

## **HUNTER CENTRAL RIVERS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

### *2007-2008 Sustainable Agriculture Grants Scheme* **Guidelines and Application Form**

#### General Information

The Sustainable Agriculture Grants Scheme aims to provide financial support for private landholders across the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region to implement on-ground works that address farm sustainability issues. It is only available to landholders who have undertaken a CMA endorsed course. Endorsed courses include:

- Sustainable Grazing Management,
- Physical Property Planning and
- Targeting Actions for Local Catchments, provided by the Integrated Land

Management Program being offered by DPI on behalf of the CMA. Other endorsed courses will be listed on the CMA web site [www.hcr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hcr.nsw.gov.au). Funding for the Grants Scheme is sourced from the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the CMA will make around \$500,000 available in 2007-2008.

A maximum of \$15,000 for each landholding is being offered for projects that address the CMA's sustainable grazing management or property planning priorities in the Catchment Action Plan<sup>1</sup>. The definition in the CAP of '*sustainable grazing*' is a process of continuous improvement that for any particular farm situation, balances and prioritises the following land management ideals: increased productivity and profitability from the grazing system; increasing water infiltration and water use efficiency in the grazing system; managing grazing according to the capability of the land; protecting and enhancing the on-farm natural resources of soil, water, native vegetation and biodiversity; respect for catchment effects and addressing off-site impacts from the grazing system; enhancing landholder capacity to implement change; and improved protection of the farm business against drought.

#### **How to Apply?**

To apply for a Sustainable Agriculture Grant you can either complete the attached *Registration of Interest Form* **OR** the attached *Application Form*. By

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<sup>1</sup> The CMA's Catchment Action Plan (CAP) is available on our website [www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au).

completing and submitting an ROI form, a CMA officer will contact you to assist in developing your project and then assist you in completing the *Application Form*. In either case you are encouraged to discuss your project with a CMA officer. You must have undertaken an endorsed training course.

Proposals for the Sustainable Agriculture Grants do not have to be submitted on any particular date, as there will be three application assessments during 2007/2008. Projects received prior to the following dates will be assessed in the corresponding assessment.

<b>Final Date for Receipt of Sustainable Agriculture Grants Applications</b>	
<b>Round 1 Assessment</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> July 2007</b>
<b>Round 2 Assessment</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b>
<b>Round 3 Assessment</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> February 2008</b>

## Assessment Process

The CMA will assess projects using a set of standard criteria. Projects will firstly need to score above a benchmark figure and then funds will be allocated to the highest scoring projects until all funds are allocated for each assessment round.

The criteria used to assess projects include:

- The technical feasibility of the project
- The objectives being realistic
- The proposed activities being recommended practices and in line with property management plan (if applicable)
- The degree to which the project addresses the CAP's definition of sustainable grazing
- Cost sharing ratio – applications must be at least 50:50 cost sharing
- The capacity and commitment of the applicant to implement the project
- The investment benefit – off-farm benefits vs on-farm benefits; natural resource benefits vs production benefits; in-kind contribution vs funding requested
- Aboriginal cultural heritage issues addressed

Preference will be given to applicants who have not previously been funded through this scheme with only one application per landholding permitted. All applicants, successful and unsuccessful, will be notified in writing following each assessment round.

## Unsuccessful Projects

The CMA maintains the right to refuse any project application. If your application is unsuccessful you will have the opportunity to revise your proposal and submit it for assessment in a later round. In this instance your CMA contact officer will still be available to assist you with reworking your application.

## Eligible Projects

Projects that deliver better grazing management, improved nutrient management, enhanced natural resource management and increased drought protection are eligible. Projects should be in line with recommendations from relevant training workshops. Examples include:

- Off-stream stock watering system
- Improved stock watering system for better pasture utilisation
- Provision of stock shade or shelter (natural or artificial) for better nutrient management
- Internal fencing for strategic grazing management
- Laneways and creek crossings for improved nutrient management
- Protection of native vegetation.

