

Department of Planning and Environment

# Environmental Education Grants Program Guidelines 2022–23

NSW Environmental Trust



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Cover photo: Digging a soil pit to determine the presence of organic matter at the surface following a history of cropping. Mid Lachlan Landcare project, Soils for the Future. Stuart McDonald, Mid Lachlan Landcare Inc

Published by:

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See also [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

ISBN 978-1-922899-63-7  
EHG 2022/0473  
September 2022

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## How to use this guide

These program guidelines provide an overview of the NSW Environmental Trust's (the Trust) Environmental Education grants program, including the types of organisations eligible to apply for funding and the types of activities that may be funded under the program. The guidelines also outline how applications will be assessed and what to expect if you are awarded a grant.

## Important dates

Opening date	Closing date
Monday 12 September 2022	5 pm Monday 7 November 2022

## Funding available

Two Environmental Education funding tiers are available in 2022–23, with a total available funding pool of \$1 million.

Funding tier	Funding per project	Project timeframe
1	up to \$60,000	2–3 years
2	from \$60,001 to \$250,000	3–5 years

## Getting started

### Step 1

Download and read the program guidelines (this document).

Links to key resources to help develop and submit an application are provided on the **[Environmental Education Grants Program webpage](#)**.

These include:

- Developing your application guide
- Grants Management System (GMS) link to register and submit an application
- Creating change through your Environmental Education project practical guide
- Previously funded projects
- Workplan sample.

Links to additional resources are provided in **Part 8: More information**



## Step 2

Check the eligibility conditions.

- is your organisation eligible? (refer to **Part 2: Eligibility**)
- are your proposed activities suitable for this program? (refer to **Part 3: What can be funded**)

## Step 3

Access the GMS via the Environmental Education Program webpage to register and complete an application. The GMS will automatically assign each application a project reference number. This reference number should be used in any correspondence with the Trust.

### Enquiries

NSW Environmental Trust

Telephone: 02 8837 6093

Email: [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au)

# Part 1: About the program

## Who are we?

The NSW Environmental Trust (Trust) is an independent statutory body established by the NSW Government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance and protect the State’s environment. The Trust’s main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants.

The Trust is chaired by the NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage, and its members include representatives from Department of Planning and Environment, local government, the Nature Conservation Council and NSW Treasury.

The Trust is currently administered by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE).

## What is the aim of the program?

The Environmental Education Program (the program) is a contestable grants program funded by the Trust.

It provides funding to achieve long-term beneficial outcomes for the NSW environment by developing, broadening, and transforming the community’s knowledge, skills, and intrinsic motivation to engage in sustainable behaviours and encourage participation in protecting the environment.

## Program objectives

The program is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- facilitating change in the practices and behaviour of individuals and groups to improve specific or broad environmental problems
- developing and promoting education projects that improve the environment and address sustainability challenges.

## Important information for 2022–23

### Priority themes

Since 2020, the Trust has been implementing its Strategic Plan 2020–24. To be considered for funding, applications must focus on one or both of the following immediate funding priorities:

- addressing climate change impacts on the natural environment – both mitigation and adaptation
- supporting threatened species recovery.

### Funding tiers

Two funding tiers are available in this round. An overview of the funding tiers is provided in table 1 below. Refer to **Part 2: Eligibility** for detailed information on each funding tier.

**Table 1 Overview of funding tiers**

	<b>Tier 1:</b>	<b>Tier 2:</b>
Implementation timeframe	2–3 years	3–5 years
Available funding	Up to \$60,000	\$60,000 to \$250,000

### Application limits

Lead applicants may submit a maximum of two applications to Tier 1 and one application to Tier 2.

### Applicant resources

A full list of links to relevant program resources is provided in **Part 8: More information**, at the end of this guide.

### Important timeframes for this round

	<p><b>Applications</b> Open between 12 September 2022 – 5pm 7 November 2022</p>
	<p><b>Announcement</b> Successful grant projects announced April - May 2023</p>
	<p><b>Project planning and commencement</b> Project planning activities will take place in June - July 2023 Projects commence from August 2023</p>



## Part 2: Eligibility

### Funding tiers

Two funding tiers are available under the program which align with project complexity, duration and funding available. Applicants will need to identify which tier their project is best suited to before applying. A single application process applies for both tiers.

