

# Habitat Action Grant Application Guidelines

June 2023

## Purpose

These guidelines provide essential information for all applicants seeking funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts in 2023 and beyond.

## Recreational Fishing Trusts

### Background

When fishing in NSW waters, both freshwater and saltwater recreational fishers are required by law to pay the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee. All money raised by the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee is placed into the Recreational Fishing Trusts and spent on **improving recreational fishing in NSW**. These trusts are **overseen by two committees made up of recreational fishers** - one for saltwater and one for freshwater.

A comprehensive angler survey of the Recreational Fishing Trusts, completed in 2013, indicated widespread support for the current range of programs that receive funding from the Trusts.

The Habitat Action Grant program has been running in its current form since 2008. The Habitat Action Grant program is a devolved grant program directing money raised from the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee toward projects that improve local fish habitats across NSW. Rehabilitation of fish habitat provides long-term sustainable benefits for native fish stock and in turn provides substantial benefits for NSW recreational fishers.

### Who can apply?

Anyone who is interested in **rehabilitating fish habitat** in NSW can apply for a Habitat Action Grant including individual recreational fishers, fishing clubs and organisations, educational institutions, councils, community groups, individuals and natural resource managers. Joint applications are also encouraged.

### What types of projects are funded?

These grants aim to enhance and rehabilitate degraded recreational fish habitat through a range of on-ground works such as those listed below. If you need some project ideas, go to the Habitat Action Grant page on the NSW DPI website at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag).

Project type	Examples
Rehabilitation of riparian lands	Reinstating native vegetation on riverbanks, wetlands, mangrove forests, saltmarsh; stock management on riparian lands through fencing.
Removal of exotic vegetation from waterways	Removal of smothering vines, willows, privet, camphor laurel, osage orange etc and replacing them with native vegetation.
Bank stabilisation works	Installing “rock fillets”, environmentally friendly seawalls, soft erosion control works (coir logs or brush bundles), or natural timber structures (such as pins, snags, log revetment or engineered log jams).
Removal or modification of barriers to fish passage and reinstatement of natural flow regimes	Removal of disused roads, weirs and floodgates; replacement of poor functioning structures with bridges, improved culverts; improved management of floodgates; installation of fishways.
Re-snagging waterways with natural timber structures	Installing natural woody habitat (snags), engineered log jams, “fish hotels”.
Adopting new technologies	Irrigation off-take screens (which prevent the loss of fish from the natural system).

### How long can projects run for?

Projects should aim to run for **12 months** only. The starting date is the date that the contracts have been co-signed by both the applicant and Department of Regional NSW – Primary Industries.

Allowance will be provided for conditions out of the applicant’s control such as flooding or drought where survival of plantings or stability of instream works will be put at risk if undertaken in unsuitable conditions. Requests for project variations will need to be made in writing (via email) to the Habitat Action Grant Administrator, adjusting milestone timing and associated milestone payments accordingly.

### Is matching funding a requirement?

**Yes.**

Matching funding is a requirement for funding; however, this does not need to be a cash contribution. Other contributions towards the project count as an ‘in-kind’ contribution and can include any voluntary labour (hands on work), project management time (administration, reporting, etc.) and cost of machinery use for example. It can also include on-going maintenance of a site (capped at 3 years after project completion).

### Eligibility and priority areas

Funding applications **must relate to the enhancement of recreational fishing by improving fish habitat.**

Applications from recreational fishers or which demonstrate the support of local recreational fishers will be given preference.

Applications should:

- Show consultation has occurred with Primary Industries - Fisheries representatives listed below – **mandatory**;
- Be technically sound and utilise best practice methods;
- Have an understanding of permits required for projects including instream and bank works such as re-snagging, fish hotels and erosion control activities. Permits do not have to be obtained prior to submitting the funding application;

- Have matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis (cash and/or in-kind support by the applicant or project partners);
- Provide itemised/detailed quotes and budget breakdowns.
- Have letters of support from recreational fishing clubs, organisations and/or long term fishers in the area of works and project partners.
- Applications which are incomplete and/or do not meet the above criteria will not be assessed.

To assist applicants, a checklist forms part of the application form and **must be completed**.

