



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

# Protecting Our Places Grants Program 2020 Program Guide

NSW Environmental Trust



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Published by:

Environment, Energy and Science  
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
59 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232  
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)  
Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment, Energy and Science enquiries)  
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967  
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967  
Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

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## How to use this guide

This program guideline provides an overview of the NSW Environmental Trust's Protecting Our Places Grants Program, including eligible organisations and types of activities that may be funded under this program. The guidelines also outline how applications are assessed and what to expect if you are awarded a grant.

If you decide to apply for a Protecting Our Places (POP) grant, it is strongly recommended that you read the **How to complete your Protecting Our Places 2020 grant application guidelines**. Contact the Trust prior to the **closing date of 3pm, 16 March 2020** if you still have questions about the program, such as the program's objectives, timeframes, eligible activities, whether your organisation is eligible or what the responsibilities of successful grantees are.

## Enquiries or questions

NSW Environmental Trust

Telephone: 02 8837 6093

Email: [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au)

# About the Program

**Closing date: 3pm Monday 16 March 2020**

## Who are we?

The NSW Environmental Trust (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 State's environment. The Trust's main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants.

The Trust is currently administered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

## What is the program?

The Protecting Our Places Grants Program is a contestable grants program for NSW Aboriginal community organisations and groups, seeking to achieve long-term beneficial outcomes for the NSW environment.

Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, the program empowers Aboriginal communities to protect, conserve and restore cultural landscapes and waterways that are important to the local Aboriginal people.

The program provides opportunities for Aboriginal communities to address local environmental and cultural priorities, as well as developing project management skills and encouraging new collaborations and positive relationships with other organisations, government and community stakeholders.

### Important note

Prior to commencing your application, the Trust strongly recommends reading the Program Guidelines, particularly the information on grantee support mechanisms outlined in the [Grantee support section](#).

It is compulsory for successful grantees to participate in the support services activities offered under this program to satisfy the Trust's funding requirements.

## Program objectives

The Protecting Our Places program assists Aboriginal communities to take greater ownership of their projects, build capacity to undertake those projects and deliver quality environmental and cultural outcomes.

The program's outcomes are achieved through the following objectives:

- To facilitate the sharing and protection of cultural knowledge with and between Aboriginal groups, government and public stakeholders and to enable Aboriginal people to contribute to the improvement and the management of environmental and cultural resources on Country.

- To increase the amount of culturally significant Aboriginal land protected, restored, enhanced and managed by local Aboriginal groups, land managers and stakeholders and support connection to Country.
- The Protecting Our Places program is an appropriate, effective and sustainable mechanism to deliver Government policy, priorities and outcomes.

## What is new for the 2020 round?

The 2020 program has diversified the types of Aboriginal organisations and entities eligible to apply for funding and has added the following eligible categories:

- **NSW Incorporated Associations** registered under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*
- **Non-distributing NSW Co-operatives** registered under Co-operatives National Law and associated Acts

Information on each of these categories may be found in the [Eligibility: Who Can Apply?](#)

## Funding available

A total of \$600,000 is available for the 2020 round of the Protecting Our Places program.

Grants of up to \$60,000 may be awarded per project, divided into two stages, Stage 1 – Planning and Stage 2 – Implementation.

**Note:** Projects are **not automatically guaranteed** to progress to Stage 2 Implementation unless the Trust is satisfied that the full requirements of Stage 1 have been met.

- Each project must be implemented over two stages i.e. Stage 1 – Planning, followed by Stage 2 – Implementation (where the plan prepared during Stage 1 is implemented).
- Specific timeframes and funding limits are set for both stages of the project.
- \$1000 of approved grant funds is quarantined and must be used for independent financial auditing at the end of the project.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the available funds and timeframes for the 2020 projects.

**Table 1** Protecting Our Places funding and timeframes

	Maximum funding available	Duration of Stage
Stage 1–Planning	\$10,000	6-12 Months
Stage 2–Implementation	\$49,000	18-24 Months
Financial Audit	\$1,000	End of Project
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>24-36 Months</b>

### Note:

- The \$1000 for the Financial Audit is a mandatory budget item for each project. The funds are to be used to pay for a certified service provider to audit the project and prepare a Factual Findings declaration/statement and final financial report and must not be spent on anything else.
- Although not a requirement, co-contributions by applicants and any project partners will improve the chances of success. There are two types of co-contributions:
  - **Financial** – An actual cash contribution by the applicant or project partners towards the costs of delivering the project.

