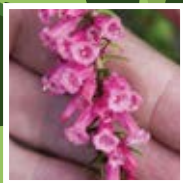


Communities for Nature

2014
Funding
Guidelines



Grants to support practical local action in the environment

Department of
Environment and
Primary Industries



Communities for Nature

Grants to support practical local action in the environment

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2014



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Minister's Foreword



Four years ago I launched the \$20 million Communities for Nature program with the aim of boosting practical local action to address local environmental issues.

Now in its final year, I am so proud of what everyday Victorians have achieved by working together to make a real difference in their local communities.

More than \$15 million was provided from 2011 to 2013 to directly support hundreds of projects of environmental significance in Victorian towns and cities.

There is \$4 million still available, with \$2 million for Round 4 so I encourage schools and volunteer organisations to take an active and shared responsibility to support this important work.

Look around at your nearby parks, waterways or reserves – there may be something happening in your backyard where you believe you can make a difference.

Maybe you have an idea to upgrade your local river or creek reserve, or you want to build nest boxes or improve habitat for threatened species? It could be a revegetation project to enhance the flora and fauna in your town or perhaps you need to control weeds or pest animals?

Talk to your teachers, students, friends, neighbours, family or your local council about submitting an application. If you have previously applied for a grant, we encourage you to apply again if you have a project you are passionate about.

Community and volunteer groups are vital to delivering on-ground projects and management specific to a local area. These groups contribute to our environmental knowledge, improve environmental outcomes and make a difference in their local communities.

Communities for Nature is a way of recognising and supporting the amazing efforts of these groups.

The following guidelines provide an overview of the application criteria and information on how applications are assessed.

I look forward to seeing the results of projects achieved through this latest round of Communities for Nature.

The Hon. Ryan Smith MP

Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Communities for Nature

Grants to support practical local action in the environment

What is the Communities for Nature grants program?

The Communities for Nature grants program will provide better support to community groups to enable them to participate more effectively in environment programs.

The Communities for Nature grants program seeks to:

- support practical community action to deliver measurable environmental outcomes;
- support community groups and volunteers undertaking works of primarily an environmental nature; and
- support communities with relevant and timely information to assess priorities at the local level to determine the best returns in undertaking on-ground works.

Projects should be locally based and focus on:

- biodiversity and habitat preservation
- threatened species recovery and sustainable management of native wildlife
- revegetation and native tree planting in the Melbourne metropolitan area
- cleaning up waterways
- improving water quality in the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay and their tributaries
- control of weeds and pest animals
- community engagement.

What funding is available?

The Victorian Government is inviting applications from the community who are seeking support to improve their local natural environment and conserve local biodiversity values.

Applications are being sought for small grants of up to \$10,000.

Single year projects that will be completed by **30 June 2015** are eligible for funding.

Applications open at **4.00pm on Thursday 13th March 2014** and close at **4.00pm on Friday 11th April 2014**.





