

BushBank public land native vegetation restoration grants

Frequently asked questions

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| USING GRANTS ONLINE TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION | 3 |
| REGISTRATION AND STARTING A NEW APPLICATION | 3 |
| ACCESSING EXISTING DRAFTS AND SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS..... | 3 |
| SITE NAVIGATION..... | 3 |
| FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS..... | 3 |
| WHO CAN APPLY? | 3 |
| CAN I SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION? | 3 |
| HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE? | 3 |
| WILL I BE REQUIRED TO MATCH FUNDING? | 3 |
| WHAT IS THE VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION RATE? | 3 |
| HOW LONG DO SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS HAVE TO COMPLETE THEIR PROJECT?..... | 3 |
| DOES MY ORGANISATION NEED TO HAVE AN ABN? | 3 |
| DOES MY ORGANISATION NEED TO BE REGISTERED FOR GST? | 4 |
| DO I INCLUDE GST IN THE BUDGET WHEN COSTING THE PROJECT? | 4 |
| DOES THE GRANT PAYMENT INCLUDE GST?..... | 4 |
| DOES MY PROJECT HAVE TO BE ON PUBLIC LAND? | 4 |
| DO I NEED LANDOWNER CONSENT IF I AM NOT THE LAND MANAGER OR LANDOWNER? | 4 |
| WHAT IS THE MINIMUM EXTENT OF LAND THE PROJECT MUST RESTORE? | 4 |
| WHAT IS CONSIDERED RESTORATION? | 4 |
| WHAT IS THE PLANTING STANDARD REQUIRED? | 4 |
| CAN WEED AND PEST CONTROL BE CONSIDERED IN MY APPLICATION? | 5 |
| HOW DO I DETERMINE IF THE SITE IS SUBJECT TO FREQUENT FUEL MANAGEMENT OR POSES UNACCEPTABLE INCREASED BUSHFIRE RISK TO COMMUNITIES? | 5 |
| WHAT IF MY PROJECT DOESN'T MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?..... | 5 |
| CAN MY PROJECT GENERATE CARBON CREDITS?..... | 5 |
| WILL MY PROJECT BE IMPACTED BY WATER AVAILABILITY ACROSS THE CATCHMENT AREA?..... | 5 |
| DO I NEED TO ENGAGE WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS? | 5 |
| HOW DO I ENGAGE WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS?..... | 6 |
| WHERE DO I FIND OUT WHICH TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUPS I SHOULD BE ENGAGING WITH? | 6 |

WHAT IS THE PROJECT PLAN AND NATIVE VEGETATION RESTORATION PLAN? 6

WHAT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION DO I SUBMIT? 6

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULT OF MY APPLICATION? 7

WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION? 7

WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GRANT?..... 7

HOW DO I MAKE A SHAPEFILE AND A PDF VERSION OF MY MAP? 7

HOW DO I PREPARE A CARBON SEQUESTRATION REPORT USING LOOC-C CARBON ABATEMENT CALCULATOR? 7



USING GRANTS ONLINE TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

REGISTRATION AND STARTING A NEW APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted using Grants Online <https://deeca.my.site.com/publicform?id=a0hRF0000003CPd>. You will need to register to submit your application and you can save your application as your go.

ACCESSING EXISTING DRAFTS AND SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

To access a saved application, return to <https://deeca.my.site.com/>. All your commenced applications are listed here, including your previously submitted applications.

SITE NAVIGATION

The side navigation bar helps you quickly navigate to the page you have worked on. The navigation bar colour changes from grey to green once the page is completed. You can jump to any page that is green.

When you click on Save as Draft button, your application form is saved.

When you click on View as PDF button, you can view the entire application form.

When you click on Next Page button, the previous page content is saved automatically.

If you require technical assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO CAN APPLY?

Public and incorporated entities can apply. For the purposes of this grant, a public entity includes Victorian Government departments, a Victorian Government agency, a public entity, a statutory authority or a municipal council. Private individuals cannot apply. If you are unsure of your eligibility, contact BushBank on bushbank.program@delwp.vic.gov.au.

CAN I SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION?

