



# ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

## GRANT GUIDELINES: ROUND 9

<b>OPENING DATE</b>	2 February 2026
<b>CLOSING DATE</b>	9 March 2026
<b>TYPE OF OPPORTUNITY</b>	Open competitive
<b>FUNDS</b>	Sustain or Activate or Prepare
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	<a href="mailto:aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au">aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="https://dbca.wa.gov.au/ARP">dbca.wa.gov.au/ARP</a>

*This funding is administered by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions under the Western Australian State Government's Royalties for Regions, through an agreement with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.*

[dbca.wa.gov.au/ARP](https://dbca.wa.gov.au/ARP)

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## CHECKLIST

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Before you start an application, please make sure you have:

- ✓ Read these Round 9 Grant Guidelines in full and understood what this funding opportunity is for.
- ✓ Checked that your Aboriginal organisation is eligible.
- ✓ Selected the most appropriate Fund to apply for - either Sustain, Activate or Prepare. You can only apply in one Fund.
- ✓ Checked the template funding agreement on the Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP) website via this link [Aboriginal Ranger Program / Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) and understood your organisation's potential obligations, should you be successful.
- ✓ Considered the timeframe set out in these Round 9 Grant Guidelines. Is your organisation ready to sign a funding agreement in June 2026 and ready to implement your project on the date that you have identified in your application form starting 1 July of any year between 1 July 2026 and 30 June 2030?
- ✓ Requested and received Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent) or Regional Corporation or Traditional Owner support, if required.
- ✓ Requested and received written permission to access and conduct your project on the land you plan to work on, if required.

### HELPFUL TIP

Please allow plenty of time to prepare your application as late applications are unlikely to be accepted.



## Round 9 Process Flowchart

### Governance

The ARP team and independent social researchers worked with sector partners and stakeholders to inform a review of Phase 2 and priorities for Phase 3.



ARP Reference Group guided design of Phase 3, Round 9 and the assessment criteria for each fund.



An independent Probity Auditor was appointed, to confirm the processes set out in the guidelines are followed.



The Minister for the Environment approved the Round 9 Grant Guidelines and the intent and objectives of Phase 3 and Round 9 including having three funds (Sustain, Activate and Prepare).

### Assessment Process

The grant round opens.



Applicants complete the application form online and submit it.



Applications are checked for eligibility.



Eligible applications are provided to the Assessment Panel. Each panel member undertakes an assessment on their own, including giving scores.



The Panel comes together to discuss the applications and all agree on final scores for all eligible applications allowing a ranking of projects.



The Panel makes a recommendation to the Minister for the Environment about which applications are preferred, and how much funding to offer each applicant.



The Minister for the Environment makes a decision about which applications are successful, and authorises the ARP to make a funding offer.



Successful applicants accept the funding offer, and begin negotiating a funding agreement, including a payment schedule.



The funding agreement is signed by the recipient and DBCA. The first payments can be sent to recipients and the project can begin.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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These guidelines provide information in relation to **Round 9** of the Western Australian State Government's Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP).

In this round, up to \$62 million is being made available including:

- *At least* \$50 million in the Sustain Fund;
- *Up to* \$10 million in the Activate Fund; and
- *Up to* \$2 million in the Prepare Fund.

Detailed information about each fund is provided later in this document. You must read these Round 9 Grant Guidelines carefully and in its entirety before you start an application to determine if this opportunity is the right one for your organisation at this time. This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity;
- the eligibility and assessment criteria;
- how grant applications are lodged, assessed and selected;
- how successful projects will be monitored and reported; and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the funding opportunity.

**Round 9 is funded wholly by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's (DPIRD) Royalties for Regions and as such does not have a funding component available for activities occurring in the Perth metropolitan region.** Perth metropolitan region means the area of Western Australia not included in a DPIRD Regional Development Commission with maps available here [Regional Development Commission Boundaries \(DPIRD-020\) - Datasets - data.wa.gov.au](#). **Investment in the Perth metropolitan region relating to the ARP will be designed at a later stage.** If you are an Aboriginal organisation within the Perth metropolitan region, please nominate your interest in this form to assist program planning <https://forms.office.com/r/GHEnTmvS2r>.

### 1.1 Background

The WA State Government launched the ARP in 2017 with an initial \$20 million of funding over five years (Phase 1) that supported Aboriginal organisations to establish and run Aboriginal ranger programs. This funding was invested in 35 projects with 28 different Aboriginal organisations across the State over three competitive rounds, providing employment and training opportunities for 1236 Aboriginal people, 45% of those being women.

The State Government acknowledged the importance of funding Aboriginal ranger teams and the success of Phase 1 by committing \$83 million to the ARP to implement Phase 2 from 2021 to 2026. This investment has enabled the ARP to continue to provide opportunities to

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#### *Voices from Country – reflections from previous ARP funding recipients*

*“The funding has had a significant impact particularly in connection to Country and developing strong identity and evidence shows that if you have a strong connection to your culture you will have better life outcomes... The ranger program is a mechanism for motivating people to get out on Country and this develops a stronger sense of self.”*

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Close the Gap and deliver other key outcomes for Aboriginal people, communities and the State. Aboriginal knowledge and aspirations have informed the design of the ARP including input from an initial steering committee comprising representatives of Native Title Representative Bodies, Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Aboriginal ranger teams, industry and government. A dedicated ARP Reference Group, formed in 2021, guided and shaped Phase 2 of the program. More information on the Reference Group's work can be found at [www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/aboriginal-engagement/aboriginal-ranger-program](http://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/aboriginal-engagement/aboriginal-ranger-program) Phase 2 included:

- Round 4 - Expansion Fund - \$23 million allocated for 14 ranger programs
- Round 5 - Development Fund - \$10 million allocated to 17 ranger programs
- Round 6 - Innovation Fund - \$11 million allocated to 12 special ranger projects
- Round 7 - Development Fund - \$13 million to 22 ranger programs
- Round 8 - Climate Action, Youth and Cultural Tourism - \$16.5 million to 12 focused ranger projects

The total commitment to the ARP's Phase 1 and 2 has been \$103 million across 112 individual ranger programs.

In 2025 a review of Phase 2 was conducted and an extensive partner and stakeholder engagement project was undertaken. Combined with the continued social science monitoring and evaluation of the ARP, and guided by the ARP Reference Group, this engagement provided an opportunity to improve program management, reflect the maturity of the ARP by updating objectives and outcomes to better align with expectations and aspirations of ranger groups and their communities, and inform the design of Phase 3 and this Round 9.

Phase 3 investment of at least \$69.5 million over four years will bring the total investment into the ARP since 2017 to \$172.5 million.

## 1.2 ARP links to key government initiatives

The WA State Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 puts culture at the heart of government policy and decision-making to contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal people and ensure a secure foundation for life. The strategy outlines the principles for government engagement, policy making and service delivery and ways to focus reform and investment to meet commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Connection to Country and culture through ranger programs is a key pillar of government investment in achieving this commitment. All updated ARP objectives and outcomes have been mapped to their relevant intersects with these two key strategies which provides an opportunity to show how all ranger programs are contributing to meeting strategy outcomes for Aboriginal people.

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### *Voices from Country*

"Our ranger program is not just dealing with land and sea matters."

"ARP funding has allowed increased reach of decision making to include people living far away, women, young people and broadened engagement for looking after Country."

"This gives us the opportunity to pass on our culture and make sure it's in safe hands."

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### 1.3 Objectives of the ARP

The objectives of the ARP have been updated following the review of Phase 2 and engagement with partners, stakeholders and the ARP Reference Group in mid 2025. All your proposed ranger activities can now be linked to these updated outcomes and objectives of the ARP. When combined, this information provides a powerful statement about the impact of Aboriginal ranger projects on Country, culture and community across the State. The ARP objectives are:



## **ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Aboriginal ranger organisations and rangers are empowered to maintain and improve the health of Country, culture and community.**

**OBJECTIVE 2: Better futures for Aboriginal people by supporting meaningful employment and skill development of Aboriginal rangers within the sector.**

**OBJECTIVE 3: Build, maintain or strengthen Aboriginal ranger organisations' effectiveness in delivering and sustaining ranger programs according to community priorities.**

The ARP objectives have corresponding outcomes listed below:

#### **OBJECTIVE 1 – Aboriginal ranger organisations and rangers are empowered to maintain and improve the health of Country, culture and community.**

- OUTCOME 1.1: Aboriginal rangers continue to keep Country healthy through land and sea management activities.
- OUTCOME 1.2: Aboriginal rangers continue to maintain and protect cultural values and sites and strengthen identity including through cultural knowledge and language transfer.
- OUTCOME 1.3: Aboriginal ranger projects continue to help keep the local Aboriginal community healthy and strong, in particular by providing access to Country.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2 – Better futures for Aboriginal people by supporting meaningful employment and skill development of Aboriginal rangers in the sector.**

- OUTCOME 2.1: Provision of meaningful and culturally appropriate employment and career pathways for Aboriginal people in the ranger sector.
- OUTCOME 2.2: Increased capacity of rangers to care for Country through training and personal development opportunities that increase ranger skills, pride and confidence.



**OBJECTIVE 3 – Build, maintain or strengthen Aboriginal ranger organisations’ effectiveness in delivering and sustaining ranger programs according to community priorities.**

- OUTCOME 3.1: Increased opportunities for impactful planning that ensures Aboriginal community led priorities can be implemented through ranger programs.
- OUTCOME 3.2: Strengthened capacity within Aboriginal ranger organisations to care for Country, deliver a ranger program over time, support peoples’ pathways and ongoing employment and income generation opportunities relating to ranger work.
- OUTCOME 3.3: Strengthened collaborative partnerships between Aboriginal ranger organisations and relevant stakeholders to support ranger programs.
- OUTCOME 3.4: Increased respect and recognition of Aboriginal people and culture facilitated through ranger programs’ cross-cultural and community engagement.

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*Voices from Country*

“Country is a healthy space. Healing people, healing Country.”

“Health of Country is improved by just getting people out on Country.”

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## 2. ROUND 9 GUIDELINES

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### 2.1 Summary of key points

- Up to \$62 million is available to fund Aboriginal ranger projects to plan for, develop a new *or* continue an existing ranger project.
- There are three funds.
- **You can only apply once.**
- **You can only apply in one fund, either:**
  - Sustain Fund; **or**
  - Activate Fund; **or**
  - Prepare Fund.
- Activities must be undertaken in Western Australia, but **not** within the Perth metropolitan region. Perth metropolitan region means the area of Western Australia not included in a DPIRD Regional Development Commission with maps available here [Regional Development Commission Boundaries \(DPIRD-020\) - Datasets - data.wa.gov.au](#)
- Applications can only be made by eligible Aboriginal organisations.
- Applications will be assessed through a competitive process, which means your application will be assessed against the factors described in these guidelines and then compared against other applications.
- **Submitting an application is not a guarantee that funding will be awarded.**
- If your organisation is successful, you will enter into a legally binding funding agreement which includes requirements for reporting and annual independent auditing.
- Funding will be allocated from 1 July 2026 at the earliest.
- Funding will be provided to 30 June 2030 at the latest.
- Projects can start on 1 July in any financial year; projects can be one, two, three or four years in length.

