

NSW Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program

Incentive program for riparian projects

[Guidelines and conditions](#)

Round two expressions of interest close on **26 August 2022**.

To lodge an online expression of interest, visit www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fnbr



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About the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program

The Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program is being run until 30 June 2023 and forms part of a suite of environmental measures being delivered under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to improve the health of our native fish populations and water quality by collaborating with landholders and land managers.

The program is being delivered by Local Land Services to protect the sensitive environmental areas of our rivers, creeks and wetlands through incentives grants to deliver works such as fencing and minor erosion control to reduce the impact of livestock on these areas while also improving stock access to water supplies through installing troughs and tanks.

Once complete, these works will provide a direct contribution to the enhancement of native fish outcomes and complement other programs such as the Northern Basin 'Toolkit' measures that are proposed to be undertaken by the NSW Government.

This suite of measures is designed to complement and support the implementation of the Basin Plan, and create opportunities for local communities, including Aboriginal people.

The northern Murray-Darling Basin is home to a network of rivers and wetlands that support a unique mix of ecosystems and Australian wildlife. These ecosystems have evolved over thousands of years in response to the seasonal rainfall and flow patterns that feed the creeks, rivers and wetlands of the region.

Healthy riparian zones support a high diversity of plant and animal life and are a key component of healthy ecosystems. They help maintain bank stability, increase productivity, and help reduce run-off from sedimentation and agricultural chemical into waterways which promotes cleaner water, helps to reduce water temperature and improves native fish outcomes.

The Australian Government has committed up to \$7.5 million for the delivery of the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program in NSW until June 2023.



Australian Government



Introduction

These guidelines contain information for Round 2 of the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program in NSW.

You must read these guidelines before completing your expression of interest. These guidelines provide information on:

- The purpose of the program
- Incentive grant opportunities under the program
- Eligibility and assessment criteria
- How expressions of interest are assessed
- Monitoring and Evaluation of project areas
- Requirements for successful applicants.

Available grants

The Expression of Interest period for this round is from 18 July 2022 to 26 August 2022.

Details on eligible activities and available grants is found in the eligible activities section of this document.

Funding under the NSW Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks is limited, which may mean some incentive projects will not be funded. Local Land Services reserves the right to refuse funding for incentive projects or components which provide insufficient environmental benefit for their cost. Assessment of environmental benefit is at the sole discretion of Local Land Services. Funding amounts listed are GST exclusive. Funding amounts, activities and project standards are subject to change without notice.

Eligibility criteria

The program is being rolled out across the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin (see Figure 1).

Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Grants under the program are available to land holders and land managers including individuals, groups, Aboriginal organisations, non-government organisations, not for-profit organisations, and local government and state government agencies (excluding core functions of government agencies).

If you are not the owner of the land (e.g. a lessee), you will need signed consent to undertake your proposed project.

Who is not eligible to apply for funding?

You are not eligible for funding if:

- Your property is located outside the northern Murray-Darling Basin (See Figure 1)
- You have:
 - outstanding requirements under previous Local Land Services, the National Landcare Program or previous NSW Catchment Management Authority project contracts, including monitoring records
 - outstanding contracts with Local Land Services
 - outstanding debt, including rates, owing to Local Land Services.

Landholders whose land isn't located within the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin but are interested in riparian restoration projects, are encouraged to talk to your regional Local Land Services office to learn what is on offer.

