



CARING
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COUNTRY

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Landcare Facilitators Initiative Applicant Guidelines

1 July 2010 to 30 June 2013

For further information and an application form:

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02 6272 4981

Email:
landcarefacilitators@daff.gov.au

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Landcare Facilitators Initiative
Sustainable Resource Management Division
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Street address:
18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra City ACT 2601

Landcare Facilitators Initiative

1. Overview

The *Landcare Facilitators Initiative* is an element of the *Caring for our Country* program.

At a total cost of \$33.6 million over four years a network of Landcare facilitators will be established to work specifically with community groups including Landcare, farming, sustainable practice and productivity groups to improve their knowledge and skills in sustainable and land management practices, as set out in the government's 'Caring for our Country Outcomes 2008-2013' statement. These guidelines describe how organisations may apply for funding for this initiative.

Funding will be provided under this initiative for organisations to employ a Landcare facilitator to provide, within a specific natural resource management (NRM) region, ongoing coordination and support for Landcare groups and networks of community volunteers working on and off-farm to encourage improved sustainable farm and land management practices and ecosystem services and landscape scale conservation.

A National Landcare Facilitator will provide information and guidance to this network. The National Landcare Facilitator provides expert advice to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and represents Australian Government interests to Landcare groups and the rural sector generally. It will be the responsibility of the successful proponent organisation to ensure that the Landcare facilitator delivers on an agreed work program.

2. Purpose of the Initiative

The objective of the *Landcare Facilitators Initiative* is to promote sustainable farm and land management practices, and contribute to and support the uptake of sustainable practices and landscape scale conservation in rural and regional landscapes in a changing climate. This will be achieved using a national network of skilled and informed Landcare facilitators that link, and support, community Landcare and production groups participating in sustainable farm and land management practices and on and off-farm NRM. The facilitators will provide an effective interface with NRM regional bodies, industry, research and development corporations and the Australian, state and territory governments.

While the primary focus of the Landcare facilitators will be working with community groups in rural landscapes their work can also extend into urban areas where this is linked to the overall objective of better landscape scale natural resource management.

The role of each Landcare facilitator will be to:

- Work with community Landcare and production groups to promote sustainable farm and land management practices and contribute to and support the uptake of land management practices in rural and related landscapes in a changing climate. This must be aligned with the *Caring for our Country* sustainable farm practice outcomes including establishing information networks and brokering projects to deliver these outcomes¹.
- Establish, link, support and develop community Landcare and production groups participating in sustainable farm and land management practices, on and off-farm, in rural and related landscapes to support the adoption of practices to deliver improved ecosystem services and landscape scale conservation.
- Provide an effective interface between the regional NRM bodies and community Landcare and production groups.
- Promote opportunities for groups and networks to access public and private funds to address public benefit sustainable farm and land management practices and contribute to and support the uptake of land management practices in rural and related landscapes including *Caring for our Country* targets².
- Provide feedback to the Australian Government and the National Landcare Facilitator on emerging issues and current attitudes and activities in the NRM region which are relevant to sustainable agricultural practices and the needs of community Landcare and production-based networks.
- Provide assistance on any other relevant matters as required by the Minister.

Individual Landcare facilitators will establish adaptable, self reliant, and appropriately informed networks of community Landcare and production groups in each NRM region accessing funding, partnerships, training and information and facilitating the adoption of land management practices that:

- maintain for future generations, Australia's capacity to sustainably produce food and fibre; and
- enhance the capacity of rural and related landscapes to deliver ecosystem services such as clean air and water, healthy soils and biodiversity conservation.

¹ The *Caring for our Country* sustainable farm practices outcomes are published in the '*Caring for our Country Outcomes 2008-2013*' statement available at:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/caring-outcomes.html>

² The *Caring for our Country* sustainable farm practices targets are published in the '*Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009-10*' available at:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/business-plan.html>

The network will contribute to Australia's productive landscapes, natural icons and environment to ensure they are sustained for future generations through the adoption of sustainable land management practices across Australia.

3. How is it to be delivered?

Through an open and competitive process, where up to 56 organisations will be selected and contracted to employ a Landcare facilitator to provide services to each specific NRM region.

A list of the NRM regions used for this initiative and the funding available is at Attachment A.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry will administer the initiative.

4. How do I apply?

An information pack including the application form is available at www.daff.gov.au and www.nrm.gov.au. Hard copy packs are also available by phoning (02) 6272 4981 or email landcarefacilitators@daff.gov.au

The application seeks information on the capacity of the applicant (or consortium) to support a facilitator including work program, risk assessment, program logic and budget. If an organisation or consortium is proposing to apply for funding to employ Landcare facilitators in multiple NRM regions, a separate application must be submitted for each NRM region.

Applications must be received by **5pm Thursday 15 April 2010 (AEDT*)**. Late applications or applications that are received at addresses other than the address below will not be accepted. Applications must be sent to the following address:

Landcare Facilitators Initiative
Sustainable Resource Management Division
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Street address:
18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra City ACT 2601

To help streamline the assessment and contracting process, applicants are also required to provide the application (excluding supporting letters etc) as a Microsoft word document (word document). The word document should be emailed to landcarefacilitators@daff.gov.au or posted with the hard copy application to the above address.

