



Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants Guidelines 2020/21 North East Victoria

Applications close 5.00pm Mon 20 July 2020

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Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants in North East Victoria

Warning: Health and safety is paramount

- A fireground is dangerous. Even after a fire has passed, these are still dangerous areas.
- You must put in place relevant Work Health Safety policies and procedures to ensure the safety of those undertaking grant activities.
- You must comply with any public health measures and requirements in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19). Stay up to date at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au

1. Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants

1.1 What are the Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants?

The 2019/2020 Victorian bushfires have been exceptional in size and impact. It has affected us all and has had a significant impact on our state, particularly within the North East and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) areas and to a lesser extent, the Glenelg Hopkins CMA area.

Additional funding has been provided by the Victorian Government in response to the impact of the 2019-20 bushfires for the **Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants**, to support the communities most heavily affected with their bushfire recovery efforts.

The objectives of the Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants are:

- To fund projects that support community and biodiversity recovery after the 2019/20 bushfires through delivery of grants for activities including:
 - Biodiversity on-ground works
 - Community capacity building activities including community education and engagement.
- To support the recovery from the 2019/20 bushfires of private land that has received previous Government biodiversity investment and/or has a Trust for Nature covenant.
- To support and strengthen the ability of environmental volunteer groups and networks including Friends' of groups, Landcare groups and networks to meet community needs and priorities in the bushfire affected areas in a time of crisis.

The funding will focus on the delivery of on-ground works and associated community capacity building to assist in the recovery of bushfire affected communities within the most severely impacted areas.

It is recognised that our communities have been severely impacted, not only by the recent bushfires but with coronavirus (COVID-19). It is also known that volunteer and community organisations are important to keep people informed and help them stay connected – it helps people feel safe and calmer in a time of uncertainty.

As part of the community capacity building component of this program, projects that include virtual or on-line activities are eligible. This may include online convening or training to maintain skills and promote information sharing regarding biodiversity rehabilitation post bushfire.

The timeframe for project completion is December 2021 and takes into account potential delays to group-based activities due to the current situation. Time variations will not be considered.

1.2 Who can apply?

A total of \$900,000 is available for eligible private landowners, environmental volunteer groups and networks for the Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants across Victoria. There are three funding streams:

<p>1. Private landowner grants</p> <p>Up to \$10,000</p> <p>Private landholders who have received previous Government investment in biodiversity conservation activities on their land and/or have a Trust for Nature covenant on the site</p>	<p>2. Environmental volunteer group grants</p> <p>Up to \$30,000</p> <p>For environmental volunteer groups including Landcare and Friends groups that undertake on ground biodiversity conservation works</p>	<p>3. Environmental volunteer networks grants</p> <p>Up to \$50,000</p> <p>For environmental volunteer networks including Landcare and Friends networks that undertake on ground biodiversity conservation works</p>
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Note:

Matching funding will not be required for the Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants.

The grants are statewide and apply to any areas affected by the 2019/20 bushfires within the North East, East Gippsland and Glenelg Hopkins CMA areas.

Applicant groups/networks and private landowners must have a focus on biodiversity on-ground work and be located within the identified 2019/20 bushfire extent area (as per the maps on available via this link to the bushfire recovery resources pages on the Victorian Landcare Gateway <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/fire-recovery/maps/>) or via the North East CMA Site Mapping tool <http://arcg.is/19OLPi>.

Groups and network applicants must:

- Be an incorporated association registered through Consumer Affairs Victoria, or be incorporated through an incorporated association, e.g. Landcare Victoria Incorporated
- Hold insurance sufficient to safeguard volunteers and participants involved in the funded activities, including public liability insurance of at least \$10 million and personal accident insurance.

Groups and networks that do not meet the above requirements can still apply for funding but must operate under the auspices of a sponsor organisation that meets these requirements (see 'Do we need an auspice' on page 7).

Private landholders will not need an auspice. Private landholders will be required to provide us with their address (home and property address), phone number and email address (if any) as well as a tax file number or a tax exemption.

Traditional Owner groups are also eligible to apply.

1.3 Can I apply for more than one project?

Yes, you may submit one or more projects in one or more streams. Each project submitted must be separate and clearly different. Projects will not be accepted if:

- they are dependent on another project getting funded, or
- scaled versions of the same project have been submitted, or
- the same project has been submitted across multiple streams.

If one of your projects is funded, preference may then be given to unfunded applicants over your other projects.

1.4 When do applications close?

Applications close at 5pm on Monday 20 July 2020.

