

H5 bird flu Wildlife Rehabilitator Preparedness Grant Program

Guidelines

What is the H5 bird flu Wildlife Preparedness Grant Program?

The H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) Wildlife Rehabilitator Preparedness Grant (WRPG) Program provides one-off upfront grants to support authorised wildlife shelter operators and authorised foster carers to improve preparedness and biosecurity capability in response to H5 bird flu.

Funding support will focus on ensuring authorised wildlife shelter operators and authorised foster carers have appropriate processes, equipment and supplies to implement biosecurity measures now to reduce the risk of H5 bird flu spread to animals in their care, and support compliance with required standards for isolation and risk mitigation.

Grant Program Summary

This is an upfront preparedness grant. If you are eligible and your proposed purchases or activities support H5 bird flu biosecurity readiness, isolation capability or mitigation of virus spread, your application will be approved subject to available funding.

Purpose	Upfront grants to help authorised wildlife shelter operators and authorised foster carers prepare for H5 bird flu by improving biosecurity readiness, isolation capability and mitigation of virus spread.
Funding available	Up to \$500 per eligible applicant.
Who can apply	Authorised wildlife shelter operators and authorised foster carers
What can be funded	Funding may be used for the following costs that directly improve and implement biosecurity measures, strengthen isolation capability, or mitigate the risk of virus spread. The purchase or activity must be consistent with current H5 bird flu advice and biosecurity guidance as set by Agriculture Victoria and the Department. This can include: ☐ Personal protective equipment, including protective clothing (coveralls or gown), protective washable footwear than can be cleaned such as gumboots or disposable shoe covers, disposable gloves, heavy duty rubber gloves may be required for handling some species, respiratory protection: P2 (N95) face masks and eye protection: goggles (preferred) or if available a face shield. ☐ Cleaning, sanitising and disinfectants and rubbish bags suitable for avian influenza biosecurity purposes ☐ Biosecurity supplies that support infection prevention and safe wildlife care. ☐ Other reasonable preparedness items approved by the department that align with the purpose of improving biosecurity readiness or risk mitigation of virus spread.

Assessment	The Department will check that the applicant is eligible and that the proposed purchases support H5 bird flu preparedness or biosecurity.
Payment	Upfront payment will be made after the grant is approved and the applicant accepts the grant offer, agrees to the funding terms, and provides required payment information.
Reporting	All receipts or tax invoices must be retained and supplied upon request. No further project reporting is required.
Closing date	Open until the allocated funding has been fully expended or until the closing date specified on the program webpage.

Grant Guidelines

How much is available?

Eligible applicants may apply for an upfront grant of up to \$500.

Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis until the total allocated funding has been fully expended. Depending on the uptake of the program a second funding round may be implemented.

Applications that meet the basic eligibility requirements will be considered for approval, subject to available funding.

Who can apply?

To be eligible for the H5 bird flu Wildlife Rehabilitator Preparedness Grant Program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- hold current authorisation as a wildlife shelter operator or foster carer under section 28A of the *Wildlife Act 1975*,
- be actively engaged in wildlife rehabilitation, including the care of injured, sick or orphaned wildlife, and maintain an up-to-date shelter record or equivalent record in accordance with authorisation conditions
- propose purchases or activities that support H5 bird flu preparedness, implementation of biosecurity measures, safe wildlife handling, animal separation/isolation capability, or mitigation of virus spread
- agree to the program terms and conditions, including acquittal through receipts and a short declaration.

Who cannot apply?

The following individuals cannot apply for funding:

- A person convicted of any offence under the *Wildlife Act 1975*, *Wildlife Regulations 2024*, *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* or similar interstate or federal legislation during the last 10 years
- Any person who does not hold a valid wildlife shelter operator or foster carer authorisation under section 28A of the *Wildlife Act 1975*
- Any person who is currently subject to investigation or is subject to a written direction or compliance notice from the Conservation Regulator within the Department

What can the grant be used for?

Funding may be used for the following costs that directly improve H5 bird flu preparedness, support implementation of biosecurity measures, strengthen isolation capability, or mitigate the risk of virus spread. The purchase or activity must be consistent with current [H5 bird flu advice](#) and biosecurity guidance as set by Agriculture Victoria and the Department. This can include:

- Personal protective equipment, including protective clothing (coveralls or gown), protective washable footwear than can be cleaned such as gumboots or disposable shoe covers, disposable gloves, heavy duty rubber gloves may be required for handling some species, respiratory protection: P2 (N95) face masks and eye protection: goggles (preferred) or if available a face shield.
- Cleaning, sanitising and disinfectants suitable for avian influenza biosecurity purposes
- Biosecurity supplies that support infection prevention and safe wildlife care.
- Other reasonable preparedness items approved by the department that align with the purpose of improving biosecurity readiness or risk mitigation of virus spread.

What will not be funded?

