



Public Policy - Economics - Government - Strategy

Independent Review of the Lead Environment Community Groups Administrative Grants Program

Final Report

Prepared for the NSW Environment
Trust

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- Public Policy Evaluation & Design
- Cost Benefit, Economic & Social Impact Assessments
- Strategy
- Government Relations
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on the review of the Lead Environmental Community Groups Administration Assistance Grants Program (the LECG program), which is administered by the NSW Environment Trust (the Trust). The LECG provides funds to environment NGOs to support their administrative costs. It was created in 2006 and has awarded \$3.3 million via competitive tender to 31 NGOs since then. Grant recipients are obliged to use their funding to achieve a suite of program objectives including the delivery of *NSW 2021* goals.

The NSW Government is concerned to ensure that public sector spending in general and in the environment sector represents value for money. This review is responding to this objective.

The analysis, key findings and recommendations in this report are based on a thorough desktop review of LECG program funding applications, assessment processes, and acquittal against funding systems; formal survey and interviews with grant recipients, unsuccessful applicants, members of the Technical Committee assessing funding applications, Trust members and Office of Environment and Heritage staff administering the program; and a literature review of grant administration policies and comparative grant programs.

The review finds that the LECG program complies with the seven best practice principles of grant administration and represents value for money for the NSW Government because it is appropriate, effective and efficient (to the extent that environment values can be measured). Consultations indicate that the way in which the program is governed is highly regarded by environment NGOs. When compared to other grant programs in the environment, employment and international development sectors the LECG program is appropriately targeted to available recipients and has appropriate risk management for the volume of funds provided.

One of the key benefits of the program is that it enables NGOs to divert their other available resources to projects and programs which offer the most appropriate opportunities to activate, engage and increase community volunteers over the long term.

The review has found that the LECG funds are properly used by NGOs. However to maintain the integrity of the LECG program it is important to ensure that funds cannot be used to indirectly support political campaigns. This report recommends some action to address this. The report also recommends the creation of two streams of funding within the existing funding pool to improve eligibility equity between large and smaller NGOs and improve delivery against program objectives. Some further recommendations are made to assist the application and assessment process. The review finds that the funding pool is currently appropriate, but in the future could be adjusted to account for inflation and any growth in community volunteering that achieves environmental outcomes.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings

History of LECG Program

1. The LECG program has enabled a much more diverse group of environmental organisations to be funded while also continuing support for some environmental organisations which received assistance prior to 2006.
2. Since the LECG program was introduced total available funding for lead environmental organisations has increased by about 300 per cent and the number of organisations eligible to receive funding has increased by almost 80 per cent.

Program Appropriateness

3. It is appropriate that the NSW Government fund the LECG program because:
 - (a) The LECG program has a defined purpose which is to ensure that environmental NGOs have the capacity to represent environmental issues to the community and government. The need for government to fund NGOs to promote issue representation remains as relevant today as it did when the LECG program was first created. Without the LECG program the capacity of NGOs to activate volunteers and focus their resources on programs and projects is decreased.
 - (b) Doing so is consistent with the role of government and principles of democracy to equip NGOs to effectively contribute to the policy and regulatory process and is also consistent with the objectives in *NSW 2021*.
 - (c) NGOs are unable to rely on other alternative sources of funding to fully support their administrative costs.
4. As an alternative to the LECG program the NSW Government could fund the administrative costs of NGOs by allowing a proportion of program/project costs to be used to support administrative activities. However this may need to be supplemented with some additional dedicated funding to specifically support (1) the capacity of peak NGOs to participate in the public policy process and/or (2) the management and co-ordination of certain environment activities, such as landcare, to harness volunteer networks and activity. This is consistent with the approach taken by the Victorian Government.

Program Effectiveness

5. The LECG program is effective because:
- (a) The funding provided under the LECG program delivers outcomes that are consistent with the objectives of the program. Specifically:
 - (i) The program supports a wide range of community engagement and education activities by NGOs.
 - (ii) It is appropriate and consistent with current objectives of the program for it to support advocacy by NGOs. There is no evidence that the program is directly supporting political activism that is defined as militant activity distinct from advocacy. However to ensure that the program is not indirectly used to support political campaigns the eligibility criteria should be amended to explicitly preclude applications from organisations which are involved in political campaigning.
 - (iii) The program supports the widespread delivery of at least three NSW 2021 goals by all grant recipients and can be shown to support the delivery of a further twelve goals on a case by case basis.
 - (b) The funding provided under the LECG program is used by recipients for the purpose it is currently intended.
 - (c) The eligibility criteria for LECG program funding enables support for a wide range of large and small NGOs involved in various environment activities. It is reasonable for not-for-profit NGOs which operate commercially to be eligible for funding as long as they meet the other eligibility tests. Where NGOs operate commercially it can multiply the effect of government expenditure. To reduce the costs of applying for funding and assessing applications and also strengthen the link between funding and outcomes it would be appropriate to separate the existing pool of funds into two funding streams, one of which caters to larger peak NGOs and one of which is used by smaller regional and local NGOs. This solution is acceptable to the majority of stakeholders consulted during this review.

Program Efficiency

6. The LECG program is efficient because:
- (a) It is an efficient allocation of resources to the extent that environmental values can be measured on the basis that:
 - (i) It is consistent with government's general responsibility to protect public good and prevent market failure.
 - (ii) The supply of funds under the program does not exceed demand for them.

-
- (iii) It supports only a proportion of total NGO administrative costs which is appropriate given that environment activities can have a mix of market based value and intrinsic (public good) values that are not valued by the market.
 - (iv) It enables NGOs to activate and utilise community volunteers to deliver actual environment programs and projects which have a direct benefit to the socio-economic welfare of society. The use of volunteers to complete administrative tasks would not have the same impact.
 - (b)** The LECG program is governed to a high standard, sufficiently transparent and accountable, and is considered a leader amongst government grant programs.
 - (c)** The LECG program includes a number of whole of program risks which can be simply resolved through current or future action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Program Appropriateness

That the NSW Government:

- (a) Consider that it is a public good and appropriate to support the administrative costs of lead environment NGOs, particularly where this promotes the activation of volunteers, enables NGOs to participate in the public policy process, helps NGOs deliver *NSW 2021* goals, and supplies funding that the private market cannot provide.
- (b) Consider that support for administrative costs can be provided through (1) a dedicated funding stream like the LECG program or (2) via general program/project funding which permits some allocation to administrative costs. Similar to other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, where option (2) is used it should be accompanied by other dedicated programs to fund the administrative costs of peak NGOs to specifically enable their public policy contributions and/or specific environment co-ordination activities like landcare.

Recommendation 2: Program Effectiveness

That the objectives of the program be amended by:

- (a) Precluding organisations which undertake explicit co-ordination of political activity which is targeted at individual politicians or political parties. This could be administered on the basis of a warning system (such as three strikes and you're out) but would require the development of a set of guidelines to determine the nature of precluded political activity and an independent mechanism for considering any breaches of this ban.
- (b) Remove the objective to promote “being effective advocates in expressing the community’s environmental concerns”.

Recommendation 3: Program Effectiveness

That the LECG program be separated into two funding streams with separate eligibility criteria as follows:

-
- (a)** For large peak NGOs applications should be for a value over \$20,000pa up to the maximum amount available per year. To be eligible for this funding organisations shall:
- Have a full time physical office presence in NSW
 - Be a representative of a field of environmental activity across the state of NSW
 - Be an umbrella organisation providing the full spectrum of activities expected of a peak environment organisation, including but not limited to (i) education on environmental issues, (ii) seminars and events to promote environmental improvement or preservation, (iii) participation in government policy and legislative development, (iv) support the attainment of Goals 22, 23 and 24 of NSW 2021
 - Have their own constitution and be incorporated under the law of a state or territory as an incorporated association, company or cooperative society at the time of lodging the application
 - Have the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as one of their primary objectives
 - Be a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, have annual audited financial statements and have either a (i) minimum voting financial membership of 60 (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of individuals) and/or (ii) minimum membership of 10 affiliated bodies with an aggregate membership of 400 or more (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of other bodies)
- (b)** For smaller, community and/or volunteer NGOs applications should be for a value less than \$20,000pa. To be eligible for this funding organisations shall:
- Be located and focused on activity in NSW
 - Be a representative of a specialized field of environmental endeavor
 - Support the attainment of Goals 22, 23 and 24 of NSW 2021
 - Be a regional coordinator of community based organisations
 - Be primarily concerned with supporting voluntary community organisations with specialist co-ordination, advice or support services:
 - Have their own constitution and be incorporated under the law of a state or territory as an incorporated association, company or cooperative society at the time of lodging the application
 - Have the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as one of their primary objectives
 - Be a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, have annual audited financial statements and have either a (i) minimum voting financial membership of 30 (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of individuals) and/or (ii) minimum membership of 5 affiliated bodies with an aggregate membership of 200 or more (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of other bodies)

Recommendation 4: Program Efficiency

That:

- (a)** The LECG program should provide for funding over 3 year terms.
- (b)** The LECG funding pool should be reviewed periodically to account for inflation and any growth in community involvement and volunteering that preserves and enhances the environment in NSW.
- (c)** Guidelines should be developed to assist the Technical Committee:
 - (i) Understand the intent of each of the criteria and demonstrate what is required to justify a high, medium or low score for each of the criteria.
 - (ii) Determine what constitutes a “Lead environment organisation” and guidance for the Technical Committee in how is should deal with competing “Lead organisations” in the same field.
 - (iii) Assess applications from National organisations with operations outside NSW.
 - (iv) Assess how applicants satisfy the *NSW 2021* goals.
- (d)** The application process and consistency and quality of applications should be improved by:
 - (i) Providing full working examples of completed applications along with notes to applicants.
 - (ii) Asking more precise questions in the application forms to assist the Technical Committee ensure organisations are sustainable.
 - (iii) The development of a more precise definition of administrative costs that can be funded by the LECG program.
 - (iv) A greater focus on the provision of feedback to unsuccessful grant applicants and also feedback to all applicants on issues/concerns identified by the Technical Committee
- (e)** Guidelines should be developed to assist grantees acquit their spending of LECG funds in a more consistent manner.

1. INTRODUCTION

The NSW Environment Trust (the Trust) has commissioned Aegis Consulting Australia (Aegis) to review the Lead Environmental Community Groups (LECG) Administration Assistance Grants Program (the LECG program). The LECG program is one of a number of grant programs administered by the Trust. However the LECG program is the only program administered by the Trust that offers funding support for the administrative costs of organisations. All other programs administered by the Trust assist with the cost of operational activities.

1.1 Objectives of the Review

This is the first review of the LECG program since it was introduced in 2006. The scope of the review includes the funding allocations in 2006, 2009 and 2012. The review is intended to examine the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the LECG program. In particular the review has been asked to assess:

- The extent to which the program meets the objectives of the lead environmental groups and the NSW Government.
- The extent to which the program supports the role and contribution of lead environmental groups and assists in protecting and improving the environment.
- How the program compares to similar programs in other jurisdictions and sectors.
- The value of the program and opportunity cost if it did not exist in its current form.
- The management of the program by the Trust.
- Any improvements that can be made to the program.

1.2 The Environmental Trust and LECG Program Management

The Trust is an independent statutory body established by the NSW government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the environment of NSW. The key features of the Trust are that it is:

- Empowered under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, and its main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants.
- Administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), Department of Premier and Cabinet.
- Chaired by the Minister for Environment and its other members are the Director-General of Department of Premier and Cabinet (delegated to the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage) and representatives from the Local Government and Shires Associations, the Nature Conservation Council and NSW Treasury.

1.2.1 Objectives of the Trust

The objectives of the Trust are to:

- Encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- Promote research into environmental problems of any kind.
- Promote environmental education in both the public and private sectors.
- Fund the acquisition of land for the national parks estate.
- Fund the declaration of areas for marine parks and for related purposes.
- Promote waste avoidance, resource recovery and waste management (including funding enforcement and regulation and local government programs).

- Fund environmental community groups.
- Fund the purchase of water entitlements for the purpose of increasing environmental flows for the State's rivers and restoring or rehabilitating major wetlands.

The Trust allocates its funding by seeking applications from eligible organisations on a regular basis.

1.2.2 Objectives of the LECG Program

The objective of the funding provided under the LECG program is to assist eligible lead environmental community organisations in NSW to value, conserve and protect the natural environment through:

- Actively involving the community in projects to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Raising community awareness and understanding of, and gathering information on, environmental issues with a view to bringing about Behavioural change across the community.
- Being effective advocates in expressing the community's environmental concerns.
- Being actively involved in program and policy development initiatives with governments and industry bodies on environmental issues and undertaking activities that support Goals 22, 23 and 24 of *NSW 2021*.

NSW 2021 is the NSW Government's ten year strategy to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen local environment and communities. It replaces the previous State Plan as the NSW Government's strategic business plan. The specific goals that the LECG program is aimed at supporting are:

- Goal 22 - Protect our natural environment
- Goal 23 - Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhood and environments
- Goal 24 - Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities

The main objectives of the Trust that are supported by the LECG Program are:

- Promote environmental education in both the public and private sectors.
- Fund environmental community groups.

1.2.3 LECG Program Decision Making

The Trust makes decisions about allocations of funding under the LECG program. Its decisions are informed by the recommendations of a Technical Committee. The OEHS staff administering the Trust perform the secretariat functions necessary to assist the Technical Committee consider applications for funding.

Section 9(1) of the *Environmental Trust Act 1998* (the Act) requires that a Technical Committee be established to assess applications for funding under each of the programs administered by the Trust. Consistent with the Act, the Technical Committee that assesses funding applications under the LECG program has representatives from the NSW Government, community and industry.

Section 14 of the Act provides that the functions of the Technical Committee are as follows:

- The Trust is to refer each application for a grant to a Technical Review Committee of the Trust.
- The committee is to assess the practicability and overall worthiness of each application referred to it and provide the Trust with its assessment.
- A member of a committee may nominate another person to take the member's place in assessing a particular application if the member considers that the nature of the application requires the expertise of that other person.

2. METHODOLOGY

The review was conducted between March and May 2013. Evidence and data to identify and analyse findings and develop options were obtained by the following methods:

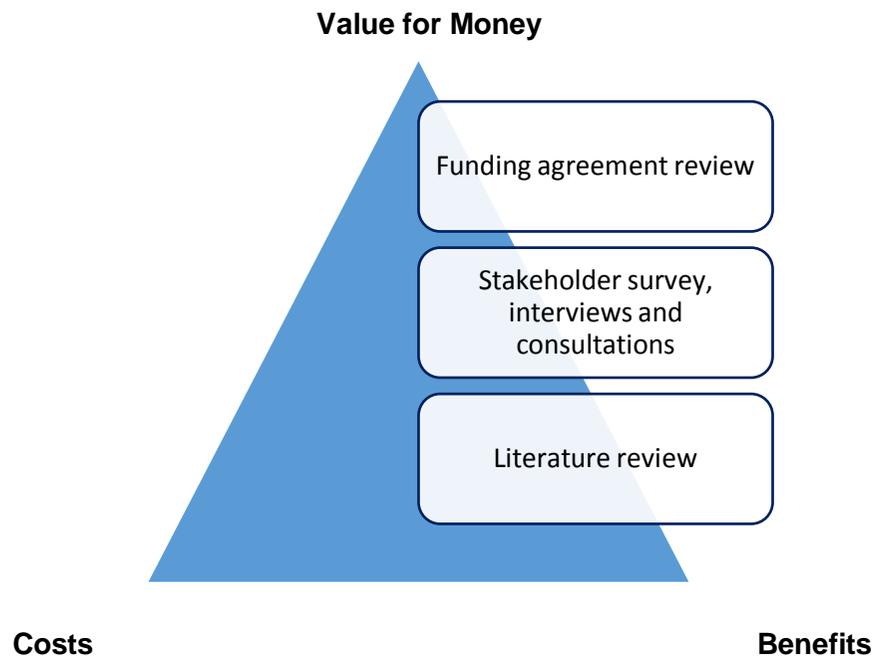
Funding document review. Aegis reviewed the funding allocation decisions in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2012, the contracts governing the grants to recipients, and the acquittals by grant recipients for the funding they received. This was with a view to identifying the terms and conditions of the grant program and how the parties were applying them. Aegis further undertook a detailed analysis of the Technical Committee's application assessment documentation, the use of the assessment criteria and their application of eligibility criteria.

▪ Stakeholder consultations.

- *Written survey of grant recipients.* All 32 recipients of funding since 2006 were contacted by the Trust and asked if they were willing to participate in the review. Of these, 22 recipients responded and all indicated they were willing to participate in the review. All of these 22 recipients were asked to complete a written survey which collected a range of data necessary for the analysis in this report. Aegis received 15 survey responses and therefore obtained base data from about 68% of the 22 grant recipients. Of the 18 grant recipients in 2012 Aegis received survey responses from 15, which represents an 83% response rate. A summary of the responses is at Appendix A.
- *Interviews with grant recipients.* Aegis interviewed 6 organisations receiving grants since 2006. Of these, 5 received grants in 2012. All of the organisations that were interviewed also returned survey responses. The number of interviews represented 27% of the 22 grant recipients willing to participate in the review, and 40% of the 15 organisations which returned survey responses. The interviewees were chosen in order to obtain a cross section of views from large, small, urban and regional lead environmental organisations with varying environmental program priorities.
- *Consultation with unsuccessful grant applicants.* The Trust contacted several organisations which had been unsuccessful in securing grants in the 2012 round. Three of these organisations indicated a willingness to participate in the review and Aegis interviewed all of these organisations.
- *Consultation with Trust.* Interviews were conducted with the Chair and other representatives of the Technical Committee which is delegated by the Trust to assess grant applications with the support of the OEH. Interviews were also conducted with members of the Trust who consider recommendations from the Technical Committee about funding allocations.