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#### *Voices from Country*

“A staged process would be good, groups can become overwhelmed and therefore do nothing resulting in failure. We should focus on small wins, there are so many cultural and social challenges that even the small wins are powerful.”

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#### HELPFUL TIP

Critical information is in **bold** throughout these guidelines.

## 2.2 Eligibility Requirements

The Assessment Panel will not assess applications that do not meet the requirements set out in this section 2.2.

### 2.2.1 Eligible applicants

For an organisation to be eligible you must:

- ✓ be an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) as defined by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. An ACCO is an organisation that:
  - is incorporated under relevant legislation (e.g. CATSI Act, Corporations Act, or state-based incorporation laws);
  - is not-for-profit;
  - is controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people;
  - is connected to the community or communities in which it delivers services; and
  - is governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body;
- ✓ have a legal right and/or right to access and undertake the proposed activities on the land included in your application (see section 2.2.3); and
- ✓ demonstrate that you have cultural authority to access land and deliver the proposed activities (via appropriate letters of support, where relevant – see section 2.2.2)

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) as defined by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, are organisation types designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and offer culturally appropriate governance and reporting structures. The funding agreement must be with the eligible ACCO (the applicant) who is the party responsible for the obligations and commitments of the agreement. How the applicant chooses to deliver these obligations and commitments, whether that be through partnerships or corporate structures within that ACCO, is at its discretion but should be described thoroughly in assessment criteria 3. **Please ensure your application is made in the ACCO's name even if your ACCO has a subsidiary company structure and has previously held ARP funding agreements in that subsidiary's name.**

The applicant must have the legal capacity to, among other things, enter into agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, and to be held responsible for its actions. DBCA may request successful applicants verify their legal entity status before entering into a funding agreement.

DBCA may also request additional information to ensure organisations have the governance and financial structures in place to appropriately manage funding.

Ineligible applicants may partner with eligible applicants and support them with their application; however, the eligible applicant must be the applicant and if successful, the funding agreement and all responsibilities of that agreement will be with the eligible applicant.

Individuals seeking employment as a ranger are encouraged to contact a ranger program in their area directly. Maps of all ARP funded organisations are available on the ARP website <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/aboriginal-engagement/aboriginal-ranger-program> under "Recipients".

## 2.2.2 Evidence of support from Traditional Owners

DBCA respects the Traditional Owners and their rights and responsibilities for Country across the State. The ARP extends across lands and waters in Western Australia, including lands with or without a Native Title determination, and lands where Native Title has been extinguished. Depending on your circumstances, a letter of support may be a requirement of eligibility. If required, it should be included with your application.

### *Voices from Country*

“Getting a letter of support takes some time, so start these discussions and process as soon as you can.”

**Please ensure you obtain a current letter of support relating specifically to this application process.** Previous letters may not be accepted and may deem you ineligible.

The following table sets out the requirements for letters of support from the Traditional Owners of the lands an applicant applies to work upon.

Status	Applicant	Letter of support
Native Title has been determined and there is a Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) (or equivalent), or a settlement has been reached and there is a Regional Corporation (RC) in place	The application is from the PBC (or equivalent) or RC	Not required
Native Title has been determined and there is a PBC (or equivalent), or a settlement has been reached and there is a RC in place	The application is from another group other than the PBC (or equivalent) or RC	Required from the PBC (or equivalent) or RC
There is no PBC or RC in place	The application is from the registered Native Title claim group	Not required
There is no PBC or RC in place and no registered Native Title claim group	The application is from an unregistered Native Title claim group/s	Not required
There is no PBC or RC in place and no registered or unregistered Native Title claim group/s in place	Application is from the Traditional Owners	Not required
There is no PBC or RC in place, and no registered or unregistered Native Title claim group/s	Application is from any other group other than the Traditional Owners	Required from the Traditional Owners

## 2.2.3 Project location and evidence of support from landowner/s

Funding from ARP can be sought across various land tenures. Letters of support for access and all proposed operations on those lands from all landowners and/or land managers where on Country operations are proposed are required at the time of application in both the Sustain and Activate Funds.



In the Prepare Fund, applicants will need to identify whether their project involves on Country access and if so, acknowledge that they will require landowner and or/land manager permissions if funded.

**It is strongly recommended you meet with all landowners and land managers to discuss your access and proposed operations on their land, so you are both clear about each party's intentions, obligations, requirements or any restrictions.**

Applications over Aboriginal Lands Trust reserves or Unallocated Crown land (UCL) may require the appropriate permits/licences from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). Projects proposed on UCL or unmanaged reserves may require evidence of consultation with, and support from, the relevant local government authority. In considering appropriate permits and licences, DPLH may need to consult with other interest holders. If proposed operations are planned on land managed by DBCA, you will need to demonstrate that you have talked with the relevant DBCA District about your plans and received written support for both access and those operations.

To assist with the identification of landowners and land managers, detailed project location information must be identified within your application. Please be as specific as possible when describing the location that your planned activities will occur on by listing the relevant land and waters and supplying a clearly marked map or aerial photograph. Ideally, the information should also be provided for use with GIS software (i.e. as a .shp file, including all associated files).

Please ensure that your letter is recently dated and applies to your application for Round 9 funding and identifies support for both access and the proposed activities you propose on the landowner/land manager's land. Do not use an old letter unless it states unending support.

#### HELPFUL TIP

Meeting with landowners and land managers to discuss and agree to access and proposed operations and receiving subsequent letters of support can take time. Please ensure that your organisation starts this process as early as possible.

### 2.2.4 Other considerations

In addition to the eligibility requirements above, applicants must:

- meet the conditions described in section 2.10.4 *Conditions and accountability* below;
- complete and submit the application form in the required format using [SmartyGrants](#) before the closing date and time, answering all questions and completing all tables; and
- agree to the terms specified in the application form.

If an offer of funding is made, to receive funds, successful applicants must enter into a legally binding funding agreement with the State which sets out the requirements and conditions under which the funding is provided and includes reporting requirements and a payment schedule. Payments are attached to reporting milestones and are subject to the recipient meeting reporting requirements as well as receiving approval on an assessment on meeting commitments on expenditure and operations.

All reporting will require successful applicants to report on expenditure and progress towards and completion of committed operations. Multi-year programs should anticipate the submission of an

annual project plan for each year of their funding, as well as progress and annual reports each year. Single year programs and grants in the Prepare Fund can anticipate reduced reporting requirements compared to the Activate and/or Sustain Fund.

A sample ARP funding agreement and examples of the reporting templates are provided in the 'Downloads' section at the ARP website [www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/aboriginal-engagement/aboriginal-ranger-program](http://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/aboriginal-engagement/aboriginal-ranger-program)

**Annual independently audited financial statements will be required for all agreements.**

There may only be one applicant organisation per ranger project application. If your organisation is working or plans to work with another Aboriginal organisation/s to carry out one ranger project, the application must only be made by one of the partner organisations, and with whom the agreement will be entered into if successful and who will be responsible for the obligations under that agreement. You will need to describe the partnership you propose in your application and what each partner will contribute to the project. If you are an organisation starting out or needing extra support, you may like to consider partnerships with larger umbrella organisations who are also eligible for funding.

If they meet the eligibility requirements stated in these guidelines, groups that have previously or are currently receiving funding from the ARP may apply in this round. Please note that organisations cannot hold concurrent ARP funding agreements for the same ranger project. If an organisation successfully applies in this round to continue its Phase 2 ranger project, the Phase 2 agreement must acquit first before the Phase 3 agreement can start. In which case, ARP reserves the right to reduce a funding request proportionate to the time taken to acquit an existing project.

If an existing eligible ARP funded group is successful in Round 9, entering into a new funding agreement will be conditional on an assessment by DBCA on whether the existing project will be completed according to the agreed outputs, milestones and obligations of the agreement, and/or plans are in place to account for any unspent funds (if not remitted to DBCA).

If they meet the eligibility requirements stated in these guidelines, unsuccessful groups in previous ARP rounds, as well as groups that have never applied previously may apply.

If you have queries about your specific circumstances, please email [aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au)

## 2.3 Sustain Fund summary

You can only apply once and in one fund.

- This fund is the key focus of Round 9.
- **At least \$50 million** will be available for the Sustain Fund.
- This fund will support activities commencing from **1 July 2026 and completing no later than 30 June 2030**. Projects can be **one, two, three or four years in length but must start on 1 July 2026, 2027, 2028 or 2029**.
- This fund is specifically designed to support **existing and established** Aboriginal ranger groups.
- These **existing** groups **do not** have to be funded by ARP currently, they can be funded in other way, but they must be functioning upon applying.
- Applicants to this fund will be asked to **attach evidence of a plan** specific to ranger operations.
- There is no maximum grant amount in this fund, but when applying consider that the total value of the entire fund is \$50 million and that value for money will be considered as part of the assessment process (refer to assessment criteria 4). All expenditure should be justified and essential to the delivery of the project.
- A portion of the funding (**up to 20% of the total grant value, but only up to the combined total value of \$250,000**) may go towards the purchase of assets (an asset is an item over \$5,000 exclusive of GST) and/or infrastructure.

The weighted assessment criteria for the Sustain Fund are below, refer to section 2.9.2 for detail.

1. Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (40%)
2. Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community, gap/s and/or needs (20%)
3. Governance and capacity to deliver (20%)
4. Value for money (20%)

**APPLY FOR THE SUSTAIN FUND HERE**

<https://dbca.smartygrants.com.au/ARPRound9SustainFund>

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### *Voices from Country*

"It's been great with the grant to get capital such as equipment because it allows us to develop long term capabilities and partnerships that allow us to move into the fee-for-service space, to understand costs, get training and become a more sustainable and independent ranger program. This increases our ability to support our community. Increasing our self-determination and supporting our rangers to develop career pathways, identifying areas of skills they want to develop."

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## 2.4 Activate Fund summary

You can only apply once and in one fund.

