



Guidelines for applicants 2025–26

Coastal and Estuary Grants Program

Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water



Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency Boss Lady Creative Designs created the People and Community symbol.

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Introduction

This document (the ‘guidelines’) provides an overview of the 2025–26 Coastal and Estuary Grants Program (‘the program’). It aims to inform applicants and the broader community about the program’s objectives, purposes and the criteria for applicants and grantees.

The 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 NSW Government recommends that councils manage their coastal risks in accordance with the regulatory framework for coastal management. This framework includes the:

- *Coastal Management Act 2016* (‘the Act’)
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* (‘Resilience and Hazards SEPP’)
- *NSW Coastal management manual*.

This program is administered by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department). The guidelines may be updated by the department at any time. If this occurs, the revised guidelines or any addenda will be published on the website.

Links to documents, legislation and websites referred to in the guidelines are provided in the ‘More information and resources’ section at the end of the guide.

Coastal and Estuary Grants Program

The program provides funding to enable local councils with their communities to prepare coastal management programs (CMPs) and implement actions outlined in certified CMPs and coastal zone emergency action subplans (CZEAS), enhancing the management of coastal and estuarine environments. It supports local councils in managing the coastal environment of New South Wales in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development for the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of the people of the state.

Funding is available under 6 funding streams: a planning stream, 4 implementation streams and one stream for undertaking emergency works as identified in a CZEAS. Refer to Table 1 for a description of the streams, funding ratios and key dates (that is, opening and closing dates for applications).

Table 1 Coastal and Estuary Grants Program funding streams

Category and stream	Funding ratio/ amounts ¹	Key dates
Planning (open year-round)		
Stream 1: Preparation of coastal management programs	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 30 June 2026
Planning (contestable round)		
Conducting studies, hazard mapping or coastal risk assessments	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Implementation (contestable round)		
Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area mapping	100:0 ratio, maximum \$100,000 and one application per council	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Stream 3: Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Stream 4: Coastal environment area (land containing coastal features)	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Stream 5: Coastal use area (land where development may be carried out)	2:1 ratio	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Exempt activities (as aligned to the above implementation streams – maximum 2 applications per council)	1:1 ratio, maximum \$100,000 per application	Open 24 July 2025 Close 4 September 2025
Emergency works (emergency trigger)		
Stream 6: Coastal zone emergency action subplan (CZEAS) actions	1:1 ratio, maximum funding per application \$500,000	Open once emergency trigger occurs

1. See 'Funding' section for specific details. A 2:1 ratio means that the NSW Government will provide \$2 for every \$1 provided by the applicant; a 1:1 ratio means that the NSW Government will provide \$1 for every \$1 provided by the applicant; a 100:0 ratio means the NSW Government will fully fund the project.

Eligible organisations

The following organisations are eligible to apply:

- local councils
- county councils
- joint organisations (established under an Act of Parliament)

- incorporated regional organisations of councils (ROCs).

When multiple councils work together within the same coastal sediment compartment or estuary to prepare or implement a CMP, one council, joint organisation or ROC from within the area applies and must be the lead agency in terms of signing 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 or other eligible organisation is the principal applicant and assumes overall responsibility for administering the grant.

Planning

Stream 1: Preparation of coastal management programs

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

- meet their statutory objectives under the framework, using the guidance and materials provided as part of the coastal reforms, including the *Coastal management toolkit*
- plan coastal and estuary management activities, such as preparing scoping studies, hazard and risk assessments, feasibility analyses, cost-benefit analyses, distributional analyses and CMPs.

The funding for preparing CMPs enables the NSW Government to achieve 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 enhance the resilience of public coastal assets against the impacts of an uncertain climate future, including those resulting from climate change
- promoting integrated and coordinated coastal planning, management and reporting
- supporting public participation in coastal management and planning, while fostering greater public awareness, education and understanding of coastal processes and management actions.

