



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

Guidelines for applicants 2020-21

Coastal and Estuary Grants Program



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Introduction

The NSW Government has established a regulatory framework for coastal management with the commencement of:

- the *Coastal Management Act 2016*
- a consolidated Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy
- a coastal management manual.

The Coastal and Estuary Grants program underpins the implementation of the coastal management framework and supports local councils and communities to achieve the State's long-term vision for the coast.

The program enables local councils and communities to prepare coastal management programs (CMPs) and implement actions to better manage the coastal and estuarine environment.

The program has five streams – one for preparing CMPs, and four for implementing actions in line with state priorities in each of the coastal management areas identified in the *Coastal Management Act 2016*.

Councils can apply at any time during the 2020–21 financial year for funding for the preparation of CMPs, while applications for implementing actions are part of a contestable funding round (a round that will have a specific opening and closing date).

Councils with a certified coastal zone management plan (CZMP) or CMP for a location listed as a significant open coast hazard will be able to apply for funding for works over \$500,000 at any time to implement actions that cannot wait until the next funding round.

This grants program is administered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

Closing date for the contestable funding round: **5.00pm 29 September 2020**.

Eligibility

Local councils, county councils and Joint Organisations (established under an Act of Parliament) are eligible to apply.

Where multiple councils are working together within the same coastal sediment compartment or estuary to prepare and implement a CMP, one council (county council or joint organisation) is required to be the lead agency in terms of signing of the funding agreement, managing monies and reporting on the project.

Public land managers (such as a Crown reserve trust or a location-specific NSW government authority) may apply in partnership with a lead council, providing the council is the principal applicant and assumes overall responsibility for administering the grant.

All applications for the 2020-21 round of the program will be via the new online [Grants Management System](#).

Program objectives

The program supports local councils to prepare and implement CMPs and to deliver the objects of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*. The program supports local councils to

manage the coastal environment of New South Wales in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the people of the State.

Funding streams – objectives and priorities

Stream 1: Preparation of coastal management programs

Funding is available to support councils to transition into the coastal management framework. Councils and their communities can prepare CMPs that respond to existing and emerging coastal challenges and opportunities. Funding will support councils to:

- meet their statutory objectives under the new framework, by using the guidance and materials being provided as part of the coastal reforms
- plan coastal and estuary management activities e.g. to prepare scoping studies, hazard and risk assessments, feasibility analyses, cost-benefit analysis, distributional analysis and CMPs.

The funding for preparing CMPs allows the NSW Government to deliver on its objectives for coastal management by:

- enabling councils and their communities to mitigate current and future risks from coastal hazards, taking into account the effects of climate change
- encouraging and promoting strategies to improve the resilience of public coastal assets to the impacts of an uncertain climate future; including the impacts of climate change
- promoting integrated and coordinated coastal planning, management and reporting
- supporting public participation in coastal management and planning and promoting greater public awareness, education and understanding of coastal processes and management actions.

Streams 2 to 5: Implementation of coastal management programs

Funding in streams 2 to 5 is to support the implementation of actions identified in certified CMPs or CZMPs and for the following exempt activities without a certified CMP or CZMP:

- beach scraping to mitigate immediate coastal erosion risk
- management and stabilisation of dune systems
- formalising or reducing the number of beach access points to reduce environmental damage/impact
- restoring or enhancing natural defence to coastal or estuarine hazards by managing coastal dunes and riparian vegetation
- littoral rainforest regeneration
- coastal wetland rehabilitation where an approved management plan for the site exists.

These exemptions are available until December 2021.

Eligibility for funding under streams 2 to 5 is subject to councils demonstrating that the actions:

- are part of a certified CMP or CZMP (except for the exempt activities listed above)
- result in net benefits to the local community and the wider NSW community

- they must also deliver on at least one of the following:
 - actions supporting climate change adaptation that reduce future risks from coastal hazards and climate change impacts
 - actions that support improving natural resilience to potential impacts from coastal hazards and climate change impacts
 - actions that manage risks to public assets, benefits or interests
 - actions that maximise the delivery of public benefits and interests
 - actions that reduce the State's potential liability in relation to coastal natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements
 - actions that reduce unacceptable and immediate risk from coastal hazards resulting from legacy issues
 - actions to reduce or remove the potential impacts of emerging or future risks.

