



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

The Australian Government's Wild Otways Initiative

Community Environment Grants Program Round 2 - Funding Guidelines (2021-2023)

Round 2 - Applications close 12 November 2021

This project received funding from the Australian Government





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Community Environmental Grants Program

1. What is the Community Environment Grants Program?

The Australian Government is providing funding through its *Wild Otways Initiative* (the initiative) to support community groups, local governments and Traditional Owners to undertake on-ground environmental works projects that will protect and restore native plants, wildlife and coastal environments in the Otways region, between Bells Beach and Peterborough, and the Otways hinterlands.

2. What type of works will be funded?

The Australian Government's *Wild Otways Initiative* Community Environment Grants Program (Grants Program) will fund projects that demonstrate environmental outcomes through the delivery of the following on-ground works:

- Indigenous revegetation and supporting activities (plant propagation and fencing where directly related to and proportional to the benefits of revegetation activities);
- Weed and pest animal control (except those activities outlined in 'What will not be funded' section below)
- Fencing and access track construction or improvement works that protect or manage environmental values; and
- Other habitat improvement works.

3. How much funding is available?

A total of \$1 million is available over the life of the program, with individual grants of between **\$3,000 to \$20,000 per year (excluding GST) for up to 18 months duration** available to eligible groups.

4. When do applications close?

Applications close on 12 November 2021.



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Project Grant Requirements

5. Who can apply?

Grants are open to all community-based groups, Local Government Authorities and Traditional Owners located within the Program Area (see Figure 1) who can demonstrate how they will deliver on-ground environmental improvement works that protect and restore native plants, wildlife and coastal environments.

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. Committees of Management, both incorporated or unincorporated, under Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 are covered by DELWP and do not require additional public liability insurance.
- Have a Covid-safe plan that adheres to the guidance of the Chief Health Officer (www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/).

Groups that do not meet the above requirements can still apply for funding but must operate under the auspices of an organisation that meets these requirements (see 'Do we need an auspice' section in Appendix 1).

6. How many funding rounds will there be?

This will depend on the number of grants awarded in the first funding round. If the total \$1 million in funding is allocated in the first round, there will be no future funding rounds. If there are funds remaining after this first round, additional funding rounds will be undertaken until all funds are committed or the balance remaining does not warrant the expense of a further round.

To ensure consideration of your project, groups are strongly encouraged to apply in this first round.

7. What will be funded?

The Grants Program will fund projects **from \$3,000 to \$20,000 (excluding GST) per year for up to 18 months duration (December 2021 – June 2023)**. All proposals should contain sufficient detail to allow them to be assessed and the detail is to be commensurate with the level of funding requested.

Projects must:

- a) Be delivered within the geographic area shown in Figure 1 below, which stretches from Bells Beach to Peterborough and includes the Otways hinterland.
- b) Deliver activities that will protect and restore native plants and vegetation communities, native wildlife and coastal environments including **on-ground works** listed under section 2 'What type of works will be funded'. Please note that conditions apply to some works – see 'What will not be funded' below.



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Please note:

- More than one project grant application can be submitted by an applicant (e.g. group/network).
- Your budget and value for money will be considered in the assessment process. You 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.
- Project proposals that can demonstrate greater project outcomes through in-kind contributions or investment have a higher likelihood of attracting funding.

Projects must meet the following conditions:

- **Project management** costs are not to exceed 10% of the total Community Environment Grants Program funding requested.
- Subject to the limitations in section 8 below, you will need to demonstrate a clear need and community benefit for any capital items included in your budget. Capital items will need to become a registered asset of the applicant group or auspisor.
- 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 15 June 2023.

Examples of projects/activities that will be funded include, but are not limited to:

- Fencing to remove stock and protect remnant native vegetation, including threatened vegetation communities and flora species and/or sites that may be habitat for fauna, especially threatened fauna.
- Weed control to improve patches of remnant vegetation, improve habitat for fauna or increase native vegetation diversity.
- Rabbit warren destruction to reduce the impact of rabbits, especially for revegetation projects. (See section 8 'What will not be funded' for other pest animal control activities that will not be supported)
- Woody weed control and revegetation with local indigenous vegetation of a site, especially those that connect or link to remnant vegetation. Note, there is no minimum size threshold for sites but connectivity of the site to other native vegetation sites or threatened species records is encouraged.
- Revegetation/supplementary planting using suitable indigenous plant species to increase flora diversity within remnant vegetation or past revegetation project areas.
- Track construction to prevent weed or disease spread or human impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.
- Projects that protect or improve sites containing Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Appendix 1 includes a range of Fact Sheets and Guidelines for on ground works, including Aboriginal Cultural Heritage requirements for all on-ground projects.



