

Erosion intervention and waterway protection in the West Hume area

Guidelines

28 March 2023



A program to assist landholders protect waterways through changed land management practices including erosion prevention and early intervention.

This program is supported by Murray Local Land Services through funding from the NSW Environmental Trust

1. Program Description

Sedimentation as a result of gully and streambank erosion is a major factor in waterway health decline and the loss of critical aquatic refuges in the Murray region. With increased high-intensity rainfall and reduced stream-flow reliability as a result of climate change, these refuges become even more critically important.

This project is a partnership between West Hume Landcare and Murray Local Land Services to protect waterways through changed land management practices which will reduce the impacts of sedimentation. Murray LLS and West Hume Landcare will work with landholders to develop erosion management plans, carry out on ground works and develop skills in prevention and early intervention. Erosion Management Plans will consider land capability, farm management, infrastructure, current management issues and natural assets such as creek lines and remnant vegetation.

The program will run for two and a half years and comprises two stages:

Stage 1: Call for Expressions of Interest to participate in project. 'First in first served' approach; the first 15 enquiries will be selected to participate in the project, and will receive a property visit, technical assessment of erosion sites and an erosion management plan tailored for their property.

Stage 2: Five (5) project participants from Stage 1 will be selected through a competitive prioritisation process via an assessment panel to receive funding for on-ground works to address gully erosion. Works may include earthworks, fencing and revegetation. The total combined amount of funding available for all project participants is \$89,405 (ex GST).

Project participants will be selected in Stage 1 through a 'first in first served' approach. Incentive funding will be allocated in Stage 2 through a competitive application process assessed against criteria outlined in this document. The application process and anticipated timeframes are detailed in the table below:

Project stage	Anticipated timing
Stage 1	
EOI opens	Wednesday 5 th April 2023
Last day to submit EOI	Wednesday 26 th April 2023
Property visit & technical assessment	Monday 15 th May – Thursday 25 th May 2023
Erosion Management Plans distributed	From Monday 12 th June 2023
Stage 2	
Notification of project participants eligible for funding	31 st August 2023
Deadline to sign agreements outlining works to be funded, in-kind contributions, maintenance, and monitoring	20 th September 2023
Deadline for completion of on-ground works	31 st May 2024
Deadline for completion of project site monitoring (including photo points)	31 st May 2025

2. What can I receive funding for (Stage 2)?

Eligible activities and expenses

The table below details the eligible activities and the level of funding that applies to them under Stage 2 of this program. The total combined amount of funding available for all project participants is \$89,405 (ex GST). The amount of funding received by individual project participants will depend on the extent and nature of the recommended on ground works.

Eligible activities	Funding available
Fencing	Fencing materials for the construction of fences at a rate of \$5 per m
Revegetation	Plants (including trees, shrubs and grasses) and consumables associated with planting (including stakes and guards), and direct seeding (including seed and seeding costs) of species that are indigenous to the locality of the project site. 100% of the cost of materials and seeding costs, including planting costs where done by a contractor.
Major gully erosion works	Earthworks, including gully control structures, diversion banks, gully shaping, contours and flumes depending on nature and severity of gully erosion at each site. A maximum of three (3) gully erosion works sites across all properties will be funded through this project.

All funded projects must comply with Australian Standards (including installation) where required by regulation. Installations must comply with the manufacturer's instructions and use licensed tradespeople when required by legislation, council regulation or the manufacturer's instructions. Works on waterfront land may require a controlled activity approval and in some cases development approval from local council. This is the responsibility of the farm business. West Hume Landcare and Murray Local Land Services are not liable in any way in relation to or in connection with the Eligible Project, other than as expressed in the Guidelines.

Ineligible activities and expenses

- Activities that may have a significant adverse impact on indigenous cultural heritage and which have not received approval through relevant state or territory legislative requirements
- Activities that involve planting of species (including native species) that are known to be, or could become, environmental or agricultural weeds in or near the project location
- Activities that will or could have adverse impacts on downstream landholders or sites
- Enlarging, deepening or construction of new water bodies.
- Projects, activities, or purchases already undertaken prior to written approval-in-principle of the grant application.

This list is not exhaustive and grant recipients will be notified prior to entering into an agreement which items are eligible to receive funding.

Budget

The budget (amount of funding being requested) will be determined by the landholder and Murray LLS. This includes any in-kind contribution (such as your labour, time, materials, maintenance etc). Should the total value of eligible participants budgets be less than the amount of funding available, additional participants may be offered funding, at the discretion of West Hume Landcare and Murray LLS.