The success of councils in obtaining funding will be determined by the extent to which the actions deliver broad public benefits to the NSW community or result in beneficial outcomes for public assets. Environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits will be considered. Funding arrangements for implementing actions must reflect the 'beneficiary pays' principle.

Councils can apply for funding to implement actions in their CMP if it has been submitted for certification at the date of the grant round closing; however, funding will not be provided until the CMP has been certified.

Funding is available in streams 2 to 5 based on the four coastal management areas identified in the *Coastal Management Act 2016*.

Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area

For actions on land identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) to be a coastal vulnerability area or that has been identified as land affected by a current or future coastal hazard in a local environmental plan, or development control plan, or a study or assessment undertaken by or on behalf of a public authority. This area being land subject to coastal hazards such as beach erosion, shoreline recession, foreshore erosion cliff failure and coastal inundation.

Projects should meet one or more of the management objectives given in the *Coastal Management Act 2016* (CM Act) for these areas:

- to ensure public safety and prevent risks to human life
- to mitigate current and future risk from coastal hazards by considering the effects of coastal processes and climate change
- to maintain the presence of beaches, dunes and natural features of foreshores
- to maintain public access, amenity and use of beaches and foreshores*
- to encourage land use that reduces exposure to risks from coastal hazards, including through siting, design, construction and operational decisions
- to adopt coastal management strategies that reduce exposure to coastal hazards, such as restoring or enhancing natural defences including coastal dunes, vegetation, and wetlands or by taking other action to reduce exposure to those coastal hazards, such as actions to avoid significant degradation of or disruption to biological diversity and ecosystem integrity, geological and geomorphological coastal processes
- to prioritise and plan actions that support the continued functionality of essential infrastructure during and immediately after a coastal hazard emergency
- to improve the resilience of coastal development and communities by improving adaptive capacity and reducing reliance on emergency responses.

Stream 3: Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area

For projects on land that is mapped and displays the hydrological and floristic characteristics of coastal wetlands or littoral rainforests, listed under the SEPP, and 100 metres buffer around the areas.

Projects should meet one or more of the management objectives given in the CM Act for these areas:

- to protect coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests in their natural state, including their biological diversity and ecosystem integrity
- to promote the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests
- to improve the resilience of coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests to the impacts of climate change, including opportunities for ecosystem migration
- to support the social and cultural values of coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests
- promote the objectives of State policies and programs for wetlands or littoral rainforest management.

Stream 4: Coastal environment area (land containing coastal features)

For actions on land containing coastal features such as the coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons and land adjoining those features including headlands and rock platforms.

Projects should meet one or more of the management objectives given in the CM Act for these areas:

- to protect and enhance the coastal environmental values and natural processes of coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons, and enhance natural character, scenic value, biological diversity and ecosystem integrity
- to reduce threats to and improve the resilience of coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons, including in response to climate change
- to maintain and improve water quality and estuary health
- to support the social and cultural values of coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons
- to maintain the presence of beaches, dunes and natural features of foreshores
- to maintain public access, amenity* and use of beaches, foreshores, headlands and rock platforms.

Stream 5: Coastal use area (land where development may be carried out)

For actions on land that is mapped in the SEPP, including land adjacent to coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons where development is or may be carried out (now or in the future).

Projects should meet one or more of the management objectives given in the CM Act for these areas:

- to protect and enhance the scenic, social and cultural values of the coast to accommodate both urbanised and natural stretches of coastline.

What will be funded?