#### Tier 1

Tier 1 will fund grants of up to \$60,000 for projects running for 2 to 3 years.

This stream is best suited to implementation of local education-based projects that address a specific/small scale issue.

Tier 1 projects are expected to:

- achieve environmental outcomes involving either one or both immediate funding priorities
- engage with target groups and seek participant feedback in the development stage to inform delivery of the educational framework in milestone 2
- move beyond ‘workshops and educational materials’ towards engaging and experiential activities
- allow for innovative ideas and adaptive management
- measure and report on the rate of participation and satisfaction by target groups
- provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of the differences they have made to environments and/or human/organisational practices.

Tier 1 applicants should read and consider *Creating change through your Environmental Education project practical guide* before applying. See **Part 8: More information** for a link to the guide.

#### Tier 2

Tier 2 will fund grants of between \$60,001 and \$250,000 for projects running from 3 to 5 years.

This stream seeks to enable emerging contemporary thinking in the design of education solutions to tackle complex and enduring environmental problems.

Tier 2 projects are expected to:

- achieve environmental outcomes involving either one or both immediate funding priorities
- address the systemic causes of problems
- include social research or co-design in project development to ensure solutions are carefully targeted to the practical realities of people’s lives
- conduct small scale field tests, prototyping, or piloting of ideas, and then amend project plans based on learnings, prior to full implementation
- take risks and trial innovative ideas
- move beyond the formula of ‘workshops and educational materials’ towards engaging, experiential, personally transformative or agency-building activities

- leave a sustained legacy in environments/systems that assist long-term shifts in human/organisational behaviours
- measure and report on the impact on the environmental problem they are tackling, as well as changes to organisational/human systems and environments.

An important outcome will be transformation in thinking and assumptions by the project teams themselves, so that they understand and appreciate the process their target audience is expected to go through.

Grantees will work with Trust Administration and leading environmental education and behaviour change experts for up to 12 months investigating and planning their projects in line with these expectations, before implementing projects over the following 2 to 4 years.

Tier 2 applicants must read and consider *Creating change through your Environmental Education project practical guide* before applying.

## Eligible applicants

Proposals must have a lead applicant and collaborators. The following organisation types are eligible for either of these roles:

- community organisations
- community groups
- incorporated associations
- incorporated non-profit organisations
- non-commercial cooperatives
- state government agencies and/or statutory committees
- local councils
- Local Land Services
- universities
- regional organisations of councils
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Registered NSW Aboriginal Corporations
- other local government-controlled organisations
- companies limited by guarantee (that can demonstrate not-for-profit status).

## Ineligible applicants

The following entities are ineligible to apply for funding under the program:

- individuals
- industry joint ventures
- for-profit businesses
- profit-distributing corporations (limited by shares).

## Conditions of eligibility

### Status for tax purposes

All applicants must have an active Australian Business Number (ABN) that establishes the organisation as an eligible entity.

### Lead applicant

If successful in securing a grant, the lead applicant will hold primary responsibility for delivery of the project. This includes managing the administrative and financial requirements of the grant, and the performance of collaborators.

Non-incorporated community groups and organisations are only eligible to apply if they appoint an administrator to auspice grant funds on their behalf.

The administrator must be a legal entity, and grant agreements are prepared in the name of the administering body. Grant payments are made payable to the administrator, who is responsible for dispersing funds on the grantee's behalf and the preparation of financial reports. An agreement should be reached between the grantee and the administrator in relation to project management at the application stage. It is expected that the actual project implementation will be led by the applicant and not the administrator.

### Collaborators

Collaborators are key project partners. They can provide a valuable source of expertise and skills to ensure the long-term success of a project (sustained behaviour change). They can also help lead applicants reach their targeted primary and secondary audiences. It is a requirement of the program that lead applicants engage collaborators as part of developing an application and, if awarded a grant, maintain their active involvement during delivery of the project. Collaborators are also expected to commit to ongoing use of the project outcomes.

Note: Confirmation of collaborator commitments is a requirement in all applications.

### Past performance

The Trust will take into consideration any record of past poor performance in respect of previous grants, or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations when assessing eligibility. If it is considered that past performance presents a sufficient risk to the timely and effective performance of the project, an applicant may be asked to respond to the determination, and this response will be considered alongside the overall merits of the application. Special conditions may be included in the funding agreement to address any issues of concern.

