

Greater Sydney Local Land Services

Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Agriculture

June 2023



1.0 Overview

The Greater Sydney Local Land Services (GS LLS) Region has a diversity of natural environments ranging from extensive and highly biodiverse bushland areas to wetlands, rivers and estuaries, and dramatic stretches of rocky coastline and beaches.

GS LLS provides grant opportunities, generally in the form of funding, for works and activities that support and enable land managers to better manage these natural resources whilst maintaining land uses that are sustainable and productive, through its Natural Resources Management & Sustainable Agriculture (NRM & SusAg) Grants Program.



Grass Trees on Remony Farm, Kurrajong

2.0 Purpose of guidelines

These Grant Guidelines have been produced to help land owners and managers to understand the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program process and assist them in preparing competitive applications.

3.0 GS LLS role

Staff in GS LLS are tasked with supporting land owners and managers through the grant application process. Staff strive to provide specialist advice to assist you in developing sound and effective projects, that align with our strategic focus, for application. This service generally promotes increased success for applications and effective on-ground outcomes.

4.0 Purpose and objectives of the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program

The primary purpose of the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program is to deliver on the objectives of the LLS Natural Resource Management Framework 2021–2026, the LLS Agricultural Services Framework 2021-2026 and the GS LLS NRM Plan 2022-2028. This includes:

- Improving the condition and extent of native vegetation including connectivity
- Improving habitat and condition of threatened species and communities
- Reducing the impact of invasive species of flora and fauna
- Increasing the sustainability of agriculturally productive landscapes
- Rehabilitating waterways and their riparian zones in priority catchment locations
- Rehabilitating priority wetlands, lagoons, and estuaries
- Gaining and sharing knowledge that contributes to practice change and improved NRM outcomes.¹

The GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program is supported by a number of different investor programs (funding streams), such as the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and NSW Government NRM

¹ Note that GS LLS administers a 'Caring for Country' grants program specifically targeted at supporting First Nations communities to continue their deep and reciprocal relationship with Country and all this represents. Visit our website for further information.

Treasury Funds. Therefore, grants opportunities are generally targeted at specific environmental issues and/or outcomes, according to investor program objectives.

5.0 Eligibility

5.1 Activities

Eligible Activities should deliver on actions within recognised NRM/ Sustainable Agriculture strategic plans, such as:

- LLS NRM framework
- GS LLS NRM Plan 2022-2028
- LLS Agricultural Services Framework 2021-2026
- A recognised Management Plan (e.g. Council Biodiversity Strategy, Coastal Zone Management Plan, Estuary Management Plan, River Health Strategy or Water Quality Improvement Plan, Coastal Management Program).
- A Threatened Species Recovery Plan.

Specific activities that are likely to be supported include:

- Ecological restoration/bush regeneration activities and habitat enhancement works.
- Revegetation of biodiversity buffers, corridors and stepping stones, using endemic native plants.
- Access controls to protect threatened species, their habitat, and Threatened Ecological Communities, such as fencing.
- Strategic weed and pest control for the benefit of biodiversity protection and enhancement and/or protection of agricultural assets.
- Foreshore soft engineering stabilisation works (e.g., natural rock riprap, bed controls, coir logs etc), environmentally friendly seawalls.
- Riparian rehabilitation works including bed and bank stabilisation and revegetation.
- Education and capacity building activities targeted at promoting effective and sustainable natural resource management practice.
- Promotion of ground covers and good soil health through strategic grazing.
- Nutrient management on farms, such as runoff filtration and control.

Other innovative activities not on this list may be considered, however it is recommended that you consult with GS LLS staff prior to preparing an application to determine suitability. Please note that GS LLS has a range of minimum standards for activities and works associated with grants. Information on some of these standards is provided in Appendix 2 of these guidelines.

Activities that are not eligible for the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program include:

- Activities that are already funded from other sources including (but not limited to); the Biodiversity Offset



Lower Hawkesbury Nepean River

Scheme, the Landcare Coordinator Initiative, NSW Weed Action Program or the Saving Our Species Program.

- Activities that are the subject of legal matters eg a Biosecurity order or enforceable undertaking.
- Works that are existing land holders obligations, such as; on title conservation agreements or Land Management code agreements.
- Works undertaken before the contract is executed or after the project agreement ends.
- Maintenance of previous grant projects.
- Projects solely intended to beautify or improve amenity.
- Rock revetment of riverbanks.
- De-snagging of waterways.
- Waterway channel modification.
- Purchase of machinery and computer hardware and software, where there is no demonstrated land use change.
- Replacement or maintenance of property boundary fencing

that is the landholder's normal responsibility.

- Capital works, for example construction of buildings or viewing platforms.

