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| Nature Fund  Guidelines |

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**Warning: Health and safety is paramount:** You must put in place relevant Work Health Safety policies and procedures to ensure the safety of those undertaking grant activities. You must comply with any government measures and requirements in relation to COVID-19. Stay up to date at [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au).

**Acknowledgements:** DELWP thanks those organisations who provided invaluable input to inform the program design.

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Version: 1.1 (14/9/22). Updated to confirm that proposals focused on threatened ecological communities (listed on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act Threatened List) are eligible to apply to the Nature Fund.

**Note: Caretaker period 2022:** As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 26 November 2022, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 1 November 2022 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned. Applications will not be processed during the caretaker period. In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to proceed with this grant process and enter into funding agreement/award the grants after the caretaker period. Applicants should be aware that all information about this grant process represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change; and the incoming government may decide to not proceed with this grant process.

Photo credit: Penny Croucamp, DELWP.

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| Acknowledgment  We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.  We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.  The term ‘First Peoples’ is used in this document to recognise the connections to Country and culture held by the Aboriginal people, respectfully acknowledging the diverse preferences held by Aboriginal people for other terms as outlined in the language statement identified in: “To be heard and for the words to have actions" – Traditional Owners voice: improving government relationships and supporting strong foundations. |
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Program overview

## Introduction

The Nature Fund has been established by the Victorian Government to support high impact projects that deliver on the goals of *Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037* (Biodiversity 2037), the Government’s plan to stop the decline of native plants and animals and improve the state’s natural environment.

To achieve all we’ve set out to do in Biodiversity 2037, we know we need to work together and across different sectors.

The Nature Fund will encourage collaboration and partnerships between government, business, philanthropy and the community to deliver high impact projects that contribute to improving Victoria’s biodiversity.

The Victorian Government has invested $10 million to establish the Nature Fund to support projects that will make a significant difference to the outcomes for biodiversity and threatened species in Victoria.

Projects supported through the Nature Fund will need to demonstrate their ability to make a high impact contribution to improving Victoria’s biodiversity and supporting the conservation of Victoria’s threatened species — for example, leading to the improvement in the conservation status of a listed Threatened Species. It is envisaged that at least $2 million from the Nature Fund will be provided to initiatives targeted at conservation of threatened species.

The Nature Fund will also support projects that advance the self-determination of Victoria’s First Peoples, including through a $1.4 million Caring for Country stream.

The Nature Fund is being administered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

## Objectives

The Nature Fund aims to support projects which deliver high impacts for Victoria’s biodiversity, including threatened species, consistent with the goals and targets of Biodiversity 2037 in partnership with business and non-government organisations.

The fund is intended to be adaptable and responsive to key threats impacting Victoria’s natural environment and to support approaches which advance the self-determination of Victoria’s First Peoples.

## Available funding

The Victorian Government has invested $10 million to establish the Nature Fund. There are two streams available.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Funding | Stream 1 (General stream) | Stream 2 (Caring for Country) |
| Amount | Up to $8.6 million | Up to $1.4 million |
| Project Duration | Multiyear – up to 36 months | Multiyear – up to 36 months |
| Total funding | $8.6 million | $1.4 million |
| Requirement | Standard | Traditional Owner Led\* |
| Co-funding required | At least 1:1 | Not required |
| Minimum funding request | $20,000 | $20,000 |

\*Traditional Owners also have access to the general stream.

Multiple grant applications may be submitted across streams. Each application you submit must be separate (not reliant on another project) and must not be a scaled version of another funded project.

## Key dates

The Nature Fund will operate as a rolling fund, with grants assessed as they are received. Early applications are encouraged.

**Note: Caretaker period 2022:**

As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 26 November 2022, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 1 November 2022 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned.

Applications will not be processed during the caretaker period.

In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to proceed with this grant process and enter into funding agreement/award the grants after the caretaker period.

Applicants should be aware that all information about this grant process represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change; and the incoming government may decide to not proceed with this grant process.

# Co-contribution

The Nature Fund will support high-impact Victorian conservation projects by topping up investment from non-government organisations.

To be eligible for funding projects from the general stream will need to provide at least matched funding. Preference will be given where projects can leverage funding at a higher ratio. The Nature Fund will be targeting a co-investment ratio of $1 of Nature Fund investment to $3 non-Nature Fund investment.

Co-investment funds do not need to be secured at the time of proposing investment from the Nature Fund – however, they must be secured within an agreed timeframe prior to final approval from the Nature Fund.

For projects supporting biodiversity actions led by Traditional Owners through the Caring for Country stream, co-investment is not required however co-investment will be looked upon favourably.