- **In-kind** – A donation of goods or services, time or expertise. Includes goods; use of services and facilities; professional services or expertise in the form of staff time; provision of, or access to, equipment and/or special materials.

## Grantee support

A key outcome for the Protecting Our Places program is to provide opportunities for grantees to build capacity of the organisation, staff and community members, and to improve the ability to successfully manage, deliver and report on the project.

To this end, the Trust is committed to providing coordinated and facilitated grantee support workshops at the beginning of Stage 1, along with providing ongoing support and advice throughout the life of the project.

## Capacity building

The Trust will provide the following capacity building support to grantees:

- Delivery of 2 x 2-day face to face workshops, regionally located depending on grantee locations, which will provide:
  - project management training
  - practical activities, discussions and support relevant to the awarded project
  - understanding of the Trust's monitoring and reporting requirements
  - assistance in navigating and completing the Trust's reporting tool (an Excel spreadsheet)
  - an opportunity to meet Trust staff in person.
- Access to online project management tools, resources, information and support to assist with the project planning.
- Assistance with understanding the project needs for successful delivery.

These workshops are facilitated by Aboriginal educators and project management trainers with support from by Trust staff.

## Ongoing Trust support

Ongoing support will be provided by Trust staff over the life of the project including:

- assistance to prepare project plans, including the monitoring and evaluation and risk assessment plans
- periodic project management support and advice over the life of the project.



## Important dates and timeframes

The program has a single-stage application process. Important dates for the program application process are set out below.



**Figure 1** Timeline for Protecting Our Places application process

It is expected Funding Agreements will be signed with successful applicants within a month of successful project announcements, with support workshops to follow thereafter.

## What we want to achieve

The Protecting Our Places program seeks to work with Aboriginal organisations and communities to achieve the following:

### Caring for Country

- Support Aboriginal communities to manage places of significance and intangible cultural values and resources on land and water.
- Acknowledge the vital cultural and spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with traditional lands and waters.
- Provide greater opportunities for Aboriginal communities to take part in projects on Country that involve the protection and restoration of native flora and fauna.

### Partnerships developed and maintained

- Aboriginal organisations develop partnerships and strengthen collaborations with other Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal organisations, land managers, local and state governments and local stakeholders.
- These partnerships and collaborations seek to protect and restore Aboriginal cultural values and develop a mutually beneficial working relationship.
- Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are developed, where necessary, outlining terms and details, including each parties' conditions and responsibilities.

### Build capacity

- Enhance and support Aboriginal organisations and communities to conduct environmental activities that are ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate.
- Aboriginal communities develop skills and experience to engage and recruit members of the local and broader communities to participate in cultural land management activities on Country.
- Improve the position of Aboriginal community organisations and/or groups to resource the continued management of environmental projects on Country.

### Awareness raising

- Recognise, promote and raise awareness of cultural land and water management practices and the use of cultural resources.
- Community projects that practice contemporary and traditional land management styles that are carried out safely and in appropriate ways.
- Cultural connection pathways created between people, land/water and that practices are documented and shared appropriately.

### Increased participation

- Private and public land managers work with Aboriginal people and the communities to improve cultural land management practices and protection of cultural values, resources and places of importance.
- Targeted communities (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) are involved in management actions supported by the POP program to care and connect with Country.

### Use of cultural knowledge

- Appropriate cultural land and water management practices are applied to protect and restore environmental and cultural values and ensure sustainable management of Country to address present and future issues.
- Cultural knowledge holders are engaged and consulted on all aspects of the project, and transfer of knowledge is passed on appropriately to community members.

# Eligibility

## Who can apply?

The following NSW Aboriginal community organisations are eligible to apply:

- **NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils** (LALC)
- **NSW Aboriginal Corporations** registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*
- **NSW Incorporated Associations**\* registered under *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*
- **Non-distributing NSW Co-operatives**\* registered under *Co-operatives National Law* and associated Acts
- **NSW Registered Native Title Body Corporates** (RNTBC).

Other Aboriginal organisations and groups are eligible to apply, however, will need the support of another organisation who will perform the role of **Administrator** (see below).

### \*Note

Associations and Co-operatives will undergo additional eligibility checks to ensure they are not for profit/non-distributing and that the organisation's objectives and activities seek to provide benefits for and involves the participation of local Aboriginal people and communities.

## Ineligible applicants

The Trust will not fund the following under the Protecting Our Places program:

- non-Aboriginal groups or organisations
- individuals, industry joint ventures, and profit-distributing corporations or co-operatives (limited by shares).

