

## **Session 8: What Funding Assistance is Available To Land Managers for Natural Resource Management?**

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### **Introduction**

Access to information about the range of funding sources available to landholders for natural resource management has not always been readily available. Once you have identified problem areas, found technical advice and developed a plan, where do you go for financial assistance and which funding program is the most relevant? A joint project between Snowy Catchment Action Planning and the Total Catchment Management Education Officer for the South East Catchment Management Board saw the production of a guide for landholders, summarising such information. This guide can be accessed on the Snowy River Shire Council web site ([www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au](http://www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au)). Funding programs are available from Federal, State and non-government sources.

### **Federal funding**

#### ***Natural Heritage Trust (NHT)***

The major source of federal government funding for natural resource management has been the NHT. This fund was created in 1996 with \$1.25 billion dollars to invest in Australia's natural heritage over five years (until September 2001). In its current state there is one final funding round to go. The trust is a partnership between Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, offering 18 programs. Ten of these can be accessed through a single application form, a one-stop shop directing applications to the most relevant program.

These programs include:

- Bushcare to reverse long term decline in the quality and extent of Australia's native vegetation cover
- National Landcare Program to develop and implement resource management practices to enhance soil, water and biological resources that are equitable, efficient and consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- National Rivercare Program for the sustainable management, rehabilitation and conservation of rivers outside the Murray Darling Basin
- Farm Forestry Program to encourage the incorporation of commercial tree growing and management into farming systems for wood and non-wood production, increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resource management
- Endangered Species Program to protect and conserve Australia's nationally threatened species and ecological communities
- National Wetlands Program to promote the conservation, repair and wise use of wetlands across Australia
- Fisheries Action Program to help repair Australia's aquatic environment and assist in the conservation and sustainable use of fish resources
- Waterwatch, the nationwide water quality monitoring program, with the focus of 'healthy waterways'
- Murray-Darling 2001 and
- National Reserve System Program.

Within these programs, there is opportunity for projects to conserve and manage areas of native vegetation.

To be eligible for these Commonwealth funds, you must satisfy be at least one of the following criteria:

- An incorporated community group

- An individual proposing activities of a very high public benefit
- An incorporated non-government organisation
- A local government
- A regional organisation working in partnership with local or state governments
- A State or Territory government agency
- An educational institution or
- A commonwealth body proposing a recovery or threat abatement planning under the Endangered Species Program

The Trust will generally fund projects on a dollar for dollar basis and will give higher priority to those organisations proposing to contribute more (in a cash and in-kind basis).

Projects need to be applied for well in advance of the actual work being undertaken. An idea of the application process can be seen by looking at the schedule during 2000 for the 2000-2001 application round where applications closed at the end of February and successful applications were recently announced at the end of October.

For more information about NHT applications and funding process, visit the web site [www.nht.gov.au](http://www.nht.gov.au), talk to local extension officers who have had experience in filling out application forms, such as Landcare Co-ordinators and Rivercare Officers.

### *Threatened Species Network (NHT) Community Grants*

TSN Community Grants is a community based program jointly funded by NHT and WWF Australia. Grants are provided to assist community groups take on long term responsibility for the conservation and recovery of nationally threatened species and ecological communities.

Funding is available for hands on work such as:

- Enhancing, restoring, establishing key habitat;
- Controlling feral animals and weeds where long term maintenance is likely;
- Establishing population survey and monitoring programs;
- Managing visitor access and sign-posting;
- Establishing management agreements on key sites;
- Propagating and planting threatened plant species; and
- Fencing.

For more information about this funding source- NSW TSN Co-ordinator Francesca Andreoni at WWF for Nature (02) 9281 5515, [www.nccnsw.org.au/member/tsn](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/member/tsn)

### **NSW Government Funding**

The major funding sources available for natural resource management available from the NSW Government include:

#### *Environmental Trust*

Administered by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the trust is an independent statutory body that funds environmental restoration, rehabilitation, research and education projects. From July 2000 this funding has become available to community organisations with an increase to the amount of grants awarded.

Grants are available for:

- Rehabilitation and Restoration works. Individual projects that involve restoring.
- Degraded environmental resources, protecting rare and important ecosystems and habitats; preventing or reducing future environmental damage or enhancing the quality of valuable environmental resources. Grants were available this year for between \$5000 and \$100 000 to community organisations (total of one million dollars) and local government and relevant government agencies (total \$500 000).
- Environmental Research to generate new knowledge or information to facilitate local solutions to environmental problems. Grants were available for projects between \$30,000 to \$300 000 over 1-3 years for projects that involve research in biophysical, economic and/or social disciplines. This funding is available to community organisations, universities and research institutes.
- Environmental Education for individual projects from \$5 000 to \$100 000 that involve developing or widening community knowledge, skills and commitment to protecting the environment.
- Eco Schools grants, providing 80 schools each year with the opportunity to involve the community and students in developing and implementing environmental management projects.

There is a formal application process for these grants. This year applications opened in May and closed mid July. The EPA ran several workshops to help with the application process. For more information, contact the Grants Administrator 02 9995 5369, [envirotrust@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:envirotrust@epa.nsw.gov.au) or visit the epa website [www.epa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au) and look at their grants section.

#### *Native Vegetation Incentive Fund*

The NSW government provided \$15 million over three years for native vegetation management incentives. The fund has been managed by the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) and provides funding to conserve existing remnants of native vegetation on private property.

