

Biodiversity On-ground Action - Community & Volunteer Action Grants

Frequently asked questions

What is Biodiversity On-ground Action?

Biodiversity On-ground Action is the name of the Victorian Government's current investment program targeting improvements to Victoria's biodiversity. It builds on the successful action funded through the one year Threatened Species Protection Initiative, and will focus on achieving benefits to Victoria, including:

- Protection and management of biodiversity resources, including threatened species and habitats to increase the resilience of species in the face of systemic issues such as climate change
- Increased public engagement in the protection of biodiversity
- Partnerships between agencies, organisations and the community to reduce threats to native flora and fauna
- Implementation of innovative and crowd sourced solutions to support biodiversity conservation and engagement.

The new Biodiversity On-ground Action program runs over four years and will more broadly support biodiversity conservation action as well as threatened species.

One of the components of the program is the provision of Community & Volunteer Action Grants.

How long will the Biodiversity On-ground Action program run for?

The program runs from 2016-2020. Opportunities to apply for grants to support conservation efforts will be provided over the four years of the program.

Is this a new program?

Biodiversity On-ground Action is a new initiative that builds on previous conservation-focused programs to conserve biodiversity. This new program has a strong focus on connecting community groups to scientific information to support conservation efforts. It also provides a more coordinated approach to monitoring the effectiveness of activities carried out to address threats to biodiversity.

The new program funds community projects which will support activities to conserve biodiversity, threatened species and protect habitat.

Which species does this program help?

The program targets conservation measures to improve outcomes for indigenous flora, fauna, threatened species and habitats native to Victoria.

Community & Volunteer Action Grants

Community & Volunteer Action Grants funding aims to support practical community efforts to deliver conservation projects on public and private land. Funding of up to \$1 million is available in grants in 2017.

Where can I get more information about the grants?

For further information about the Community and Volunteer Action grants or for a copy of the guidelines, visit www.environment.vic.gov.au/communityaction



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Or contact the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356.

When can I apply for the grants?

Community & Volunteer Action Grants 2017 on-line submissions will close at midnight on Wednesday 10 May 2017.

Can I submit an application outside of the listed dates?

No, the on-line SmartyGrants system used to submit applications cannot accept late applications.

Can I write my application and post it in?

All applications must be submitted through the on-line SmartyGrants webpage. There are no hard copy options available to submit an application.

Can we apply if we received funds in previous grant programs?

Yes, applicants may apply if they meet the eligibility criteria for the grants.

Project actions must be new work and not projects or parts of projects that are already funded. However, new projects can expand upon previously funded work.

How do I get approval to work on Parks or DELWP public land?

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning managed land - seek advice and approval from the Program Manager, Public Land Administration in your region (call 136 186 to be directed to the relevant regional Public Land Administration staff).
- Parks Victoria managed land - Parks Victoria managed land - seek advice and approval from regional Parks Victoria staff. All applications require Parks Victoria approval. If you are unsure of the most appropriate Parks Victoria regional contact, email Leesa Riley, Statewide Volunteer Coordinator (leesa.riley@parks.vic.gov.au). While waiting for Parks Victoria approval a group can develop their application.
- Parks Victoria can also sponsor an application. The group will need to ensure that Parks Victoria staff have given approval and are nominated on the application form as the auspisor.

What types of project activities are being funded? (examples only)

- Local habitat protection and restoration projects by community groups (such as planting of indigenous flora and fencing to protect habitat from trampling by stock and people, and protection from predators).
- Volunteer and community activities such as participation and training in bird counts and monitoring of indigenous plant and animal populations for conservation and threatened species recovery programs.
- Along with on-ground activities, complementary activities that engage the community in understanding more about conservation needs and management for local biodiversity (indigenous flora and fauna) are also supported.

Who will deliver the projects funded through Community & Volunteer Action Grants?

Community and Volunteer Action Grants will be delivered by volunteer and community-based groups, and not-for-profit conservation based groups.

What is incorporation?

Incorporation recognises a community group as a legal entity separate from its members. This provides some cover against a group's debts and liabilities for individuals operating as office bearers.

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A community group can be incorporated through:

- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012
- Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006
- Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

Groups can also be covered as a member group of an incorporated association such as through the Farm Tree and Landcare Association.

Why would I need an auspicer (sponsor)?

If a local community group does not meet the eligibility requirements for the Community & Volunteer Action Grants, it will require an auspicating organisation to “sponsor” and manage the project. The auspicer will sign the contract, receive payment and be responsible for reporting and acquittal of the project.

To apply, a group/organisation must:

- Hold insurances to cover participant involvement including \$10 million public liability and personal accident insurance. Cover through the Farm Tree and Landcare Association (FTLA) or through DELWP for Committees of Management arrangements is also acceptable.

AND

- Be incorporated (either directly or as a member group of an incorporated association such as through the Farm Tree and Landcare Association) or through DELWP for Committees of Management,

OR

- Provide an auspicating organisation that is incorporated and holds the above insurances to enter into a contract with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to oversee the project for the sponsored group.