Planning

Stream 1: Coast and estuary planning

- development of CMPs (including individual stages) or the transition of a CZMP to a CMP, consistent with the NSW Coastal Management Manual
- studies to understand coastal processes and map coastal hazards/coastal vulnerability area that are needed to develop a CMP
- studies to understand threats to coastal management areas within the NSW coastal zone that are needed to develop a CMP
- investigations and designs for infrastructure works recommended in a certified CZMP or CMP
- cost-benefit analyses (see Guidelines for using cost-benefit analysis to assess coastal management options) and distributional analysis.

Implementing actions

Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area

Activities that are demonstrated to reduce the threat from coastal hazards and may include:

- Management and stabilisation of dune systems. Please refer to the [Coastal Dune Management – A Manual of Coastal Dune Management and Rehabilitation Techniques](#) when developing the project. For any dune re-profiling projects, the environmental benefit of the activity must be demonstrated.
- Design and implementation of erosion reduction structures. If the project includes a seawall lined foreshore in an estuary, the council must demonstrate the environmental benefits and how the project aligns with the standards in the [Environmentally Friendly Seawall – A Guide to Improving the Environmental Value of Seawalls and Seawall-lined Foreshores in Estuaries](#).
- Beach nourishment and actions to reduce exposure to climate change.
- Actions to reduce future risk from coastal hazards and monitoring to understand the coastal zone overtime where it relates to future action.
- Actions to improve natural resilience to potential impacts from coastal hazards.
- Actions to reduce the risk to public assets.
- Actions to reduce liability in relation to coastal natural disasters.
- Education, where it will help reduce exacerbating issues in the coastal vulnerability area.

Stream 3: Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area

- invasive animal and weed management
- management of trails/access ways to reduce environmental impact
- management of runoff from and discharges into littoral rainforest
- reduce exposure to coastal erosion and climate change
- management of salinity

- replanting and stabilising vegetation
- habitat restoration and conservation
- interpretative signage
- public education programs.

Stream 4: Coastal environment area

- community education on the importance of the coastal and estuarine areas
- reduction of the number or formalising foreshore access points to reduce environmental damage
- dredging for environmental benefit
- monitoring of estuary and coastal environments (monitoring projects must be linked with actions to improve ecosystem health and be consistent with the Assessing estuary ecosystem health: Sampling, data analysis, and reporting protocols)
- actions to protect Aboriginal heritage
- stormwater quality management where it is demonstrated to have a significant impact on the receiving environment
- revegetation and weed management projects
- sediment and erosion control actions
- acid sulfate soils management
- habitat restoration and conservation including riparian corridor management
- actions in the upper catchment (beyond the tidal limit) that can **clearly demonstrate** they will improve estuary health (evidence of the benefits must be included), including riparian rehabilitation, water sensitive urban design, riverbank and channel stabilisation or rehabilitation of freshwater wetlands.

Stream 5: Coastal use area

- community education on the importance of coastal and estuarine areas
- reduce the number of beach access points
- formalise access to reduce environmental damage
- monitoring of estuary and coastal environments (monitoring projects must be linked with actions to improve ecosystem health and be consistent with the Assessing estuary ecosystem health: Sampling, data analysis, and reporting protocols)
- actions to protect Aboriginal heritage
- stormwater management
- revegetation and weed management projects.

Amenity

Funding will be considered for amenity works, marked with an * in streams 2 to 5, if they are part of holistic coastal management project and result in improved:

- public access to the coastal zone
- ecological health
- education opportunities for the public.

This work should only be a minor part of the overall project. Projects or aspects of projects that are significantly or purely amenity are unlikely to be funded as they do not meet the funding objectives.

What will not be funded?

