

Inspiring Environmental Solutions

EPA's Community Funding Program

PROGRAM GUIDELINES



Volcano Dreaming



Inspiring Environmental Solutions (IES), EPA's Community Funding Program, invites Victorian communities to develop projects which benefit both the community and the environment affected by a pollution event.

Projects should have a clear connection to the prosecuted offence, enable affected residents to have a greater connection to their local environment and engage directly with affected residents throughout the project

About the fund source

Where a fine is imposed for an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1970, the monies must be accredited to Victorian State Government revenue.

However, if a penalty is imposed by a Court under section 67AC of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* or through other remedy and sanctioning tools, the company or individual found guilty of the environmental offence may be directed by the Court to fund a community project for restoration or enhancement of the environment. This is how funding for the IES program is sourced.

Through the IES program, EPA collates a register of community groups. When a prosecution is pending, EPA uses the register to source suitable community and environment-based projects to recommend to the Court.

Individual prosecution orders generally range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. As funding is contingent upon the successful prosecution of pollution incidents, and at the discretion of the presiding Magistrate or Judge, the total amount of funding on offer will vary.

Fund objectives

The IES program has incorporated the key recommendations from EPA's Compliance and Enforcement Review (2011). As a result, there is now a greater emphasis on sourcing projects which benefit both the environment and the community affected by the pollution event.

A simpler process has been introduced that uses a register of groups and invites project proposals once information about an upcoming prosecution requiring a community project is known.

Projects should enhance the environment in a public place, or undertake environmental activities for the benefit of the community.

High-quality proposals will:

- benefit the affected environment in a significant and lasting way, beyond the life of the project;
- enable affected residents to have a greater connection to their local environment and build their capacity;
- benefit the affected local residents and directly engage with them at all stages of the project using local relationships and networks;
- have outcomes with a clear connection to the prosecuted offence.



Volcano Dreaming An interpretive educational tool created by collaborating with the community to compile their local knowledge and photographs of the complex ecology of the grasslands of the Volcanic Plains. Funded through the IES program in 2008.

What groups are eligible

Eligible groups

Applications to the IES program are invited from incorporated groups and organisations or other legal entities (other than individuals) that have an environmental or environment related role.

Examples of eligible applicants include:

- Incorporated community organisations (e.g. friends or Landcare groups)
- Not-for-profit/Non-government organisations
- Indigenous Associations
- Peak/representative associations
- Schools/Universities
- Research groups
- Local and state government

Non-incorporated groups can only apply under the auspice of an eligible group which must agree to take on financial accountability for the project.

Groups must consider if their project requires appropriate insurance to cover their activities.

What projects are eligible

Eligible projects

Proposals must enhance the environment in a public place, or undertake environmental activities that benefit the community.

- ✓ Projects must be based in Victoria
- ✓ Projects must be not-for-profit
- ✓ Activities on private or public land must be developed in consultation with the appropriate land manager/owner
- ✓ Projects must be delivered within 12–18 months of funding
- ✓ Funding cannot be retrospective but existing projects that can be appropriately expanded will be considered
- ✗ Proposals that are the funding responsibility or core business of another State or local government department will not be considered.
- ✗ Projects that are considered to mainly beautify or improve amenities such as school grounds or parks and reserves will not be funded.
- ✗ Activities inconsistent with local, state or national frameworks, policies or standards for the environment will not be funded.



Greening Federation Trail, Brooklyn.
Funded through the IES program in 2010.

Eligible project activities

Proposals should consider how they can be staged or propose several options for delivery.

Eligible project activities can include:

- ✓ Personnel, including salaries (cash/in-kind contribution of an equal amount would be expected)
- ✓ Consultants (e.g. professional artists)
- ✓ Professional fees (e.g. accounting and auditing costs)
- ✓ Local travel
- ✓ Supplies and materials
- ✓ Printing and communication costs
- ✓ Minor equipment (up to \$1,500 total)
- ✓ Vehicle costs (up to \$1,500 total)
- ✓ Capital works (plans and approvals would be required)
- ✓ Research

Funding cannot be used to:

- ✗ purchase large equipment and assets (e.g. vehicles, property)
- ✗ travel interstate or overseas
- ✗ offset normal operational costs of the applicant

Application and assessment process

The Inspiring Environmental Solutions program has a two-part application process - Stage 1 Registration and Stage 2 Detailed project plan.

Stage 1 Registration

Registration is open all year.

Contact details and information are collected about the group proposing the project, their ability to manage projects, past projects and their partnerships.

All applicants are notified by email when they are successfully added to the register.