### Regional representation

The Trust uses a merit-based assessment process for all applications, so does not allocate funding for specific areas or regions of the State. However, in recognition of the historically low allocation of grants to regional areas, we strongly encourage applications from regional and rural communities, or projects that incorporate regional collaborations or partnerships.

## Part 3: What can be funded

### 2022–23 priority themes

Each year, the program funds activities aligned to priority themes of the Environmental Trust Strategic Plan 2020–24.

The priority themes for 2022–23 are:

**Theme 1:**

Addressing climate change impacts on the natural environment – both mitigation and adaptation.

**Theme 2:**

Supporting threatened species recovery.

**Grants are available for projects involving activities that address either or both priority themes.**

## Eligible and ineligible activities

### Eligible activities

Table 2 below provides examples of activities that may be funded through the program. Activities are not limited to the examples provided.

Further guidance and examples to assist applicants with linking practical activities with either or both the immediate funding priorities is available in the **Developing your application guide**, available on the program webpage.

The extent to which an application addresses these priorities will be considered when assessing applications.

**Table 2 Examples of activities eligible for grant funding**

Item	Description
Administration and accounting	Capped at 10% of the total grant. Administration can cover office related overheads associated with delivery of a project (e.g., office supplies, accounting fees including final audit).
Consultancies/Contractors	Appointment of external specialists to manage the project or deliver specific project components (e.g., workshop presenter, field event guest speakers, social researchers). Alignment with NSW Government procurement standards is expected to be followed when sourcing these services. A link to the standards is available in Part 8: More information.
Educational resources	Materials and production costs to create project specific resources (e.g., booklets, signage, app and website development). Note: General organisational app and website development costs, including ongoing maintenance of these platforms, cannot be paid for using Trust funding.

Item	Description
<p>Employment of project staff (either in-house through salary plus on-costs, or an externally appointed contractor)</p>	<p>Staff may be employed with the use of project funds under one of two options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1: a merit-based, advertised, recruitment process for a new staff member.</li> <li>• Option 2: Direct appointment of an existing staff member who has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Previously been appointed through a competitive and transparent recruitment process (i.e., merit based and advertised) when first engaged with the organisation and who now has additional capacity to be appointed to the project under a new contract or is part-time and being employed for additional hours.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Alternatively, a contractor can be appointed to manage the project – see ‘Consultancies/Contractors’ below.</p>
Facilities hire	Rental of appropriate spaces to facilitate project delivery to its target audiences. This may also include licensing for digital platforms to deliver content (e.g., Teams, Zoom).
Internal capacity building	Training and/or up-skilling project staff in specialist areas required to successfully deliver project components (e.g., short-course related costs to attend seminars or training).
On-ground activity demonstrations	Production of demonstration materials associated with education outcomes (e.g., GPS trackers, cameras for monitoring wildlife). Where these materials can be hired or borrowed on a short-term basis, this approach is encouraged.
Promotion and media	Costs associated with promotion of a project event or outcome (e.g., local media advertising to promote a workshop).
Transport and accommodation	Travel related logistics required for successful project delivery (e.g., overnight accommodation for guest speakers at events).
Other items	If uncertain whether a proposed item or activity is eligible for funding, please contact the Trust to discuss.

## Ineligible activities

Table 3 below describes examples of activities which cannot be funded through the program. This list is not exhaustive. If you need further guidance, please contact Trust Administration.

**Table 3 Examples of activities not eligible for grant funding**

Item	Description
Administration (non-project-related)	Operational costs of organisations that are not project specific. Project related administration cannot exceed 10% of the total grant funds.
Administration (organisational)	Organisational administrative/operational costs not specifically related to the project.
Capital expenditure	Infrastructure and large capital item purchases (e.g., vehicles, construction). Small capital equipment purchases are allowed where it can be demonstrated to be more cost effective to purchase than to lease for the life of the project. Costs for capital items should generally not exceed 20% of the total project budget.
Core business	Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or educational institutions. ‘Core business’ can be difficult to define as it varies by organisation, but generally, it is considered the essential business or legal responsibility of an organisation. The Trust will consider funding works that are related to core business but additional to the organisation’s usual work or responsibilities.
Cost recoupment	Funding cannot be used on any activities that have commenced before the grant is offered and accepted, including application development. Activities should be planned to commence after 1 August 2023.
Cost shifting	Reimbursement of salaries of existing state or local government staff who will be supervising or working on the project unless it can be demonstrated that salaries have not already been budgeted for. (See examples in Developing your application guide).
Devolved grants	Projects that fund devolved grants (i.e., projects offering grants to other organisations). Trust funds must be managed directly by the applicant or their appointed administrator, and all financial transactions must be managed in line with the approved budget and NSW Government Procurement Policy.
Existing commitments	Ongoing maintenance of projects to which organisations have committed as part of a previous grant or their core business operations.



