions, details on how this was spent/used must be included.

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, which may or may not be granted, by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager.

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.

## **12.4 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.

## **12.5 Record keeping**

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

## **12.6 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 the impact of your project and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

The grant agreement will set out the information, data and reporting requirements to evaluate program specific outputs arising from investments and how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes. You will be required in line with the grant agreement to collect data and information for this purpose, and the legislated review of the Fund by the Productivity Commission (PC) during the third year of the four-year Funding Plan (due 2022-2023). The PC is expected to assess the economic, environmental, and social outcomes of the grant.

We will evaluate each grant, guided by the Future Drought Fund's comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework. The MEL framework identifies the anticipated short, medium and long term outcomes from implementation of the Future Drought Fund. We will use high-level indicators, informed by relevant datasets and analysis to evaluate the success of the Fund against expected outcomes. At this level, the indicators will identify progress towards

achieving overall drought resilience that is evaluated against a baseline established before programs are implemented. The MEL framework will also clearly articulate how the specific program interventions will lead to improved drought resilience and direct attribution to the Fund investment.

## 12.7 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 Australian Government by using one of the following statements:

*'This program/project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.'*

or

*'This program/project is supported by [project providers name], through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.'*

If there has been more than one funding body, the following statement should be used:

*'This program/project is supported by [project providers name], through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and [other funding body's name].'*

If the program provider/project participant has also provided funding, the following wording should be used:

*'This program/project is jointly funded through Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the [organisation name].'*

Successful applicants will be provided with the logo (available for use in a variety of electronic formats), together with further guidance material as required.

## 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 of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

### 13.1 Enquiries and feedback

The Department of Social Services feedback and complaints process apply 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 sent to [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.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 (DSS) website, or contact the DSS Complaints line.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto: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 of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 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 of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://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 Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 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
- 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 or
- 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 interests 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 of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 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 disclose 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 1988](#) 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 of Agriculture, Water and the Environment would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

### 13.4 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose 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 three 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:

- the committee and other 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 in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

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 (DSS)  
                           GPO Box 9820  
                           Canberra ACT 2601

By email:         foi@dss.gov.au

## 14 Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <a href="#">Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</a> .
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
agriculture dependent communities	refers to rural, regional and remote communities vulnerable to the impacts of drought.
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.
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.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)</i>	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 makes a decision to award a grant.
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.

Term	Definition
grant	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>13</sup> or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money<sup>14</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
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.
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 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 Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> Program.
landscape-scale	refers to the wider region or group of regions that share the same range of ecosystems, and within which individual farming properties are located.
Natural Capital	Natural Capital is the stock of natural assets, including vegetation, soils, water, animals and microorganisms, and the ecosystem goods and services they provide that underpin the health and productivity of the landscape.

<sup>13</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

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

Term	Definition
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.
the Fund	refers to the Future Drought Fund legislation, the <i>Future Drought Fund Act 2019</i> , which enables the Commonwealth to make arrangements or grants with a person or body in relation to drought resilience.
Transformational change	a partial or complete change of the activity or business as a result of introducing novel practices, systems and approaches, or adapting existing successful ones from different industries, geographic areas or systems.
value with money	<p>value with money in this document 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved and</li> <li>• the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>