Submission of applications for funding are open year-round to support the development of a CMP, and applications may include the investigation and design of a project included in a certified CMP.

Funded planning activities (open year-round)

Funded activities (open for applications all year) include:

- developing CMPs (including individual stages) consistent with the NSW *Coastal management manual* (including community consultation and consultation with Aboriginal communities)
- conducting studies to understand coastal processes and map coastal hazards/coastal vulnerability areas necessary for CMP development
- conducting studies to identify threats to coastal management areas within the NSW coastal zone essential for CMP development
- undertaking investigations and designs for infrastructure works, including coastal protection works, and nature-based solutions recommended in a certified CMP

- conducting cost–benefit analyses (refer to the *Guidelines for using cost–benefit analysis to assess coastal management options*) and distributional analyses for actions outlined in certified CMPs.

Assessment process and criteria

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility, ensure correct categories have been selected and for completeness. Ineligible or incomplete applications will not be assessed. Where applicable and possible, an application may be moved to a more appropriate program stream for assessment.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a demonstrated need for and importance of the project
- the method proposed to undertake the work is sound
- the project is value for money/reasonable cost (compared to similar projects)
- alignment with the procedures outlined in the *NSW Coastal management manual* if related to cost–benefit analysis.

This assessment is conducted by the department’s technical specialists, in consultation with relevant department staff. A numerical scoring system is used in the evaluation of applications against the above criteria, and an overall recommendation is made on each application. Applications are approved under delegation by the Director Grants, Strategic Policy, Science and Engagement. Details of successful applications will be placed on the department’s website. All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

Conducting studies, hazard mapping or coastal risk assessments

Funding is available for actions as outlined in a CMP (or under certain situations where there is no CMP) for conducting studies, hazard mapping or coastal risk assessments, and for coastal vulnerability area mapping. Funding will be awarded through the annual contestable round at a 2:1 ratio.

Funded planning activities (contestable round)

Funded planning activities include:

- conducting studies to understand coastal processes and identify and map coastal hazards as identified in a certified CMP
- conducting studies to identify threats to coastal management areas within the NSW coastal zone as identified in a certified CMP
- development of coastal vulnerability area mapping.

Assessment process and criteria

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible, incomplete or late applications will not be assessed. The department’s technical specialists will provide comments on each application and an independent State

Assessment Panel will review, score and recommend applications. Projects recommended for funding are provided for consideration and approval by the appropriate department delegate.

The applications will be assessed against a range of criteria including:

- the action is identified in a certified CMP (except for coastal vulnerability area mapping if it is founded on suitable data and aligns with the Resilience and Hazards SEPP)
- the project aligns to both statewide priorities and objectives, and this grant program's priorities and objectives
- a demonstrated need for the proposed study and its relevance to future works in the area
- is based on suitable data and evidence, and will facilitate sustainable land-use planning decisions
- a capacity to deliver the project with available resources
- a commitment to using the information to support future coastal management decisions or for the work to be integrated into planning decisions
- cost-effectiveness and technical feasibility.

Implementation

Funding is available in Streams 2 to 5 based on the 4 coastal management areas identified in the Act and is focused on actions in the mapped coastal zone.

Councils may submit applications for implementing actions listed in a certified CMP or for a plan pending certification at the grant round's closing date. Funding will be contingent on the CMP being certified, except for coastal vulnerability area mapping projects (Stream 2), which may also be funded where there is no certified CMP or CMP pending certification.

Actions in a catchment area (outside the mapped coastal zone) to support the delivery of a certified CMP may be eligible, provided they clearly demonstrate that the outcome of the action will:

- significantly benefit the coastal zone and be a critical factor in estuary health
- give effect to the management objectives for the coastal management areas and the objects of the Act
- assist in addressing a key coastal management issue affecting the area to which a certified CMP applies.

Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area

This stream provides funding for actions on land identified in the Resilience and Hazards SEPP as coastal vulnerability areas; or 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.

