



FUNDING GUIDELINES:

Bushfire Recovery Grants for the Nature-led Recovery

Background

The 2019-20 bushfire season was unprecedented in intensity and devastation. Throughout the summer, fires burnt large areas of Victoria, primarily in East Gippsland and North East Victoria. These fires burned about 1.5 million hectares and had significant impacts on communities, businesses and the environment.

The fires were exceptional in size and impact. It is recognised that under climate change we are entering a 'new world' in terms of the scale and complexity of managing fire impacts on biodiversity. Multiple large-scale active fires and the increasing proportion of areas that have been burnt multiple times since 2000 have expanded the context in which mitigation will increasingly include options beyond the fire areas.

The 2019-20 fires were also exceptional in the response by the community to the impacts on biodiversity. The bushfires have triggered an extraordinary response, both locally and globally. As individuals and communities attempt to comprehend the extent, severity and enormity of the impact of the fires, many people in fire-affected communities and beyond, have strong desires to act to help wildlife and to act now. However, many people don't know how, where or the best actions to take and some current ad hoc actions may even be damaging to wildlife and potentially divide communities.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) is a new, permanent and dedicated Victorian Government agency working directly with local communities to listen, help and deliver what they need to recover from the impact of bushfires.

What is Bushfire Recovery Grants for Nature-led Community Recovery

Zoos Victoria has partnered with BRV to lead the Bushfire Recovery Grants for Nature-led Community Recovery Program (NCRP).

The NCRP aims to support both the recovery of Victoria's biodiversity and communities recovering from the Victorian 2019-20 fires. There is a strong desire within the broader Victorian community to assist nature and community to recover. Community groups within fire impacted areas can apply for funding through this program to design and deliver projects that benefit local wildlife and biodiversity.

While this program focuses on helping the environment and fire-impacted communities to recover, Victorians from right across the state are now wanting to better understand what action they can take. This presents a critical opportunity to harness strong community sentiment to act for nature, galvanise ongoing support and effect long term behaviour change. Providing environmental volunteering opportunities for locals in fire-affected areas and volunteerism opportunities for Victorians across the state, this initiative aims to deliver on-ground action for wildlife and habitats while supporting local economies in fire-affected regional communities.



The total funding available for this program is \$90,000.

Program objectives

The objective, based on the recognised benefits of people's connectedness to nature, is to facilitate people's recovery within 2019-20 fire-affected communities, as well as engaging with the broader Victorian community, through meaningful activities consistent with biodiversity conservation, and which allow witnessing of nature recovery. This work will align with principles of psychological safety, relevant for fire-affected communities.

Intended benefits include:

- Increased understanding of environmental fire recovery in currently affected communities. This will also apply to other Victorian communities vulnerable to future emergencies. Improved community understanding of succession and threats to natural recovery.
- People contributing to meaningful, effective actions to support local, place-based natural values recovery.
- Increased visitation and boost to regional economies in fire-affected areas through volunteering opportunities.
- Improved advocacy for nature by all Victorians.
- Co-creation benefits of diverse perspective, shared ideas, better decisions.
- People's recovery along with their environment's recovery.

Applicants will be able to apply for grants up to \$5,000

Examples of projects that could be supported include:

- A Municipal Recovery group seek funding to conduct an activity to elicit possible nature-based community recovery. Regular Recovery Walks through nature which is accessible to various/all sectors of the community, becoming embedded in regular community events; establishing interpretive trails that tell a story of community and forest recovery.
- A local community hub/group wishing to advance a project to protect native species or environments: creating artwork to raise awareness or sponsoring a specific activity to reduce threats (nest boxes, fencing, captive release, insurance population, etc).
- A local community wishing to create spaces for individual reflection, connection and appreciation of native wildlife or natural environments.
- A local group wants to establish meaningful citizen science to track the recovery of local species and share the results with the wider community.

Grants cannot be used for:

- Offsetting of salaries, operating costs for existing staff or contractors.
- Feasibility studies, business plans, cost-benefit analysis and economic impact studies.
- Projects that may have a negative impact on existing businesses/services.
- Passing on funding to a third party in the form of sponsorship or grant.
- Retrospective funding for projects that have commenced activity.

Guidelines

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible, an organisation must be either:

- a community, not for profit or Aboriginal organisation that is an incorporated legal entity under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), or the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2001* (Vic) or the *Corporation (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth)
- a social enterprise with a clearly stated purpose or mission-related specifically to supporting bushfire recovery.