If you are unsure whether your organisation is eligible, please contact the Trust on 02 8837 6093 or [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au)

Please note: the Trust considers any record of poor performance of previous grants projects, including revoked grants or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations, when assessing eligibility. If appropriate, the Trust will apply a risk assessment process to determine any special conditions required to be placed on the Funding Agreement.

## The role of the Administrator

If your organisation or group is not incorporated or does not have the capacity to manage the financial aspects of the project for whatever reason, you may nominate another organisation to manage the grant funds on your behalf – an Administrator. The Administrator must be an incorporated or registered organisation (e.g. LALC, NGO, local council, etc).

Funding Agreements are prepared in the name of the **Administrator**, who is then required to sign the Funding Agreement on behalf of the Grantee. The Grantee remains the lead decision maker and will control the project's activities and direction.

Grant payments are made to the Administrator, who is then responsible for making all payments relating to the project on the Grantee's behalf, as well as preparing all financial reports as required under the Funding Agreement. It is expected that there will be an agreement in place between the Grantee and the Administrator, particularly regarding the project's management and submission of the progress/final reports.

## Eligible activities

Under each of the program's two separate stages, specific funding will be approved to implement different types of activities. For example, Stage 1 – Planning funds should be used to undertake planning and preparation activities such as obtaining permits or licenses, developing the site plan, costs incurred in stakeholder engagement events/meetings, etc. This funding should not be used to implement on-ground activities such as weeding, revegetation or removal of waste.

The Trust will only fund proposals that provide tangible benefits to the natural environment of New South Wales.

Cultural based projects may be proposed, however, they must be directly linked towards achieving clear environmental outcomes.

### Stage 1 – Planning

The focus of this stage is to create a strong foundation for the project through activities that assist grantees plan and prepare for the on-ground activities in Stage 2 – Implementation. The main Stage 1 activities include:

- preparing a Project Implementation Plan (PIP). For further information, see [Project Implementation Plan \(PIP\)](#)
- preparing site action plans (where applicable)
- finalising a detailed project budget
- developing clear measures and a monitoring plan for Stage 2 activities
- obtaining agreements with partners, such as MOUs or Committee Terms of Reference
- obtaining permits/licences/approvals or evidence that the process to obtain these prior to Stage 2 are complete (or at least considerably advanced)
- attendance at both two-day **mandatory** capacity building workshops by key project personnel.

Table 2 below provides a summary of eligible project activities under Stage 1 – Planning.

**Table 2** Eligible project activities – Stage 1 Planning

Activity	Description
Photo monitoring points Baseline (before works)	The Trust requests that you start establishing your project's baseline/benchmark data so that you can clearly demonstrate the outcomes you achieve during your project i.e. identify your baseline photo monitoring points and take the first images prior to on-ground works starting. Refer to the Trust's <a href="#">Guide to photo monitoring of ecological restoration projects funded by the NSW Environmental Trust</a> for further information.
Project coordination	Costs associated with coordinating or facilitating projects (see application budget guidelines). This could include funding to implement project-monitoring activities.
Project planning	Development of a project plan. This includes identifying the key activities; the resources required, both human and capital, as well as any training requirements. It does not include the development of property plans (however, site management plans intended to be

Activity	Description
	implemented as part of the project are eligible). Examples of project planning documents include Project Implementation Plans and site action plans. Any project planning documents prepared should link to existing strategic and planning documents that apply to the land.
Site mapping	Development of a mapping resource (e.g. GIS, google maps) of the site that assists in project planning, management and monitoring activities. The Trust has prepared a <a href="#">Guide to monitoring NSW Environmental Trust grants</a> using mapping.
Surveys	Survey actions (e.g. archaeological or ecological investigations or studies) may be eligible if they are essential to undertaking the project. The commissioning of these studies must be directly linked to the development of site action plans and delivery of on-ground project outcomes.
Aboriginal Heritage Information System (AHIMS) Assessment	<p>The AHIMS Aboriginal Site Recording database is used for reporting and recording Aboriginal objects and features that are likely to be of significance to Aboriginal people.</p> <p>It is mandatory to undertake an AHIMS search prior to the commencement of on-ground works and activities to ensure that no accidental damage is done to identified Aboriginal sites.</p> <p>Grantees are also encouraged to record known Aboriginal sites on AHIMS that are relevant to the project during this planning phase. For more info please see the <a href="#">website</a>.</p>
Research/documentation of knowledge	Research activities must have a specific and direct link to delivering on-ground outcomes for the project. Examples of research activities that may be relevant include: collection of cultural knowledge on land management practices so that it may be applied in Stage 2, collecting oral knowledge from community, etc.
Capacity building	Training and up-skilling and/or educating volunteers, community members and landowners in natural resource and cultural management techniques to improve the tangible environmental outcomes (must be relevant to the project). Examples of relevant capacity building include: finalisation of a training plan, contracting a training provider, delivery of training courses relevant to the project.
Partnership negotiation	Activities that facilitate consultation with community, project partners and stakeholders to develop cooperative agreements, develop inclusive project work plans, etc may be undertaken. Examples include: holding meetings, development of a Memorandum of Understanding, development of site access agreements, etc.
Activity preparation	Essential planning processes that need to be followed to ensure compliance with legislation should be undertaken. These include, developing cultural burn plans, obtaining relevant licencing, permits and approvals e.g. scientific licences, Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIPs), Development Applications, etc. Identification of these requirements and preparation of official documentation etc. must be undertaken as part of Stage 1.