1.5 When do projects need to be complete?

Projects must be completed and reported on by 31 December 2021. Time variations will not be considered.

1.6 Helping our Communities

Private landowners, groups and networks outside of bushfire affected areas can apply for funding to do work on behalf of impacted groups within the bushfire affected areas (with written permission). We understand that the impact of the fires has been huge, and some groups may not have capacity to undertake projects. Help from outside the fire impacted areas may help other groups get back on their feet.

2. Project Grant Requirements

2.1 What will be funded?

Grants should:

- Be delivered within 19/20 bushfire affected areas in the North East CMA region
- Deliver activities to protect or improve biodiversity and natural environment assets such as native vegetation, native fauna, waterways, wetlands and soils including:
 - **Biodiversity on-ground works** such as weed control, pest and animal control (rabbits and foxes only; includes ripping rabbit burrows, harbour removal, baiting and fumigation only), fencing remnant vegetation habitat protection, waterway protection (using fire-proof fencing), revegetation, direct or hand seeding, artificial habitat (eg nest box installation), waterway bank and soil stabilisation and cultural heritage assessments. Conditions apply to some works – see ‘What will not be funded’ below.
 - **Community capacity building** such as education and engagement activities such as property planning courses, field days, education events, development of property biodiversity recovery plans, demonstration sites, knowledge-gathering (eg. surveys)*.

* Any data collected on species must be submitted to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.

Meet the following conditions:

- **Project management** costs are not to exceed 15% of the total funding requested
- Total cost of **capital items and equipment** not to exceed \$3,000 (this excludes fencing). Capital items will need to become a registered asset of the applicant group/network or auspice organisation.
- Ensuring that **health and safety, cultural heritage and biodiversity impacts** have been taken into account, particularly for eligible activities that have the potential for harm such as warren/den ripping.
- Can be completed and reported on no later than 31 December 2021.
- On-ground projects that involve fencing must use fire-proof fencing, i.e. fences that use steel or concrete posts. Wooden posts or droppers, and plastic droppers will not be funded.

Value for money will be considered in the assessment process. Private landowners, groups and networks will need to demonstrate that all activities and budget items are necessary for the success of the project and that the amounts requested are reasonable. Contactors can be engaged to undertake works.

It is recommended that projects are designed to be scalable to allow for partial funding if full funding is not available for all projects. Generally, higher scoring projects will be funded. The projects to be funded may also take account of the overall mix of project types and locations.

The grants are for projects within bushfire affected areas and can include replacement of burnt assets (such as fencing of remnant vegetation that improves biodiversity outcomes), as well as new assets if, after undertaking a planning process, better conservation outcomes are likely. For example, a Landcare group may determine that realignment of burnt fencing to protect an environmental asset would improve biodiversity outcomes. Applications will need to describe biodiversity conservation outcomes and meet the objectives of the grant program.

2.2 What will not be funded?

The following activities will not be funded:

- Amenity and beautification projects
- Shooting, trapping, tranquilisers or explosive methods for pest animal control. This includes engaging a contractor to undertake these activities
- Boundary fencing
- Property subdivision fencing without a biodiversity benefit
- Barbed wire fencing
- Non-indigenous vegetation planting
- Vegetation corridors less than 10 metres wide. Minimum project width of 10 metres is required (minimum 10 metres from the top of the bank in riparian areas)
- Purchase of capital items over \$3,000 (excluding fencing)
- Project management or administration costs that collectively total more than 15% of total funding requested
- Computers, laptops, cameras and smartphones
- Rubbish removal
- Purchase of goods for competitions, prizes, giveaways, vouchers or alcohol
- Insurances
- Native vegetation and threatened species offsets or offsetting activities (such as a condition of a permit)
- Areas/projects that have already received bushfire relief funding
- Any other action of activity determined by the Assessment Panel through the assessment process to be an inappropriate or unsuitable use of the funds.

2.3 Project location and mapping

Projects can be on private or public land in Victoria and must be within the identified 2019/20 bushfire extent area (as per the maps on available via this link to the bushfire recovery resources pages on the Victorian Landcare Gateway <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/fire-recovery/maps/>) within the North East, East Gippsland and Glenelg Hopkins CMA areas only.

Applicants will need to map the location(s) of the on-ground component of their project, and label their project sites with a site ID, if working on more than one site. Applicants must use the North East Site Mapping tool via <http://arcg.is/19OLPi> to record project and site ID where known (or approximate location). Please contact your Regional Landcare Coordinator if you need assistance with the mapping.