Coastal vulnerability areas include lands subject to various coastal hazards, including beach erosion, shoreline recession, foreshore erosion, coastal cliff instability and coastal inundation.

Projects should align with one or more of the management objectives outlined in the Act for these areas, aiming to:

- ensure public safety and prevent risks to human life
- mitigate current and future risk from coastal hazards by considering the effects of coastal processes and climate change
- maintain the presence of beaches, dunes and natural foreshore features
- maintain public access, amenity and use of beaches and foreshores
- encourage land-use planning and infrastructure and asset management practices that reduce exposure to risks from coastal hazards
- adopt coastal management strategies that enhance resilience to coastal hazards, such as restoring or enhancing natural defences like coastal dunes, vegetation and wetlands; or taking other actions to reduce exposure to hazards while avoiding significant degradation or disruption to biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, geological and geomorphological coastal processes

- prioritise and plan actions that support the continued functionality of essential infrastructure during and immediately after a coastal hazard emergency
- improve the resilience of coastal development and communities by enhancing adaptive capacity and reducing reliance on emergency responses.

Funded activities

Some examples of the types of projects eligible for funding under this stream are:

- management and stabilisation of dune systems. Please refer to *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
- implementation of coastal protection works. If the project includes a seawall-lined foreshore in an estuary, the applicant must demonstrate the environmental benefits and alignment with the standards in *Environmentally friendly seawalls: 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
- beach scraping to mitigate immediate coastal erosion risks
- actions to reduce future risks from coastal hazards
- setup and implementation of short-term (up to 3 years) monitoring to understand the coastal zone over time in relation to informing future actions
- actions to improve natural resilience to potential impacts from coastal hazards
- actions to reduce the risk to public assets
- actions to minimise liability related to coastal natural disasters
- education initiatives aimed at reducing exacerbating issues in the coastal vulnerability area.

Stream 2: Coastal vulnerability area mapping

This stream provides for mapping of coastal vulnerability areas in line with an action in a CMP or where there is no certified CMP or CMP pending certification. Funding for this stream is for up to \$100,000 (fully funded by the NSW Government) and is limited to one application per council each 5-year period.

Where there is no certified CMP, applications for coastal vulnerability area mapping are to be founded on suitable data and evidence of alignment with the Resilience and Hazards SEPP.

Stream 3: Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area

This stream provides funding for projects on land mapped and displaying the hydrological and floristic characteristics of coastal wetlands or littoral rainforests, as listed under the Resilience and Hazards SEPP, along with a 100-m buffer around such areas.

Projects should align with one or more of the management objectives outlined in the Act for these areas, aiming to:

- protect coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests in their natural state, including their biological diversity and ecosystem integrity
- promote the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests
- improve the resilience of coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests to the impacts of climate change, including opportunities for ecosystem migration
- 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.

Funded activities

Some examples of the types of projects eligible for funding under this stream are:

- management of invasive species, including plants and animals
- management of trails/access ways to reduce environmental impact. Dune rehabilitation should be considered as a component of this work
- management of run-off from and discharges into littoral rainforest and coastal wetlands
- reducing exposure to coastal erosion and climate change
- management of salinity
- actions to protect Aboriginal community's cultural heritage and values
- replanting and stabilising vegetation
- habitat restoration and conservation
- public education programs or educational signage that are aimed at reducing issues in the wetland or littoral rainforest.

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

This stream provides funding for actions on land containing coastal features such as coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes, coastal lagoons, and land adjoining those features, including headlands and rock platforms.

Projects should align with one or more of the management objectives outlined in the Act for these areas, aiming 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
- reduce threats to and improve the resilience of coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons, including in response to climate change
- maintain and improve water quality and estuary health

- support the social and cultural values associated with coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and coastal lagoons
- preserve the presence of beaches, dunes and natural features of foreshores
- maintain public access, amenity and use of beaches, foreshores, headlands and rock platforms.