- For streams 2 – 5 any actions that are not identified in a certified CZMP or CMP (apart from the exempt activities listed on page 2).
- GST: the project cost is to exclude GST.
- Retrospective projects: funding is not available for projects currently underway (unless they are a stage of a previously approved project and the work has not commenced on the stage that funding is being requested for) or included in an existing contractual commitment, are already tendered for, or that have been completed.
- Administration costs: all internal costs (including on-costs) associated with core activities of the applicant are ineligible for funding. An applicant's core activities include preparing study briefs, reviewing proposals and tenders, researching and copying records, attending meetings, administering contracts and grants, accounting costs and liaising with government agencies and the public.
- Non-monetary contributions as matching funds: an applicant's matching funds must be in the form of monetary contributions and cannot include in-kind, voluntary contributions or funding from other sources.
- Contingencies: should not be included in the application. Project costs should be listed as accurately as possible.
- Projects the applicant can reasonably be expected to undertake without financial assistance from this program.
- Maintenance of projects once complete, this includes maintenance of existing infrastructure for its design life.
- Projects that are funded or eligible for funding as part of a natural disaster relief declaration.
- The proportion of works deemed via cost-benefit analysis/distributional analysis to be for private asset protection or private benefit.
- Amenity works that have no environmental benefit or projects with no direct linkage to a reduction in risk associated with coastal processes but might be located within a Coastal Vulnerability Area such as car parking, footpaths, BBQ facilities, seating, shelters, lighting, amenity sheds, showers, toilets or activities related to surf life-saving clubs.
- Vegetation reduction for amenity outcomes.
- Projects that are in the freshwater environment, unless they can be shown to be a significant contributor to improved estuary health, be cost-effective and are a priority in a CZMP or CMP.
- Sites with existing biobanking agreements or preparation of a site to be eligible for biobanking.
- Projects that do not demonstrate they are cost-effective for the outcomes achieved.
- Additional funding after commencing the project of more than 30% of the original amount requested. Any requests for more than a 30% increase may result in the applicant being asked to reapply.

What applicants will need to contribute

Coast and estuary planning

The State Government will provide \$2 for every \$1 provided by the applicant (2:1 ratio). In-kind contributions cannot be used as matching contributions. Council cannot use funds from other sources for their matching contribution.

Implementing actions

All projects over \$500,000

Investigation and design must be completed for all infrastructure works valued over \$500,000 (total project cost) before applying for funding for implementation.

In-kind contributions cannot be used as matching contributions. The source of the applicant's share of funds should be detailed in the application and cannot include funds received from other sources.

Project with a total project cost under \$1 million

For projects that address a documented action in a certified CMP funding is \$2 from the State Government for every \$1 provided by the applicant.

For projects that address a documented action in a certified CZMP the State Government will contribute 50% of the project costs.

For exempt activities the State Government will contribute 50% of the project cost up to a maximum of \$150,000 in grants funding. All project costs above this limit will need to be borne by council.

Project with a total project cost over \$1 million

Council will need to complete cost-benefit analysis and distributional analysis to establish a funding model before applying for funds to implement the works.

The proportion of State Government funding available will be determined having considered the results of distributional analysis, that is based on the cost-benefit analysis or as defined by a funding model developed and approved as part of a certified CMP/CZMP.

The State Government will pay \$2 for every \$1 provided by the applicant for the portion determined to be of public benefit for documented action in a certified CMP.

The State Government will pay 50% of the portion determined to be of public benefit for documented action in a certified CZMP.

Partnerships

Where a group of local councils is working together in partnership, the councils should reach agreement on cost-sharing arrangements before applying and provide letters of support from those councils outlining their financial commitment to the project. The contributions from all councils involved must total the amount required to meet the funding ratio contribution.

The lead council or joint organisation can claim project management costs for a multiparty project.

The amount eligible for funding is capped at 10% of the total project cost where up to four councils are working together or 20% of the total project cost when there are five or more partner councils. For example:

- if three councils are working together on a project with a total cost of \$150,000 then \$15,000 would be eligible to be allocated for project management (at a 50% funding ratio \$7500 paid by the program and \$7500 from council)
- if five councils are working together on a project with a total cost of \$150,000 then \$30,000 would be eligible to be allocated for project management.

The project management costs must be directly related to the funded project and are exempt from the guidance on administrative costs noted under 'What will not be funded?'. Funding can be used for:

- a dedicated project manager selected by a competitive process
- a staff member from one of the councils or a joint organisation (acknowledging that resources will be needed to replace their time).