We understand that not all groups may have project sites confirmed or are unable to currently access proposed sites. If this is the case, please map the proposed site and work with your Regional Landcare Coordinator to ensure the site aligns with the objectives of this funding. Land owner/manager consent is required for all projects.

2.4 Project assessment

Grant applications will be assessed and prioritised by a Regional Assessment Panel convened by the respective CMAs and will then be assessed by a Statewide Assessment Panel.

For groups and networks both assessment panels will consider the contribution a project makes in terms of:

- protection and restoration of biodiversity values in accordance with local and regional priorities and impact of the 2019/20 bushfires,
- the extent the project contributes to protection, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity through on-ground works within a bushfire affected area,
- cultural heritage protection,
- community engagement and capacity-building,
- demonstrated need and community benefit,
- project design and group/network capacity to deliver the project,
- value for money.

For private landholders both assessment panels will consider the contribution a project makes in terms of:

- protection and restoration of biodiversity values in accordance with local and regional priorities and impact of the 2019/20 bushfires,
- previous government investment in high biodiversity value or improved native vegetation quality that contributes to protection, enhancement and restoration of land and environment through on-ground works within a bushfire affected area,
- value for money.

More details are provided in Appendix 2 on page 11.

3. How do I apply?

Applications are to be submitted through the online grant application system called SmartyGrants. You can save your application and work on it until you are ready to submit it. We recommend that you start your application as early as possible.

Your online application can only be accessed by one set of login details. We recommend that you sign up to SmartyGrants with a generic group or network email address, if you have one, and provide the email address and password to all Landowners you wish to contribute to the application.

It is recommended that you use a computer with broadband internet access to complete your application. If you are using dial-up internet access you may find that information in your application is lost if the internet connection drops out. Computers with broadband internet are available for use at public libraries. Support in the use of computer and internet technology is also often available.

If you do not have internet or internet connectivity is an issue in your area, a hard copy application form is available. Please contact the Regional Landcare Coordinator for your CMA region to obtain a form.

To apply click on this link:

<https://delwp.smartygrants.com.au/northeast2020BBRG>

3.1 Questions

For any queries and to discuss your application please contact:

Landcare Grants

North East CMA

Email: landcare@necma.vic.gov.au or

ph. 1300 216 513

Appendix 1: Useful information and resources

Do we need an auspice?

Applicant organisations who do not have adequate insurance or are not incorporated or registered as a not-for-profit, will need to partner with another organisation, known as an auspice, to act as a project sponsor organisation. Applicant organisations will need approval from the auspice organisation before applying for a Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grant, as that organisation will be legally responsible for delivery and administering the grant on behalf of the applicant.

If your application is successful, the auspice organisation will be required to sign the funding agreement and manage the grant funding.

An auspice organisation must:

- Be either incorporated or registered as a not-for-profit with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission
- Hold personal accident insurance and a minimum of \$10 million public liability insurance cover
- Approve of the project and be willing to take responsibility for the management and safety of the volunteers and participants involved in the funded activities
- Sign the funding agreement and receive the grant payment
- Be responsible for the delivery and reporting on the project.

Potential auspice organisations may include:

- Local governments
- State government agencies, e.g. Parks Victoria
- Statutory authorities
- Umbrella not-for-profit associations, e.g. Landcare Victoria Incorporated, or community networks in your area.

Applicant organisations who meet all the eligibility criteria on their own do not need an auspice.

Private landowners do not require an auspice.

Commercial entities and for-profit organisations and Commonwealth government agencies are NOT eligible to be either an application or an auspice. Individuals cannot be an auspice.

Example 1

Friends of Clay Creek is a volunteer based environment group, which does not have public liability insurance and is not incorporated. To apply, Friends of Clay Creek will need to partner with an auspice.

Example 2

South Beach Fishing Club is a recreational community group, which is incorporated and has the required level of public liability insurance. South Beach Fishing Club can apply without an auspice.

Example 3

Mr Smith, a private landowner with a Trust for Nature conservation covenant over his property will not require an auspice, but is required to provide a tax file number or a tax exemption.

Useful Plans and Strategies

Regional Catchment Strategies – The [North East Regional Catchment Strategy](#) identifies regional environmental assets and sets out regional objectives and priorities for their protection and improvement. Applicants should design their projects to make clear contributions towards Regional Catchment Strategy objectives and priorities.

Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve the natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for.

The *Volunteering for Nature – Environmental Volunteering Plan* released in 2018 provides an opportunity to address the challenges and changing needs of the environmental volunteering sector in order to help volunteers to do more for nature when, where and how it suits them.