## Part 4: Program governance

### Technical Review Committee

Selection of the Trust’s Environmental Education grants is a statewide, merit-based process. The Trust establishes an independent Technical Review Committee (TRC) for each grant program to assess applications against relevant assessment criteria. These committees are made up of people with knowledge and experience relevant to each grant program and include at least one representative of community groups and one representative of industry. All members of the Environmental Education TRC have significant environmental education qualifications, experience and expertise. It should be noted that the TRC is not the final decision maker. The TRC makes recommendations for projects to be funded, which are forwarded to the Trust Board for its consideration.

### Probity

The Trust places high importance on the integrity and transparency of program and project governance. All funded projects must be delivered in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements as specified in a funding agreement, as well as other accepted governance and project management standards. Project performance reviews are conducted annually by the Trust, which include an assessment of grantee compliance with their funding agreement.

### Procurement

Value for money in project delivery is a priority for the Trust. To conform to relevant governance and probity standards, the Trust requires all grantees to follow NSW Government Procurement Policy (refer to link provided in **Part 8: More information**). This relates to all major budget items, such as purchase of materials or engagement of contractors. It also includes ensuring that goods and services are only paid for once they have been satisfactorily delivered.

All contractors (including consultants) must be chosen on their merits and ability to effectively deliver the work. Grantees will select contractors or consultants using a competitive process. The Grantee Guide to Procurement for Environmental Trust Projects (refer to link provided in **Part 8: More information**) provides a summary of the NSW Government policy requirements.

### Statement of business ethics

All providers of goods and services, including project managers and project partners, are required to observe the following principles when carrying out work on the funded project:

- help prevent unethical practices in business relationships
- declare actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

All contracted and sub-contracted staff, or associated staff, are expected to comply with the Department of Planning and Environment Statement of Business Ethics. If sub-contractors are employed as part of a project, they must be made aware of this statement and the Trust’s expectation that they will abide by it. A link to the Statement of Business Ethics is available in **Part 8: More information**.

## Conflicts of interest

All staff and contractors are required to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to the Trust relating to the project. This may be at the time of application development or during the implementation of a project, if funded. Conflicts of interest may relate to such areas as procurement, grants, direct negotiations, sponsorships, partnerships, third party service provisions. Examples of conflict of interest are found in the **Developing your application guide**.

## Recruitment

The Trust supports the employment of new or existing staff to manage and implement projects and will pay for their salaries where:

- additional hours/days can be clearly demonstrated to relate to existing staff being appointed to a new project
- the Trust is not effectively reimbursing an organisation for salaries it has already budgeted for (cost shifting), or for work that is part of its core business
- a competitive process is run for new Trust funded employment opportunities
- recruitment using Trust funds is transparent and accountable.

To demonstrate transparency of the recruitment process, grantees will be required to provide supporting information demonstrating how the selection was made. This information will need to be provided with either the first milestone report or in subsequent milestone reports if new staff are either recruited or replaced. Information required (where relevant) will include:

- evidence of advertisement (either external or internal)
- number of applicants interviewed, and date of the interview panel convened
- copy of the internal document used for recording and approving employment of the staff member at the conclusion of the recruitment process.

Recruitment of staff should only occur once a grant has been awarded.

## Third party assistance

Lead organisations are encouraged to collaborate with project partners during development and implementation of a project, however, careful consideration is required around establishment of any commercial relationships. Lead organisations are welcome to seek third party assistance to develop their project and complete their application, however, any costs associated with this service cannot be reimbursed using Trust funding.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring transparent and equitable access to government funded opportunities. Third parties who have assisted in the development of an application may bid for Trust funded work if the grant is awarded. However, grantees must clearly demonstrate that they have ruled out any potential or perceived conflicts of interest during the recruitment of any third-party contractors by implementing transparent processes and providing adequate justification for their selection. Grantees must demonstrate that no competitive or commercial advantage was gained by third parties as a result of their involvement in project planning.

