NSW Environmental Trust regional workshops

Albury 13 November 2018

What is the NSW Environmental Trust?

What is the Trust?

The NSW Environmental Trust is an independent statutory body of the NSW Government to fund (via grants) a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the NSW environment.

However, we also engage with community, government and industry to:

- identify priority environmental issues;
- research and analyse environmental and community needs;
- design, deliver and evaluate programs;
- build the capacity of the community; and
- prove new and better ways of doing things.

Budget of approximately $80 million in 2018/19

Who is the Trust?

The Trust is a Board of five people.

- Minister for the Environment
- Chief Executive OEH
- Representative from NSW Treasury
- Representative from Local Government NSW
- Representative from Nature Conservation Council of NSW

They meet 3 – 4 times a year to approve grants

The Trust is supported by secretariat staff - hosted by OEH.

What is it trying to achieve?

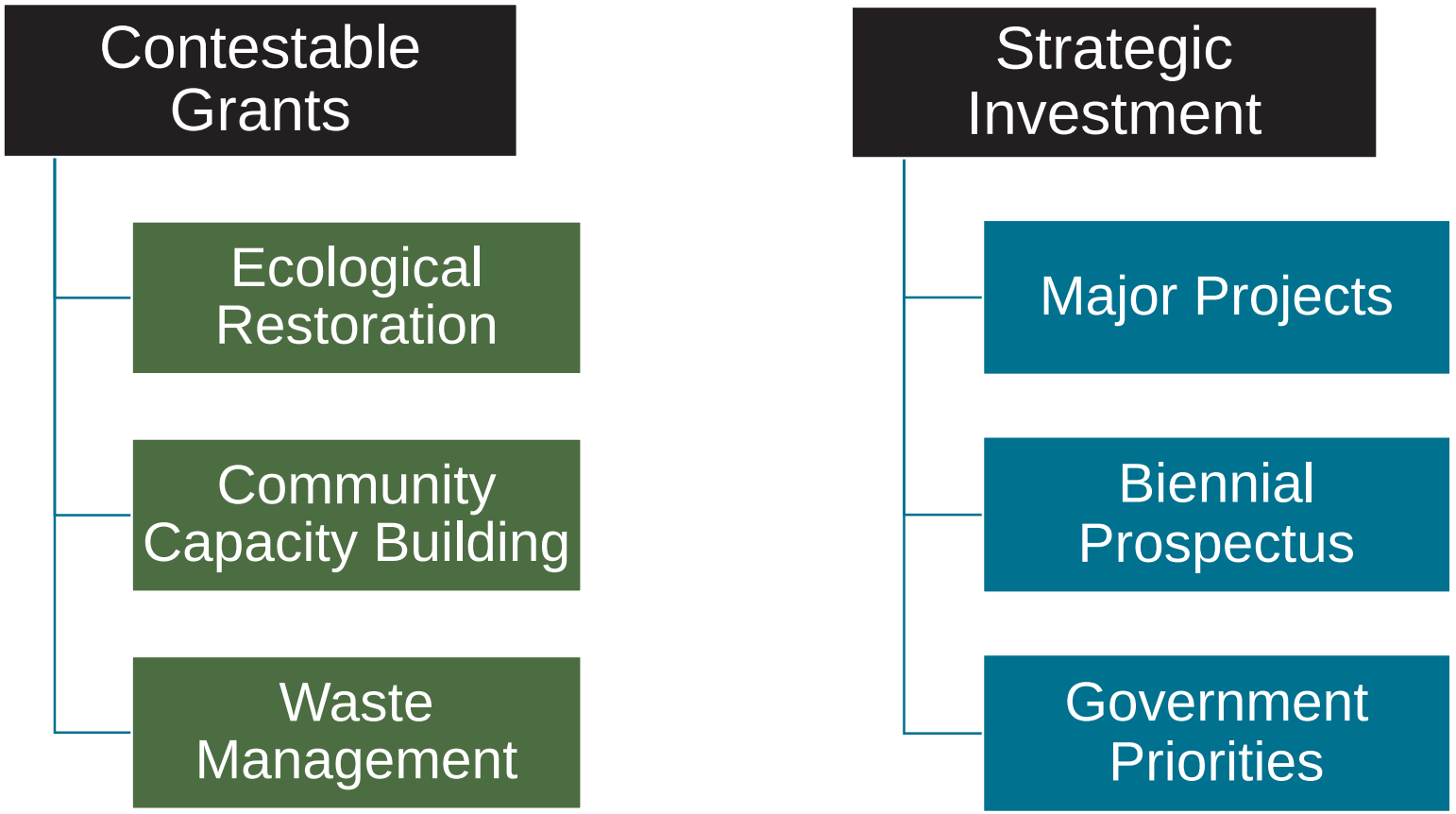
The Trust has some very specific objectives under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998* to:

- support restoration and rehabilitation projects that will prevent or reduce environmental degradation of any kind across NSW
- promote research into environmental problems of any kind
- promote environmental education and encourage the development of education programs that will increase public awareness of environmental issues
- fund environmental community groups
- fund the acquisition of National Parks
- fund the declaration of Marine Parks
- promote waste avoidance, resource recovery and waste management
- fund the purchase of water entitlements or the purpose of increasing environmental flows and rehabilitating major wetlands

Funding Principles

- Must target actions that actually fix problems
- Break inertia to action (limited resources or capacity)
- Encourage innovation, proof of concept, niche filling, early intervention of emerging issues, etc
- Support delivery of best practice activity and action
- High priority given to co-contributions, strategic collaboration, and longevity of outcomes
- Must meet the objectives of the Trust Act and priorities of NSW Government
- Not for core business / cost shifting / replacement funding / ongoing maintenance, or to fix policy or program failings.

How does it achieve these objectives?



Highlights of Trust Funding in 2017-18

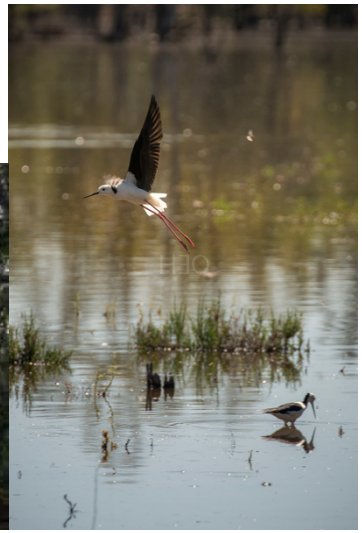
More than **$52 million** was provided for the delivery of environmental projects by a broad range of NSW community groups, businesses, schools and government agencies.

- Over **$14 million** invested in 27 strategic major projects
- Over **$38 million** was awarded through 23 contestable grant programs
  - Nearly 1000 applications and expressions of interest processed
  - 225 new contestable grant projects approved
  - Over 500 grant payments processed
- The funded projects will **rehabilitate** natural habitats, **reduce** waste, produce innovative **research** solutions and **enhance** environmental education and **community** engagement.

NSW
GOVERNMENT
River Connections Program

River Connections Program overview

- River Connections is a $10m over 11 years contestable grants program seeking to improve health outcomes for inland rivers in New South Wales.
- The program encourages consortium based projects to develop/trial new innovative approaches/techniques to integrated river management.
- The program aims to address declining river health at a landscape scale and encourages an collaborative approach.



Objectives

Three main objectives:

- To establish partnerships that align a range of river users with diverse values into a common purpose to improve river health, that will continue beyond the program and its funding.
- To trial new approaches or combinations of approaches to integrated river management and connectivity that deliver improved health outcomes for inland rivers.
- To create an incentive for coordinated activities that contribute to improved river health.

Program design parameters

- Contestable grants program focussed on NSW inland rivers.
- Over 10 years: with The Trust and consortia jointly funding the consortia
- Co-contributions from consortia cash AND in-kind.
- Contributes to Trust Objects - restoration and rehabilitation, research, environmental education.
- Complementary/additionality (proof of concept) – no funding activities that organisations have responsibility.

Who can apply?

- Consortiums - two or more individuals
  - community groups/organisations
  - not-for-profit organisations
  - Local Aboriginal Land Councils.
  - Government – local, state, commonwealth
  - Universities
  - Land mangers
  - Philanthropic co-investors
- Consortiums that comprise a range of river users with diverse values to ensure that integration of diverse outcomes can occur.

Eligibility and scale

Funding available

- Applicants can apply for grants of between $5 – $9 million
- One to two projects will be awarded
- Projects are expected to run over 10 years
- Stage 1 of the application process comprises an Expression of Interest (EOI).
- Stage 2 – invitation only – full business plan - selected applicants can apply for seed funding of up to $30,000 to develop a detailed business plan for consideration.

Application Process

Stage 1- Expression of interest

- **Conduct** regional information workshops
- **Launch** the program
- **Receive e**xpression of interest
- **Subcommittee assesses** and recommend applications
- **Approve** Trust Secretary shortlists applications and approve seed funding grants
- **Communicate A**pplicants notified

Stage 2- Full application – invitation only

- **Sign S**eed funding grant agreements
- **Receive** Full business plans
- **Subcommittee** assess and recommends projects
- **Approval** NSW Environmental Trust to approve recommended business plans
- **Communicate** Applicants notified
- **Acquit** Seed funding grants

Stage 3 - Implementation

- **Sign G**rant agreement
- **Grant Management**
- Annual implementation plans
- progress reports,
- annual reports submitted and endorsed
- **Review** Mid-term review of the program
- **Evaluate** program and send NSW Environmental Trust for noting
- **Acquit** Grants program