How to apply to register your group

Complete and submit the registration form, paying attention to what information the questions are asking for. The form must be endorsed by an elected office bearer / manager of the group. The Section 3 declaration must be discussed with the person who has delegated authority from your group.

Download the **Registration form** and complete electronically. Only electronic applications can be accepted.

The form must be saved and submitted in MS Word format. Please do not convert your registration to PDF as it makes it difficult to upload into the program database.

Email ies@epa.vic.gov.au

Information Phone **1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842)**

Stage 2 Detailed project plan By invitation to targeted registered groups

When a prosecution suitable under Section 67AC is identified, groups from the register will be invited to submit a detailed project plan.

Your group will receive information about the nature of the incident being prosecuted, who the affected community are and the expected dollar amount of the financial penalty to assist with completing the project plan form. You must also address the IES selection criteria.

The project plans are assessed by an evaluation panel.

Following Stage 2 assessment, EPA will submit a recommendation to the Court presiding over the incident prosecution. The Magistrate or Judge will make the final decision on the proposal(s) to be funded.

It is important to note that proposals are chosen on overall merit based on the IES selection criteria. Successful and unsuccessful projects will be notified and applicants can request feedback.

How to submit a project plan

Complete the project plan form responding to the IES selection criteria.

Download the **Project plan form** and complete electronically. Only electronic applications can be accepted.

The file must be saved and submitted in MS Word format. Please do not convert your registration to PDF as it makes it difficult to upload into the program database.

Email ies@epa.vic.gov.au

Information Phone **1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842)**



Monitoring platypus populations along the Yarra River, including training community volunteers to be platypus observers, increasing their connection to the environment and informing the environmental planning of water management agencies. Funded through the IES program in 2009.

Project plan selection criteria

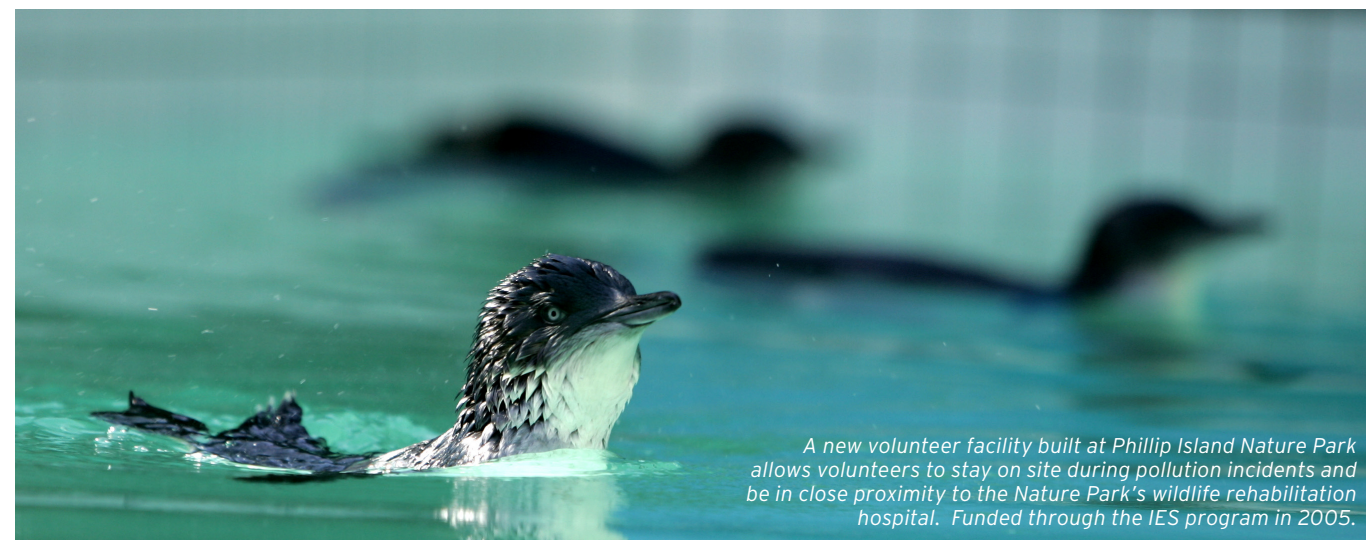
Eligibility criteria

Your project must meet all of the following to be eligible for assessment:

- Does the Land Manager approve for the project to be undertaken on their land?
- Do you or your partner organisation have an OHS procedure or policy? If not, how will your organisation protect the health and safety of participants in the project?
- Does your group hold current public liability insurance? Alternatively, is your project covered by the public liability insurance of your partner organisation?
- Are your activities eligible?
See page 3 for information on eligible groups and projects, and project selection criteria on page 6.
- Do you know of any conflict of interest for your group or the project? If yes, what is the conflict of interest?
For example, someone in the project team works for EPA or is involved in other EPA projects; your organisation is being prosecuted by EPA; your organisation has a commercial interest in the project.
- Has your project plan been completed, discussed and signed by the person who has delegated authority in your group?