- *Consultation with Office of Environment and Heritage.* Aegis held several meetings with the OEH staff responsible for managing the grant process and supporting the Trust. Aegis also consulted with the Chief Executive Officer of OEH.
- *Consultation with the NSW Government.* Aegis consulted with the Minister for Environment and Heritage.
- **Literature review.** Aegis undertook research of NSW Government environment, finance and program management policy to assess whether the LECG program was meeting broader government objectives. Aegis also analysed other comparative grant programs to assess the value being delivered by the LECG program.

Aegis used these sources of information to triangulate and assess the costs and benefits that inform the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency (value for money) of the grant program and options for its shape and delivery.



3. HISTORY OF THE LECG PROGRAM

Key Findings

1. The LECG program has enabled a much more diverse group of environmental organisations to be funded while also continuing support for some environmental organisations which received assistance prior to 2006.
2. Since the LECG program was introduced total available funding for lead environmental organisations has increased by about 300 per cent and the number of organisations eligible to receive funding has increased by almost 80 per cent.

3.1 Funding for NGO Administrative Costs Before and After 2006

The LECG program was introduced in 2006. It superseded the grants that the Minister for the Environment had provided via the Department of Environment and Conservation (now the Office of Environment and Heritage) to five peak non-government organisations since the early 1980s to assist with their administrative expenses.

Since the LECG program was introduced total available funding for lead environmental organisations has increased by about 300 per cent and the number of organisations eligible to receive funding has increased by almost 80 per cent.

Table 1: Comparison of Pre and Post 2006 Funding¹

Period	Number of Years	Total Funding Allocated \$	Average Yearly Allocation \$	Total Organisations Funded	Average Funding Received By Organisations Over The Period \$
1988-2005	17	1,000,093	58,829	7	142,870
2006-2012	6	3,587,777	550,000	32	112,118

¹ Technical Committee Reports to the Trust for 2006, 2009 and 2012

Since 2006:

- A one off grant supplement was allocated in 2007 and acquitted in combination with the 2006 grants. This further expanded the grant program’s reach – though four grant recipients only received funding in that round of funding.
- The LECG program has provided funding for three year terms except for 2012 when funding was provided for one year. The change in the term of funding in 2012 was because of the need to review the program in 2013.
- About one third of the administrative costs that applicants have sought funding for have been determined to be eligible for support by the LECG Program.

Table 2: Overview of LECG Program²

Year of Allocation	Funding Term (Years)	Number Of Organisations Applying For Funding	Total Funding Sought \$	Number Of Organisations Receiving Funding	\$ Total Funding Allocated
2006	3	28	3,831,096	11	900,000
2007	1	19	287,777	19	287,777
2009	3	35	4,707,944	21	1,800,000
2012	1	22	1,368,156	18	600,000
Total			9,907,196		3,587,777

3.2 Impact of the LECG

The LECG program has enabled a much more diverse group of environmental organisations to be funded while also continuing support for some environmental organisations which received assistance prior to 2006. Of the 32 organisations that have received funding under the LECG program, 50 per cent have secured grants in two or more funding rounds.

Key points are that:

- 5 large recognised peak organisations have been funded continuously from 1988 to 2012.
- 1 organisation was funded continuously between 1988 and 1992 and then since 2006
- 5 organisations that were not funded before 2006 have been continuously supported since then.
- 5 organisations that were not funded before 2006 have received funding in two rounds of funding since 2006.

² Ibid

Table 3: Environmental Groups Funded Pre and Post 2006³

	Organisation	1988-1992	1993-2005	2006	2007	2009	2012
1	Australian Association for Environmental Education	\$	-	\$	\$	\$	\$
2	Australian Conservation Foundation	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
3	Australian Conservation Foundation / Inland Rivers Network				\$		
4	Australian Network for Plant Conservation	-	-	\$	\$	\$	\$
5	Australian Seabird Rescue	-	-	-	-	\$	-
6	Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers	-	-	-	\$	-	-
7	Bicycle NSW	-	-	-	-	\$	-
8	Community Environment Network	-	-	\$	\$	\$	\$
9	Conservation Volunteers Australia	-	-	-	-	\$	\$
10	Earthwatch Institute Australia	-	-	-	-	\$	\$
11	Environmental Defenders Office NSW	-	-	\$	\$	\$	\$
12	Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
13	Friends of Koala Incorporated	-	-	-	\$	\$	\$
14	Futureworld National Centre for Appropriate Technology	-	-	-	\$	-	-
15	Greening Australia	-	-	-	-	\$	-
16	Gymac Incorporated	-	-	-	\$	-	-
17	Inland Rivers Network	-	-	-	-	\$	\$
18	International Erosion Control Association Australia	-	-	-	\$	-	-
19	Keep Australia Beautiful Council	-	-	\$	\$	\$	\$
20	Landcare NSW	-	-	-	-	\$	\$
21	Murrumbidgee Landcare Association	-	-	\$	-	-	-
22	National Parks Association of NSW	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
23	Nature Conservation Council NSW	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
24	Parkes and Districts Landcare Incorporated	-	-	-	\$	-	-
25	Planet Ark Environmental Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	\$
26	Shortland Wetlands Centre	\$	-	-	\$	-	-
27	Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services	-	-	-	-	\$	-
28	The Bower Reuse and Repair Centre Co-operative	-	-	-	\$	-	-
29	The Wilderness Society	-	-	-	-	\$	\$
30	Total Environment Centre	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
31	Wetland Care Australia	-	-	-	-	-	\$
32	Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service NSW	-	-	\$	\$	\$	-

Key: \$ means an organisation received funding in this year
 - means an organisation did not receive funding
 Organisations have continuously received funding since 1988

Organisations received funding continuously since 2006
 Organisations received funding 2 or 3 times since 2006
 Organisations (no fill colour) which received funding only once

³ Ibid

4. REASONS FOR THE REVIEW

This review is occurring because:

- Since it was established in 2006, the LECG program has not been subject to an independent review; and
- The NSW Government is determined to improve the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of public sector spending.

The Government's determination in this regard is aimed at improving the sustainability of spending and therefore the capacity of the Government to deliver its *NSW 2021* goals.

The framework for improving the use of public sector funds has been set by the Government's Independent Commission of Audit. The Commission released its Final Report on Government Expenditure in April 2012 and the NSW Government has publicly endorsed its recommendations.

Some of the key findings of the Commission of Audit relevant to this review include that:

- For many years financial management in NSW has been confusing, lacking in transparency and below the standards expected of efficient and effective government.
- Since 2005-06 the State budget has been deteriorating significantly with the growth in expenditure well in excess of the growth in revenue.
- Proper budget management will enable the delivery of all the goals in the *NSW 2021* Plan including strengthening the environment and local communities.
- Government expenditure policy should equip local decision making.
- Since 2007-08, aggregate expenditure growth in grants to Non-Government Organisations has increased by 12% annually.
- The major driver of the relative high expenditure increase over the decade in the environmental area of 7.9% has been grants, particularly aimed at water and energy conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In response to these and other issues, the Commission of Audit made 132 recommendations, supported by the NSW Government.

Two of these recommendations are particularly relevant to this review. These are that:

- Each year NSW Treasury should review the allocation of general government current expenditure to check that it is reflecting government policy and priorities, namely improving the capability of the public service, devolution of service delivery to more local levels, strengthening non-government organisation (NGO) arrangements, focussing on early intervention, keeping people healthy (prevention) and out of hospital, and improving medium to long term planning (Commission of Audit recommendation 1); and
- Agencies, in collaboration with central agencies, should conduct periodic evaluations of their smaller programs and pilots (both existing and new) (Commission of Audit recommendation 131).

This review will enable the Trust and OEHL to participate in these recommended government review processes.

5. VALUE OF THE LECG PROGRAM

5.1 Overview of Value for Money Assessment

A best practice approach to grants administration should include and be governed by seven key principles.

Table 4: Seven Principles of Grant Administration⁴

	Principle
1	Robust planning and design which underpins efficient, effective and ethical grants administration, including through the establishment of effective risk management processes.
2	An outcomes orientation in which grants administration focuses on maximising the achievement of intended government outcomes from the available funding.
3	Proportionality in which key program design features and related administrative processes are commensurate with the scale, nature, complexity and risks involved in the granting activity.
4	Collaboration and partnership in which effective consultation and a constructive and cooperative relationship between the administering agency, grant recipients and other relevant stakeholders contribute to achieving more efficient, effective and equitable grants administration.
5	Governance and accountability in which a robust governance framework is established that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties; establishes the policies, procedures and guidelines necessary for defensible funding recipient selection and administration processes that comply with all relevant legal and policy requirements; and supports public accountability for decision-making, grant administration and performance monitoring.
6	Probity and transparency in which program administration reflects ethical behaviour, in line with public sector values and duties; incorporates appropriate internal and fraud control measures; ensures that decisions relating to granting activity are impartial, appropriately documented and publicly defensible; and complies with public reporting requirements.
7	Achieving value with public money which should be a prime consideration in all aspects of grant administration and involves the careful consideration of costs, benefits, options and risks.

⁴ Commonwealth Grant Guidelines—Policies and Principles for Grants Administration, Financial Management Guidance No. 23, July 2009

Appropriate, effective and efficient grants administration should ideally aim to⁵:

- Equitably and transparently select funding recipients that represent the best value for money to deliver the program objectives; and
- Efficiently and effectively deliver government funding to eligible recipients to achieve desired government policy outcomes.

Value for money is a critical outcome for the expenditure of public funds. The standard approach taken by Australian governments is that the assessment of value for money relies on⁶:

- The nature of the spending by a government agency to purchase or support activities or services; and
- The consideration of relevant issues upon which value for money is based.

In relation to the nature of spending, there are two primary factors to take into account:

- The difficulty of securing a supply of services which means (a) the degree to which the required services present risks or are critical to the agency and (b) the extent to which a competitive market for the supply of services exists.
- The relative expenditure for the services which means their cost relative to the total purchasing expenditure of the agency.

The diagram describes how these two factors can be combined, categorised, compared and applied. Generally, spending in categories 2-4 require a detailed analysis and evaluation of the factors contributing to value for money.

⁵ Australian National Audit Office, Implementing Better Practice Grants Administration 2010, p3

⁶ Australian Government, NSW Government, Queensland Government, State Purchasing Policies

Diagram 1: A Guide to the Nature of Purchasing (Spending)



Based on the guide to spending the LECG program fits comfortably within category one because:

- The expenditure (at \$600,000 per annum) is a very small proportion of the Trust's total expenditure; and
- The provision of environment research, community engagement and advocacy which the LECG is designed to support is easily available from a range of large and small environment NGOs with expertise and capacity in the delivery of these outcomes.

In this context the value for money of the grant program only needs to be assessed against the first two of the following three factors that are often used to judge value which are:

- How the services help deliver government objectives.
- The non-cost or qualitative issues such as fitness for purpose, quality, service and support.
- The whole-of-life costs of the activities funded under the program, including the internal processing costs of acquiring, using, maintaining and disposing of the service. This activity can include comparing the costs of service provision by government and the non-government sector and comparing the unit costs of funding an activity or service against the quantifiable and/or qualitative benefits the activities achieve for government and the community in general.

5.1.1 Summary of the Value of the LECG Program

In section 5 there is a detailed discussion of the issues summarised here. The discussion examines the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the LECG program in order to assess its value in line with the first two factors referred to above.

The table below summarises the value for money of the LECG program against these two relevant factors.

It demonstrates that the grant program provides a range of important values for the expenditure.

Table 5: Value for Money Assessment of LECG Program

Assessment Factor	Criteria	Value for Money of Grant Program	Does the Grant Program Satisfy the Criteria?
Delivery of government objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery of legislative and/or policy objectives ▪ Promotion of public good ▪ Addressing market failure ▪ Support for regional service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivers specific legislative obligations of Trust ▪ Enables scheme participants to engage with the community, represent environment issues, divert resources to environment programs and projects to achieve environment solutions which is a public good and assists to address potential market failure such as the economic and social costs of inappropriate environment and conservation outcomes ▪ Engagement of external service providers with commitment to and expertise and capacity in environment issues can maximise the benefits to the community, build knowledge amongst stakeholders across NSW and enable the equitable delivery of services in regions ▪ Can be used to influence the scope, scale, speed and targeting of services to address government priorities 	Yes
Non-cost issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fitness for purpose ▪ Risk exposures ▪ Benefits to be obtained from the purchase ▪ Compliance with specifications where relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is fit for purpose based on accessibility to all eligible scheme participants ▪ Represents low risk to Trust and assists to reduce social and economic risks associated with poor environment policy decisions ▪ Provides opportunities for community to understand and seek advice environment issues ▪ Current funding contract specifies conditions governing use of funds which enables easy compliance by grant recipients 	Yes

5.2 Program Appropriateness

Key Findings

3. It is appropriate that the NSW Government fund the LECG program because:
 - (a) The LECG program has a defined purpose which is to ensure that environmental NGOs have the capacity to represent environmental issues to the community and government. The need for government to fund NGOs to promote issue representation remains as relevant today as it did when the LECG program was first created. Without the LECG program the capacity of NGOs to activate volunteers and focus their resources on programs and projects is decreased.
 - (b) Doing so is consistent with the role of government and principles of democracy to equip NGOs to effectively contribute to the policy and regulatory process and is also consistent with the objectives in *NSW 2021*.
 - (c) NGOs are unable to rely on other alternative sources of funding to fully support their administrative costs.
4. As an alternative to the LECG program the NSW Government could fund the administrative costs of NGOs by allowing a proportion of program/project costs to be used to support administrative activities. However this may need to be supplemented with some additional dedicated funding to specifically support (1) the capacity of peak NGOs to participate in the public policy process and/or (2) the management and co-ordination of certain environment activities, such as landcare, to harness volunteer networks and activity. This is consistent with the approach taken by the Victorian Government.

The first step in evaluating the value of an expenditure program is assessing whether the program is appropriate. The key questions that generally need to be answered to determine the appropriateness of a funding program are:

- What is the problem or issue that the spending is seeking to resolve and does that issue remain relevant?
- Is it the role of government to fund the activities?
- Can the activities be funded in an alternative way?

5.2.1 The Purpose of the LECG Program

It is clear that continuously since 1988 the NSW Government has considered that it is important to assist environmental organisations with their administrative costs because administrative activities are integral to the capacity of those organisations to educate the community, raise awareness, and represent and advocate environmental issues.

Therefore the issue that the LECG program has been intended to address is the incapacity of environmental NGOs to represent environmental issues to the community and government without financial support from the government.

There is a legitimate and ongoing case that NGOs require government assistance to provide their services. This case relies on the well accepted propositions that:

- Most NGOs operate on a not for profit and non-commercial basis and therefore need public funds to operate.
- Government expenditure on NGOs is valuable because NGOs provide local community based services that are necessary and which government is often ill-equipped to deliver.
- Even where NGOs are large, operate commercially and have access to various sources of funding, government assistance is justified because these NGOs have the economies of scale and cost effective structures to multiply the beneficial impact of government expenditure in ways that government itself would find difficult to achieve.

The Importance of the LECG Program to NGOs Which Receive Funding

In its survey of grant recipients Aegis asked recipients to describe how their capacity to represent environmental issues would be affected if the LECG program was unavailable or funding was decreased.

All of the survey respondents indicated that the LECG program enabled them to fulfill their need for professional administration to meet statutory obligations and effectively manage databases, newsletters, on-line information dissemination, and the co-ordination of forums, events and project activities.

Depending on the nature of the grant and the size of the NGO, most respondents advised that if the LECG program was unavailable or funding decreased it would have an adverse impact on the extent of NGO capacity in some or all of the following ways:

- It would reduce the level of administrative professionalism and their capacity to participate in the public policy process.
- It would reduce the extent to which they communicated with and engaged the community.
- It would reduce some of the more expensive activities such as regional community outreach.
- It would force NGOs to give up face to face education of the community.
- It would reduce volunteer programs and project activity because existing funding would need to be redirected towards fixed administrative costs.
- It would force NGOs to divert funding to cover the cost of rent and other fixed administrative costs.
- It would reduce the capacity of NGOs to assist in the delivery of State Plan *NSW 2021* goals, particularly goals 22, 23 and 24 and government objectives to increase volunteering.

The Importance of the LECG Program to NGOs Which Do Not Receive Funding

To further test the impact on the capacity of NGOs if the LECG program was unavailable, Aegis interviewed a range of diverse NGOs that had been unsuccessful in securing grants under the LECG program. These organisations are:

- *Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN)*. The HEN represents a wide range of environmental issues within a wide geographic area which extends from Camden in the South, the Nepean, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Hunter Valley to the North. It co-ordinates a large number of smaller community based organisations through a virtual rather than physical location.

-
- *Lead Advisory Service (LAS)*. The LAS operates with only one part time staff member. It offers the community advice on the effects of lead poisoning, how to test gardens and homes for lead contamination, how to safely remove sources of lead contamination, and how to best cope with the results of lead contamination. It makes submissions to government on any activity which might result in exposure to lead contamination and operates as a link between households, environmental activists, medical service providers and the scientific and research communities.
 - *Blue Mountains Plant Rescue Service (BMPRS)*. The BMPRS is focused solely on the protection of plant species in the World Heritage area of the Blue Mountains. It actively propagates native plants and sells them to developers, and those interested in protecting the native plants of the Blue Mountains nature conservation area. All funds raised are used to support the activities of the service. It works in close cooperation with several government agencies including local councils, Centrelink and the Department of Juvenile Justice on programs designed to deliver skills to offenders, promote respect for the environment and ensure the propagation of native plants in the precinct.