5.2 Applicants

The following individuals or organisations are eligible to apply for the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program:

- Private landowners on properties greater than 2 ha
- Local Councils, State Government Agencies and NGO's with project outcomes greater than 2 ha

Applications must be made by either:

- The landowner or an authorised officer of the agency or organisation that owns or manages the land where the project will be undertaken, or
- Applicants acting on behalf of the landowner that have written authorisation from the landowner to undertake the proposed project.



6.0 Grant Value

The funding available for individual projects will vary depending on the funding stream(s) being advertised, generally the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program offers grant opportunities ranging from \$5000 to \$30,000 per project. Larger grant proposals across multiple years may be considered in some cases.

Value for money, including in-kind contributions is part of the selection criteria. Funding offered may be reduced to match the available in-kind. Proposed budgets will be negotiated and finalised with successful applicants.

Please refer to the advertisement or speak to your LLS officer for more information.

7.0 The application process

The GS LLS NRM Grants Program is delivered through three (3) rounds each year, as per the following schedule:

| Round | Application window | Assessment Panel Review | Outcome notification |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | August | End September | 4 weeks after panel review |
| 2 | October | Mid-November | 4 weeks after panel review |
| 3 | March | Mid-April | 4 weeks after panel review |

Please note that funding will only be made available for subsequent rounds where it has not been exhausted in previous rounds, for example if all funding has been allocated in rounds 1 and 2, round 3 will not take place.

Grant opportunities are advertised via:

- GS LLS website (lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/greater-sydney)
- GS LLS electronic newsletters
- NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding>)

Land holders and managers are encouraged to monitor the GS LLS websites and/or sign up for our electronic newsletters to keep informed.

A flowchart showing the key steps in GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program application process is provided in Appendix 1 of these guidelines, these steps include:



1. Expression of interest: interested persons should complete and submit an [expression of interest form](#). This form provides a very brief summary of the proposed project and will prompt staff to contact you to discuss your proposal and support you through the next steps in the process. This step is particularly recommended for those persons who have not received funding from GS LLS previously.

2. Initial review and site inspection: If your proposed project aligns with the grant program and relevant funding stream staff will arrange for a site inspection to better understand the project and provide advice.

3. Grant Application: GS LLS staff will work with you to prepare an application for assessment. Once you are happy with the application please complete the online application form and submit it for consideration in the next funding round. Following receipt of your application a GS LLS officer will contact you about the next steps, including the date of the next assessment panel.

4. Application assessment and award: Applications are competitively assessed and scored by an internal

panel of experts according to pre-determined criteria (see Section 8.0 of these guidelines). Recommendations from the panel are reviewed by GS LLS management, prior to approval. Applicants will be advised of the outcome via email within one month of assessment.

5. Initiation: If your application is approved for funding you will be required to enter into a contract with GS LLS to deliver the required works and activities and undertake reporting according to a payment schedule.¹ The contract will need to be signed by the applicant and the landowner (if different).

6. Payment: A payment schedule will be determined under the contract, generally based on achieving project milestones. Payments will be made on receipt of a signed ATO compliant tax invoice on completion of agreed milestones, they may subject to verification via a site inspection by GS LLS staff. GST registered grantees will be paid 10% GST on top of the approved grant amount.

7. Project delivery and management: Your project now proceeds to implementation phase for you to deliver your works, activities, monitoring and reporting according to the contract.

8. Project acquittal: Following completion of your contract obligations you will prepare a final report. In most cases GS LLS staff will undertake a site inspection to verify project outcomes and acquit the grant.

9. Maintenance: Most projects that are funded through the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program will require a minimum maintenance period to ensure that the project outcomes are maintained and value for money is achieved.

8.0 Application Assessment

Grants are awarded through a competitive process whereby eligible applications are assessed on their comparative merits against criteria.

For each funding round the internal assessment panel will assess all projects against criteria that includes:

- Delivery on strategic objectives

¹ 2 Copies of standard contract terms are available from GS LLS staff.

and outcomes in accordance with purpose and objectives of the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program, investor program and NRM strategic plans.

- The project scale and viability of promoting positive change to land management practices.
- Capacity of the applicant to appropriately deliver the project and manage risks within the required time frame.
- Capacity of applicant to maintain the project outcome(s) beyond the term of the project implementation phase.
- Level of value add and/or integration with other projects to deliver NRM outcomes eg engagement of partners such as community volunteer groups.
- Value for money, including in-kind contribution, stakeholder participation and cost benefit of project.
- Proximity and/or linkage of sites adjacent to existing projects and/or locations of strategic NRM value.
- Outcomes for Aboriginal community and cultural values.

