

12 February 2026

## Frequently Asked Questions

### NSW Landcare Enabling Program 2023-2027: Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are for the NSW Landcare Enabling Program (LEP) Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program. They are to be read in tandem with the [Grant guidelines](#).

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#### 1. Who administers the NSW Landcare Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program?

This program is administered by Local Land Services.

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#### 2. Who can apply for funding?

Applicants for this grant program are limited to:

- the regional organisations listed within Schedule A of the Landcare NSW Limited Constitution (see [Constitution-Landcare-NSW-Limited-V3-2025-June-3-.pdf](#)) or
- a non-scheduled regional Landcare organisation who was successful in Phase 1 of the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, in consultation and with the endorsement of a Schedule A regional organisation.

Each region is permitted one application only, submitted by a single eligible applicant on behalf of the region. In regions where there are multiple Phase 1 grantees, a single combined regional application will still be required.

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#### 3. How much funding is available for the Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program, and is it competitive?

\$5 million is allocated to this program. The maximum regional allocation is outlined in Table 2 of the Grant guidelines and is tied to the applicant's self-assessment of their capability, capacity, and cultural readiness to participate in and meet the objectives of the Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program.

This is a **closed, non-competitive** grant, meaning that intended recipients only are invited to submit applications. These applications will be assessed individually, without reference to the comparative merits of other applications.

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## 4. When do applications open and close?

The Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program opens at 2pm on **Monday 15 December 2025** and closes at 5pm on **Monday 16 February 2026**.

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## 5. Is there support available when completing an application?

A webinar is available to targeted applicants. It provides general advice on how to interpret the guidelines and practical guidance on completing a grant application.

This FAQs resource will be updated as necessary, and applicants will be advised of FAQs updates via email.

For additional enquiries, please email [landcare.grants@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:landcare.grants@lls.nsw.gov.au).

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## 6. How do we submit an application?

Applicants are required to submit their application and supporting documents via the SmartyGrants webpage at [https://lls.smartygrants.com.au/LEP\\_AboriginalPartnerships](https://lls.smartygrants.com.au/LEP_AboriginalPartnerships).

The requirements for supporting documents are outlined in the [Grant guidelines](#).

Applications cannot be reopened or amended once the closing date has passed.

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## 7. What is the assessment process?

Determining which applications are successful involves three stages: eligibility cull, assessment and decision-making.

Once an application has been received, Local Land Services will determine if the application meets the eligibility criteria.

Applications which are eligible will then be evaluated by the assessment team against the assessment criteria.

As part of the decision-making process, the assessment team can:

- seek advice from other NSW Government agencies and other sources as required.
- contact applicants seeking clarification of information in the application or further supporting material.
- make written recommendations to the decision maker, whose decision is final.

Applications must meet a minimum standard to be eligible for funding. To be considered for funding, an application must achieve a minimum overall score of 70% across the assessment criteria.

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## 8. Can staff funded through the LEP (local and regional Landcare coordinators and support staff) be involved in the design and delivery of grant applications?

LEP staff may be involved in grant design, however this should be considered in the context of existing staff capacity.

For Tier 1 applicants and Tier 2 applicants not employing an Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator, LLS encourages grantees to engage Aboriginal businesses to provide grant delivery support.

For Tier 2 and 3 applicants, Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator time for grant delivery should be included in the budget.

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## 9. Is this grant application process the same as we completed for Phase One?

Elements of this grant application process are similar to the Phase One process; however, this grant application process will be managed by Local Land Services, not the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) Grants Management Office.

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## 10. When will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed after the closing date and outcomes will be made known by **April 2026**.

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## 11. How many applications will be accepted per region?

Each region is permitted one application only, submitted by a single eligible applicant on behalf of the region. Grantees will need to demonstrate they have consulted with Landcare groups in their region. The grantee is responsible for the delivery and acquittal of all contracted outcomes.

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## 12. Our region is diverse in terms of the capability, capacity and cultural readiness of individual groups. How do we determine which tier best reflects the current status of our region?

The tiers reflect the applicant's capability, capacity, and cultural readiness to participate in and meet the objectives of the Aboriginal Partnerships Grant Program. Applications are on behalf of a region and therefore the self-assessment should reflect the current status of the region as a whole.

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When undertaking the self-assessment, applicants should consult Table 3 of the Grant guidelines and consider which tier best describes the majority of groups and the evidence required to justify the nominated tier.

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### 13. What is an FTE and can the roles be split / shared?

FTE is full-time equivalent and equates to 35 hours a week (Monday to Friday).

The minimum FTE per role is 0.5FTE. The maximum FTE is 1 FTE for applicants who self-assess as Tier 2 and 2 FTE for Tier 3.

Applicants may opt for a lower FTE than 0.5 but will need to provide strong justification.

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### 14. We have self-assessed as Tier 2/Tier 3. Is there a requirement to employ an Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator?

Applicants who self-assess as Tier 2 may employ up to 1 full-time equivalent Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator as well as apply for funding for training, consultants, events and/or on-ground works up to a total value of \$450,000 excl. GST.

Applicants who self-assess as Tier 2 but are unable to employ an Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator may instead apply for funding for training, consultants, events and/or on-ground works up to a total value of \$450,000 excl. GST.

Applicants who self-assess as Tier 3 are required to employ Aboriginal Landcare Coordinators (up to 2 full-time equivalent) as well as apply for funding for training, consultants, events and/or on-ground works up to a total value of \$700,000 excl. GST.

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### 15. Does the program include funding for professional development for Aboriginal Landcare Coordinators?

Yes, an allowance of \$3,000 will be available over the grant period per Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator 1.0FTE.

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### 16. Is there an award rate to calculate Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator positions?

It is expected that Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator/s will be employed under the same conditions as Regional Landcare Coordinators.