The co-funding can include a combination of:

* funding from other sources, for example:
* financial donations (including donations from businesses and individuals)
* government and philanthropic grant programs
* in-kind support, for example:
* volunteer time (costed at $40 per hour)
* staff time allocated to completing the project, where the salary comes from another source
* donated and loaned resources (such as access to equipment, construction materials).

While proposals that have in-kind support are welcomed the Nature Fund will preference applications where the co-funding is a cash contribution.

##### How do I calculate the value of volunteer contribution?

Volunteer time contributions should be valued at $40 per hour. You can determine the dollar value for your whole project using the following calculation:

*Volunteer contribution = [number of volunteers] x [hours worked per day] x [number of days] x $40*

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| **Example:** 12 volunteers x 5 hours per day x 5 days (project duration) x $40 = $12,000 in volunteer time contribution |

# Eligibility criteria

Proponents must meet the following eligibility criteria. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria can partner with another organisation that does meet the criteria, known as an auspice.

Proponents who do not have adequate insurance (see below) or are not incorporated/registered as a not-for-profit will need to partner with another group or organisation, known as an auspice, who does meet the requirements.

## Who can apply?

### Stream 1: General stream

Proponents must:

be an incorporated or statutory entity (including governmental, not-for-profit or private entity) with financial systems in place for receiving, managing and acquitting government funding

have demonstrated expertise and experience in delivery of high impact projects for biodiversity benefit in Victoria with a good track record in delivering successful projects to a high standard on time and within budget

have existing relationships with landowners within the proposed project landscape area(s)

have links and/or previous experience working with other organisations within the proposed project landscape area(s), where those organisations are proposed to be involved in project delivery

have appropriate systems, processes and procedures in place to identify and manage risk that complies with all relevant laws and regulations including the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*

have appropriate systems, processes and procedures to ensure good governance, and a high standard of quality assurance for project delivery

have demonstrated experience in delivering projects that access co-funding and can meet the requirement to achieve co-funding of at least 1:1.

### Stream 2: Caring for Country

The *Caring for Country* stream will support actions led by Traditional Owners. Under this stream, proposals will be accepted from Incorporated Victorian Traditional Owner organisations or Aboriginal Victorian organisations.

These are organisations that are:

* a not-for-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission **or**
* an incorporated body or organisation registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria or an incorporated association under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act).

If the organisation making a proposal is not a Traditional Owner Corporation registered under the CATSI Act, the proposal will need to include a letter of support for the project and for the organisation from the Traditional Owner Corporation of the Country where the works are proposed. If the proposed works are on Country where there is a formally recognised Traditional Owner Corporation (Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP)), the letter should be from the RAP. Where the location has no RAP, letter/s of support should be from relevant Traditional Owner groups with interest in the area of the proposed works.

##### Insurance

The funding agreement will specify minimum insurance requirements and coverage values, including but not limited to public liability insurance ($10 million minimum) and personal accident insurance cover to safeguard any volunteers and participants involved in the funded activities.

Prior to signing any funding agreement, the Proponent must have appropriate insurance coverage for its operational and business risks with one or more of the following:

* 1. the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority or Liability Mutual Insurance
  2. an insurer authorised under the *Insurance Act 1973* (Cth)
  3. an insurer approved in writing by the Department.

## Where can projects be located?

The Nature Fund can support projects on public or private land in Victoria.

Projects must have land owner / land manager approval.

##### Public land

DELWP supports the self-determination of Traditional Owners. For projects on public land, partnership with Traditional Owners should be undertaken as early as possible in the project development, in line with [*Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* ‘Owning Our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025](https://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/aboriginalselfdetermination/self-determination-reform-strategy) — for example, discussions at a relevant forum, a site visit on Country and/or demonstrated ‘in principle’ support from the Traditional Owner group specific to that area. Projects should factor in adequate budget for Traditional Owners to be adequately renumerated and resourced. Sufficient time should be allocated, and timelines must incorporate Traditional Owners’ governance structures and ways of making decisions. DELWP can assist to facilitate engagement with Traditional Owners where required.

To find found out who the Formally Recognised Traditional Owners are for an area, you can search the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS), available at <https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victorias-current-registered-aboriginal-parties> and to find details of non-formally recognised Traditional Owner groups in Victoria, please visit the (Commonwealth) [Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations](https://www.oric.gov.au/) (ORIC). DELWP is clear that any Traditional Owner group(s) with an interest in the project should be included and engaged with. You are strongly encouraged to read the relevant Country Plan for the group you will be engaging (if they have one) prior to commencing any engagement and understand the Traditional Owner group’s legal status and rights under the relevant legislation.

