



Caring
for our
Country

Open Grants 2008-09

Call for Applications

Funding is available under the Australian Government's new \$2.25 billion Caring for our Country initiative for activities that address national priority areas.

Caring for our Country's goal is to have an environment that is healthy, better-protected, well-managed, resilient, and that provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Caring for our Country will focus on achieving strategic results and invest in six national priority areas:

- a national reserve system
- biodiversity and natural icons
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- sustainable farm practices
- natural resource management in remote and northern Australia
- community skills, knowledge and engagement

Transitional arrangements are in place for 2008-09 to smooth the change over from previous programs.



Caring for our Country Open Grants will provide up to \$25 million in 2008-09. This funding is available for high quality projects in these six areas, particularly those that will:

1. Protect, enhance or restore Australia's biodiversity and natural icons;
2. Improve the water quality of our critical aquatic habitats
3. Achieve greater take-up of sustainable farm practices.

Projects under these priority areas that: address environmental and sustainable land management outcomes in remote and northern Australia; generate improvements to the national reserve system or coastal environments; or improve community skills, knowledge and engagement, will also be considered.

Caring for our Country Open Grants are encouraging larger scale integrated projects or programs or activities. Smaller community grants are being offered under other Caring for our Country elements such as Community Coastcare.

Who can apply?

Anyone can apply as long as you are a legal entity. For example:

- Regional/Catchment natural resource management bodies
- Non-government organisations
- Incorporated community, industry and Indigenous groups
- Businesses
- Research organisations
- Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments
- Individuals

How do you apply?

You will need to submit a Caring for our Country Application for 2008 – 09 funding. This application form is available on the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au

When do applications close?

Applications must be received by **5.00pm (AEST) Friday 1 August 2008.**

What types of projects are we seeking?

The Australian Government is looking for applications for projects or programs that:

- can clearly deliver measurable outcomes in at least one of the Caring for our Country priority areas for 2008-09;
- are seeking funds from \$80,000 up to \$400,000 (GST exclusive)
- demonstrate integration of approaches, issues and partnerships between key players, such as regional groups, community, industry, government and non-government organisations;
- can be completed by 30 June 2009, but we will also accept projects that can be completed within 12 months.

All projects will need to demonstrate how you will:

- engage key stakeholders
- measure success
- communicate and promote your project's outcomes
- make any findings or information available to the wider public
- promote Caring for our Country.

Examples of project types that may be funded are outlined below:

1. Biodiversity and Natural Icons – investments in this priority area aim to protect and manage Australia's biodiversity and natural icons.

Types of projects:

- increasing the extent, condition, connectivity and resilience of native habitat, vegetation and landscapes
- integrated biodiversity projects to protect, enhance or restore high conservation value ecosystems, including the habitats of nationally threatened species or endangered ecological communities
- decreasing the impact of a nationally significant weed or invasive species on a key asset
- developing comprehensive regional biodiversity strategies
- reducing critical threats, improving or restoring values of World Heritage and National Heritage natural places.

2. Critical Aquatic Habitats – investments in this priority area aim to protect and manage critical aquatic habitats and address threats to these assets.

Types of Projects

- cross catchment protection of riparian areas for biodiversity and water quality
- a water monitoring project to identify pollution or salinity sources where monitoring is part of a larger project
- collaboration of industry, community and land holders to implement management practices across a catchment.
- protect and reduce threatening processes on a Ramsar wetland or other high conservation value aquatic ecosystems.

3. Sustainable Farm Practices – investments in this priority area aim to support (a) adoption of management and production practices that improve the capacity of land managers to deliver productive and environmental services; and (b) land managers to respond to emerging threats to productivity and the condition of natural resource assets.

Four themes will be supported under the sustainable farm practices priority area in the transitional year.

Types of Projects

- *Innovative Practices* – projects that develop, adopt and promote innovative practices, techniques, technologies and products
- *Understanding Impacts and Priority Setting* – projects that enhance industry understanding of the impacts of their activities on natural resources
- *Industry Monitoring and Reporting Practice Change* – projects that invest in enabling industry to monitor and document the location and rate of priority practice changes
- *Reducing the Impact of Invasive Plant and Animal Species* – projects that invest in reducing the impact of invasive plant and animal species on agriculture.

Further Information

Guidelines for Applicants provides further detail on Caring for our Country funding including criteria and assessment.

Guidelines for Applicants can be found on the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au

For enquiries call the Caring for our Country toll free hotline on **1800 065 823**.

