*Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program - Supporting the recovery of wildlife and their habitat*

*Grants Program 2021-22 - Guidelines and Criteria*

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# 2021-22 Landcare led Bushfire Recovery Program - *Supporting the recovery of wildlife and their habitat*

# GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

## Purpose of the Grants

Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network (NLN) will jointly manage facilitated grants to support bushfire recovery activity across seven bushfire-affected regions in QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC and SA.

This grants program is jointly managed by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, delivered in conjunction with the relevant State and Territory Landcare organisations to mobilise, build capacity, increase participation and support Landcare and community groups, landowners, land managers and other partners for improved delivery of bushfire recovery actions.

The Program has been supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and their Habitat.

**The objectives of the grant program are to support:**

- Bushfire recovery actions for fire-affected plant and animal species, ecological communities, and natural assets, including Ramsar listed wetlands and World Heritage properties, within the seven bushfire regions identified as most impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires; and

- Develop and use partnerships with local landowners, community and Landcare groups, and other local, regional, and national partners, to support their involvement in delivering bushfire recovery actions.

**The intended outcomes of the grant program are to:**

- Enhance the recovery and maximise the resilience of fire-affected native plant and animal species, ecological communities, and natural assets within the seven regions identified as most impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires

- Build capacity for better delivery of environmental bushfire recovery projects; and

- Increase engagement and participation of local Landcare groups, landholders and others in bushfire recovery activities for wildlife and their habitat

## Funding Available

The Landcare Australia and National Landcare Network partnership grants program will allow Landcare networks across the seven identified bushfire regions to deliver on-the-ground environmental outcomes, with a significant portion of the program funding focussed on East Gippsland.

**The total funding of the 2021-22 Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program is $14,000,000.**

The Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program will support local, regional and national groups to undertake priority recovery activities. Community groups, networks, and organisations are strongly encouraged to work together to develop landscape-scale projects to address common issues. Contact your Region's Applicant Support Team (See Contacts on Page 9) for further information and support.

Funding will be delivered in three streams. The funding portions per stream are shown below as approximate upper-limits for guidance only, as there is flexibility in the funding range. Please contact your Region's Applicant Support Team to discuss your options.

**Eligible applicants are invited to apply for grants in three different streams:**

1. **Community grants** to approximately $50k
2. **Landscape Scale Partnership projects** to approximately $300k
3. **Major projects** to approximately $500k - $1m each **(East Gippsland Region Only)**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** <u>All</u> project activity and reporting must be completed by 29th April, 2022.

## Key Dates

*Table 1 – Key dates for grants program*

| Item: | Date: |
|---|---|
| **Applications open** | 21st May 2021 |
| **Applications close** | 16th June, 2021 |
| **Applications assessed** | 28th June, 2021 |
| **Successful applicants notified** | 15th July, 2021 |
| **Quarterly Progress Update Reports** | a) 14th November, 2021<br>b) 13th February, 2022 |
| **Final Report due and project completed** | **STRICTLY 29th April, 2022** |

*If required, additional application rounds may be run.*

*The 29th April 2022 completion date is fixed - <u>no extensions will be granted.</u>*
*Please consider the timeframe carefully when planning project activities.*

# Eligibility Criteria

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Your application will be considered if you are an incorporated local Landcare group/network, Traditional Custodian or landholder*, community organisation, Indigenous group, and/or other regional and national organisation.

## INELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

The following organisations are ineligible to apply:

- Unincorporated groups*
- Organisations, or organisations with a project partner organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined, or signified their intent to join, the Scheme (www.nationalredress.gov.au).

*Individuals and unincorporated groups should apply through an auspicing body (e.g. local Landcare network, Aboriginal Land Council, Landcare State or Territory Organisation). If you need support with this process, please get in touch with your Region's Applicant Support Team (See Contacts on Page 9) or Landcare Australia's Grants Team: grants@landcareaustralia.com.au.

The Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program is seeking to support as many good projects as possible. If your organisation is unincorporated, we encourage you/your organisation to get in touch with a local Landcare group or similar incorporated organisation to submit an application - for help finding them, contact with your region's Applicant Support Team (See Contacts on Page 9).

## PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Where partnering on projects, a lead organisation must be appointed. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into agreement. For larger projects (valued at over $50k), including Landscape Scale and Major Projects, the lead organisation's application must identify all project partners, and include a brief letter of support from each of them.