### What project items will not be funded?

- Projects that are located outside of 'key fish habitat' - [Key Fish Habitat Maps](#)
- Commercial ventures or materials developed for a primarily commercial purpose.
- Activities that have already been completed (expenses cannot be reimbursed or used as in-kind to your Habitat Action Grant application);
- Construction of fishing related infrastructure such as boat ramps, fishing platforms or fish cleaning tables (applicants should seek funding from the general [NSW Recreational Fishing Trust](#) funding or the "NSW Boating Now" program);
- Construction of general amenities such as picnic tables, footpaths, toilet blocks, BBQs, and other picnic area enhancements;
- Projects that are predominantly research focused;
- Projects that are considered to be wholly or partially of private benefit. This may include but is not limited to the protection and/or replacement of private infrastructure. Activities that may not be considered for funding include flood damage of roads, crossings or bridges and/or bank stabilisation works to protect infrastructure including homes, sheds, fences and power poles.
- Ongoing maintenance of a project site. The maintenance of a project site, post Habitat Action Grant activities, should be considered as part of the project proposal, but should be included within the in-kind support from the applicant or project partners.

### Assessment Process

All applications undergo a preliminary review to determine eligibility for assessment and further consideration by the Technical Assessment Panel (TAP). Applications that are incomplete or include items listed above ('Project items that will not be funded') will not progress to the assessment stage and applicants will be informed.

A Technical Assessment Panel (TAP) will review applications and assess them against the below criteria. The TAP consists of members from a range of backgrounds who have expertise in aquatic habitat rehabilitation, natural resource management and/or grant funding management. The TAP also consists of at least one member from both the Fresh and Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committees, two external/independent members and internal staff representatives from Department of Regional NSW – Primary Industries – Fisheries.

Projects are assessed against a number of criteria including:

- The extent of benefit to fish habitat, recreational fishing and support from recreational fishers;
- Whether the project is technically sound (including concept designs, photos, maps);
- The adequacy of expertise within the project team (engineering, project management, previous experience);
- Cost effectiveness, value for money and sound budgeting (detailed/itemised quotes/estimates);

- The extent of tangible onground outcomes to be achieved and extent of riverbank improved.

The TAP will provide recommendations to the Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (RFTEC) for consideration, who will make the final decision. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the assessment process once formal approval has been received from the Trust Executives. Written advice will be provided to all applicants on or before March the following year.

### What happens if I am successful?

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a Habitat Action Grant Funding Deed;
- Obtain permits, where relevant, prior to any on-ground works commencing;
- As a condition of funding, submit written reports on completed payment milestones and invoice NSW Department of Primary Industries;
- Submit a final report within 60 days of completing the project;
- Provide annual photos/reports of any maintenance commitments;
- Seek approval from the Department before finalising all project publications, media (including social media) and signage. The Recreational Fishing Trust must be acknowledged in the above outputs (approved words of acknowledgement and associated logos will be provided by the Department upon request).

Milestone and Final Report templates can be accessed via [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag) under "Habitat Action Grant reporting forms".

### How to apply

Applications can be made by completing the Habitat Action Grants application form and submitting it via

- **email:** [fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

Only information which is considered essential for assessment should be sent as attachments with your application, **please do not send excessive pages of attachments** as these have to be copied multiple times for each assessor. If you wish to acknowledge a report in the application, include the title and relevant pages.

See *Notes for applicants* below for further information.

After submitting your application to the [fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au) email address, your application will undergo a preliminary review to determine the applications suitability for the Habitat Action Grants. Applicants will receive an email with a unique project reference number.

## Who can assist you?

You **MUST** contact one of the following DPI staff to discuss your project and ensure applications are consistent with priorities for funding. They may also be able to provide assistance with completing your application.