Letters confirming receipt of applications will be sent to the contact officer listed in each application.

It is intended that the Australian Government will enter into a contract with the successful proponent organisation for each NRM region by the end of June 2010. This would allow the first payment to be made from 1 July 2010.

*Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time

5. Who is eligible?

The Landcare Facilitators Initiative is targeted towards proponent organisations, that are actively engaged in natural resource management and promoting the uptake of sustainable farm and land management practices and working with local community and industry groups to achieve these objectives.

To be eligible, an organisation must be a legal entity. Consortiums of organisations are welcome to apply, but must include a legal entity who will be the lead organisation and responsible for the administration, management and reporting of the grant.

The proponent organisation must be actively engaged in natural resource management and promoting the uptake of sustainable farm and land management practices and working with local community and industry groups to achieve these objectives.

Individuals, state government agencies (excluding statutory and non-statutory regional NRM bodies and local government bodies) and private companies operated for profit are not eligible. A consortium must not include entities that would not otherwise be eligible to apply.

While proponent organisations do not have to be physically located in the NRM region, they need to have established networks and be able to locate the Landcare facilitator they employ within the NRM region or, in the case of very geographically isolated areas, in a location that allows the facilitator to carry out their function effectively. The organisations must be able to demonstrate the provision of good governance and maximise opportunities to leverage relevant support and partnerships e.g. regional NRM bodies, local government, or large sustainable practice, productivity and industry groups.

The Australian Government places a high priority on accountability for public money. Organisations that have overdue final reports and/or acquittals under the *Caring for our Country* and previous Australian Government NRM programs will not be eligible to apply for funding under the *Landcare Facilitators Initiative*.

6. What qualifies for funding?

Each Landcare facilitator will undertake the following role:

- Work with community Landcare and production groups to promote sustainable farm and land management practices and contribute to and support the uptake of land management practices in rural and

related landscapes in a changing climate. This work should be aligned with the *Caring for our Country* sustainable farm practice outcomes including establishing information networks and brokering projects to deliver these outcomes.

- Establish, link, support and develop community Landcare and production groups participating in sustainable farm and land management practices, on and off-farm, in rural and related landscapes to support adoption of practices to deliver improved ecosystem services and landscape scale conservation.
- Provide an effective interface between the regional NRM bodies and community, Landcare and production groups.
- Promote opportunities for groups and networks to access public and private funds to address public benefit sustainable farm and land management practices and contribute to and support the uptake of land management practices in rural and related landscapes including Caring for our Country targets.
- Provide feedback to the Australian Government on emerging issues and current attitudes and activities in the NRM region, relevant to sustainable agricultural practices and the needs of community Landcare and production-based networks.
- Provide assistance on any other relevant matters as required by the Minister.

Costs related to these activities can be included in the proposal. However, purchase of capital items, computer hardware and software, vehicles and media equipment are not eligible to be included in the proposal. Host administration costs for managing the Landcare facilitators must not exceed 10 per cent of the budget. The primary purpose of the funding is towards funding the Landcare facilitator (including associated oncosts such as superannuation).

Up to \$150 000 (GST exclusive) per full financial year is available for the employment of each Landcare facilitator. Announced grants will not include GST. Grant payments will be GST inclusive. Therefore, if you are awarded \$150 000, you will receive \$165 000. When submitting your project budget, you should omit GST from your figures.

Funds can be used to employ up to three part-time facilitators (up to the equivalent of one full time employee), particularly where funds from other sources are available to increase the level of facilitation services available in the NRM region.

Matching funding is not essential, but desirable, and will be taken into account in assessing value for money. Contributions can be in cash, or in-kind or both. Contributions could be from the community, local industry, local or state government or other appropriate sources. In-kind contributions should be costed at local market rates and justification must be provided for these rates. Contributions cannot include funds from the Australian Government.

7. How are applications assessed?

For each NRM region, applications will be assessed on the eligibility criteria (as set out in section 5 of these guidelines) and against the following assessment criteria, which are of equal value:

- a. Capacity to engage and support significant numbers of farmers and community groups to adopt sustainable farm and land management practices in rural and related landscapes to deliver improved ecosystem services and landscape scale conservation.
- b. Appropriate location of the facilitator within the NRM region to maximise both geographic coverage of sustainable agriculture areas and operational efficiency.
- c. The experience and demonstrated capacity to support and work with community groups including Landcare and sustainable production groups and networks within the NRM region.
- d. Strong history of good governance by the proponent organisation or consortium and capacity to collaborate in partnerships with government, regional organisations, community groups and industry bodies.
- e. Value for money, taking into account both matched funding arrangements and the capacity to deliver on practice change and network support.

The assessment process may take into account material and information other than that provided in the application.

