

# Improving farm water for livestock and biodiversity



## Program guidelines

An incentive program to assist landholders improve the water quality of farm dams and other water bodies which are regularly used by livestock on their farm.

*This program is supported by Murray Local Land Services, through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund*



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



Future  
Drought  
Fund



Local Land  
Services

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## Grazing Management

The landowner will exclude livestock grazing from each site for a minimum period of four (4) years after planting or seeding to allow for enhancement works and natural regeneration of native species to establish.

Following the 4-year exclusion, grazing of the site is permitted under certain conditions and is to be managed solely to enhance the quality of native vegetation, soil and water.

Grazing must not occur at any time between the months of November to January when native plants are setting seed (most native grasses, saltbushes, wattles, forbs and herbs set seed in late spring and summer).

Grazing should not exceed four two-week periods in any one year.

Grazing must not occur if the site is waterlogged, this prevents pugging and compaction of the soil.

Supplementary feed must not be brought into the project site as this can introduce weeds into the site.

Should the landholder identify a significant risk to the site (such as increased fire risk, incursion of weedy species), grazing may be permitted after consulting a representative of Murray LLS.

## 8. Assessment and notification process

In general terms, applications will be assessed on whether they align with desired outcomes of the program, provide public benefit, deliver long-term outcomes and represent good value for money.

Specifically:

1. Assessment will be undertaken by the Project Officer in relation to the eligibility criteria.
2. An Evaluation Panel will be convened and will assess projects deemed to meet the eligibility criteria. The Evaluation Panel will comprise two (2) Murray Local Land Services staff and one (1) independent panel member with relevant expertise in the field.
3. The Evaluation Panel will assess projects according to the Evaluation Criteria and rank them in order of highest to lowest. The Evaluation Criteria will be based on:
  - *The scale of the project and the water body, the connectivity of the site to existing native vegetation and other water bodies, the expected improvements in water quality and biodiversity, value for money, the type of work(s) being proposed and the location of the proposed project.*
4. Applications will then be offered funding in ranked order until the allocated funding is expended
5. Successful applications will receive a site visit to confirm site and project details and produce an accurate map of the project site to be used in the Management Agreement.
6. Where an on-site assessment is undertaken, and there is found to be significant variation between information provided during the application process and data collected on-site, Murray Local Land Services reserves the right to review the project ranking for that project. Any changes to the assessment will be based on advice from the Murray LLS staff member completing the site assessment and will require the Evaluation Panel to review such projects.
7. Any applications that meet the assessment criteria but do not receive funding due to higher ranked applications exhausting the available funding, will be placed on a second round offer list in order of ranking. If further funding becomes available offers may then be allocated in order of that ranking by the panel using the same principles/process as outlined in this plan.
8. Any disputes over eligibility or ranking will be resolved by the Evaluation Panel.
9. The program aims to ensure some geographical spread of projects across the Murray LLS region so projects can act as local demonstrations to encourage adoption of improved practices. Murray LLS will reserve the right to review application rankings to achieve a spread of projects accordingly.

If this is required it will be undertaken to the minimum extent necessary to achieve this spread. The aim is not to achieve an even spread of projects across the Murray LLS region, however, the program aims to provide as much geographical diversity as possible, without compromising on the quality or expected outcomes of individual projects and the program in general.

10. In the event the program does not receive sufficient eligible applications to achieve the outcomes required, MLLS reserve the right to make direct approaches to landholders or community groups to help identify projects that would contribute to the program outcomes. Any projects that are developed in this way will be subject to the same funding conditions and expectations of those projects developed through the open call process.

Contracts will be offered to eligible project proponents until program funds are exhausted. All works will be funded through a standard contract linked to the application. The contract will require ongoing maintenance of the works for a 10 year period and the submission of (basic) monitoring and evaluation information, such as the provision of photo point monitoring.

Once a fully executed contract is received by Murray Local Land Services, up to 75% of the maximum grant application will be provided to the applicant to be spent on works and activities related to the project. A minimum of 25% of the total funding will be retained until the project is fully implemented to the satisfaction of Murray Local Land Services. Landholders will be required to provide evidence (via a compliant Tax Invoice and Receipt) of all expenditures related to the project and provide documentary evidence of (any) in-kind contribution(s).