The following activities are not eligible under this funding:

- Major capital works or substantial facility upgrades.
- General wildlife rehabilitation equipment, including cages, crates, enclosures or consumables, where the item is not clearly linked to H5 bird flu preparedness, biosecurity, separation, isolation or mitigation of virus spread.
- General equipment, such as dishwashers, freezers, fridges, washing machines, portable air conditioners and heaters and sterilisation equipment.
- Payment of staff wages, volunteer allowances, or traineeships.
- Routine operating costs such as rent, utilities, insurance or council rates.
- Retrospective expenditure incurred before funding approval.

The Department may determine other items to be ineligible where they do not align with the purpose of the program and aim to prevent the spread of H5 bird flu in Victoria.

How will applications be assessed?

The Department will confirm that the applicant is eligible, the proposed purchases or activities support H5 bird flu preparedness, implementation of biosecurity measures, isolation capability or mitigation of virus spread, and that the funding request is at or below \$500 per application.

Applications that meet these requirements may be successful and approved, subject to available funding.

What are the funding conditions?

Funding will be provided in a single upfront payment.

Applicants will be notified via email after the eligibility assessment. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback.

Successful applicants must accept the grant offer, agree to the current Victorian Common Funding Agreement short form and any specific conditions of the H5 bird flu Wildlife Rehabilitator Preparedness Grant Program, and use the funding only for the purposes of H5 bird flu preparedness.

Applicants must provide accurate bank account details and any other payment information required by the Department before payment can be made.

Recipients must retain receipts or tax invoices for funded purchases. To acquit the grant, recipients may be required to provide copies of receipts or tax invoices and a short declaration confirming that the grant was spent for the approved preparedness purpose.

No detailed project reporting, milestone reporting or outcome reporting will be required.

If any information in the application or acquittal is found to be incomplete, false, misleading or contrary to the conditions of these guidelines, the grant may be repayable on demand and future grant applications may not be considered.

Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state legislations and regulations, including but not limited to:

- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*
- *The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic)*
- *Wildlife Regulations 2024*
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*
- *Guide to the Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006.*

All recipients are required to comply with their authorisation conditions and any relevant wildlife rehabilitation standards or guidance.

Tax implications

Applicants should consult with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant.

Successful applicants without an Australian Business Number will need to provide a completed ATO form Statement by a Supplier so that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support and promotional guidelines (available at <https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/grants>) will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Payments

The Department will make payment after the applicant accepts the grant offer, agrees to the Victorian Common Funding Agreement short form, and provides all required bank account and payment information.

Please check that all requested forms and declarations are completed to prevent payment delays.

Absolute discretion

The Department reserves the right to:

- amend these guidelines and application terms at any time.
- not approve any application or approve a lesser amount than that applied for.
- where funding remains available, the Department may approve additional applications from previously funded applicants where this supports the objectives of the program.

Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in deciding whether to approve a grant application or vary the amount approved:

- the submitted information does not adequately demonstrate that the proposed purchases or activities support H5 bird flu preparedness, biosecurity capability, isolation standards or mitigation of virus spread
- information in the application is found to be false, misleading, incomplete or contrary to the conditions of these guidelines
- adverse information has been provided by a regulator, or there are findings of guilt for an offence under any relevant legislation including the *Wildlife Act 1975*, *Wildlife Regulations 2024*, *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* or equivalent interstate laws
- the applicant is no longer authorised as a wildlife shelter operator or foster carer recognised by the department for the purposes of this program.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by the department for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications.

Personal information may also be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other government departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure 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.

The Department is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy. Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing Foi.unit@deeca.vic.gov.au.

What is the application process?

Applications must be submitted online using the Grants Online portal. To apply, visit the [Environmental Grants website](#).

Applicants will need to briefly describe what they intend to buy with the grant, including the estimated cost of each item. A signed applicant declaration will be required, confirming agreement to the program terms and conditions, including the Victorian Common Funding Agreement short form and any specific conditions of the H5 bird flu Wildlife Preparedness Grant Program.

You will receive an application number when you submit an application online. Please quote this number in all communications with the department relating to your application.

Note: No hard copy applications will be accepted. Late and incomplete applications may not be considered.

Additional information

Additional information is available at the [program webpage](#).

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

For questions specific to the H5 bird flu Wildlife Rehabilitator Preparedness Grant Program, please email enviro.grants@deeca.vic.gov.au or contact the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186.

Checklist

Read these guidelines and the information about this grant program before applying and complete the following checklist:

Have you:

- ☐ Read these guidelines carefully?
- ☐ Checked that you are eligible to apply for this grant?
- ☐ Identified the items, equipment or supplies you intend to purchase with the grant to improve your H5 bird flu preparedness?
- ☐ Prepared an estimate of the costs of the items you intend to purchase?
- ☐ Checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws, regulations and authorisation conditions?
- ☐ Prepared the information required to complete your application?