8. What will not be funded?

The following activities will not be funded:

- a) Amenity and beautification projects without demonstrable benefits for native plants, wildlife or coastal environments.
- b) Pest animal control methods including shooting, poisoning, trapping, explosive or fumigation will not be supported. This includes engaging a contractor to undertake these activities.
- c) Boundary fencing for the primary purpose of stock management.
- d) Barbed wire fencing.
- e) Revegetation with non-indigenous plant species (note: all plants should be locally sourced and chosen on the basis of the diversity and structure of the vegetation type (Ecological Vegetation Class) predicted for the site, local environmental conditions, ease of propagation, and the size of the area to be planted).
- f) Vegetation corridor 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).
- g) Purchase of capital items with a total cost over \$2,000 for projects requesting up to \$20,000 per year in funding.
- h) Project management or administration costs that collectively total more than 10% of total funding requested.
- i) Purchase of computers, laptops and smartphones.
- j) Purchase of goods for competitions, prizes, giveaways, vouchers or alcohol.
- k) Any other action or activity determined by the Grant Assessment Panel through the assessment process to be inconsistent with the Grants Program Objectives.

9. Project location and mapping

Projects can be on private or public land within the Community Environment Grants Program Area (see Figure 1 below). Written consent from Public Land Managers must be provided in your application.

Applicants will need to provide a map of the location(s) of the on-ground component of their project and attach the map to their application as a pdf.