Please contact the Trust on **02 8837 6093** or [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au) if you have any questions about Stage 1 – Planning.

## Stage 2 – Implementation

The focus of this stage is to implement the activities within the approved Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and any relevant site action plans. Eligible activities include a wide range of on-ground land and cultural management activities including site protection, bush regeneration, restoration works and conservation type activities.

Activities listed in Table 3 are eligible for funding under Stage 2: Implementation.

**Table 3** Eligible project activities – Stage 2: Implementation

Activity	Description
Bush regeneration (Assisted natural regeneration)	The practice of naturally restoring native plant communities and reinforcing an ecosystem's ongoing natural regeneration process. This may include the employment of suitably qualified bush regenerators or supervisors.  Many activities listed below contribute to bush regeneration.
Weed management	Control, containment or eradication of environmental weeds (agricultural weeds will not be funded) to facilitate the recovery of a native plant species or community or preserve/protect cultural objects and resources, places of importance and lands of significance to Aboriginal people. Invasive native species control may also be considered; however, the Trust will not fund the control of weeds that are the legislative responsibility of the landowner under the <i>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</i> .  For more information on classification of weeds, please see the Department of Primary Industry <a href="#">WeedWise</a> webpage.
Revegetation	Reintroduction of local native plant species through the planting of tube-stock, direct seeding, brush matting or transplanting. Used typically only where a viable native seed bank does not already exist on a site.
Pest animal management	Strategic long-term control of feral pest animal species through physical intervention to facilitate the recovery of habitat, native animal and plant species, and protect sites from further degradation. Local Land Services should be involved in this activity.
Preservation/protection of cultural assets	Activities that apply specialised methods and employ skilled professionals to conduct on-ground preservation and protection of cultural assets i.e. places, objects and features. For example, rock art preservation, archaeological excavations and burial sites.  <b>Note:</b> such activities are eligible to be funded when part of a broader environmental project e.g. protection of a cultural asset while undertaking weed control activities.
Fencing	Installation of wildlife-friendly fencing to restrict access to restoration areas (including temporary protection of revegetation plots), cultural objects and resources, places of importance and lands of significance to Aboriginal people.
Erosion control	Works to prevent local water quality degradation and protect soil stability.
Habitat creation	Installation of natural and/or artificial structural habitats.
Formalisation of tracks	Upgrading or rationalisation of existing tracks which are causing degradation on sites of high conservation value. <b>Upgrading of tracks or construction of new tracks for amenity or recreation purposes are not eligible.</b>

Activity	Description
Ecological/cultural burning	Strategic burning of an area for ecological reasons e.g. control weeds, stimulate growth of fire dependant species, etc. using culturally appropriate methods. Engagement with relevant fire authority (i.e. Rural Fire Service and/or National Parks and Wildlife Service) is required if burning is proposed.
Capacity building	Training and up-skilling and/or educating volunteers, community members and landowners in natural resource and cultural management techniques to improve the environmental outcomes of a project.
Signage and educational resources	Educational or interpretive resources relating to the project outcomes that increase community awareness of the benefits associated with the project and influence positive behavioural change.
Project coordination	Costs associated with coordinating or facilitating projects (see application budget guidelines). This could include funding to implement project-monitoring activities. <b>Note:</b> While this may be budgeted for, prioritisation will be given to projects that maximise on-ground activities.
Developing management agreements	Engagement of project collaborators, landholders, etc. to enter into agreements that aim to preserve and protect natural resources and cultural assets. For example, agreements on land management, biodiversity conservation, site access, and site co-management.
Protecting threatened species	On-ground works that provide direct benefits for threatened species, such as planting of feed/shelter trees, or the mitigation of known threats. <b>Note:</b> Appropriate licences must be obtained prior to commencing a project where works impact threatened species or occur within defined threatened ecological communities. Contact DPIE if you are unsure of which licences you need to obtain or visit the <a href="#">Department's website</a> .
Sustainable management of Country	Implementation of business plans that seek to encourage sustainable use of natural resources through activities that place an economic value upon effective management of the natural resources available at the project location.
Waste management	Some waste management activities may be eligible for funding but should not be the only objective of your project. The clean-up of waste on Country should be a part of a broader project delivering strong environmental and cultural outcomes.



