Gippsland Transport Environmental Projects – Pilot Program

Version 01

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About the Program

Victoria's road network provides habitat for vast stretches of remnant vegetation across the state. In many areas roadsides offer the last remaining native vegetation across the landscape, providing crucial habitat for flora and fauna and having important intrinsic biodiversity and aesthetic values.

Throughout Victoria, Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) is responsible for the management of road reserves of high environmental and cultural significance. This includes critically endangered grasslands and woodlands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, landscape vegetation of the Great Ocean Road, Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregions, Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland and White Box, Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland. All of these important environmental areas are protected under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.*

As a land manager, RRV takes its role as environmental custodians seriously, and we take care with all we do to ensure the environmental and cultural values we interact with are protected.

Beyond our business as usual relationship with the environment in which we work, RRV's *Our Plan 2020-2023* includes a commitment to allocate a proportion of project budgets to works or activities that provide environmental benefits above and beyond our legislative obligations. This presents a significant opportunity to enhance landscapes and work with a range of stakeholders across Victoria to proactively manage our road network for the benefit of the environment.

The **Gippsland Transport Environmental Projects – Pilot Program (GTEP Pilot Program)** is one of the ways in which RRV is supporting environmentally beneficial projects in the Gippsland region, by providing funding to important initiatives in collaboration with local community groups and the West Gippsland CMA, East Gippsland CMA, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA and North East CMA.

This document sets out application guidelines and eligibility for the GTEP Pilot Program.

Program Requirements

Funding available

Up to **$500,000** is available under the GTEP Pilot Program for projects within designated bioregions and project areas within the Gippsland Councils (Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Baw Baw, Latrobe, Wellington and East Gippsland that includes all or part of the following CMA's:

- West Gippsland CMA
- East Gippsland CMA
- Port Phillip and Westernport CMA
- North East CMA

Importantly, the GTEP Pilot Program is intended to be utilised for environmental initiatives considered additional to any environmental legislative requirements to achieve benefits to a standard that is beyond compliance. As such, it is not intended to fund activities that would typically be considered 'business as usual' or 'maintenance activities' (e.g. native vegetation offsets, noxious weed control), but rather focus on outcomes that would provide an environmental benefit that would not have otherwise been delivered through existing funding arrangements.

Eligibility

All initiatives must have a **clear, defendable and demonstrable link** to the road network (including land in the roadside or abutting the arterial road network) and constitute a benefit to the local landscape or environment. Applications under the GTEP Pilot Program should include documentation that provides information such as specific location, detailed activity, benefits, costs and intended outcomes. A map of the arterial road network can be found at *vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/road-network-and-performance/maps-of-declared-roads*

Who can apply

Grants are open to all Victorian Landcare and other environmental volunteer groups and networks with a focus on on-ground land and natural environment improvement work. This includes, but is not limited to, Landcare groups and networks, Friends of groups, Conservation Management Networks, Committees of Management, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature and Coastcare groups.

Applicants must:

1. Be an incorporated association registered through Consumer Affairs Victoria, or be incorporated through an incorporated association, e.g., Landcare Victoria Incorporated; and

2. Hold insurance sufficient to safeguard volunteers and participants involved in the funded activities, including public liability insurance of at least $10 million and personal accident insurance.

Groups and networks that do not meet the above requirements can still apply for funding but must operate under the auspices of an organisation that meets these requirements (see **Appendix 1: Conditions of Funding**).

What will be funded?

The grant program will fund projects from **$5,000 up to $50,000** that:

- Are delivered within the Gippsland Councils (Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Baw Baw, Latrobe, Wellington and East Gippsland that includes all or part of the West Gippsland CMA, East Gippsland CMA, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA and North East CMA regions;
- Deliver activities to protect or improve natural assets such as native vegetation, native fauna, waterways, wetlands and soils including:
    - **On-ground works** such as weed control, pest plant and animal control, protective fencing, revegetation, artificial habitat, soil stabilisation (conditions apply to some works – see 'What will not be funded' below)
- Meet the following conditions;
    - **Project management** costs are not to exceed 15% of the total funding requested
    - Total cost of **capital items and equipment** not to exceed $3,000. You will need to demonstrate a clear need and community benefit for any capital items included in your budget. Capital items will need to become a registered asset of the applicant group or auspicor
    - Ensuring that **health and safety, cultural heritage and biodiversity impacts** have been considered, particularly for eligible activities that have the potential for harm such as warren/den ripping
    - The project and final report must be completed and invoice provided by 31 May 2022.

Examples of the types of activities that could be undertaken under the GTEP Pilot Program are in **Appendix 4: Potential Activities**.

More than one project grant application can be submitted by a group/network.

Value for money will be considered in the assessment process. You will need to demonstrate that all activities and budget items are necessary for the success of the project and that the amounts requested are reasonable.

