



Australian Government

**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Communities Combating Pests and Weed Impacts During Drought Program — Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds

General feedback for applicants

Summary

The grant round for the Communities Combating Pests and Weed Impacts During Drought Program – *Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds* received 85 applications, of which 83 were eligible. After assessment, 48 were selected for funding, totalling \$15 million.

It was excellent to see the interest shown by stakeholders in the program and successful applications were of a high standard.

The selected applicants provided strong, well-written responses to all the assessment criteria. The proposed activities were eligible, appropriate and effective to achieve the program outcomes and demonstrated their suitability for public funding and value for money.


Program overview

Communities Combating Pests and Weed Impacts During Drought Program — *Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds*

The program is one of the drought assistance programs of the Australian Government. It aims to assist communities manage the impact of wild dogs, vertebrate pest animals and weeds during drought. This program will stimulate economic activities in drought affected areas by facilitating local employment and providing long term benefit.

This was a restricted competitive grants opportunity offering up to \$15 million over the 2018–19 financial year only, for the invited drought affected local councils.

The program is administered by the Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub (the Hub), on behalf of Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR), under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.



There were two opportunities under the program:

Wild dog exclusion fencing

This grant opportunity is intended to provide funding for exclusion fencing for wild dogs in eligible Local Government Areas (LGAs) with an aim to limit the impact of wild dogs on agricultural production and to stimulate employment and training opportunities for local job seekers in the communities suffering from the impact of severe drought.

Pest and weed management activities

This grant opportunity is intended to fund projects that control/manage priority pests and weeds in eligible LGAs. It aims to increase stocking rates for farm businesses and agricultural output by reducing competition for fodder and native plants from vertebrate pests and weed species and to stimulate economic activity and increase local employment.

Selection process

Projects were selected through a restricted competitive process.

All applications that passed the initial compliance and eligibility checks were assessed and moderated against the assessment criteria. A Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) was convened to provide additional geographical insight and industry expertise. The SAP was comprised of a Chair and two members determined by DAWR. The SAP made final selections based on the strength of the applicants' responses to the assessment criteria and their demonstrated ability to meet the requirements of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Final approval of projects was made by the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

General feedback for applicants

This feedback aims to enable applicants to strengthen any future submissions. It is based on feedback provided by the Hub assessment team and Selection Advisory Panel during the funding round as well as experience from other funding rounds.

Writing and providing details

Applications should clearly and concisely address the selection criteria. It is difficult to assess poorly written and verbose applications, so careful editing is advised. The use of sub-headings and dot points can also assist to improve the readability of applications.

A number of applicants did not effectively utilise the word limits in their applications, providing too much background information but not enough detail on the proposed project. Low scoring applications often lacked sufficient detail to describe the:

- *need for the grant activity* – applications that provided limited or no details about the need of project activities generally did not score well. Assessors need to be able to determine from the application why the proposed activity is needed and how it will address the need. Higher scoring applications provided quantitative evidence to demonstrate need of the activity and explain how this would address the need.
- *project effectiveness*– applications that did not clearly determine the effectiveness of project to achieve the program outcomes did not score well. Applications that provided measured contribution to the achievements and showed how much the project will achieve the program outcomes were generally well rated by assessors. Higher scoring applications clearly articulated the project effectiveness and how this would contribute to program outcomes.

Contribution towards program outcomes

To be awarded funding, applications needed to clearly demonstrate that the project would deliver the program objectives.

The program grants are to support drought affected LGAs across Australia that facilitate local employment, stimulate economic activity and provide a long-term benefit to communities where projects take place.

In general, many unsuccessful applications did not sufficiently demonstrate how their project would contribute to program outcomes, with some projects seeming to have limited relevance to the program. In particular, in order to improve a project's relevance with the program, applicants should consider:

- checking the Grant Opportunity Guidelines to ensure that the proposed project is a good fit for the program
- demonstrating the need for the project in the LGA
- ensuring that the application clearly demonstrates how the proposed project meets the program outcomes and links project activities to the project outcomes
- how much the project will use local resources, how the project will increase local employment and how the project will provide long term benefit to local agriculture
- justifying the delivery approach.



Capacity to deliver

Unsuccessful applicants commonly did not strongly demonstrate that they have the capacity to successfully deliver the project. To rank highly, applicants should:

- demonstrate their ability to manage Commonwealth and/or state government grant funding responsibly and effectively
- include a strong focus on the capability to engage relevant expertise, including any technical expertise, required to achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders
- clearly articulate how they will measure outcomes and progress towards achieving the objectives of the grant opportunity.

Criteria specific feedback

Criterion 1 - What is the need for the grant activity in the eligible LGA?

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



Criterion 2 - Describe how the development and implementation of the grant activity will contribute to achieving the program's objectives

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



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

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



Criterion 4 – Stakeholder engagement and employment

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