Yes, you can submit multiple applications for different projects. Where possible, projects should be aggregated into a single application.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The total funding available for this grant offer is \$5 million over five years, to be allocated across successful projects. There is no specified funding limit for individual projects. The funds allocated and number of projects funded will depend on the outcome of the assessment and approval process.

WILL I BE REQUIRED TO MATCH FUNDING?

Applicants able to demonstrate financial and in-kind contributions will score more highly. A minimum of matched funding at a ratio of 1:1 (financial and/or in-kind) is preferred. Financial contributions from other State Government funding will not be counted towards the matched funding amount.

Activities that are already funded by another fund source will not be funded. Your project can build on the success of past or existing projects, but the grant must fund additional activities that would not occur without this funding. Evidence of other funding sources must be provided as a supporting document, if applicable.

WHAT IS THE VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION RATE?

Volunteer hours are calculated at \$40/hour, per volunteer. This is based on an average rate that was calculated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2010, which we have corrected for inflation.

HOW LONG DO SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS HAVE TO COMPLETE THEIR PROJECT?

Projects can commence in 2023/24 or 2024/25 and be delivered over a maximum of five years.

DOES MY ORGANISATION NEED TO HAVE AN ABN?

Successful applicants without an ABN will need to provide a completed Australian Taxation Office form 'Statement by a Supplier' so that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

DOES MY ORGANISATION NEED TO BE REGISTERED FOR GST?

Applicants do not need to be registered for GST.

DO I INCLUDE GST IN THE BUDGET WHEN COSTING THE PROJECT?

When developing budgets, you should ensure that activity costs (such as materials and contractor charges) are fully costed, including GST.

DOES THE GRANT PAYMENT INCLUDE GST?

If you are a non-government organization with an ABN and are registered for GST, your grant payment will be taxable and GST will be added to the total amount of funding you have requested/has been approved (e.g., total amount requested is \$100,000, your GST registered organisation will receive a total amount of \$110,000).

If you are a non-government organization and are not registered for GST, your grant payment will not be taxable, so will not include GST (e.g., total amount requested is \$100,000, you are not GST registered, organisation will receive a total amount of \$100,000).

Grants provided to a Government Related Entity (e.g., Commonwealth, Universities, State Government, Public Entities etc.) will follow section 9-17 (3) of the GST Act and GST will not be paid on the transaction (e.g., total amount requested is \$100,000, organisation will receive a total amount of \$100,000).

DOES MY PROJECT HAVE TO BE ON PUBLIC LAND?

Projects must be delivered on public land, which includes Crown land and freehold land freehold land in public ownership, including freehold land owned by the Victorian Government, a Victorian Government agency, a public entity, a statutory authority, or a municipal council.

DO I NEED LANDOWNER CONSENT IF I AM NOT THE LAND MANAGER OR LANDOWNER?

At the application stage, a letter of in principle support is needed if the applicant is not the land manager. If the application is successful, then a formal letter of consent is required from the relevant land manager/s.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM EXTENT OF LAND THE PROJECT MUST RESTORE?

The minimum extent of restoration for a single project is 20 hectares.

The 20 hectares may comprise multiple restoration patches and a combination of assisted regeneration, supplementary planting and/or revegetation provided:

- any isolated restoration patch not connected to another patch of existing native vegetation has a minimum extent of 5 hectares
- any connected restoration patch (i.e., abutting existing native vegetation) has a minimum extent of 1 hectare and the combined extent of the restoration patch plus existing native vegetation patch is at least 5 hectares
- any patch to be restored through revegetation has an area to perimeter ratio of at least 20, or when adjacent to existing native vegetation the combined area has an area to perimeter ratio of at least 20. The area to perimeter ratio is calculated by dividing the area (metres squared) by the perimeter (metres).

WHAT IS CONSIDERED RESTORATION?

Restoration includes:

- **Revegetation**, through planting or direct seeding of land containing no native vegetation (including planting around scattered paddock trees)
- **Supplementary planting** in gaps where there is no or limited chance of natural regeneration within areas of degraded native vegetation
- **Assisted regeneration** where areas are actively managed to facilitate regeneration including through stock exclusion, herbivory control, and pest and weed management, but with no or very limited planned planting.