- **Up to \$10 million** will be available for the Activate Fund.
- This fund will support activities commencing from **1 July 2026 and completing no later than 30 June 2030**. Projects can be **one, two, three or four years in length but must start on 1 July 2026, 2027, 2028 or 2029**.
- This fund is specifically designed to support groups that have **already conducted detailed ranger related planning** and are ready to employ new Aboriginal rangers at some stage.
- Applicants to this fund will be asked **to attach evidence of a plan** specific to ranger operations that has been completed and received cultural approval to prove readiness to begin a ranger team (refer to assessment criteria 3).
- Proposed activities in Activate Fund projects should be **staged over the life of the project** to allow time to build strong internal organisation support and capacity for the ranger project and allow time for team establishment and start up.
- There is no maximum grant amount in this fund, but consider that the total value of this fund is up to \$10 million and that value for money will be considered as part of the assessment process (refer to assessment criteria 4). All expenditure should be justified and demonstrated to be essential to the delivery of the project.
- A portion of the funding (**up to 20% of the total grant value, but only up to the combined total value of \$250,000**) may go towards the purchase of assets (an asset is an item over \$5,000 exclusive of GST).
- Depending on where your organisation is in its ranger journey will determine what establishment elements and activities you might like to consider applying for within the Activate Fund. Examples of the types of activities that could be funded in this fund relate to organisational capacity building; partnership development; purchasing assets or equipment; development of workplace procedures and administration systems; recruitment of rangers and support staff; onboarding and job readiness preparation; initial training; employment; then land and sea Country management and operations; further training; personal development; monitoring and reporting.

The weighted assessment criteria for the Activate Fund are below, refer to section 2.9.3 for detail.

1. Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (20%)
2. Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community, gap/s and/or needs (30%)
3. Governance and capacity to deliver (30%)
4. Value for money (20%)

APPLY FOR THE ACTIVATE FUND HERE

<https://dbca.smartygrants.com.au/ARPRound9ActivateFund>



## 2.5 Prepare Fund summary

You can only apply once and in one fund.

- Up to a total of \$2 million will be available for this fund.
- This fund will support activities commencing from **1 July 2026 and completing no later than 30 June 2030**. Projects can be **one, two, three or four years in length but must start on 1 July 2026, 2027, 2028 or 2029**.
- This fund is specifically designed to support groups aspiring to develop a new ranger program in the future and need to **undertake planning and/or preparatory works**. These smaller grants aim to strengthen groups so they are in a better position to apply for larger grants, including but not limited to the ARP, that will support the beginnings of ranger operations.
- Funding in the Prepare Fund is to help groups plan for a ranger program, for example through a **business plan, feasibility study or Healthy Country planning**. It could also be used to **build internal capacity, governance and administration systems** specifically related to ranger project/s.
- If your organisation is successful for a Prepare funding opportunity it in no way guarantees you of further or future funding with the ARP. Please consider this if your projects ends before 30 June 2030 as there may be no further ARP funding available until after that point in time.
- **Maximum funding permitted per agreement in the Prepare Fund is \$250,000.**
- **No assets or infrastructure permitted** in the Prepare Fund.
- Examples of the types of activities that could be funded in the Prepare Fund include, but are not limited to: accessing expert assistance in scoping and planning a ranger program; researching and developing the feasibility of a ranger program; on Country and community meetings or engaging Elders in the planning phase to establish priorities, governance and decision-making processes; employment of administration staff or managers to prepare for a ranger program; training or mentoring of key support staff in business, project management, or use of software to increase capacity to support a ranger program.

The weighted assessment criteria for the Prepare Fund are below, refer to section 2.9.4 for detail.

1. Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (30%)
2. Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community, gap/s and/or needs (30%)
3. Governance and capacity to deliver (20%)
4. Value for money (20%)

**APPLY FOR THE PREPARE FUND HERE**

<https://dbca.smartygrants.com.au/ARPRound9PrepareFund>

## 2.6 What cannot be funded?

In this round, funding is **not** available, in any fund for:

- International travel;
- Purchase or transfer costs of land or buildings, including housing and land rates;
- Infrastructure or assets (an asset is an item over \$5,000 exclusive of GST) with a combined total value of more than \$250,000 or over the maximum of 20% of the total value of the grant;
- Expenses that are the responsibility of other organisations such as local, state or Commonwealth government agencies;
- Operations that are more appropriately funded by others;
- Permanent infrastructure to be established on land owned by an individual/s;
- Operations upon, or infrastructure to be established on land which are the primary responsibility of the individual landowner or lease holder or land manager, or where the activities are more appropriately funded by others. Examples of activities that are the responsibility of a private landowner or leaseholder or land manager, or that fall under other laws and regulations, include but are not limited to creating and maintaining fire breaks or ensuring building codes are upheld;
- Any expenses incurred to undertake any fee-for-service work;
- The lease or purchase of assets that are used only for the purpose of delivering fee-for-service activities;
- Expenses incurred in the preparation of any retrospective or future grant application or related documentation;
- Expenses that do not directly contribute to the outcomes of the agreement, including but not limited to: payment of fines or loans, legal settlements, purchase of gifts, personal debts, sitting fees or redundancy payments; and
- Any retrospective costs: grant funding cannot be paid retrospectively and eligible costs may only be incurred between the execution date of the agreement and the project completion date.

Please refer to each Fund summaries (2.3, 2.4, 2.5) for fund specific exclusions and details.

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### *Voices from Country*

“The grant process has been great, it’s helped us learn about things like running costs, fuel price fluctuations, inflation, maintenance costs... From this process we are learning what it takes in time and costs to run a ranger program, this is huge and invaluable. We can now break down what it costs to run a crew for a year, this is a huge step towards our sustainability.”

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## 2.7 What can be funded?

In preparing your application, your organisation must provide a detailed Project budget of proposed eligible expenses as well as employment details for funding you seek including full time equivalent capacity of proposed employment, proposed roles and positions, number of people you plan to employ and gender balances of staff.

### HELPFUL TIP

Applicants should ensure project budgets cover all anticipated program costs over the lifetime of the funding agreement, including increases to wages and other costs.

Eligible expenditure for ranger projects in Round 9 across budget categories are described below.

#### Employment expenses

Eligible employment expenses include, for example: wages and salaries, superannuation, allowances and bonuses as per the relevant award or enterprise agreement, tax, rental or accommodation subsidies, any other expenses directly related to an individual's employment excluding training and operational equipment.

In all fund categories, wages for positions should be budgeted at an amount, at least equivalent to relevant salary schedules under the WA Government Rangers (National Parks) General Agreement 2022 (available at <https://downloads.wairc.wa.gov.au/agreements/ran017.pdf>).

Other wages for project management if not a ranger type position should be commensurate with industry standards for similar roles. Please remember to allow for CPI increases over time. Support staff wages should be commensurate to the proportion of their time spent on the project.

#### Administration and audit expenses

Eligible administration and audit expenses include, for example: the cost of the annual financial audit and agreement administration, workshop/office leasing, insurance premiums, phone costs, utilities and administrative officer wages commensurate to the proportion of their time spent administering ranger business (for example, time spent organising ARP employment contracts, payroll, procurement of operational ranger materials, vehicle and equipment management and arranging ranger insurance and workers' compensation). Eligible expenses may also include, for example minor office equipment and supplies, fees for professional services such as accountants and lawyers, insurance costs, bank fees, other project related administration expenses. Administrative overhead requests should not 'double dip' or be counted more than once in the proposed budget.

In all fund categories, a portion of funds (up to 20% of total grant value maximum) may be sought for administration and audit costs essential to achieve the specified outcomes of the program and that it will provide Aboriginal employment outcomes. This will be included in the assessment criteria 4.

Consider direct employment, in particular of Aboriginal people, in the administration of your project to build organisational capacity as well support Aboriginal employment.

### **Engagement and/or planning expenses**

Eligible engagement and/or planning expenses include, for example: any costs related to engaging with Traditional Owners' groups, land and interest holders, advisory committees and/or the local community to inform plans, feasibility studies, business cases or work plans or operations related to ranger business, as well as costs to actually prepare that plan, communications and media costs, venue and audio visual equipment hire, meeting catering and light refreshments, fees for professional services such as meeting facilitation, interpreting services, consultants or service provider to support planning, any other costs related to project planning and community consultation including Elders fees and on Country trips.

### **Operational expenses**

Eligible operational expenses include all minor costs directly connected to delivering on the on ground land and sea Country management activities including, for example: materials, tools and equipment (under \$5,000 per item excluding GST), consumable supplies such as pesticides and accelerants, uniforms and protective equipment; trip and catering costs, and all costs related to the lease and maintenance of vehicles and vessels including but not limited to: lease fees, registration and insurance, repairs and maintenance, storage/mooring; fuel, all other costs related to vehicles and vessels excluding purchase costs (see Asset expenses for more information).

### **Training and capacity building expenses**

Eligible training and capacity building expenses include all costs related to training and developing staff (external and/or in-house) including, for example: course fees, materials and equipment, training related travel and accommodation, licensing, networking, conferences, knowledge transfer activities, membership fees for professional associations, and expenses associated with organisational capacity building.

### **Asset expenses**

An asset is any single item of a transferrable physical nature such as trailers, vehicles, cameras, drones, scientific equipment and non-permanent infrastructure with a value **of \$5,000 or more per item excluding GST**.

Eligible asset expenses include all costs related to the purchase of assets including, for example: cost of the base item and extras/add-ons, stamp duty, deliver and installation, work health and safety modifications and adjustments, all other costs related to the purchase of assets.

A portion of the Activate Fund (up to 20% of the total grant value, and up to the combined total value of \$250,000) may go towards the purchase of assets.

A portion of the Sustain Fund (up to 20% of the total grant value, and up to the combined total value of \$250,000 combined with infrastructure) may go towards the purchase of assets.

No assets may be applied for in the Prepare Fund.

In the application, organisations must specify and describe all proposed assets, when these are planned for purchase and why they are needed.

Before including assets in your budget, ensure you understand the full cost and availability. Lead times may mean that a new vehicle cannot be reliably sought within the timing of the funding agreement.



Some new vehicles have been known to have a two-year lead time. At the end of the project, the asset will remain with the grant recipient.

Assets previously applied for and funded under the ARP (or other funding body) may be considered when awarding funding for additional or new assets.

### **Infrastructure expenses**

Eligible infrastructure expenses include all costs related to the purchase, construction, alteration, renovation, completion and fit-out of buildings essential for ranger work including, for example: buildings and shelters (ranger bases, offices, sheds), equipment storage facilities, water tanks, on Country shade and basic facilities, ablution blocks, and the associated water, power, and communications systems to operationalise that infrastructure.

No infrastructure may be applied for in the Prepare Fund or the Activate Fund.

A portion of the Sustain Fund only (up to 20% of the total grant value, and up to the combined total value of \$250,000 combined with assets) may go towards infrastructure.

You will need to describe the tenure, ownership, security, lease arrangements, zoning of any land proposed for infrastructure installation. Secure land tenure needs to be demonstrated for any permanent infrastructure and proof of ownership and land arrangements may be requested by the Assessment Panel. This will be checked before an offer of funding is finalised. The panel will assess this as part of assessment criteria 4.

