

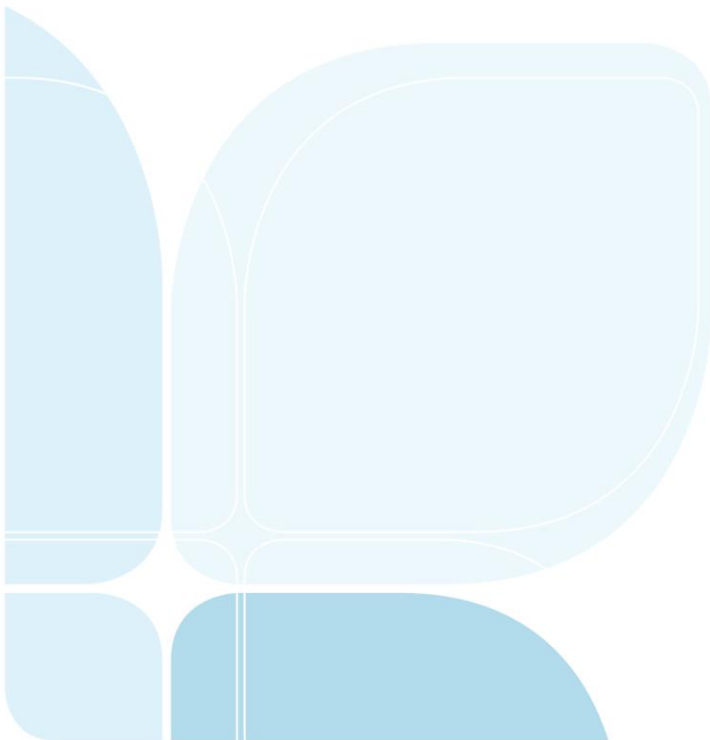


Local Land
Services

Rangeland Rehabilitation Program

Rehabilitating the Coolibah-Black Box
Endangered Ecological Community

Guidelines and conditions for rangeland
rehabilitation projects



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1. About the program

Western Local Land Services utilises funds from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program – Regional Land Partnerships program. This program is part of the Australian Government's investment to deliver on-ground natural resource management through projects targeting key national environment and sustainable agriculture priorities at the regional level. This project will address Outcome 4: *By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities.*

The priority area for investment is the Coolibah-Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions. Investment is to be made into land management practices that improve the values of the Coolibah-Black Box Woodland. A map of the predicted distribution of this Woodland is shown in Appendix A. For more information on this ecological community, visit <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicshowcommunity.pl?id=66>

Western Local Land Services must demonstrate its ability to deliver against the program's strategic objectives and targets and funding may only apply to specific activities and areas of the Western region.

For more information on the National Landcare Program visit www.nrm.gov.au.

In partnership with:



2. What can I apply for?

Eligible activities and expenses

The following types of rehabilitation projects are eligible for funding through this program:

Waterponding: Waterponds vary in shape from complete circles to horseshoes. They are used to reclaim claypan and scalded areas by holding the water on the site. The water sitting within the pond causes the clays to swell and crack and start the recovery process.

Waterspreading: Waterspreading banks are used on low slope country to spread and disperse runoff. This reduces the energy of concentrated flows, minimising soil erosion and improving water infiltration.

Contour furrowing: Contour furrows are long-term stable earthworks that are used on degraded ridge country (of less than 5% slope) to capture moisture, seed, litter and soil. This creates a niche for the establishment and growth of vegetation along the furrow.

Erosion control along linear infrastructure: Erosion along linear infrastructure, such as tracks and fencelines, is a major cause of erosion. Erosion control structures prevent this type of erosion by reinstating the direction of natural waterflows.

Rehabilitation of ground tank diversion banks: The construction of new ground tanks and diversion banks into ground tanks will not be funded. However, the rehabilitation of eroded, poorly constructed diversion banks can be funded and the construction of new diversion banks can be funded if the work is in line with best practice for erosion control.

Other works: In some situations the on-ground works need to be designed and laid out according to the unique erosion situation. This may be a combination of the above techniques, a modification of an existing

technique or any other established technique used for soil erosion control (see “Design and Construction of Earthworks” below for a list of other established techniques not listed above).

Native plant establishment: The costs associated with the introduction of native grasses, forbs, bushes and tree species is eligible and can be included in the project budget. If the proposal involves establishing native plants, a thorough risk assessment needs to be completed, outlining strategies that will ensure a high probability of successful establishment of plants.

Design and construction of earthworks

The design, layout and construction of all earthworks must be approved by the Western Local Land Services Rangeland Rehabilitation Officer. Furthermore, the minimum standards for bank design, layout and construction must be adhered to and are set out in:

- 1) Earthmovers Training Course, Unit 20 Special Earthworks 1991. (for waterponding)
- 2) Soil Conservation Service District Technical Manuals, chapter 11, Design of Soil Conservation Structures
- 3) Soil Conservation Manual - A Manager's guide 2009, Victoria River District Conservation Association
- 4) Rangeland Rehydration: Field Guide, Ecosystem Management Understanding, Ken Tinley & Hugh Pringle, 2013

For all banks constructed, the de-stocking of domestic livestock is mandatory until earthworks consolidate and become stable. The period must be until 50 mm of rain has fallen on the project area, unless otherwise agreed through written variation by the Local Land Services.