And you must have:

- a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- no outstanding final reports or final reports required for any previous government grant programs.

We strongly encourage applications from:

- new and emerging community organisations
- not for profit community organisations
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations
- local organisations that are based in bushfire impacted areas.

Auspice Organisations

Auspice organisations can support unlimited applications from lead applicants.

If your organisation is not incorporated or does not have an ABN, you may still apply if you are supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for you.

An auspice arrangement is when a larger organisation assists a smaller organisation to fund a grant activity.

The larger organisation is known as the auspice organisation. Your community group or organisation is known as the grant recipient.

The following are examples of organisations that can auspice a smaller group or partner in an application but may not be able to apply as the lead applicant:

- local councils
- preschools, TAFE institutes and universities.

Who cannot apply?

- State and federal government departments and agencies

- individuals and sole traders
- unincorporated community organisations
- commercial enterprises
- fixed trusts
- local councils, including council, managed, operated, administered and regulated trusts (can act as an auspice)
- commercial enterprises are not eligible to apply for a grant alone (they can partner with an organisation as a sponsor and only provide contributions).

In addition, project proponents:

- are invited to request advice and assistance from Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), or Zoos Victoria on local 'nature needs' post-fire, species/natural environment advice, citizen science and engagement advice, and
- to lodge their projects on State-Wide Flora and Fauna Teams (SWIFFT) and any information about species on Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA).

Zoos Victoria is planning a showcase of nature-based projects at Melbourne Zoo in 2022. Successful projects will be invited to share their stories at this event.

How to Apply

Interested parties will be invited to submit a brief project proposal on the form available through the local Community Recovery Committee for consideration by the Natural Resources Sub-committee of the municipal recovery committee who will provide advice to the Assessment Panel on the merits of the application against the objectives of the program (see Program Objectives above).

Selection Criteria

Provided your organisation is eligible to apply (see Applicant Eligibility) your application for a Bushfire Recovery Grant for Nature Led Recovery will be assessed against the following:

1. Purpose

Applicants must explain how their project will deliver direct benefit to a bushfire affected community and supports one or more of the Nature-led Community Recovery objectives.

2. Community Participation

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will:

- be used by the community
- be accessible to the community
- be promoted to the community. Please note, 'word of mouth' is not a valid promotion type.

3. Location

Applicants must demonstrate that their project is located in a bushfire affected area. As of June 2020, the following Local Government Areas and Alpine Resorts are considered within the scope of the Nature-led Community Recovery program:

- Ararat, Alpine, Ballarat, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Indigo, Mansfield, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wellington and Wodonga
- Falls Creek, Mount Buller, Mount Hotham and Mount Stirling.

4. Budget

Applicants must provide simple evidence to show that:

- Costs are accurate and reasonable
- Include any in-kind or co-contribution funding support.

Assessment Criteria

Applications received will be assessed against the criteria as outlined in the table below.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
The Project shows clear benefits or relationships to a native species or the natural environment and the community	50%
The project demonstrates the potential to provide legacy improvements and awareness for the environment	30%
Community participation and accessibility	20%

Funding Agreements, Reporting and Acknowledgement

Organisations approved for funding will enter into a short form Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with BRV.

The short form VCFA will outline:

- the grant's terms and conditions, including the use of funds
- key deliverables and due dates
- reporting requirements.

Organisations that are successful in receiving funding will have 30 days to enter into a short form VCFA. If a grant offer is not accepted during this period, the grant may be withdrawn.

Reporting

Organisations will be required to provide a short report on the funded activity and can submit their final report online and must submit their final report on time.

Acknowledgement Guidelines

A common condition of BRV grants is that grant recipients must agree to follow BRV guidelines for acknowledging the government's funding. A breach of these guidelines is considered a breach of



your funding agreement with BRV.

Privacy

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in the application will be collected by BRV, an Administrative Office in relation to the Department of Justice and Community Safety for grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies to assess applications. If personal information about third parties is included in the application, the applicant must ensure that the third parties have consented to their information being collected and used to assess the application and are aware of the contents of this privacy statement and the BRV Privacy Policy available from the Privacy Officer (details below).

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in 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. BRV is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

BRV's privacy policy is available from:

Privacy Officer

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

GPO Box 4912

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Email: privacy@brv.vic.gov.au

Enquiries about access to information about you held by BRV should be directed to:

Freedom of Information Manager

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

GPO Box 4912

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Email: privacy@brv.vic.gov.au