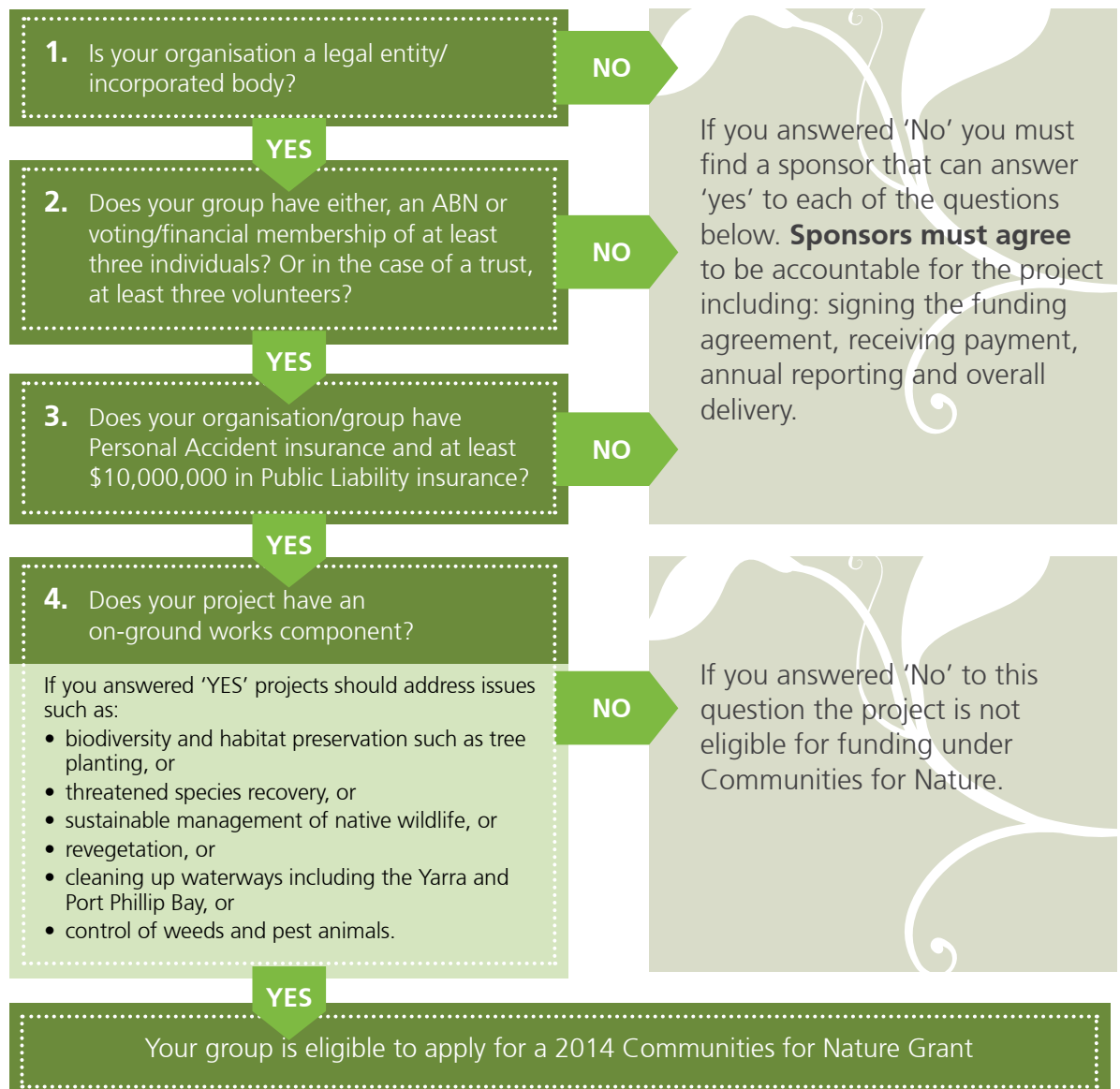
Who is eligible?

Communities for Nature grants are targeted towards local community groups and organisations, including schools.

Please note that if your group is considered a peak body (organisations whose membership consists of more than one small group that has common or related interests), your project will need to be locally place-based and focused on practical on ground measures to address local needs rather than state or nationally focused issues.

To be eligible for a Communities for Nature grant:

- you must answer yes to each question below OR
- have a sponsor who can answer yes to each question.



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Who can be a sponsor?

The following organisations can participate as a sponsor[^], but are NOT eligible to apply in their own right:

- catchment management authorities
- water authorities
- industry bodies
- state government statutory bodies/authorities
- state government agencies (except for schools)
- local government.

The following are NOT eligible to apply for or sponsor a project:

- commonwealth government agencies
- private individuals
- private companies and private trusts.

[^] *Sponsors must be able to meet the eligibility criteria as outlined on page 5.*



What might be funded?