3. Project and applicant eligibility

Applicants must:

- properties must be located within the West Hume Landcare footprint (see map, page 6) and landowners must be a Local Land Services ratepayer (property size 10 ha or more).
- have no outstanding debts to Local Land Services, or have already entered into, and are complying with, a payment plan
- be willing to enter into a written agreement with Local Land Services and undertake certain works in accordance with set specifications and agreed timeframes
- be an Australian citizen,
- applicant (or auspicing organisation) must be registered for tax purposes in Australia and have an Australian bank account,
- be willing to declare any conflicts of interest when submitting an application. Persons who have associations that are considered by West Hume Landcare and/or Local Land Services to represent a conflict of interest which cannot be managed will not be eligible
- have public liability insurance for a minimum of \$10 million to be considered for funding
- abide by and implement as required all Local, State, and Federal Government laws, regulations, and Acts as they are relevant to an individual project
- be able to complete all on-ground activities by the contract end date.

4. Conflict of interest

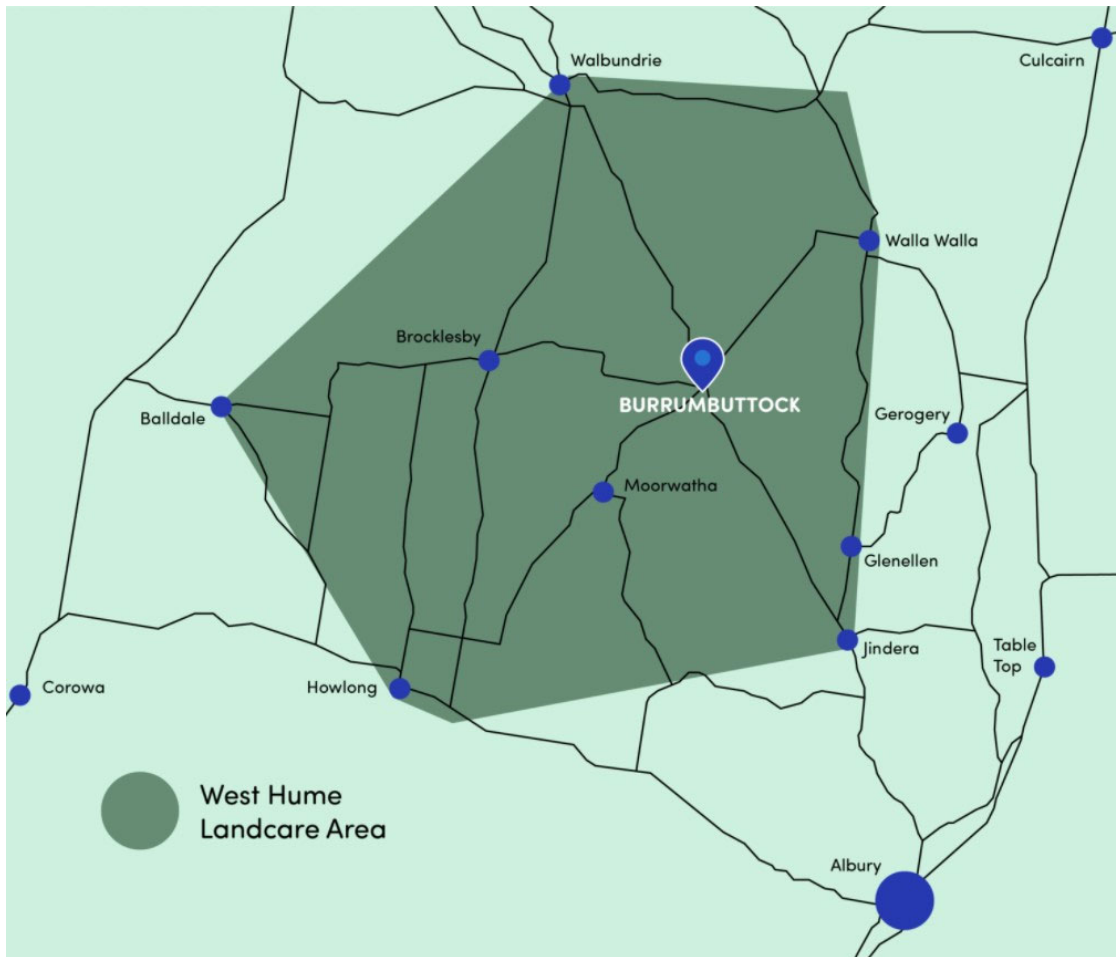
West Hume Landcare staff and committee members are required to avoid conflicts of interest where possible, identify and disclose any conflicts of interest and carefully manage any conflicts in an open and transparent way. In the event of a conflict of interest being identified the WHL conflict of interest form will be completed

Local Land Services staff and board members are required to identify and declare conflicts of interest so that they can be managed in an open and transparent way. This policy extends to external parties or individuals who may be associated with Local Land Services staff or Local Land Services board members through immediate family relationships, close friendships or business relationships. Should a conflict be identified, a conflict of interest declaration form will be provided to the applicant to complete.