Budget

The budget is a very important aspect to every project application as it is where the assessors get a very detailed understanding of the proposed activities. It is also used to determine how cost effective the project is. A limit of \$10,000 contribution from Western Local Land Service has been put on each project.

Higher points will be awarded to applicants that contribute a higher percentage to the project.

- the cost sharing ratio is 1:2 – one dollar from the landholder to two dollars from Western Local Land Services
- please include all in-kind costs (your labour, time, materials, maintenance etc.). For most rehabilitation projects there is very little in-kind labour required if contractors are forming the banks, it is therefore expected that a financial contribution will be made by the applicant to meet the cost sharing ratio
- employment of contractors may be costed into the project
- if necessary, please cost the use of your own plant (graders, dozers etc) at 80% of current market rates
- itemise all materials
- all budget figures must be GST **exclusive**
- money allocated to projects will be based upon the submitted budget and no allowances will be made for price increases
- monitoring and on-going weed control are ineligible costs

Please seek help if you are unsure, the project budget is critical to the approval of the project.

Description of items	Number of items	Cost per item	Applicant contribution	Western LLS contribution	Total cost
rip bank lines using HD16 – 9.0 km	18 hrs	\$120/hr	2160	0	2160
grade banks using CAT12 Grader – 9.0 km	72 hrs	\$80/hr	0	5760	5760
roll banks – 9.0 km	12 hrs	\$60/hr	720	0	720
			2,880.00	5,760.00	8,640.00
Total cost divided by 3 (1:2 cost sharing)					2,880
Is applicant contribution equal or greater (Yes/No)					Yes
Is Local Land Services Western Region contribution equal or less than \$7,500 (If no, cost sharing is too low)					Yes

Ineligible activities and expenses

Non-native re-seeding: The introduction of non-native, persistent and perennial species is not eligible.

Reforming old banks: Any soil conservation earthworks previously constructed with or without funding are not eligible for funding in this round. Any damage or maintenance to banks is considered normal farm maintenance and is not eligible for funding.

Construction of fencing: Western Local Land Services encourages fencing to control total grazing pressure, especially in areas where soil conservation earthworks have been carried out. However, this funding program has the specific output to protect and/or treat land from soil erosion by engineering works.

Ground tanks and associated diversion banks: The construction of ground tanks and diversion banks into ground tanks will not be funded. However, the rehabilitation of eroded, poorly constructed diversion banks can be funded and the construction of new diversion banks can be funded if the work is in line with best practice for erosion control.

Clearing associated with rehabilitation: Any clearing that needs to be completed before a rehabilitation method can be applied is not eligible under this program.

3. Applicant eligibility

The program is available to:

- individual landholders or organisations operating at a property scale. Note that the applicant must be the landowner, or have written permission from the landowner to apply
- all works must be carried out on properties located within the Western Local Land Services region. If unsure of your LLS region, please refer to www.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-regions/whats-my-region or contact one of the Western LLS staff

- the priority area for investment is the Coolibah-Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions. Investment is to be made into land management practices that improve the values of the Coolibah-Black Box Woodland. A map of the predicted distribution of this Woodland is shown on page 12. For more information on this community, visit <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicshowcommunity.pl?id=66>

The program is not available to:

- individuals with an outstanding monitoring activity with Western Local Land Services or the former Catchment Management Authority
- individuals with outstanding contracts with Western Local Land Services, including incomplete weed management contracts
- individuals with outstanding debt, including rates, owing to Local Land Services
- applicants applying for works proposed on land located outside the Western region
- group applications for works to be completed on privately owned or managed land.

4. Conflict of interest

Local Land Services staff and board members are required to identify and declare conflicts of interest so that they can be managed in an open and transparent way. This policy extends to external parties or individuals who may be associated with Local Land Services staff or Local Land Services board members through immediate family relationships, close friendships or business relationships. Should a conflict be identified, a conflict of interest declaration form will be provided to the applicant to complete.

5. Conditions of funding

If your application is successful, the following conditions of funding will apply:

- you must formally commit to undertaking your project by entering into a Funding Agreement with Western Local Land Services
- you must not commence your project until you have signed a contract with Local Land Services
- the term of the funding agreement will be for a period of 10 years
- a maximum of \$10,000 per property will apply
- payment of 100% will be made upon successful completion of works and a final inspection conducted by a Local Land Services staff member of the contracted works
- if the works are deemed unsatisfactory, the final payment may be withheld, funds recovery action may be taken and restrictions on future funding may occur. Appropriate measures to remedy the issue will be discussed
- all contracted works must be completed by **8 May 2020**. Note that a inspection will be carried out by Western Local Land Services staff to verify the successful completion of the project
- variations to the funding agreement must be requested in writing to the project manager and will be assessed on a case by case basis
- you must agree to allow Western Local Land Services to publish information about you and your project on our website, Facebook page and other communication channels and products as required

- you must provide invoices supporting the expenditure of outlined budget items
- if your project is funded you will be required to undertake basic monitoring of your project's environmental outcomes for 10 years. This monitoring information will assist Local Land Services to assess project and applicant successes and is necessary to justify future funding rounds
- you must complete and submit a survey following the successful completion of contracted works, note that final payment will not be made until this requirement has been fulfilled
- projects funded through the National Landcare Program will require groundcover monitoring (in addition to the basic monitoring), Local Land Services staff will conduct monitoring required
- you must complete and submit a follow-up survey ten years following the completion of contracted works.