## Privacy

The Trust uses the information supplied by applicants for processing and assessing applications. While we do not publicly release applications as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or other lawful requirement. A link to the Act is available in **Part 8: More information**.

The Trust may also disclose information supplied to us for the purpose of evaluating and/or auditing its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.

## General obligations

Signing the funding agreement commits the grantee to the following general obligations:

- comply with all conditions contained in the funding agreement
- provide evidence of appropriate insurance coverage on request
- start the project within a month of signing the funding agreement
- seek prior approval for budget changes greater than 10% (while being aware that project administration costs should never be more than 10% of the project costs)
- seek prior approval from the Trust to alter proposed outputs, outcomes or timeframes
- provide milestone reports in accordance with the Trust's reporting guidelines
- acknowledge the Trust's support in any promotional materials or public statements about a project, including use of the NSW Government logo in published materials
- be prepared for all knowledge gained as part of the grant to be made publicly available, whether that be publishing of the final report or promoting the project via other avenues available to the Trust
- the standard conditions of the funding agreement will not be changed at the request of grantees.

## Part 5: Developing your project concept

In recent years, the program has focused on funding projects which seek to create a consciousness shift in target audiences toward adopting lasting, environmentally sustainable behaviours. Rather than using traditional approaches based on incentives or regulations, which often only result in temporary behaviour change, applicants are encouraged to design projects which generate transformative learning outcomes.

### Transformative learning for sustainability

Transformative learning is about eliciting changes in the identity of the learner<sup>1</sup> through motivation, practice and feedback. It is about challenging underlying beliefs and frames of reference about an attitude and world belief, through critical reflection, open discourse and implementing new understandings into practice.<sup>2</sup> An overview of the Theoretical Framework Behind the Program is provided in the Developing your application guide to help guide the thinking behind an application.

### Guiding principles of environmental education projects

Designing a project underpinned by a theory of change which leads to transformative learning outcomes involves forward thinking and careful planning. Figure 1 and Table 4 provides a set of guiding principles for effective and impactful environmental and/or sustainability education projects, which should be reflected in all applications.

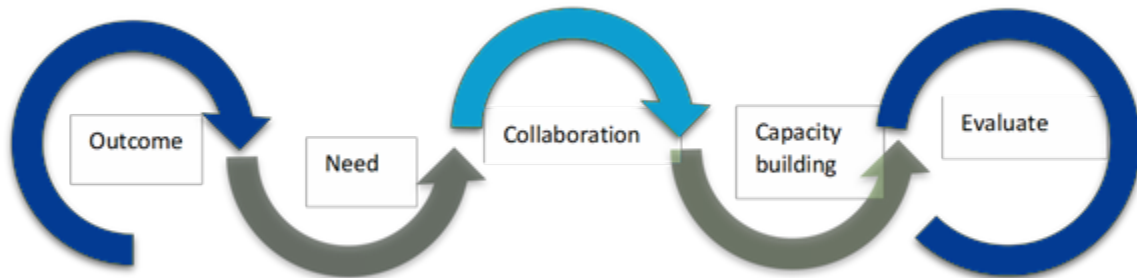


Figure 1 Guiding principles of environmental education projects

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<sup>1</sup> Illieris K 2014, Transformative Learning and Identity, Journal of Transformative Education, vol.12(2), pp.148-163.

<sup>2</sup> Meziro J et al. 2000, Learning as Transformation, Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco pp. 3-33

**Table 4 Guiding principles of environmental education projects**

<p><b>Environmental outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and understand the environmental problem being addressed.</li> <li>• Understand and clearly demonstrate the theory of change underlying a project (i.e., how the project proposal will improve the environmental problem).</li> <li>• Look beyond the traditional focus on single behaviours to broader approaches considering practices, values, worldviews, and changes in organisations and institutions. For tips and examples on designing best practice environmental education project, applicants are encouraged to read the <i>Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the target audience (e.g., Who are they? Where are they located? Why target them?)</li> <li>• Explore and build evidence on the target audience needs (e.g., What are their typical behaviours, characteristics, values, and worldviews?)</li> <li>• Understand appropriate ways to engage and educate the target audience to inform the project design and delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify relevant collaborators (or partners)</li> <li>• Establish how collaborators can add value to the scoping, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the project</li> <li>• Indicate how collaborators will be actively involved in the project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how the project will enhance the skills and capacity of the target audience or collaborators</li> <li>• Capacity building and training is integral in developing sustained behaviour and skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation and dissemination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify evaluation techniques that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ measure the success of the project (i.e., have changes occurred in the practices of the target audience that will result in an environmental outcome?)</li> <li>○ ensure continuous improvement based on findings</li> <li>○ share education and engagement outcomes (e.g., approaches, tools, resources).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Target audience

