



# Our Marine Parks Grant – Round 4

## Feedback for applicants

---

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Our Marine Parks Grant – Round 4 grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process below.

### Overview

The application submission period opened on 20 July 2023 and closed on 27 September 2023. The grant opportunity received 109 applications.

The Our Marine Parks Grants Round 4 grant opportunity will support organisations, including First Nations peoples and organisations, to build their capacity to take an active role in the management of Australian Marine Parks, support evidence-based decision making, and improve ecosystem health.

There was a strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. Applications were assessed in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process below.

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

### Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered eligible and compliant applications through an open competitive grant process. The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing applications the panel took into consideration a number of factors incorporating the inclusion/exclusion of late applications, the volume of applications received, meeting the identified requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the available funding envelope.



---

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- which applications provided strong merit and represented superior value for money while achieving a spread of projects across the type of applicants and across the Australian Marine Parks network, guided by policy objectives and the grant program outcomes, namely:
  - Active engagement of First Nations peoples in the management and protection of the marine environment in or adjacent to Australian Marine Parks.
  - Enhanced capacity of First Nations peoples to manage Sea Country in or adjacent to Australian Marine Parks.
  - Increased First Nations employment and business associated with the sustainable use and management of Sea Country in or adjacent to Australian Marine Parks.
  - Enhanced protection and conservation of biodiversity and other natural, cultural and heritage values of marine parks in the Australian Marine Parks network.
  - Improved ecosystem health and resilience, and a greater understanding of Australian Marine Parks values and the pressures impacting them.
  - Scientific information to support evidence-based marine park management such as to inform environmental assessments, adaptation and restoration activities and review the preparation of Australian Marine Park management plans.
  - Research and monitoring to contribute to the sustainable use and management of Australian Marine Parks.

In accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, the panel's final recommendations to the decision maker were informed by consideration of the following factors:

- the initial merit-based assessment category (that is, alignment against the assessment criteria)
- proportionality of costs to expected impact and value with money (noting that projects that demonstrate in-kind support, or leverage additional funding through project partners, will be assessed higher than those that do not)
- wider social and economic impacts
- contribution to Australia's international obligations
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates it will contribute to meeting the outcomes and objectives of the Our Marine Parks Grant Round 4
- the risks – financial, fraud, delivery and other – that the applicant or project poses for the department or for the Commonwealth
- distribution of grants across type of applicant and Australian Marine Parks
- how the grant activities will impact on, leverage or be led by First Nations or local community groups
- legacy outcomes – that will lead to long term benefits for the management of Australian Marine Parks
- innovation in contributing to achieving the grants objectives
- compliance with legislation, policy and industry standards.

Final approval of the successful projects including the amount of grant funding to be awarded was provided by the Minister for the Environment.



---

## Selection results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criterion.

The Community Grants Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criterion.

### Criterion 1

Demonstrated how their project met one or more of the grant opportunity objectives.

- Clearly articulating the need or problem.
- Outlining the proposed “solution” (grant activities), and identify their expected impact, value or importance, in the context of the Grants Program’s intended objectives (section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).
- Identifying clear, specific and achievable project outcomes that contribute to the delivery of the Our Marine Parks Grants Round 4 Program objectives.
- Identifying the project location within one of more Australian Marine Park(s) as identified at section 5.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Strong applications demonstrated:

- clear benefits to Australian Marine Parks
- how specific activities would achieve the objectives of the grant opportunity
- the activities to be undertaken, project outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, in-kind contributions, and risks and dependencies
- the need for the project and/or the gaps the project would meet
- how the proposed project does not duplicate other activities
- how the proposed project leverages off existing knowledge (if available).

Weaker responses to the criteria did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:

- the specific deliverables of the grant activity, and/or how the grant activity would be implemented
- how the project activities aligned with the objectives of the grant opportunity and provided benefits to Australian Marine Parks
- how First Nations peoples and/or marine park users’ engagement would be facilitated by the project.



---

## Criterion 2

Demonstrated how your project will benefit and engage First Nations peoples and/or the local community and stakeholders.

- Engaged or otherwise benefited First Nations peoples and communities and demonstrated support (written correspondence) from an entity or entities with responsibility for representing relevant Sea Country. The entity could provide guidance on the most appropriate person/organisation to participate in the project. The entity could include:
  - a Registered Native Title Body Corporate
  - a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) or a Native Title Service Provider (NTSP)
  - Aboriginal land councils or corporations established under relevant legislation.
- Described the broader social benefits of the project for the community, marine user groups or stakeholders.
- Described how the local community and/or stakeholders will be involved in the project, including through direct participation, capacity building or communication activities.
- Demonstrated that your project has the support of First Nations peoples and/or the local community.

Strong applications demonstrated:

- engagement with key stakeholders, including First Nations peoples and/or community groups
- genuine engagement with relevant First Nations peoples/organisations and details of how they would be involved in project activities
- social, economic or cultural benefits to First Nations people, communities or marine user groups, including employment opportunities and funding to undertake project activities
- the partnership arrangements with co-contributors
- how stakeholder engagement would occur and how it would lead to improved activity outcomes
- provided written letters of support.

Weaker responses to the criteria did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:

- high levels of co-contributions from their organisation or other partners
- how key stakeholders, community and/or First Nations groups would be involved in the project.

---

### Criterion 3

Demonstrated how your project will achieve value for money.

- Demonstrated high levels of co-contributions (financial and in-kind) from your organisation and/or other parties (such as external partners or state or territory funding schemes/grants).
- Outlined how all costs associated with the delivery of your organisation's activity are price competitive.
- Outlined how any large expenditure item (items over \$50,000) is justified to achieve the objectives of the project.
- Identified opportunities for lower cost solutions (that is, partial funding options or cost savings), where appropriate.
- For research and technological type projects, described how well developed the methods, solutions and technologies are (for example, are they: (1) proven and ready to be applied; (2) at the proof of concept or trial phase; (3) at the initial research phase; or (4) not yet developed). Projects that are more well advanced will be assessed more favourably.

Strong applications demonstrated:

- how project outcomes would be additional to existing activities
- a budget that was value for money, realistic and market value
- how the project would benefit the wider community
- that the budget is proportioned in an effective way to achieve project outcomes
- the co-contributions of partners involved in the project
- high in-kind contributions.

Weaker responses to the criteria did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:

- financial or in-kind contributions from the applicant or partners
- reasonable budgeted costs in relation to the project, including administration and capital costs.

---

## Criterion 4

Demonstrate your capability to deliver the project on time and within budget.

- Demonstrated your organisation's experience or ability to develop and implement similar projects using relevant examples.
- Described the relevant skills, experience and qualifications of key personnel and their role in the project.
- Explained the governance, management, financial and administration systems that your organisation will use to help deliver the activity on time and within budget.
- Identified areas of risk or uncertainty relating to project delivery, and how those issues might be handled.

Strong applications demonstrated:

- the experience of the key personnel and organisation in administering grants and securing outcomes
- how partner organisations also had the capacity to successfully deliver similar projects
- key personnel with the appropriate skills and experience, and how those key personnel were engaged in the project deliverables
- established governance and administrative arrangements within their organisation and with key partners.

Weaker responses to the criteria did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:

- how key personnel would be involved in managing the project and their capabilities
- the organisational systems in place to support the delivery of the project as described in the project plan.

## Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be available on request.

Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to [AMPGrants@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:AMPGrants@dcceew.gov.au). Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 30 days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 30 days of receipt of the request.