Note that the purchase and/or building of this infrastructure needs to be completed within the project timeframe so ensure this is possible. Your organisation could consider non-permanent, removable or pre-fabricated infrastructure if available and viable and if land tenure does not have long term security or if there are concerns that construction may not occur in time.

### **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

All expenses should be exclusive of GST.

### **Consultancy and service provider expenses**

Funding may be considered for consultants and/or service providers to deliver specific components of your program where this is essential to delivering project outcomes, with high regard for proposals that contract the services of Aboriginal people, businesses or organisations for this purpose. Consultancy expenses should be itemised in the appropriate budget line item above with a description of extent of their work and demonstrated essentiality to project delivery.

### **A note on fee-for-service**

The ARP supports the strengthening and capacity building of rangers and Aboriginal organisations to generate income through fee-for-service opportunities. However, to avoid 'double dipping', the ARP cannot fund any expenses incurred to undertake fee-for-service works. Also, any deliverables, operations or expenses incurred whilst undertaken fee-for-service work must not be reported in any ARP reporting. Please consider that if you intend to employ only full-time employees using ARP funding, these employees will have no capacity to undertake fee-for-service work unless that work is undertaken outside their regular full time work hours.

**Please do not include any planned fee-for-service expenses in your Activities Table or Project budget.**

## 2.8 The Activities Table

The Activities Table in the application form is where you will describe all your planned activities.

The ARP has outcomes that help meet the program's objectives (section 1.3) and for each outcome a set of standard measures has been developed, updated after a review of Phase 2 with information provided from most of our current partners and including standard measures from typical ranger operations. When all the measures from all the funded ranger groups are collated these measures help understand the breadth of impact of the ARP. The ARP uses these collated measures to report on the program to its funder and the whole of government.

If your project is funded, your activities will contribute to achieving program level outcomes so you will need to report on measure/s for each of your activities at annual reporting time. In your application, you will need to describe the activities you plan to conduct and include target/s that you will achieve by the end of the project period, and that you can measure your progress against each year. These target/s will need to match the measure/s that are most appropriate for each activity. If successful, the ARP may discuss annual targets for planning and reporting purposes.

You will need to report against these measures in your annual reports so make sure they are achievable, realistic and are proportionate to the number of activities that you are doing, the size of your team, and the value of funding you are requesting. If your organisation has a Healthy Country Plan or similar or a specific ranger operations plan also align your ranger work with your own priorities.

ARP has tried to capture all the common measures that are reported on in a numerical way (see 2.8 ARP Outcomes and Quantitative Measures Table). In your application, if you cannot see a measure listed for your activity, you can select 'other' and describe a measure you will use. This 'other' feature is to ensure that all/any of your priorities can be captured and reported on in a way that you feel is appropriate. The 'other' feature may also provide a way for you to measure an activity in a more holistic manner. In any future rounds, these may be added to the generic list.

**It is important that you select all the measures that are appropriate for your activity.** If successful, if you have not selected the appropriate number or the correct measures, the ARP will work with you to set targets against these missed measures so that both you and the ARP can report accurately and holistically. These will also be included in your agreement. The more you think about your operations and how you are going to record and measure them when applying the easier it will be to accurately assess the project and the quicker you will be able to get your funding.

As well as activity measures, there are also critical measures that the ARP must collect related to number of individual people in employment, number of full time equivalent (FTE) and training data. These will be addressed in the Employment and Training section of the application form.

If successful, in your annual reporting you will also have the opportunity to describe the *qualitative* outcomes of your project that are not able to be captured in the quantitative measurements that link to ARP outcomes; positive or negative shifts around the gaps or needs your project aims to meet. This means you can talk about opinions, feelings and experiences, or provide specific examples (if appropriate and with permission) on how your project has impacted individuals, Country, community and culture. Here you will be able to contribute case studies, impact statements or stories which provide powerful information when combined with the numerical data.

If successful, the ARP may also contact your organisation to support program level monitoring and evaluation to inform parts of the outcomes that cannot be easily reported on using measures that use numbers. This information will also be captured in a qualitative way.

In the application you will also need to identify how you plan to provide evidence of your work. This may be as simple as photos; or perhaps sharing data you have collected (if culturally appropriate); attaching reports or trip reports that you have completed; sharing products you have developed or providing links to this relevant information on your website or social media. **This evidence will need to be included in your annual reporting so if successful, please plan to collect evidence during your works.** Your evidence is critical in the auditing of the ARP.

Any deliverables, operations or expenses incurred whilst undertaking fee-for-service work must not be reported in any ARP reporting. **Please do not include any planned fee-for-service operations in your Activities Table.**

All ARP outcomes and their associated measures are listed below and will appear in the Activities Table (except those relating to outcomes 2.1 and 2.2). Review all the measures below to find the ones that best match each of your operations when filling out your Activities Table.

#### ARP Outcomes and Quantitative Measures Table

ARP Outcome	Quantitative Measure
<b>LAND AND SEA COUNTRY MANAGEMENT</b>  1.1 Aboriginal rangers continue to keep Country healthy through land and sea management activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of weed management plans developed</li> <li>• Number of sites managed for weeds</li> <li>• Number of feral animal management plans developed</li> <li>• Number of hectares of feral animal management</li> <li>• Number of kilometres of fencing installed or maintained</li> <li>• Number of feral animal or weed research projects conducted</li> <li>• Number of site management plans prepared</li> <li>• Number of site management plan actions completed</li> <li>• Number of hectares of fire management (cultural burning, prescribed burning and bushfire suppression)</li> <li>• Number of cultural burns conducted</li> <li>• Number of hectares of Country protected, restored or managed (revegetation, habitat restoration, fencing, erosion management)</li> <li>• Number of land, sea and/or water management projects conducted (revegetation, habitat restoration, fencing, erosion management, seed collection)</li> <li>• Number of threatened flora and/or fauna surveys undertaken</li> <li>• Number of kilometres of track managed</li> <li>• Number of environmental research or monitoring projects undertaken</li> <li>• Number of seedlings planted</li> <li>• Hectares of direct seeding undertaken</li> <li>• Number of species of seed collected</li> </ul>
<b>PROTECTING CULTURE</b>  1.2 Aboriginal rangers continue to maintain and protect cultural values and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of cultural sites protected, restored, managed or monitored</li> <li>• Number of cultural heritage elements documented and/or mapped</li> <li>• Number of tools developed to record cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal ranger and community cultural knowledge sharing opportunities</li> </ul>

sites and strengthen identity including through cultural knowledge and language transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of individual Aboriginal people involved in cultural knowledge sharing opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY</b>  1.3 Aboriginal ranger projects continue to help keep the local Aboriginal community healthy and strong, in particular by providing access to Country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trips on Country</li> <li>• Number of Elders supported to be on Country</li> <li>• Number of individual Aboriginal people attending on Country trips</li> <li>• Number of community wellbeing activities delivered by Aboriginal rangers (eg. providing bush medicine or tucker, delivering hampers, chopping wood, organising, mental health training)</li> <li>• Number of partnerships with health or social service organisations</li> </ul>
<b>ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT</b>  2.1 Provision of meaningful and culturally appropriate employment and career pathways for Aboriginal people in the ranger sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people employed</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people employed</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal women employed</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal youth (15-24 years) employed</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people 25-64 years employed</li> <li>• Number of new people employed this year (not reported as employed with ARP funding previously in ARP Phase 3)</li> <li>• Number of new Aboriginal people employed this year</li> <li>• Number of new Aboriginal women employed this year</li> <li>• Number of new Aboriginal youth (15-24 years) employed this year</li> <li>• Number of new Aboriginal people 25-64 years employed this year</li> <li>• Number of young people (10-17 years) engaged with project</li> </ul>
<b>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>  2.2 Increased capacity of rangers to care for Country through training and personal development opportunities that increase ranger skills, pride and confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people undertaking accredited training</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people completed accredited training</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III or higher) this year</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people undertaking unaccredited training</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people completed unaccredited training</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal youth (15-24 years) trained</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people participating in personal and professional development opportunities (eg mentoring, leadership, career planning)</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURAL GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING</b>  3.1 Increased opportunities for impactful planning that ensures Aboriginal community led priorities can be implemented through ranger programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community engagement opportunities conducted during ranger planning</li> <li>• Number of individual Aboriginal people involved in planning process</li> <li>• Number of planning documents or studies completed that support ranger business, Country management, or strategic direction</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organisational policies or procedures developed</li> </ul>

<p>3.2 Strengthened capacity within Aboriginal ranger organisations to care for Country, deliver a ranger program over time, support peoples' pathways and ongoing employment and income generation opportunities relating to ranger work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of training or mentoring opportunities provided to rangers and community members in corporate management, planning and/or governance</li> <li>• Number of plans developed for targeted-outcome on Country projects (eg youth engagement, visitor management, cultural awareness, infrastructure development)</li> <li>• Number of plans implemented for targeted-outcome on Country and ranger projects (eg youth program, visitor management, cultural awareness, infrastructure development)</li> <li>• Number of key support staff employed</li> <li>• Number of Aboriginal people receiving job readiness support</li> <li>• Value of assets and infrastructure invested in</li> <li>• Value of in-kind leverage funding for project</li> <li>• Value of financial leverage funding for project</li> <li>• Number of facilities established to support ongoing income generation (eg nursery, ablutions block, water tanks, shelter on Country)</li> <li>• Number of cultural enterprises developed associated with cultural and language growth and development</li> </ul>
<p><b>PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <p>3.3 Strengthened collaborative partnerships between Aboriginal ranger organisations and relevant stakeholders to support ranger programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of collaborative partnerships with Government</li> <li>• Number of collaborative partnerships with education or research bodies</li> <li>• Number of collaborative partnerships with others (eg. Aboriginal organisations, community groups, non-government organisations and/or philanthropic organisations)</li> <li>• Number of formal agreements established to generate additional funding, income, sponsorship or in-kind support of ranger work</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENGAGEMENT</b></p> <p>3.4 Increased respect and recognition of Aboriginal people and culture facilitated through ranger programs' cultural and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of cultural education or awareness activities or events delivered to community (other than in schools)</li> <li>• Number of educational events delivered to schools</li> <li>• Number of schools engaged</li> <li>• Number of visitor sites actively monitored or managed</li> <li>• Number of cultural interpretation or visitor information developed (eg signage, tourism product)</li> <li>• Number of cultural interpretation or visitor information materials installed (eg signage, tourism product)</li> </ul>

### HELPFUL TIP

In your application form you will need to nominate activities and link them to outcomes and describe how you will measure and report on these. The more thinking and planning you do now related to these activities means the easier it will be to hit the ground running if you are funded as it will form the basis of your funding agreement and work plan for your project and /or rangers.