## Ineligible activities

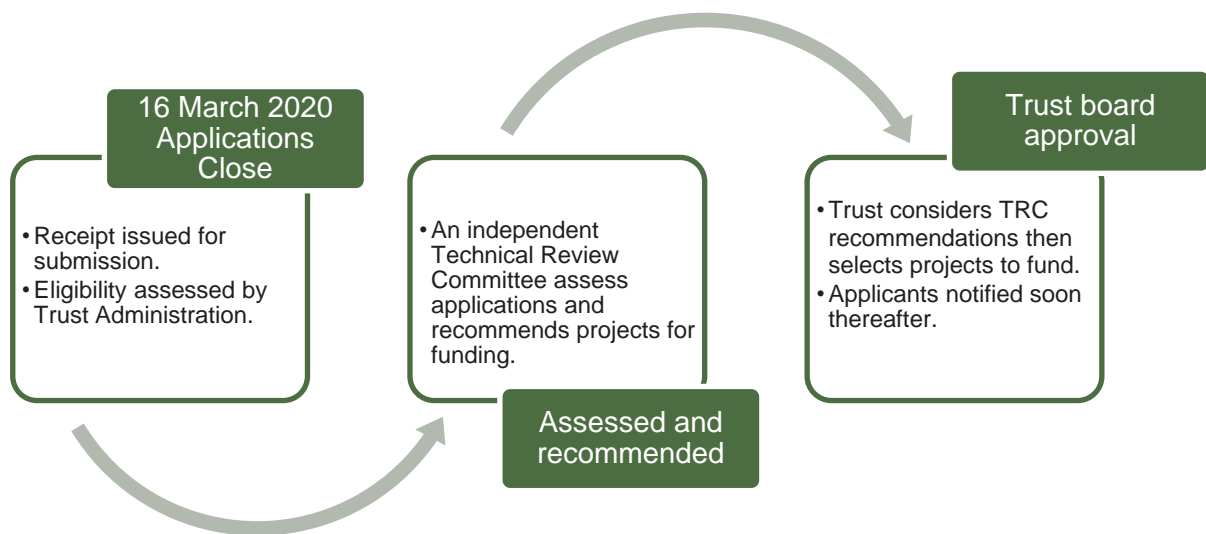
There are a range of activities that are not eligible for funding in either Stage 1 or Stage 2, as outlined below in Table 4.

**Table 4** Ineligible project activities

Activity	Description
Administration	Existing day-to-day administration or operational costs of organisations. <b>Note:</b> reasonable additional administrative costs resulting from the project may be budgeted for (see application budget guidelines).
Aesthetics, amenity, recreation and cultural projects unrelated to benefitting the environment	The focus of all projects must be on delivering benefits for the environment. Projects primarily focussed on improving aesthetics, local amenity or recreational opportunities will not be funded. Projects that include elements of these must show clear environmental benefits.
Build environment	Construction, restoration or rehabilitation of buildings or facilities.
Core business	Activities where an existing organisation or individual is legally responsible for the task (e.g. noxious weed control) or where funds obtained through a grant are used for cost-shifting purposes. This includes activities that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or the applicant organisation.
Devolved grants	Offering funding to other organisations or individuals through a grant program.
Facilitating changes of land tenure	Expenses associated with any activity that will result in the transfer of land, either private or public, between landholders.
Equipment	Capital equipment purchases, unless it is evidently more cost effective to purchase than lease equipment for the life of the project.
Existing employees	Salaries of existing employees working on the project as part of their usual duties (this should be considered as an in-kind contribution). However, the Trust will fund salaries of staff employed specifically to work on the project if it is not their normal role or responsibility.
Maintenance	Ongoing maintenance of projects to which the organisation has previously committed. Routine property maintenance such as lawn mowing and gardening are not eligible for funding.
Weed management (Biosecurity directions/undertakings)	Projects that seek to implement weed control activities under Biosecurity Directions or Biosecurity Undertakings will not be funded. These weeds are the core responsibility of landowners and are enforceable by Local Control Authorities. Control of weeds that seek to achieve an economic outcome (e.g. to address a problem/issue impacting primary production) are the core responsibility of the landowner and will not be funded.
Research	Projects that specifically focus on research and are not adequately linked to on-ground outcomes.
Similar projects funded by another funding body	Projects funded by another funding body that seek to achieve the same or similar outcomes will not be funded.
Retrospective activities	Activities carried out or committed to prior to accepting and signing the grant management agreement.