##### Private land

The Nature Fund can help respond to new conservation opportunities and to environmental threats as a co-investment for a project on private land.

Projects on private land must demonstrate a clear public benefit. The project will need to demonstrate it will make a significant difference and represents good value for money, leveraging co-funding from another source.

## Can we apply for more than one project?

An eligible organisation can propose more than one investment from the Nature Fund provided that each proposal / project is separate and clearly defined.

A proposal will not be eligible if a proposal to the Nature Fund is dependent on another proposal to the Nature Fund receiving funding.

# Eligible projects and expenditure

## Eligible types of projects

### General Stream

The Nature Fund will support high impact projects that deliver on the goals of Biodiversity 2037 and projects that advance the self-determination of Traditional Owners and improve outcomes for threatened or culturally significant species.

The Nature Fund is designed so that it is a co-investor in high impact projects. Projects should consider the role the Nature Fund will play as part of a larger project that will create high impact.

Examples include:

* contribution towards land purchase costs of a priority site to protect habitat and support the survival of a threatened species
* landscape-scale actions highly aligned to Biodiversity 2037 contributing targets, for example:
* revegetation in priority locations
* herbivore and pest predator control in priority locations (above legal requirements of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*)
* species-specific actions that improve the outlook for a Threatened Species through:
* location-specific action targeted at a specific site to improve the habitat for a species or group of species — for example, artificial hollow creation, wetland restoration, fencing of key habitat or species, or supplementary planting of food trees
* population-specific action to help a specific species persist — for example, genetic management (gene mixing), additional captive breeding (ex situ management) or translocation of a species into new habitat
* landscape-scale or targeted actions that provide high impact outcomes for the conservation of threatened ecological communities.

In proposing investment from the Nature Fund, you will need to ensure that your activities are not undertaken in isolation of, or contrary to, regulations, laws, strategies and plans.

### Caring for Country Stream

The *Caring for Country* stream will support Traditional Owner led projects which advance self-determination and are aligned with the objectives of the Nature Fund. More detail is provided in the Assessment criteria below in Section 8.

### Project Criteria – General Stream

The below criteria will be used to evaluate project’s suitability to deliver required outcomes. We encourage potential applicants to contact [naturefund@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:naturefund@delwp.vic.gov.au) to discuss how their project aligns with this criteria:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Focus | **Biodiversity 2037**  **Contributing Targets** | **Threatened Species and/or Threatened Ecological Communities Improvement** | |
| Types of Actions and Outcomes | **Landscape-scale:**  Landscape-scale actions across a species range with synergies for multiple species and/or threatened ecological communities | **Location-specific:**  actions targeted at specific sites to improve the habitat for the species or significantly benefit a threatened ecological community | **Population-specific:**  actions targeted at a population level to increase recruitment |
| Examples | * + revegetation in priority locations   + herbivore and pest predator control in priority locations   + weed control in priority locations | * + artificial hollow creation   + wetland restoration   + fencing of key habitat or species   + supplementary planting of food trees   + manage biomass appropriately | * + genetic management (gene mixing)   + additional captive breeding (ex situ management)   + translocation of a species into new habitat |
| Project Criteria | Alignment with Biodiversity 2037 contributing targets utilising Strategic Management Prospects   1. The mapped project area has over 75% alignment with top-ranked cost-effective areas (Top 20%), or the top-ranked benefit areas (Top 20%) for revegetation, in SMPv3 for the action of interest   **AND**   1. For projects with herbivore or predator management, the project undertakes integrated threat management (see Note A below) **AND** 2. The project fills in identified gaps in current and past allocations in top ranked areas for the action of interest. | Part A. Species Eligibility  1a. The species is on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act Threatened List (1995 species;) **AND**  1a.1 The species doesn’t have adequate Species Forecast data (see Note C below) **OR**  1a.2 The species has poor Species Forecast under current management (see Note C below)  **OR**  1b. The species is deemed culturally significant by a Traditional Owner organisation.  Part B. Project Eligibility  2a. The action(s) proposed are Location-specific or Population-specific type actions (see Note B below) **AND**  2b. The action(s) proposed are listed on a current Action Statement or in line with DEWLP decision support tools where available (see Note C) **OR**  2c. Where no current Action Statement or inadequate Species Forecast data is available, the project includes evaluation of action benefits using DELWP’s standard approach (see Note E below).  NB: Actions proposed by Traditional Owner organisations that relate to a culturally significant species will informed by Traditional Owner knowledge. | |
| Self- Determination | Degree to which the project advances the self-determination of Traditional Owners | Degree to which the project advances the self-determination of Traditional Owners | |

Projects involving the purchase of land will be considered against and in conjunction with other priority actions proposed on that land.