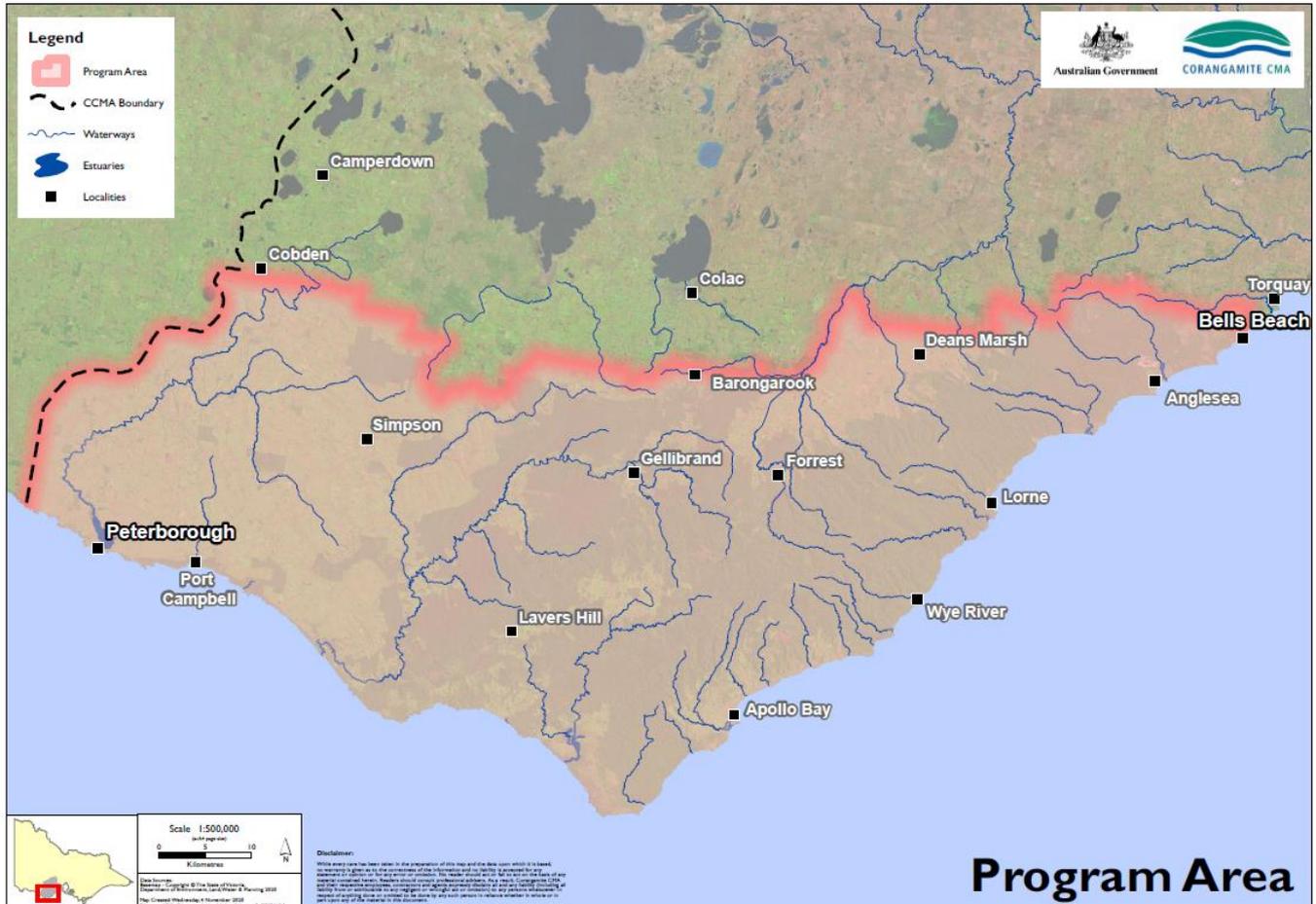


Figure 1: Australian Government's Wild Otways Initiative Community Environment Grants Program Area

10. In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions are not a mandatory requirement as part of a grant application, although contributions of time/services or funding will be considered favourably when applications are assessed against the assessment criteria (refer to Appendix 2). In-kind contributions may include:

- a) Volunteer time dedicated to the project, which is to be costed at \$30 per hour per person (including project planning, organising and delivery).
- b) In-kind support e.g. photocopying, loan of equipment (at no cost), donation of materials.
- c) Funding from other sources e.g. donations, philanthropic grants program.



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11. Project assessment

Project grant applications will be assessed by a Corangamite CMA Grant Assessment Panel. This Panel will consider the contribution a project makes in terms of:

- a) Environmental outcomes, including the protection and restoration of native plants, wildlife and coastal environments
- b) Community participation and community benefit
- c) Project design and applicant capacity to deliver
- d) Budget and value for money (including in-kind contributions).

More details are provided in Appendix 2.

12. How do I apply?

Applications are to be submitted through www.ccma.vic.gov.au [direct link to be inserted before going live]

13. Questions

For any queries and to discuss your application please contact:

Anthony Byrne

Project Officer, Corangamite CMA

Ph: (03) 5232 9100 M: 0407 885 143

Email: ccmagrants@ccma.vic.gov.au



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Appendix 1: Useful information and resources

1. Threatened species Recovery Plans and Conservation Advices

Projects must align with Threatened species Recovery Plans or Conservation Advices where relevant. These can be accessed for the Corangamite CMA region at: <https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/conservationadvice.pl>

2. Regional Catchment Strategy

The Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy <https://ccma.vic.gov.au/what-we-do/regional-catchment-strategy/> identifies regional environmental assets and sets out regional objectives and priorities for their protection and improvement.

3. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage **MUST** be prioritised when planning on-ground projects.

It is a legal obligation in Victoria that all Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Aboriginal Intangible Heritage (traditional practices and knowledge), including Aboriginal sites, places and objects, are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. It is the responsibility of us, as the carers for the land, to respect, understand, and protect our Aboriginal Heritage.

To determine if your planned project is within an identified area of Cultural Heritage sensitivity, you will need to look at the *online map tool*, which can be found on the *Aboriginal Victoria (AV) website*. Please note the AV website does not always provide a definitive answer so care needs to be taken at all times.

Aboriginal Victoria → Heritage → Heritage tools and publications → Heritage tools → Online map tool

Please note: Areas of Cultural Heritage sensitivity are shaded in green

Please be aware – 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 your on-ground works, you must STOP IMMEDIATELY and contact Aboriginal Victoria on 1800 762 003.

If your proposed project site is within an area of Cultural Heritage sensitivity, don't panic, there is an easy-to-follow process to ensure that your project is planned and delivered in the most efficient and effective way possible.



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To maintain accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, please demonstrate one of the following steps:

- If your project is on public land, contact the land manager (e.g. Council, Parks Victoria, etc). The land manager is responsible for ensuring the project complies with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
- Consult with the appropriate Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) (link to state-wide RAPs provided below).
- Contact the Aboriginal Heritage Operations Team at Aboriginal Victoria on 1800 762 003 or Aboriginal.heritage@dpc.vic.gov.au for further assistance.