Regions	Contact	Email	Phone
Border Rivers, Gwydir & Namoi	David Ward	<a href="mailto:david.ward@dpi.nsw.gov.au">david.ward@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	(02) 6763 1255
Central West, Central Tablelands & Western	Joe Brennan	<a href="mailto:joseph.brennan@dpi.nsw.gov.au">joseph.brennan@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0456 643 571
Murray, Riverina & Murrumbidgee	Iain Ellis	<a href="mailto:iain.ellis@dpi.nsw.gov.au">iain.ellis@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0429 300 486
	Alison McLean	<a href="mailto:alison.mclean@dpi.nsw.gov.au">alison.mclean@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0484 907 343
North Coast	Hayley Leczkowski	<a href="mailto:hayley.leczkowski@dpi.nsw.gov.au">hayley.leczkowski@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0436 002 524
	Charlotte Jenkins	<a href="mailto:charlotte.jenkins@dpi.nsw.gov.au">charlotte.jenkins@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0407 154 320
Lake Macquarie-Midcoast	Cherie Colyer - Morris	<a href="mailto:cherie.colyer-morris@dpi.nsw.gov.au">cherie.colyer-morris@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0472 713 714
Randwick – Lake Macquarie	Karthika Krishna Pillai	<a href="mailto:karthika.krishnapillai@dpi.nsw.gov.au">karthika.krishnapillai@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0456 985 908
Wollondilly, Blue Mountains & Southern Sydney Metro	Jess Hyland	<a href="mailto:jess.hyland@dpi.nsw.gov.au">jess.hyland@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0455 794 560
South Coast & Southern Tablelands	Jillian Keating	<a href="mailto:jillian.keating@dpi.nsw.gov.au">jillian.keating@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0427 129 506
	Mick Bettanin	<a href="mailto:mick.bettanin@dpi.nsw.gov.au">mick.bettanin@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>	0438 293 747

General Enquiries - Habitat Action Grant Coordinator – [fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

Milly Hobson, 02 6763 1206

## Notes for applicants

### File naming protocol

Please include **the abbreviated name of your project** in both the application email subject and the application file. e.g. “Stony River revegetation Stony Creek Landcare HAG.pdf”

Please DO NOT leave file name as “Large-grant-habitat-action-grant-program.pdf” or similar.

### File sizes

Please keep file sizes to **<10MB** total, including attachments.

### Photographs

Please incorporate photographs into a word or pdf document (preferred) prior to sending. A maximum of 5 photographs to be included in the application. Photos should be labelled to indicate their subject and dated.

## Project summary

This is used for media (e.g. on NSW DPI website). Please ensure the summary is 40 words or less – **all words in excess will be deleted**.

## Project location details

Please include the Lot/DP and latitude and longitude for the land on which you plan to undertake the activities. If you are not the owner, you will require written permission from the owner prior to your application being assessed. Please ensure that Latitude and Longitude are in **decimal degrees** such as: 28.870813°, 153.508457°.

Please include a map of the local and regional area to show where the site is located within its catchment and proximity to nearest towns. This can be achieved through the use of Google Earth or Google Maps, or scans of topographic maps.

## Project budget

Please where possible provide **quotations/estimates** to support your project budget.

Demonstration of cost effectiveness, value for money and sound budgeting form part of the assessment criteria for your project. It is important that the costs identified are **realistic** and that the project budget totals are calculated correctly and where possible should be supported with quotations for the works to be undertaken.

It is understood that costs will differ across the state based on ease of access to materials, machinery, geographic location and expertise required. Please ensure any elevated costs are justified and supported by evidence.

Refer to the example budget on the application form but please do not copy the values listed - use them as a guide only.

Costs should be broken into (for example):

\$/hour x required time x number of people

\$/unit (tree/rock/material) x number of units.

Speaking with contractors and experts in the field of work you are proposing will help guide the overall project budget. These people should be listed in the “Project consultation and support” section of the application form rather than team members.

## In-kind contributions

Please ensure all aspects of the project are identified and costed in the budget table. This includes voluntary labour, donations of time or specialist expertise, project management and administration time, maintenance of the site following completion of works (e.g. watering and weeding of plants), donation of plant and equipment to the project, the value of discounted rates given to the project, etc.

All of these ‘in-kind’ contributions to projects should be costed. These contributions, when realistically costed, add value to the project and improve the project’s overall value for money.

A rate of \$35/hour should be applied to volunteer labour, with a higher rate used for skilled services (justification for the value used will be required).

## Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Organisations that are **GST registered must quote GST exclusive prices** in their project item costings. If your organisation is **not GST registered**, your organisation will still pay GST on goods and services, therefore you need to **quote GST inclusive prices** in your costings.

## More information

A list of previously funded projects and case studies can be found on the NSW DPI website at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hag).

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