Projects that include and increase permanent protection as part of their proposal will be looked at favourably and should also consider the SMP benefit layer for permanent protection where possible.

### Additional information to support criteria

**Strategic Management Prospects (SMP):** SMP is the tool that displays how and where we can make the biggest different for as many species across Victoria as possible and deliver the targets of Biodiversity 2037. It can be utilised to assess projects alignment against Biodiversity 2037 targets. For more information including guidance on how to use the SMP tool visit [Choosing Actions for Nature (environment.vic.gov.au)](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/natureprint).

##### Note A: Definition: Integrated threat management

Landscape-scale management is most effective when it is sustained and integrated. Integrated threat management involves managing all the relevant threats in a location (e.g. managing both deer and pigs in areas where these species are threatening biodiversity, rather than just managing deer only).

SMP can be used to identify where integrated threat management is required. Actions in the top 20% that co-occur in the project area should be undertaken together.

##### Note B: Definition: Location-specific or Population-specific type actions

There are a wide range of management actions available for threatened species conservation – including direct or on-ground actions as well as actions that have indirect benefits to the species (e.g. research, community engagement etc).

Three different types of direct action which could be considered as part Nature Fund investment are defined below:

* **Landscape** actions are those undertaken across large areas of the landscape and have benefits to multiple species.
* For example – predator control, herbivore control, fire management and revegetation
* **Location-specific** actions targeted at a specific site to improve the habitat for specific species
* For example – artificial hollow creation, wetland restoration, fencing of key habitat or species and supplementary planting of food trees
* **Population-specific** actions targeted at a population level to increase recruitment for a specific species
* For example – gene mixing, translocation, ex situ management

##### Note C: Species Forecast data table

Species Forecast uses data from DELWP Decision support tools to predict the likelihood a species is present in Victoria in 50 years under different management scenarios. This data can be used to determine how likely a species is to persist under current management, or if more direct or specific actions are required.

This data will be made available through the application process.

##### Note D: Identifying gaps in current management

Maps have been produced to show the priority areas for each action that are not currently under management (eg where no action was recorded in the past 12 months). These maps are based on the most current available data as of June 2022, including priority areas from SMPv3 and activity data from the 2020/2021 Biodiversity 2037 reporting period. These maps will be made available to support applications.

##### Note E: Evaluating action benefit using DELWP standard approach

When the species has no current Action Statement or inadequate Species Forecast data, or when the action has not previously been assessed using Specific Needs Assessment, the project needs to include evaluation of benefits using DELWP’s standard approach. The outputs from this work should align with current DELWP projects which are assessing actions for biodiversity.

This can be done by following guidelines outlined in [Biodiversity 2037: Manual for the identification and prioritisation of biodiversity actions and knowledge gaps.](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0040/497659/Manual-for-the-identification-and-prioritisation-of-biodiversity-actions-and-knowledge-gaps_final.pdf)

It is recommended that proponents engage with DELWP support team for guidance on appropriate tools including the *Threatened Species Framework for Cost-effective Management.*

### Advancing the self-determination of Traditional Owners and improving outcomes for threatened or culturally significant species

The Nature Fund will also support projects that advance the self-determination of Traditional Owners and improve outcomes for threatened or culturally significant species. These can be part of projects focused on delivering on Biodiversity 2037 through landscape-scale action or projects focused on significantly improving the outlook for Threatened Species.

In addition, the Nature Fund includes a $1.4 million Caring for Country stream specifically for biodiversity actions led by Traditional Owners, including projects to improve outcomes for threatened species or culturally significant species. Traditional Owners also have access to the general stream.

### Long term success

The proposal will need to demonstrate how the project will ensure long term success, beyond the life of the funding provided.

## Eligible types of expenditure

The Fund will support the following categories of expenditure:

* materials
* for revegetation (for example, plants and tree guards)
* for pest and predator control (for example, exclusion fencing)
* to support threatened wildlife (for example, captive breeding or translocation of a species to a new habitat, or creation of artificial hollows)
* contribution towards land purchase costs (e.g. as part of a project to purchase land to protect habitat and support the survival of a threatened species)
* equipment hire
* improvement of existing assets that support the environmental health of the site
* personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, goggles and masks)
* site preparation
* training and certification
* capital items (e.g. access steps)
* project coordination / project management (limited to ten per cent of any project proposal)
* contractors, including presenters and survey work
* capital equipment, such as monitoring equipment.