Who can be an auspicer?

The following organisations can act as an auspicer (to support community group projects)

- Catchment Management Authorities
- Water authorities
- Umbrella not for profit associations and community networks
- Local Government
- Parks Victoria

What is the role of an auspicer?

An auspicer must agree to be accountable for the project on behalf of a local, volunteer or community group. This includes agreeing to and signing the funding agreement, receiving payment for project work and meeting reporting and project delivery requirements. The auspicer takes on the legal responsibility for volunteers working with them, including day to day support and health and safety.

An auspicer must be able to cover all participants in the project including volunteers through Personal Accident insurance and have at least \$10 million (ten million) in Public Liability insurance.

Are there ineligible and eligible areas of Victoria?

This is a statewide Victorian Government program.

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Community groups will need to target a local Victorian site to undertake action that is providing conservation outcomes and demonstrate its value against a local or regional strategy or plan.

Project sites can be on either public or private land. However sites cannot be 'vegetation offsets' or be for work that is already funded under another program.

Refer to the Community & Volunteer Action Grants Guidelines for further information.

How do I create a map of project sites to attach to my application

There are two ways to create maps:

- Download Google Earth and follow the instructions to create a map
- Using the Biodiversity Interactive Map (BIM) tool. For guidance on how to generate a map using BIM refer to: www.environment.vic.gov.au/communityaction Please contact David Adams from DELWP on 03 9637 9800 or via email at david.adams@delwp.vic.gov.au for further advice on how to use the tool.

I'm having trouble with SmartyGrants - where do I go for help?

<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

SmartyGrants IT support E-mail: service@smartygrants.com.au

Phone: Australia +61 3 9320 6888

The support desk operates 9:00am - 5:00pm AEST, Mon - Fri.

Do I need to have an ABN?

A group should provide its ABN if it has one. If a group does not have an ABN, then an Australian Tax Office form (Statement by a supplier) will be provided to you to complete if your application is successful.

What is the contract that I will be required to sign if I am successful?

DELWP is using the Victorian Common Funding Agreement with grant recipients. Details of the funding agreement can be found at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/not-for-profit-organisations/common-funding-agreement>

Why is the grant GST free?

The grant is not a taxable supply which makes it GST free. The maximum amount available for a project is \$50,000 regardless of whether or not the recipient organisation is registered for GST.

For example, a group registered for GST and a group not registered for GST both applying for a \$45,000 grant will receive \$45,000 - the same amount regardless of their GST status. A group registered for GST cannot charge the department GST on top of the grant payment.

Do I include GST in the budget when costing my project?

A group will need to work out the costs of the project that need to be funded by the grant (to a maximum of \$50,000). This may include taxable supply items which include a GST charge such as nursery plants and materials. In the budget include each item and its cost (including GST) for which you are requesting grant funding. Provide a reason why the item is needed to complete the project. If you are successful, the total amount you have asked for in your budget will be what you receive.



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What counts as 'Capital items & Equipment' in the budget I need to prepare for the Community & Volunteer Action Grants submission?

Capital items & Equipment are those that have a usable lifespan beyond one year and therefore would need to be maintained on an asset register by an organisation to be depreciated over several accounting periods. This includes items such as for example tree planters and photographic, video and motion sensor cameras.

All capital items or equipment will need to become a registered asset with your organisation or an auspisor.

Please ensure that where possible, assets are hired or borrowed and shared between groups rather than purchased for one-off projects.

What sort of information should I include in the application regarding the budget?

You should include all of the costs that you need covered by the grant that are eligible to be considered and justification of its use in your project.

Please refer to the following page for an example application budget:

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Below is an example application budget:

Budget item (select from dropdown list)	Item description	Purpose and justification of item	Grants funds requested (\$)
Capital items & Equipment	Back pack spray units x 3	Spot spraying of selected weeds for regular control by volunteers	\$270
Hire	Direct seeding machine hire	To direct seed larger area to revegetate for habitat	\$500
Materials	Herbicide	Initial knock down and follow up spraying of blackberry infestations choking site	\$350
Materials	Fencing materials, bollards and wire	Barrier against stock and people impacting site	\$300
Materials	500 tube stock	Planting natives species (not suitable for direct seeding) to revegetate for habitat	\$500
Project management	Project coordination, site management	Staff costs for coordination of activities, to increase community participation and ensure appropriate standard of work delivered	\$550
Contractors	Weed spraying	Selective weed spraying in steep terrain not suitable for volunteers	\$1,500
Contractors	5x Site assessments and monitoring and report	External ecologist to complete site assessment with volunteers and provide report to community to enable group to prioritise management actions for species X	\$1,500
Educational signage	Design, print and install 3x2m sign	Educational site signage to prevent trampling of nest sites	\$600
Hire	Hire of hall for community event	To present results of citizen-science research to community members	\$100
Total:			\$6,170

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