Each letter of support should include:

- Name and ABN of project partner(s);
- An overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project;
- An outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group;
- The roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any); and
- Details of a nominated management level contact officer.

A draft/template Letter of Support is available here: http://landcareledbushfiregrants.org.au/letter-of-support

## ELIGIBLE LOCATIONS

Projects must be delivered in the seven bushfire impacted regions within Australia, identified as those most vulnerable following the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. Projects can be delivered across multiple regions. The regions are listed and shown in the map below:

1. *the rainforests of South-East Queensland*
2. *the rainforests of the NSW North Coast and Tablelands*
3. *the Greater Blue Mountains and World Heritage Area*
4. *the forests of the NSW South Coast*
5. *the alpine environments across ACT, NSW and Victoria*
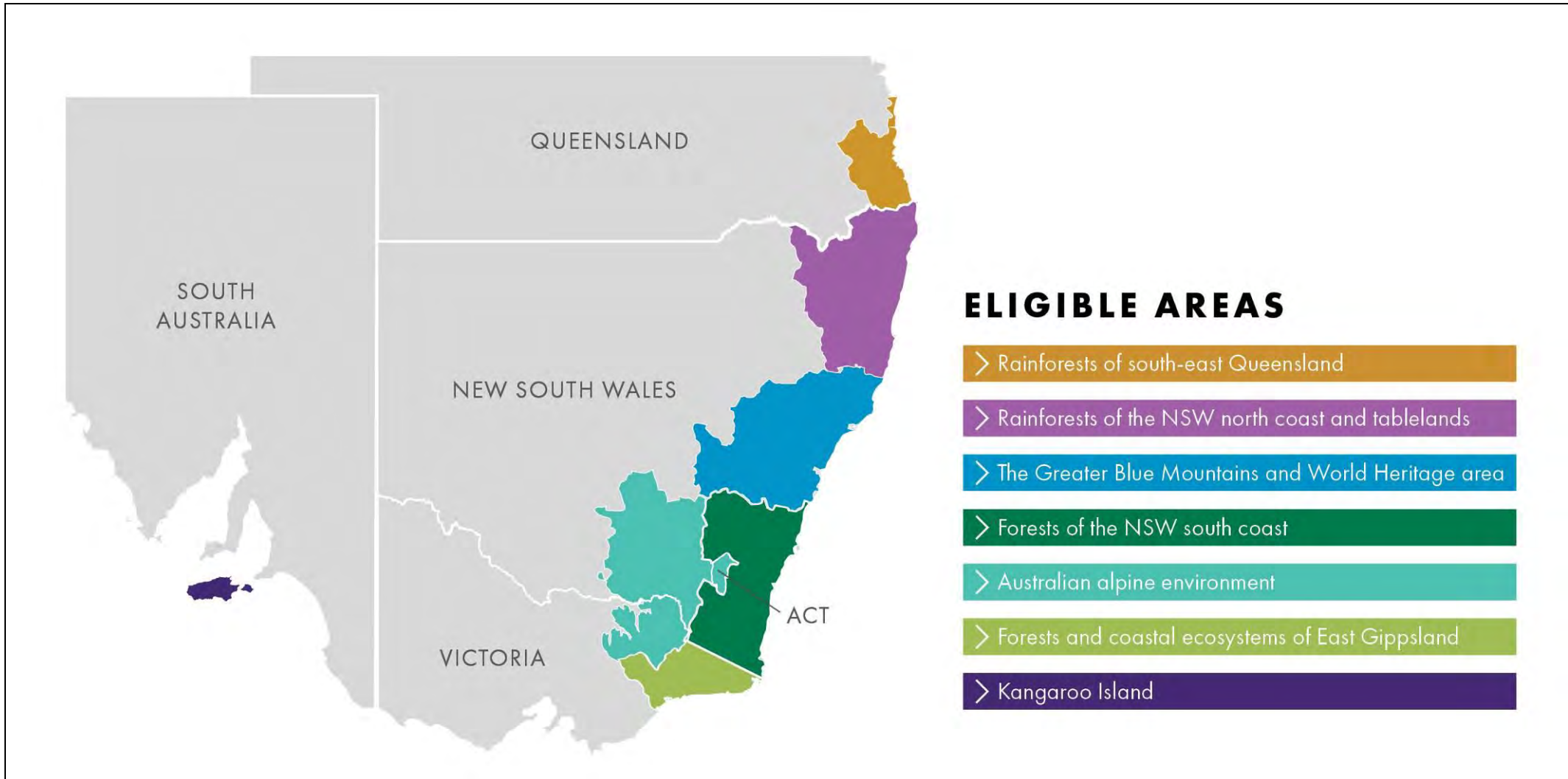6. *the forests and coastal ecosystems of East Gippsland*
7. *Kangaroo Island.*