5. Conditions of funding (Stage 2)

If your application is successful, the following conditions of funding will apply:

- you must formally commit to undertaking your project by entering into a Funding Agreement with Murray Local Land Services
- you must not commence your project until you have signed a contract with Local Land Services
- the total combined amount of funding available is \$89,405 (ex GST). The amount of funding received by individual project participants will depend on the extent and nature of the recommended on ground works.
- payment of up to 75% of the requested grant amount upon the execution of a compliant contract with Murray Local Land Services. The remainder of the grant funds will be provided upon successful completion of works and a final inspection conducted by a Local Land Services staff member of the contracted works
- if the works are deemed unsatisfactory, the final payment may be withheld, funds recovery action may be taken and restrictions on future funding may occur. Appropriate measures to remedy the issue will be discussed
- **all contracted works must be completed by 31st May 2024** within the project area (see map below). Note that an inspection will be carried out by Murray Local Land Services staff to verify the successful completion of the project
- you must agree to allow Murray Local Land Services to publish information about you and your project on our website, Facebook page and other communication channels and products as required by Murray Local Land Services
- if your project is funded you will be required to undertake basic monitoring of your project's environmental outcomes for 10 years, such as photo point monitoring. This monitoring information will assist Local Land Services to assess project and applicant successes and is necessary to justify future funding rounds
- if your project is funded you will be required to undertake ongoing maintenance of the site (monitoring and removing weeds and maintaining stock proof fences) for a minimum of 10 years



6. Project standards

To be eligible to participate in this program, certain minimum standards are to be applied to aspects of projects.

Fencing Standards

All fencing supported by this project will be constructed using new materials. The preferred materials and construction methodology is as follows:

- No barbed wire is to be used
- Minimum of 7 lines of high tensile plain wires or a combination of plain wires and 7/90/30 hinged joint
- Maximum line post spacing of 5 metres apart (8 metres in flat plains country)
- Site must contain at least one permanent gate for site access, minimum 12 feet wide
- End assemblies are to be appropriate to soil type
- Electrified wires may be used, but fence must be stock proof without the power on, in case of electrical failure.
- Variations to this standard may be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, in all

circumstances, the fencing must be permanent, wildlife friendly and stock proof.

- Any clearing of native vegetation deemed necessary for the construction of the fence line must be to the minimum extent necessary and be undertaken in accordance with allowable activities under the Local Land Services Act 2013.
- Fencing under this project adjoining waterways, wetlands and drainage lines must be located a minimum of 20m out from the top of bank (or high-water mark for wetlands).

Stock Water Supply

Contributions to the establishment of reticulation water systems will be considered where fencing excludes livestock from an area that serves as a current permanent water source. Landholders can apply for support in providing alternative water access points to the immediate paddocks that are affected by exclusion of stock.

Vegetation

The landholder will be responsible for preparation of the site for revegetation.

The landholder will source and plant seedlings and/or direct seed using native species suited to the location and landscape at each site.

Plants selected should be local native species, with different species selected for the various zones that are located within the planting site (e.g. wet and bogging areas, fringing zones and dry areas).

If using tree guards, biodegradable tree guards are preferable.

Landholders will be responsible for ensuring invasive pests and weeds are controlled within the project site.

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.

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.

7. Assessment and notification process

In general terms, project participants will be assessed for funding eligibility in Stage 2 against the criteria detailed below.

An Evaluation Panel will be convened and will assess projects deemed to meet the eligibility criteria.

The Evaluation Panel will assess projects according to the Evaluation Criteria and rank them in order of highest to lowest. Final approval for funded projects will be given by the Murray LLS Manager – Biosecurity & Emergency Services.

Evaluation Criteria	Definition	Value
Extent to which project activities contribute to project objectives	Project activities protect waterways in the West Hume Landcare area leading to improved waterway health and water quality through an increase in groundcover, gully head and gully floor stabilisation.	50%
Long term outcomes	The likelihood the project will have outcomes that extend beyond the life of the project	20%
Value for money	High outputs for the level of investment through 1. Size of project site. Fencing larger sites are likely to be more cost effective than smaller sites. 2. Amount of in-kind contribution.	20%
Level of risk	The level of risk involved with delivering the project, for example in terms of likelihood of completing the project or external risks that may impact successful outcomes	10%

Any project participants that meet the assessment criteria but do not receive funding due to higher ranked applications exhausting the available funding, may be placed on a second round offer list. If further funding becomes available offers may then be made using the same principles/process as outlined in this plan.

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.

8. 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 West Hume Landcare and 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.

9. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment

It is the responsibility of 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. If deemed necessary, Local Land Services may request that a site inspection is a condition of the agreement.

10. 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.

11. How to submit your application

If you are experiencing issues with gully erosion on your property, and you are located within the

project area (see map on page 6), you can lodge an EOI form, found on the West Hume Landcare website. Alternatively, contact West Hume Landcare or Local Land Services for assistance with completing the form.

EOI forms will be considered if they are received by 5 pm on Wednesday 26th April 2023 via the online link (accessed through the website) or by emailing a pdf of the application form to: rob@westhumelandcare.org.au. You will receive an acknowledgement to confirm receipt of your EOI form.

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.

12. More information

For any queries or questions, contact:

Rob Cook, Project Officer, West Hume Landcare, 0427 873 604.

Chris Allen, Land Services Officer, Murray LLS, 0407 790 115.