In return for signing a contract or agreement with DLWC, the landholder will receive funding in an up-front payment for fencing, site management such as weed and feral animal control and tree or understorey planting to extend and protect existing remnants.

In return for the funding, landholders must sign a formal agreement with DLWC agreeing to undertake the works within a specified period and to manage the area for an agreed period- including stock and fire management. Landholders may sign either a Management Contract or Registered Property Agreement with the Department.

- Management Contracts have a minimum period of 10 years (after fence construction) and a funding limit of \$10,000. It is a contract that the Department will provide funding in return for the landholder undertaking the agreed work and manage the vegetation through stock exclusion.
- A registered property agreement also has a minimum period of ten years. However, they may also be extended into perpetuity. The agreement must be registered on the title deeds for the agreement period. Agreement will be negotiated for projects under and over \$10,000.

The fund is nearing completion, the Department will still accept expressions of interest for the fund though current funding is practically fully committed.

Negotiations may be lengthy and are made much easier when landholders have a clear idea of what they would like to achieve and what assistance is required to protect the vegetation. For more information, contact your local DLWC Conservation Office.

### *Rivercare Program*

An educational and funding program administered by DLWC to encourage community groups and other organisations to become actively involved in managing rivers and streams in their local area. For more information, contact your local DLWC office to speak to a Rivercare Officer

### *Acid Soil Action*

Funding assistance to tackle the negative affects of acid soils on agricultural production and land degradation. This is administered by two regional committees, the southern and northern committees. They will support projects submitted to them falling within a given set of guidelines. For more information, talk to the Extension Specialist Acid Soils, in Queanbeyan on 02 6297 1861 or Acid Soils Program coordinator at Wagga Wagga on 02 6938 1906

### *Salt Action*

The Salinity Control Strategy of NSW aims to minimise, prevent and control salinity and waterlogging problems by coordinating community and government actions. Funding is available to community groups and NSW government agencies to take actions to address salinity problems. Assessment of Salt Action Projects is similar to the NHT process and applications are called for at the same time. For more information, contact the Convener, Salinity Subcommittee 02 9228 6317.

### *NSW Wetlands Program*

This provides grants to restore a range of wetlands such as developing a local wetland management plan and presenting innovative approaches to implementing wetland management, research, extension and public awareness strategies. Any community group that is incorporated, or associated with an incorporated organisation is eligible to apply for funding. Contact the Wetlands Action Coordinator on 02 9895 7183

### *NSW Rural Assistance Authority*

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority offers a number of schemes to landholders to better manage their properties. These include:

- NSW FARMBIS to provide assistance in the form of a subsidy (up to 75%) of the cost of training programs to enhance farmers' business management skills. This funding is limited to \$2 000 per year for a scheme.
- Special Conservation Scheme, an incentive scheme aimed at promoting improved land management practices in NSW soil conservation, woody weed control, stock and domestic water supply, upgrading existing irrigation systems, livestock effluent control and Serrated Tussock control in the form of a fixed interest rate loan.
- Irrigated water use efficiency scheme, assistance in the form of a non-repayable interest free grant or an interest subsidy grant to offset the costs associated with planning, undertaking and monitoring improved irrigation and drainage management.

### **Non-Government Funding**

#### *Greening Australia*

Greening Australia offers a number of programs designed to help individual landholders conserve and enhance native vegetation on their properties. During 2000, programs offered by Greening Australia include:

- **Native Vegetation Fencing Incentives:** Providing a refund of up to \$1200 per kilometre to landholders for the cost of purchasing fencing materials to fence existing trees, shrubs, grasslands and wetlands to assist landholders promote natural regeneration on their properties.

- **Bushcare Support**, providing technical advice, training and support to communities protecting and enhancing native vegetation.
- **Native Endangered Species Tree Scheme (NESTS)**: providing funding for fencing materials to improve woodlands that may provide habitat to a range of endangered species.

These are just a few of the projects being run by Greening Australia in SE NSW and ACT. To find out more about Greening Australia and how they can help you, call the NSW State Office on (02) 9560 9144.

### *WWF Grassy Ecosystems Grant*

A partnership between WWF Australia and Bushcare focuses on increasing knowledge, community involvement and formal conservation of grassy ecosystems. Funding grants are generally available between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for projects to address long term conservation, collect consistent ecological data or consistent with a recovery plan for the area and include specific outcomes and performance measures. Funding allocated through an application process, applications opened in August and closed mid October this year. For more information, contact WWF Australia 1800 251 573 or visit [www.wwf.org.au](http://www.wwf.org.au)

### *Easy Grants*

The Easy Grants information service provides summaries of grants available from the Federal government and non-government sources. Within these grants, some are relevant to natural resource management. For information about this service, contact Strategic Australia (03) 9419 1833 or e-mail [strategicaustralia@bigpond.com.au](mailto:strategicaustralia@bigpond.com.au)

### *Sponsorships*

If your community group or organisation has missed out on sponsorship from the NHT or other formal funding programs, seeking sponsorship from a prominent business or corporation is an option open to you. Before approaching these organisations, there are some things you should consider.

- Be prepared. Be organised, with a clear description of your project with what you would like, and what the benefits are to the sponsor.
- Consider the type of sponsorship you require - monetary sponsorship or in-kind sponsorship in the form of materials or services.
- What will your project offer the sponsor?
- Will sponsors receive exclusive rights to the project?
- Is your proposal presented in a clear and succinct manner?

For more information on approaching sponsors, contact your local Landcare Co-ordinator.