The key common themes arising from consultations with these NGOs are that:

- All of these organisations have administrative functions that the LECG program is intended to support.
- All of these organisations rely on community volunteers.
- All these organisations offer education to the community generally, to members and assist in both local and State Government decision making as it relates to their areas of focus.
- Failure to secure funding under the LECG program has reduced their effectiveness and the sophistication of their service delivery.
- The reliance on volunteers to complete administrative activities results in high volunteer turn over which adversely affects organisational continuity and reduces the capacity of the NGOs to leverage increased volunteer contribution for programs and projects.

5.2.2 Role of Government

The environment is generally viewed by responsible governments as a public good and an inter-generational legacy worth preserving. As a result these governments embed a range of measures to promote and continuously improve environmental protection and conservation, including funding the activities of non-government organisations that research, advocate and deliver environmental outcomes. This is the case in NSW and is reflected in the goals of *NSW 2021*.

The environmental protection and conservation measures that governments choose to take reflect the significant value that both domestic and the global society place on the conservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems and habitats. For many years this value has been reflected in the World Conservation Union (IUCN), which was established in 1948 to “influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”. The IUCN has over 1000 government and NGO members, as well as more than 11 000 volunteer scientists from about 160 countries, including Australia⁷.

More recently, the value that the international community places on environment and conservation has also been captured in the *Convention on Biological Diversity 1992* (CBD). The CBD is an international treaty and the paramount legal instrument governing the conservation of biodiversity. Every nation in the world, with the exception of the United States of America, has ratified the CBD⁸.

Two of the indicators of the value that the Australian community attributes to the environment and conservation are (1) the fact that the Australian government is a signatory to the CBD⁹, and (2) the extent of regulation that the Commonwealth and State parliaments have and continue to enact to implement the CBD and promote and improve biodiversity outcomes¹⁰.

As part their commitment to the international principles of environment protection and conservation governments in Australia and globally recognise the need for their communities to understand and be aware of environmental issues. In democratic societies environmental awareness is easily and acceptably translated into responses to and advocacy about environmental issues. This includes challenges to

⁷ Information from the ICUN

⁸ Convention website <http://www.cbd.int/countries/>

⁹ Australia ratified the CBD on 18 June 1993

¹⁰ Commonwealth Department of Environment

government policy and regulation that may be perceived to result in outcomes that are inconsistent with the international value placed on environment protection and conservation. Governments generally accept these challenges as a natural part of the democratic process.

Where governments want the public policy and regulatory development process to be properly informed by diverse views they will seek to ensure that environmental NGOs are equipped to be able to contribute effective and useful research and analysis to government decision making.

Funding the capacity of environmental NGOs to contribute to the policy process often means that governments can be confident that their proposals are either challenged or supported for substantial reasons that can withstand public scrutiny. Accordingly, government consideration of these inputs from environmental groups can lend credibility to any final policy or regulation.

The overall findings of the NSW Commission of Audit support a move away from larger government and excessive spending towards smaller government that uses public funds to harness effective partnerships between government and other sectors and encourages local participation and ownership of issues and solutions.

Funding environmental NGOs and supporting their capacity for contribution is consistent with this direction because doing so helps government:

- Build the strength and capacity of the community and voluntary sector.
- Leverage the lower cost structures and access to a voluntary workforce that NGOs have.
- Harness the close relationships that NGOs often have with local and regional communities, marginalised communities and special interest groups.
- Access the specialist local knowledge or expertise that NGOs often have.
- Enlist NGOs to bring people together in constructive relationships to work directly with communities to achieve shared goals.

5.2.3 Alternative Funding Sources for NGO Administrative Costs

There are a range of potential sources of funding that environmental NGOs can generally draw upon to support their costs, other than NSW Government expenditure. These sources include:

- Commonwealth Government Grants.
- Corporate sponsorship.
- Individual donations.
- Membership fees.
- Use of volunteers.

In practice however, not all these potential sources can be fully used to support the administrative costs of NGOs.

Commonwealth Government Grants

The Commonwealth Government provides the Grant for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO). These grants are available to all environmental NGOs in NSW¹¹. Data provided by OEHL indicates that between 2007 and 2012 the GVEHO program was successfully accessed by 17 NGOs that had also received LECG program funding since 2006. The key points from this data are that:

- 54 per cent of all LECG grant recipients had also received a GVEHO grant.
- The GVEHO grant was accessed by large and small NGOs.
- Except for three organisations, all the recipients received grants in three or more years between 2007 and 2012.
- Grants in any one year ranged from \$1,500 to \$87,000.
- The total funding was about \$575,000, with one organisation receiving a total of \$356,000.
- After the large amount provided to one organisation, the remaining 16 NGOs each received an average of \$13,000 over the period.

¹¹ Commonwealth Department of Environment

This data is consistent with the information provided by respondents to the Aegis survey as part of this review. Eight of the fifteen survey respondents (53.3%) advised that they receive some funding for administration from the Commonwealth. This ranged from funding which covered 2% of administration costs up to 23% of administration costs for one organisation.

The remaining seven respondents indicated that the only government funding they received to support their administration costs was from the LECG program.

While the GVEHO program is another source of funding for environmental NGOs it can be considered a supplementary, rather than full alternative, support for NGO administrative costs. This is because over the same period as the LECG program:

- It has provided \$0.57 million in funding to NGOs compared to the \$3.3 million provided by the LECG program.
- It has provided an average of \$13,000 to 16 NGOs compared to the average of \$106,000 the LECG program has delivered to 31 NGOs.

Corporate Sponsorship¹²

Funding from the corporate sector is available but cannot generally be relied on by all NGOs to consistently support their administrative costs. This is because:

- Corporate sector sponsorship is generally delivered via corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and business commitment to funding CSR programs often varies with business profitability. Business commitment to CSR programs is generally weakest at times of economic uncertainty.
- Companies are increasingly moving their CSR programs to a shared value model which requires CSR funds to be spent on community activities that also deliver real value to the business. This is a very different approach to the traditional one where companies often allocated CSR funding to activities that had no relationship to their business. The shared value approach will generally deliver greater benefit to large, well established NGOs with diverse agendas as the nature of these organisations mean they are more likely to have priorities in common with the private sector.

¹² The analysis in this section is based on the consultations that Aegis has held with several of its private sector clients and the responses from NGOs to the Aegis survey conducted for this review.

- Consistent with the shared value approach CSR funding is often tied to specific programs and projects with definable and reportable outcomes. This approach does not suit the provision of funding for administrative costs.
- Many companies use their CSR programs as a tool to engage their employees. This means that employees are empowered to put forward the issues and organisations that they believe their companies CSR program should support. This process is likely to generally favour large organisations which have profile amongst corporate employees, although it can also assist smaller single issue NGOs. In either case, CSR funding is unlikely to be requested or provided for administrative costs.
- Instead of providing financial support for NGOs many companies prefer to contribute in-kind support such as the time of their staff or use of their premises or services. Generally in-kind support is provided for specific projects and programs that have outcomes against which in-kind support can be measured. Again, this does not suit support for administrative costs.

Corporate sponsorship in whichever form it may take is not an alternative to government funding of NGO administrative costs. If environment protection and conservation is considered to be a public good, then part of government's role is to prevent market failure having an adverse impact on environmental outcomes. The tendency for corporate CSR funding to vary in changing economic environments can represent a market failure in circumstances when environment NGOs solely reliant on CSR funding to deliver a public good are adversely affected. One of the ways that government can avoid this market failure is to provide NGOs with certainty in relation to support for their administrative costs.

Individual Donations

Funding from individual donations raised through fundraising and marketing is also available but cannot generally be relied on by all NGOs to consistently support their administrative costs. This is because donors often want assurance that their contributions are being used to fund specific programs or projects, not administrative costs. When NGO administrative costs are funded by government they are able to dedicate funds from donors to operational activities.

Membership Fees

Funding from membership fees can be used to support administrative costs, as members accept that their fees may be and should be used for this purpose. However a reliance on membership fees can be problematic for smaller NGOs who have limited membership bases. Part of the

role of government in the promotion of environment and conservation outcomes as a public good is achieving as much equity and diversity in the environmental NGO sector. This diversity also assists government to obtain varying national, regional and local views about environmental issues as part of the public policy and regulatory development process. Government funding of administrative costs of NGOs regardless of size and membership capacity is consistent with this goal.

Use of Volunteers

One of the significant values offered by NGOs is their capacity to attract and harness the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers. However the use of volunteers to support administrative activities is not as simple as it might first seem. Some common themes emerged in relation to this in the responses to the Aegis survey undertaken for this review. These are:

- Volunteers are keener to actively participate in projects where they can understand the actual impact their effort is having.
- When volunteers are engaged to provide administrative support they are less enthusiastic and this results in a high turnover. This can have a detrimental effect on the capacity of the NGOs to retain corporate knowledge, undertake research, continue the management of grants, apply for grants and maintain organisational compliance obligations.
- Volunteers in administrative roles are often required to manage databases, publications and websites and organisational compliance with a range of regulation including statutory financial reporting, insurance, work health and safety, and fire safety. These activities are not typically attractive for volunteers.
- The LECG program is particularly important because it allows NGOs to utilise volunteers more effectively in operational roles that have a direct link to achieving the environmental objectives of the Trust and NSW Government.

5.2.4 Alternative Ways for Government to Support NGO Administrative Costs

There are two basic ways that government can support the administrative costs of NGOs where it chooses to do so. These are:

- By providing funding programs specifically for administrative costs; or
- Permitting administrative costs to be supported with funding that is mainly provided for programs and projects.

Both of these approaches are used by governments. Comparative approaches are discussed in detail in section 7 of this report, however some discussion of this is relevant to the issue of program appropriateness.

In relation to the environment sector, amongst the governments of Victoria, South Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and Queensland, only the NSW and Commonwealth Governments have funding programs that are dedicated to specifically supporting NGO administrative costs¹³. In the other jurisdictions, governments only provide funding to support specific environment programs and projects, but in the cases of Victoria and Western Australia a proportion of this funding can be used for administrative costs¹⁴. In Victoria the proportion of program costs that can be spent on administration is capped at 15 per cent and in Western Australia it is 10 per cent. The option of allowing a proportion of program and project funding for NGOs to be used for administrative costs is the approach generally taken by governments in the social policy sector¹⁵.

While the Victorian Government does not provide a dedicated general funding stream for NGO administrative costs like the LECG program, it does recognise the value of supporting NGO administrative costs because it provides separate funding for:

- *The Victoria Naturally Alliance (VNA)*. This alliance is the peak environment NGO in Victoria and is made up of the Victorian National Parks Association, the Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Environment Victoria, Greening Australia, BOCA, Invasive Special Council, Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage Australia. The funding of the administrative costs of the VNA are shared by the Victorian Government and private sector¹⁶.
- *Landcare facilitators*. The role of these facilitators is purely an administrative one and involves the management and co-ordination of landcare activities by NGOs and other groups. These roles were funded and performed by the Commonwealth Government until funding

¹³ Material provided by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

¹⁴ Consultations with the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment. And material provided by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

¹⁵ Aegis experience in the Indigenous, disability, ageing, family and community services, human services and welfare management policy sectors. See section 7 for the discussion about AusAid funding.

¹⁶ Aegis consultations with the Victorian Naturally Alliance and Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment

was terminated in 2006. The current Victorian Government introduced a 3.5 year \$10M funding program to reinstate landcare facilitators but has insisted that these roles be performed by environment NGOs, rather than government officials. The program funds 68 landcare facilitators across Victoria. One of the key reasons that the Victorian Government has decided to reinstate this program is the volunteer network and activity that such administrative and co-ordination roles can activate and leverage¹⁷.

The accountability for expenditure on administrative costs and the measurement of outcomes it may support does not necessarily depend on whether funding is provided through a dedicated or general program. What is important is the quality of the expenditure acquittal process that the government agency deploys to assess and monitor how funding has been used. However, it may be easier to monitor the use of funds spent on administrative activities when those expenditures are separated from project spending.

While other smaller jurisdictions provide only program and project funding, it is considered that NSW, as the leading and largest State in the Commonwealth, should maintain some support for administrative costs for NGOs. This is consistent with the practices of the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. This can be achieved through the current LECG program or a revised approach that enables a proportion of program/project funding to be allocated to administrative activities. When considering the most appropriate option, the survey responses of NGOs about the impacts of changes in funding discussed in section 5.2.1 of this report should be taken into account.

Recommendation 1

That the NSW Government:

- (a) Consider that it is a public good and appropriate to support the administrative costs of lead environment NGOs, particularly where this promotes the activation of volunteers, enables NGOs to participate in the public policy process, helps NGOs deliver *NSW 2021* goals, and supplies funding that the private market cannot provide.
- (b) Consider that support for administrative costs can be provided through (1) a dedicated funding stream like the LECG program or (2) via general program/project funding which permits some allocation to administrative costs. Similar to other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, where option (2) is used it should be accompanied by other dedicated programs to fund the administrative costs of peak NGOs to specifically enable their public policy contributions and/or specific environment co-ordination activities like landcare.

¹⁷ Ibid

5.3 Program Effectiveness

Key Findings

5. The LECG program is effective because:
- (a) The funding provided under the LECG program delivers outcomes that are consistent with the objectives of the program. Specifically:
 - (i) The program supports a wide range of community engagement and education activities by NGOs.
 - (ii) It is appropriate and consistent with current objectives of the program for it to support advocacy by NGOs. There is no evidence that the program is directly supporting political activism that is defined as militant activity distinct from advocacy. However to ensure that the program is not indirectly used to support political campaigns the objectives could be amended to explicitly preclude this.
 - (iii) The program supports the widespread delivery of at least three NSW 2021 goals by all grant recipients and can be shown to support the delivery of a further twelve goals on a case by case basis.
 - (b) The funding provided under the LECG program is used by recipients for the purpose it is currently intended.
 - (c) The eligibility criteria for LECG program funding enables support for a wide range of large and small NGOs involved in various environment activities. It is reasonable for NGOs which operate commercially to be eligible for funding as long as they meet the other eligibility tests. Where NGOs operate commercially it can multiply the effect of government expenditure. To reduce the costs of applying for funding and assessing applications and also strengthen the link between funding and outcomes it would be appropriate to separate the existing pool of funds into two funding streams, one of which caters to larger peak NGOs and one of which is used by smaller regional and local NGOs. This solution is acceptable to the majority of stakeholders consulted during this review.
 - (d) While there is no suggestion that any of the organisations funded have used the funding for political activity or campaigning, there remains some concern that the administrative grants free up resources for political campaigns. Organisations that choose to become participants in political campaigns should not be eligible for funding from the Government.

Once an expenditure program has been determined to be appropriate, the next fundamental issue is whether the program is actually effective in delivering its intended purpose. The key questions that generally need to be answered to determine the effectiveness of a program are:

- Has the funding helped to deliver the objectives of the program (the benefits)?
- Is the funding being used by the organisations in the way it was intended?
- Is the funding being received by the organisations for which it was intended?
- Is the funding creating any additional benefits that were not foreseen at the time the program was introduced?

5.3.1 Satisfying Program Objectives – The Benefits

The objectives of the funding provided under the LECG program is to assist eligible lead environmental community organisations in NSW to value, conserve and protect the natural environment through:

- Actively involving the community in projects to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Raising community awareness and understanding of, and gathering information on, environmental issues with a view to bringing about behavioural change across the community.
- Being effective advocates in expressing the community's environmental concerns.
- Being actively involved in program and policy development initiatives with governments and industry bodies on environmental issues and undertaking activities that support Goals 22, 23 and 24 of *NSW 2021*.

Community Engagement, Education and Awareness

In its survey of grant recipients Aegis asked NGOs to detail how funding under the LECG program has enabled them to fulfill LECG program objectives in relation to involving the community, educating the community and raising awareness within the community about the environment.

All survey respondents discussed how they used the LECG funding to deliver these objectives in different ways. The reported outcomes achieved due to LECG funding include:

- Delivery of workshops to educate communities about environment issues and help communities develop environmental skills.
- Providing environmental updates via handbooks, on-line web sites, newsletters and seminars.
- Providing legal and scientific advice to assist community responses to environmental issues.
- Representing the views of local community and volunteer groups to policy makers.
- Providing corporate governance advice to community volunteer groups to ensure their compliance with financial, workers compensation, occupational health and safety and other Commonwealth and State regulation.
- The organisation of public liability, product liability and volunteer insurance for member organisations.
- Project planning and co-ordination of volunteer/community involvement.
- Working with land owners and government agencies to promote sustainable fire management.
- Connecting with large and small corporate organisations as well as the community to directly encourage recycling of containers, printer cartridges, mobile phones and computers, plant trees and provide information on recycling opportunities and methods.
- Coordinating and updating skills and activities of environmental educators and wetland conservation groups.

Environmental Issue Advocacy

In its survey of grant recipients Aegis asked NGOs to detail how funding under the LECG program has enabled them to fulfill LECG program objectives in relation to advocacy and issue representation.

To a greater or lesser extent, all NGOs reported that they are active advocates on matters of concern to their organisations and members. Some NGOs become directly involved in organising and implementing political campaigns to challenge government policy, whilst others prefer to educate and assist the community and their members contribute to the policy making process and have their voice heard.