References from community leaders and community organisations may be taken into account in assessing the applicant's demonstrated engagement with the community, capacity to manage a facilitator position, deliver contracted outcomes, or governance arrangements.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback about their application upon request to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

8. Who is selecting the suitable applicants?

Final decisions will be made by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on the basis of advice from a Community Advisory Panel comprising the National Landcare Facilitator, community members and officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

This process may not result in Landcare facilitators being employed in each NRM region. DAFF reserves the right to undertake another call for applications generally, or for a particular NRM region, where no suitable application is received or a funding agreement cannot be satisfactorily negotiated. This may include DAFF facilitating the development of a suitable consortium of groups to provide services within a region.

All applicants will be informed in writing of the success, or otherwise, of their application.

The contact details of each Landcare facilitator will be made available on the websites at www.daff.gov.au and www.nrm.gov.au.

9. What are the conditions?

This is an open and competitive process. Simply meeting the eligibility and selection criteria does not guarantee funding.

The successful proponent organisation will enter into a funding agreement with the Australian Government and employ a Landcare facilitator, who possesses the demonstrated skills to undertake the role outlined in section 2 of these guidelines, to provide services for a specific NRM region. It is envisaged that funding agreements will cover the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2013 but will include an annual review based on performance.

The funding agreement template is available as part of the information pack.

Proponent organisations will be required to ensure that the Landcare facilitator has the demonstrated skills to undertake the role outlined in section 2 and to monitor the work of the Landcare facilitator against an agreed annual work plan and keep a record of activities, e.g. attendance and participant feedback at workshops. Quarterly payments will be made in advance, based on quarterly milestone reports showing satisfactory progress in the previous quarter against the work plan. Proponent organisations will also be required to set up a steering committee or similar arrangement approved by DAFF to ensure that relevant industry and community groups in the NRM region are involved. Details of the steering committee will be set out in the contract.

The organisation will be legally responsible for ensuring all contractual requirements are met including monitoring, reporting and acquitting expenditure. This will involve having a qualified accountant examine their records and sign a certified statement that all funds have been expended in accordance with the funding agreement. The organisation will also be required to sign a statutory declaration confirming that they have expended all funds in accordance with the funding agreement. Random audits on financial and performance records may be undertaken by an independent consultant employed by DAFF.

Grants are subject to normal taxation treatment and no special arrangements will apply. All potential applicants are strongly advised to seek independent taxation advice on the tax implications of receiving a grant under this initiative and independent legal advice before entering into a Funding Agreement.

Successful applicants will not be able to receive funding unless they have public liability insurance for the period of the grant.

Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge the grant provided by the Australian Government through the *Landcare Facilitators Initiative*,

in accordance with the *Recognition of Caring for our Country Guidelines*.

The guidelines can be found on the *Caring for our Country* website:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/guidelines/recognition-guidelines.html>

10. Privacy and use of information submitted in an application

All information in the application will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Applicants should be aware that if they are successful, Commonwealth policy requires DAFF to publish information about the applicant including but not limited to:

- Name of the entity receiving the grant;
- Amount of funding received;
- Term of the grant;
- Funding location; and
- Name and contact details of the facilitators.

Applicants should be aware that DAFF may publish the above information on its website in order to comply with Commonwealth policy and to meet mandatory reporting requirements.

By submitting an application for funding under this *Landcare Facilitators Initiative*, the applicant consents to the use, disclosure and publication of information submitted to DAFF in the ways described above.

11. Conflict of interest

Where applicants identify that a conflict of interest may arise in the provision of the services, applicants must notify the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and are to include such information in their application.

12. Contact us?

If you have any questions regarding the *Landcare facilitator Initiative*, including the application process, please direct them to the following contacts.

Telephone:(02) 6272 4981

Email: landcarefacilitators@daff.gov.au

Post: Landcare Facilitators Initiative
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NRM regions for which Landcare facilitator are being sought.

Please see www.nrm.gov.au for maps of these regions

New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

- Australian Capital Territory
- Border Rivers/Gwydir
- Central West
- Hawkesbury/Nepean
- Hunter/Central Rivers
- Lachlan
- Lower Murray/Darling
- Murray
- Murrumbidgee
- Namoi
- Northern Rivers
- Southern Rivers
- Sydney Metro
- Western

Victoria

- Corangamite
- East Gippsland
- Glenelg Hopkins
- Goulburn Broken
- North Central
- North East
- Mallee
- Port Philip and Westernport
- West Gippsland
- Wimmera

Queensland

- Border Rivers/Maranoa Balonne
- Burdekin
- Burnett Mary
- Desert Channels
- Cape York
- Condamine
- Fitzroy
- Mackay Whitsunday
- Northern Gulf
- South East
- South West
- Southern Gulf
- Torres Strait

- Wet Tropics,

South Australia

- Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
- Alinytjara Wilurara
- Eyre Peninsula
- Kangaroo Island
- Northern and Yorke
- SA Arid Lands
- SA Murray Darling Basin
- South East

Western Australia

- Avon
- Northern Agricultural Region
- South Coast Region
- South West Region
- Rangelands
- Swan

Tasmania

- North
- North West
- South

Northern Territory

- Northern Territory