Other types of expenditure may be considered during assessment of your project.

Please note that capital equipment will need to become a registered asset with your organisation or auspice.

You will need to demonstrate:

* that all expenditure, especially for contractors, training, project coordination and capital equipment, is essential to the success of the project
* that the amounts requested are commensurate with the overall project and
* as part of the overall project, what specifically is being requested from the Nature Fund and what is being funded through co-investment from other source/s.

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

**Please note: GST should be included in the funds you request. If your proposal is successful, you will not receive GST in addition to the total funds requested.**

# Ineligible expenditure

Funding is not available for:

* activities that are not focused on the outcomes of the Nature Fund
* routine or ongoing maintenance activities including those required by legislation
* recurrent operating costs, for example rent and associated utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding
* activities located outside the State of Victoria
* political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties
* activities that are already funded through another organisation, program or fund source

(Note: Your project can build on the success of past or existing projects. The grant must fund additional activities that would not occur without this funding.)

* native vegetation and threatened species offsets or offset activities (such as to meet a condition of a permit)
* any activity involving clearing of native vegetation
* any illegal activity
* computers
* purchase of goods for competitions, prizes, giveaways, vouchers or alcohol
* insurance
* any other action or activity determined through the assessment process to be an inappropriate or unsuitable use of the funds

# Funding conditions

## Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DELWP. The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with not-for-profit organisations and Local Government Authorities. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>.

The activity does not include using the Funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

## Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory 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*.

## Tax implications

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

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.

## Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government’s support and promotional guidelines (<https://www2.delwp.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

Payments will be made as long as:

* the funding agreement has been signed by both parties
* grant recipients provide reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the activity is progressing as expected
* other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

## Monitoring

Recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, site inspections, completion reports and acquittal documentation.

## 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 that 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.

DELWP is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DELWP Privacy Policy online at [www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy).

Requests for access to information about you held by DELWP should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by phone on 9637 8697.

# Relevant policy and strategic documents

There are a range of policies and strategies relevant to the Nature Fund, including:

* [Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan)
* [*Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* ‘Owning Our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025](https://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/aboriginalselfdetermination/self-determination-reform-strategy)
* [Local Jobs First](https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au/)

# Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the criteria below. Generally, higher scoring projects will be funded.

##### Stream 1: General stream

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Weighting** | **Description** |
| Project alignment with program objectives and project criteria | 70% | The extent to which your project is aligned to the project criteria and demonstrates ability to deliver high impact outcomes.  Extent to which project will create a positive legacy beyond the funding period. |
| Capability and capacity to successfully deliver the project | 20% | Applicant has demonstrated expertise and experience in delivering high impact projects for biodiversity benefit including:   * Clear, detailed, and reasonable timeframe to deliver the activities * The financial viability of the project, including letters of support for proposed funding contributions * Risk management (e.g., COVID-19, OH&S, Cultural and environmental) * Provision of permits or approvals, if required * Maintenance plan for project deliverables beyond the life of the project * Suitable skills and resources available to deliver the project |
| Value for money | 10% | Demonstrates value for money:   * The scale of the project and activities versus the funding sought * The contribution of additional cash or in-kind support |

##### Stream 2: Caring for Country

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Weighting** | **Description** |
| Biodiversity Outcomes | 50% | The degree to which the project demonstrates achieving outcomes consistent with the objectives of the Nature Fund and advances the self-determination of Victoria’s First Peoples  Extent to which project will create a positive legacy beyond the funding period and delivers value for money. |
| First Peoples and community outcomes | 30% | The degree to which the project benefits First Peoples communities by supporting self-determination through building ongoing capability, caring for and managing Country, maintaining or increasing traditional ecological knowledge, sharing cultural knowledge and outcomes, or achieving wider community benefits. |
| Capability to deliver the project(s) | 20% | The degree to which the applicant can demonstrate their capacity and capability to successfully undertake and deliver the project/activity including:   * Clear, detailed, and reasonable timeframe to deliver the activities * The financial viability of the project, including letters of support for proposed funding contributions * Risk management (e.g., COVID-19, OH&S, Cultural and environmental) * Provision of permits or approvals, if required * Maintenance plan for project deliverables beyond the life of the project * Suitable skills and resources available to deliver the project |

# How to apply

All applicants are to complete an on-line application form for funding.

Information on the process to apply is available at [www.environment.vic.gov.au/nature-fund](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/nature-fund).

Applicants are encouraged to email [naturefund@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:naturefund@delwp.vic.gov.au) to discuss their idea and seek advice.