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### 17. Can we include travel/support/administration budget in our application?

Funding applications can include:

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- operational costs to a maximum of 17.5% of salary component of grant funding.
  - employment costs such as remuneration, superannuation, leave entitlements, annual leave loading and workers compensation up to 30 June 2027 for the roles specified in the Grant guidelines.
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## 18. Can we apply for grant funding for on-ground works?

Yes, Tier 1-3 applicants are eligible to apply for on-ground works. Projects involving on-ground works or activities with potential environmental impact must comply with all relevant environmental laws and regulations. Applicants will need to demonstrate that the on-ground works achieve value for money and address the assessment criteria.

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## 19. Do all approvals and permits need to be obtained before the application deadline, or can applicants demonstrate engagement and secure approvals post-award? Is an Expression of Interest (EOI) from landholders or groups sufficient at application stage?

Demonstration towards engagement would be acceptable but fully obtained is preferred. There is a risk that the time taken to secure approvals may impact project delivery.

Where works may take place on private land, evidence of landholder support should be provided. An EOI or email from the landholder are acceptable forms of evidence.

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## 20. What supporting documents should be included? What are some examples of regional strategies?

Supporting documents should aim to provide evidence to support your application. Supporting documents will be used to assess your application during the assessment process.

Examples of strategies include LLS Local Strategic Plans, LLS Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, LLS Regional NRM Plans, other NSW plans such as the NSW Koala Strategy or NSW Plan for Nature, or National Plans such as National Recovery Plans for Threatened Species.

Landcare Networks may also refer to their own strategic plans.

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## 21. Are there templates or examples available for a Regional Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, or an Aboriginal Partnership Plan?

A Landcare Aboriginal Partnerships Framework and Cultural Practice Guide has been developed by an external Aboriginal organisation in consultation with Landcare groups, Landcare NSW and LLS staff. These documents have been made available to Landcare networks.

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## 22. Can we budget a percentage for administration into our application?

There is no allocation for administrative expenses for this grant program. However, applicants can cost in salary towards an Aboriginal Landcare Coordinator or an independent contractor to help with the project management of proposed deliverables. Refer to question 8 of these FAQs for more detail.

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## 23. The funding deed refers to LLS being able to undertake an independent audit of grant funded projects. Do we need to build the cost of this into the grant?

If an independent audit is undertaken for a grant program, LLS will incur this cost.

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## 24. Can we have an editable version of the application form?

LLS can only provide the supporting documents, including a pdf of the application form, already released.

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## 25. How much detail is required for activities under the Aboriginal Partnerships grant?

The assessment panel will rely on the information provided in the application form to determine if applicants have effectively met the assessment criteria. Applicants should aim to frame their responses with this in mind. Refer to question 7 of these FAQs for more detail.

There should be sufficient detail to indicate that projects are ready to commence within one month of the Funding Deed (as noted in the guidelines).

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## 26. Can LLS provide letters of support for our grant application?

No. Although we encourage applicants to work with all relevant partners, including LLS, as the Grant Administrator, LLS cannot endorse projects or provide letters of support.

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## 27. Can we apply for an extension?

Local Land Services retains discretion to extend the closing date and time, and to accept late applications in extenuating circumstances. All requests for extension must be received in writing by 3pm on the application closing date and be approved by the LLS Landcare Business Partner. The following principles will be applied to all extension requests:

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No Extension	2-hour Extension	6-hour Extension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General requests for more time</li> <li>- Short term non-serious illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forgot to attach a document or key information</li> <li>- Confusion with deadline time</li> <li>- Extended or serious illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical issues including poor connectivity</li> <li>- Impacted by natural disaster</li> <li>- Other issues deemed significant and out of the control of the applicant</li> </ul>

The Landcare Business Partner can apply discretion to the above timeframes in extenuating circumstances. All time extensions will be reviewed by the independent probity advisor for consistency and fairness.

If an applicant is approved to submit after the closing time and date, Local Land Services must advise the applicant in writing that the Decision Maker has final discretion to consider the application.

## 28. Contracts and funding:

Question	Answer
Will there be an upfront payment aligned to the first milestone?	Yes.
Are subsequent payments linked strictly to milestone acquittals?	Milestones and payments will be negotiated at funding deed stage.
What is the expected timeliness of payments once an invoice is submitted (noting the guideline reference to 30 days)?	LLS will aim to make payments within 30 days, assuming all relevant acquittal information has been received.
Is Schedule A automatically populated from the application?	Schedule A will be manually populated by LLS staff based on the information in your application. LLS may seek further information and negotiate aspects of your funding deed.
Is it possible to extend the delivery end date to 31 May 2027, or potentially to the end of 2027, rather than April 2027?	The Landcare Enabling Program ceases on 30 June 2027. Grant program end dates are based on the need to finalise and acquit grant program outcomes by the LEP end date. If there is a program extension or new Landcare program, LLS may consider extensions to grant programs.

Will we be able to make changes to our proposed activities once funding deeds are signed?	After funding deeds are executed, Local Land Services may consider requests for variations to projects in limited circumstances.  (see Guidelines page 26)
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## Grant guidelines page references for Frequently Asked Questions

Question	page reference
<b>Selection criteria</b>	
What are the eligibility criteria?	page 11
What are eligible projects and activities?	page 14
What are eligible costs?	page 16
What are ineligible costs?	page 16
Do applicants need to make a financial co-contribution?	page 10
How do we account for GST?	page 26
<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
What are the four assessment criteria?	Table 5 – page 18
<b>Application process</b>	
How do I apply?	page 20
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What are the three assessment stages?	page 22
<b>Next Steps</b>	
How will we be notified of our application outcome?	Page 24
What should we expect will be in a funding deed?	page 25
How will grants be paid?	page 26