It is recommended that projects are designed to be **scalable** to allow for partial funding if full funding is not available for all projects. The projects to be funded may also take account of the overall mix of project types and locations.

What will not be funded?

The following activities will not be funded:

- Amenity and beautification projects
- Shooting, poisoning, trapping, explosive or fumigation methods for pest animal control. This includes engaging a contractor to undertake these activities
- Boundary fencing
- Barbed wire fencing
- Non-indigenous vegetation
- Purchase of capital items over $3,000 (except where clear rationale can be provided, such as for purchase of nesting boxes or native plant supply, which may be considered on a case by case basis)
- Project management or administration costs that collectively total more than 15% of total funding requested
- Computers, laptops and smartphones
- Purchase of goods for competitions, prizes, giveaways, vouchers or alcohol
- Any other action of activity determined by the Regional Assessment Panel through the assessment process to be an inappropriate or unsuitable use of the funds.

Assessment criteria principles

Project Grant applications will be assessed by a Regional Assessment Panel. This panel will consider the contribution a project makes in terms of:

- protection and restoration of land and environment in accordance with local and regional priorities
- demonstrated need and community benefit
- project design and group/network capacity to deliver
- value for money.

Further details regarding assessment criteria and weighting are provided in **Appendix 2: Assessment Criteria**.

Project location and mapping

Projects can be on private or public land in Victoria. All projects must be mapped prior to submitting your application. Please see **Appendix 3: Mapping Guidelines** for information on mapping your project.

RRV will coordinate and provide any traffic management required as part of works being undertaken on the roadside. All applications must include location and timing of work to be undertaken to allow appropriate traffic management arrangements to be made.

Co-contribution

Funding co-contribution is optional but not required, however applications for funding under the program must be able to be directly linked to specific project outputs. Furthermore, the delivery of project outputs must not be contingent upon other funding sources.

How to apply

Timeframes

Applications must be submitted by **11.59pm Sunday 2 May 2021**, via the online grant application system called SmartyGrants.

Where to apply (i.e. online)

Applications are to be submitted through the online grant application system called SmartyGrants. You can save your application and work on it until you are ready to submit it. We recommend that you start your application as early as possible.

Your online application can only be accessed by one set of login details. We recommend that you sign up to SmartyGrants with a generic group email, if you have one, and provide the email address and password to all individuals you wish to contribute to the application.

Hard-copy applications will not be accepted - applications must be submitted online Only information contained in the SmartyGrants application will be considered as part of the assessment.

To apply click on this link:

https://vicroads.smartygrants.com.au/GTEPilot

Further information

For further queries and to discuss your application please contact:

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Assessment process

The Regional Assessment Panel will assess your application based on the information received in your application. The panel may decide to recommend partial funding of some project and support grants.

If you apply for more than one project and one of your projects is funded, preference may then be given to unfunded applicants over your other projects.

Notification of outcome

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing within **four (4) weeks** after applications close and the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. However, applicants who are not granted funding are welcome to ask for feedback on their application.

Appendix 1: Conditions of Funding

Funding agreements

If your organisation is successful then you will have **two (2) weeks** after receipt of the letter of offer, including the funding agreement, to submit your organisation's signed funding agreement, and any other documentation outlined in the letter of offer. If the documentation is not submitted within this timeframe, the funding may be reallocated to other projects.

Successful applicants will receive an initial milestone payment of 50 per cent of the total agreed funding amount once the funding agreement has been signed and returned. Payment of the remaining 50 per cent will be made once a final progress report is submitted and approved. If you have an auspice, they will receive payments on your behalf.

Funding conditions

Successful applicants and auspicing organisations (if an auspice is used) are required to:

- enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Transport (which RRV is part of)
- be responsible for meeting contractual obligations to deliver the project, including submitting project progress reports, and a final report by **31 May 2022**
- adhere to all relevant legislation including Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- acknowledge the (RRV or equivalent) Victorian Government funding in publications and promotions.

Governance and reporting

Successful applications will be required to cooperate fully with RRV in providing monthly reporting to assess progress with the project against milestones, outputs and outcomes.

#1 Progress reports will be required by **15 December 2021** and must include:

- A brief update of how the project is progressing
- Any issues or challenges
- Photos of completed work and activities

A progress report template will be provided.

#2 The final report will be required by **31 May 2022** and must include:

- Photos showing funded work/activity.
- Details of how you spent the grant
- What you achieved with the funding
- Data that you collected during the project. Note - data may be made publicly available
- What you learnt while completing the project
- How the project will support the group, network or partnership into the future.

A final report template will be provided.

#3 By submitting a progress and final report, you are giving permission for DoT to use any material therein in our communications etc, include link here to the use of photographs, permissions such as for photos including children, media and communication guidelines.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on project outcomes, including longer term impacts beyond project completion for use in the program evaluation reviews. It is the responsibility of successful applications to put in place adequate data collection / monitoring arrangements to capture the appropriate data in relation to output and outcomes. These arrangements will assist RRV to undertake a robust evaluation of the GTEP Pilot Program.