The target audience is the demographic that the project activities will seek to engage. Understanding the target audience is perhaps the most crucial component when designing an education project. Applicants should carefully consider a community’s characteristics including geographic location, socioeconomic status, specific needs, values, drivers, and interests.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read ‘Theory of change’ in the **Developing your application guide** when considering the target audience.

## Part 6: Application and assessment

The program has a single stage application process.

Applications must be registered and submitted in the online Grants Management System (GMS), available on the program webpage and must meet the following conditions:

- projects must aim to commence between 1 July and 31 August 2023
- projects under Tier 1 must end no later than 31 August 2026
- projects under Tier 2 must end no later than 31 August 2028.

**Table 5 Grant round timeframes**

Step	Timeframe	Process
1	12 September 2022	Applications open in the GMS.
2	7 November 2022	Applications close.
3	November 2022 – February 2023	The Technical Review Committee review each application using the assessment criteria and recommend projects for funding to the Trust. Trust staff may also contact applicants or their nominated referees for further information about an application.
4	March – April 2023	The Trust, having considered the Committee's recommendations, determined which applicants will receive funding. Decisions by the Trust are final. There is no appeal process.
5	April – May 2023	Successful applicants will be notified by Trust staff. Successful applicants may not receive the full amount requested and funding may be subject to special conditions. A summary of each successful project will be published on the Trust website. Unsuccessful applicants are advised of the outcome and encouraged to contact the Trust for feedback on their application.
6	May – June 2023	Project planning including mandatory workshops for review and refinement of the workplan to support the delivery, communication and subsequent reporting for the project, issuing of funding agreements and first payments.
7	July-August 2023	Projects commence.

### Assessment criteria and process

All applications are assessed against the criteria outlined below in Table 6 by each member of the TRC. After individual assessment, the TRC meet to discuss and agree on project rankings and which projects will be recommended to the Trust for funding consideration.



**Table 6 Assessment criteria****Criterion 1: Environmental outcome (20% weighting)**

- Clear explanation of the environmental problem (aligned with the Trust’s Strategic Plan 2020–24 priorities) and sustainability challenges to be addressed (i.e., need is clearly demonstrated).
- Likelihood the project will make a difference to this problem. Clear description of the theory of change underlying the project and the inclusion of more systemic and transformative approaches (considering practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change).
- Demonstrated evidence that similar or existing programs/projects are not duplicated (this does not include expansion of pilot projects or implementation of plans developed through previous programs/projects).
- Degree of originality or innovation of a proposed approach (not essential).

**Criterion 2: Target audience (20% weighting)**

- Clear specification and understanding of target audience.
- Likely impact of target audience communication and engagement strategy.
- Extent to which project activities build capacity of target audience.

**Criterion 3: Project team and collaborators (20% weighting)**

- Strength and appropriateness of the collaboration.
- Demonstrated engagement of collaborators in developing proposal and commitment to involvement in project.
- Relevance of project team expertise.
- Relevance of expertise of collaborators.

**Criterion 4: Project planning (20% weighting)**

- Quality of the project plan to show how the proposed activities will facilitate behavioural and systemic changes.
- Proposed changes in behaviours and systems, and the activities and resources that facilitate these are measurable, either quantitatively and/or qualitatively.
- Clear explanation of how the project, including research and testing phases, will be evaluated and disseminated.
- How well the project plan incorporates measures to monitor and address identified risk factors.
- Feasible timeframe for achieving proposed outcomes and outputs.

**Criterion 5: Value for money (20% weighting)**

- Extent to which the budget supports the proposed activities and resources, and whether it will ensure the viability of the project overall.
- The likely environmental/sustainability impact of the proposal relative to the amount of program funds sought.
- Appropriateness of the mix in the total budget for materials and other direct project costs and in-kind contributions to the project.
- Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to continue to support the project’s outcomes beyond the life of the grant.
- Transferability for dissemination of project outcomes.