*Figure 1 - Map showing the seven bushfire impacted regions which are eligible project site locations for the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grants Program 2021-22*

**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

Your application will be considered if your project is directly-related to the implementation of bushfire recovery activities within an eligible location (see above).

Eligible activities include:

- o Pest / feral animal management / control.
- o Weed management / control.
- o Erosion control to protect waterways and repairing riparian areas.
- o Habitat augmentation, including provision of shelter (such as nest boxes and artificial hollows).
- o Revegetation and regeneration, including tree planting using native plant species that are known to be indigenous to the site and represent the type of vegetation community, existing on the site before the 2019-20 bushfires, or historically.
- o Seed collection and propagation of native plant species for use in revegetation (applicants are responsible for identifying and obtaining appropriate permits for land access and collecting seed).
- o Fencing installation to protect sensitive or regenerating areas with clear environmental / conservation benefits (e.g., to protect refugia, sensitive or regenerating areas, pest exclusion, stock exclusion from natural water sources etc.)
- o Protection of unburnt habitat/refugia.
- o Contractor works for Project Outcomes.
- o Expert flora and fauna surveys, habitat mapping, data recording, citizen science and education, where these form part of a project that includes on-ground bushfire recovery activities.
- o Supporting the establishment of legally binding conservation convents on private property
- o Management to maintain landscape integrity (e.g., Indigenous fire and land management activities).
- o Eradicating or reducing the impact of diseases.
- o Engaging with local communities and Indigenous land managers aimed at bushfire recovery efforts in the seven identified bushfire regions.
- o Providing planning and advice, knowledge and education to local communities and Indigenous land managers regarding bushfire recovery of species and ecological communities.

*If you have a proposed activity that is not listed above, please demonstrate the need for the activity and the expected outcome relating to bushfire recovery. For further advice, contact the Applicant Support Team (details on Page 9).*

**The 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 completion date is fixed - <u>no extensions will be granted.</u>**
*Please consider the timeframe carefully when planning project activities.*

**ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE**

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure you have incurred as defined in your grant agreement.

Eligible expenditure items include:

- Direct labour costs of employees you directly employ on the core elements of the project, including on-ground project coordination, facilitation and delivery. We consider a person an employee when you pay a regular salary or wage, out of which you make regular tax instalment deductions.
- Up to 30 per cent labour on-costs to cover employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance.

- Contractors. <u>Note - all contractors must have a written contract prior to starting any project work. Invoices from contractors must contain a detailed description and breakdown of the work, including hours and hourly rates.</u>
- Purchase (or hire) of tools, equipment and supplies to directly support delivery of project outcomes.
- Domestic travel limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct agreed project activities in Australia.
- Training and capacity building that directly supports the achievement of project outcomes.
- Engagement, communication, educational materials and promotional costs <u>directly related</u> to the project including event advertising materials, venue hire and catering costs, workshop materials, fact sheets and web materials.
- Costs incurred to obtain planning, environmental or other regulatory approvals <u>during the project period</u>. However, associated fees paid to the Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments are not eligible.
- Administrative support and overheads additional to the <u>normal day to day running costs</u> of the organisation, including administrative project management or co-ordination (maximum 10 per cent of the grant).

To be eligible, expenditure must be a direct cost of the project.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application, and you should keep copies of all receipts. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs (>20% of total budget).

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding, and the Program Management Committee will be responsible for making the final decision on eligible expenditure and activity.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible.

## INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURE

You cannot use the grant for activities which are not directly related to the objectives of the grant.

Expenditure items that are not eligible include:

- Capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, computers, printers or photocopiers and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities such as buildings and laboratories.
- Costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware (unless it directly relates to the project).
- Costs such as rental, renovations and utilities.
- Non-project-related staff training and development costs.
- Insurance costs (the participants must effect and maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of its participation in funded activities).
- Routine operational expenses, including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges.
- International travel costs.
- Costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports and preparing any project variation requests.