## Assessing your application

The flow chart below explains what will happen after you have submitted your application.



**Figure 2** Application assessment process

The Trust has established an independent Technical Review Committee for each grant program. Committee members are people with knowledge and experience relevant to each grant program. They include at least one community and one industry representative. The Protecting Our Places program Committee comprises majority Aboriginal membership including an Aboriginal Chairperson.

Successful applicants are announced by the Minister for Energy and Environment. A summary is published on the [Environmental Trust's Protecting Our Places webpage](#).

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by the Trust and are encouraged to seek feedback.

## Assessment criteria

### Application assessment criteria

Selection for Trust grants is a statewide, merit-based process. All projects will be assessed against specific program assessment criteria. The Technical Review Committee assess all applications against the assessment criteria set out in Table 5 below. **You should prepare your application with these criteria in mind.**

**Table 5** Application assessment criteria

<b>1. Tangible environmental outcome (Questions B5 – B10)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear explanation of the environmental issue to be addressed</li> <li>• demonstrated need for the project, and appropriateness of proposed actions</li> <li>• the project will make a clear contribution toward the Protecting Our Places program objectives</li> </ul>
<b>2. Project activities and outcome (Questions C1 – C7)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proposed activities are clearly targeted towards achieving the expected outcomes</li> <li>• project displays sound project planning and method</li> <li>• project demonstrates long-term benefits beyond the life of the grant</li> </ul>
<b>3. Capacity to deliver (Questions D1 – D6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear identification of any additional training or skill development required</li> <li>• commitment to undertake the project</li> <li>• involvement of appropriate project partners</li> <li>• community involvement and understanding of how this will be achieved</li> <li>• past performance</li> </ul>
<b>4. Value for money (Questions E1, E2 and C6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the budget supports the project outcomes and the viability of the project overall</li> <li>• the likely environmental benefit of the proposal relative to the amount of grant funds</li> <li>• the reasonableness of the budget items</li> </ul>

If you have questions, please contact the Trust on **02 8837 6093** or at [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au).

## Assessment criteria for successful applicants to advance from Stage 1 – Planning to Stage 2 – Implementation

Should you be successful in gaining a grant, the outcomes from your Stage 1 – Planning will be assessed against separate criteria to determine suitability to progress to Stage 2 – Implementation. **Projects are not guaranteed to progress to Stage 2 unless they satisfy the requirements in Table 6 below.**

**Table 6** Assessment criteria to progress to Stage 2 – Implementation

<b>1. Tangible environmental outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear explanation of the environmental issue to be addressed</li> <li>• demonstrated need for the project, and appropriateness of proposed actions</li> <li>• the project will make a clear contribution toward the Protecting Our Places program objectives</li> </ul>
<b>2. Project activities and outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proposed activities are clearly targeted towards achieving the expected outcomes</li> <li>• project demonstrates long-term benefits beyond the life of the grant</li> </ul>

### 3. Planning and method

- completion of a detailed and comprehensive Project Implementation Plan (PIP)
- attendance and satisfactory completion of the program's grantee support workshops (2 x 2 days)
- potential risks to the project identified and addressed appropriately
- time frame is realistic for achieving the proposed outcomes

### 4. Capacity to deliver

- involvement of appropriate project partners
- degree of community involvement and how this will be achieved
- demonstrated knowledge, skills and expertise of the project team members
- degree of community involvement and how this will be achieved
- capacity and commitment to complete and continue to support the project outcomes after grant finishes

### 5. Value for money

- how the budget supports the project goals, outcomes and the viability of the project overall
- the likely environmental benefit of the proposal relative to the amount of grant funds
- the reasonableness of the budget items, including appropriate mix of:
  - materials and other direct project costs
  - professional expertise
  - in-kind support (e.g. equipment, expertise, staff time) and/or case contributions
  - voluntary expertise/labour

## Other important program information

### Partnerships

Each project must have an Aboriginal organisation as the Grantee. If appropriate, applicants are encouraged to apply for a grant as a partnership project with other relevant stakeholders (i.e. Council, LLS, DPIE, etc.), rather than as a single organisation. Careful consideration is advised when entering into any commercial agreements or relationships. The Trust cannot become involved in disputes or issues that might arise during the project that are related to partnerships formed.