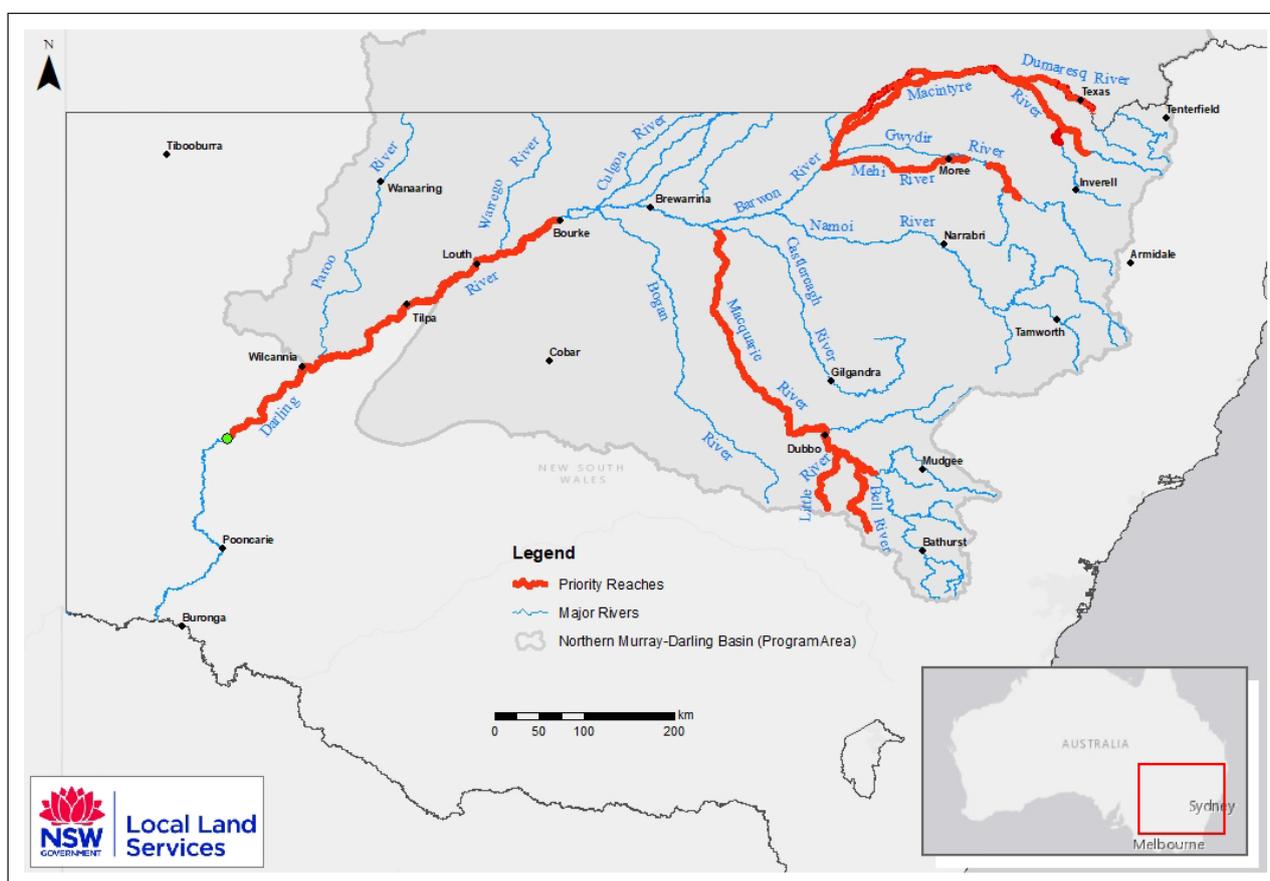
What can the incentive grant money be used for?

Funding under the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program in NSW is available for on-ground projects that help to protect the sensitive environmental areas in riparian zones which will help us to improve native fish habitat.

Eligible locations

Your grant activities must be delivered in the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin (refer to Figure 1 below). Any projects outside the NSW northern Murray-Darling are ineligible under the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program.

Figure 1. Map of the NSW Northern Murray-Darling Basin (Program area)



If your property is outside the program area, contact your Local Land Services office to discuss other opportunities to participate in other programs aimed at delivering healthy floodplains and healthy rivers.

Eligible on-ground activities

Incentive grant monies are offered on a cost-share basis, with cash and/or in-kind contributions from the Landholder. A description of eligible activities can be found in Table 1. Information on contribution ratios and amounts are found in Table 2. Further information about project standards, can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Eligible Activities: description and minimum requirements.

Eligible Activity	Benefit	Minimum requirements
Livestock proof fencing	<p>Allows regeneration to occur, improves groundcover and can also help keep stock away from areas where access for mustering or to the water source may be difficult.</p> <p>Note: Landholders wishing to install a higher standard for fencing, must meet the additional costs of that fencing above the grant contribution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New materials must be used • Must be livestock proof • Can include conventional and/or electric fencing. • Construction without barbed wire is preferred, to allow for the movement of native wildlife. • Landform and minimum distance requirements from waterways will determine location of fence lines. • Please discuss requirements around minimum fencing design with your Local Land Services Case Officer.
Alternate water point	<p>In projects where a waterway is being fenced and a trough is installed as an alternative, there will be an improvement in water quality for stock, and more reliable control of watering points access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to compensate for loss of access to water due to <u>new</u> fencing only
Exotic woody weed control	<p>Weeds can have huge impacts on farm businesses and the environment. Implementing a weed control program improves groundcover, native species diversity and reduces the risk of weed incursions spreading into adjoining farming paddocks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of exotic woody weeds only • Works within the protected riparian zone and an adjacent 50 metre buffer • Applies to first year of project only
Revegetation	<p>Improves habitat and provides protection to native fauna species. May assist in stabilising soil on erosion prone areas, helping maintain bank stability, reducing sedimentation and chemical run-off, providing shade to waterways, and increased amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting of local native species through tubestock or direct seeding within fenced riparian zones where stock access is minimised or excluded. • Eligible activities include purchase of plant material, soil preparation and seeding and/or planting, and labour (flat hourly rate)