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. **Please contact the CCMA Project Officer on the details provided to discuss your project application.**

Any further questions regarding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, please contact Aboriginal Victoria on 1800 762 003 or Aboriginal.heritage@dpc.vic.gov.au.

All applicants are encouraged to engage the appropriate Traditional Owner group and/or Victorian Aboriginal community, in either planning or delivering the proposed project. If you require further assistance to identify the appropriate person, please contact your Regional Landcare Coordinator.

Useful links:

To find out if your planned project falls within an area of Cultural Heritage sensitivity please click on the following link:

<https://applications.vic.gov.au/apps/achris/public/publicMap>

For information on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage places, objects and processes, please click the following link:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-publications.html>

For information on Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), including a State-wide map of RAPs, please click the following link:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/registered-aboriginal-parties.html>

For information on Cultural Heritage Permits, processes, and the application form, please click the following link:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/planning-and-heritage-management-processes/cultural-heritage-permit-process.html>



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4. Fact Sheets and Guidelines for on-ground works

A range of Fact Sheets and Guidelines relating to standards for fencing, revegetation, supplementary planting and off-stream watering, as well as guidelines on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Crown Land Water Frontage, rabbits and weeds can be found at:

<https://ccma.vic.gov.au/what-we-do/waterway-management/waterway-protection/info-for-landholders/>

5. Occupational Health and Safety

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

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

- Victorian Landcare Gateway: www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/health-and-safety/
- Victorian Workcover Authority website: www.vwa.vic.gov.au

6. Landowner consent

Public land - you will need to provide written evidence of Public Land Manager consent/support in your application.

Private land - you need to list landowner details (name and 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 provide evidence of private landowner's consent for on-ground works to take place.

7. Childsafe Standards

New Child Safe Standards came into effect in Victoria from 1 January 2017. 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 are required to meet the Child Safe Standards from the beginning of 2017. 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/>



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8. 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 in writing from the auspice organisation before applying for a grant, and present that approval with their application, 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 government authorities.
- State government agencies, e.g. Parks Victoria or Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning.
- Committees of Management, both incorporated or unincorporated, under Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 are covered by DELWP and do not require additional public liability insurance.
- Other 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.

9. 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**.



Appendix 2: How will applications be assessed?

Eligible project grant applications will be assessed by the Corangamite CMA Grant Assessment Panel against the criteria described below.

1. Assessment criteria

Table 1. Assessment Criteria Wild Otways Initiative Community Environment Grants Program

Criteria	Value	Description
Environmental outcomes	40%	The extent to which the project contributes to protection and restoration of environmental values through on-ground works
Community participation and benefit	15%	How is community participation built into the project? What benefits to the community will the project provide?
Project design and applicant capacity	15%	Capacity of applicant to plan and deliver the project. Priority will be given to eligible projects that are well-planned and achievable within the project timeframe. The track record of the applicant group in delivery of projects including accurate and timely reporting, mapping of outputs and communication may be considered.
Budget	30%	The budget is sound in that it includes realistic costs and a clear justification for requested budget items. Co-contributions, including in-kind contributions, will also be considered as part of this criteria.

The above criteria and any risks related to the application will be considered in determining which applications provide the best value for money outcome and therefore which applications should be funded.

What happens after applications close?

2. Assessment process

The Corangamite CMA Grant Assessment Panel will assess your application based on the information received in your application and any clarification requested by the Panel.

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.



3. 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.

4. If your application is successful

If your group or organisation is successful then you will have four weeks after being notified 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.

5. Funding conditions

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

- a) Enter into a funding agreement with the CMA.
- b) Be responsible for meeting contractual obligations to deliver the project and submit project reports by **15 June 2023**.
- c) Adhere to all relevant legislation including Occupational Health and Safety requirements.
- d) Acknowledge the Corangamite CMA and Australian Government funding in publications and promotions.

6. Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will need to provide six monthly progress reports and a final report on completion of the project. The reporting template will be provided to successful applicants with the project Agreement. Upon request, successful applicants will also need to provide the Corangamite CMA with updates, photos and information about activities being delivered to support communications of the Initiative. The report will need to include:

- a) How you spent the grant
- b) What you achieved with the funding
- c) Data that you collected during the project. Note - data may be made publicly available
- d) What you learnt while completing the project
- e) How the project will support the group, network or partnership into the future.