Funded activities

Some examples of the types of projects eligible for funding under this stream are:

- community education on the importance of coastal and estuarine areas and their protection
- formalising or reducing the number of foreshore access points to minimise environmental damage. Dune rehabilitation should be considered as a component of this work
- dredging for environmental benefit
- setup and implementation of short-term (up to 3 years) monitoring of estuary and coastal environments. Monitoring projects must be linked with actions to improve ecosystem health identified within a CMP
- actions to protect Aboriginal community's cultural heritage and values
- stormwater quality management where it is demonstrated to have a significant impact on the receiving coastal or estuarine environment
- revegetation and weed management projects
- sediment and erosion control actions
- acid sulfate soils management
- conservation, including riparian corridor management
- public education programs or educational signage that are aimed at reducing issues in the coastal environment.

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

This stream provides funding for actions on land mapped in the Resilience and Hazards 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 align with the following management objectives outlined in the Act for these areas, aiming to:

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

Funded activities

Some examples of the types of projects eligible for funding under this stream are:

- community education on the importance of coastal and estuarine areas and their protection
- formalising or reducing the number of beach access points. Dune rehabilitation should be considered as a component of this work
- setup and implementation of short-term (up to 3 years) monitoring of estuary and coastal environments. Monitoring projects must be linked with actions to improve ecosystem health identified within a CMP
- actions to protect Aboriginal community's cultural heritage and values
- stormwater management where it is demonstrated to have a significant impact on the receiving coastal or estuarine environment
- revegetation and weed management projects
- public education programs or educational signage that are aimed at reducing issues in the coastal environment.

Exempt activities

The exempt activity funding stream provides applicants with financial support to perform physical on-ground works without being listed in a certified CMP or CZEAS under the above streams. Funding is limited to \$100,000 per application and each applicant can only submit 2 exempt activity applications per year.

The following exempt activities are eligible for funding:

- 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 defences 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.

Assessment process and criteria for Streams 2–5 (except coastal vulnerability area mapping) and exempt activities

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible, incomplete or late applications will not be assessed. The department's technical specialists will provide comments on each application and an independent State Assessment Panel will review, score and recommend applications. Projects recommended for funding are provided for consideration and approval by the appropriate department delegate.

The applications will be assessed against a range of criteria including:

- the action is identified in a certified CMP or CZEAS (except for exempt activities)

- the project aligns to both statewide priorities and objectives, and this grant program's priorities and objectives
- the project meets one or more of the management objectives for the relevant coastal management area
- a capacity to deliver the project with available resources
- a commitment to maintaining works in a condition suitable to meet its design intent for the design life
- cost-effectiveness and technical feasibility with best practice implementation
- the environmental benefit of the project.

Assessment process and criteria for Stream 2: coastal vulnerability area mapping

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible, incomplete or late applications will not be assessed. The department's technical specialists will provide comments on each application and an independent State Assessment Panel will review, score and recommend applications. Projects recommended for funding are provided for consideration and approval by the appropriate department delegate.

The applications will be assessed against a range of criteria including:

- the action is identified in a certified CMP
- there is no certified CMP and the coastal vulnerability mapping is founded on suitable data and aligns with the Resilience and Hazards SEPP
- the project aligns to both statewide priorities and objectives, and this grant program's priorities and objectives
- a demonstrated need for the proposed study and its relevance to future works in the area
- is based on suitable data and evidence, and will facilitate sustainable land-use planning decisions
- a capacity to deliver the project with available resources
- a commitment to using the information to support future coastal management decisions or for the work to be integrated into planning decisions
- cost-effectiveness and technical feasibility.

Emergency works

Stream 6: Coastal zone emergency action subplan actions

This stream specifically pertains to applications seeking funding for urgent coastal zone emergency action subplan (CZEAS) works following significant erosion events or a coastal inundation emergency.