Minor Erosion Control	Gully erosion is a significant contributor to sediment in waterways impacting fish habitat and filling up deeper water holes which provide important drought refugia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilisation of erosion gullies and other point sources of river sedimentation such as stock crossings works may be eligible within a protected riparian zone
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Table 2: Incentive grants co-contributions.

Eligible Activity	Landholder Financial Contribution (Cash or In-Kind)	Local Land Services Funding Contribution Cap (Maximum amount is indicative only and not a guaranteed funding amount)
Livestock-proof fencing and alternate water points	<p>Fencing contribution of at least 50% of the total cost of materials and construction of fence.</p> <p><u>And</u></p> <p>Alternate water point contribution of at least 33% of the total cost of materials and construction.</p>	<p>Local Land Services contribution for fencing and alternate water points of combined total of up to a maximum \$10,000/km of fence constructed being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to a maximum of \$7,000/km of fencing constructed, or up to 50% of fencing costs, whichever is lesser <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to a maximum of \$2,000 per alternate water point, or up to 67% of alternate water point costs, whichever is lesser
Exotic woody weed control	Landholder contribution of at least 20% of the total cost of labour and herbicide	Local Land Services Contribution of up to a maximum of \$8,000 or up to 80% of the total costs, whichever is the lesser
Revegetation	Landholder cash or in-kind contribution of at least 50% of total costs	Local Land Services Contribution of up to a maximum of \$4,000 or 50% of total costs, whichever is the lesser
Minor Erosion Control	Landholder cash or in-kind contribution of at least 20% of total costs	Local Land Services Contribution of up to a maximum of \$15,000 or 80% of total costs, whichever is the lesser

Eligible expenditure

Grant monies can only be spent on agreed grant activities as specified in your Land Management Agreement (contract) and associated Works Plan. This may include, for example:

- Materials
- Contractor fees
- Herbicide

If your application is successful, you are required to keep financial records of the project costs you incur and may be asked to provide evidence of the costs associated with your project. Costs need to be incurred between the start date and end, or completion date of your Land Management Agreement to be eligible.

What the grant money cannot be used for

The following provides an overview of the activities are not eligible for funding under the Program. For further information contact your Local Land Services Case Officer:

- Boundary fencing
- Temporary fencing (does not meet project standard)
- Pest animal control
- Activities that have been completed or commenced prior to signing of your Land Management Agreement (Contract)
- Projects that only benefit private individuals or enterprises within the community
- Activities outside the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin
- Activities funded through other Commonwealth or State Government programs and investment
- “Business as usual” activities for which other Commonwealth, State or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- Research and development projects
- Activities related to labour, operational and maintenance costs post project completion.

Assessment Criteria

Grants under the NSW Fencing Northern Riverbanks Program are assessed against the eligibility criteria in the order they are received. Monies may be expended by the time you have lodged your expression of interest (Eol).

Funding under the NSW Fencing Northern Riverbanks Program will be provided on a cost-share basis with Local Land Services. Further details about cost sharing can be found in the ‘Eligible On-ground Activities’ section.

Assessment of Eols is based on the information you provide. Only those projects which best meet the intentions of this program will be funded. Throughout the Program, priority will be given to projects that:

- Are located in identified target river reaches
- Connect riparian corridors along waterways and multiple properties. This may require partnerships with neighbouring landholders / collaborative projects between neighbouring landholders are welcome / encouraged
- Demonstrate a direct positive impact to target river reaches

- Help to protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites and places
- Provide a direct contribution to federal, state, regional and/or local strategies and plans that aim to contribute to improving native fish populations and habitat.