It is recommended that you do not apply for funding if you're not able to meet these conditions

6. Assessment and notification process

1. A field visit will be arranged after the application form has been received. The field assessment evaluates whether the project meets the funding criteria/eligible activities. At this time information is recorded on the issue, management of the area, spacial information and proposed rehabilitation technique.
2. During the field visit, the benefits of the project are assessed using consistent criteria. The assessment measures the natural resource benefits, cost effectiveness and project risk of the proposal. This assessment produces a biometric score.
3. An assessment panel will review the field visit information and the biometric score. The panel will generate a score and all projects will be ranked according to the score generated by the biometric score and assessment panel score. Funds will be allocated to each project down the list until all funds have been spent or the project eligibility list is exhausted.
4. Contracts will be offered to all eligible project proponents. All works will be funded through a standard contract linked to the application. The contract will require ongoing maintenance of the works for a 10 year period and the submission of monitoring information annually over this period.
5. If your project is approved but misses out on funding when program funds are fully allocated to higher ranking projects, it will remain on an eligibility list.
6. Funds may become available if contract offers are declined. The next ranked project on the eligibility list is then allocated funds.
7. Where the newly available funds are not sufficient to fund the next ranked project, the funds are allocated to the next project on the eligibility list that can be fully covered by the available funds.
8. Once the eligibility list expires (when no further funding opportunities are available), applicants will need to reapply for any future funding rounds.

7. Application feedback

If your application is not successful you can ask for feedback about why it was not supported. To receive feedback, please contact the Rangeland Rehabilitation Program – Senior Land Services Officer: Paul Theakston (02 6836 1575).

8. How your information is used

The information you provide to Western Local Land Services in your application will be stored and used in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. If you have concerns about the amount or type of information we require in the application form, please contact the Rangeland Rehabilitation Program – Senior Land Services Officer: Paul Theakston (02 6836 1575).

Projects with a Local Land Services financial contribution greater than \$150,000 are required to be listed on a public register. By signing the funding agreement you provide consent for Western Local Land Services to publish the following information on the public register:

- the applicants name and location
- the amount of funding granted
- a brief description of the project.

Western Local Land Services will also use this information to communicate to the public about the program. This may include publishing communication articles on our website, Facebook page and other communication channels and products, as required.

9. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment

It is a mandatory requirement for any successfully funded project to undertake an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment before the commencement of any earthworks. It is the responsibility of the Local Land Services and the landholder to ensure due diligence takes place with respect to Aboriginal cultural heritage values. If the application is successful, a cultural heritage assessment will be arranged by Local Land Services at no cost to the landholder. The outcome of this assessment will be used to design and layout any rangeland rehabilitation works, with the clear intent to protect cultural heritage.

10. Compliance with existing State and Commonwealth Legislation

Local Land Services only approves the amount of funding for your project. This does not authorise you to implement the project. You must ensure that your project has all necessary approvals, licenses, permits, consents, etc. and that your project complies with all relevant legislation including, but not restricted to, the following:

Legislation	How is it relevant?	More information
Crown Land Management Act 2016 - NSW	Western Lands Lease conditions	www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands
National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 - NSW	Protection of Cultural Heritage sites	www.environment.nsw.gov.au
Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Local Land Services Amendment Act 2016 - NSW	Clearing or disturbance of native vegetation	www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au
Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 - NSW	Protection of threatened species and endangered ecological communities when installing infrastructure	www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Federal	Protection of flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places	www.environment.gov.au/epbc
Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2017 - NSW	Impact of project proposal on threatened species and/or ecological communities	www.planning.nsw.gov.au
Local Land Services Act 2013 – NSW	Project proposals must be located within the Local Land Services Western Region	www.lls.nsw.gov.au
Water Management Act 2000 – NSW	Impact of project on streams, flow of water and complying with any Floodplain management plans	www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 - NSW	Infrastructure must be compliant with codes	www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
Work Health and Safety Act 2011	Safe work method statements and reporting (see information on Work Health and Safety below)	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

11. How to submit your application

If you believe that your project fits the criteria, you can lodge an application form, found on our website. Application forms will be assessed if they are received or post-marked by 5 pm on Friday 4 October 2019. You will receive an acknowledgement to confirm receipt of your application form.

Email your application form to: kerry.wood@lls.nsw.gov.au. Alternatively, you can post your application form to: Western Local Land Services, Rangeland Rehabilitation Program, PO Box 307 Cobar, NSW 2835. You can also hand delivery to any Western Local Land Services office. For office locations please visit: <https://western.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/contact-us>

Application forms must be submitted by 4 October 2019.

Appendix A