To find out more about these plans visit environment.vic.gov.au.

The *Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework* represents the Victorian Government's approach to managing existing and potential invasive species across the state. The framework expands the Victorian Government's vision for what invasive species management can achieve for the Victorian community.

Go to agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria/invasive-plants-and-animals/invasive-plants-and-animals-policy-framework

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

All Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in Victoria including: Aboriginal Intangible Heritage (traditional practices and knowledge), Aboriginal sites, places and objects are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Act Regulations 2018*. It is the responsibility of us, as the carers of the land, to respect, understand, and protect our Aboriginal Heritage.

It is highly recommended that all Grant applicants conduct an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage check as early in the planning stage as possible. This can be done by engaging the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party or the Aboriginal Victoria Heritage Operations Team.

To determine if your planned project is within an identified area of cultural heritage sensitivity, you will need to look at the [online mapping tool](#), which can be found on the [Aboriginal Victoria website](#) under the Heritage section.

If your proposed project site is within an area of Cultural Heritage sensitivity, please refer to the [Aboriginal Victoria website](#) under the Heritage section for further information.

If your project is not within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity, this does not guarantee there are no Aboriginal sites in the area – If an unregistered Aboriginal site is found during the delivery of your project, you must STOP IMMEDIATELY and contact Aboriginal Victoria on 1800 762 003.

For guidance on this process please follow the [Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide](#) to ensure that your project is planned and delivered in the most efficient and effective way possible. If a Cultural Heritage Permit is required, you may need to include a separate budget item in your grant application and allow a minimum of 30 days to complete the permit process. For more information please contact your Regional Landcare Coordinator, Registered Aboriginal Party or Aboriginal Victoria.

Useful links:

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide:

<https://www.landcarevic.org.au/assets/Uploads/Aboriginal-Cultural-Heritage-Guide-FINAL-Jan2020-Online.pdf>

Cultural Heritage Sensitivity:

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-sensitivity>

Online Map Tool:

<https://achris.vic.gov.au/#/onlinemap>

Registered Aboriginal Parties:

<https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victorias-current-registered-aboriginal-parties>

Occupational Health and Safety

You must have a safe system of work in place for your project to protect the health and safety of yourself and/or your group/network, volunteers and anyone else on your project site.

You can find resources on OHS tailored to community groups on:

- North East CMA Solutions www.necma.vic.gov.au/Solutions/Landcare-Community-Groups/Group-Resources
- Victorian Landcare Gateway: www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/health-and-safety/
- Victorian Workcover Authority website: www.vwa.vic.gov.au

Landowner consent

Public land - you need to provide evidence of land manager consent/support in your application.

Private land - you need to list landowner details (name & address) in your application for all private properties where on-ground works will be taking place. If your application is successful, you will be required to confirm that you can provide, upon request, evidence of private landowner's consent for on-ground works to take place. If you or your group do not have project sites confirmed or can't get access to proposed sites yet, please identify where your proposed site is and work with your Regional Landcare Coordinator to ensure the site aligns with the objectives of this funding. You will still need to get consent for any proposed sites.

If acting on behalf of another group or network, please provide evidence of the other group's or network's support for the project, as well as consent as described above.

Childsafe Standards

Child Safe Standards apply in Victoria. The Victorian Government has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to ensuring the safety of children and takes deliberate steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural abuse, and neglect and create a culturally safe environment for all children.

Organisations operating in Victoria, including community-based organisation, that provide service or facilities where children are involved since early 2017 have been required to meet Child Safe Standards. More information on the child safe standards can be found here

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/>

Incorporation

Your organisation may become incorporated as:

- a member group of Landcare Victoria Incorporated – for more information go to: www.lvi.org.au/ or contact Landcare Victoria Incorporated on **P. 9207 5527 F. 9207 5500 E. info@lvi.org.au**
- an incorporated association through Consumer Affairs Victoria. Go to www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-fundraising/incorporated-associations

GST

The maximum grant available for a project is \$10,000 for private landowners, \$30,000 for groups and \$50,000 for networks (GST exclusive).

A group or network registered for GST will receive GST in addition to the project grant payment. Those not registered for GST will receive only the grant amount.