## 2.8.1 Filling in the Activities Table

The Activity Table will look like this:

**Activities Table**

[Maximise](#)

Briefly describe the activity	ARP outcome	How will you measure this?	Your target	How you will collect data and evidence	When will you complete this activity?
*	▼ *	▼ * Other <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	* <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	* <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	▼ *
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20%;">There may be more than one ARP outcome that your activity meets, but select the one that suits your activity the best from the dropdown list.</div> <div style="width: 20%;">As only one measure can be selected per row, click 'Add More' to add another clean row beneath, copy and paste details in columns one and two into that new row, then in the third column select the next measure for the activity. If you think that none of the measures is appropriate for your activity, please select 'Other' and describe the measure you propose for your activity.</div> <div style="width: 20%;">Must be a number.</div> </div>					

[Add More](#)

Must be at least 1 rows

### Briefly describe the activity

In this column you will need to describe each of the activities that will make up your project. Describe one activity per row and click 'Add More' to add a new row to describe your next planned activity.

When you describe each activity be realistic and specific. Identify who will be involved in delivering each output (rangers, Elders), partners involved, where it will occur and what will be done.

### ARP outcome

ARP has nine program outcomes, two relate to employment and training which are addressed in Part 10 Employment and Training. The remaining seven are listed in the dropdown menu in this column.

There may be more than one ARP outcome that your activity meets, but select the one that suits your activity the best from the dropdown list.

### How will you measure this?

Select the best measure/s for your activity. Use the numbering to guide which measures match which outcome.

Sometimes there will be more than one measure you need to measure your activity by. For example, if your activity is taking Elders and rangers on Country for knowledge sharing trips, you will need to select the following three measures:

- Number of trips on Country



- Number of Elders supported to be on Country
- Number of individual Aboriginal people attending on Country trips

As only one measure can be selected per row, click 'Add More' to add another clean row beneath, copy and paste details in columns one and two into that new row, then in the third column select the next measure for the activity.

If you think that none of the measures is appropriate for your activity, please select 'Other' and describe the measure you propose for your activity.

It is important that you select **all** the measures that are appropriate for your activity.

### **Your target**

This must be a number and is the target for the measure you've selected in the previous column and is the target for the entire project period for that activity.

### **How you will collect data and evidence**

In this column describe how you will collect data and state what evidence you will provide to demonstrate that you've achieved your annual targets for this activity. **You will need to provide this evidence at annual reporting time.** Evidence methods might include surveys, photographs, trip reports, videos, products created, online links, maps, interviews/case studies, administrative data, observation/estimation or datasets.

### **When will you complete this activity**

Use the dropdown menu in this column to select when you plan for this activity to be complete – by the end of the first, second, third or fourth project year.

Below are some examples on how you could fill in your Activities Table in your application.

#### **Example 1**

**Briefly describe the activity:** Rangers to conduct annual burning program to manage and provide access to cultural sites for Elders at Place 1, Place 2 and Place 3

**ARP outcome:** 1.1 Aboriginal rangers continue to keep Country healthy through land and sea management activities

**How will you measure this:** 1.1 Number of hectares of fire management (cultural burning, prescribed burning and bushfire suppression); AND 1.1 Number of cultural burns conducted

**Your target:** 20 hectares of cultural burning conducted; AND three cultural burns conducted

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Burns will be mapped and recorded with GIS software, complete trip reports for each burn trip and provide these with photographs in annual reports

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's fourth year

### Example 2

**Briefly describe the activity:** Develop a ranger business plan for No Name Aboriginal Organisation including four community consultation meetings in town to ensure we are best placed to apply for any future ranger funding

**ARP outcome:** 3.1 Increased opportunities for impactful planning that ensures Aboriginal community led priorities can be implemented through ranger programs

**How will you measure this:** 3.1 Number of community engagement opportunities conducted during ranger planning; AND 3.1 Number of individual Aboriginal people involved in planning process; AND 3.1 Number of planning documents or studies completed that support ranger business, Country management, or strategic direction.

**Your target:** Four engagements; AND 30 people; AND one ranger business plan

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Social media post to be created, photos taken at each engagement and ranger business plan with social media post, photos and report submitted with annual report

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's first year

### Example 3

**Briefly describe the activity:** Develop and formalise two new partnerships with No Name University and No Name TAFE to secure support that provides access to their laboratories and soil testing research training for our rangers

**ARP outcome:** 3.3 Strengthened collaborative partnerships between Aboriginal ranger organisations and relevant stakeholders to support ranger programs

**How will you measure this:** 3.3 Number of collaborative partnerships with education or research bodies

**Your target:** Two partnerships

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Provide formal agreement for each partnership (if not confidential) and photographs of rangers using facilities and an example of soil testing results in annual reports

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's second year

### Example 4

**Briefly describe the activity:** Develop a safe working environment for new rangers by writing job safety analyses for main ranger activities

**ARP outcome:** 3.2 Strengthened capacity within Aboriginal ranger organisations to care for Country, deliver a ranger program over time, support peoples' pathways and ongoing employment and income generation opportunities relating to ranger work

**How will you measure this:** 3.2 Number of organisational policies or procedures developed

**Your target:** Four safety procedures developed

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Example of a job safety analysis developed and provided with annual report

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's first year

#### Example 5

**Briefly describe the activity:** Develop a job readiness and induction program and deliver this to all four new ranger employees

**ARP outcome:** 3.2 Strengthened capacity within Aboriginal ranger organisations to care for Country, deliver a ranger program over time, support peoples' pathways and ongoing employment and income generation opportunities relating to ranger work

**How will you measure this:** 3.2 Number of Aboriginal people receiving job readiness support

**Your target:** Four rangers receiving work readiness support and induction

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Checklist of components of job readiness support and induction program provided with annual report

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's second year

#### Example 6

**Briefly describe the activity:** Provide support to Elders in No Name Town by chopping and delivering wood provided by the No Name Shire which has been confiscated from illegal clearing and provided to our organisation for this use

**ARP outcome:** 1.3 Aboriginal ranger projects continue to help keep the local Aboriginal community healthy and strong, in particular by providing access to Country

**How will you measure this:** 1.3 Number of community wellbeing activities delivered by Aboriginal rangers

**Your target:** 20 wellbeing activities

**How you will collect data and evidence:** Photos of rangers delivering wood provided in annual report

**When will you complete this activity?:** This will be completed by end of project's fourth year

## 2.9 Assessment Criteria

### 2.9.1 Summary of assessment criteria

Using well defined assessment criteria ensures transparency for all groups. It allows groups to understand exactly what the Assessment Panel will be looking for when recommending funding. They also ensure that most of the information provided in your application is relevant and useful to the assessment process and you are not wasting your time providing information that will not be considered.

The following assessment criteria will be used to evaluate applications for funding in this round. Applicants should address each criteria that is relevant to your selected fund when completing the application form. Note that each criteria may be weighted differently. A weighting just means that some aspects are considered more important than others.

A summary of the weighted assessment criteria for all of the funds is noted in the below table. For information specific to your fund please also refer to:

- Sustain Fund – section 2.9.2
- Activate Fund – section 2.9.3
- Prepare Fund – section 2.9.4

Assessment Criteria	Percentage weighting		
	Sustain	Activate	Prepare
1. Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts	40%	20%	30%
2. Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community gap/s and/or need/s	20%	30%	30%
3. Governance and capacity to deliver	20%	30%	20%
4. Value for money	20%	20%	20%

## 2.9.2 Sustain Fund assessment criteria

Use this guide if you are applying to continue your existing ranger program in the **Sustain Fund**.

### **Criteria 1: Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (40%)**

Your project will need to meet ARP objective/s and outcomes which are listed in section 1.3.

You will need to demonstrate how your planned activities meet ARP outcomes in the Activities Table in your application form. Information in the Activities Table will be considered when assessing this criteria.

You will need to provide an impact statement relating to the anticipated breadth and scale of impact of your project on Country, culture and/or community, including impacts if funding is not continued

### **Criteria 2: Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community gap/sand/or need/s (20%)**

You will need to describe and demonstrate how funding will fill a gap or need or maintain your existing ranger services during the allocated project time. These gaps and needs may be financial, operational, cultural, Country, capacity, geographical, employment, planning and/or strategic.

### **Criteria 3: Governance and capacity to deliver (20%)**

You will need to describe and demonstrate your organisation's capacity to continue to administer and deliver your ranger project. Demonstrate evidence (link or attach examples) of organisational governance; cultural governance and representativeness of community; adequate organisational and project planning, administrative capacity; policies and procedures; existing project team with an ability to deliver; sustaining partnerships; and monitoring and evaluation processes.

Information relating to sections 2.2.2, 2.10.2 and 2.9.5 will also be considered when assessing this criteria.

**You must also attach your ranger related planning documentation.**

### **Criteria 4: Value for money (20%)**

Value for money is about balancing cost, quality, and outcomes to achieve the best overall result. You will need to describe how your project represents value for money in delivering your anticipated outcomes for Country, culture and community. This could include the social, cultural, Country-based or financial benefits the project will bring, as well as how it may reduce social, cultural or financial costs in the future. You may also describe how your location impacts costs.

You will need to provide specific information if you are applying for:

- Assets – itemise and describe each asset and cost/s and demonstrate essentiality to project delivery;
- Infrastructure – land tenure ownership and security, installation timeframes and demonstrated essentiality to project delivery; and
- Consultancy costs – extent of work and demonstrated essentiality to project delivery.

Information relating to sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and the Project Budget, Activities Table and your employment and training commitments within your application will also be considered when assessing this criteria.

### 2.9.3 Activate Fund assessment criteria

Use this guide if you are applying to begin a new, well planned ranger program through the **Activate Fund**.

#### **Criteria 1: Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (20%)**

Your project will need to meet ARP objective/s and outcomes which are listed in section 1.3.

You will need to demonstrate how your planned activities meet ARP outcomes in the Activities Table in your application form. Information in the Activities Table will be considered when assessing this criteria to assess alignment with ARP objectives. You will need to provide an impact statement relating to anticipated breadth and scale of impact of your project on Country, culture and/or community.

#### **Criteria 2: Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community gap/sand/or need/s (30%)**

You will need to demonstrate how funding will fill a gap or need related to ranger services on your Country during the project time. These gaps and needs may be financial, operational, cultural, Country, capacity, geographical, employment, developing or implementing plans and/or strategic.

#### **Criteria 3: Governance and capacity to deliver (30%)**

You will need to demonstrate your organisation's capacity to administer and deliver your project. Describe how you will develop or have already developed (with evidence) organisational and cultural governance and representativeness of community.

You will need to describe at what stage your organisation is at in its journey towards a ranger project. Depending on where you are at, will determine what establishment activities you might need to apply for funding for. Describe those activities and when you will complete them. Remember to allow time for organisational capacity building, negotiating a funding agreement, confirming partnerships, purchasing new assets, developing workplace procedures, establishing administration systems, recruiting rangers and support staff, onboarding, job readiness, initial training before you begin land and sea Country management activities. Then you may be able to focus on skills, training, personal development, support, capacity building, monitoring, reporting. This staged approach should be reflected in your application and will be assessed in this criteria.