9.0 Applicant's Responsibilities

For approved applications, the applicant will be required to take full responsibility for implementation of all aspects of the works outlined in the contract, including:

- Overall project management as per the contract including; management and coordination of all aspects of on-ground works, monitoring and reporting and promoting a safe workplace.
- Management of all identifiable risks to avoid, minimise, or control adverse impacts.
- Collaboration with other parties relevant to the project, in particular those specified in the contract.
- Ensuring that the project complies

with all relevant State and Australian Government policy and legislation including but not limited to that associated with; environmental, Aboriginal heritage and other heritage protection and Native Title.

- Possession of an Australian Business Number, or a signed Statement of Supplier form if not registered for GST and have not quoted an ABN.
- Insurance as specified in the contract.
- Record keeping of relevant documentation and information such as quotes, invoices and photographs.
- Compliance with any internal or external data licence agreements.
- Maintaining liaison and communication with GS LLS.

10.0 Monitoring and Reporting

We aim to make our reporting process as simple as possible, whilst collecting all relevant information. Progress Reports will be required periodically eg every six months or on achievement of milestones. Progress payments may be linked to the submission of Progress Reports. A Final Report will be required at the completion of the Project.

Reports generally include photo point monitoring, however more complex projects may require additional monitoring and reporting. We recommend that when you procure contractors to undertake works you identify opportunities for them to assist with monitoring and reporting, for example require the contractors to take photographs of works throughout the project. GS LLS will provide templates for applicants to use for reporting purposes.

GS LLS reserves the right to inspect the project area over the duration of the agreement, to review progress and verify reporting information, particularly for final reports.

11.0 Project media and promotion

Media and promotional activities should be planned and executed in liaison with GS LLS staff. Refer to our contracts for requirements regarding these matters and recognition of GS LLS and the grant(s).

12.0 Privacy

All successful granted projects will be published on the GS LLS page and the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder, however applicant's details will be limited to your postcode.

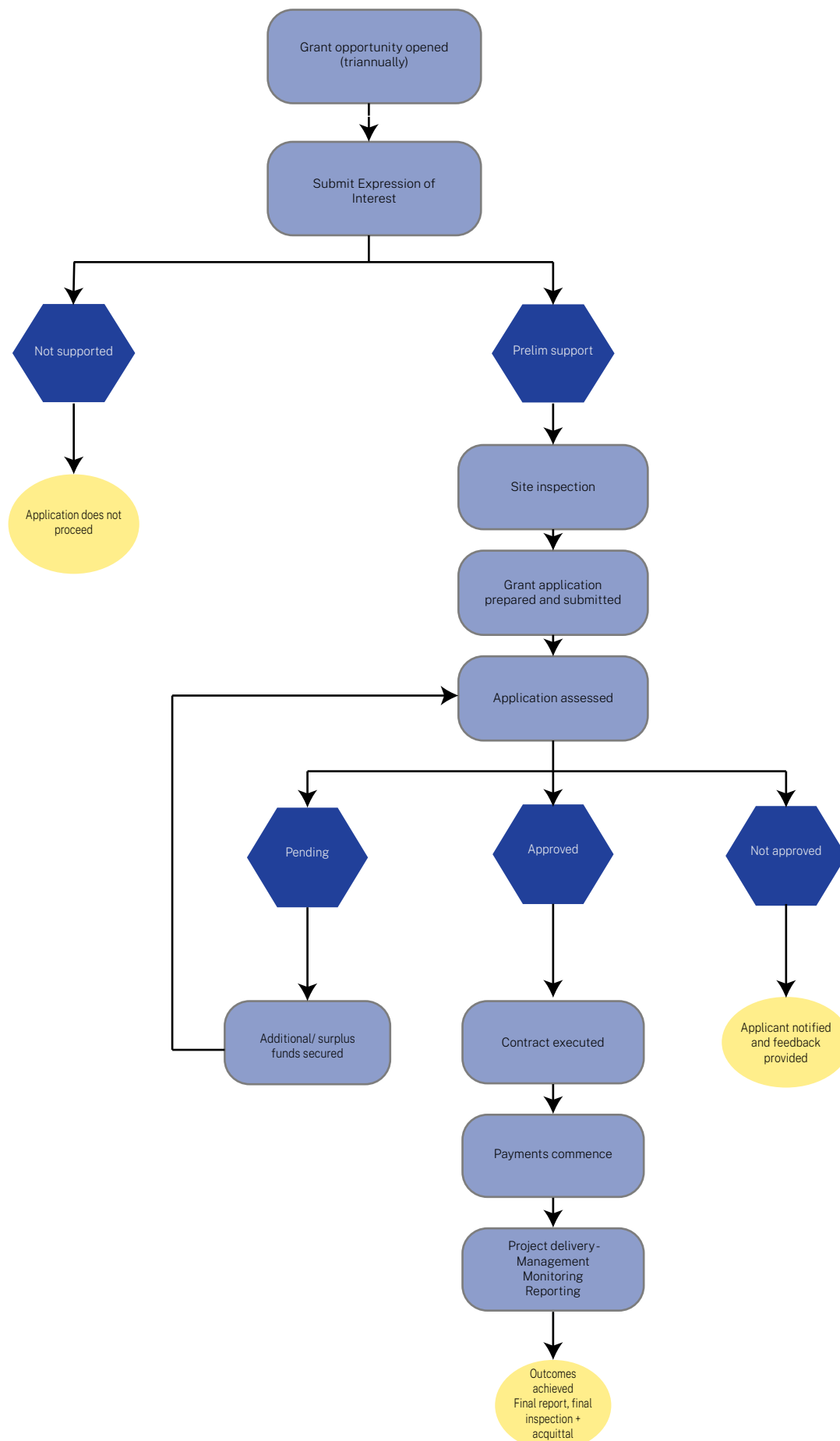
GS LLS has requirements with the Australian and NSW Government to provide spatial information and details of funded works, which may in turn be published on public websites. Consequently, your project may be represented spatially (e.g. point or polygon on catchment scale map in publicly released documents) but no detailed information will be released.