Some NGOs, like the Total Environment Centre and Nature Conservation Council are advocates across a range of areas, whilst other NGOs, such as the National Parks Association, Bicycles NSW, and Friends of the Koala, advocate on specific issues.

A genuine issue for the Government to consider is the extent and nature of issue advocacy that the LECG program should support.

The current objectives of the LECG Program explicitly require NGOs to be “effective advocates in expressing the community’s environmental concerns”. Arguably advocacy can be defined broadly to include a range of activities including activating communities to represent issues to government. However problems arise for government and for NGOs when advocacy is perceived to actually be targeted political campaigning.

Advocacy is defined as the ‘act of seeking public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy’¹⁸. This is distinct from political activism or campaigning which is defined as the ‘policy of taking direct and often militant action to achieve an end, especially a political or social one’¹⁹.

Whilst it is appropriate for public expenditure, such as the LECG program, to be used to support NGOs advocating a policy position, it does not seem reasonable that government spending is used to support militant activity whether directed at it or other institutions.

The rules governing the grants prohibit the use of funds to support project or program delivery, membership growth activities, fund raising activities, and political campaigning.

¹⁸ Oxford Dictionary

¹⁹ Collins Dictionary

As part of the review Aegis thoroughly examined the acquittal and governance process for grants provided by the LECG program since 2006 and has found that the process managed by the Trust and OEHL is very well documented and comprehensive. There is no suggestion that LECG funds have been directly used to promote any political campaigning.

Nevertheless, the provision of funding through the LECG for administrative costs such as rent, office equipment, administration staff, and computers enables other NGO funds to be used to implement political campaigns.

To address the risk that the LECG program is used indirectly to support political campaigns, the eligibility criteria should be amended to explicitly prohibit funding being provided to organisations which directly co-ordinate or participate in political campaigning (as opposed to advocacy for their environmental objectives) To support this approach a set of guidelines may need to be developed to assist compliance by NGOs.

Further, the program objectives should be amended to remove the requirement for NGOs to be “effective advocates in expressing the community’s environmental concerns”. This objective actually encourages political activism as a means of achieving environmental outcomes.

Policy Development and Delivering NSW 2021

In its survey of grant recipients Aegis asked NGOs to detail how funding under the LECG program has enabled them to fulfill LECG program objectives in relation to policy development and delivery of *NSW 2021*.

The majority of the respondents reported that the LECG program enables them to dedicate other resources to develop and implement community education and assistance programs which in turn equip communities to participate in the public policy development process.

All of the respondents were able to demonstrate that they delivered at least the following three goals in *NSW 2021*:

- Goal 22 - Protect our natural environment
- Goal 23 - Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhood and environments
- Goal 24 - Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities

Some organisations such as Total Environment Centre, Greening Australia and Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, were also able to show that the LECG program helped them deliver these additional *NSW 2021* goals:

- Goal 1 - Improve the performance of the NSW economy
- Goal 4 - Increase the competitiveness of doing business in NSW
- Goal 6 - Strengthen the NSW skill base
- Goal 13 - Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage
- Goal 14 - Increase opportunities for people with a disability by providing supports that meet their individual needs and realise their potential
- Goal 25 - Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life
- Goal 26 - Fostering opportunity and partnership with aboriginal people
- Goal 27 - Enhance culture, creative, sporting and recreational activities
- Goal 28 - Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters
- Goal 30 - Restore trust in State and Local Government as a service provider
- Goal 31 - Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information
- Goal 32 - Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects

Recommendation 2

That the objectives of the program be amended by:

- (a) Precluding organisations which undertake explicit co-ordination of political activity which is targeted at individual politicians or political parties. This could be administered on the basis of a warning system (such as a three strikes and you're out) but would require the development of a set of guidelines to determine the nature of precluded political activity and an independent mechanism for considering any breaches of this ban.
- (b) The objective to promote "being effective advocates in expressing the community's environmental concerns" should be removed.

5.3.2 Use of LECG Funds By Recipients

The review of the acquittal and governance process by Aegis and the reporting by respondents to the Aegis survey confirm that funding under the LECG program is used by recipients for the purpose it is intended. Respondents reported that they use the LECG program to fund between 2 and 40 per cent of their administrative costs. Activities, costs and functions that are funded include:

- Provision of administrative and project management staff
- Rent of NGO office premises and accommodation for volunteers, students and lawyers providing pro-bono work
- Provision of office equipment such as computers and printers
- Payment of professional fees for bookkeeping, accounting, audit, insurance, human resources and risk assessment services
- Development of information and technology capability to support projects and programs
- Payment of printing, phone, utilities, stationary and internet costs
- Administrative support for implementation of community engagement programs
- Training programs for investment in environmental programs such as Landcare, first aid and computer and database management

These activities are consistent with the purpose of the LECG program.

5.3.3 Organisations Receiving LECG Funding

One of the key issues examined by Aegis was whether funding under the LECG program is being used by the organisations for which it was intended.

It is clear from the earliest construction of the LECG program in 2006 that the Government intended funding to be made available to a variety of lead environment NGOs. This was a departure from the pre-2006 arrangement where funding for similar purposes was provided only to large peak NGOs at the discretion of the Minister for the Environment. The use of the term 'lead environment community group' rather than 'peak environment group' in the title of the program confirms the intention to broaden the scope of NGOs able to be assisted.

As discussed in section 3 of the report, since the LECG was introduced the number of organisations eligible to receive funding has increased by almost 80 per cent from 7, pre-2006, to 31 today. However – the Technical Committee have reported struggling with how "lead" is defined and how this should be applied when considering eligibility for funding (see Recommendation 4c(ii) below).

Funding has been awarded to large peak NGOs with institutional or affiliate membership representing a wide range of environmental community groups. These large peak groups undertake a wide range of activity towards educating, raising awareness and directly contributing towards environmental conservation and improvement in NSW. They provide advice to smaller environmental community groups; provide training, co-ordinate volunteer activity; and participate in government policy formulation by taking part in Government forums and writing submissions on policy proposals and draft legislative changes. Examples of these NGOs include the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife; National Parks Association; Nature Conservation Council; and the Total Environment Centre.

Funding has also been awarded to smaller NGOs which represent one particular issue or offer a specific skill or expertise to environmental community and volunteer groups. These NGOs concentrate on specific areas of environmental conservation activity and lead the community debate and action in these areas. Each of these organisations leverage government funding by obtaining sponsorship or pro-bono work through the corporate community, professional individuals and service providers, as well as both fund raising and the delivery of environmental action from volunteers and members. Examples of these NGOs include: Environmental Defenders Office; Bicycle NSW; Keep Australia Beautiful; Planet Ark; Friends of the Koala, Wetland Conservation, Keep Australia Beautiful, Association of Environmental Educators and the Community Environment Network.

The successful diversity amongst recipients can also be judged by the nature of their membership. Recipients of funding include NGOs such as:

- Australian Conservation Foundation, Bicycle NSW and National Parks Association representing mass individual members.
- Nature Conservation Council, Landcare NSW, Total Environment Centre, and Wetland Care representing a large number of community organisations.
- Environmental Defenders Office which offers specialist advice to community and volunteer organisations.
- Keep Australia Beautiful, Planet Ark, and Greening Australia that facilitate direct participation by community volunteers in targeted environmental activities.

Whilst on the face of it this range and diversity of funding recipients may be consistent with the original intention of the LECG program in practice it can create some problems.

In its consultations with members of the Technical Committee delegated by the Trust to assess funding applications, Aegis identified two competing schools of thought. These are as follows:

- Some members considered that it was preferable for the LECG to focus on funding large peak organisations that had regional or State-wide coverage, broad environmental issue agenda interests and the capacity to contribute a solid body of research and evidence to assist government policy development on behalf of their members and constituent organisations. This preference was informed by a mix of views including that smaller one issue organisations may be more unsustainable and therefore funding them represented a financial risk for government, and did not have the capacity to make solid contributions to the public policy process.
- Some members considered that it is preferable for the LECG to continue to support large and smaller organisations. This preference was also informed by a mix of views including that the purpose of the funding was to facilitate diversity in environment issue representation and activity, this approach was consistent with the local capacity building agenda in *NSW 2021*, and that funding a diverse range of NGOs including smaller local ones was the best pathway to facilitating more community volunteering.

Some members of the Technical Committee also raised concerns about providing funding for organisations which are involved in fee for service and green business activities. These concerns reflected a view that it was not appropriate for public expenditure to support the cost structures of commercial activities.

Aegis explored this concern in consultations with NSW Treasury, grant recipients and unsuccessful applicants. The view of these stakeholders was that:

- The key eligibility test is whether an organisation is a not for profit or charity registered organisation.
- If this test is satisfied the nature of their activities, whether commercial or non-commercial is not relevant.

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- In many sectors, such as the social policy sector, many not for profit organisations operate commercially and this is an advantage because it multiplies the impact of government expenditure. In many respects the commercial nature of NGOs is preferable because it reduces the risk to government that funded organisations will be financially unviable over the long term.

The experience of Aegis in reviewing other government programs in the environmental, employment and social policy sectors is that when NGOs operate commercially they increase the opportunity to deliver greater value for government expenditure.

Assessment of the Eligibility Criteria for Funding

The eligibility criteria for the LECG program has been an effective means of communicating how organisations can be successful when seeking funding. This is demonstrated by the fact that of the 31 organisations that have received funding under the LECG program, 51 per cent have secured grants in two or more funding rounds. Aegis consultations with NGOs that have not been successful indicate that once they were deemed ineligible, these organisations did not apply for support in subsequent funding rounds.

The *eligibility criteria* were initially set in 2006. In 2009 the criteria were modified to more clearly define what a state and national organisation was considered to be and the number of focus areas was increased from one or more, to two or more of the four program criteria. In 2012 an additional criterion was added specifically to align with the *NSW 2021* goals.

In its consultations with grant recipients, unsuccessful applicants and other stakeholders Aegis identified the key issues in relation to the eligibility criteria:

- Grant recipients did not have any great concerns with the eligibility criteria. This is understandable as more than 50 percent have successfully applied for funding more than once.
- Unsuccessful applicants did consistently find the eligibility criteria confusing and difficult to navigate.
- The members of the Technical Committee had differing views about the definition of a lead environment community group and which groups should be eligible for funding.
- The eligibility criteria have acted to enable a wide range of NGOs to receive funding – though the question of what constitutes a “lead” environment group has caused some confusion.

If the primary measure of effectiveness in terms of organisations receiving funding is the variety of NGOs benefiting from the LECG program since it was introduced, then it can be said that the program is effective in this respect.

If the NSW Government is satisfied with this outcome then the option is to retain the current eligibility criteria.

However it is also possible to argue that the eligibility criteria can be improved to address any residual confusion amongst the Technical Committee and applicants about the purpose and allocation of funding. Improvements may also further embed the use of funding to meet program objectives.

One reasonable option to improve the effectiveness of the program may be to separate the total funding pool into the following two streams:

- Funding for large peak NGOs; and
- Funding for smaller local or regional NGOs.

This separation may need to be accompanied by amendments to the LECG program so that each funding stream had its own objectives, eligibility criteria, application timelines, assessment process and grant acquittal obligations. Implementing this would assist to tailor each stream to properly balance its cost effectiveness for applicants and the Trust²⁰. Some clear advantages of this approach would be:

- It would enable the comparison of like applications and avoid large and small organisations competing for the same pool of funds and therefore assist in managing the expectations of potential funding recipients. When the total funding and maximum available grant under each stream are communicated it can help reduce the extent to which applicants invest time and effort in proposals that are unlikely to be successful. It can also reduce the time and effort taken by agency resources to assess applicants that are not eligible²¹.
- It would enable the government to demand that large organisations in particular needed to prove a capacity and track record in contributing to the public policy process as part of their eligibility test.

²⁰ Australian National Audit Office, Implementing Better Practice Grants Administration 2010, p60

²¹ Ibid

- It would enable the government to require smaller regional and local organisations to show a commitment and track record in activating community volunteers as part of their eligibility test.
- It would enable the government to explicitly ask larger NGOs to demonstrate whether or not they had the capacity to multiply the effect of public expenditure as part of their eligibility test.

Aegis asked survey respondents to comment on this option. Of the respondents:

- About 26 percent were opposed to the separation of the existing funding pool on the basis that all applicants should compete on an equal basis for funds.
- About 66 per cent supported creating these two separate funding streams from the current pool of funds on the basis that it would improve program clarity and enable funds to be more proportionally and clearly assessed and allocated to larger and smaller organisations that have very different administrative cost structures.

Recommendation 3

That the LECG program be separated into two funding streams with separate eligibility criteria as follows:

- (a)** For large peak NGOs applications should be for a value over \$20,000pa up to the maximum amount available per year. To be eligible for this funding organisations shall:
- Have a full time physical office presence in NSW
 - Be a representative of a field of environmental activity across the state of NSW
 - Be an umbrella organisation providing the full spectrum of activities expected of a peak environment organisation, including but not limited to (i) education on environmental issues, (ii) seminars and events to promote environmental improvement or preservation, (iii) participation in government policy and legislative development, (iv) support the attainment of Goals 22, 23 and 24 of NSW 2021
 - Have their own constitution and be incorporated under the law of a state or territory as an incorporated association, company or cooperative society at the time of lodging the application
 - Have the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as one of their primary objectives

- Be a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, have annual audited financial statements and have either a (i) minimum voting financial membership of 60 (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of individuals) and/or (ii) minimum membership of 10 affiliated bodies with an aggregate membership of 400 or more (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of other bodies)

- (b)** For smaller, community and/or volunteer NGOs applications should be for a value less than \$20,000pa. To be eligible for this funding organisations shall:
 - Be located and focused on activity in NSW
 - Be a representative of a specialized field of environmental endeavor
 - Support the attainment of Goals 22, 23 and 24 of NSW 2021
 - Be a regional coordinator of community based organisations
 - Be primarily concerned with supporting voluntary community organisations with specialist co-ordination, advice or support services:
 - Have their own constitution and be incorporated under the law of a state or territory as an incorporated association, company or cooperative society at the time of lodging the application
 - Have the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as one of their primary objectives
 - Be a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, have annual audited financial statements and have either a (i) minimum voting financial membership of 30 (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of individuals) and/or (ii) minimum membership of 5 affiliated bodies with an aggregate membership of 200 or more (for organisations whose membership consists primarily of other bodies)

5.3.4 Additional Benefits Created By LECG Funding

In its survey of grant recipients Aegis asked recipients to describe whether the LECG program had enabled them to provide new services. Whilst the purpose of the program is not to fund services themselves an important indicator of the additional benefits that the program may have supported is the extent to which funding for administrative costs has increased the capacity of NGOs.

Almost all respondents indicated that the LECG program had increased their administrative capacity to provide new services. The nature of these services includes the following.

- Increased professionalism of administrative services resulting in higher quality and volume of services to members
- Increased communication material and services to communities including the creation of on-line capacity, social media connectivity and e-newsletters
- Increased frequency of community engagement through workshops and forums
- Production of technical guidelines on environmental issues for communities
- Increased capacity to respond to community inquiries and provide free advice
- Increased capacity to demonstrate to the community that their donations are spent on programs and projects not administration
- Development of new programs such as the Green Capital Program
- Development of stronger networks between environmental groups for wetland and other conservation issues
- Increased capacity to respond to parliamentary and government inquiries and draft policy proposals

5.4 Program Efficiency

Key Findings

- 6.** The LECG program is efficient because:
- (a)** It is an efficient allocation of resources to the extent that environmental values can be measured on the basis that:
 - (i) It is consistent with government's general responsibility to protect public good and prevent market failure.
 - (ii) The supply of funds under the program does not exceed demand for them.
 - (iii) It supports only a proportion of total NGO administrative costs which is appropriate given that environment activities can have a mix of market based value and intrinsic (public good) values that are not valued by the market.
 - (iv) It enables NGOs to activate and utilise community volunteers to deliver actual environment programs and projects which have a direct benefit to the socio-economic welfare of society. The use of volunteers to complete administrative tasks would not have the same impact.
 - (b)** The LECG program is governed to a high standard, sufficiently transparent and accountable, and is considered a leader amongst government grant programs.
 - (a)** The LECG program includes a number of whole of program risks which can be simply resolved through current or future action.

Once a program has been determined to be effective the next issue is whether it is efficient. The key questions that generally need to be answered to determine the efficiency of a funding program are:

- Has the program efficiently allocated resources to achieve its stated outcomes?
- Are the program and its risks managed appropriately?

5.4.1 Efficient Allocation of Resources

A traditional approach to assessing whether the LECG is an efficient allocation of resources involves examining whether the grant is maximising the economic well-being (welfare) of society. The efficient allocation of resources usually occurs in a competitive, freely functioning market when supply is in equilibrium with demand and therefore the marginal cost of government expenditure is equal to the marginal benefit gained by people using it. However this approach is not applicable to the LECG grant for the following reasons:

- In section 5 it is clear that the size and nature of the grant program does not require an assessment of the whole of life cost issues that would form the basis of determining the efficiency of the allocation.
- Expenditure in the environmental sector does not lend itself to a traditional assessment of allocative efficiency²² because environment values are complex and multi-dimensional. Many environmental activities are not valued by markets but communities intrinsically value them. Even where individuals have little or no use for a given environmental asset or attribute they would nevertheless feel a 'loss' if such things were to disappear. Thus it can be meaningless to assign an economic value to an environmental asset, activity or expenditure.
- The complexity of environmental expenditure assessment partly arises because there is a need to examine (1) sustainability issues such as how the welfare of society is affected if future generations have reduced opportunities to enjoy 'natural assets' and (2) the intrinsic value of activities that are not valued by markets.