Information relating to section 2.2.2, 2.10.2 and 2.9.5 will also be considered when assessing this criteria.

**You must also attach your ranger related planning documentation.**

#### **Criteria 4: Value for money (20%)**

Value for money is about balancing cost, quality, and outcomes to achieve the best overall result. You will need to describe how your project represents value for money in delivering your anticipated outcomes for Country, culture and community. This could include the social, cultural, Country-based or financial benefits the project will bring, as well as how it may reduce social, cultural or financial costs in the future. You may also describe how your location impacts costs.

You will need to provide specific information if you wish to apply for any of the following items:

- Assets – itemise and describe each asset and cost/s and demonstrate essentiality to project delivery;
- Consultancy costs – extent of work and demonstrated essentiality to project delivery.

Information relating to sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and the Project Budget, Activities Table and your employment and training commitments within your application will also be considered when assessing this criteria.



## 2.9.4 Prepare Fund assessment criteria

Use this guide if you are applying to plan your ranger related priorities for Country, community and culture by applying to the **Prepare Fund**.

### **Criteria 1: Project's potential to contribute to ARP objectives and outcomes and project's anticipated impacts (30%)**

Your planning project will need to meet ARP objective/s which are listed in section 1.3 together with their associated ARP outcomes. In the Prepare Fund it is reasonable for your project to only meet one or a few ARP outcomes.

You will need to demonstrate how your planning project will meet ARP outcomes in the Activities Table in your application form. Information in the Activities Table will be considered when assessing this criteria to assess alignment with ARP objectives.

You will need to provide an impact statement relating to the anticipated breadth and scale of impact of your planning project on Country, culture and/or community.

### **Criteria 2: Project's potential to address Country, culture and/or community gap/s and/or need/s (30%)**

You will need to demonstrate how funding your planning project will fill a gap or need related to ranger services on your Country during the allocated project time. These gaps and needs may be planning, financial, operational, cultural, Country, capacity, geographical and/or strategic.

### **Criteria 3: Governance and capacity to deliver (20%)**

You will need to demonstrate your organisation's capacity to administer and deliver your planning project including your governance structure.

Information relating to 2.2.2, 2.10.2 and 2.9.5 will also be considered when assessing this criteria.

### **Criteria 4: Value for money (20%)**

Value for money is about balancing cost, quality, and outcomes to achieve the best overall result. You will need to describe how your project demonstrates value for money, including that the amount of funding your organisation requests is proportionate to the activities within your planning project in your local context.

If you are applying for consultancy costs, you will need to provide specific information on role of the consultant, the extent of work and demonstrated essentiality to project delivery.

Information relating to sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and the Project budget and Activities table within your application will also be considered when assessing this criteria.

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### *Voices from Country*

"The Healthy Country Plan funded under this ARP grant offered that foundational funding for which we will be forever grateful".

"This program has taught us so much about governance, we've learned how to develop employment contracts and manage employees, this has been huge for our capacity development."

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### 2.9.5 Other considerations in the assessment

In this round, the ARP will also take into consideration the following in the assessment stage:

- the commitment to employment of Aboriginal people, organisations and/or businesses in all or most roles and services;
- if the applicant is a previous recipient of ARP funding, the ability, how and to what extent the applicant met or meets obligations of any previous or existing funding agreement(s); and
- alignment with State Government priorities and budget allocations.

### 2.9.6 Leverage funding, in-kind support and partnerships

Applicants are encouraged to seek other funding sources to complement any ARP funding and expand the potential outcomes of their project ideas, but it is not essential to being awarded ARP funding in this round. Alternative funding might include other grants, funding from private enterprise or community organisation or philanthropic support. Information about other funding sources, including in-kind contributions, will be requested as part of your application. If you have received funding from another source for a specific position or program output that duplicates a request made in your ARP application, it may impact whether you are awarded ARP funding.

Applicants are encouraged to build partnerships with other organisations to help build the capacity of their organisations and expand the potential outcomes of their programs, but these are not essential to being awarded ARP funding in this round. Partners can help deliver project ideas through financial support, practical assistance or in-kind support. Information about your partnerships will be requested as part of your application.

Before considering the use of paid consultants or businesses, particularly non-Aboriginal businesses consider if you can access those resources, skills or support from other partnerships. Many groups are interested in partnering and supporting Aboriginal rangers in some way and you will likely be helping them fulfil their own priorities as well so everyone can benefit.

#### HELPFUL TIP

**Look to engage Aboriginal people, organisations and businesses as much as possible.**

Coordination or support staff (including consultants) to implement training, mentoring, safety management and works planning to support the work of Aboriginal rangers will be considered where it can be demonstrated that this is essential to achieve the specified outcomes of the program. Aboriginal support staff provide enhanced Aboriginal employment outcomes and are looked on favourably. Succession planning that supports Aboriginal staff to learn the skills that may be initially supported by non-Aboriginal people will also be looked upon favourably.

The Assessment Panel may review your budget details and/or request clarification on budget details. This review and/or advice will be considered before a formal offer is made and may impact the total amount of funding offered.

## 2.10 What other information and approvals are required?

### 2.10.1 Goods and Services Tax

Most registered Aboriginal corporations have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and will be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST). GST is therefore generally applicable to funding under the ARP but applicants should not include GST in calculating their project costs in their application. If applicants have an ABN, but are not registered for GST, then no GST applies, and the total payment will be made exclusive of GST.

### 2.10.2 Insurance

If successful, recipients of ARP funding are required to have appropriate insurance cover before activities can commence. **It is the recipient's responsibility to ensure they, and any consultants, service providers or subcontractors hold appropriate insurance for all activities undertaken for the project.** Applications will be accepted from organisations that do not have the appropriate insurance cover but that commit to take out or upgrade their insurances should they be successful. Failure to provide evidence of having the appropriate insurances within three months of signing the funding agreement may result in the suspension or delay of payments, or the funding agreement being terminated. Appropriate insurance may include:

#### Public Liability

Public liability insurance covers the legal liability of the applicant and the applicant's personnel arising for an amount of not less than \$20 million for any one occurrence and unlimited in the number of occurrences happening in the period of insurance.

#### Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the provisions of the State Government *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*, includes cover for common law liability and should cover for an amount of not less than \$50 million for any one occurrence in respect of workers of the applicant. The insurance policy must be extended to cover any claims and liability that may arise with an indemnity under section 175(2) of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*.

#### Motor Vehicle Third Party

Compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance is required under statute relating to motor vehicles used in connection with the application for funding. Motor vehicle third party insurance covers legal liability against property damage and bodily injury to, or death of, persons (other than compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance) caused by motor vehicles used in connection with the application for funding for an amount of not less than \$30 million for any one occurrence or accident.

#### Professional Indemnity

Professional indemnity insurance covers the legal liability of the applicant and the applicant's personnel arising out of any act, negligence, error or omission made or done by or on behalf of the applicant in connection with the applicant's project and should be for a sum of \$1 million – \$5 million for any one claim and in the annual aggregate, with a provision of one automatic reinstatement of the full sum insured in any one period of insurance. Professional indemnity insurance can include:

- a) fraud and dishonesty;
- b) defamation;
- c) infringement of intellectual property rights;
- d) loss of or damage to documents and data; and
- e) breach of Australian Consumer Law.

DBCA reserves the right to request additional insurances are obtained if they are not already by the applicant but are relevant to the project.

#### HELPFUL TIP

ARP will request a copy of your relevant insurances each year.

### 2.10.3 Disclosure of Information and privacy

The Minister for the Environment and DBCA have statutory obligations under section 58 of the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Accordingly, any funding application may be made available to the public on request, with the possible exemption of any confidential or personal information. Applicants are invited to identify confidential and personal information and specify the reason for its confidentiality.

Applicants should be aware that if they are successful, DBCA may publish information about recipients, including but not limited to:

- the name of the entity receiving the funding;
- title and purpose for which funding awarded;
- a description of the project and expected outcomes;
- amount of funding awarded; and
- location/s where funding awarded.

By submitting an application under the ARP, the applicant consents to publication of the information by DBCA if they are awarded funding.

### 2.10.4 Conditions and accountability

Successful applicants will be expected to comply with a range of conditions detailed in a funding agreement between the recipient and the State. An example of an ARP funding agreement is on the ARP website, but this example does not necessarily reflect agreements that will be made as a result of this process. Failure to comply with the conditions of a funding agreement may influence the awarding or disbursement of any future funding and may result in the termination of the agreement. Recipients of funding under the ARP should not expect that funds will be provided automatically or on an ongoing basis.

## 2.11 How to apply

The closing date for applications is 5.00pm AWST on Monday 9 March 2026. You are encouraged to submit your application in advance of this time and date to allow time for any unexpected technical issues which may arise.

Applications can only be made by via the [DBCA SmartyGrants online portal](#). All applications will be sent an automatic email from *SmartyGrants* confirming receipt of their application.

### HELPFUL TIP

Continue to save your application in SmartyGrants or prepare and save your text in another document and copy and paste into SmartyGrants questions. There is not an autosave function and we do not want your hard work to be lost.

### Applications received by email or post will not be accepted

Late applications will generally not be accepted but may be considered where applications have been submitted contrary to application requirements in circumstances where no applicant has been materially advantaged or disadvantaged.

### Make sure you are ready to attach the following with your application:

- Letters of support from Prescribed Body Corporate (or equivalent), Regional Corporation or Traditional Owners, if required (refer to section 2.2.2 for more information);
- Letters of support from all relevant landowners and land managers (refer to section 2.2.3 for more information);
- Detailed project location information (refer to section 2.2.3 for more information); and
- If you are **applying in the Sustain or Activate Funds, attach your ranger related planning document/s.**

### HELPFUL TIP

Begin discussions with Traditional Owners and landowners or land managers early in the application process to ensure that all parties understand theirs and the other's commitments, expectations or restrictions and what any support includes.

Please limit supporting material to what is specifically requested in the application form. The maximum upload possible on *SmartyGrants* is 25 megabytes per document, but the recommended size of file attachments is 5 megabytes. **If you are applying in the Sustain or Activate Fund you must attach your ranger related planning document.** If you are unable to do so, due to upload restrictions, please contact

the program using details provided at 2.12. The Assessment Panel may ask you to supply this supplementary material at a later date if required.

#### **Grant writing tutorial**

In 2022, the ARP offered a grant writing tutorial to all potential applicants. The tutorial is available to watch on our website <https://youtu.be/YIL-dPvWIXg>

## **2.12 What happens next?**

All applicants will be advised in writing at the conclusion of the funding application process, following approval by the Minister for the Environment. Please allow for up to three months from the submission of your application to be notified of the outcome.