CMA Privacy Statement

The North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is committed to protecting personal information provided by you in accordance with the principles of the Victorian privacy laws. The information collected in this form will be used to assess your application, and if you are successful, it will also be used to administer your grant and promote the Program. The information you provide will be made available to the CMA, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

DELWP Privacy Statement

Privacy Information about your project, including the title, a summary of the project, the amount of funding received and your name or group or organisation's name will be made publicly available. Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will only be collected by the department for the purpose of grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian government bodies for the purposes of assessing your application. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement. Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and other applicable laws. DELWP is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DELWP Privacy Policy online at <http://www.DELWP.vic.gov.au/privacy> Requests for access to information about you held by DELWP should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 3002. Alternatively, contact by phone on 03 9637 8697.

Appendix 2: How will applications be assessed?

For groups and networks, eligible grant applications will be assessed and prioritised by the CMA using the criteria below. Prioritised lists of applications from the CMAs will then be assessed by a Statewide Assessment Panel against the same criteria.

Assessment criteria

Table 1. Assessment Criteria Grants

Criteria	Value	Description
Land and environment outcome	20%	The extent to which the project contributes to protection, enhancement and restoration of land and environment through on-ground works, community engagement and/or capacity building within a bushfire affected area.
Community engagement and capacity building	20%	The extent to which the project engages and builds on the capacity of the group and/or volunteers and/or land managers and/or broader community and assist with resilience in a time of crisis.
Demonstrated need and community and public benefit	20%	Alignment with strategy or plan or other statement identifying the need for this project or activity and the community and public benefit to be delivered by the project. The extent to which the project contributes to local and regional priorities as set out in the Regional Catchment Strategy, including cultural heritage protection.
Project design and group/network capacity	20%	The capacity of group/network to plan and deliver the project including group resources and technical feasibility of the project. Priority will be given to eligible projects that are well-planned and achievable. The track record of the applicant group in delivery of projects including accurate and timely reporting, mapping of outputs and communication may be considered.
Value for money	20%	The budget demonstrates that the application represents good value for money, including realistic costs and a clear justification for requested budget items.

For private landowners, eligible grant applications will be assessed and prioritised by the CMA using the criteria below. Prioritised lists of applications from the CMAs will then be assessed by a Statewide Assessment Panel against the same criteria.

Criteria	Value	Description
Land and environment outcome	20%	The extent to which the project contributes to protection, enhancement and restoration of land and environment through on-ground works in accordance with local and regional priorities within a bushfire affected area.
Previous investment	40%	The extent to which the project builds on and/or reinstates previous government investment within a bushfire affected area.
Value for money	20%	The budget demonstrates that the application represents good value for money, including realistic costs and a clear justification for requested budget items.

Appendix 3: What happens after applications close?

Assessment process

Regional Assessment - Stage 1

The Regional Assessment Panel will assess your application based on the information received in your application.

The Regional Assessment Panel may decide to recommend partial funding of some grant applications.

If you apply for more than one project and one of your projects is funded, preference may then be given to unfunded applicants over your other projects.

Statewide Assessment - Stage 2

The CMAs will provide DELWP with a prioritised list of projects, and a Statewide Assessment Panel will assess your application based on the information received in your application and the feedback provided on each application by the Regional Assessment Panel.

The Statewide Assessment Panel may decide to recommend partial funding of some grant applications.

Notification of outcome

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. However, applicants who are not granted funding are welcome to ask for feedback on their application.

If your application is successful

If your organisation is successful then you will have four weeks after receipt of the letter of offer, including the funding agreement, to submit your organisation's signed funding agreement, and any other documentation outlined in the letter of offer. If the documentation is not submitted within this timeframe, the funding may be reallocated to other projects.

Successful applicants will receive payment once all paperwork has been completed and submitted. If you have an auspice, they will receive the payment on your behalf.

Funding conditions

Successful applicants and auspicings organisations (if an auspice is used) are required to:

- enter into a funding agreement with the CMA
- be responsible for meeting contractual obligations to deliver the project and submit project reports by **31 December 2021**.
- adhere to all relevant legislation including Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- acknowledge the CMA and Victorian Government funding in publications and promotions.

Reporting Requirements

You will need to provide a report on completion of the project. Reporting will be completed online using SmartyGrants, and the reporting template will be open during project delivery.

The report will need to include:

- how you spent the grant

- what you achieved with the funding
- for revegetation projects, the amount of hectares revegetated will be required
- data that you collected during the project using DELWP standard outputs. Note - data may be made publicly available
- what you learnt while completing the project
- how the project will support the group, network or partnership into the future.

Participants in funded activities are also requested to complete the “What’s your relationship with nature?” survey on Engage Victoria (Link). <https://engage.vic.gov.au/lms>