²² **Allocative efficiency** occurs when there is an optimal distribution of goods and services. This involves taking into account the preferences of consumers and calculating whether the price that consumers are willing to pay is equivalent to the marginal benefit that they receive from the service of good. Allocative efficiency occurs when the marginal benefit of the good or service equals the marginal cost of purchasing it.

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- The LECG grant is designed to fund administrative costs, not services. Accordingly there is insufficient data about how LECG expenditure has directly delivered environmental outcomes that may be intrinsically valued or valued by markets.

In this context governments consider that it is efficient to allocate spending to environmental programs to achieve policy, legislative or program objectives for one or more of the following reasons:

- To achieve a public good. Governments can support a public good by (a) funding services that the market would not normally fund (b) subsidising market based activities to enable an increase in the scope, scale or accelerated delivery of services and/or (c) subsidising services to retain affordability for consumers.
- To address market failure. Governments can seek to address market failure by (a) providing services itself (b) subsidising market based services to ensure a particular standard or quality and/or (c) responding with the same actions as it would to support a public good.

The nature of these possible responses by government indicates that there is a range of inter-relationships between supporting public goods and addressing market failure. Sometimes in choosing one option government is also pursuing another.

The LECG program is no different because it is designed to:

- Fund administrative costs of environment NGOs to enable them to dedicate more resources to contributing to the policy process and raising community awareness about environment issues. This is consistent with preserving the intrinsic value of environmental assets and activities and the inter-generational opportunities to enjoy environment capital (a public good); and
- Assist NGOs with a proportion of their administrative costs in order to provide certainty. This certainty enables NGOs to plan and implement their other activities and avoids the need for them to rely solely on other sources of funding which are market based and therefore unreliable (addressing market failure).

Accordingly the LECG program is consistent with government's general responsibility to protect public good and prevent market failure.

In carrying out this responsibility governments can decide between providing services themselves or outsourcing services. In the case of the LECG program government has decided to provide funding to support the capacity of NGOs to deliver environment outcomes. This is an outsourced model.

Government has decided to support the activities of environment NGOs rather than deliver those activities itself because it is efficient to do so. The efficiency arises because:

- The core business of environment NGOs is the delivery of environment protection and conservation activities.
- The expertise and structure of NGOs equips them best to engage with and activate community contribution and volunteering.
- The expertise of NGOs equips them to provide informed contributions to government policy making.

Some key facts discussed in this report and identified through the review and consultation process provide evidence that the LECG program can be considered an efficient allocation of resources to enable government to support public good and address market failure. These are that:

- Since 2006 the demand by NGOs for support from the LECG program has been \$9.9 million, however the program has delivered them \$3.3 million or about one third of the demand. It would be inefficient if the supply of government funds exceeded demand.
- The LECG is used to support between 2 and 40 per cent of NGO administrative costs. This means that while the LECG program offers NGOs certainty, the demand by NGOs for support is being met from other sources also. As environment activities can have a mix of market based value and intrinsic (public good) values that are not valued by the market, it would be inefficient if government expenditure supported 100 per cent of NGO administrative costs.
- By supporting the administrative costs of NGOs the LECG program is enabling them to activate and utilise community volunteers to deliver actual environment programs and projects which have a direct benefit to the socio-economic welfare of society. The use of volunteers in this way energises and motivates them and therefore increases the opportunities that the benefit of government expenditure will be multiplied by small and large NGOs. The use of volunteers to complete administrative tasks would not have the same impact.

5.4.2 Program and Risk Management

During the review Aegis examined the governance and accountability of the LECG program. This included a review of funding applications, assessment processes and decisions and the management of grant acquittals as well as consultations with stakeholders.

Governance

Overall the management of the LECG program is of a very high standard. This is because:

- There are clear program objectives. This is the case even though there has been debate within the Technical Committee about the eligibility of organisations. This debate has not hindered the allocation of funding consistently with the objectives. Recommendations made in section 5 seek to address any confusion about eligibility of organisations.
- The Technical Committee assessment process supported with the advice provided by OEHL have delivered an auditable, documented decision making process which ensures that funded organisations meet the eligibility criteria, funds are applied in accordance with the rules of the LECG grants and grants are acquitted with documented and audited evidence.
- The assessment and acquittals process is transparent for successful applicants. Feedback from grant recipients was universally supportive of the administration of the program. About 86 per cent of respondents to the Aegis survey indicated that they considered the reporting obligations to be fair and balanced. Some of the grant recipients go to great lengths to write up justifications of the acquittal. Others fill out the available table with a single line of explanation and a dollar amount. Nonetheless, all use the table required and all show financial calculations as required by the acquittal criteria. The Aegis review of the 2006 round of acquittals and the draft 2009 acquittals shows that there is a sound process for demonstrating that the expenditure of grant funds has been spent on what the funding was requested for. Variations from the application are documented and supported by relevant attachments.
- Members of the Trust Board and the Technical Committee who are involved with the administration of other Government Grant programs commented that the administration of the LECG program is outstanding and a leader among government grant administration.

Risks

The five primary whole of program risks:

- *Assessment of applications against NSW 2021.* The absence of guidelines for the Technical Committee to use during their assessment of applications may reduce their capacity to ensure that applications are meeting the objectives in *NSW 2021*, particularly in relation to increasing community involvement. To address this guidelines should be developed.
- *Funding term.* The 12 month funding cycle in 2012 has created uncertainty for applicants and grantees in relation to their business planning and financial administration. This reduces the value for money of the program. To address this future funding rounds should return to a 3 year funding term.
- *Unviable grantees.* There is a small risk that funds may be provided to organisations which are not sustainable. The current requirements for applicants to prove their longevity of existence, active membership and basic financial competence should effectively mitigate this risk. In an event, given that the average grant is low (over the total period since 2006, 31 grantees have received an average of about \$106,000 each), the potential future un-viability of grantees represents a small risk to the program as a whole.
- *Discouraged applicants.* As discussed in section 5 the assessment process and post application **communication** discourages unsuccessful applicants from reapplying. Further, all of the unsuccessful applicants interviewed advised that they had received no detailed feedback on the reasons for the decision not to fund their organisations. This needs to be addressed to ensure that the program is attracting the full range of applicants for each funding round.
- *Size of funding pool.* Since 2006 the demand for LECG funding (\$9.9 million) has been significantly greater than supply of LECG funding (\$3.3 million). This has not been due to large increases in the number of applicants over time, but is more a result of the size of funding supported being requested. At present the average level of support provided indicates that the funding pool is sufficient. However if the supply of LECG funding is too low compared to demand there is a risk that the program will become inefficient because it is unable to provide the proper level of support NGOs need to direct resources toward activating community volunteering and contribution. As discussed in section 5.4.1, this community involvement and the environmental outcomes it can achieve represents the public good that the LECG program is aimed at achieving. To address this risk, the level of LECG should be adjusted periodically for inflation and to reflect any growth in community interest in preserving and enhancing the environment in NSW.

Two other minor process risks are:

- The Technical Committee has correctly expressed concern regarding the quality of the applications from some applicants for the 2012 round of funding. Some of these applicants had previously received funding under the program which suggests anomalies in the process that may create audit risks.
- Tables 4.4 and 5.2 in the application forms were regularly miss-interpreted by applicants.

Recommendation 4

- (a)** The LECG program should provide for funding over 3 year terms.
- (b)** The LECG funding pool should be reviewed periodically to account for inflation and any growth in community involvement and volunteering that preserves and enhances the environment in NSW.
- (c)** Guidelines should be developed to assist the Technical Committee:
 - (i) Understand the intent of each of the criteria and demonstrate what is required to justify a high, medium or low score for each of the criteria.
 - (ii) Determine what constitutes a “Lead environment organisation” and guidance for the Technical Committee in how is should deal with competing “Lead organisations” in the same field.
 - (iii) Assess applications from National organisations with operations outside NSW.
 - (iv) Assess how applicants satisfy the *NSW 2021* goals.
- (d)** The application process and consistency and quality of applications should be improved by:
 - (i) Providing full working examples of completed applications along with notes to applicants.
 - (ii) Asking more precise questions in the application forms to assist the Technical Committee ensure organisations are sustainable.
 - (iii) The development of a more precise definition of administrative costs that can be funded by the LECG program.
 - (iv) A greater focus on the provision of feedback to unsuccessful grant applicants and also feedback to all applicants on issues/concerns identified by the Technical Committee.

(e) Guidelines should be developed to assist grantees acquit their spending of LECG funds in a more consistent manner.

6. OPPORTUNITY COST OF LECG PROGRAM

The opportunity costs associated with the LECG program can be determined by comparing the use of the funding and the value of its benefits in terms of whether the use is economically sustainable or socially optimal. Opportunity costs are usually assessed as a combination of direct, external costs and costs to users.

Table 6: Consideration of Opportunity Cost Issues

	Government		Environment NGOs	
	Economic Sustainability	Social Value	Economic Sustainability	Social Value
Direct costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$600,000 per year. This represents a small proportion of the overall Trust grant program and overall government budget for grants ▪ Additional cost of OEH staff administering the LECG, however staff are administering a range of grant programs offered by Trust and therefore costs are defrayed ▪ Cost of the time of the Technical Committee and Trust members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting the capacity of NGOs to act to preserve the inter-generational intrinsic and market value of environment assets and activities ▪ Enabling NGOs to redirect other resources to engage, activate and use community volunteers to deliver environment policy objectives of government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of applying for grant funding every 3 years ▪ Cost of administering the grant to ensure appropriate use and reporting to government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Without the LECG funding NGOs may be unable to rent premises, increase staff capacity, improve connectivity and communication with the community, increase activation and use of volunteers, improve their professionalism and issue representation and improve co-ordination of members and environment partners ▪ These activities are integral to environment NGO programs and projects
External Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost to government administration where NGOs use the LECG grant to increase their capacity to contribute to the policy development process. Cost includes government review of policy submissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enabling the solid and evidence based contribution of NGOs to the policy development process to ensure that government decisions do not reduce the socio-economic welfare of society associated with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An over-reliance on the LECG program may dissuade NGOs to seek other funding and therefore reduce their connectivity with potential corporate supporters. At present NGOs use the LECG grant to fund not more than 40 per cent of their administrative costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NGOs deliver less social value if they minimise their funding base

	Government		Environment NGOs	
	Economic Sustainability	Social Value	Economic Sustainability	Social Value
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to government administration where NGOs use the LECG grant to increase their capacity to challenge government policy outside the normal consultative processes created by government. 	environment		
Costs to users	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the LECG grant enables NGOs to improve their services, community engagement, capacity for policy contribution and administrative quality this increases both internal and external expectations that they will maintain this capacity. Meeting this demand can add costs to the organisation and increase reliance on grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacity of NGOs increases the delivery of intrinsic and market based environmental value

7. COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

In addition to a value for money assessment Aegis has also examined some comparative approaches to the provision of government grants to support the administrative costs of NGOs. The comparison to other grant schemes confirms that the LECG program is well governed, appropriately targeted to available recipients, has appropriate risk management for the volume of funds, and delivers value for money for the NSW Government.

Table 7: Comparative Approaches to Funding Administrative Costs of NGOs

Grant Program and Purpose	Responsible Government Agency	Organisations Funded	Funding	Allocation and Measurement Process	Reported Outcomes	Key Differences/Similarities with LECG
<p>Funding for workers compensation, education and information services.</p> <p>To ensure that (a) all scheme participants have the best opportunity to understand and receive assistance with respect to their rights, obligations and entitlements (a public good) and (b) the prevention, management and rehabilitation of work injuries occurs efficiently, avoids unnecessary economic and social costs, and maximises benefits for scheme participants (addressing market failure).</p>	Queensland Workers Compensation Regulatory Authority (QCOMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 peak employer NGOs 2 peak employee NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$330,000 per year 3 year terms Funds provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For activities that NGOs would not normally undertake such as dedicated telephone advisory services and offering advice to people who aren't members of their NGOs; Subsidise the normal services of NGOs such as seminars, preparation of written material and delegate training, to enable increase, widen and accelerate services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct allocation to nominated NGOs on basis of their expertise to deliver QCOMP objectives No competitive tendering Broad benefits of grant reported to QCOMP on a quarterly basis but specific outcomes are not measured effectively No consistent template for reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity to achieve QCOMP outcomes Increased awareness of issues, rights and obligations by employees and employers 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No competitive process for funding allocation Recipients selected on basis of expertise and membership only <p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective is to preserve public good and address market failure Specific funding of current and additional administrative costs to support services 3 year terms

Grant Program and Purpose	Responsible Government Agency	Organisations Funded	Funding	Allocation and Measurement Process	Reported Outcomes	Key Differences/Similarities with LECG
<p>Funding for community and volunteer groups for natural resource management.</p> <p>To encourage and activate local responses to environment issues.</p>	South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer and community groups, such as land, catchment and water care groups; conservation groups; progress associations; farming and agricultural groups; Aboriginal organisations and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About \$2M 1 year terms Administrative costs are included in the items that can be funded although grants are for services and capital projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive tender process Two separate streams for community groups and volunteer groups Community groups receive 99% of funding Reporting against project conditions using paper based template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various environment services, research and asset development 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General funding in which administrative costs are included 1 year term <p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides support to achieve environment protection and conservation goals Allocation through competitive tender Large and small NGOs are funded Clear objective to encourage volunteering
<p>Funding for development programs.</p> <p>To assist NGOs deliver projects consistent with the Australian Government's overseas development priorities</p>	AusAID	Small and large Australian NGOs across a range of sectors including health, environment, education and microfinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About \$106M in the annual pool of funds 3 year funding terms for a small group of AusAID 'partner' NGOs, 1 year funding terms for all other NGOs Funding provided to NGOs for projects implemented overseas and development education of the Australian community 10% of total funding can be used for administrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply for funding NGOs must first be accredited every 5 years. The accreditation process takes 12-24 months to prepare for Funding is provided to the NGO which determine the projects to fund At a minimum full accredited NGOs receive \$300K and base accredited NGOs \$150K each per year Based on their average 	Quantitative and qualitative data available on outcomes of funded projects, results published on AusAID website	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large pool of funds Two streams within funding pool to cater to eligibility requirements Up front accreditation of NGOs deals with eligibility and enables simpler annual funding submissions. However this can disadvantage smaller NGOs. Quantitative and qualitative measurement of outcomes <p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Grant Program and Purpose	Responsible Government Agency	Organisations Funded	Funding	Allocation and Measurement Process	Reported Outcomes	Key Differences/Similarities with LECG
			<p>costs across the whole NGO or for specific projects</p>	<p>development spending from previous years (3 years for 'partner' NGOs and 1 year for all other NGOs), full accredited NGOs are allocated the remaining funds but one NGO cannot receive more than 35% of this remaining amount</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strict on-line reporting against standard quantitative and qualitative measures, case studies are also requested 		
<p>Funding for community groups to undertake nature conservation programs called <i>Communities for Nature</i> grants.</p>	<p>Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment</p>	<p>Local community groups and organisations including schools that are involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity and habitat protection ▪ Revegetation ▪ Cleaning up waterways ▪ Control of pests and weeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$20M over 4 years (2011-14) ▪ Funding is available for 1 to 4 years depending on the project. ▪ Funding is provided for projects but a proportion can be used to support project administration costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The total funding pool is divided into two separate streams. There is a stream for small grants worth up to \$10K and large grants worth between \$10K and \$150K. ▪ Reporting against conditions in the grant agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Various environment project outcomes 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General project funding in which administrative costs are included ▪ Various funding terms depending on project ▪ Two funding streams to provide small and large grants. <p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides support to achieve environment protection and conservation goals ▪ Allocation through competitive tender ▪ Large and small NGOs are funded ▪ Clear objective to encourage

Grant Program and Purpose	Responsible Government Agency	Organisations Funded	Funding	Allocation and Measurement Process	Reported Outcomes	Key Differences/Similarities with LECG
						volunteering

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO AEGIS SURVEY

	Q1 – How many members Note: Answers to Questions 2 and 3 are at the end of this document (following answers to Q.19)	Q4 – What are LECG Grants used for?	Q5 – Relationship to State Plan
AAEE (NSW)	150 members including many institutional members	Project Officer	Direct influence on delivery of SP targets 22, 23, 24
ACF Online	8826 members Australia wide including 151 Schools and 165 Community organisations	Part funding of admin officer in the Sydney office	22, 23, 24
ANPC	145 members in NSW (approx 30% are organisations)	2 x part time paid administration staff	Contributes to 22 and 23
Bicycle NSW	12,000 members	Rental assistance	Contribute to various state plan targets
CEN Inc	400 members including 80 community groups – operates as a LECG at Regional level	Admin staff, office equipment, bookkeeping fees, insurance, printing and internet costs	22, 23, 24
EDO	57 individual members (no institutions)	Rental assistance Allows for engagement and accommodation of volunteers, students and lawyers providing pro-bono work	22, 23, 24, 26 and 29
Foundation for NP&W	110 individual members – state wide	Administration costs, office equipment, insurance, rent land valuations and land IT costs	15, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27
Friends of the Koala	370 – Regional (Northern Rivers)	Phone, utilities, rates, insurance, printing, stationary and training, audit and legal fees.	22, 23 and 24
Greening Australia	31 active financial members – State wide level organisation	Funding of administration for projects and programs	6, 13,14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
Landcare NSW	2000 Landcare groups in NSW 50,000 individual members 25 Network members Landcare NSW is the only Peak body in NSW	Place Stories Program 3 annual “musters” Training programs for investment in Landcare LECG covered administrative costs to support these activities	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31 and 32
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	110 member societies across NSW Peak state body	\$30K rent \$30K salaries and on costs for admin staff \$20K office expenses	22, 23, 24
NPA (NSW)	4,000 8 libraries 29 small NGO 3 corporate members	Co-ordination of community engagement programs Training – first aid and computer administration Risk assessments	No specific answer – addressed in application