The Communities for Nature grants program intention is to support local communities to address issues of environmental significance that will result in long term improvement to biodiversity and benefit the broader community.

Projects are expected to address local environmental issues such as:

- biodiversity and habitat preservation such as tree planting (preservation of areas known for their biodiversity and habitat values); or
- threatened species recovery; or
- sustainable management of native wildlife; or
- revegetation (of areas that enhance existing habitat or connectivity); or
- cleaning up waterways# including the Yarra and Port Phillip Bay (creeks, wetlands, streams, rivers and seas); or
- control of weeds and pest animals.

For all eligible activities, groups must demonstrate that they are utilising best practice management techniques and have taken safety, cultural heritage and biodiversity impacts into account. Advice on these matters should be sought from the Grants Information Line.

cleaning up waterways activities may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- constructing fishways
- constructing in stream barriers
- constructing sediment traps
- fencing
- controlling pollution point sources
- removing pollutants
- removing rubbish
- replacing logs in stream
- assessing water (quality) habitat elements.



What might be funded?

Projects are expected to:

- be on either public or private land or both and have consent of the land owner/manager; (for activities on private land, project works must demonstrate community benefits and contribute to wider landscape scale improvements transcending boundaries. Weed and pest animal control activities must go beyond a landowner's duty of care under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*)
- include on-ground works with work permits where they apply; (applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their local Shire/ Council to determine whether permits for works are required and obtain permits for work where applicable)
- ensure capital items purchased or leased are related to the project's on ground components and become a registered asset with the entity. (Note the purchase of capital items is limited to \$1000);
- ensure re-vegetation works use locally indigenous species only;
- clearly define project costs and show transparent application of funds.

The grants program will support the following categories of expenditure:

- rubbish removal (if necessary prior to site restoration);
- exclusion fencing;
- personal Protective Equipment (such as gloves, goggles and masks);
- materials (chemicals, plants, etc.);
- equipment hire;
- transportation and travel costs (actual or as per ATO reimbursement rates per Km);
- signage;
- printing/design;
- training and certification (if directly related to funded activity);
- site preparation;
- site security (landholder agreements);
- equipment purchase (Note the purchase of capital items is limited to \$1000);
- postage;
- advertising;
- project coordination;*
- environmental assessments;*
- contractors.*

** There is a limit of 20% of project budget that can be allocated to project coordination, environmental assessment or contractors. Applicants will need to demonstrate that project coordination, environmental assessment or contractors is essential to facilitate the on-ground works component of the project and in the case of contractors is for works which your group is unable to carry out.*

Your costing table must show costs inclusive of GST.



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What won't be funded?

Funding is not available for:

- Activities (or components of projects) that have been funded by other funding bodies.
- The purchase of goods for competitions, prizes, give-aways, vouchers or alcohol for any events.
- General operating or travel costs not directly associated with a project/event.
- Projects assessed as not meeting the eligibility and assessment criteria.
- Any activity requiring clearing of native vegetation.
- Activities that involve the use of fire-arms, traps or explosives.
- Any activity required as an offset (as a condition of a permit to clear native vegetation).
- The purchase of capital items exceeding \$1000 in total value.

Assessment process?

The assessment process for grant application is:

1. Applications are submitted online by the due date for that round.
2. Project applications are reviewed to ensure eligibility.
3. Project applications are assessed against the program criteria. Consideration is given to the overall mix of project types and the regional spread of the projects that have been funded through this and other programs.
4. Recommendations are sent to the relevant Minister for approval.
5. Successful projects are announced.
6. Grant funding agreement is signed.
7. Grant money is provided and project begins.

Applications received after the closing date may not be assessed for the current funding opportunity.

What are the application open and close dates?

Applications for this 2014 small grants funding opportunity **can be submitted online from 4.00pm on Thursday 13th March 2014.**

Funding is available for:

- **small grants** for projects up to \$10,000 (GST inc.).