Assessment criteria includes:

- Presence of existing riparian fencing on neighbouring or nearby properties along the reach
- Presence of riparian vegetation in good condition on neighbouring or nearby properties
- Presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage artefacts or places of spiritual significance that would be protected by the project
- Presence of significant point-source sedimentation that could be stabilised by the project.
- Presence of in-stream structural fish habitat and/or drought refugia (e.g. deep pools, snags)
- Aquatic habitat areas identified for priority protection
- display strategic and cost efficiency approach
- alignment with best practice methods for chosen project activity
- A minimum of 500 metres of fencing or a minimum of 3 hectares of riparian zone protected
- Located on a named waterway.

When completing your expression of interest, you may wish to identify any known threatened or endangered aquatic or semi-aquatic species in your area or how your project is consistent with any strategies and plans, for example such as:

- Local Landcare plans
- Local Land Services strategic plans
- The Native Fish Recovery Strategy
- recovery plans for threatened fauna, threatened flora and threatened ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act.

Work completed before or at the time of the project proposal is not eligible for funding.

If your Expression of Interest is deemed as being eligible against the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Guidelines, you will be contacted by a Local Land Services Case Officer who will assist you in developing your proposed project, including maps, budgets and works plan.

Your works plan provides information on the design, costing and management activities you will undertake over the period of your Management Agreement with Local Land Services (10 years).

Assessment of your proposed project

Once you submit your completed project proposal to your Case Officer, your proposed project will be assessed by a regional Local Land Services staff. Based on the information you provide, including:

- confirm that the participant meets the funding criteria
- score your proposed project based on the answers provided
- assess the cost efficiency of your proposal.

Notification of your proposed project outcomes

You will receive notification from Local Land Services when your proposed project has been assessed to inform you about the outcome of your application, and the next steps. Sometimes, changes may be made to your proposed project and these will be discussed with you.

What happens if my project proposal is successful?

If successful, you must formally commit to undertaking your project by entering into a Land Management Agreement with Local Land Services for a period of 10 years. The Land Management Agreement sets out the conditions of your funding and requires you to maintain your project site and associated infrastructure and works over a 10 year period, and to participate in some simple monitoring and evaluation activities (such as a brief report and photo-point monitoring).

Conditions of funding

Under the agreement you will agree to undertake works in partnership with Local Land Services through an in-kind/cost share arrangement (Full details on Conditions of Funding can be found in Appendix 1).

- Any variations to the funding agreement must be requested via email or in writing to your dedicated Local Land Services Case Officer and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Program Steering Committee
- you must agree to allow Local Land Services to publish information about you and your project on our website, social media profiles and other communication channels as required
- you must keep invoices supporting the expenditure of outlined budget items
- you must complete an evaluation survey following the successful completion of contracted works
- you must complete and submit a follow-up evaluation survey at five years and ten years following the completion of contracted works
- hourly rate for use of your own machinery should show labour at \$40/hr plus associated running costs. Rate must reflect current market price
- If your proposed project is greater than the nominated grant contributions below it will be referred to the Program Steering Committee to make a recommendation to the programs funding partners for a decision on approval.
- Your project may be used by Local Land Services for demonstration and/or promotional purposes with your consent
- Applicants are required to have a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance for the duration of the Land Management Agreement (Contract)
- Where an applicant is not the owner/lessee of the land, specific permission will be required from the owner/lessee to implement the project. Owners/lessees will be required to co-sign the completed program application form.
- All on-ground works must be completed within an agreed timeframe from the date of contract execution.
- Successful projects may be required to have an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage survey completed (further information at Appendix 1: Conditions of Funding). Costs related to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage survey will be covered by Local Land Services.

How to submit an expression of interest

Expressions of interest can be submitted as follows:

Option 1 (preferred):

Online expression of interest form at www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fnbr

Option 2:

Download, print and complete the hard copy, PDF Expression of Interest Form available at www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fnbr, and:

- Scan and email to: northernbasin.fencing@lls.nsw.gov.au, or
- Submit in person over the counter at your Local Land Services office (see the 'Where to Get Assistance' section in this document)

Note: expressions of interest emailed directly to a Local Land Services staff member will be deemed ineligible.

Round Two Expressions of Interest will close at 11:30pm on Friday 26 August 2022.

Where to get assistance

The program is being rolled out across five Local Land Services regions. Staff from each of these regions form part of the NSW Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program Team and can assist you with any queries you may have.