	Q1 – How many members Note: Answers to Questions 2 and 3 are at the end of this document (following answers to Q.19)	Q4 – What are LECG Grants used for?	Q5 – Relationship to State Plan
	10,000 supporters		
Planet Ark	53 individual members NSW body	Admin, finance, HR, governance systems – in particular – IT to ensure a comprehensive budgeting process for all campaigns. Also the development of an IT database for Planet Ark	22, 23 and 24
TEC	84 voting members 400 supporters Represent Coastal alliance (90 local groups) and the Boomerang Alliance (26 Groups) Statewide lead organisation	Rent, insurance and office management costs including basic office infrastructure	1, 4, 6, 22, 23
Wetland Care	28 NSW members 22 are NGO organisations	See detailed response (<i>as an observation – most of these activities are not allowed under the LECG grant guidelines</i>)	22, 23 and 24

	Q6 – Impact of reduced funding on capacity to deliver state plan objectives	Q7 – What new services did the grants enable you to provide?	Q8 – Describe if/how you measure benefits
AAEE (NSW)	Reduced capacity	Increased professional delivery of services to members	Membership numbers Surveys of members
ACF Online	Vital for the operation of the Sydney office	Reduced administrative costs in Sydney office has allowed more funds to be spent on program activities	Email survey of members Website visits Feedback to website Attendance at regular member events
ANPC	Would need to charge for workshop attendance and other fees to ensure cost recovery	New web site Introduced an e-newsletter Increased frequency of workshops Produced technical guidelines Held 2 National forums Developed social media networks	Membership surveys (last done in 2010) Evaluating workshops with questionnaires Member feedback
Bicycle NSW	Yes – Bicycle NSW now has long term rent at a more affordable level	Without LECG grant, Bicycle NSW would have delivered similar benefits to members but at a reduced level	Membership numbers Number of events and participants Numbers of workshops Number of programs and participants

CEN Inc	No – other grants and funding sources are restricted to program activities and not allowed to be used for administration	Since the LECG grants have been made available, CEN has grown in size and now provides information and assistance to community members and the public	Post workshop member surveys Review of feedback and emails/letters Annual review of Strategic Plan targets Annual audit
EDO	Any reduction would have a significant impact. Currently unable to meet demand for requests for legal advice on environmental matters from community groups across NSW	In 2005/06 EDO responded to 750 requests for service. In 2011/12 EDO responded to 1500 calls to its free legal advice service. Similar growth has been experienced in its educational roles and contribution to legislative change and government policy	No answer
Foundation for NP&W	Less money available for core activities Reduced funding would mean more expenditure on fixed cost overheads	Community support is strong because it can be shown that money they donate is spent on program activity	Report on outcomes of projects; newsletters, report against goals in annual report; Report on costs and fundraising; report on number of species protected, habitats and heritage that have been benefited
Friends of the Koala	Reduced funding would result in need to volunteers being required to undertake administrative work. State Plan goals 22 would be adversely impacted and goals 23 and 24 would be undermined due to the retreat of disgruntled volunteers.	Community benefits were provided – but all by volunteers. LECG grants have led to an increase in level of professionalism and in turn – improved focus and performance	Current grant acquittal process demonstrates measures of performance. Annual report also contains measures.
Greening Australia	As the size of the grant was very small, a cut in funding would not have a major impact on activities funded	Grant was too small to make a significant difference	Grant did not make a significant contribution
Landcare NSW	Co-ordinating large numbers of volunteers requires some professional administration support. Volunteer burnout is high if they are focussed in areas they are not comfortable with.	LECG enabled quality services to be provided to members and Networks	Landcare supports communities to deliver environmental benefits.
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	Reduce level of support for members Reduce capacity to represent as a peak organisation Reduce volunteer co-ordination	No answer	Number of workshops Number of participants Evaluation of participant learning outcomes Energy saved (kWh), waste avoided (kg) Area covered by fire management plans (ha) Clear strategic priorities and goals
	Q6 – Impact of reduced funding on capacity to deliver state plan objectives (Continued)	Q7 – What new services did the grants enable you to provide? (Continued)	Q8 – Describe if/how you measure benefits (Continued)

NPA (NSW)	Reduced scale Cut community engagement staff Admin needs of 22 programs would not be able to be supported	Some – but smaller scale Enabled NPA to comply with legislation which required that volunteers comply with OHS standards of training as well as other compliance requirements Smart phone tablet apps have changed the way NCC does business – in area of comms with members and supporters	Participant surveys Evaluation reports drawn up following surveys See measures in annual report
Planet Ark	Activities listed in Q3 would continue but would be reduced and may threaten successful completion	Improves administrative efficiency resulting in improved campaign benefits for environment	Campaign evaluation reports Specific measurable outcomes include: No. Participants No. Sites (eg. National Tree day) No printer cartridges recycled Qualitative evaluation and review
TEC	Stabilising rental income is a key to organisational planning	The Green Capital Program was developed following the receipt of the first LECG grant. Other activities of TEC would not have been undertaken to the same degree as resources were diverted to cover fixed costs such as rent, insurance etc.	Policy regulated or gazetted Habitat protected Reported in annual report and judged against strategic plan targets Web site visit data collected Visitors to film events (eg. WasteNot)
Wetland Care	LECG grant enabled growth and modernisation of administrative systems. Clearly established a new name, objectives, brand and recruiting material to attract new members.	Prior to LECG grant – main role for AWA was circulating resolutions for Ramsar conferences. Grant funding allowed for: Strengthening access to an active network of Wetland NGOs Hosting fora Improving links with key stakeholders	Delivery of outputs and activities as described in the LECG grant application Level of active participation in AWA roles such as recruitment of new members Anecdotal evidence and feedback Funds have been used to get the Network onto a professional footing

	Q9 – What is most effective way to measure benefits?	Q10 – What are current barriers to measuring benefits?	Q11 (a) What proportion of your organisation’s total administrative expenditure is funded by the LECG grant	Q11 (b) Other sources of administrative grants funding?
AAEE (NSW)	Membership numbers Face-book posts Numbers of advocacy programs delivered	Resources – measurement required dedicated administrative resources		None – Membership fees is only other source of funding
ACF Online	No answer	No answer	27% of NSW administrative costs 2% of admin costs nationwide	None
ANPC	Member surveys are very effective	N/A	20%	GVEHO grant (C'th) = 2% of administrative funding
Bicycle NSW	All of Q8 currently done	None	6.5%	None
CEN Inc	Keep it simple – number of volunteers or community members assisted in being engaged in activities	NA – we already measure these	20%	GVESH0 – 5% of admin costs and lasts 1-2 y only
EDO	No answer	No answer	13%	No answer
Foundation for NP&W	Clearly show that members’ money is spent on programs not overheads.	Current measures reported are not specific and not demanded by the membership. Reports against goals with specific examples highlighted. Foundation for NP&W do not employ project managers or scientists	15%	GVESH0 \$5,000 pa NSW Parks \$50,000 pa Sources of funding include telemarketing; backyard buddies program and gifts and donations from the public
Friends of the Koala	Membership /stakeholder survey considered – but not undertaken due to administration workload	Ongoing membership and commitment to activities of FOK on the ground	37%	GVESH0 provide \$3,000 (or 9% of total admin) a single year payment only
Greening Australia	Greening Australia uses its own tools to measure effectiveness of programs and projects	No answer	0.5% of total administrative expenditure	No Answer
Landcare NSW	Level of membership engagement Effectiveness of the annual Muster Partnership with stakeholders and communities	Lack of infrastructure with no current physical base	No answer to question	No answer to question
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	No direct relationship between admin funding and measurable community benefits – therefore must evaluate	To date – evaluation efforts have focussed on program and project funding with specific measurable outcomes.	18%	GVESH0 15% - 1 year Membership fees 3% Donations 6%

	Q9 – What is most effective way to measure benefits?	Q10 – What are current barriers to measuring benefits?	Q11 (a) What proportion of your organisation’s total administrative expenditure is funded by the LECG grant	Q11 (b) Other sources of administrative grants funding?
	organisational effectiveness based on activities of the entire organisation. Recipients should be encouraged to nominate measures of success in the applications	Key challenge is to find a way to measure the outcome of advocacy work – a key role for any peak body.		Other grants (admin component) 58%
NPA (NSW)	Results of programs are published on the web site Numbers of those participating in bushwalking	Resources not available to enable consistent measurement – more administrative grant funds assist here	19.4%	Donations 5.5% Membership 22% Commonwealth grant 0.96% Nature protectors grant 23.3% New members 5.5% Investment income 6.9% Sub lease 16.4%
	Q9 – What is most effective way to measure benefits? (Continued)	Q10 – What are current barriers to measuring benefits? (Continued)	Q11 (a) What proportion of your organisation’s total administrative expenditure is funded by the LECG grant (Continued)	Q11 (b) Other sources of administrative grants funding? (Continued)
Planet Ark	Broad measurements allow balanced perspective – Admin and campaign costs viz campaign outcomes over time This will show improvements in output due to system improvement	NA	5.3%	C'th - \$20,000
TEC	Current LECG system of reporting against goals submitted in grant application seems the best method People interactions are difficult to interpret in terms of their impact on environmental objectives	NA	30% of admin costs (reduced from previous grant which was 45%)	A further 21% is derived from 2 other grants GVEHO and NEM Advocacy Panel
Wetland Care	Number of project hours funded through the grant Feedback from members	Key role of AWA is development of national and international policy through the Ramsar Convention. Difficult to develop a monitoring program which would capture the impact of	30%	Member funds

	Q9 – What is most effective way to measure benefits?	Q10 – What are current barriers to measuring benefits?	Q11 (a) What proportion of your organisation’s total administrative expenditure is funded by the LECG grant	Q11 (b) Other sources of administrative grants funding?
		international and federal policy for on the ground outcomes. Ongoing administrative support would allow for development of more clearly defined and measureable targets		

	Q12- Impact if funding increased?	Q13 - Impact if funding decreased?	Q14 – Views on Stratification of funding	Q15 - In what way do you consider eligible applicants for LECG funding should prove that they are sustainable organisations?
AAEE (NSW)	Currently administration project officer is part time consultant. Additional funds would allow for a more permanent engagement	Reduce to capability of the entire organisation	Smaller networks and organisations should be funded	Time in existence Governance structures
ACF Online	Funding towards administration allows for ACF to direct funds to other issues and programs (campaigns, outreach, communications and fundraising)	Sydney office would close	Application form is corporate in language and style. Format is aimed at larger organisations. More simple format would be more appropriate to smaller and regional organisations	Proof of internal financial controls and processes Provide documentation of campaign and project goals and objectives
ANPC	Increase number of workshops and cater for regional locations Reduce fees Improve plant conservation info on social media	Reduced level of service	Smaller organisations applying for smaller grants should have a lower burden. "Time taken to complete applications should be commensurate to \$ outcome". Smaller organisations seeking small grants should have a simpler process	Annual financial reports Length of time in existence Providing membership numbers
Bicycle NSW	More programs with more participants	In the years that grant was provided, fund would have had to be diverted to cover the shortfall in rent	This would be good for fairness across sectors and fields on environment focus – but possibly bad for "value for money"	Demonstrated means of sustainability through revenue opportunities such as membership fees, event ticket sales and sponsorships
CEN Inc	Members would get more support CEN would offer volunteer groups in community greater guidance, support and information on mechanisms for engagement	Anything greater than a 10% drop in funding would impact on activities. Forums would be dropped. Perhaps less newsletters or events.	No comment	Longevity Membership size Values and governance Demonstrated links with Government bodies and community organisations
EDO	No answer	No answer	All applicants for the same grant funding pool should compete against each other	Longevity of operation Range and stability of funding sources

	Q12- Impact if funding increased?	Q13 - Impact if funding decreased?	Q14 – Views on Stratification of funding	Q15 - In what way do you consider eligible applicants for LECG funding should prove that they are sustainable organisations?
				Have audit reports been qualified (and if so – is this grounds for concern?) Financial reserves (min 3 months for current level of operations) See response to question in application regarding financial controls
Foundation for NP&W	This would enable us to provide more information and services to members and the community.	Any decrease in funding would make a huge difference. Members and volunteers respond well when they can see funds being spent on programs and activities. Fundraising from supporters would need to be directed to fixed organisational costs rather than program activities.	There should be one application process. A more simple process does or stratification of funding does not result in greater value for money for the Environmental trust. At present – eligibility criteria determine whom the ET wants to support.	5 years of audited accounts and provision of a business plan (in confidence)
Friends of the Koala	Increase in funding would be very significant. Increasing numbers of volunteers requires some professional administrative assistance. To benefit the community, members and the Koala population, an increase in grant funding is needed which can then be leveraged through engagement of volunteers	See Q 6 and Q 12 answers. Benefits delivered to protection of Koala population would be reduced. Habitat enhancement, scientific research would be reduced.	Both large state-wide umbrella organisations and smaller regional lead organisations should be funded. FOK actively utilises services from NCC, EDO and TEC. Grants for <30Kpa should be more simple and have a reduced burden of administrative compliance.	Sound governance Regular reporting Demonstration of partnerships Longevity
	Q12- Impact if funding increased? (Continued)	Q13 - Impact if funding decreased? (Continued)	Q14 – Views on Stratification of funding (Continued)	Q15 - In what way do you consider eligible applicants for LECG funding should prove that they are

	Q12- Impact if funding increased?	Q13 - Impact if funding decreased?	Q14 – Views on Stratification of funding	Q15 - In what way do you consider eligible applicants for LECG funding should prove that they are sustainable organisations?
				sustainable organisations? (Cont...)
Greening Australia	Increased funding for on the ground projects and programs	No measurable impact as grant funding was only \$5,000 pa for 3 years (total \$15K)	If each organisation is assessed fairly against the criteria – the same process should apply to everyone (big or small). Most important point is that the goals of the organisation align with those of the ET and that the funding is commensurate with the size of the applicant's impact	Income, expenditure and audited accounts
Landcare NSW	Increased funding would enable the development of a base for the organisation	Reduced capacity, effectiveness. Reduced communications with members and communities. Reduced capacity for workshops and peak body feedback on issues	If you can show you are a lead organisation at National, state or regional level – this is different to work done at a local level. Community outcomes are different to environmental outcomes. Those who Network local community activities need to be recognised as having a role.	Evidence of communications with members Awareness of issues Increased skills Engagement of community
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	Increased funding would allow for greater investment in volunteer co-ordination	Reduced advice and assistance for members Reduced ability to participate in government processes.	NCC supports a 2-tiered application process to reduce transaction costs and complexity for smaller organisations while maintaining accountability for larger organisations. Essential that LECG program return to a 3 year funding cycle. Smaller organisations should only need to provide audited accounts at the end of the 3 year cycle (not annually).	Track record of achievement Sound financial controls and budget process Audited financial accounts
NPA (NSW)	Further services Community conservation fora Bush regeneration Healthy ageing initiatives	Less money for community engagement Reduced staff co-ordination Reduce on line presence Reduced on line presence (which is	Separate competitive processes should be created – for small, local and regional organisations. Current application form is daunting for a	Audited financial statements Realistic strategic plan (with alignments to NSW

	Q12- Impact if funding increased?	Q13 - Impact if funding decreased?	Q14 – Views on Stratification of funding	Q15 - In what way do you consider eligible applicants for LECG funding should prove that they are sustainable organisations?
		largest source of attracting more membership)	volunteer run organisation	Strategic Plan 2021)
Planet Ark	Improved reporting and administrative systems System design and review More effective comms with supporters Integration of newsletter and volunteer and campaign databases	If databases are not consolidated, communication opportunities will be missed therefore leading to missed opportunities for funding or for environmental participation	Yes – agree – separate process for big and small seems fair. More admin and compliance burden on larger organisations Smaller local and regional organisations should rely on application form	Sustainability of finances and operations Extent of community support
TEC	Administrative costs are increasing with inflation. Additional funding would assist in covering these costs	A decrease in funding would result in a decrease in activity in the absence of additional fundraising. A 3 years funding stream is more welcome for the purpose of stability	Better value for money through funding of larger organisations with aligned goals. The larger organisations can then assist smaller groups do their work without duplicating administrative effort. A smaller portion should be kept for smaller organisations which operate with low overheads and require small grants.	Longevity of operations Good budget control and administrative processes History of success Capability of Senior Executive staff and board / governance authorities
Wetland Care	Develop a web site with an e-bulletin for members Improve co-ordination of reporting for Ramsar conferences Provide more direct support to community	Reduced quality of administration and co-ordination of NSW Wetland groups' contribution to Ramsar Conferences	Single process. Ratio of grant admin costs to grants awarded should be kept low so as to fund as many programs as possible	Number of members Longevity of incorporation Financial statements / reports Track record of delivery of grant outcomes

	Q16 (a) Too much information is required in the applications.	Q16 (b) The eligibility criteria and required responses are not clear enough	Q16 (c) The application forms and eligibility criteria are easy to follow and respond to	Q16 (d) The Guidelines were clear and made completing the Grant Application forms easy.
AAEE (NSW)	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
ACF Online	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
ANPC	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Bicycle NSW	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
CEN Inc	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
EDO	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Foundation for NP&W	Agree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Agree
Friends of the Koala	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Greening Australia	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Landcare NSW	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
NPA (NSW)	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
Planet Ark	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
TEC	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
Wetland Care	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree

	Q17 - In what ways could the application process and eligibility criteria be improved	Q18 - How would you rate your reporting obligations in your LECG grant agreement (a) too prescriptive (b) balanced (c) not prescriptive enough?	Q19 - What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to the terms of the LECG grant agreement?
AAEE (NSW)	No answer	"Better than the ET Education Grants"	N/A
ACF Online	No answer	Sometimes difficult to report on goals and objectives after a 3 year funding process as goals change over time	No answer
ANPC	Consider a 2-step on-line process Step 1 – EOI – if accepted - Step 2 – Complete further details	Reporting time consuming but not too prescriptive	None
Bicycle NSW	None	Procedure balanced, not too onerous	None
CEN Inc	Best practice is with C'th Water grants. They were on-line, simple and easy to complete. LECG application is ambiguous in parts	Balanced	Funding needs to be for a longer period and reporting made more simple (easier)
EDO	Reasonable – categorisation of admin expenditure "fiddly" but manageable Use of TC to assess applications is very good	Balanced.	Trust should not request provision of information which has already been provided – either to the Trust or to ACNC. This would reduce burden on NGOs which operate as charities.
Foundation for NP&W	If funding is for administration – this should be able to be seen through MYOB reports or financial accounts. Completing separate financial reports in time consuming and a waste of limited resources.	Too prescriptive and not simple enough.	Reduce administrative burden if possible.
Friends of the Koala	Cut out one year funding. 3 years minimum to allow for planning and engagement of staff.	Balanced	More time required for final report till 30 September – not 31 August. Too soon after end of FY.
Greening Australia	Reasonable	Too prescriptive and too much required for level of funding provided	No answer
Landcare NSW	Reasonably "good fit" Co-ordination of multiple projects could be an added criteria as this is what requires admin assistance	OK Reporting formats must reflect the application to ensure consistence of objectives	Notification of results of applications needs to be more timely 3 year funding is essential
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	No answer	Balanced	3 year funding essential to allow for certainty and planning

NPA (NSW)	Grant should be for 3 years Ensure longevity of community engagement and reduce admin burden of applications Allow for budgeting Annual reporting still necessary	Well balanced but far reaching	Answer not relevant.
Planet Ark	No answer	Balanced and reasonable	NA
TEC	No answer	Balanced	3 years cycle preferred
Wetland Care	Not sure	Balanced	None

	Q2 – Describe the services you provide to members and the general community	Q3 – Describe the general environmental, social and/or economic benefits that your services deliver to members and the general community.
AAEE (NSW)	<p>We provide information, support, professional development and advocacy to our members; we sit on government panels around environmental education,</p> <p>NSW EfS Plan</p> <p>General community we are a voice for environmental educators</p>	<p>We run the NSW Environmental Education awards in three categories government (local and state), formal and community educator award, gould league scholarship (to educators to assist attending conference), biannual NSW environmental education conference 2013 is the 31st conference.</p> <p>There is no data to give on benefits, but it is the only provider to the NSW environmental education community, the awards are the only recognition process for environmental educators in NSW and led into the Australian EE awards run by the national body.</p>
ACF Online	<p>For 45 years ACF has been a strong voice for the environment, promoting solutions through research, consultation, education and partnerships. We have deep and long-lasting networks in business and the community with a membership base close to 9,000.</p>	<p>To achieve a healthy environment and prevent ecological breakdown, Australia will over the next decade have to pursue social, cultural, economic and institutional transformation. To help deliver these transformations, ACF will focus on uniting people in our society who have the desire and ability to make a real difference. We will engage these people to help develop a clear, positive direction for Australia's future. We will support them in building communities and economies that are sustainable in practice. And we will help them have a voice to influence those who make the decisions that shape our nation. We will build momentum for change by highlighting the urgent need to act now, by enabling Australian's to actively participate in environmental solutions, and by amplifying their influence through our national voice and our networks.</p> <p>ACF has around 100,000 people following our activity on email and social networks. We have 8,826 members, around 3000 taking action as part of our campaigns online and offline & a few hundred volunteers leading activity in their community or coming into the office to volunteer. We have 300 trained climate presenters through The Climate Reality Project who have given thousands of presentation in their communities or industries.</p>

	Q2 – Describe the services you provide to members and the general community	Q3 – Describe the general environmental, social and/or economic benefits that your services deliver to members and the general community.
ANPC	<p>(a) The ANPC provides members with up-to-date information on plant conservation within Australia through the publication of a quarterly bulletin, regular e-newsletters, workshops, a biennial conference, the website and via social media.</p> <p>(b) The mission of the ANPC is to promote and develop plant conservation in Australia. To achieve this, the ANPC: maintains a national network of organisations and individuals involved in plant conservation; facilitates information and skills exchange between scientists and practitioners; runs practical workshops and courses; organises thematic conferences and forums; publishes a quarterly bulletin and technical guidelines; distributes an electronic newsletter containing plant conservation news and events; and maintains an informative website on plant conservation in Australia.</p>	<p>The ANPC enables members and the community to keep in touch with the latest developments in plant conservation science and practice. In a 2010 survey of members 60% of respondents indicated they read all or most of the ANPC quarterly bulletin with an additional 25% reading articles of interest. Almost all respondents indicated that the bulletin rated very highly in its importance in plant conservation. Since January 2010, the ANPC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has conducted 16 workshops and courses on a range of plant conservation topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plant Identification of Grassy Ecosystems ○ Translocation of Threatened Plants ○ Seed Collection Storage and Use ○ Myrtle Rust – a new threat to Australia’s biodiversity • held two major conferences, in Perth in 2010 and in Canberra in 2012. <p>Over 1,000 people have attended an ANPC event in that time. People who attend ANPC workshops are asked to complete an evaluation which includes questions on whether the workshop has met its objectives of increasing their knowledge of the subject and their ability to apply that knowledge. For workshops held in 2012 at Mt Annan, NSW workshop participants indicated that the workshop met those objectives to a high degree.</p>
Bicycle NSW	<p>a) Bicycle advocacy and submissions, bicycle skills and education, bicycle events, insurance, legal advice, online magazine, newsletters, retailer discounts.</p> <p>b) Bicycle advocacy and submissions, bicycle skills and education, bicycle events, newsletters</p>	<p>Our mission is to create a better environment for cycling.</p> <p>By encouraging more people to cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We create a better environment by reducing greenhouse gasses, and by using less resources. • We provide an environment for people to interact socially on rides. • We provide an activity which promotes mental wellbeing and higher self-esteem. • We introduce a more economical way to travel, which is environmentally friendly and reduces congestion on our roads which is an economic benefit to all. • We create a healthier population reducing the strain on our health system which is an economic benefit to all.

	Q2 – Describe the services you provide to members and the general community	Q3 – Describe the general environmental, social and/or economic benefits that your services deliver to members and the general community.
CEN Inc	<p>CEN provides the following services to members and the wider public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Services = Events, Networking Nights, email Notices, website and a network. • Resource Centre (desks, phones. Internet, computers, copier, maps, library, meeting room and equipment). • Projects; Grant or contract funded positions for specific on ground or educational projects. • Issues and Campaigns, support for local community groups to access information and provide input. • Wildplant Nursery volunteers growing indigenous native plants for sale or to give away. • Partnership with University of Newcastle to establish and operate the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre. 	<p>CEN does not differentiate between members and general community.</p> <p>Environmental – see project list attached</p> <p>Social – Activities for volunteers and landowners many of whom are retired. Training for unemployed or under employed.</p> <p>Economic – 14 PT Employees and partnerships with many councils and other NGOs on projects where people are employed (possibly another 12 people PT). Purchase of Materials, consumables and services from grants, contracts or donations.</p>
EDO	<p>(a) EDO NSW services are not provided to members specifically though members can access services in the same way as the general public can.</p> <p>(b) Legal advice and representation; scientific/technical advice as it relates to legal issues; legal education and information; contributing to public policy and law reform.</p>	<p>(a) Not applicable</p> <p>(b) The community has access to information and advice about their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to environment and planning law in NSW. These legal services are similar to those provided by the NSW government through Legal Aid NSW and Law Access except that those agencies do not assist in the specialist areas of environmental and planning law. As such, EDO NSW services are a unique and complementary service enhancing access to justice in NSW. EDO NSW also works with the government in the area of law and policy development and our work with the community in providing legal advice and education gives us a strong evidence base to inform our views on environmental and planning matters of concern to the community.</p> <p>We have evidence from various sources such as quantitative and demographic data on clients serviced, qualitative information from formal and informal feedback processes and we occasionally engage independent consultants to evaluate our work.)</p>
Foundation for NP&W	<p>The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife cares for the environment by supporting six key areas;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Growing Parks & Reserves <p>Acquisition of land to grow Australia’s National Reserve System, which ensures land is managed for conservation in perpetuity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Habitat Conservation & Wildlife Corridors <p>Restoration, rehabilitation and revegetation of degraded terrestrial and</p>	<p>The Foundation is the only organisation in Australia whose philanthropy is an investment in our public estate, our unique species, and our cultural heritage – for all to enjoy.</p> <p>In the last ten years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foundation disbursed over \$12 million dollars to a wide range of conservation projects. • Foundation funding for bush regeneration and private land conservation grants totaled almost a million dollars. • Education and research projects received almost \$1 million dollars in funding.

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	<p>marine habitats to ensure their ability to sustain native species.</p> <p>3) Saving Threatened Species Scientific research with tangible conservation outcomes and on-ground works to conserve Australia’s threatened species.</p> <p>4) Parks for People Improvement of national park facilities for the enjoyment of all, to foster and encourage the appreciation of nature.</p> <p>5) Preserving & Celebrating Cultural Heritage Conserving and telling the stories that make up Australia’s cultural heritage as part of the gift we leave to future generations.</p> <p>6) Environmental Education Provision of environmental education to grow an awareness and appreciation of the value of Australia’s native species and environment, and the need to conserve what we have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatened species projects received approximately \$1 million. Over 60 threatened Australian native species benefited from Foundation funded projects during this decade, including Mountain Pygmy Possums, Humpback Whales, Bottle-nosed Dolphins, Eastern and Spotted Quolls, Rock-wallabies of all descriptions, Little Penguins, Southern Corroboree Frogs and many more. Over \$1 million was spent on cultural heritage restoration and preservation work at sites including Greycliffe Gardens in Neilsen Park, Goat Island, Mungo National Park, Old Great North Road, and the Quarantine Station at Manly. Over 41,000 hectares of land, valued at approximately \$6.4 million, was added to Australia’s National Reserve System in the last decade. This is about the size of Barbados, or 328,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools! <p>In our 43 year history the Foundation has been able to add over 500,000 hectares to Australia’s national parks and nature reserves for the benefit of the public, and our wildlife.</p>

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<p>Friends of the Koala</p>	<p>(a) Organisational good governance (including financial viability); co-ordination of deliverables; a safe workplace; training; information; high quality veterinary support; ‘advancement’ mechanisms; quarterly newsletters, website, Facebook, etc.; social events; contribution recognition - basic refreshments, award nomination, etc.; financial assistance - attend conferences, build homecare facilities, fuel, out-of-pocket expenses, etc., representation on external working groups, committees, etc., a maintained koala care facility enabling rostered involvement; accessible food tree plantations; necessary equipment.</p> <p>(b) Information about koalas, habitat, conservation etc.; 24/7 koala rescue/sighting hotline and response effort; referral advice (Enviro Line, NRCMA, Councils, EDO etc.); provenanced koala food trees for planting; planting advice (and assistance); referee/letters of support for personal and local authority habitat enhancement grant applications; learning opportunities – workshops, field days, etc.; DA (development application) monitoring over five and occasionally seven LGAs; koala conservation related policy development & reform ; research contribution.</p>	<p>FOK’s organisational framework and reputation empowers people of all ages and backgrounds to take individual and collective responsibility for protecting and nurturing the region’s koalas and their habitat – despite increasing threats, the Northern Rivers is still an acknowledged koala stronghold of national significance (in the Lismore LGA at least, the population may be expanding):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,426 koalas brought into care 1992-2012; 928 released back into the wild • 115,000 koala food trees distributed for planting <p>By working with state (DoPI & OEH) and local government (staff and elected representatives) FOK has contributed to five of the six councils in the Northern Rivers region committing to preparation of comprehensive koala plans of management for at least some of their jurisdictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-East Lismore* • Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (in preparation)* • Byron Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (in preparation)* • Ballina Shire Koala Habitat Study (in preparation)* • Richmond Valley Shire Council presently negotiating funding assistance from OEH. We expect to be invited to participate in developing a partial CKPoM. <p>*Friends of the Koala represented on project reference groups</p> <p>By preparing reasoned responses to development applications and matters of policy which adversely impact on koalas and their habitat Friends of the Koala benefits those members and concerned members of the general public who do not have the capacity to make their own individual submission.</p> <p>By maintaining a strong [regional] media presence, website, Facebook, print publications, Koala Care Centre educational tours, presentations and workshops to schools, community groups, conferences, etc. FOK is contributing to a high level of community awareness and understanding of koala conservation issues in the Northern Rivers which is resulting in behavioural change such as people reporting koalas requiring intervention, planting koala food trees on their property, expressing support for koala/conservation issues through local government elections, letters to the editor, etc.</p> <p>FOK’s on-ground experience is broadening scientific knowledge of koala biology, the threats facing koalas and possible solutions. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tissue samples for genetic analysis • Urban tracking

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Chlamydia vaccine trials • Datasets-sharing <p>FOK’s holistic approach to koala conservation (habitat protection, individual koala welfare, community education, policy development and reform, advocacy, and research assistance) creates an underlying inclusiveness that’s attractive to people because it offers a wide choice of tasks requiring varied interest and expertise which all contribute to our mission. This inclusiveness is reflected in the group’s longevity and broad community trust. FOK’s active members enjoy considerable public recognition because of the group’s good reputation and wide acknowledgement as the primary community stakeholder in koala conservation on the Northern Rivers. FOK’s valuing of its active members demonstrated in reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses, personal recognition, policies regarding financial assistance, together with general good governance, promotes strong mutual loyalty. FOK’s Koala Care & Research Centre is one of the few tourist “must sees” Lismore has to offer, thus adds to the City’s economy.</p> <p>FOK provides the community (and government) with excellent value for money: services conservatively valued at \$.5m + pa for around \$70,000 pa, of which \$15,000 comes directly from the NSW state government.</p>

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Greening Australia	<p>Greening Australia is one of Australia’s leading environmental not-for-profit organisations. Since 1982 Greening Australia has been developing sustainable environmental solutions for the challenges facing our nation’s unique landscapes. We work to conserve, rehabilitate and improve the biodiversity of our natural environment.</p> <p>As a not-for-profit organisation any revenue raised through the delivery of project works is reinvested back into environmental and community work. An example of this is the Community Nursery Greening Australia has built in Western Sydney that provides a resource for volunteers, youth at risk groups and traineeships.</p> <p>Greening Australia NSW delivers all aspects of an ecological restoration project; our team can provide the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Planning – Vegetation Management Plans, Bio-banking and vegetation offsets • Seed Services – collection plans, collection, cleaning and storage • Plant supply – we own and operate a 1 million+ production nursery at Richmond • Community Engagement – new resident engagement programs, Community Nursery, schools programs • Traineeships – we work with the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council to deliver indigenous traineeships integrated in our project • Bush regeneration/weed control • Revegetation – including all site preparation, installation and maintenance required • Site maintenance • Monitoring and Reporting 	<p>Social Benefits: GANSW engages and educates youth, schools and the community on environmental and conservation issues and work. We believe this empowers the community to make changes locally and to think globally about the environment. Over the years we have run programs such as Green Corps which enabled young people to undertake work experience and demonstrate their abilities to future employers (making them more employable). Green Corps activities, as with all GANSW works, also contributed to conserving, preserving and restoring the Australian environment. GANSW also facilitates volunteers to come to our nursery and learn how to work in the horticultural industry. These volunteers take away skills from their experiences as well as new friends and an improved sense of wellbeing. GANSW also works with school to increase general feelings of community ownership over conservation works and their local environment.</p> <p>Economic Benefits: Any volunteer, green corps participant or community member who has moved into gainful employment using skills and work experience gained through GANSW is delivering economic benefit to the general community. The benefit delivered is even greater if this person had previously been receiving financial help from the Australian Government. There are many economic benefits gained from completed conservation works. For example, restored riparian zones can lead to better water quality in waterways which could lead to healthier river ecosystems. Healthy river systems are economically valuable as they are less likely to make people sick (costing the community money through healthcare) and they can also support aquatic food chains. There are thousands of other iterations of economic benefit just like this example that can be gained from successful environmental works.</p>