Refer to the Round 9 Process Flowchart at the beginning of this document and section 3 below for more detailed process information.

## **2.13 How to contact us about these guidelines**

Enquiries about Round 9 must only be made in writing and must be emailed to [aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au)

DBCA officers can only offer general advice and are unable to assist applicants in preparing their applications. Applicants should seek independent professional advice where necessary.



### 3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

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The assessment process and methodology for Round 9 of the ARP will be guided by the following.

#### 3.1 Establishment and role of Assessment Panel

An Assessment Panel comprising representatives from DBCA and other relevant stakeholders, will be established prior to the closing date. Panel members will represent a broad range of skills and experience related to the ARP and the ranger sector. The Assessment Panel will aim to consist of the following:

- Executive Director, Parks and Visitor Services Division, Parks and Wildlife Service (Panel Chair - Voting) – non-Aboriginal, male, DBCA staff.
- Coordinator Policy and Projects (Voting) – Aboriginal, female, DBCA staff.
- Four representatives from the Aboriginal ranger sector (Voting) – with an equitable representation of gender and Aboriginality and DBCA staffing, with a preference for individuals who are not working for Aboriginal organisations likely to apply to Round 9.

An independent Probity Auditor will attend all Assessment Panel meetings and ARP staff will provide support to the panel where needed as outlined in Section 4.2.2.

#### 3.2 Procedure for assessment

The procedure for assessment is as follows:

- Funding applications closes.
- Applications are checked for eligibility against application requirements.
- Request for advice on relevant applications if further information is required, for example from DBCA regional staff, other government agencies or other funding bodies.
- Eligible applications and additional information collated and distributed to Assessment Panel.
- Panel members individually assess applications.
- Panel convenes to discuss applications, come to a group score which will inform recommendations.
- Panel seeks any clarification from applicants (if required).
- Panel provides written confirmation (via email) that the recommendations drafted for the consideration of the Minister are a true reflection of the discussion and advice made by the panel.
- Recommendations provided to the Minister for the Environment for consideration and approval.
- Subject to Minister for the Environment's approval, successful and unsuccessful applicants notified.
- Successful applicants enter into a funding agreement with DBCA.

#### 3.3 Referral of applications

The Assessment Panel may seek additional information from within DBCA and from relevant government agencies on eligible applications to inform the Assessment Panel's deliberations. Relevant government agencies are those that may have a statutory role in approving elements of the application;

an interest in the activities or outcomes proposed in the application; or whose advice may be important in assessing the application.

Eligible applications may be provided to relevant government agencies and DBCA staff. The Coordinator ARP is responsible for referring applications. Advice received from DBCA staff and relevant government agencies will be collated for the Assessment Panel to consider together with the application.

### **3.4 Assessment considerations**

To be recommended for funding, applicants will be required to:

- meet the eligibility requirements detailed in section 2.2; and
- have appropriate insurances as detailed in section 2.10.2 or indicated a commitment to get them.

Eligible applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria as well as other considerations for assessment in section 2.9.5.

The assessment will be made in accordance with the assessment methodology identified below.

The Assessment Panel may consider that an organisation is better suited to apply for a different Fund and may choose to assess an application against the assessment criteria of a different fund and then make an offer of funding according to that assessment.

### **3.5 Assessment Panel may seek clarification from applicants**

A successful applicant may not be offered the level of funding requested and may be asked that some elements of the project be modified.

The Assessment Panel may also direct the Coordinator ARP or Coordinator Policy and Projects to contact applicants to seek clarification about their application and/or request evidence in support of any declaration made in the application.

All communication seeking clarification from applicants will be discussed with the Chair of the Assessment Panel.

### **3.6 Recommendation to Minister for the Environment**

The Assessment Panel will make a recommendation to the Minister for the Environment who will make the final decision as to which applicants are successful.

All Ministerial decisions are final.

### **3.7 Notification of applicants**

All applicants will be informed in writing of the status of their application at the conclusion of the process and following approval by the Minister for the Environment.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided written feedback via a letter to support their future funding submissions. An offer to meet to receive feedback on their application will be offered. Feedback cannot include a direct comparison to any other application because all applications are treated in confidence except where the law requires otherwise.

### 3.8 Assessment methodology

The ARP uses a competitive process to allocate funding under the Round 9 that allows applicants to use their own initiative to develop applications that will meet the outcomes of both the program and the aspirations of Aboriginal organisations and communities.

In assessing applications, all information provided by applicants in the application form, as well as any clarifying information sought by the Assessment Panel from applicants, other government agencies or DBCA staff, will be taken into account. All reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of information when seeking verifying information from other parties.

Applications will be assessed against others in their Fund (or against another Fund if the Assessment Panel deems that more appropriate).

A scoring system will be used to assess the applications against each assessment criteria. The scoring legend zero to nine is outlined as follows:

- 0 Does not address assessment criteria.
- 1 Limited understanding or capability, no confidence that assessment criteria is met.
- 3 Less than satisfactory understanding or capability, limited confidence that assessment criteria is met.
- 5 Satisfactory understanding or capability, reasonably confident that assessment criteria is met.
- 7 Good understanding or capability, confident that assessment criteria is met.
- 9 Excellent understanding or capability, complete confidence that assessment criteria is met.

'In between' scores such as 2, 4, 6 and 8 may be used to reflect variation to these scores.

Members of the Assessment Panel will provide an individual score against each of the assessment criteria. An average score for each assessment criteria will be determined by combining scores of each member of the Assessment Panel.

**Please note that your application must meet an average score of at least 3 in all of the assessment criteria to be considered for a funding offer.**

### 3.9 Determining the successful applicants

The aggregate of these average scores will form a total score for each applicant, which will be used in the final assessment of applications, in addition to other considerations in the assessment – section 2.9.5, to form the recommendations to the Minister for the Environment.

Following the assessment and scoring by the Assessment Panel, applications are ranked according to their total score. Within each Fund the panel will consider which applicants to recommend to the Minister for the Environment as preferred applicants using the above scoring system and by applying the other considerations in the assessment – section 2.9.5 outlined in these guidelines if relevant. The amount of funding requested and the amount available will also be considered in this context.

Up to \$2 million will be allocated in the Prepare Fund. If this \$2 million is not completely allocated, the remainder will be allocated to the Sustain Fund. Up to \$10 million will be allocated in the Activate Fund. If this \$10 million is not completely allocated, the remainder will be allocated to the Sustain Fund.

The Assessment Panel will only make recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and does not make the final decision as to which applicants are successful. The Minister for the Environment will consider the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and will determine which applicants will be successful. The Minister for the Environment's decision is final.

## 4. PROBITY GUIDELINES

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### 4.1 Principle 1 - Confidentiality and conflict of interest

The community and applicants have a right to expect public sector staff and elected officials will perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way and that the decisions they make are not affected by self-interest or personal gain. Conflicts of interest arise when public officials are influenced, or appear to be influenced, by personal interests when doing their job (ICAC Dec 1995).

#### 4.1.1 General security

Security of all information that becomes available and pertaining to this application process is the responsibility of all members of the Assessment Panel.

All persons must take reasonable precautions to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

It is the responsibility of the Coordinator ARP to ensure that reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of information by government agencies and DBCA staff to which applications are referred.

In referring applications to government agency staff and DBCA staff, confidential information will be redacted. This includes financial information that is provided.

All office files will be established in accordance with the DBCA's overall policies and stored in secured cabinets. All files must be returned to the central cabinets each night where they will be locked when the office is unattended.

#### 4.1.2 Physical security

It is the personal responsibility of all persons privileged to confidential documents to ensure that they are securely stored and unobtainable to others not authorised by the Coordinator ARP.

Any documents, files or copies of submissions that are given to Panel members should be identified by number and signed out by the Coordinator ARP or Executive Officer.

#### 4.1.3 Computer security

The computer environments containing confidential ARP information at DBCA shall be secured and accessed only by authorised individuals with their own passwords. The system administrator shall ensure individuals only have access to areas of information that are appropriate to the roles assigned to them by the Coordinator ARP. The Probity Auditor shall test the environments from time to time to confirm that the systems remain secure.

#### 4.1.4 Confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations

Each person having access to confidential assessment information are to provide the Coordinator ARP with a signed confidentiality statement and a declaration if they do not have any conflict of interest which may, or may be seen to, affect the impartiality of the selection process. The signed statement

also carries the obligation to report any subsequent changes to that person's circumstances to the Coordinator ARP throughout the funding application process.

Individuals provided with direct access to applications in *SmartyGrants* for assessment, are to declare if they have any conflict of interest regarding each individual application as part of completing the *SmartyGrants* assessment form.

#### 4.1.5 Process for dealing with conflict issues

Upon becoming aware of conflictual matters whether declared or otherwise, the Coordinator ARP may consult with the Coordinator Policy and Projects, Assessment Panel Chair (and Probity Auditor if required) and will record the circumstances in the conflict of interest register, together with the mitigation measures and status of action taken to address the circumstances.

Any conflict that appears to directly threaten the integrity and probity of the funding application process must be immediately referred to the Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services and the Probity Auditor for guidance on resolution.



## 4.2 Principle 2 - Impartiality

Individuals and organisations involved in preparing and submitting applications for public sector funding often invest considerable time, effort and resources and in return, they are entitled to expect impartial treatment at every step of the selection process.

In probity terms, procedural fairness implies a duty to act fairly and adopt fair procedures that are appropriate to the circumstances of a particular procurement/ selection process. Good administration and proper process are to be followed.

Failing to follow an open and fair selection process may lead to a loss of public confidence and the funding application being subject to judicial review – this is inevitably costly in terms of image, time and resources.

The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* requires that all employees act impartially and with integrity including avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest.

The following principles of procedural fairness must be adhered to in the selection process.

### 4.2.1 Knowledge

Before commencing the selection process, the Panel Chair must be satisfied that all nominated Assessment Panel members (including advisors) have been provided with adequate material and/or instructions before participating in the evaluation to ensure that they have an understanding of:

- the contents of each application;
- the assessment criteria against which applications will be rated; and
- the process by which each application will be rated.

### 4.2.2 Relevant circumstances

Assessment Panel members must consider all relevant considerations related to each application. This includes applicant's responses to the assessment criteria, and all other information they were required to supply, additional information provided where applications have been referred for further details and "other considerations" described in these guidelines.

### 4.2.3 Irrelevant considerations

Generally, the selection process must not be based on irrelevant considerations, that is, anything outside the assessment criteria or information requested and subsequently provided through the funding application process. Changes to the selection process should be communicated in writing before the close of funding application to all applicants.

### 4.2.4 Bias

The selection process must be free of bias or conflict of interest, and any perception of bias or interest. Any connections between an Assessment Panel member or adviser and an applicant must be disclosed to the Panel Chair. Only in exceptional circumstances, and approval by the Panel Chair, will an Assessment Panel member continue to be included in the selection process if there is a perceived association.