For more information:

- Visit the program website at: www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fnbr
- Email the Program team at: northernbasin.fencing@lls.nsw.gov.au
- Contact a Local Land Services staff members as listed below

Table 2. Contact details for participating Local Land Services Regions.

Region	Staff Member	Phone	Email
Central Tablelands	Tim Nalder	M: 0438 224 536	tim.nalder@lls.nsw.gov.au
Orange Agricultural Institute 1447 Forest Rd, Orange NSW 2800	Land Services Officer NRM		
Central West	Dominic Nowlan	T: 02 63491202	dominic.nowlan@lls.nsw.gov.au
20A Warraderry St, Grenfell NSW 2810	Senior Land Services Officer	M: 0409 915 695	
Central West	Libby McIntyre	T: 02 6841 6525	libby.mcintyre@lls.nsw.gov.au
209 Cobra St, Dubbo NSW 2830	Land Services Officer	M: 0429019309	
Northern Tablelands	Andrew Walsh	M: 0427 433 317	andrew.walsh@lls.nsw.gov.au
15 Vivian Street, Inverell NSW 2360	Senior Land Services Office		

North West 203 Balo St, Moree NSW 2400	Pippa Jones Senior Land Services Officer NRM	M: 0427 454 795	pip.jones@lls.nsw.gov.au
Western 32 Enterprise Way, Buronga NSW 2739	Michelle Kelly Program Manager, Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program	M: 0437 424 851	michelle.kelly@lls.nsw.gov.au
Western 3-5 Bradley Street, Cobar NSW 2835	Brian Dohnt A/Team Leader - Land Services	T: 02 6836 6004 M: 0455 901 258	brian.dohnt@lls.nsw.gov.au

This Program is delivered under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by the NSW Government, through funding from the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and water.

Appendix 1: Conditions of Funding

Land managers considering applying for funding will need to meet the following general criteria. For further information contact your regional Local Land Services Office.

Contracts

All NSW Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks projects will be delivered through a contract between the landholder and Local Land Services.

If your application is successful, you will be required to enter into a Land Management Agreement for a minimum of 10 years. All projects are expected to be maintained for the duration of the Management Agreement.

Local Land Services has standard and special conditions that will be included in your Management Agreement. Your Local Land Services Case Officer can provide details of these conditions and provide a copy for your consideration prior to you submitting your project plan.

Any variations to Management Agreements must be requested via email or in writing and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Program Steering Committee. However, Local Land Services reserves the right to reject any alternation.

The Management Agreement will need to be signed by the land manager. The landholder named on the application should match the landholder that will sign the contract and this should also match the landholder that will receive the Grant funds.

Conflicts of Interest

Non-professional relationships with Local Land Services staff or board members may be perceived as a conflict of interest. All applicants will be required to complete a brief checklist in their application form which will identify any such conflicts. Should a conflict be identified, a Conflict of Interest Declaration will be provided to the applicant to complete.

The Conflict of Interest will be assessed, consist across all Local Land Services regions, to determine the best approach to managing a real or perceived conflict of interest.

It should be noted that the default position of Local Land Services is removal of the conflict, in which case participation in the NSW Fencing Northern Basin Program may not be permitted. If you are concerned that a perceived conflict of interest may impact on your application, please contact the NSW Fencing Northern Riverbanks Program Team via email to: northernbasin.fencing@lls.nsw.gov.au or by calling your regional Local Land Services office.

How will you be paid?

Payment of funds is attached to contract milestones. If you are offered a contract and accept it, the milestone payments will generally be paid in two instalments:

1. An initial payment of 80% of Local Land Services funds (as identified in your project budget), paid to you following signing of the Management Agreement.
2. The remaining 20% will be paid upon successful completion of the on-ground works, your project will require a final inspection by a Local Land Services officer.

Payment will be made on receipt of a signed Australian Tax Office compliant tax invoice on completion of agreement milestones.

GST registered Grantees will be paid 10% GST on top of the approved Grant amount.

Applicants should discuss the implications of receiving funding with a financial adviser.

Public Liability Insurance

The Grantee agrees to maintain a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance for the duration of the Management Agreement and provide Local Land Services with a Certificate of Currency when requested.

Maintenance

All funded activities will require maintenance to ensure the outcomes are maintained. All activities must be regularly maintained for at least 10 years.