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Landcare NSW	<p>In order to best describe the services we provide to our members and the general community, I have copied in our Terms of Reference, which were developed and endorsed by Landcare at our 2nd annual Muster</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to celebrate the achievements of Landcare and promote Landcare and community based NRM organisations and activities, and to provide a conduit for sharing ideas and projects between Landcare members. b. to identify, communicate with and represent Landcare at the grass-roots, State and National level to develop and foster ideas, knowledge and resources. To promote the outcomes of what Landcare achieves at a political level, corporate level and to the general public. c. to organise an annual Landcare Muster where Landcare networks, groups and members can raise Landcare and broader natural resource and environmental issues, and develop strategies to address issues raised. d. to establish and enhance cooperation and partnerships between Landcare and broader natural resource, environmental and primary industry organisations including regional NRM bodies and government departments, e. to speak as endorsed representatives of Landcare networks and Landcare groups in the development of District, State and National Landcare and broader natural resource and environmental policy 	<p>In addition to the outputs and outcomes of the LECG grant, our organisation has been able to develop and grow to enable us to deliver the following benefits:</p> <p>As the Lead agency, we co-ordinated the \$4.2m Caring for Our Country - Communities in Landscapes project involving a multi-partnered agency response to achieving landscape scale management change in Box-gum Grassy Woodlands (NSWPI, NSW OEH, NPWS, CSIRO, GA, University of Sydney etc) Together we delivered outcomes across 3 CMA regions in NSW. Targets achieved included increasing areas of Box-gum woodland managed to reduce critical threat by over 66,000 ha: Increasing Landscape Scale conservation with over 70 farmers adopting conservation practices. Please see http://cil.landcare.nsw.gov.au for further information</p> <p>We have raised the profile and understanding of voluntary Landcare groups in the public and the governments' perception, and provided a mechanism for volunteers to have a voice at a state level, and a cohesive approach to supporting Landcare at the regional level. We now have a representative seat at many policy and planning tables and the state and regional level.</p> <p>As a direct result of our lobbying and communications with the State government, we were instrumental in and are currently directly involved with the development and roll out of the NSW Government Landcare support package.</p>

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Nature Conservation Council (NCC)	<p>Services to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updates on environmental issues, policy developments and funding opportunities • low cost insurance (public and product liability insurance, volunteer insurance) • representation and advice on environmental policy issues at state and federal level • organising annual and regional conferences for members and representatives • providing a forum for debating and reaching consensus on environmental policy issues • providing a platform for collaboration, including policy committees and working groups • collaborating on community education programs (e.g. power saving, waste avoidance) <p>Services to the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing updates on environmental issues and policy developments • providing information, advice and assistance on environmental policy issues • delivering workshops, seminars and conferences on key environmental issues • delivering education programs on power saving, waste avoidance and sustainable living 	<p>Our organisation is a democratic network of community organisations, engaged in positive action for the environment. Our conservation and sustainability programs engage thousands of people every year, from a broad cross-section of the community.</p> <p>Our programs contribute to NSW Government environmental priorities by engaging the community in positive individual and collective action to promote nature conservation, sustainable natural resource management, renewable energy and waste avoidance.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Living Program</i></p> <p>Our community education programs have helped thousands of households save power, reduce waste, switch to clean energy and get involved in community action for a sustainable future.</p> <p><i>Reducing Food Waste</i></p> <p>Our <i>Food Waste Challenge</i> provides practical advice to help households reduce the amount of food they waste. preventing food waste saves money, water, energy and natural resources, and reduces landfill and methane emissions. This proven behavioural change program focuses on helping households to reduce waste by teaching people how to shop, how to store food correctly, how to cook with correct portion sizes and with leftovers and surplus fruit and vegetables.</p> <p>The <i>Food Waste Challenge</i> was run last year in Willoughby, Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, Wagga Wagga, Eurobodalla and Coffs Harbour. Food waste champions were identified and trained in each area so these local food champions can spread the word in their community.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Renters Guide</i></p> <p>For many participants in our community education programs, renting is perceived as a barrier to achieving a sustainable lifestyle and reducing their environmental footprint. To help overcome these concerns, we produced the <i>Sustainable Renters Guide</i>, a practical guide for residential tenants wishing to live more sustainably.</p> <p>From choosing a rental property to saving water in the garden, the <i>Sustainable Renters Guide</i> provides a comprehensive collection practical advice, presented in simple language and a user friendly format. For every topic from power saving to recycling, the guide provides handy tips and simple checklists to help you make your home more sustainable.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Living for Renters</i></p> <p>The <i>Sustainable Renters</i> workshop series, funded by a grant from the City of Sydney, focused on ways renters can reduce their environmental footprint. Each participant learned how they could live more sustainably in rented accommodation, using less energy and water and choosing a house with an orientation to maximise cooling in summer and warmth in winter.</p> <p>Participants received a <i>Sustainable Renters Guide</i> and three workshops were run in the City of Sydney, including workshops for students at the University of Technology Sydney.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with landholders and agencies to promote sustainable fire management 	<p><i>Reducing household carbon emissions</i> Our <i>Community Climate Challenge</i> promotes practical action by householders such as saving power and taking public transport to reduce their carbon footprint and save on energy bills. since the <i>Community Climate Challenge</i> was launched in 2006, we have worked with more than 4,000 households across New South Wales. Last year, we delivered the <i>Community Climate Challenge</i> in two regions: the Hunter valley and the illawarra. More than 600 participants took the challenge to reduce their carbon footprint and live in a more sustainable manner. Participants earned points for every practical action they chose – from riding a bike to work, to starting a kitchen garden and using a smart power board to turn all appliances off at the wall.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Food Choices</i> The <i>Foodprint Challenge</i> is an education program designed to improve the community’s awareness of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable food consumption and to encourage sustainable food consumption patterns. Through a range of educational tools including face-to-face workshops and a <i>Sustainable Shopper Passbook</i>, the challenge encourages sustainable food consumption strategies. These include buying local, seasonal produce and producing your own food, supporting cooperative agriculture, reducing meat consumption, buying sustainable seafood and promoting the purchase of environmentally, economically and socially beneficial food choices such as organics and fair trade.</p> <p><i>Fire and Biodiversity</i> Our fire and biodiversity programs continue to lead the way on ecologically sustainable fire management, working with hundreds of rural landholders and peri-urban households to achieve improved outcomes for nature and local communities.</p> <p><i>Supporting Sustainable Fire Management</i> Recognising the important role of fire in the Australian landscape, our award winning <i>Hotspots</i> fire project provides landholders and land managers with the skills and knowledge needed to protect and restore biodiversity using sustainable fire management practices. Over the past year, our team has delivered 38 workshops, reaching 450 landholders within 20 different regional communities across new south Wales. each workshop series brings together the latest ecological knowledge and practical operational skills in a unique training model. The program continues to receives positive feedback from landholders and land managers. this year, our team had the opportunity to work with Aboriginal landholders in culturally significant landscapes and contributed to survey work and</p>

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		<p>fire management planning for the nationally endangered Hastings River mouse along the Northern Tablelands.</p> <p><i>Hotspots</i> is delivered in close collaboration with the NSW Rural Fire Service, under the guidance of an advisory committee comprised of key stakeholders and land management agencies.</p> <p><i>Facilitating regional collaboration</i> We have taken a leading role in the northern Rivers fire and Biodiversity Consortium, a network of 22 stakeholders and land management agencies focused on managing fire for biodiversity outcomes in the Northern Rivers region. The consortium has established working groups focused on ecological burning constraints, koala habitat and bell miner associated dieback, and has secured federal funding for restoration of habitat for threatened species in the Border Ranges, including the eastern bristlebird, Hastings River mouse and eastern chestnut mouse. Consortium partners have secured funding to protect and restore koala habitat on the far north Coast, and plan to deliver a community awareness program on the consequences of intense wildfires on koala populations.</p> <p><i>Promoting Sustainable Fire Policy</i> We have been actively involved in fire management, bushfire education and advocacy for sustainable fire policy since 1979. over the past year, we have provided extensive advice and input on fire management policy, including detailed submissions on management of fire in national parks, planning for bushfire protection, protection and restoration of wildlife corridors and controls on burning of native vegetation. We provided high level policy advice through our participation on the Bush fire Coordinating Committee, Rural fire service Advisory Council, Hazard Reduction panel and Bush fire environmental Assessment Code Review panel. our representatives provide a vital voice for nature on more than 40 bushfire management committees across the state.</p> <p><i>Preparing for fire</i> We believe that hazard reduction burning is most effective, and least environmentally harmful, when implemented as part of an integrated program, which recognises the important role of the community in managing fire risk and conserving native bushland. Our <i>Preparing for Fire</i> workshops aim to build the awareness and capacity of peri-urban householders to prepare for fire. four pilot workshops were delivered this year, reaching over 100 residents. the workshops involve a two-way exchange of information between residents and agency representatives about bushfire risk and biodiversity conservation. they also help the community understand the limitations of prescribed burning.</p> <p><i>Restoring threatened woodlands</i> In collaboration with the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service,</p>

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		<p>we have commenced a three year program to examine the use of fire as a restoration tool in the threatened woodlands of the Cumberland plain.</p> <p>The native vegetation of this region has been extensively cleared for agriculture and the growth of western sydney. today only 13 per cent remains as intact bushland. These important last patches of habitat are highly fragmented and vulnerable to weed invasion. Over the next three years, we will conduct an extended trial to investigate the use of fire for the control of three priority weed species and to restore ecosystem health in the Cumberland plain.</p> <p><i>Collaborating with indigenous landowners</i></p> <p>In an exciting new development for our fire and biodiversity programs, we successfully secured funding for a long-term partnership with Aboriginal landowners in Northern New South Wales.</p> <p>This new initiative, <i>Firesticks</i>, will use contemporary and traditional fire management practices to enhance ecological health and resilience by creating habitat mosaics, reducing the impacts of wildfire, protecting carbon rich ecosystems and reducing the impacts of invasive species.</p> <p>The program will be delivered over 5 years, in partnership with three Indigenous Protected Areas, four Local Aboriginal Land Councils, the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).</p>

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NPA (NSW)	<p>Access to our community education forums we organise frequently across the state on a broad range of topics including: the benefits of marine parks; the social, economic and biodiversity values of NSW Travelling Stock Routes; weed identification; connectivity conservation and biodiversity.</p> <p>Access to Australia's largest volunteer led bushwalking program</p> <p>Access to participate in our conservation projects and community engagement/education programs</p> <p>A range of NPA's bush regeneration programs around Sydney Harbour, mid north coast, Illawarra and Armidale for members and non members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in our Citizen Science projects like the NSW Koala Count, NatureKeepers, Rock Wallaby survey. Importantly, participants in these programs do not need to be members. • Insurance coverage is provided to members while participating in authorised NPA activities • Our quarterly magazine published seasonally • Bushwalking Handbook which includes current information on safety and first aid. • E-Newsletters (General conservation, Walks Updates,) This is sent to over 10,000 supporters. 	<p>Over the past 55 years NPA has been the principle advocate for NSW National Parks. Two thirds of our members live in regional NSW, a unique characteristic of our membership structure. This enables us to play a positive role across the NSW community. There are numerous social and economic benefits our programs and services achieve for our members and the broader NSW community, including:</p> <p>We play a positive and active role at the local level by connecting people with nature through our extensive volunteer led bushwalking program. We now offer well over 1000 guided walks per year, increasing participants' appreciation of and support for their natural environment. There are significant health and wellbeing benefits attributable to participation in our bushwalking programs. Our programs enable the community to enjoy our national parks and in doing so increasing fitness levels which is great in fighting diabetes, obesity and heart disease. From improving physical health to lifting mood, improving concentration, and facilitating social connectedness a closer engagement with nature has it all.</p> <p>We publish positive stories about NSW national parks in our primary publication <i>Nature NSW</i>.</p> <p>Additionally, we undertake scientific and citizen science studies on a range of topics including: marine biodiversity surveys; recording traditional aboriginal knowledge of the Tumut Aboriginal community; undertaking citizen science projects like the NSW Koala count. These are just a few examples of our community engagement work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thousands of NSW participants engage with our projects and programs. For example 20,000 people bushwalk with us each year. Over 1000 attended our regional conservation forums in Coffs Harbour, Orange, Central Coast, Southern Highlands, Armidale, Milton, Iluka. • Our programs contribute to the states regional economy in a number of ways. Bushwalkers purchase goods from local businesses close to national parks. Our forums book venues and participants stay in local accommodation.

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Planet Ark	<p>Planet Ark’s campaigns provide environmental education, promote environmental behaviour change and help connect people and nature. Our campaigns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day which combine to make Australia's biggest community tree planting and nature care event. - National Recycling Week which seeks to educate and facilitate action on recycling through the school, business and general community. - Recycling Near You and Business Recycling website and Information Centre services provide information the community is seeking about recycling materials and facilities. - Cartridges 4 Planet Ark program, which is conducted with industry and retail partners, provides consumers with easy practical solution to recycling printer cartridges. <p>Additionally, we offer a number of recycling information services including Recycling Near You (for consumers) and Business Recycling</p>	<p>Planet Ark’s environmental programs have been established to involve and benefit the general community.</p> <p>National Tree Day is Australia's largest community based environmental action, with around 200,000 participants planting native trees and shrubs at 3300 sites across Australia, approximately 40% in NSW. To date 17 million trees and shrubs have been planted through the history of National Tree Day, involving more than 2.8 million people.</p> <p>[Source re NTD numbers: http://treeday.planetark.org/about/what.cfm]</p> <p>Cartridges 4 Planet Ark is now in its 11th year with 21 million printer cartridges collected and therefore diverted from with landfill with high recovery of valuable resources.</p> <p>National Recycling Week 6,000 people involved in NRW activities in 2012 such as Big Aussie Swap Parties, Friday File Fling events, Recycle Right Quiz entries and registered participants in the Schools Recycle Right Challenge.</p> <p>[Source re NRW numbers: NRW 2012 campaign evaluation stats]</p> <p>Recycling Near You website and hotline have had more than 7.6 million visits and 19,850 phone calls respectively since the launch in November 2006.</p> <p>[Source re RNY numbers: RNY Annual Report 2012-09-13]</p>

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TEC	<p>Our members only receive a newsletter and e-updates. Our focus is on the general community and other NGOs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing information on current issues via the website and specialist issue websites (eg, Green Electricity Watch, Safer Solutions) - assisting with advice on how to participate in government policy making processes - producing research papers about environmental problems and solutions - providing a voice to advocate for the environment and on behalf of the community via mainstream and social media and on government committees and to business groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we have undertaken over 100 successful campaigns to protect the environment across urban and natural fronts (see: http://www.tec.org.au/docman/func-startdown/398) since our establishment in 1972. - it is well established that new environmental regulation creates employment and sustains new industry (eg, via BASIX and new recycling laws which were major campaigns of ours). - our Green Capital program helps foster sustainable business practices which have a dispersed positive economic value and provide greener choices to consumers.
Wetland Care	<p>The Australian Wetland Alliance was initially established in 1994 to facilitate input by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to the Ramsar Conference of Parties held in Brisbane in 1996. Since then its members have supported an on-going role in wetland conservation, strategic planning, national reporting and policy.</p> <p>The Australian Wetland Alliance supports Australian NGOs working on wise use and conservation of wetlands. It provides a communication platform for people working in wetland management via an email list for correspondence, forums and other avenues.</p> <p>AWA is administered through a Secretariat, hosted by a member organisation and supported by a Technical Reference Group. On international wetland issues it is affiliated informally with the World Wetland Network. Currently the Secretary of AWA is the Oceania regional representative for the World Wetland Network.</p> <p>Mission To achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands in Australia.</p> <p>Goals To promote implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Australia, enabling NGO leadership, communication and the development of alliances and networks.</p> <p>Objectives 1. Foster and support a network of Australian NGOs involved in</p>	<p>AWA: Environmental benefits: improve management, rehabilitation and education for wetland conservation by sharing information and knowledge to build capacity of members. Social benefits: build social capital through supporting relationships and networks. Co-ordinating the capture, storage and dissemination of information about wetland activities in the NGO sector, in particular relating to delivery of Australia's commitments under the Ramsar convention. Build national and international knowledge and relationships between stakeholders working in the NGO sector.</p> <p>Economic: Reinforce Australia's position as a leading contracting party to the Ramsar convention. The network helps promote and strengthen the NGO sector which is an important part of the economy, employing people in natural resource management sector and conserving the environmental foundation of economic activities such as agriculture and tourism/recreation.</p> <p>WCA: WetlandCare Australia is the leading Australian not for profit wetland conservation organisation. For over 20 years it has been dedicated to supporting every Australian to protect and restore our precious wetlands. Our primary focus has been on the ground action and building the capacity of and providing ongoing support to over 16,000 volunteers, community groups, indigenous groups, landholders and natural resource managers. Together we have conserved, restored and sustainably managed over 175,000 hectares of Australia's functioning wetland ecosystems and their catchments and assisted wetland managers in rehabilitation planning through mapping and</p>

	Q2 – Describe the services you provide to members and the general community	Q3 – Describe the general environmental, social and/or economic benefits that your services deliver to members and the general community.
	<p>wetland conservation and provide linkages to other sectors and networks including all levels of government, environmental organisations and interest groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Share knowledge, expertise and resources to build the capacity of members to conserve wetlands and influence government and wetland managers. 3. Support Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) to promote best practice for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. 4. Raise the profile of member NGOs and their collective role in local delivery of state, national and international wetland conservation agreements. 5. Facilitate the involvement of member NGOs in national Ramsar reporting and the Ramsar triennial Conference of Contracting Parties. 6. Promote development and implementation of wetland policies and action plans at all levels of government. <p>WetlandCare Australia’s newsletter and Facebook page promote wetland-related stories to a wide network of over 2000 stakeholders representing government agencies, NGOs and individuals. In NSW, 52 individuals are on our email list calling for submissions for the newsletter, representing 33 organisations. We offer these stakeholders opportunity to learn about wetland related policies, activities and events, and to promote their activities to target audiences with wetland interests.</p>	<p>assessing over 1,480,000 hectares of wetlands across New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD). Our combined reached across Australia is estimated at 1.7 million people through our associations, partnerships and synergies.</p>