Restoration and Rehabilitation Program

2016/17 Program Guidelines

Closing date: 3pm Monday 26 September 2016

Image source - N.Cubbin (Office of Environment and Heritage) 2014
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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. However, as appropriate, readers should obtain independent advice before making any decision based on this information.

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How to use this guide

These program guidelines provide an overview of the Restoration and Rehabilitation grants program, including the types of organisations that are eligible to apply for funding and the types of activities that may be funded under the program. The guidelines also outline how applications will be assessed and what to expect if you are awarded a grant.

If you decide to apply for a Restoration and Rehabilitation grant, you should read the How to complete the application form guidelines for completing your application.

There are two streams of funding available under the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program in 2016/17. When you have established which stream is most suitable for you, you can identify references to the relevant stream using the following key:

Stream 1 Community	Stream 2 Government

Enquiries or questions

NSW Environmental Trust

Telephone: (02) 8837 6093

Email: info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Part 1: About the program

The **Restoration and Rehabilitation p**rogram is a contestable grants program seeking to achieve long-term beneficial outcomes for the NSW environment.

Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, the program encourages and enables community and government organisations to protect, conserve and restore our valuable natural environment.

Program objectives

Restoration and Rehabilitation seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- to restore degraded environmental resources, including rare and endangered ecosystems
- to protect important ecosystems and habitats of rare and endangered flora and fauna
- to prevent or minimise future environmental damage
- to enhance the quality of specific environmental resources
- to improve the capacity of eligible organisations to protect, restore and enhance the environment
- to prevent and/or reduce pollution

What is new for 2016/17?

If you have applied for a Restoration and Rehabilitation grant before, you may be interested to know that we have made the following changes for 2016/17.

- To ensure the sustainability of the Trust's investment and the monitoring of project outcomes, projects must be a minimum of two years in duration, with a maximum of 70 per cent of requested funding available in the first 12 months.
- Projects primarily targeting Class 1-2 Noxious Weeds (declared within the project's local government area) are ineligible for funding. These weeds are a core responsibility of landowners and are enforceable by local control authorities. Consideration may be given to fund some Class 3 and 4 environmental weeds where they are part of a suite of weeds being treated, and where the applicant clearly demonstrates that they pose a direct threat to a threatened species or an endangered ecological community. See Eligible and Ineligible Activities tables on pages 4 to 5.

Funding available

Two funding streams are available in the 2016/17 round.

Program	Total funding available	Minimum grant funding	Maximum grant funding	Duration of funding
Community	$2,000,000	$5,000	$100,000	Up to 3 years
Government	$2,000,000	$5,000	$100,000	Up to 3 years

Important Timeframes for 2016/17

- Applications open 15 August 2016
- Applications close **3pm** on **26 September 2016**
- Assessment of applications will commence in October 2016, with successful projects announced in approximately May/June 2017.
- Projects should aim to commence between 1 August 2017 and 1 October 2017.

Eligible applicants

Community

The following **not for profit** organisations can apply for the community stream:

- Community organisations
- Community groups
- Incorporated associations
- Incorporated non-profit organisations
- Non–commercial cooperatives
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Non-government organisations
- Trusts

TIP

Community organisations that are **not incorporated** are only eligible to apply if they arrange for their grant to be administered by another incorporated or government organisation.

Government

The following organisations can apply for the government stream:

- State government agencies and/or statutory committees
- Councils
- Regional organisations of councils
- Other local government controlled organisations
- Universities (only eligible to apply for funding for projects on their own land)

Important information: Organisations may submit a maximum of **three** applications.
A maximum of **two** applications per organisation may be funded.

Ineligible applicants

Individuals, industry joint ventures, and profit-distributing corporations (limited by shares) are **not eligible** to apply. If you are unsure, whether your group is eligible to apply, please contact the Trust on (02) 8837 6093.

Past performance

Please note that the Trust will take into consideration any record of past poor performance in respect of previous grants projects, or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations when assessing eligibility.