Councils with a CZEAS in a certified CMP can apply for emergency works funding when a significant coastal storm event has occurred to implement actions described in their CZEAS addressing beach erosion, coastal inundation or cliff instability that cannot wait until the next funding round. If a significant event has occurred, the applicant should contact the department's Grants Branch for advice. Applications under this stream must be submitted within 90 days of the emergency event having occurred, unless extended by the department.

Emergency works not defined within a CZEAS in a certified CMP will not be funded.

If the department requests additional information to support assessment of an application, this must be provided within 10 business days of the request, unless otherwise agreed by the appropriate department delegate.

The applicant must demonstrate that the action:

- is identified in a CZEAS in a certified CMP
- has been triggered by the CZEAS
- will result in an overall reduction in the risk from coastal hazards in the short and/or medium term
- consists of temporary measures to mitigate risk with clear links to long-term management actions
- delivers broad public benefit, allowing appropriate management of public assets.

Funded activities

Some examples of the types of projects that may be funded under this stream are:

- actions to reduce immediate risk from coastal hazards
- actions to reduce immediate risk to public assets
- emergency actions or activities to be carried out by a public authority under the CZEAS
- emergency actions or activities to ensure public safety and prevent risks to human life
- projects to prioritise and plan actions that support the continued functionality of essential infrastructure during and immediately after a coastal hazard emergency.

Assessment process and criteria

Applications will initially be checked to confirm eligibility and completeness. Ineligible or incomplete applications, or applications that do not meet the submission timelines will not be assessed. The department's technical specialists will provide comments on each application and a department panel will review, score and recommend applications. Projects recommended for funding are provided for consideration and approval by the appropriate department delegate.

The applications will be assessed against a range of criteria including:

- the priority of works due to the immediacy of threats to environmental, social or asset-related concerns
- the nature of works is temporary
- the works are consistent with long-term management plans for the location
- the clear identification of locations and types of emergency works
- details on how emergency works will not create additional hazards or risks.

Funding

Funding contributions

For all funding streams except exempt activities, CZEAS projects, coastal vulnerability area mapping and projects over \$5 million, the NSW Government will provide \$2 for every \$1 provided by the applicant (2:1 ratio).

For exempt activities, the NSW Government will provide \$1 for every \$1 provided by the applicant (1:1 ratio) to a maximum grant amount of \$100,000.

For actions in CZEAS (Stream 6), the NSW Government will provide \$1 for every \$1 provided by the applicant (1:1 ratio) to a maximum grant amount of \$500,000.

For coastal vulnerability mapping under Stream 2, the NSW Government will provide 100% (100:1 ratio) of funding to the maximum grant amount of \$100,000.

All projects over \$500,000

Investigation and design must have been completed for all infrastructure works in a certified CMP valued at over \$500,000 (total project cost) before applying for implementation funding. The investigation and design documentation must be attached to the submitted application.

Projects with a total project cost over \$5 million

The applicant must provide information on the key beneficiaries of any works, complete a cost-benefit analysis, and demonstrate that appropriate cost-sharing arrangements are in place before applying for funds to implement the works.

The proportion of NSW Government funding available will be determined after considering the results of a distributional analysis, based on the cost-benefit analysis, or as defined by a funding model developed and approved as part of a certified CMP.

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

Projects involving coastal protection structures on the open coast

The applicant must provide information on key beneficiaries of any works.

The proportion of NSW Government funding available for open coast protection structures is as follows:

- Where the primary beneficiaries of the work are private landholders:
 - 80% of the total project cost will be funded by the private beneficiaries
 - 20% of the total project cost will be funded by the NSW Government and relevant local council/government at a 1:1 funding ratio.

- Where the primary beneficiaries of the work are private landholders but there are significant public assets (such as a public road) or significant public infrastructure located between residential properties and the beach, the following will apply:
 - 40% of the total project cost will be funded by the private beneficiaries
 - 60% of the total project cost will be funded by the NSW Government and relevant local council/government at a 2:1 funding ratio.
- Where there are no private beneficiaries (that is, works are 100% public benefit), funding is provided by the NSW Government and relevant local council/government at a 2:1 funding ratio.