All project partners must have a demonstrated tangible role in the project delivery with roles and responsibilities identified and agreed to, preferably within a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar. This may be developed during the Stage 1 – Planning phase.

Applicants can seek assistance from other parties to develop the project and complete the application, however, please be advised that any costs associated with this assistance cannot be reimbursed using Trust funding. In addition, any assistance provider involved in the development of the project application is ineligible to tender for contract activities for that project (due to unfair advantage) except under exceptional circumstances e.g. remote locations with limited available service providers. Should this be the case, strong justification needs to be provided.

## Program governance (probity)

The Trust places high importance on the integrity and transparency of program and project governance. It is vital that all funded projects are delivered in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as other accepted governance and project management standards. Value for money in project delivery is also a significant priority for the Trust.

### Procurement

The Trust requires grantees to follow NSW Government procurement procedures. This applies to any major budget items, such as the purchase of materials or the engagement of contractors or consultants.

All contractors (including consultants) must be chosen on their merits and ability to effectively deliver the work. Grantees are required to select contractors or consultants using a competitive process. For example, for any contracts exceeding \$30,000, a minimum of three written tenders/quotations should be obtained. In addition, unless selected through an open competitive process, the value of work to any single contractor (or consultant) must not exceed \$30,000 in total during the life of the funded project.

Exemptions may apply for specific contract services where three suppliers are not available/suitable (i.e. suppliers of specific cultural knowledge or expertise).

### Staff recruitment

The Trust will not fund staff already employed by your organisation that will be supervising, project-managing or working on the project as part of their usual duties. The Trust may, however, pay for staff employed specifically for your project, provided a formal recruitment process has been undertaken.

At a minimum, the following must be done:

- a job description must be prepared
- the job must be advertised (either internally or externally)
- candidates must be assessed on merit, with all candidates asked the same questions.

Further information and guidance may be found under **Part D: Project delivery – Question D5: Is the Trust being asked to fund an existing employee?** in the POP Application Guide which can be found at our Protecting Our Places webpage.

**Note:** Recruitment of staff cannot occur until after you have been awarded a grant.

## Project Implementation Plan (PIP)

The Trust has developed a specific project management tool referred to as a Project Implementation Plan (PIP). The PIP is an Excel spreadsheet and assists grantees to define the project's activities, including:

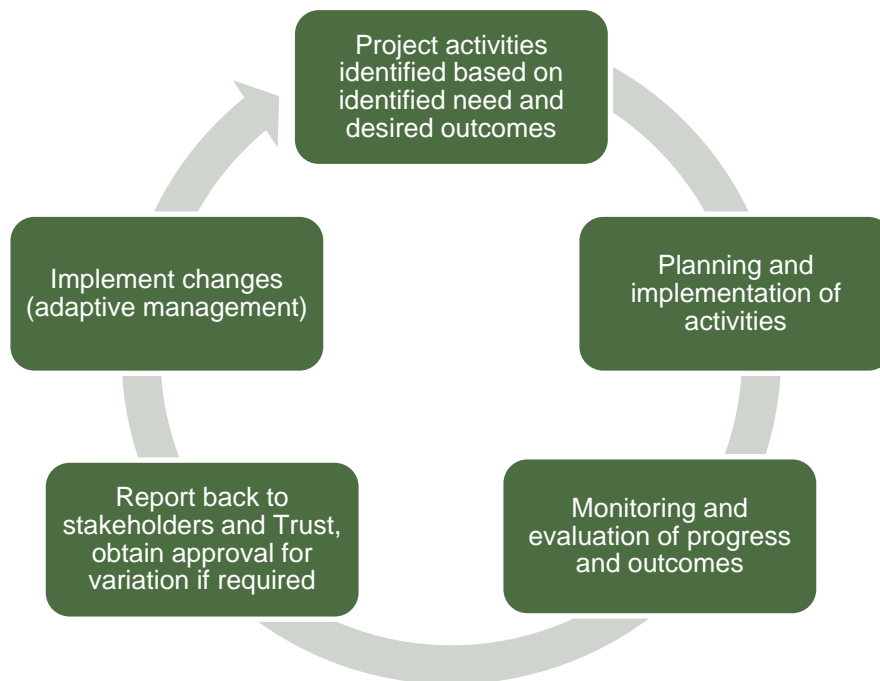
- the outcomes to be achieved i.e. environmental, social and cultural
- the what, when and who for each activity to achieve the outcome
- how activities will be implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Updating the PIP will be a continuous process during the project. This commences with the application PIP (to broadly define project outcomes and activities), and if you are successfully awarded funding, will continue throughout the Stage 1 Planning phase, for approval and then used during the entire Stage 2 Implementation phase to guide your project activities.