Potential program activities

AREA	ACTIVITY
River health	• Increasing connectivity and fish passage • Improving in-stream structure and habitat • Reducing exotic species • Reducing native fish entrainment to off-river systems • Reducing impacts from releases from impoundments
Riparian, floodplain and wetland health	• Native riparian revegetation • Exclusion of livestock and pest animals from waterbodies and margins • Reducing erosion of stream banks and sedimentation of waterholes • Complementary activities linked to environmental flows • Connectivity of wetlands/floodplain
Partnerships	• Engaging stakeholders and river users to maximise environmental, economic, cultural and social opportunities to improve river health • Increasing education and awareness of river health • Community engagement/education and collaboration • Connecting with others to communicate stories, successes/ failures/ lessons learnt and experience

Assessment criteria

Stage 1 – EOI

- Project objectives
- Consortium and stakeholders
- monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Risk management
- Dissemination
- Value

Stage 2 – Business Plan

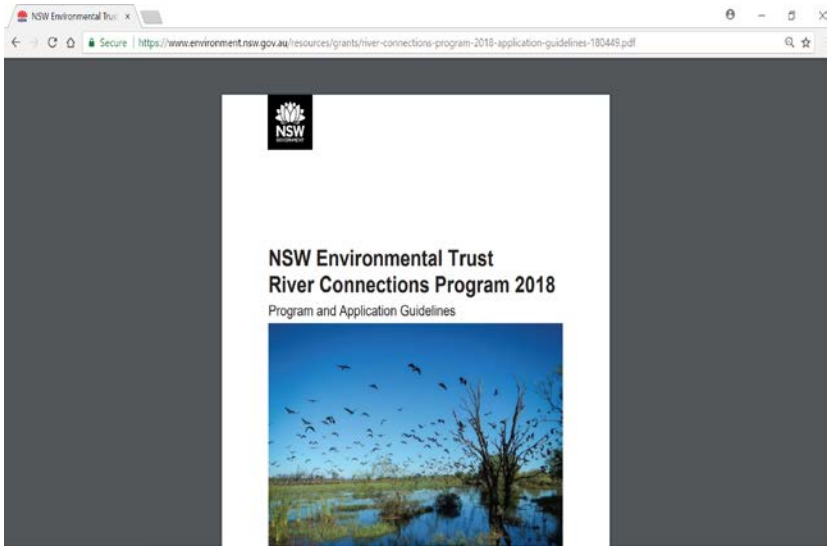
- Proven environmental needs and tangible environmental benefits
- Consortium capacity to deliver
- Planning and methodical approach
- Value for money

Where can I get more information?

- Program Guidelines and application forms can be found/downloaded from the NSW Environmental Trust website at:

https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/river-connections.htm

- Contact the Environmental Trust on (02) 8837 6093 or email info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au



Successful partnerships

Why partnerships?

- Bring together all the relevant players
- Share knowledge, skills and expertise
- Leverage additional investment (both cash and in-kind)
- Increase ownership of project across a range of organisations
- Reduce risk to any individual organisation

Not without challenges

- Lead partner (organisation)
- Partners v Stakeholders
- Who makes decisions?
- Partner agreements / communication mechanisms / regular reporting
- Adaptive management essential

Examples of successful partnerships funded by the Trust

- **Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance**

Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance (lead)
Bellingen Shire Council
Bellinger Landcare
Center for Ecological Learning
Coffs Harbour LALC
Coffs Harbour City Council
Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare
Dorrigo Plateau LALC
EnviTE Environmental
Never Never Catchment Group
Gondwana Rainforest WHA
Nature Conservation Council
North Coast LLS
National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW OEH
OzGreen
Yandaarra

'Jaliigirr landscape connections in the Great Eastern Ranges'

10 year project – First 6 years assisted through $525,400 ET grant

'Jaliigirr koala habitat restoration - Hydes Creek to Bongil Bongil'

3 year project $99,500

Examples of successful partnerships funded by the Trust

- **Jiggi Catchment Landcare**

  Jiggi Catchment Landcare Group (lead)

  Rous Water

  National Parks and Wildlife Service

  Lismore City Council

  Caniaba Landcare

  Mulvena Road Landcare

  Whian Whian Landcare

  Friends of the Koala

  Doroughby Environmental Education Centre

'Landcare expanding high conservation value GER habitats & corridors'

10 year project – First 6 years assisted through $550,912 ET grant

'Rehabilitating high conservation value habitats and corridors'

6 year $250,000 ET grant

Examples of successful partnerships funded by the Trust

- **Rivers of Carbon**
  Australian River Restoration Centre (lead)
  Greening Australia
  Local Land Services – South East
  Upper Lachlan Landcare
  Bush Heritage Australia

'Rivers of Carbon – Goulburn district river linkages'

10 year project – First 6 years assisted through $592,468 ET grant

'Rivers of carbon - burra banks, bush and biodiversity'

3 year project $99,954

'Rivers of Carbon - Yass River Linkages - Stage 2'

3 year project $99,954

'Rivers of carbon - Breadalbane biodiversity linkages'

3 year project $99,950

More Information

Website: www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 8837 6093

Email: info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Any questions?