

Guidelines for Applicants to the Council Roadside Reserves Environmental Grant Program

March 2017

This project has been assisted by the New South Wales
Government through its Environmental Trust.



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About the Council Roadside Reserves (CRR) Project

The Council Roadside Reserves (CRR) project is a three year project funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and managed by Local Government NSW to help councils towards best practice roadside environmental management. It will build the capacity of councils to enable the value of natural assets in roadside reserves to be embedded into councils planning, reporting and asset management systems (Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) systems).

The project consists of three distinct phases:

Phase 1 (completed) involved the development of the [Council Roadside Environmental Management Framework](#) which aims to streamline roadside environmental management in councils. The framework is also supported by a range of tools and templates to assist councils to improve their management and understanding of roadside reserves.

Phase 2 includes a contestable grant process (this process) and seeks a good representation of councils to participate in testing the framework and tools.

Phase 3 will involve updating the framework with lessons learnt from Phase 2. The framework will then be disseminated to all councils within NSW with guidance on how to incorporate roadside and linear reserve vegetation management information into council's IP&R system. This will occur in 2019.

More information is available on the website www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/roadside-environmental-management/council-roadside-reserves-project

Objectives and outcomes of project

The overall **objective** of the CRR project is:

To build the capacity of NSW councils to manage their linear reserves, protecting biodiversity and enhancing biodiversity values in roadside and other linear reserves in an integrated way.

The project aims to achieve the following broad **outcomes**:

- Councils have access to a framework that enables them to embed roadside reserve management into their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) systems.
- Improved knowledge and practical application of how to implement the framework across local government
- Tools and approaches are tested for integration of natural assets into IP&R systems, which results in an informed evidence-based framework that is disseminated to all councils.

The contestable grants component of the project enables innovation and flexibility for councils to design and seek support for projects to meet their local and regional needs. This may vary from capacity building and training, to assessment and knowledge building of roadside reserves, or embedding roadside environmental management into councils strategic planning, asset management and reporting processes.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, councils are required to undertake Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R), which provides a framework to draw together various plans which exist across council, to understand how they interact and to link these plans with financial planning, workforce planning, asset management planning and the delivery and operational plans. The purpose of the IP&R framework is to facilitate holistic planning and managing for a sustainable future.

About the NSW Environmental Trust

The NSW Environmental Trust is an independent statutory body established by the New South Wales Government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the environment of NSW. The Trust is empowered under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, and its main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants. The Trust is administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

Funding

A total of \$1.46 million in funding is available to NSW local councils through this contestable grants process to trial the framework concepts and to improve the management and long-term environmental value of their roadside reserve assets.

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to individual councils to support trialling different aspects of the framework. In addition, newly amalgamated councils will be able to apply for up to \$80,000 in grant funding (this is in recognition of the larger areas and the need to integrate systems, plans, etc. due to the amalgamation).

Two or more councils may wish to apply for a regional project. Grants of up to \$100,000 are available for such projects.

A competitive grant assessment process will be undertaken to determine successful applicants. Projects can last for a maximum of **twenty (20) months**. Projects will commence by 1 June 2017.

Cash or in-kind contributions are not a grant requirement, however they will increase the competitiveness of your application.

Population size of the LGA

Grant applications will be assessed against applications from similar sized councils (based on LGA population). This ensures that your application will only compete against other similar sized councils. The following categories apply:

- Less than 30,000 people
- 30,000 – 70,000 people
- Over 70,000 people

For regional / joint applications from two or more councils, the category will be determined by the combined populations of the applicant councils.

Who can apply?

Grants are open to all NSW councils and groupings of councils.

Councils may lodge a maximum of 2 applications.

Councils will need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving their roadside and linear reserve vegetation management practices.

Eligible Activities

Examples of some initiatives eligible for CRR funding

The Council Roadside Reserves grant program will fund projects to test and trial different aspects of the [Council Roadside Environmental Management Framework \(CREMF\)](#) and tools that have been developed. Councils are encouraged to prepare a project application that incorporates multiple components of roadside management, which contributes to a whole of council approach to managing roadside environments. The CREMF, [Rapid Assessment Methodology](#) and other tools and materials are available for viewing on the [LGNSW website](#). To assist in identifying possible projects and how they relate to the materials that have been developed, LGNSW have an [introductory grant summary document](#) which includes a list to guide councils on the type of projects they might like to seek funding for.