Grant applications must be submitted by the closing date: 4.00pm Friday 11th April 2014.

Please note that paper applications will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted online.





How will applications be assessed?

Small grant applications will be assessed through program alignment, project need and project design.

Program alignment – how well does the project address one or more of the desired grants program outcomes?

Support practical community action in the environment.

What local environmental issue/s does your project address? What are the project objectives? How will the community participate in the project?

Create visible and lasting improvement.

How will the project's benefits be maintained in the long term? What will be achieved as a result of the funding? Does the project fit within a strategic management plan, have a site management plan or align to State or Regional priorities?

Foster greater enjoyment of the natural environment.

How important is the site or issue to the local community and how does it affect the community in its current state? What are the anticipated environmental and community benefits of the project?

Strengthen partnerships and participation by equipping communities with the ability, skills and knowledge to take action safely and with the capacity to optimise resources.

How many partnering groups or organisations are involved in the project? How will the project build skills and knowledge in the local community?

Project need – what is being protected, restored or enhanced? What are the threats impacting on the area now or in the future?

Project design – what evidence do you have that the proposed approach will address the issue? What skills and knowledge will your group (and partners) bring to the project? How do you propose to track progress and ensure you meet your objectives? Are your costs clearly defined and show transparent application of project funds?

Note that applicants are also encouraged to obtain the best levels of co-contribution of resources (in kind, funds, equipment) they can achieve.

If I'm not successful

All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Applicants not granted funding can ask for feedback on their application and are invited to reapply for future funding rounds.



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What are the conditions of funding?

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) signed by the authorised representative of the group or sponsor organisation.

Agreements detail the obligations to use funding, meet performance against described activities, the expected timeline for project expenditure and project reporting requirements and describe how grant recipients will be required to acknowledge the funding support from Communities for Nature grants.

As a guide, the agreed project funding will be available upon the provision of duplicate signed funding agreements and the following documentation:

- insurance certificate of currency by an insurer authorised under the *Insurance Act 1973* as per eligibility criteria on page 5;
- copies of permits for works that apply to the project; (funding does not guarantee your permit will be awarded, you must apply for this separately)
- payment details so that the Department can generate a Recipient Created Tax Invoice on behalf of the applicant;
- photographs of the site/s prior to works.

All successful applicants will be required to provide completion reports, including a map showing the project area, at the completion of projects.

Successful applicants must adhere to all relevant legislation including Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

How do I apply?

1. Check to see if you and your project are eligible.
2. Visit www.depi.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/community-programs/communities-for-nature-grants and download the information pack.
3. Contact the Grants Information Line on **1300 366 356** (during business hours) as early as possible to obtain technical or general advice to assist in completing your application.
4. Seek approval from the site's land manager/owner and consult with your local Council regarding any permits you may need to undertake works.
5. Log on to www.depi.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/community-programs/communities-for-nature-grants click on the application link to create a log on and draft your application. **NB:** your draft can be saved until you are ready to submit.
6. Respond to all the application information requirements and provide all the necessary documentation in the right format.
7. Print a copy of your application prior to submission and check all content. **NB:** You will be unable to edit your application after you submit.
8. Submit your grant application online by **4.00pm on Friday 11th April 2014.**
9. Applicants will receive an automated email confirming receipt of the application.

The contact person for the group, as nominated on the application form, will receive all correspondence from DEPI regarding grant application and administration.

Contact the **Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356** (during business hours) for help accessing the online information pack or completing the application form.





Who can I contact?

For further information, to discuss concerns or for support with project development please contact the Grants Information Line on **1300 366 356** (during business hours) and your query will be directed to a regional technical advisor or the Communities for Nature Program Manager.

*Thank you for your interest in the
Victorian Government's Communities
for Nature Grants program*



Further information:

Contact the Grants Information Line
on **1300 366 356**

Communities for Nature

www.depi.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature

Department of
Environment and
Primary Industries