Partner contributions: non-partnership projects

Partnership contributions to the project (non-council contributions) must be removed from the whole project cost prior to applying the funding ratio. For further advice on the calculations of partner contributions, please contact Grants Branch staff.

Eligibility

Eligible and non-eligible costs

Eligible costs and items

- Staffing resources may be eligible where it can be demonstrated that the staff member or team possesses relevant skills, experience and qualifications aligned with the proposed activities. If the individual is an existing employee, it must be clearly shown that their role within the program is not the result of cost shifting from other responsibilities. The application must provide a strong justification for this staffing approach, including detailed costings and an explanation of why it is preferred to alternative arrangements. The applicant must also clearly demonstrate their capacity to deliver and complete each proposed activity.
- Actions in a certified CMP that have not been tendered for or commenced.
- Contribution towards private asset protection of 10% by the state for open coast protection structures where approved.
- Amenity works in Streams 2 to 5 if they are part of a holistic coastal management project and result in improved:
 - public access to the coastal location, including paths and facilities for multi-user access
 - community use and public safety
 - nature space with plantings to increase visual aesthetics linked to the works.
- Vegetation reduction where it has a sound environmental outcome.
- Actions outside of the mapped coastal zone if they can be shown to provide significant benefit to the coastal zone or estuary health.
- Monitoring conducted for less than 3 years to evaluate the effectiveness of an implemented measure or to identify potential future actions at a specific location.
- Cost-effective projects that align with the program guidelines and objectives.

Non-eligible costs and items

- Goods and services tax (GST): the project cost must exclude GST.
- Budget contingencies: project costs should be listed as accurately as possible.
- Operating costs or staffing: an applicant's business-as-usual or core activities include preparing study briefs, reviewing proposals and tenders, researching and copying records, attending and facilitating meetings, administering contracts and grants, accounting costs, and liaising with government agencies and the public (unless approved as a dedicated resource at the time of application).
- Projects that are funded or being considered for funding as part of a natural disaster relief declaration.
- Grant funding cannot be sought for financial co-contribution through other NSW or Commonwealth programs. The applicant's matching funds must be in the form of

monetary contributions and cannot include in-kind, voluntary contributions or funding from other sources.

- For Streams 2 to 6, any actions that are not identified in a certified CMP or CZEAS (apart from the exempt activities and Stream 2 coastal vulnerability area mapping).
- For Streams 1 to 5 retrospective projects, funding is not available for projects currently underway or included in an existing contractual commitment, which are already tendered for or have been completed.
- Maintenance of projects once complete, including maintenance of existing infrastructure for its design life. This includes work undertaken to keep something in proper condition, care or upkeep; to avoid something breaking down (preventative maintenance); or to bring something back to working order (corrective maintenance). Note: Only projects involving the replacement or upgrading of existing protection structures noted as a priority action in a certified CMP will be considered.
- Foreshore protection structures within estuaries that delineate or are built along a private boundary.
- The portion of protection structures deemed to be for private asset protection or private benefit.
- Amenity works that have no environmental benefit, projects with no direct linkage to a reduction in risk associated with coastal processes, or connection to the area of works, such as car parking, barbecue facilities, shelters, amenity sheds, showers, toilets, sea pools or activities related to surf lifesaving clubs.
- Amenity projects in CZEAS.
- Vegetation reduction for amenity outcomes.
- Actions in the catchment area (outside the mapped coastal zone) that do not support the delivery of a certified CMP, will not provide significant benefit to the coastal zone, or are not a critical factor in estuary health.
- Sites with existing biobanking agreements or the preparation of a site to be eligible for biobanking.
- Monitoring projects longer than 3 years or repeat monitoring projects at the same location.
- Projects that do not demonstrate they are cost-effective and do not have links to long-term management planning.