A risk rating will be applied to your organisation and/or administrator. The applied risk rating will form part of your project's assessment and will be used to determine additional special conditions in the funding agreement.

If it is considered that past-negative performance presents a substantial risk to the timely and effective performance of the project, an applicant will be asked to respond to the negative determination and this response will be taken into consideration alongside the overall merits of the application.

Eligible activities

The table below gives examples of the kinds of activities that may be funded under a Restoration and Rehabilitation grant. It covers a wide range of on-ground restoration type activities, however, grants are by no means limited to the examples provided.

TIP

The Trust welcomes applications for projects that address any of the program objectives, not just traditional biodiversity restoration.

Activity	Description
Bush regeneration (Assisted natural regeneration)	The practice of naturally restoring native plant communities and reinforcing an ecosystem's ongoing natural regeneration process. Many of the activities listed below contribute to bush regeneration.
Weed management	Control, containment or eradication of environmental weeds through physical intervention (mechanical, chemical or biological) to facilitate the recovery of a native plant species or community. Invasive native species control may also be considered. Consideration may be given to fund treatment of some Class 3 and 4 environmental weeds only if they are part of a suite of weeds being treated, and they are not the primary focus of weed control works. The applicant will need to demonstrate that they pose a direct threat to a threatened species or an Endangered Ecological Community. For more information on classification of weeds, please see the Department of Primary Industry WeedWise webpage.
Revegetation	Introduction 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 native animal and plant species.
Fencing	Installation of wildlife friendly fencing to restrict access to restoration areas including temporary protection of revegetation plots.
Erosion control	Works to protect soil stability and prevent water quality degradation to adjacent waterways on a localised level.
Habitat creation	Installation of natural and/or artificial structural habitat for fauna.
Formalisation of tracks	Upgrading or rationalisation of existing tracks which are causing degradation on sites of high conservation value. Upgrading of tracks or construction of new tracks for amenity or recreation purposes are not eligible.
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.
Capacity building	Training, up-skilling and/or educating volunteers, community members and landowners in Natural Resource Management techniques so as to improve the tangible environmental outcomes of a project.
Fire	Strategic burning of an area to control weeds and stimulate growth of fire dependent species. Engagement with relevant fire authority (i.e. Rural Fire Service and/or National Parks and Wildlife Service) is typically required if burning is proposed.
Project coordination	Costs associated with coordinating or facilitating projects (see application budget guidelines). This could include funding to implement project-monitoring activities. **Note:** While this may be budgeted for, prioritisation will be given to projects that maximise on-ground activities.
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. **Note:** Appropriate licences must be obtained prior to commencing a project where works impact threatened species or occur within defined threatened ecological communities. Contact the Office of Environment and Heritage if you are unsure of which licences you need to obtain.

Ineligible activities

The following activities are not eligible for funding.

Activity	Description
Administration	Existing day-to-day administration or operational costs of organisations. (See application budget guidelines).
Aesthetics, amenity, and recreation	Projects primarily focussed on improving aesthetics, local amenity or recreational opportunities. The focus of all projects must be on delivering benefits for the NSW environment.
Built 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. Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or the applicant organisation (see page 8 of the how to guide for applicants).
Devolved grants	Offering funding to other organisations or individuals through a grant program.
Facilitating changes of land tenure	Expenses associated with any activities resulting in the transfer of land, either private or public) between landholders will not be considered.
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 (instead this should be considered as an in-kind contribution). The Trust, will however, fund salaries of staff employed specifically to work on the project.
Maintenance	Ongoing maintenance of projects to which organisations have previously committed. Routine property maintenance such as lawn mowing and gardening is also ineligible for funding.
Noxious weeds	Projects primarily targeting declared class 1-2 noxious weeds will not be funded. These weeds are the core responsibility of landowners and are enforceable by local control authorities. Consideration may be given to fund the control of Class 3 and 4 environmental weeds, but priority will be focussed on where they pose a direct threat to a threatened species or an Endangered Ecological Community. For further information, see the DPI WeedWise webpage.
Project planning	Development of overarching project plans will not receive funding, however site management plans, which will be implemented as part of the project, may be considered.
Research	Projects that focus on research and are not specifically linked to on-ground outcomes for the project.
Retrospective activities	Activities carried out or committed to prior to accepting and signing the grant management agreement.
Waste management	Projects with a primary focus on waste management and research. See Waste Less, Recycle More or the Environmental Research Grants Program for potential funding opportunities.