Audits

Audits of successful projects may periodically be carried out by RRV to determine the success of environmental projects. Successful groups will be advised if an audit if scheduled and will be required to support the audit with information requested for the nominated project.

Competitive neutrality

All successful applications for the GTEP Pilot Program from a government body, including local governments, will be required to comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy Victoria, in respect of any commercial goods or services offered by the body as a result of the grant.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by RRV for the purpose of grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies for the purposes of assessing your application. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure they are aware of the content of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws. RRV is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

Acknowledgement

Successful applications need to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the provision of funding through the GTEP Pilot Program. Promotional guidelines form part of the funding agreement and include the requirements that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Successful applicants must liaise with RRV to coordinate any events or announcements related to the activity. Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in communication materials.

Appendix 2: Assessment Criteria

Eligible Project Grant applications will be assessed by a Regional Assessment Panel against the criteria described below.

Assessment criteria

Table 1. Assessment Criteria Project Grants

Criteria	Value	Description
Land and environment outcome	**25%**	The extent to which the project contributes to protection, enhancement and restoration of land and environment through on-ground works.
Demonstrated need and community benefit	**25%**	Alignment with strategy or plan or other statement identifying the need for this project or activity and the community benefit to be delivered by the project. The extent to which the project contributes to local and regional priorities as set out in the Regional Catchment Strategy.
Project design and group/network capacity	**25%**	The capacity of group/network to plan and deliver the project including group resources and technical feasibility of the project. Priority will be given to eligible projects that are well-planned and achievable. The track record of the applicant group in delivery of projects including accurate and timely reporting, mapping of outputs and communication may be considered.
Value for money	**25%**	The budget demonstrates that the application represents good value for money, including realistic costs and a clear justification for requested budget items.

Appendix 3: Mapping Guidelines

All projects must be mapped PRIOR to submitting your application.

Mapping your project will assist you to quantify outputs (e.g. fence length, revegetation area).

All groups are encouraged to use Google Earth or another similar online mapping tool. Google Earth can be downloaded for free.

General instructions on how to use Google Earth can be found here:
https://www.google.com/earth/outreach/learn/annotating-google-earth/

Mapping – what you need to provide

Each mapped item needs a separate identifying code/number.

Maps must be saved as jpg or pdf files to upload into your application.

Revegetation projects:
- a polygon outlining each planting/direct seeding site.
- a line showing where fencing will be installed.

Remnant vegetation protection projects:
- a polygon outlining the area of remnant vegetation protected.
- a line showing where fencing will be installed.

Weed control, soil trials or other on-ground work:
- a polygon outlining the area where work will take place.

Workshops, field days, training courses etc:
- a point showing the location where most of the activity will take place.

Appendix 4: Potential Activities

Table 2. Potential Environmental Activities by Theme

Theme	Potential Activities
Flora	Planting or direct seeding towards 100,000 trees commitment
	Weeding projects (e.g. for Clean Up Australia Day)
	Grassland and grassy woodland restoration (e.g. for grasslands)
	Improving, expanding and protecting native vegetation including but not limited to Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) which are restricted/vulnerable/endangered etc
	Seed collection and propagation
	Standardised roadside signage for high quality biodiversity
	Targeted revegetation for fragmented roadsides to improve connectivity
Fauna	Installation of nest boxes or chainsaw hollows
	Installation of fauna crossing infrastructure, or repairs and upgrades of existing fauna infrastructure
	Retrofitting existing culverts and other crossing locations to accommodate fauna (eg fencing top of culverts to minimise roadkill)
	Targeted habitat restoration and improvement
Water	Timber re-use for in-stream habitat
	Wetland restoration works
	Stormwater offsets
	Erosion control
Heritage	Historic heritage management initiatives that could include:
	o Heritage interpretation (info boards, signage, etc)
	o Repairs and upgrades of existing historic features.
	Traditional Owner driven initiatives can potentially overlap with all the listed themes and include Caring for
	Country outcomes that incorporate plants, animals, water and community benefits. These could include:
	o Cultural burns
	o Development and Installation of Heritage interpretation (info boards, signage, etc)
	o Development and Installation of Welcome to Country signage
	o Cultural place naming opportunities
	o Indigenous artwork incorporated into transport infrastructure design.
Sustainability	Solar PV and battery technology used for site sheds and along corridor
	Biophilic designs commissioned
	Use of recycled content in construction works
	Operations Greenhouse Gas reduction initiatives
Community	Donation of salvaged timber for wildlife shelters, men's sheds, etc
	Environmental training
Research and trials	Grassland and grassy woodland ecosystem restoration
	Herbicide assessments
	Wildlife crossing or wildlife reflector trials
	Monitoring and research into wildlife vehicle collisions
	Historic and archaeological research
	Sustainable materials testing