## Part 7: Managing a grant

### Starting work

Successful grant recipients (grantees) will be notified by May 2023. Grantees will then be required to undertake a project planning process from June to July 2023. This will involve formalisation of the grant via a funding agreement. Trust staff will also work with grantees to further develop their project workplan to guide delivery of the project, including a research and testing phase.

Project activities can commence from 1 August 2023.

### Funding agreement

Before activities commence, grantees must sign a funding agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of the grant and outlines a schedule of milestones, including reporting and funding instalments. A draft copy of a standard funding agreement will be provided when project planning commences. Note that the standard conditions of this agreement will not be changed. The Trust may also place additional conditions that are specific to the project. A Grants Administrator will discuss these conditions with the grantee. The final version of the funding agreement will be issued on completion of the project planning process once the workplan has been reviewed and approved.

### Workplan

Lead applicants are required to submit a draft workplan including project outcomes and associated activities, measures and associated outputs, dates and budget amounts for each activity in their application. Successful grantees are then asked to review and refine the workplan during the research and testing phase. The workplan is designed to help grantees and the Trust gauge the impact of a project and be used as a reference point for annual milestone reporting to the Trust. It will also build on the findings from the research and testing phase.

### Research and testing

The Trust encourages grantees to incorporate a research phase into their project to provide an evidence base from which assumptions can be tested. If existing evidence from thorough social research is already available, grantees can opt out of conducting further research. A testing phase is, however, compulsory for all successful grantees.

**Tier 2 grantees and their key collaborators** will be required to attend free 'kickstart' workshops early in the project to assist with design of their research and testing phase and finalisation of their project workplans.

## During a project

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Trust requires effective and consistent evidence-based monitoring of project activities. Grantees must demonstrate how they will monitor project activities by identifying and building monitoring techniques into their workplan. The use of monitoring methods will vary depending on the nature of the work being carried out, however, the Trust aims to ensure that minimum standards are created by establishing the following:

- consistent monitoring methods are used to measure activity implementation and progress, e.g., participant surveys, data audits, photo monitoring, etc.
- benchmarks/baseline data at the commencement of projects and individual activities that may be used to clearly demonstrate the outcomes being achieved over the life of a project.

Evaluation methods may vary between projects, however, they should occur as part of the project's annual review (incorporating adaptive management concepts) and reporting process. This may involve working with relevant stakeholders/partners to examine the implementation of a project workplan over the previous stage, assessing strengths and weaknesses, then integrating improvements (for both activities and timing) into a revised work plan for the following year.

### Reporting

Grantees are required to prepare and submit milestone reports periodically throughout their projects via the online Grants Management System (GMS). Milestone reports are typically required every 12 months. The due dates will be confirmed in the funding agreement. A report on the outcomes from the research and testing phase will also be required at its conclusion.

Each milestone report allows grantees to provide details on activities, achievements, and expenditure. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the project workplan. Each report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with relevant technical expertise. Where a report demonstrates that the project is progressing well, the next funding instalment is authorised, and the grantee is provided with feedback on their report.

The Trust recognises that variations to projects are sometimes necessary, and these can be applied for online throughout the life of a project via the GMS. Trust staff will then contact grantees to finalise the outcome of each variation request.

### Invoicing

A tax invoice (subject to GST if applicable) is required for each milestone payment at the time the instalment is due.

## Completing a project

When a project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final milestone report via the GMS, reflecting on achievements of the project's expected outcomes. As with all milestone reports, the final report will be reviewed by a representative of the Trust.

Trust staff will provide the grantee with project feedback, and if the requirements of the grant agreement have been met, the grant will be formally acquitted.

## Part 8: More information

### About the Trust

- [NSW Environmental Trust homepage](#)
- [NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020–24](#)

### Best Practice Environmental Education guide

- [Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide](#)

### Governance related issues

- [NSW Government Procurement Policy](#)
- [Grantee Guide to Procurement for Environmental Trust Projects](#)
- [Department of Planning and Environment Statement of Business Ethics Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009](#)
- [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009](#)

### Other resources

- [NSW Government logo](#)
- [Grants Management System User Manual](#)