Partnerships

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

The lead council, joint organisation, or incorporated ROC can claim project management costs for a multiparty project. The amount eligible for project management funding is capped at 10% of the total project cost where up to 4 councils are working together, or 20% of the total project cost when there are 5 or more partner councils. For example:

- if 3 councils are working together on a project with a total cost of \$150,000, then \$15,000 in project management costs would be eligible for funding
- if 5 councils are working together on a project with a total cost of \$150,000, then \$30,000 in project management costs would be eligible for funding.

The project management costs must be directly related to the funded project. Funding can be used for either:

- a dedicated project manager selected through a competitive process, or
- a staff member from one of the councils, joint organisations or incorporated ROC.

A letter from the host council/organisation should be provided that clearly outlines its commitment to the project with respect to staff and other resources required to implement the project.

Letters of support should be provided by each of the partner councils outlining their support and financial contribution.

Contributions to the project from other funding sources (non-council contributions) must be removed from the whole project cost prior to applying the funding ratio.

Other partnership arrangements (non-council) are not eligible to claim the above-mentioned project management costs.

Projects with approved 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 does not proceed, administrative costs cannot be claimed.

How to apply

The program operates through an online Grant Management System, which is the online platform for managing grants.

To apply for any grants within this program, visit the Grant Management System website at gms.environment.nsw.gov.au

If you are a first-time user, you will need to register, create an account, and set up an organisation profile. Registration is free and is a straightforward process.

Lodging an application for financial assistance does not guarantee assistance will be offered.

A separate application must be completed for each project through the online Grant Management System. Multiple projects cannot be included in one application.

Where multiple applications for funding through the program are being submitted, the applicant is required to identify the relative priority between their applications to assist with the project evaluation process.

Steps to apply

Step 1

Read these program guidelines and review the *Coastal and estuary grants* webpage (see 'More information and resources' section for weblinks).

Step 2

Check eligibility:

- Is your organisation eligible?
- Are your project and proposed activities appropriate for this program?
- Are you required to have a CMP or CZEAS to be eligible to apply for the project?

Step 3

Identify which funding stream is applicable to your project. If unsure, contact your departmental regional representative (see 'Contacts for assistance' section).

Review the relevant funding stream conditions in preparation of your grant application.

Step 4

Prepare your grant application in the online Grant Management System along with submitting any supporting documentation such as an extract of the applicable CMP or CZEAS action, site maps and detailed design of proposed works.

Ensure the workplan has at least:

- 2 detailed milestones with associated activities for projects up to \$75,000

- 4 detailed milestones with associated activities for projects between \$75,000 and \$200,000
- 6 detailed milestones with associated activities for projects over \$200,000.

Please note that projects must be complete within 3 years of commencement and the Grant Management System restricts applicants from submitting projects for grant funding beyond a 3-year timeframe. Projects cannot commence until 2 March 2026 and must commence by 6 October 2026.

Changes can be made to an application at any time until it is submitted. The Grant Management System offers functionality to share your application with your departmental regional representative for guidance.

Step 5

An application must be submitted, with all sections completed, and a detailed project workplan and supporting documentation prior to the closing date (see Table 1).

Applications must be submitted via the Grant Management System. Any applications submitted late or by other means will not be accepted.

Successful applicants

Details of successful applications will be placed on the department's website. All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

Funding agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the NSW Government. The agreement will need to be signed by the general manager (or someone with delegated authority) within 45 days of the formal grant offer.

No financial commitments reliant on this program should be made until formally advised that you are successful, and a funding agreement is signed and executed.

Project implementation timeframe

The department 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 3 years of the grant offer.

If the project is implementing an action and is likely to extend beyond 3 years, the applicant is encouraged to consider staging the project.

The Grant Management System will not allow applications to be submitted beyond a 3-year timeframe.