In addition, the list below provides examples of the types of activities that may be funded under the CRR grant. The list is not exhaustive and LGNSW welcomes applications for projects that address the CRR project objective and outcomes listed on page 3.

LGNSW will only select projects that enable councils to integrate roadside management into their IP&R and asset management systems. Examples of initiatives that may be funded include:

- Trialling tools and materials developed by LGNSW as part of the CRR program
- Environmental assessments of roadsides, including trialling the rapid assessment methodology tool
- Reviewing and updating existing roadside vegetation data
- Training, capacity building and skills development
- Signage to identify high conservation areas (based on SREA signage template)
- Community engagement on values of roadside vegetation
- Engagement with other land managers (e.g. adjoining farmers, Landcare groups, NSW RFS or Local Land Services)
- Development of council guidelines, templates, policies and procedures to enable a more consistent approach to roadside environmental management (ie best management practices for example; REF template, minor and routine works assessment template, standard operating procedures, etc).
- The development of a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP), where it assists councils to facilitate the integration of roadside reserve management into their IP&R framework. In addition, councils will be expected to incorporate management actions from the RVMP into 4-year delivery plans, annual operational plans and asset management plans, and commit to council endorsement of these documents¹.

Ineligible projects

The Council Roadside Reserve Grants Program will not fund the following activities:

- Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local government and/or the legal responsibility of council eg. Noxious Weeds control.
- Continuing administration/operational costs of organisations.

¹ Note: The NSW Environmental Trust requires that any project receiving funding for RVMPs or other plans of management must commit to adopting this plan and integrate it into their IP&R system. Projects who fail to achieve this endorsement may impact on council's eligibility for future Environmental Trust funding.

- Large capital equipment purchases, unless it is more cost effective to purchase than to lease capital equipment for the life of the project. Costs for capital items should generally not exceed 20 per cent of the total project budget.
- Projects that fund devolved grants (i.e. projects offering grants to other councils or organisations / community groups).
- Ongoing maintenance of projects to which councils have committed as part of a previous grant.
- Reimbursement of salaries of existing local government staff who will be supervising or working on the project as part of their usual duties. However, the project may fund additional human resources to specifically work on the project.
- On-ground works on private land.
- Work that is undertaken before the project agreement for the proposal is signed or after the project agreement ends.
- Activities and on-ground works where they are not directly linked to testing the CREMF tools, materials and framework.

Additional eligibility requirements

Integration of Roadside Vegetation Management into Council systems

Councils applying for funds to develop or update a RVMP will need to demonstrate an on-going commitment to improving their roadside and linear reserve management practices, including identifying resources to manage these areas into the future. Councils will be expected to seek council endorsement of strategic documents where roadside vegetation management has been incorporated, and the process must have internal GM/Executive support and an executive project sponsor.

Councils must commit to adopting any plan of management that is funded under this project and integrate it into their IP&R system. Failure to adopt and implement plans funded through this grant may be taken into account by the Environmental Trust when it assesses future grant applications from the council for any of its programs.

Sharing of knowledge and experiences with regards to the trialling and testing of materials, tools and framework

The trialling of the materials, tools and framework, forms a key component of the grant program and as such it is expected that all successful grant recipients will be willing to share their lessons learnt and feedback both during and at the completion of their project through the project reporting process. This feedback will be compiled and form an evidence base to inform the development of an appropriate and practical final framework which will be disseminated to all councils within NSW.

Application process

1. Confirm your eligibility to apply for funds by reviewing grant guidelines.
2. Submit all application documents, including letters of support and authorisation via the online portal. The link is provided on [LGNSW's website](#). Applications must be submitted before the **27 April 2017**.

Mandatory criteria

Projects must demonstrate senior management commitment to integrating all roadside reserve management activities/outputs from this grant into council's strategic, asset and financial planning systems

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by an independent Technical Committee against the following assessment criteria:

Your application should be prepared with these criteria in mind.

