

Overview

Grant amount: up to \$15,000 (ex GST)

The *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016* are intended to support Landcare and farming groups in undertaking projects and activities that protect environmental assets¹, address priority issues and improve the health of the environment.

Groups are invited to apply for a grant of up to \$15,000 to support projects that focus on one or more of the following areas:

- > Biodiversity
- > Sustainable agriculture

These grants will be largely funded by Landcare Australia's Workplace Giving Program, an initiative that allows individuals to make regular pre-tax donations to Landcare Australia through their employer's payroll system. These generous Workplace Giving donations are combined and then applied by Landcare Australia in support of a range of activities, including distribution to Landcare groups across Australia to maximise on-ground environmental benefits.

Key Dates

Applications open:	18 April 2016 (9.00am EST)
Applications close:	20 May 2016 (5.00pm EST)
Assessment:	May / June 2016
Successful applicants announced:	June 2016
Funding agreements offered and executed:	June 2016

¹ For the purposes of this document an 'asset' is defined as the thing we hope to protect, improve or manage better through a proposed project. It could be large or small, degraded or pristine, localised or dispersed. An asset could be a single localized thing (for example, a particular wetland or river), or it could be a collection of smaller assets, such as remnant vegetation on farms in a region, or agricultural land in a region. It can be defined to be part of a larger asset (e.g. one river reach within a river) or the entire larger asset (the whole river), depending on what the project is intended to achieve.

Eligibility

Biodiversity stream:

- > The *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016* program is open to all volunteer-based community groups across Australia that embrace the Landcare ethos, including Landcare, Bushcare, Beachcare, Dunecare, Coastcare and “Friends of” groups.

Sustainable agriculture stream:

- > The *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016* program is open, but not limited to, Landcare groups, farming systems groups and community groups.

Other conditions:

- > Projects can be conducted on public or private land.
- > Schools and pre-schools are not eligible to receive funding in this program; instead they are invited to apply for Junior Landcare grants as they become available.
- > Groups with project reports still outstanding from previous grants are ineligible for further funding until all reporting requirements are met.
- > Incomplete and late applications will not be considered.

What activities and costs will be funded?

Project activities and budget items relevant to the project include:

- > Materials
- > Equipment
- > Labour and expert advice
- > Field days, workshops, training or skill development sessions
- > Conducting monitoring and surveys

What activities and costs will not be funded?

- > Travel and accommodation
- > Food and alcohol
- > Retrospective activities
- > Amenity / beautification works

Grant focus and criteria

Biodiversity stream:

Background:

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the variety of all life forms. Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030 is a guiding framework for conserving our nation's biodiversity over the coming decades. The vision of this Strategy is that Australia's biodiversity is healthy and resilient to threats, and valued both in its own right and for its essential contribution to our existence.

Read more about Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy here:

<http://secure.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/strategy-2010-30/index.html>

Criteria:

- > Projects in this stream should address one or more of the following threats to the resilience of ecosystems in Australia:
 - > habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation
 - > invasive species
 - > unsustainable use and management of natural resources
 - > changes to the aquatic environment and water flows

- > The activities being undertaken in the project must be directly related to improving a particular environmental 'asset'. Where applicable, groups should include evidence of the asset's significance (e.g. An ecological community rated as 'vulnerable' or 'endangered'; species listed in EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora and Fauna).
- > Project activities and practices must have a sound technical basis.
- > There must be adequate technical expertise to support the project and the project must be feasible, with a strong probability of success.
- > Projects must be value for money.

Sustainable agriculture stream:

Background:

Sustainable agriculture is the efficient production of safe, high-quality agricultural products using farming techniques that protect or improve the natural environment, social and economic conditions of farmers, their employees and local communities and safeguard the health and welfare of all farmed species.