The Trust will only fund proposals that provide direct benefits to the natural environment of NSW (see page 4 for examples of eligible activities). The Trust **will not** fund construction, repairs or maintenance of buildings, facilities, or items of expenditure that will not directly benefit the environment.

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

To conform to relevant governance and probity standards, the Trust requires all grantees to follow NSW Government procurement procedures. This relates to all 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. It is required that grantees will select contractors or consultants using a competitive process.

More detail is provided in the Application budget form, however, as an example: for any contract in excess of $30,000, you must secure a minimum of three written tenders/quotations. Also, 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 life of the funded project.

The conditions of tendering shall be the same for each tenderer on any particular tender process and all tenders must comply with the NSW Government Code of Practice for Procurement (2005).

Third Party Assistance

While applicants are encouraged to seek collaboration from other project partners, careful consideration is required around any commercial relationships. Applicants are welcome to seek Third Party assistance to develop their project and complete their application, however please be advised that any costs associated with this service cannot be reimbursed using Trust funding.

Likewise, any Third Party assistance provider involved in the development of the project application should not be eligible to tender for contract activities for that project (due to unfair advantage).

Monitoring and Evaluation

All Trust funded projects require development of a Project Plan to help convert the application proposal into an operational project. This plan will provide a central document that will guide the implementation of the project over its life, and assist in ensuring that its intended objectives are met.

One of the most important elements of this Project Plan is the Monitoring and Evaluation component to effectively measure environmental improvements. The methods for monitoring a project will vary depending on the nature of the work being carried out. There are, however, minimum standards for monitoring expected by the Trust for each activity (e.g. Photo-point and plot monitoring for regeneration activities).

The Trust generally does not fund surveys or research to solely gather information regarding the status or condition of an area. Projects must demonstrate tangible environmental outcomes. There should be sufficient understanding of the prevailing issues/problems and species present as part of the project planning process. If such activities are necessary for achieving project objectives, applicants must clearly demonstrate the need for the activities, and how they will directly lead to tangible environmental outcomes.

Part 2: Assessing your application

The flow chart below explains what will happen after you have submitted your application. For information on how to apply, see How to complete your Application Form.

September 2016

Step 1

Your application is submitted and receipt is acknowledged by the Trust (by email) within 5 business days.

Step 2

Trust Administration staff check whether your application is eligible (see page 3)

October – December 2016

Step 3

An independent Technical Review Committee will assess your application using the assessment criteria outlined on page 9 and make recommendations to the Environmental Trust.

Trust Administration staff may also contact you or your nominated referees for further information.

Information: Step 3

The Trust establishes 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.

March 2017

Step 4

The Trust approves projects for funding, after considering the Technical Review Committee's recommendations. Decisions by the Trust are final.

April-June 2017

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

Successful applicants announced by the Minister for Environment.

A summary of the project will be published on Environmental Trust's Restoration and Rehabilitation webpage and you will receive a letter from the Minister.

Successful applicants may not receive the full amount requested and may be subject to special conditions of funding.

See managing your grant on page 9 for information on what happens when your project has been awarded funding.

Assessment criteria

Selection for Trust grants is a state wide, merit-based process. Eligible applications will be assessed by an independent Technical Review Committee (TRC) against the assessment criteria set out in the following table.

The application forms will allow the TRC to assess your project. Your application should be prepared with these criteria in mind. Refer to How to Complete the Application Form for guidance on which parts of your application relate to each assessment criteria.