Council Roadside Reserves Project Assessment Criteria	
<i>Beside each assessment criterion you will see a reference to a section of the Application Form that contains questions relevant to that criterion.</i>	
1. Project planning (ability to deliver the project to a high standard). Questions B3, B4 & B6	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound project planning and methodology• Outputs and activities clearly targeted towards achieving stated objectives• Measurable stated outputs and activities, both quantitatively and qualitatively
2. Integration into broader council activities. Questions B5, B6, B7, B11 & work plan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will the project result in improved integration of roadside management into councils systems and broader council activities in the long term, ie will it embed practice change?• Does the project demonstrate senior management commitment to integrating roadside vegetation management into council's strategic, asset and financial planning systems (intention to have signoff at senior management and/or councillor level?)
3. Capacity building and partnerships. Questions B4, B5, B6 & B8	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the project build the skills and experience of council staff across a range of council departments?• Will the project result in increased awareness and understanding of natural asset values of roadside reserves?
4. Efficiency and effectiveness. Questions B9, B11 & B13	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project risks identified and addressed• Feasible time frame for achieving proposed outputs and activities• How sustainable the project will be in the long term, how it is to be monitored and evaluated?• Commitment to providing detailed feedback to LGNSW regarding the framework and tools that were trialled throughout the project
5. Value for money. Proposed Work Plan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extent to which the budget supports the proposed activities and whether it will ensure the viability of the project overall• Cost effectiveness and funding ratio, including co-contributions and in-kind support• Well planned and costed budget

Submitting your proposal

Documentation

Applications must be submitted via the on-line portal, by 27 April 2017. The link is provided on [LGNSW's website](#).

A project reporting template will be made available to successful applicants.

Partnerships

Obtaining the support of other organisations/groups can add value to a project. You should provide evidence of your project partners' support when submitting your application. Please **note partnerships are not a criteria for funding**, but may strengthen your application.

Letters of support

Letters of support are only required to confirm project partner involvement. These should be submitted with your application, must be signed by a senior manager or senior office bearer of the organisation providing them, and should include details of any cash and in-kind support.

Good and services tax (GST)

All councils are registered for GST, so do not include any GST in your budget when you fill in your application. LGNSW will add GST to your grant payment.

Insurance

It is a condition of the grant that you have public liability insurance of \$20,000,000 and any other appropriate insurance cover for all your measures, works, activities and volunteer personnel. You need accident insurance for the life of the project and you need to ensure that all the people you employ are covered by workers' compensation insurance.

Attachments

Any additional material submitted with your application must be kept to a minimum. Please consider including relevant sections, or extracts of documents, rather than the whole plan. Use of web links to documents is also strongly encouraged.

Closing date for submission of proposals

Applications must be submitted via the [on-line portal](#).

All components of your application must be provided electronically, including **all attachments**. If this is not possible please contact:

Kathy Godfrey, LGNSW on 9242 4053 or kathy.godfrey@lgnsw.org.au.

Closing Date: Thursday 27 April 2017

Acknowledgement of receipt of applications

You should expect acknowledgement of your application within the next business day after submitting your application. Acknowledgement will be via email.

Notification of grant decisions

LGNSW will announce the successful applicants in May 2017. Applicants will also be notified via email. Written grant agreements will be provided to council by the 30 May 2017.

Successful projects will receive partial funding on completion of their Grant Agreement. See below for details of payment timetable.

Management of grants

A grant agreement will be provided to successful applicants including information on project timeframes, payment milestones, reporting requirements, tax invoices, financial statements and project evaluation.

Project completion

Projects may commence as soon as the Grant Agreement is finalised. All projects should be completed by **28 February 2019**.

Payment Timetable

Funding will be provided in two payments. The first instalment of 80 per cent of grant value will be provided on receipt of a signed Grant Agreement. A final payment of 20 per cent will be made on receipt of an approved final report.

Who to contact if you need further help

If you require further help with your application, please contact the Council Roadside Reserves Project Officer, Kathy Godfrey by phone on (02) 9242 4053, or by e-mail at kathy.godfrey@lgnsw.org.au

Assessment and approval process

After the closing date, project staff will check whether your application is eligible and sufficiently complete for assessment purposes. Project staff may also contact you or your nominated referees for further information about your application.

A Technical Committee will assess the applications. The Technical Committee includes people with knowledge and experience in roadside environmental management.

The Technical Committee will assess the merit of your proposal by using the assessment criteria outlined previously and will make recommendations to the Advisory Committee. The CRR Advisory Committee, having considered the Technical Committee's recommendations, determines which applicants will receive grants. The CRR Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from Local Government NSW, the NSW Roadside Environment Committee, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Local Land Services, Roads and Maritime Services, and an independent academic expert.

Decisions by the CRR Advisory Committee are final.

Conflict of interest

Applicants are required to declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest (COI) that they may be aware of in relation to the awarding of a grant.