Project management costs will not be paid upfront, they can be claimed as part of each completed milestone or at the end of the project. If a project doesn't proceed, administrative costs cannot be claimed.

Attach a letter of support from each organisation involved in the partnership, which details that partner's financial commitment to the project.

A letter from the host council should be provided outlining their commitment to the project with respect to staff and other resources required to implement the project.

Contributions to the project from other funding sources (non-council contributions) must be removed from the whole project cost before applying the funding ratio. Other partnerships arrangements (non-council) are not eligible to claim the abovementioned project management costs.

Project implementation timeframe

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment receives an annual funding allocation for the program, with limited capacity to carry over funds to future financial years. Consequently, projects should be completed within three years of the grant offer. If the project is likely to extend beyond three years, council is encouraged to consider staging the project. For projects that are not completed within three years of the grant offer, the council must justify why the grant should not be terminated. The Grants Management System will not allow you to apply for grants beyond a three-year timeframe.

While requests for variations to projects are available, it should be noted that projects which go beyond the approved time can impact funds for future rounds. No additional funding will be considered for projects during their implementation unless there are exceptional circumstances, and these will be considered on their merits.

It is recommended that for projects that contain a weeding, bush regeneration or revegetation element that the full three-year timeframe is used to ensure the works are in a state that can be easily managed by council once funding ceases. Shorter duration projects will still be considered and assessed on their merits.

Obligations of successful applicants

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement that stipulates all funding obligations and conditions.

The agreement will need to be signed by the general manager (or by someone with delegated authority) within 30 business days of the formal grant offer being made.

Successful applicants have five months from the date of offer to submit a work plan. The work plan must be based on information provided by the successful tender for the project and outline key milestones to be achieved and related claim for payments. Council must ensure that the tender process aligns with their organisation's procurement procedures/guidelines or Local Government Procurement and delivers value for money.

The project will be tracked and managed against the work plan, which must be kept current by the grant recipient, in consultation with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment throughout the funded period.

Assessment process and criteria

Stream 1: Coast and estuary planning

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility; correct categories are selected and completeness. Ineligible or incomplete applications will not be assessed. Where applicable, an application may be moved to more appropriate program streams if the round is open to do this.

Applications will be assessed against the following:

- council has demonstrated the need and importance for the project
- the method proposed to undertake the work is sound
- the project is value for money/reasonable cost (compared to similar projects)
- if cost benefit analysis related, does it align with the procedures outlined in the Coastal Management Manual.

The assessment is conducted by Department technical specialists and the Principal Coastal Specialist or Principal Estuary Specialist. A numerical scoring system is used in the evaluation of applications against the above criteria and an overall recommendation is made on each application.

For projects that involve cost-benefit analysis and/or distributional analysis the Department's Data, Economics and Analytics Branch provides an additional recommendation on the application.

Streams 2 to 5: Implementing actions and Significant Open Coast Hazards

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible incomplete or late applications will not be assessed.

Applications will then be assessed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment technical specialists and then an independent panel, which includes experts and stakeholder representation, against assessment criteria to prioritise applications on a statewide basis.

The applications will be assessed using the criteria listed below:

- action is identified in a certified CZMP/CMP (except for exempt activities)
- the project aligns to statewide and this grant program's priorities and objectives
- the project meets one or more of the management objectives for the relevant coastal management area
- the council has the capacity to deliver the project, regarding their past grant management history (if a council has a poor grant delivery history, additional conditions may be added should the application be successful), available resources and the proposed timeframe
- council commitment to maintaining works in a condition suitable to meet its design intent for the design life
- the extent to which the project cost-effectively addresses one or more of the program stream objectives
- technical feasibility and implementation of best practice
- the level of state or regional significance, including the immediacy of any threats
- the environmental benefit of the project
- a numerical score will be given to each application by Department technical specialists and each member of the panel, based on how it addresses the above criteria.