Read more about sustainable farming practices here: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/news-and-resources/resources/for-landowners>

Criteria:

- > Projects in this stream should facilitate the uptake of sustainable agriculture practices by Landcare and community groups and can be related to agricultural production, including cropping, livestock, dairy, horticulture, mixed farming, pastoral, agroforestry (farm forestry) aquaculture and fisheries.
- > The activities being undertaken in the project must be directly related to improving one of three assets: soil quality, water quality / availability, or native vegetation.
- > The farming practices or technology must have a sound technical basis.
- > There must be adequate technical expertise to support the project and the project must be feasible, with a strong probability of success.
- > Projects must be value for money.

Assessment

When assessing each application, Landcare Australia will consider the environmental asset(s) that will benefit from the proposed project, and why it is valuable.

Assessment and ranking will occur based on the following questions:

1. What 'asset' is the group trying to protect, preserve or sustain?

(Note: in the sustainable agriculture stream, groups will be asked to identify which of the following assets their project will improve: soil, water quality / availability or native vegetation).

2. How significant is the asset under consideration (in the sense of being valuable or important)?

- Exceptional
- Very high
- High

3. Is it possible to define "SMART" goals² for the asset?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

4. Is there evidence to indicate that management actions can make a real difference, sufficient to achieve a worthwhile "SMART" goal for the asset? (E.g. will it be technically possible to repair existing degradation, or prevent future degradation?)

² SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely

Expressed as a confidence level:

- High
- Medium
- Low

5. If the project requires change by other institutions (E.g. landholders) is there a good chance that this will occur?

Expressed as a confidence level:

- High
- Medium
- Low

6. Is the project value for money? (E.g. do the outcomes and scope of the project align with the project budget?)

Expressed as a confidence level:

- High
- Medium
- Low

Landcare Australia is committed to ensuring that the assessment process for the selection of projects is fair and transparent.

The following assessment process will be undertaken for the *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016*:

- > Stage 1: Eligibility check. Applications that are incomplete or that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be deemed unsuccessful.
- > Stage 2: Initial assessments conducted by internal Grants Team. Applications will be marked against the criteria set out in this document.
- > Stage 3: Shortlist provided to the Landcare Australia Grants Steering Committee for review.
- > Stage 4: Successful and unsuccessful applicants notified by email.

The Landcare Australia Grants Steering Committee consists of:

- > Two members of the [Landcare Australia Strategy Forum](#), an external body of acknowledged thought leaders and champions of the environment and/or sustainable land use, who provide expert input on future directions in education, engagement, fundraising and science.
- > Three members of Landcare Australia's management team

Landcare Australia will endeavour ensure that the geographical spread of grant recipients across states and territories is equitable. Preference will be given to groups that have not received funding from Landcare Australia in the last two years.

Conditions of receiving a grant

All funding for the *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016* will be administered by Landcare Australia.

Successful applicants must:

- > Conduct the project according to the activities and budget for which the funding was approved and received.
- > Provide a progress report and photographs of the project within six months of receiving funds.
- > Provide a final report on outcomes of the project, including how funds were spent, within 12 months of receiving funds.
- > Permit Landcare Australia and partners to use project report and photos for promotional purposes.

How to apply

Groups can apply for the *Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016* on the Landcare Australia Communities Portal. To submit an application:

1. Login or register as a user on the [Landcare Australia Communities Portal](#).
2. Click on '**Landcare Australia Special Projects Grants 2016**'.
3. Click on '**Create an application for this grant**'.
4. If you wish to leave a partially completed application, press '**Save**' and log out. You can log back in and continue to edit your application form until you are ready to submit.
5. To submit your application, select the '**Is application complete?**' checkbox and press '**Save**'.
6. You will receive a confirmation email when your application has been successfully submitted.

For questions about online submissions, please refer to the FAQs tab on the Landcare Australia Communities Portal or email help@landcareaustralia.com.au .

Successful applications

A Letter of Offer which outlines the conditions of the grant will be emailed to successful groups.

Groups are required to respond to the email within 5 business days confirming that they understand and accept the grant conditions, and then log on to the [Landcare Australia Communities Portal](#) to provide banking details.