Monitoring and Reporting

All on-ground projects funded by Local Land Services will be required to undertake photo point monitoring. A guideline for photo monitoring is available from your case officer.

Your case officer will discuss photo point monitoring requirements with you during the development of your Regional Work Plan.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

It is a mandatory requirement for any successfully funded project to undertake an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment before the commencement of any works that cause soil disturbance. It is the responsibility of Local Land Services and the landholder to ensure due diligence takes place with respect to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values.

If the application is successful, and soil disturbance will occur, a cultural heritage assessment will be arranged by your Local Land Services case officer.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage surveys will be conducted at no cost to the landholder.

The outcome of this assessment will be used to design works, with the clear intent to protect sites of spiritual significance and Cultural Heritage. A detailed report will also be provided to the project proponent.

Compliance with existing State and Commonwealth Legislation

Proposed activities must abide by all relevant Commonwealth and NSW legislation and regulations, for example, but not limited to: *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW), *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW)

All works will be considered to comply with legislative requirements where:

- There is a nil impact on known Aboriginal or historical heritage sites
- There is a nil impact on known threatened species
- Vegetation is cleared to the minimum extent necessary
- A buffer is maintained adjacent waterways in accordance with Clause 15 of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018.

Appendix 2: Minimum standards for on-ground works

Further information is available from your Local Land Services Case Officer

Overview

Your Works Plan is the plan that identifies how you will develop and manage your project area over a period of 10 years.

A Local Land Services case officer can assist you to develop your plan and will remain the key contact for you during delivery of your project and be able to assist you to develop your works plan, this includes developing a detailed map of your project site with proposed works and assisting with any queries you may have.

Your Local Land Services case officer will advise you on the required regional minimum standards required for your project to be successful.

General

It is a requirement that project proponents maintain the condition of the project site to at least pre-project level in addition to any management activities proposed. For example, weed and pest animal control should be maintained to at least the pre- project level and/or that required by relevant legislation regardless of whether it is a proposed management action or not.

Fencing

The main on-ground activity supported under the NSW program is the construction of riparian riverbank fencing to control livestock access to environmentally sensitive waterways, reducing degradation of these important sites.

All fencing (conventional or electric) must be managed in a stock-proof condition for the term of the agreement and meet the minimum standard designs as set by your Local Land Services region.

In addition, the following standards apply:

- Fence is to be permanent
- To be located at least the minimum required distance back from the top of the high bank for riparian vegetation.

Further information is available from your case officer in regard to location of fences.

Alternate stock water supply

Alternate stock watering (off-stream stock water points) for protecting or regenerating native riparian vegetation or managing nutrient runoff may be required where stream bank vegetation is fenced. This may be achieved by installing additional stock water troughs, pipelines, tanks and pumps for a reticulated supply.

The installation of additional stock water supply should be limited to providing water to areas that were previously supplied by the riparian area that has been fenced. This only applies to areas where new fencing has been erected.

All stock water works including provision of alternate stock water supply must demonstrate a hydraulic design by a suitably qualified person and must comply with all legislative and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to, the *Local Land Services Act 2013* (NSW), the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and *Water Management Act 2000* (NSW).

Grazing Management Plans

The construction of fencing and water infrastructure is the first step in establishing riparian projects.

However, the implementation of a 10-year grazing management plan is the main component of each project for achieving improvements in soil, water and vegetation condition over the duration of the contract.

Funding applications therefore need to demonstrate how grazing management will change to improve riparian vegetation, especially groundcover.

Revegetation

Revegetation of gullies, rivers and creeks is: Any plantings along riparian lands must use local native species. Riparian revegetation projects should aim, if possible, to cover both sides of the flow line.

All revegetation activities funded by Local Land Services must achieve and maintain at least an 70% survival and establishment rate and stock exclusion fencing must be installed where stock could potentially access the site. Local provenance seed/planting stock must be used on revegetation sites

Exotic Woody Weed Control

Control of exotic woody weeds is limited to the area within the fenced riparian zone and an adjacent 50 metre buffer.

Control of Invasive Native Species (INS) is not funded under this program.

Chemicals used to control woody weed must comply with all relevant legislation and where required, be labelled for use near waterways

Materials

It is required that all materials to be used in the proposed project be specified in you project budget and must be of high quality. Landholders are required to maintain financial records relating to all costs associated with the project (further information can be found in the Land Management Agreement) and may be subject to audit by Local Land Services.