# Project Planning and Support

We understand the short duration of this grants program, and have a team of Landcare staff ready to help you plan and complete your project application.

With expertise in the bushfire recovery, project management, budgeting, community organisation engagement, and grant submissions, the Applicant Support Team will assist build capacity of local community volunteer groups and organisations to participate in the Program and undertake bushfire recovery activities for threatened species, plant communities and natural assets.

For support with developing your application, please contact your Region's State and Territory Landcare Organisation, or Landcare Australia, details below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Queensland** | **New South Wales** |
| Darryl Ebenezer | Jane Nguyen |
| darryl@qwalc.org.au | jnguyen@landcarensw.org.au |
| | |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | **Victoria** |
| Karissa Preuss | Andrew Maclean |
| ceo@landcareact.org.au | andrew.maclean@lvi.org.au |
| | |
| **South Australia** | **Landcare Australia** |
| Jim Mead | Liz Graham |
| execofficer@landcaresa.asn.au | liz.graham@landcareaustralia.com.au |

To further assist with project planning, a summary of priority actions identified in Regional Bushfire Recovery Workshops for each of the seven Bushfire Affected Regions is available for download here:

https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/bushfire-recovery/consultation/workshops-and-roundtables

# ASSESSMENT OF YOUR APPLICATION

## Assessment Criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application. We will assess your application based on how well it addresses the assessment criteria, taking into account the weighting given to each criterion.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. You should provide evidence to support your answers. The application form has word limits for answers.

### Assessment Criterion 1 – Contribution to Outcomes (40%)

Your application must describe:

a.  The eligible location(s) where your project activities will take place (in relation to the seven regions identified as most impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires); and

b.  The extent to which your project aligns with one or more of the program outcomes to:

   I.   Enhance the recovery and maximise the resilience of fire-affected native plant and animal species, ecological communities, and natural assets, including Ramsar listed wetlands and World Heritage properties, within the seven regions;

   II.  Build capacity for better delivery of environmental bushfire recovery projects; and / or

   III. Increase engagement and participation of local Landcare groups, landholders and others in bushfire recovery activities, including strong Indigenous partnerships and Traditional Owner engagement.

### Assessment Criterion 2 – Project Feasibility (40%)

Your application should describe:

a.  How you will successfully deliver the project before 29th April 2022, including your readiness to commence the project, with appropriate insurance, relevant permits and approvals in place, or ability to have them in place prior to commencement, and allowances for restrictions arising from COVID-19 or natural disaster;

b.  How the project activities will achieve the Project Outcomes;

c.  Your access to personnel with the knowledge, skills and experience in delivering your project activities;

d.  Project planning, management, risk management and governance arrangements (Landscape Scale Partnerships and Major Projects applications must have an attached project plan);

e.  Any relevant track record in managing and delivering projects of this type; and

f.  How you will monitor and measure the success of your project.

### Assessment Criterion 3 –Value for money (20%)

You should provide:

a)  Reasonable and realistic costs with clear and transparent justification of items or activities, attaching quotes etc. where available, and for major costs (>20% of total budget);

b)  Clearly itemised list of eligible budget items;

c) Estimates of any leveraged funding or in-kind support, which would lead to greater impact, and demonstrate greater value from the funding requested; and

d) Budget items which align with the project activities, scale and scope.

## Who Will Approve the Grant?

An Assessment Panel comprising representatives of Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, will review applications against the eligibility criteria. Once confirmed as eligible, the Assessment Panel will then assess each application against the assessment criteria. The panellists will be familiar with the Program Objectives, Outcomes and Grant Guidelines, including governance and eligibility. The Committee will also take into account the geographical spread of projects and funding across the bushfire regions (at least $4 million to be made available to the East Gippsland region).

The Assessment Panel will make a recommendation of grants to be funded to the Program Management Committee, which includes representatives from the National Landcare Network, Landcare Australia, and an advisory representative from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The Project Management Committee will review projects recommended for funding by the Assessment Panel and make the final endorsement of all grants to be funded. The Program Management Committee's decision is final, and cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

## Notification of the Grant

Successful applicants will be notified via both email and the Grants Portal by **15th July 2021.**

## Grant Agreement

You must enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement with the Program before commencement.

The Grant Agreement will include general terms and conditions that cannot be changed.  The Grant Agreement must be signed with you before any payments are made. The Program will not be responsible for any expenditure incurred until a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process, or other considerations made by the Assessment Panel. These will be identified in the offer of grant funding.