Project plan selection criteria *continued*

Criteria	Project details
Environmental benefit	<p>Project meets the fund purpose to enhance the environment in a public place or undertake environmental activities for the benefit of the community (from 67AC of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your project improve the environment? • How will this be maintained / continued beyond the end of the project? • How does your project enable affected residents to have a greater connection to their local environment? • How will you build skills and knowledge in the community for the project to continue beyond its end date?
Justice	<p>Projects will score highly where they address all three points below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your project engage with and benefit the affected local residents? • How does your project benefit the environment affected by the incident? • How does your project relate to the prosecuted offence? e.g. a water project for a water pollution incident.
Process enables justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you feel are the affected local residents and what relationships, networks and experience do you have in working with them? • How have you engaged with the affected local residents in developing this project to date? • How will you engage with the affected local residents throughout the project?
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experience has your organisation in delivering similar projects? • What skills are required to manage this project and how will you source these? • How is your project good value for money? E.g. includes funding and in-kind contributions from your organisation and project partners. • How will you evaluate the project; what will you measure? E.g. a change in the knowledge, aspirations, skills and attitudes of participants. • What risks could affect you achieving your project goals and what actions will you take to minimise or prevent these?



A new volunteer facility built at Phillip Island Nature Park allows volunteers to stay on site during pollution incidents and be in close proximity to the Nature Park's wildlife rehabilitation hospital. Funded through the IES program in 2005.

Fund categories

Proposals are invited across three categories which relate to EPA's environmental outcomes.

Water



Projects which improve the quality of water in the environment or that encourage the sustainable use of water resources by the community or business.

Land conservation



Projects which improve the environment for the community.

Air



Projects which improve air quality; includes noise and odour.

Other Information

Total fund variations

Due to the unpredictable nature of pollution incidents, EPA cannot guarantee that projects will be funded within any one financial year.

Tax and GST

The Court will instruct offenders to pay their allocated penalty directly to the funding recipient organisation. As the payment forms part of a criminal penalty, it is not subject to GST. Groups should seek independent financial advice on taxation obligations in relation to declaring and expending this type of income.

Insurances and indemnity

Where applicable, the applicant will be required to hold a broad form public liability insurance policy or professional indemnity and workers compensation insurance. The applicant will be required to indemnify EPA for any losses/damage arising from the project.

Project agreement

The successful applicant will be required to enter a funding agreement with the EPA which will outline the project's reporting, evaluation and financial responsibilities. The successful applicant will be required to complete their project including all reporting and evaluation within 12 to 18 months of signing the project agreement.

Private information

When a prosecution is pending, EPA shares the group names with the local council to identify any other groups that EPA should contact. EPA will provide information about who the affected community is (community groups) to groups registered with EPA.

Details of the successful applications will be made public in reporting prosecutions, media releases, media articles, on the EPA website and on the offender's website or in its publications. EPA will ensure that all private and commercial information is managed according to the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

Program changes

EPA reserves the right to, at any time, modify the eligibility and selection criteria for the Inspiring Environmental Solutions Program. The most current version of criteria will be available on EPA's website.

Inspiring Environmental Solutions *EPA's Community Funding Program*

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

About EPA and the community funding program

The Environment Protection Authority ('EPA' or 'EPA Victoria') works with government agencies, businesses, industry and people in the community to control and reduce waste and pollution and to protect and improve the Victorian environment.

The *Environment Protection Act 1970* forms the legal basis for EPA's activities.

EPA is responsible for ensuring that companies and individuals comply with the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and may prosecute any offenders.

The outcome of a successful prosecution can include a monetary penalty directed to one or more community environmental projects.

IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The 12 panel grassland panorama **Volcano Dreaming** digitally merges the work of many photographers, it was funded by EPA Victoria, commissioned by Victoria University and designed and produced by Inherit Earth.

Cover image (detail of panels 1 & 2) includes images courtesy of Trevor Pescott (Spotted-tailed Quolls, Pink-eared Ducks, Australasian Grebe and Wedge-tailed Eagle), and others by Kerrie Poliness at Inherit Earth.

Monitoring platypus populations along the Yarra River courtesy of the Australian Platypus Conservancy.



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