Obligations of successful applicants

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Provide written evidence of partnership funding where relevant.
- Provide proof of land owners' approval to work on the project site and necessary permits from local, state and federal authorities to undertake the project if applicable (a cover letter will suffice).
- Obtain a licence from OEH for any project that relates to threatened species /endangered ecological communities.
- Sign a Grant Agreement that sets out terms and conditions associated with the grant.
- Comply with all conditions contained in the Grant Agreement.
- Provide evidence of appropriate insurance coverage (see page 7).
- Forward a tax invoice to the LGNSW for each instalment of the grant as detailed in the grant agreement.
- Seek prior approval from the LGNSW to alter proposed outputs, milestones or budget variations by more than 10 per cent per line item.
- Provide progress reports as required in the Grant Agreement.
- Provide a final report including a financial report certified by the Chief Financial Officer or certifying accountant. Guidance on the format of the final and progress report will be provided by LGNSW.
- Acknowledge the Trust and LGNSW's support in all promotional material or any public statement about your project. Include both the Trust and LGNSW's logos on relevant written material, including website content.
- Be prepared for all knowledge gained as part of the grant to be made publically available and participate in opportunities to share lessons learnt from the grants if requested.
- Ensure that all procurement and employment is undertaken in line with your organisation's internal policies and guidelines.
- Commit to adopting any plan of management that is funded under this project (including RVMPs) and integrate it into their IP&R system. Failure to adopt and implement plans funded through this grant may be taken into account by the Environmental Trust when it assesses future grant applications from the council.

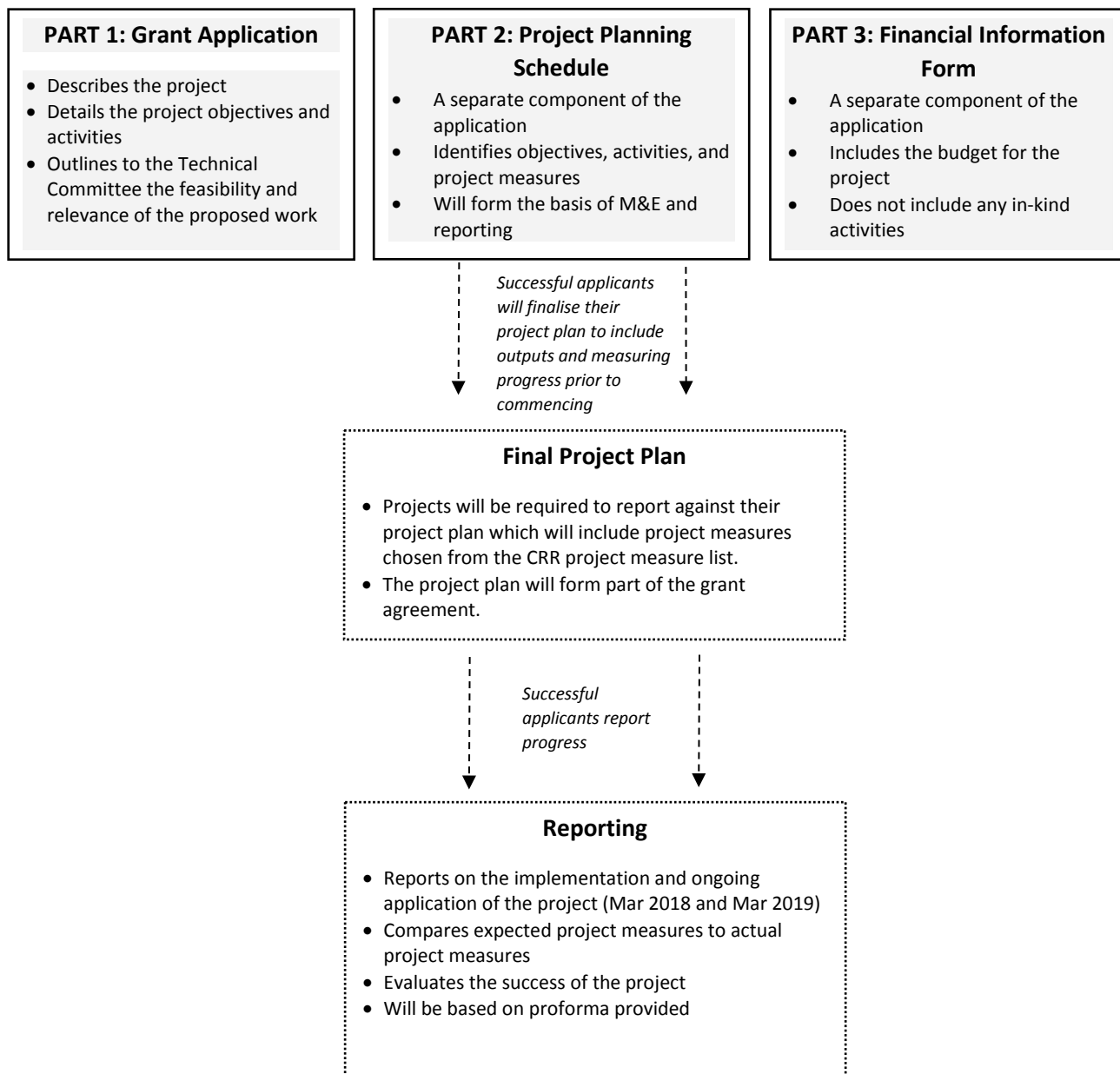
Project Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Project planning