### **Project elements we won't fund**

- Purely production orientated activities
- Pasture spraying, seeding and fertilising
- Major farm water supplies and irrigation
- Only noxious weed control
- Purchase of machinery and computer hardware and software

## Conditions for CMA On-ground Works

### Implementing Your Project

If your application is successful you will be required to enter into a Sustainable Agriculture Grants Agreement in order to access the funds. The Agreement outlines the terms and conditions for undertaking the project.

Successful applicants will have up to **31 May 2008** to implement their on-ground works and will be required to maintain the works for a further five years.

The CMA has developed a "Project Journal" that is to be completed as you are undertaking the project development and implementation. A part of the Project Journal, "Project Evaluation and Reflection" will need to be submitted as a final report to the CMA on the project.

Site audits may also be undertaken by a CMA Officer to evaluate progress and the success of your project. A site audit will be undertaken to confirm project completion in most circumstances.

## Payments

For most projects, payment of funds will be made following completion of the project and submission of the final report (Project Evaluation and Reflection section of the "Project Journal"). However the CMA may consider providing staged payments during project implementation, with payments made at the completion of significant milestones.

## Minimum standards for projects

To ensure maximum benefit is received from investing funds in on-ground works, the CMA has determined minimum standards that you are required to achieve. You should consider these in developing your project and preparing your bid.

### **Fencing**

All fencing (electric or standard) must be managed in a stock-proof condition for at least five years as per the Agreement.

*Stock-proof fencing to protect natural waterways and or gullies:*

There should be an appropriate buffer width which may be negotiated between you and the CMA. A grazing regime within the protected area may also be negotiated prior to the application being submitted

*Stock-proof fencing to protect remnant native vegetation:*

A grazing regime within the protected area may be negotiated between you and the CMA prior to the application being submitted.

*Stock-proof fencing to protect paddock revegetation areas:*

Fencing should be positioned at a minimum of 2m from the edge of plantings and grazing is to be excluded for at least five years.

### **Revegetation**

All revegetation areas must be fenced if stock are present (see above requirements for fencing). Species lists for projects must be obtained from the CMA. You should note that all areas revegetated using natives through the incentive programs will be defined as 'protected re-growth' under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

*Revegetation of gullies, rivers and creeks:*

Tree and shrub plantings along riparian lands must use locally indigenous tree,

shrub and grass species suitable for the site. Riparian revegetation sites should, if possible cover both sides of the flow line.

*Revegetation for biodiversity and conservation purposes:*

Revegetation must primarily use a mix of locally occurring (indigenous) tree, shrub and grass species suitable for the site. Wildlife corridors must link (be within 20m) existing areas of remnant vegetation or established revegetation sites and must be at least 25m wide and have an average width of at least 30m.

*Windbreaks and shelterbelts:*

Windbreaks should be a minimum of three rows utilising a mix of local native tree and shrub species suitable to the site.

*Buffer strips:*

The width of the buffer will need to be negotiated between you and the CMA. The plantings should be suitable native species.

*Revegetation for shade and shelter purposes:*

Exotic species may be used as well as native species but you should discuss species selection with the CMA.

## **Structural works**

These works apply to gullies, minor watercourses, creeks and rivers. They may include gully filling/shaping, diversion banks, gully control structures, concrete or rock flumes, rock revetment, groynes, pipes and bed control structures. All structural works must have the relevant permits required and be designed and constructed to CMA standards.

## **Stock watering points**

This may include additional stock troughs and pipelines for a reticulated supply that is part of a sustainable grazing system. It is not intended that major farm water supplies and irrigation be funded under this scheme

## **Weed control**

Funding can be used to control environmental weeds. Control of noxious weeds is also permitted where weed control is not the primary activity. Projects incorporating any weed control will need to demonstrate that this activity is integral to achieving good biodiversity outcomes and/or addressing broader environmental issues. Directions on appropriate herbicide use must be adhered to and relevant permits must be acquired especially if undertaking weed control near waterways or water bodies.

## Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Aboriginal places are a unique, irreplaceable part of Australia's heritage and the CMA is committed to ensuring that projects do not unwittingly affect the values and importance of these places to Aboriginal people.

If your proposed project is one that may affect places and objects that are of significance to Aboriginal people, it may be an advantage to involve Aboriginal persons or organisations in your project. Involvement of Aboriginal people during the development of the application and, in some cases, in subsequent project activity can in any case be a valuable aspect of many on-ground projects, whether the project is on public or private land. Aboriginal knowledge can also provide a different perspective on the biodiversity aspects of a project and this may enhance the project outcomes.

Aboriginal consultation during the planning process may involve you sending a copy of your proposal to the Local Aboriginal Land Council or other organisation, or discussing with them what you propose to do, and where. You might like to invite representatives of the local Aboriginal community to visit your proposed project sites during preparation of the application and to include their ideas for protection of sites of significance in your project planning.

The CMA has Aboriginal officers who can assist you in contacting the appropriate person(s) and facilitate an agreed outcome. The CMA also has an Aboriginal Reference Group, an official sub-committee of the CMA Board, which will be responsible for assessing and advising the CMA on issues relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

You will be required to complete an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage checklist as part of your proposal. The CMA will use this information to determine the likelihood of your project impacting Aboriginal places and objects. You will then be advised as to whether your project requires an Aboriginal cultural heritage inspection or supervision of works - the costs of which will be met by the CMA.

Please note that projects seeking to actively protect/preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage will have this recognised in the assessment process.

### **Public Liability Insurance**

As projects involve on-ground works a copy of your current Public Liability Insurance (\$10 million) will need to be supplied with your signed Agreement.

## **Disclosure of Agreement Information**

In accordance with NSW Government policy to publicly disclose details of its agreements, the CMA may publish the following information about an agreement awarded under the incentive program:

- Details of agreement (description of project to be completed or goods/services to be provided; the commencement date of the agreement; the period of the agreement).
- The full identity of the successful proponent including details of cross ownership of relevant organisations.
- The price payable by the CMA and the basis for future changes in this price.
- The significant evaluation criteria and the weightings used in proposal assessment.
- Provisions for re-negotiation (where applicable).

The CMA will not disclose the following information about any agreement awarded under this proposal unless the proponent agrees, or release is determined under the Freedom of Information Act 1989 or is otherwise legally required:

- The proponent's financing arrangements.
- The proponent's cost structure or profit margins.
- Items of the agreement having an intellectual property characteristic (eg. non-tangible property that is the result of creativity, such as patentable ideas or inventions, trademarks, copyrights, etc.).
- Any other matters where disclosure would place the proponent at a substantial commercial disadvantage with its competitors both at the time of entering into the agreement and at any later date when there would be an effect on future competitive arrangements.
- Proponents may request that the CMA not disclose particular information included in their proposal but must give the reasons for requesting this. The CMA will advise a proponent in contention for a project what information it agrees not to disclose. If the CMA and a proponent cannot agree about what should be disclosed, the CMA will seek the advice of the Chair of the State Agreements Control Board. The CMA's decision is however, final and is at the CMA's absolute discretion. Neither a decision by the CMA, nor a recommendation by the Chair of the State Agreements Control Board under this paragraph is a decision, which falls within any dispute resolution procedures specified in the agreement.
- The CMA may publish the identities of all proponents, but will not disclose other information included in an unsuccessful proposal unless the proponent agrees, or release is determined under the Freedom of Information Act 1989 or is otherwise legally required.

# Completing the Sustainable Agriculture Grant Application Form

Applications need to be completed with blue or black pen or you can request an electronic version if you wish to complete on computer. Only provide attachments of A4 size. Notes are provided on each section below to assist in completing the application.

## **1. ABN and GST status**

If you are registered for GST and you are successful in obtaining a grant you will be paid 10% GST on top of the approved grant amount. You will need to manage any GST paid to you in accordance with Australian Tax Office requirements. Further information on grant payments and GST is supplied in a Fact Sheet included with this package. Refer to section 1 of this Fact Sheet if you do not have an ABN and are not registered for GST.