The PIP will detail all components necessary to support the successful delivery of the project including planned project outcomes, a budget, monitoring and evaluation, risk assessments and reporting.

## Monitoring and evaluation

An important component of the PIP is the completion of the monitoring and evaluation items against each planned activity. Used regularly, the PIP can effectively monitor the project's activities (the environmental improvements) and be used to facilitate an evaluation of the project (review of activity implemented and the expected outcomes). This project evaluation can result in adjustments and refinements of activities to improve project outcomes (adaptive management).



**Figure 3** Project planning, monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management.

The Trust has minimum standards for monitoring projects depending on the nature of the work e.g. progressive and fixed-point photographic monitoring and documentation throughout the project (e.g. before and after planting, fencing, site protection, training, cultural burns, etc.), plot monitoring for regeneration activities and Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments. Baseline studies could be used to provide a benchmark to monitor the activity's progress and effectiveness during implementation. A variety of monitoring activities may be suggested based upon what you feel is the best way to monitor activities implemented within the projects.

Project evaluation should occur as part of the project's annual review and reporting process. This may involve your organisation and project partners/stakeholders examining the implementation of your plan over the previous year, assessing strengths and weaknesses, then integrating improvements/changes to both activities and timing in the following year's work plan. Relevant information generated during these sessions should be included in your annual report.

## Managing your grant

If you are successful in receiving a Protecting Our Places grant, we anticipate that you will be notified in mid-2020.

### Getting started

If successful, the Trust will send you a Funding Agreement which you must **review, sign and return within 30 working days**. This will allow time for you to seek further advice, if necessary, review your capacity to deliver the project (as was outlined in your application) and ask any questions you may have on the Agreement's content.

The Agreement will also contain the special conditions that may apply, if any, along with the reporting and payment schedules for your project.

At this point you must provide a tax invoice for Stage 1 – Planning, with GST if applicable.

**Important note:** you must not start Stage 1 – Planning activities until after the Trust has acknowledged receipt of your signed Funding Agreement and an invoice.

You will need to identify at least two key project personnel who would be available to attend the grantee support workshops, currently anticipated for mid-late August and again in November 2020.

They must be involved in the ongoing management of the project and understand the project objectives and be comfortable using Microsoft Excel.

### During your project

At the end of the Stage 1 – Planning phase, you are required to submit the completed Stage 1 plan (i.e. the PIP and supporting documents, such as MOUs, licences, DAs, etc). Approval by the Trust is required before you can progress to Stage 2 – Implementation and undertake any expenditure for these activities.

The PIP has a reporting tab to be used to complete the reporting for the Trust. Progress reports allow you to provide updates to the Trust on activities, achievements and expenditure, in line with approved PIP inclusive of the agreed measures.

If your progress report demonstrates that your project is progressing well, the next instalment of your grant will be authorised by the Trust and you will be provided with feedback from the reviewer.

If it is considered that your project is underperforming, funding instalments may be withheld while you work with the Trust to identify and implement strategies to bring the project up to speed.

The Trust recognises that variations to your project are sometimes required and these may be negotiated with the Trust at any time throughout your project.

Each report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with technical expertise relevant to your project's objectives.

## Completing your project

When your project is complete, i.e. end of Stage 2 Year 3, you are required to submit a final report reflecting on achievements.

The final report should include other supporting documentation along with the PIP as appropriate. You will also need to include the audited financial statement, for which \$1000 of the grant has been quarantined for this purpose.

The Trust will provide you with feedback on your project based on the reviewer's findings, and formally acquit your grant.

## Privacy

We use the information supplied to us for processing and assessing your application. While we do not publicly release your application as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or other lawful requirement.

The Trust may also disclose information that you supply to us to evaluate our grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.

### Remember:

Closing date: **3pm Monday 16 March 2020**

If you have any questions, please contact the Trust:

Telephone: **02 8837 6093**

Email: **[info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au)**