This section of the application will assist you to plan your project. Project planning requires you to think about the main objectives of your project what activities need to be undertaken to achieve those objectives and when you plan to achieve them.

At the project planning stage applicants also need to identify what project measures will be used to determine the project's success. The CRR project provides a list of project measures which are detailed in this section of the Guide and in Part 2 – 'The Project Planning Schedule'. Projects may choose to include some additional measures.

The diagram below shows the link between the Grant Application, the Project Planning Schedule, Monitoring and Evaluation Report Card and reporting requirements.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating your project enables you to determine whether you achieved what you set out to do by identifying how, when and who is responsible for monitoring your project's progress.

Undertaking monitoring and evaluation during implementation and after project completion allows for a measurement of progress against project objectives, as well as identifying areas where improved or alternative methods are required.

All applications for the CRR project need to identify how the objectives and outcomes of your project will be monitored and evaluated. This will be included in the project plan and reviewed and updated by successful applicants prior to projects commencing.

Project measures

A list of project measures have been developed for the CRR project (see table below). All projects will be expected to include the relevant project measures in their project planning. Use of these measures will enable reporting back to LGNSW and the Trust. Applicants will select relevant measures from the tables below to include in their 'Project Planning Schedule'.

Project measures are used to demonstrate the impact of a project on the original issues addressed by the project. They can be quantitative (numerical – How much did we do?) or qualitative (descriptive – How well did we do it?), and can be used to determine if project objectives have been successfully met. Projects may use additional measures if appropriate.

COUNCIL ROADSIDE RESERVES PROJECT MEASURES		
Integration of Roadside Environmental Management Across Council		
Code	Project Measure	Unit of Measurement
CRR 1	Roadside vegetation management plan or policy developed	Number
CRR 2	Roadside vegetation management plan or policy updated	Number
CRR 3	Council endorsed plan or policy	Number
CRR 4	Natural asset management system includes roadside reserve values	yes / no
CRR 5	Roadside reserve management integrated into IP&R systems	yes / no / comment
Roadside Vegetation Assessment		
Code	Project Measure	Unit of Measurement
CRR 6	Roadside areas assessed	% of roads assessed across LGA

CRR 7	Roadside assessment data incorporated into councils database	% for LGA
CRR 8	Conservation assessment status applied to data collected	yes / no
Capacity Building		
Code	Project Measure	Unit of Measurement
CRR 9	Training sessions conducted	Number
CRR 10	People trained	Number
CRR 11	Awareness raising events	Number
CRR 12	Attendees at awareness raising events	Number
CRR 13	Educational products developed	Number
CRR 14	Individuals potentially reached	Number

Reporting and evaluation

Grantees are required to provide a progress report by 13 March 2018 and a final report by the 12 March 2019 or within one month of project completion. Note that all projects will need to be completed by **28 February 2019**.

These reports will be based on the proposed work plan with some additional opportunity to reflect on whether the project achieved what you set out to do.

Glossary

Objectives – objectives define what is going to be done to achieve the overall aim of the project. These are more specific than aims. They are clear, realistic and measurable intended results of a project.

Activities – Are significant steps or actions that are needed to produce the identified project outputs. They relate to dates by which specific actions will be achieved. They map out the key steps for the project and set dates for ensuring the programs objectives are met.

Project measures – project measures include, but are not limited to, a standardised list of indicators (outputs) with units of measure that the Trust uses to report on projects across its programs. Project measures identify criterion that you will use to show the efficiency and effectiveness with which your outcomes are being achieved against the objectives of the project.

Project measures may be **quantitative** (numerical: how much did we do? Or **qualitative** (descriptive: how well did we do it?). Refer to CRR project measure table for more information.