## **2. Technical advice provided**

Provide details of the technical assistance you received in developing your project. Include your CMA contact officer and if applicable any other people you obtained advice from. Include advice on or copies of any necessary permits you may need to obtain in this section. Also include details of the relevant training in sustainable agriculture that you have undertaken.

## **3. Objectives**

The objectives are what you want to achieve through undertaking the project. For examples refer to page 6 of your Project Journal.

## **4. Actions**

Your actions will be what you propose to do to achieve the project objectives. Outline your timeframe for each action listed and indicate general maintenance you plan to carry out on the project site, for example, weed control, watering regimes. Refer to page 6 of your Project Journal for further examples.

## **5. Project costing**

Use the Resources costing page on page 5 of your Project Journal to assist in preparing your project budget. Try to make your budget costing as realistic and accurate as possible as the assessment will competitively weigh total funds requested from the CMA and project outputs against other applications. A CMA officer can assist you in developing and costing the project. However, you must

decide on what proportion of the project you will contribute to and the proportion of funds you will request from the CMA. You must contribute at least 50% of the total cost of the project.

### **6. Project activities and on-ground outputs**

Quantify your actual on-ground works here, giving approximate areas or lengths for activities only relevant to your project. It is important to ensure that these quantified areas are reasonably accurate figures, because if you are successful in gaining funding for your project, you will be required to sign a Project Grant Agreement with the CMA to undertake the area of works specified in this section. Your CMA officer contact can assist you in calculating exact areas.

### **7. Sketch of project works**

Ensure that you have provided a sketch outlining the whole property area with the project site and works clearly shown using the legend symbols provided. Do not use colour coding or attach sketches larger than A4 size. Include north on the sketch. Use multiple cross symbols to indicate planting areas to show the planting design layout, for example, a 3 row windbreak should be shown as 3 rows of crosses. Indicate widths of plantings or fencing from creeks by including a double arrow symbol ( $\leftrightarrow$ ) with width above in metres. Provide one or two photos to highlight the site issues.

### **8. Funds requested from the CMA**

Total grant funds requested must not exceed \$15,000. Remember that your bid for funds will be competing with other project bids.

### **9. Aboriginal cultural heritage and consultation**

You should complete the Aboriginal cultural heritage checklist question in consultation with your CMA contact officer. This information will be used in the cultural assessment as detailed in the Conditions for CMA On-ground works.

### **10. Revegetation projects—species list**

A CMA officer will be available to discuss with and/or advise you on the most suitable native species to use for your revegetation project and can provide you with a species list. The species list should include scientific species names and the number per species that you will actually be planting.

The CMA has contracted certain local nurseries to supply quality trees (longstems and regular tubestock) at competitive prices. These trees have been grown from locally sourced seed and come with tree guards and stakes. Your CMA officer can

advise you on whether these suppliers produce tubestock suitable for your area. Should you wish to obtain trees from these suppliers, the CMA will make the payment direct to the nursery on your behalf. This cost must still be accounted for in your total bid for funds (which must not exceed \$15,000). If your bid is successful, this amount will be deducted from your funding payment.

You will be given a formal authorisation to collect your trees from the nursery or in some cases delivery may be arranged free of charge.

### ***11. Field days, events and communications***

This question is optional and will not be considered in the assessment process. As part of administering the grants scheme, the CMA will retain contact details of everyone who submits an application.

The CMA has an education program, where case studies and other on-ground projects are promoted to the community through media releases, displays, websites and newsletters. However, you need to give permission for the CMA to use this information. The CMA is also setting up a community database where information about CMA activities can be mailed on a regular basis. Again the CMA needs your permission to be able to do this, however it will be a valuable way for you to be kept up-to-date with the latest in natural resource management.

### ***12. Declaration and signature***

If you are applying to undertake a project on a property that you don't own, the landowner will need to co-sign the application with you and be fully aware of the proposal details.