1.	**Tangible environmental outcome** (Questions B4 – B13)

- clear explanation of the environmental issue to be addressed
- demonstrated need for the project, and appropriateness of proposed actions
- the project will make a clear contribution toward the Restoration and Rehabilitation program objectives

2.	**Project objectives** (Questions C1 – C5)

- objectives clearly targeted towards achieving expected outcomes
- project demonstrates long term benefits beyond the life of the grant

3.	**Planning and method** (Questions C1 – C5)

- sound project planning and method
- How well the identified monitoring activities demonstrate the success of the project
- how well the proposal addresses risk factors that have the potential to jeopardise the achievement of expected outcomes
- time frame is realistic for achieving the proposed outcomes

4.	**Capacity to deliver** (Questions D1 – D4)

- demonstrated knowledge, skills and expertise in relevant fields of the applicant and/or project partners
- degree of community involvement and how this will be achieved
- capacity and commitment to undertake and complete the project
- demonstrated commitment to continue to support the project's outcomes beyond the life of the grant

5.	**Value for money** (Project budget and question D5)

- extent to which the budget supports the projected objectives and whether it will ensure 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
- appropriateness of the mix in the total budget between:
  - materials and other direct project costs
  - professional expertise
  - In-kind support (e.g. equipment, machinery) and/or cash contributions from applicant and other organisations
  - voluntary expertise/labour

Part 3: Managing your grant

If you are successful in receiving a Restoration and Rehabilitation Program grant, you will be notified between May and June 2017.

Getting started

If you are awarded a Restoration and Rehabilitation grant, you will be required to submit the following documents **before** starting your project.

TIP

The Trust's Grants Administration team are on hand to answer questions and help you prepare and develop the required.

1. Project Plan (Monitoring & Evaluation Plan)	2 Project Measures
The Project Plan (some applicants will know this as a Monitoring and Evaluation or M&E Plan) provides a framework for monitoring progress and managing risk, and enables you to determine whether you achieved what you set out to do. It is a more detailed version of the Project Planning section you will have completed as part of your application (please refer to the How to Complete the Application guidelines).	The Project Measures spreadsheet is a standardised list of indicators or measures that are used to 'project' the impact of your project. You are required to report against your projected throughout your project (see *During Your Project* below). The projected measures completed as part of your application would be used to complete this spreadsheet (please refer to the How to Complete the Application guidelines).
3. Grant Agreement	**4. Tax Invoice**
The Grant Agreement sets out the terms and conditions associated with the grant. A copy of the standard Grant Agreement can be found on the Trust's webpage. The Trust may also place additional conditions that are specific to your project. Your Grants Administrator will discuss these conditions with you. **Note:** The grant agreement is a standard document for all grantees. The agreement will not be changed at the request of the grantee.	A tax invoice for each instalment of your grant is required, including GST if applicable. The first instalment will be made when the signed Grant Agreement, Project Plan (M&E Plan) and Project Measures is received by the Trust.

During your project

Grantees are required to prepare and submit progress reports periodically throughout their projects. Reporting and payment schedules will be outlined in the Grant Agreement (see page 9). Progress reports allow grantees to provide the Trust with updates on activities, achievements and expenditure, in line with approved Project Plan and Project Measures (see page 9).

TIP

Progress reports are required at the completion of each stage of works.

Each report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with technical expertise relevant to your project's objectives. If your report demonstrates that your project is progressing well, the next instalment of your grant will be authorised by the Trust and your Grant Administrator will provide you with feedback from the reviewer. If it is considered to be underperforming, funding instalments may be withheld while you work with your Grants Administrator 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 your Grants Administrator at any time throughout your project.

Reporting templates are available to download from the Trust's webpages.

Completing your project

When your project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final report reflecting on achievements against the project's objectives.

Like progress reports, a representative of the Trust will review your final report. An evaluation of grantee performance is made at this point and a risk rating applied. This rating will be used when assessing future applications.

Your Grants Administrator will provide you with feedback on your project, and formally acquit your grant.

Privacy

We use the information you supply 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 for evaluating its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.

TIP

More information on the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* is available online.