Grant funds may be recovered if there is a breach of the Grant Agreement.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

## How to Apply

Applicants are required to submit an application for the **Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program 2021** on using the Grants Portal.

Before starting your application, you will need to set up an account to access our Grants Portal, if you are not already registered, you can REGISTER HERE. The Grants Portal allows you to manage a grant application in a secure online environment.

CLICK HERE for more information on how 'SmartyGrants' manages your data.

To submit your proposal, you must:

- Complete an application through the Grants Portal HERE providing all requested information;
- Address all eligibility criteria;
- Include all supporting additional attachments as required; and
- Sign a digital declaration

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records.

Before submitting applications, Landscape Scale and Major Projects will also be required to develop a detailed Project Plan. A template document to help guide and support planning is available here: www.landcareledbushfiregrants.org.au/project-plan/ Landscape Scale and Major Project applications should contact their relevant Applicant Support Team or Landcare Australia to discuss project details.

If you require help from the Applicant Support Team after you have started an application, you may be asked for access to your unsubmitted application directly from the SmartyGrants platform: service@smartygrants.com.au. This will allow the Applicant Support Team to view (not edit) the contents of your unsubmitted application form, and be able to provide feedback with ease.

**If you're having trouble with the portal, please contact SmartyGrants directly:**
https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate.  Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (C'th).  If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application.  If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should immediately notify Landcare Australia's Grants Team on grants@landcareaustralia.com.au / 02 8440 8819.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application.

**If you need further guidance about the application process contact your Regional Applicant Support Team (see contact details on Page 9), or the Landcare Australia grants team: grants@landcareaustralia.com.au / 02 8440 8819.**

# GRANT ACQUITTAL, PAYMENT AND REPORTING

## Reporting Requirements

### REPORTING PROCESS

You must submit reports through the Program's Grants Portal, in line with the Grant Agreement. We will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due.

We will expect you to report on:

- Quarterly progress against agreed project milestones;
- Project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds;
- Financial or in-kind contributions of participants directly related to the project; and any
- Key activities and media created.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

Community grants must provide a simple summary of progress quarterly.

Progress reports for Landscape scale Partnership projects or Major Projects in East Gippsland must:

- Include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project activities;
- Provide details of activities undertaken, including type of activity, location, project partners and the species, ecological communities and natural assets being targeted
- Show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date;
- Include evidence of expenditure; and
- Be submitted by the report due date.

Note: you will be able to submit reports ahead of time, if you have completed relevant project activities.

### END OF PROJECT REPORT

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report **by, or before, the 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.**

End of project reports must:

- Include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement;
- Provide details of activities undertaken, including type of activity, location, project partners and the species, ecological communities and natural assets being targeted;
- Identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project (keep evidence, such as receipts of purchases, contracts and invoices);
- Include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money; and
- Be submitted by the report due date.

  Note: If you have completed relevant project activities, you will be able to submit reports ahead of time.

*The 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 completion date is fixed - no extensions will be granted.*
*Please consider the timeframe carefully when planning project activities.*

## How the Grant Will Be Paid

For Community grants, 80% of the total funding will be paid when the Grant Agreement has been signed. The remaining 20% will be paid in May 2022 when the project has been completed and Final Report accepted.

For Landscape Scale Partnership and Major Projects, 50% of the total project will be paid when the Grant Agreement has been signed. The next instalment of 30% will be paid when the December Progress Report has

been accepted. The final payment of 20% will be paid in May 2022 when the project has been completed and Final Report accepted.

# PRIVACY AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting an application, the Applicant agrees to be bound by the Program's Privacy Policy, which sets out how the Program will collect, use, store and disclose your personal information, and how you can get in contact for more information.

Information requested in the application form will only be used for reviewing, assessing and awarding grants. If the application is successful, all information provided about successful projects, including the application, progress updates, final report, quotations, photos, maps, and videos may be used by the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program and its partners in promotions, including as part of feature projects on websites, media relations campaigns, publications, case studies and all social media.

All information provided will be maintained according to the strict privacy laws under which the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program operates.

If an application is unsuccessful, it will be stored on the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program database for 18 months and may be considered for alternative funding opportunities.

# FAQ

To see Frequently Asked Questions, please visit the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Program's website: www.landcareledbushfiregrants.org.au