Assessment Panel members must not have contact with applicants during the selection process, other than the Coordinator ARP seeking clarification where required. It is noted that in the normal course of business, it may be necessary for some of the Assessment Panel members to have contact with applicants through ARP Reference Group and 'business as usual' management. In these instances, panel members will comply with probity guidelines. Any possible issue of bias should be discussed with the Panel Chair as soon as it arises.

#### **4.2.5 Probative evidence**

Ratings and selections must be made on the basis of the material being presented and included in applications rather than mere speculation or suspicion.

#### **4.2.6 Confidentiality**

The contents of applications should not be disclosed to any outside party. Each application should be viewed as commercially confidential information.

### 4.3 Principle 3 - Transparency

By having transparent, open processes, organisations can help to minimise opportunities for fraud and corruption. This also gives applicants and the public confidence in the outcome. Organisations often invest considerable time, effort and resources when preparing and submitting applications. In return, they are entitled to expect impartial treatment at every stage of the process (ICAC Dec 1996).

#### 4.3.1 Assessment process and methodology

An assessment process and methodology will be made available to all applicants. It should contain:

- overview of the program;
- internal administrative procedures;
- applicant enquiries protocol;
- office security;
- confidentiality;
- probity;
- establishment and role of Assessment Panel;
- procedure for assessment; and
- assessment methodology.

#### 4.3.2 Guideline and application documents

The Grant Guidelines document shall provide sufficient information to applicants to enable the preparation of relevant and considered applications. As a minimum it will contain:

- objectives of the ARP and the specific funding fund;
- eligibility for funding;
- assessment criteria;
- time and closing date for applications;
- conditions of funding;
- approvals required;
- Goods and Services tax;
- insurance;
- where to lodge applications; and
- a contact email address.

#### 4.3.3 Records of meetings

All agreed items discussed and actions will be recorded including:

- meeting details;
- attendance;
- decisions and recommendations made;
- actions agreed; and
- responsibility and time frame.

#### 4.3.4 Media – public relations

Media releases, public presentations, and attendance at functions sponsored by applicants and similar, are occasions that have the potential to jeopardise the probity of the assessment process for the ARP. Members of the Assessment Panel, DBCA staff, and government agencies associated with the assessment process must be mindful of this issue and to reduce risks, the DBCA Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services Division or Coordinator ARP is to be the only spokesperson, unless approved by the Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services Division.

#### 4.3.5 Taking other information into account

As a general rule, the Assessment Panel should only consider information presented by the applicants in accordance with the approved assessment criteria and assessment approach.

Should the Assessment Panel become aware of other information about an applicant's capability that may be relevant to the assessment or the outcome being sought, the Coordinator ARP must bring this to the attention of the Probity Auditor. The information must be documented and referenced to the source. The Assessment Panel must do all that is necessary to confirm the accuracy of information with the applicant, although the source may remain anonymous if deemed necessary. Such communication may be in written form or by a meeting. The applicant must be given reasonable time to prepare a response and the Probity Auditor is to be involved in all communication with the applicant.

The Assessment Panel must not take that information into account until the Panel Chair is satisfied that the facts have been fully understood and the applicant has been extended procedural fairness. On that basis, the Panel Chair may then provide the Assessment Panel with a written summary of the information that can be taken into account for the purpose of assessment.

#### 4.3.6 Dealing with enquiries

All enquiries from applicants will be managed by the Coordinator ARP, with delegation to the Executive Officer as required.

Applicants must submit all queries by email.

All enquiries should be sent to [aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au). Enquiries made by email will receive a written response from the Coordinator ARP or Executive Officer.

Incoming enquiries will be added to an enquiries register maintained by the Executive Officer. The enquiries register will be saved in a secure online file, and a copy placed on the relevant corporate file at completion of the process. The Executive Officer shall immediately refer the enquiry to the Coordinator ARP for action.

The Executive Officer will update the enquiries register with the response action.

Each enquiry received from applicants will be reviewed by the Executive Officer to determine whether the enquiry is of a confidential or general nature. Where there is any ambiguity, this determination is to be made in consultation with the Coordinator ARP and Probity Auditor.

At the Coordinator ARP's discretion 'General Advice to all Registered Applicants' may be placed on the ARP website as soon as possible, if time permits, before the closing date and time.

All 'General Advice to Registered Applicants' will be issued in numeric sequence and signed by the Coordinator ARP. All advice will go to the Probity Auditor prior to being published on the ARP website. A register, summarising the details of material issued, will be maintained.

Any DBCA staff meetings with applicants that seek to gather partnership support for proposed operations within an application must have at least two staff in attendance. Staff involved in such meetings will not be involved in assessing the application.

As a general rule, DBCA staff or Assessment Panel members should not attend functions sponsored by applicants during the funding application process. Only the DBCA Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services Division may be eligible to do so (details to be recorded on the project file).

DBCA officers can only offer general advice, and are unable to assist applicants in preparing their applications. Applicants should seek independent professional advice where necessary, such as for legal or financial matters.

## 4.4 Principle 4 - Accountability

Public sector agencies should have appropriate mechanisms in place to show that they are accountable for their practices and the decisions that are made. Accountability requirements can reduce opportunities for corruption and save time, money, resources and problems in the long term. Mechanisms can include the agency keeping detailed records throughout the process such as minutes of meetings, the reasoning behind any decisions made, who made those decisions and any departure from established procedures being approved by senior staff not directly involved in the process. Maintaining detailed records can be a way of proving that the process followed was legitimate if any questions or complaints are raised later (ICAC Dec 1996).

### 4.4.1 Records maintenance

Incoming Material:

- Incoming emails will be saved in the ARP inbox as well as an additional SharePoint folder only accessible to those whom have provided COI forms.
- Any letters received will be stamped with date and time of receipt and the original placed on file.

Outgoing Material:

- Copies of sent emails will be saved in the ARP inbox, as well as added to an additional SharePoint folder only accessible to the personnel authorised by Coordinator ARP.
- For any other outgoing material, a copy will be retained on file and will indicate the method of dispatch (i.e. post, courier, etc.)

### 4.4.2 Roles and responsibilities

DBCA has the overall responsibility for coordinating the ARP and the achievement of the program objectives and outcomes. The funding application process seeks applications from eligible Aboriginal organisations to undertake land and sea management activities across the State.

The Assessment Panel roles are outlined in section 3.1.

#### **Assessment Panel Chair**

The Assessment Panel Chair, in addition to general Assessment Panel responsibilities include:

- speaking on behalf of the recommendations of the Assessment Panel if required.

#### **Coordinator Policy and Projects**

The Coordinator Policy and Projects will provide the ARP team with leadership and be of sufficient standing to report on the program to the Minister for the Environment. Responsibilities include:

- oversees the development of an assessment process;
- oversees processes meet the Probity Guidelines;
- manages the preparation of documentation;
- contributes to assessment of applications;
- provides advice on the resources required to complete the assessment process; and



### **Coordinator Aboriginal Ranger Program**

The Coordinator ARP will:

- complete the eligibility check
- support the development of an assessment process;
- liaise with applicants prior to, and subsequent to, submission of applications to provide information and clarify application and assessment processes;
- engage and manage the Assessment Panel meetings;
- contribute to the preparation of documentation;
- ensure probity guidelines and principles are observed;
- provide advice on the resources required to complete the assessment process; and
- liaise with and manage the input of other government agencies and DBCA staff as required.

### **Executive Officer**

An Executive Officer from Parks and Visitor Services Division will provide support during the funding application and the assessment process. The responsibilities may be shared by more than one person and include:

- support the eligibility check process
- provide regular reports to Coordinator ARP;
- manage the preparation of the summary report;
- provide administrative support;
- maintain filing;
- handle/record queries;
- manage the desired level of security for all proceedings and documents; and
- assist with negotiations and discussions with other government agencies.

### **Probity Auditor**

A Probity Auditor will be appointed prior to the closing date for applications. The auditor will provide independent probity advisory services to the assessment process and undertake compliance audits to confirm that agreed processes are followed throughout the process. Essential tasks include, but are not limited to:

- providing reasonable assurance that the procedures adopted in the submission of applications and evaluation process are fair and equitable and that probity of the process is independently validated;
- monitoring and reporting to DBCA through the Coordinator ARP that the evaluation process and procedures have been followed and that the outcome is capable of being independently validated;
- providing assurance to all interested applicants that appropriate processes were fully adhered;
- providing guidance to the Coordinator ARP as to how unforeseen issues could be resolved;
- attending evaluation panel meetings where relevant;
- attending applicant meetings and presentations (if required);
- monitoring communication during the period between submission of applications and final decision; and
- Identifying areas where efficiencies may be adopted in the process.

It is important to note that the Probity Auditor is not part of the Assessment Panel but is an external consultant acting as an independent observer of the process. The Probity Auditor will not be involved in the assessment or evaluation of any applications.

### **Other ARP officers**

Other ARP officers support current ARP funded ranger groups. ARP officers are still permitted to have their normal contact and provide support services to existing groups when it is regarding their current funded projects. During the opening of the round, officers should direct any queries specifically related to Round 9 as per the process outlined in section 4.3.6 *Dealing with applicants*.

ARP officers can only provide applicants with information about where to find the Round 9 Grant Guidelines and other published information and how to apply. ARP officers will need to be conscious of maintaining relationships and will need to explain the reasons why they cannot provide specific advice when a round is open is to ensure that the process upholds the key principles of transparency, accountability and impartiality. These key principles are the foundation for the continuation of the ARP. A detailed internal guidance document has been developed to ensure a consistent approach.

## 4.5 Principle 5 – Value for money

Obtaining value for money is enhanced when there is open competition. Impartial, open and competitive processes are an important stepping stone in achieving value for money (ICAC – Dec 1996). In line with the Western Australian Grants Administration Guidelines 2025, it is not about choosing the lowest cost, but about showing that funding will deliver clear, measurable benefits and avoid future costs whilst ensuring effective and efficient use of public resources.

Value for money is about balancing cost, quality, and outcomes to achieve the best overall result which means that applications that are the cheapest may not always provide the best value for money. Value for money also considers the differences in costs of doing business across the State. Value for money is always a key component of the grant assessment process.

### **Advertising**

Advertising coverage should be considered appropriate when DBCA as the coordinating agency is satisfied that the reach and penetration of advertising is sufficient to ensure there is minimal opportunity for potential applicants to be unaware of the program.

### **Additional funding**

If carry over from Phase 2 becomes available and is approved for expenditure in Phase 3 or if additional funding becomes available through Phase 3, the Assessment Panel reserves the right to further recommend funding of projects initially not funded in a priority order and as approved by the Minister for the Environment. This ensures a transparent process for allocation of additional funding has occurred.