

Collie Donnybrook Balingup Natural Resource Recovery Program 2024-2025

Devolved Grant Guidelines – Landowner Information Sheet

PURPOSE OF THE DEVOLVED GRANT PROGRAM

Blackberry (*Rubus* spp) is a Weed of National Significance, threatening biosecurity, biodiversity, water quality and the economy throughout the Shires of Collie and Donnybrook Balingup. As part of the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program, the Collie-Donnybrook Balingup Natural Resource Recovery Program supports the community to engage with and restore the natural landscape through activities including blackberry control, rehabilitation of endemic vegetation, fencing, community events and educational workshops.

The two Shires are collaborating with recognised biosecurity groups, catchment councils, community groups and landowners to maximise the benefits and connections that State Natural Resource Management funding provides through information sharing, capacity building and on ground works on public and private lands. Devolved funding provides Shire residents access to financial support to facilitate natural resource recovery through on ground works on their property.

DEVOLVED GRANT FUNDING FOR RESIDENTS

To ensure mutual commitment between the Western Australian Government, the Shires of Donnybrook Balingup and Collie, and landowners, a 50% co-contribution arrangement will facilitate effective outcomes for the long-term benefits of the environment, economy, and the wider community in the control of blackberry and re-establishment of native vegetation.

Through an expression of interest process, residents within the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup and Collie can apply to their relevant Shire for financial support to conduct on ground works to increase biodiversity and water quality through the control of Blackberry and revegetation works.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities that are eligible for devolved grant funding includes:

- Weed control of Blackberry, a Declared Pest, and Weed of National Significance.
- Revegetation using Endemic Native Vegetation.
- Fencing of Livestock from remnant or newly established areas of native vegetation (priority given to wetland areas).

FENCING ELIGIBILITY

Various fencing activities may be considered for funding, taking into consideration the following:

- Funding for materials is limited to a maximum of \$500 per kilometre. To justify the fencing expense, within the application, describe what kind of fence you are intending to install and what its purpose is.
- Fencing that serves to protect new or remnant vegetation must be stock proof.
- Landholders must agree to exclude stock from this protected area for a minimum of 5 years.
- Landholders must commit to providing ongoing maintenance of State NRM Program funded fencing for a minimum of 10 years.

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- Fencing that occurs along a watercourse should have a minimum 30m buffer from the high-water mark.
- Boundary fencing is ineligible for funding. In accordance with the *Dividing Fences Act 1961*, it is the responsibility of landholders to fence property boundaries including those bordering crown land. If a boundary fence is to be moved inside your property for NRM purposes, this may be considered, but should be a realignment of at least 30m inside the boundary line.
- Funds may be used to employ a contractor to construct fences. If a contractor is required, justification must be provided.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following items and activities are ineligible for devolved Grant funding:

- Activities that are a statutory or regulatory responsibility of the landholder (such as boundary fencing).
- Activities that are directly related to income generation under another program or scheme (such as carbon credits).
- Expenses/costs that are already funded or resourced, either through another grant or under business as usual, including:
 - > Expenses/costs for retroactive projects, activities, or events, including works, planning or site assessment completed prior to the grant being awarded.
 - > Purchase of equipment or materials that is ordinarily a landholder's responsibility as part of the day-to-day management of a property.
 - > Revegetation with species that are not endemic to the region.
- Revegetation that is predominantly for feed or fodder purposes.
- Control of species other than Blackberry.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Funding will be allocated to landowners based on information provided through an Expression of Interest form, and suitable quotes and photo evidence. Applications may be subject to a site visit to verify the information in the application.

The Information gathered will be assessed against Eligibility Criteria as follows:

Does the Applicant:

- Own land of applicable land use (priority will be given to Agricultural and Conservation lands) within applicable Shire boundaries?
- Have a Blackberry infestation, or have they recently undertaken blackberry control and requires assistance to rehabilitate the area?
- Have Sufficient Quotes from appropriately qualified contractors?
- Have a signed EOI, indicating they understand their responsibilities in association with the project?

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If all the requirements have been verified, the EOI will be assessed against the following qualitative criteria:

- Direct impact on waterways.
- Direct impact to the community or local economy/agriculture.
- Previous participation in programs/ weed control.
- Impact blackberry has had or is having on the local environment.
- Value for money.
- Environmental values present.
- Neighbours nearby engaged in natural resource recovery.

The above criteria have been developed to ensure that the funding provides a large impact to the broader community and region to achieve improved Natural Resource Recovery Outcomes.

Landowner Expression of Interest period for the program will open on 1 March 2024, and close at 12:00pm on 30 April 2024. Once the registration period has closed, applications will be assessed based on quantitative and qualitative criteria by the project's Working Group. This will result in applications receiving a score that will prioritise works proposed. Should the funding be limited to a decision between two identical scores, it will be assessed on a first come first served basis.

Landowners will be notified of the outcome of their application by 31 August 2024, and will be required to enter into a signed agreement, allowing for on ground works to begin. The landowner is responsible for ensuring adequate works are undertaken and that the invoice is paid in full in accordance with the contractor's terms. Once evidence of an appropriate invoice and full payment have been provided to the Shire, the Shire will reimburse the landowner in line with the signed agreement. All evidence of completed work and copies of paid invoices must be received by close of business on 30 April, 2025 to allow for reimbursement from the Shire.

To discuss this process, or for further information, please reach out to your respective Shire representative:

Shire of Donnybrook Balingup:

Claire Palmer

(08) 9780 4200

claire.palmer@donnybrook.wa.gov.au

Shire of Collie:

Matt Young

(08) 9734 9000

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