## **9. Application feedback**

If your application is not successful, you will receive notification. Landholders may seek feedback about why it was not supported by contacting Mrs Melinda Ritchie – Land Services Officer on 02 6051 2200..

## **10. How your information is used**

The information you provide to Murray Local Land Services in your application will be stored and used in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

By signing the funding agreement, you provide consent for Murray Local Land Services to use this information to communicate to the public about the program. This may include publishing communication articles on our website, Facebook page and other communication channels and products, as required.

## **11. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment**

It is the responsibility of the Local Land Services and the landholder to ensure due diligence takes place with respect to Aboriginal cultural heritage values. If the application is successful, a site assessment may be required, with the clear intent to protect cultural heritage.

## **12. Compliance with existing State and Commonwealth Legislation**

Local Land Services only approves the amount of funding for your project. This does not authorise you to implement the project. You must ensure that your project has all necessary approvals, licenses, permits, consents, etc. and that your project complies with all relevant legislation.

## 13. How to submit your application

If you believe that your project fits the criteria, you can lodge an application form, found on our website. Alternatively, contact Murray Local Land Services to receive an email or hard copy application which will be mailed to interested landholders upon request.

Application forms will be assessed if they are received or post-marked by 5 pm on Friday 8th October, 2021. You will receive an acknowledgement to confirm receipt of your application form. Email your application form to: [farmwater.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:farmwater.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, you can post your application form to: Murray Local Land Services, Farm Water Project Application, PO Box 797, Albury, NSW 2640.

Late applications may be received, however, will not be assessed against applications that have been received by the closure time. Should the project be under-subscribed after all on time applications have been assessed and eligible applications awarded, late applications may then be considered.

## 14. Useful resources

Landholders requiring further information are encouraged to review the following:

### WEBINARS AND FARM CASE STUDY VIDEO LINKS

Improving farm dams: a farmers perspective  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsgQM84dfSY>

Farm Dam Enhancements for Multiple Benefits by Sustainable Farms  
<http://www.sustainablefarms.org.au/fielddays/enhancing-farm-dams-webinar-recording-now-available>

Farm Dam Blitz – making wildlife welcome  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clxfkq\\_NjTY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clxfkq_NjTY)

### FACT SHEETS AND WRITTEN RESOURCES

#### Improving Farm Dams

Enhancing your farm dam by Greta Landcare Group  
<http://gretalandcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Enhancing-Your-Farm-Dam.pdf>

Enhancing farm dams by Sustainable Farms  
[http://sustainablefarms.org.au/sites/default/files/Farm%20dams%20brochure%20v3\\_online.pdf](http://sustainablefarms.org.au/sites/default/files/Farm%20dams%20brochure%20v3_online.pdf)

Enhancing farm dams: What to plant in and around your dam  
[http://www.sustainablefarms.org.au/sites/default/files/Farm%20Dam%20Planting%20Guide%20brochure%208.2\\_low%20res.pdf](http://www.sustainablefarms.org.au/sites/default/files/Farm%20Dam%20Planting%20Guide%20brochure%208.2_low%20res.pdf)

The farm dam handbook  
[https://www.waternsw.com.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/113687/FarmDamFinalLR.pdf](https://www.waternsw.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/113687/FarmDamFinalLR.pdf)

Revegetation

Revegetation Resources by Holbrook Landcare  
<https://holbrooklandcare.org.au/holbrook-landcare-revegetation-guide/>

Revegetation Resources by Local Land Services

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/murray/articles,-plans-and-publications/nrm-news-november-2020/thinking-of-planting-or-seeding-native-vegetation-start-planning-now>.

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

Increased livestock weight gain from improved water quality in farm dams: A cost-benefit analysis  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0256089>

## 15. More Information

Any queries or questions can be emailed to: [farmwater.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:farmwater.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, contact:

Mrs Melinda Ritchie  
Land Services Officer  
Murray LLS Albury.  
Ph: 02 6051 2200  
Mobile 0447 839 755

Mr Adrian Smith  
Senior Land Services Officer  
Murray LLS Deniliquin  
Ph: 03 5881 9900  
Mobile: 0447 778 515