The State Assessment Panel consists of a Department representative as Chair and seven stakeholders/independent technical experts. The Chair brings forward the collective Department opinion, including the technical specialists. The Chair is not a voting member of the panel, though the panel should consider any information provided by the Chair.

Note: An application will be awarded a reduced ranking if it is not well thought out, has unclear objectives or outcomes, will only partially achieve program objectives or does not meet funding priorities.

Notification

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

It is expected that a reserve list will be created for projects to be funded when and if additional program funds are available. The reserve list is only active until the opening of the next funding round. If a project is not activated from the reserve list before the next funding round, council must reapply for the project. The reserve list will not be published but applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome.

Significant open coast hazards

Councils with a certified CZMP or CMP for a location listed below will be able to apply for funding at any time to implement actions that cannot wait until the next funding round. Urgent works must be over \$500,000 in value.

Please contact the Coast, Estuary and Flood Grant Team to discuss the process for applying for urgent funding (see page 13 for contact details).

Projects are subject to the same assessment criteria as all other applications to the implementation stream and are not assured of funding.

Locations identified as having significant open coast hazards

The following locations have been identified as having significant open coast hazards:

- Ballina Shire Council – Lennox Head
- Byron Shire Council – Belongil Beach
- Central Coast Council – Noraville
- Central Coast Council – Norah Head
- Central Coast Council – The Entrance North
- Central Coast Council – Wamberal/Terrigal
- Clarence Valley Council – Brooms Head
- Clarence Valley Council – Woolli
- Eurobodalla Shire Council – Batemans Bay
- MidCoast Council – Old Bar Beach
- MidCoast Council – Winda Woppa – Jimmys Beach
- Newcastle City Council – Stockton Beach
- Northern Beaches Council – Bilgola
- Northern Beaches Council – Mona Vale
- Northern Beaches Council – Collaroy/Narrabeen
- Port Macquarie - Hastings Council – Lake Cathie

Should council believe that a location should be considered as having a significant open coast hazard, please contact the Manager Contestable Grants to discuss on 9895 6494.

This would be a location with significant public and private assets at risk in the short term.

Specific contribution rules for significant open coast hazard projects

The proportion of State Government funding available will be determined having considered the results of a distributional analysis or as defined by a funding model developed as part of a certified CMP/CZMP.

The State Government will pay \$2 for every \$1 by the applicant for the portion determined to be of public benefit for documented action in a certified CMP.

The State Government will pay 50% of the portion determined to be of public benefit for documented action in a certified CZMP or exempt activities.

The program will fund up to 10% of the cost of infrastructure that protects private property at the locations listed above, where funds are matched by the council in the form of an equivalent monetary contribution (council's contribution cannot include in-kind, third party or voluntary contributions).

Applying outside of the advertised funding round

Applications will only be considered if the works are urgent and cannot wait until the next funding round. Justification as to why the works are urgent must be provided. You should speak to a Department regional representative and the Manager Contestable Grants on how to apply under this funding stream.

Contacts for assistance

For assistance with grant applications, contact the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment offices listed below.

Table 1 Regional contacts

Region	Telephone number
North East	02 8289 6318
Hunter/Central Coast	02 4927 3248
Greater Sydney	02 8837 6343
South East	02 4224 4153

General administration inquiries

For general grant administration inquiries, contact the Grants Branch – Coast, Estuary and Flood on 02 9895 6494 or by email at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au

Instructions for completing the application process

Stream 1: Coast and estuary planning

The round is open for applications to be submitted at any time in the 2020–21 financial year. Any application that is incomplete or ineligible will not be considered.

Streams 2 to 5: Implementing actions

Applications must be received by 5.00pm 29 September 2020.

Any application that is late, incomplete or ineligible will not be considered.

Other programs

The NSW Environmental Trust offers a range of other environmental grants. For further information, please see the Environmental Trust website.

NSW Department of Primary Industries administers the Habitat Action Grants. For more information, go to Habitat Action Grants on the Department of Primary Industries site.