Reporting and payments

The Grant Management System is the project-based system all applicants and grantees are required to use in submitting applications and managing grant funded projects.

Successful applicants have 5 months from the date of offer to submit a detailed and costed initial work plan in the system with supporting documentation (quotes/tenders). The initial work plan must be based on a quote for services provided by the successful tender for the project and outline key milestones to be achieved and related claims for payment. This work plan should be developed with your departmental regional representative and work should not commence until an initial work plan is approved.

Low-cost items under \$2,000 do not require quotes but may require justification. The tender process must align with council's procurement procedures/guidelines and deliver value for money.

Upon successful completion of agreed project activities within a project milestone, a milestone report must be submitted through the Grant Management System. A departmental regional officer will review each milestone report and provide comment.

The milestone report is assessed and evaluated for approval prior to processing of a payment claim. Payments are subject to successful completion of milestone activities and outcomes, and to meeting all conditions of the funding agreement and program guidelines.

The project will be tracked and managed against the work plan in the Grant Management System, which must be kept current by the grant recipient, in consultation with the department, throughout the funded period.

Once all milestones are complete and claimed, a final report will be required to acquit the grant.

Variations

The department receives an annual funding allocation for the program, with limited capacity to carry over funds to future financial years. Consequently, projects are expected to be completed within the agreed 3 years of the grant offer.

If there are delays or changes to the project, a variation request in the Grant Management System must be submitted seeking approval for project changes with a revised workplan and supporting documentation.

If a variation request is unclear, displays errors, or seeks approval for ineligible activities, the department will seek additional information from the grantee or may reject the variation. Grantees should not commence working on any project changes until approved.

No additional funding will be considered for projects during implementation unless there are exceptional circumstances, and such requests will be considered on their merits and are typically capped at a maximum of 30%. Detailed supporting documentation must be supplied. Coastal vulnerability area mapping projects and exempt activity projects will not be provided with funding above \$100,000.

Compliance

All projects must adhere to relevant guidelines and regulations and obtain appropriate regulatory approvals, as necessary.

General information

Privacy

Information provided and collated is utilised to ensure the successful delivery of grant funded projects and the program objectives and outcomes. Any personal or business information will be held and managed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988* (NSW).

Conflicts of interest

All applicants, project team members and State Assessment Panel members are required to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest which relate to their project or the program. Conflicts of interest may relate to economic, partnerships, third-party service provisions, or contractors employed as a result of a grant application or funded project.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW). Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Contacts for assistance

Support for application development

For assistance with the development of the projects for grant funding, contact the department's regional offices listed below.

- Greater Sydney – 02 8837 6097
- Hunter Central Coast – 02 4320 4206
- North East – 02 8289 6318
- South East – 02 4224 4153.

General administration enquiries

For general grant project or administration enquiries, or for assistance with the Grant Management System, contact the Coast and Estuary Grants team on 02 9895 6494 or by email at coastalestuary.floodgrants@environment.nsw.gov.au

More information and resources

- [Coastal and estuary grants webpage](#)
- [Assessing estuary ecosystem health: Sampling, data analysis, and reporting protocols](#) (OEH 2016)
- [Coastal dune management: a manual of coastal dune management and rehabilitation techniques](#) (DLWC 2001)
- [Coastal Management Act 2016](#)
- [Coastal management manual](#)
- [Coastal management toolkit](#)
- [Environmentally friendly seawalls: a guide to improving the environmental value of seawalls and seawall-lined foreshores in estuaries](#) (OEH 2009)
- [Grants Management System](#)
- [Guideline for preparing a coastal zone emergency action subplan](#) (DPIE 2019)
- [Guidelines for using cost–benefit analysis to assess coastal management options](#) (DPIE 2020)
- [State Environmental Planning Policy \(Resilience and Hazards\) 2021](#)
- [Grants Administration Guide 2024](#) (The Cabinet Office 2024)