WHAT IS THE PLANTING STANDARD REQUIRED?

Plantings must include the planting of missing woody plants to provide the greatest carbon outcomes.

Plantings must restore ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) that can achieve 'forest cover' – having 20 per cent crown cover at a tree height of at least two metres across an area of at least 0.2 hectares (as defined by the Emissions Reduction Fund). This may be achieved by:

- establishing and maintaining native vegetation by planting trees, shrubs and other plants to achieve forest cover on cleared or degraded land that is not at forest cover and will not otherwise naturally regenerate
- increasing canopy cover on degraded land that meets the criteria for forest cover but is significantly lacking woody structure and diversity according to the relevant EVC.

Planting must accord with the minimum standard for revegetation and supplementary planting detailed at [Appendix 1 Native vegetation gain scoring manual v2](#) and [Management Standards for Native Vegetation Offset Sites](#).

Planting should consider the inclusion of future climate provenances as per the [Revegetation plant provenance information sheet](#).

Planting must align with the appropriate bioregional EVC benchmarks and follow the species diversity and density requirements as specified in the gain scoring manual and management standards for at least the Canopy Trees, Understorey Trees, Large Shrubs and Medium Shrubs. Small Shrubs and Large Tufted Graminoids should be planted where there is a high chance of survival.

CAN WEED AND PEST CONTROL BE CONSIDERED IN MY APPLICATION?

Projects that only propose weed control or pest control will not be considered. However, weed and pest control can be included in combination with other actions to restore woody native vegetation.

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF THE SITE IS SUBJECT TO FREQUENT FUEL MANAGEMENT OR POSES UNACCEPTABLE INCREASED BUSHFIRE RISK TO COMMUNITIES?

The fire management zone (where relevant) will indicate the frequency of fuel management and the risk to communities. The proximity to communities will also indicate risk. Strategies and plans may provide information about fire mitigation activities and bushfire risk to communities. You should consider all available information to inform the risk and whether risks can be mitigated. DEECA will determine if the project poses an **unacceptable** risk of bushfire to communities.

WHAT IF MY PROJECT DOESN'T MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?

If you have a project that delivers good biodiversity and carbon capture outcomes but does not meet one or more of these eligibility criteria, contact the BushBank team at bushbank.program@delwp.vic.gov.au to discuss your project suitability. Some flexibility may be possible when projects support cultural values, provide blue or teal carbon outcomes, or deliver innovations.

CAN MY PROJECT GENERATE CARBON CREDITS?

Yes, provided the requirements of the grant can be met. Requested financial support must be proportionate to the amount of carbon credits generated and this must be detailed in the application.

Crown land can only be used to generate carbon credits when all the following can be met:

- there is an existing mechanism to enable ownership of carbon credits
- the requirements of the relevant Crown land act can be met
- the Crown land manager will retain the carbon rights for their own use.

Where third parties wish to access the carbon right on Crown land, a third-party Carbon Sequestration Agreement under the *Climate Change Act 2017* must be established with the Secretary to DEECA. This is a separate process, and such projects will not be considered in this grant offer.

WILL MY PROJECT BE IMPACTED BY WATER AVAILABILITY ACROSS THE CATCHMENT AREA?

To reduce negative impacts and enhance co-benefits, applicants should:

- avoid larger revegetation works (i.e., where revegetation exceeds 10 per cent of the property) within the Gippsland Plantation Investment Program and within declared irrigation districts
- consider the impact on water availability across different catchment areas when 10 per cent of the property will be revegetated (if required, spatial information is available from BushBank to assist, email bushbank.program@delwp.vic.gov.au).

DO I NEED TO ENGAGE WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS?

Traditional Owners must be engaged as early as possible in the project planning and development to allow meaningful partnerships to be developed. Formally recognised Traditional Owners (Registered Aboriginal Parties) and all other Traditional Owner group(s) with an interest in the project should be engaged.

HOW DO I ENGAGE WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS?

Before engaging with a Traditional Owner group, you should understand the Traditional Owner group's legal status, including whether there is a Recognition and Settlement Agreement under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* or if native title has been recognised under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). Recognition and Settlement Agreements and the corresponding sub-agreements (Natural Resource Agreements and Land Use Activity Agreements) provide Traditional Owners certain legal rights on Crown land. You are also strongly encouraged to read the relevant Country Plan and other relevant strategies before engaging with Traditional Owners.