Your personal information will only be used for the purpose you are providing it in this form. Please read the privacy collection notice for more information about how we handle your information.

13.0 Further information

You can contact GS LLS staff for further information or support, via various channels. Visit our contact page on our website to sign up for our newsletters to receive updates on grant programs, as well as information on our other programs and activities.

Appendix 1. Flowchart of key steps in GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program application process



Appendix 2. Minimum standards for works and activities under the GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program

The GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program has a range of minimum standards for works and activities that promote best practice and effective long-term NRM outcomes. Some of these standards for common activities are outlined below. Note that GS LLS staff are available for advice and support throughout the application development and delivery process and will help you to meet the program requirements, including minimum standards.

Fencing

- Stock proof fencing to protect riverbanks, riparian zones and wetlands. Fencing needs to be permanent and located at least 5 metres back from the top of the bank (based on practical consideration on a site-by-site basis). Identification of top of bank and distance of fence from top of bank needs to be based on advice from your LLS technical staff member, considering erosion, flooding, and other factors. Fencing needs to allow for a buffer zone to minimise nutrients and erosion.
- Stock proof fencing to protect or regenerate remnant native vegetation. Fence to be installed so that it provides long term protection and/or restriction to stock within the project and maintenance periods, permanent fencing is preferred. Fencing around single existing remnant trees will generally not be funded (unless accompanied by areas of additional revegetation (minimum 1 hectare).

Revegetation

- Local provenance seed/planting stock must be used for revegetation. If you have questions or concerns about accessing stock please speak with your GS LLS Project Officer.
- Planting regimes should be appropriate for the plant community type, a species list will be provided by an LLS project officer in consultation with the stakeholder.

- Revegetation to establish or enhance wildlife corridors must link existing areas of remnant vegetation or established revegetation sites. Generally, the wider they are the more effective that they will be in promoting biodiversity and ecosystem health. Your GS LLS Project Officer will work with you to determine the most effective width likely to be supported based on individual circumstances, with consideration for land productivity.

- All revegetation activities funded by the LLS must achieve and maintain at least an 80% survival and establishment rate.

Soil Testing

- Where soil testing is required, it must be carried out by a NATA accredited laboratory.

Provision of alternative stock water supplies

Alternative stock watering, where stock is excluded from areas to protect or regenerate native riparian vegetation or manage nutrient runoff, may be achieved by installing additional stock water troughs, pipelines, tanks, and pumps for a reticulated supply. All pipelines need to be installed below ground and meet livestock requirements. All stock water works including provision of alternative stock water supply for sustainable grazing and implementing property plans must be appropriately designed and technically sound and comply with the native vegetation clearing provisions of the Local Land Services Act (2013). It is recommended to consult with an agricultural plumbing specialist to design stock water troughs, pipelines, tanks and pumps for a reticulated supply giving consideration to:

- underground pipelines
- fenced off solar infrastructure
- flow rates appropriate for stock consumption rates
- topography considerations for

pump capacity.

Weed Control

- Weed control activities must achieve at least an 80% reduction in cover of the targeted weed species and this should be maintained for the term of the agreement.
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority guidelines product directions on appropriate herbicide use must be adhered to.
- Relevant permits must be acquired for weed control near waterways or water bodies.
- Permits may also be required from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to control weeds in Endangered ecological Communities (EECs).

Fire Management

- The landholder must not carry out any burning in any GS LLS NRM & SusAg Grants Program funded project areas unless required to do so under the Rural Fires Act 1997, or in accordance with an LLS approved Fire Plan.
- Any sanctioned burning must involve an ecologically appropriate fire management regime that promotes biodiversity outcomes.

Local Land Services

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