DEECA can facilitate engagement with Traditional Owners or provide further advice as required.

WHERE DO I FIND OUT WHICH TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUPS I SHOULD BE ENGAGING WITH?

Formally Recognised Traditional Owners (Registered Aboriginal Parties) can be found on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS), available at <https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victorias-current-registered-aboriginal-parties>. To find details of non-formally recognised Traditional Owner groups in Victoria, visit the Commonwealth Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). Native Title Agreements and Recognition and Settlement Agreements can be found at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title>.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT PLAN AND NATIVE VEGETATION RESTORATION PLAN?

A project plan and a native vegetation restoration plan must be developed for all successful projects. This will be the first milestone and further funding will be dependent on plans being developed to DEECA's satisfaction.

Restoration and management activities must accord with the [Management Standards for Native Vegetation Offset Sites](#).

Templates for the project plan and native vegetation restoration plan will be supplied to successful applicants. Restoration plans will include at least:

- site preparation works required to ensure success
- planting specifications - direct seeding or tube stock; timing; species lists; planting densities and survival targets that accord with the DEECA gain scoring manual
- management actions required during the project period and beyond to maintain the vegetation
- monitoring and evaluation.

The grant recipient will be responsible for ensuring restored sites are well-managed and that restoration is successful. Restoration must be undertaken by, or supervised by, persons with suitable experience in those activities. As far as possible service providers should be locally based, and enterprises owned by First Peoples should be preferred. Registers of Aboriginal business can be found [here](#) (lists not exhaustive).

WHAT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION DO I SUBMIT?

Some supporting documentation is required for all projects, and others depend on the project particulars.

All projects:

- A shapefile accurately depicting the area of land to be restored, created in NatureKit, accessible at <https://maps2.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/Html5viewer/index.html?viewer=NatureKit>, ArcGIS or other spatial software. Restoration extent will inform project assessment and should be estimated conservatively if the restoration area has not yet been verified on the ground.
- Two PDF maps of the proposed work area showing:
 - the location, road names, the project area (i.e., the areas that will be restored through the project), and the type of restoration (see Attachment 1 for descriptions of restoration types), with recent aerial photography as the basemap.
 - the project area (as per map 1) with the SMP revegetation benefit layer and priority areas for revegetation layer shown underneath
- A LOOC-C report, prepared using the LOOC-C carbon abatement calculator at <https://looc-c.farm/>, showing the project areas and the estimated tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent sequestered per hectare per year (tCO₂-e per ha/year) under the environmental and mallee planting method.
- Completed excel extent, budget and risk spreadsheet.

If required/available

- Where the applicant is not the land manager or landowner, written consent to undertake the activity from the relevant public land manager or public entity landowner.
- Where an auspice is required, written consent to enter into an auspice arrangement from a relevant financial delegate or authority within the auspice organisation.
- Evidence of other funding sources, if applicable.
- A letter of support or partnership from the relevant Traditional Owners if support has been established.

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, such as Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG. The maximum file size for each file is 10MB. A maximum of 10 files can be attached, however multiple files can be compressed in a .zip folder.

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULT OF MY APPLICATION?

Applicants will be notified once the Minister has approved panel recommendations – estimated date is March 2024.

WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION?

If you require assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au.

WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GRANT?

If you have questions relating to the grant or the grant guidelines, please contact the BushBank team at bushbank.program@delwp.vic.gov.au

HOW DO I MAKE A SHAPEFILE AND A PDF VERSION OF MY MAP?

You can find instructions on how to use NatureKit at <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit/naturekit-tools>.

This video tutorial provides a visual instruction on preparing and exporting shapefiles in NatureKit. Please note, it is not specific to this grant and was made when NatureKit supported SMP version 3. SMP version 4 is the current version.

HOW DO I PREPARE A CARBON SEQUESTRATION REPORT USING LOOC-C CARBON ABATEMENT CALCULATOR?

Follow the step-by-step guide in the supporting document 'How to prepare a carbon report using LOOC-C'.

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