



# BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GRANTING GUIDELINES

## OVERVIEW

Australia is endowed with a unique environment that is home to highly distinct species, with around 90 per cent of our mammals, frogs, reptiles and plants endemic to our continent. Australia is one of the world's 17 'mega-diverse' countries with the greatest species diversity in the world. Victoria is home to many of our iconic Australian species and we have a responsibility to protect their habitats so they can thrive for the benefit of current and future generations.

Conserving and managing our natural environment has intrinsic, social, economic and cultural value, such as providing health and wellbeing through cultural connection and recreation, clean air and water, productive landscapes and carbon sequestration. However, Victoria's biodiversity is generally poor and native species continue to face major challenges including habitat loss, from urban development, invasive species and climate change.

The Ross Trust recognises the challenges to conserving Victoria's biodiversity and protecting our unique native species. To contribute to addressing this issue, the Trust is working towards a desired change that is focussed on conserving and building resilience in Victoria's land and marine environments. This desired change will assist with guiding the Trust's work and those seeking funding, to target and focus our work together, towards common outcomes.

The Ross Trust's Biodiversity Conservation funding priority supports increased and coordinated biodiversity conservation actions and increased community support for conservation. It is informed by the *United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15*, knowledge from our grantees, published research and sector expertise.

The original corpus of the Ross Trust comprised the whole of the Estate of Mr Roy Everard Ross who died in 1970. Mr Ross left a portfolio of assets for the Trust comprising shares, real property and a quarry, today operating as Hillview Quarries. The quarry is located on the Mornington Peninsula and as such the Trust considers its continued support for this region, as one of its priorities.



## BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION DESIRED CHANGE

Victoria's biodiversity is conserved, protected and valued by all as part of a healthy and resilient environment.

## LEVERS FOR CHANGE

Through a comprehensive approach of reviewing research and expert consultations, the Ross Trust has identified three levers for change that support and contribute to achieving the Biodiversity Conservation Desired Change:

- **Build collaborations and partnerships** – coordinate planning and action to conserve Victoria's biodiversity.
- **Build organisational capacity** – support organisational sustainability and equip organisations and communities to advocate for the protection and preservation of Victoria's biodiversity.
- **Improve public awareness and education** – so that Victorians understand the value of biodiversity and act to conserve and protect it.

## FUNDING APPROACHES

The Ross Trust has identified the following funding approaches which will be given preference when considering and reviewing grant applications:

- coordinated and strategic land/water/marine management projects that improve habitats and benefit multiple species, particularly those listed as threatened
- projects that conserve ecological areas at risk
- Indigenous land management projects
- projects that abate the effects of major pressures on biodiversity including habitat loss, invasive species and climate change
- new or emerging conservation approaches to land and water management across tenures to increase biodiversity conservation, for example: conservation finance or research projects at translation phase
- projects that increase biodiversity conservation actions by the community, for example: restoration activities; data collection, monitoring and reporting; programs that increase biodiversity conservation education and actions in local communities and schools; and/or programs that target landholders to increase biodiversity conservation actions
- capacity building support for strategic needs, for example: conservation action planning, communications, skills development or data management
- community-led advocacy to improve the public and/or policy dialogue for conservation
- activities that support the collection and open-source application of data for strategic conservation actions
- dissemination of knowledge or learnings with stakeholders and other communities of interest
- initiatives that are scientific and evidence-based with measurable outcomes and opportunities to share data.

## ELIGIBILITY

The Ross Trust can only consider funding requests from organisations that:

- clearly demonstrate alignment to one or more of the Biodiversity Conservation levers for change as outlined in the Biodiversity Conservation Theory of Change diagram in these guidelines
- are one of the following eligible entities:
  - Incorporated Association
  - Company Limited by Guarantee
  - Indigenous Corporation, Association or Cooperative
  - Cooperative
  - Victorian state government schools
- operate in Victoria or who will use the grant for the benefit of Victorians
- have an Australian Business Number
- are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (Victorian state government schools are exempt).\*

## HOW WE FUND

Type of grants available:

- **Smart Grants:** up to \$40,000 per year for up to three years.

Organisations can only have one active Smart Grant at any one time. For universities, the Trust will only accept one funding request for Biodiversity Conservation at a time.

- **Advocacy Grants:** up to \$50,000 per year for up to three years (by invitation only)
- **Challenge and Change Grants:** \$40,000 to \$100,000 per year for up to three years (by invitation only).

The Ross Trust undertakes research and analysis to understand the field and relevant issues for the Biodiversity Conservation funding priority. We partner with organisations whose mission and activities align with the Trust's Biodiversity Conservation granting priorities.

Challenge and Change and Advocacy Grants are therefore available by invitation only and may be invited throughout the year.

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\* Organisations that are not registered with the ACNC but are otherwise eligible to apply for a grant, will need to upload their governance documents and latest financial statements as part of their grant application.

# ROSS TRUST THEORY OF CHANGE

## BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION



Desired Change: Victoria's biodiversity is conserved, protected and valued by all as part of a healthy and resilient environment

### CONTEXT

The outlook for Victoria's biodiversity is generally poor, with native species facing challenges such as habitat loss, from urban development, invasive species and climate change.

Lever for achieving change include:

- building collaborations and partnerships to coordinate conservation planning and action
- building organisational capacity to sustain organisations and advocate for conservation
- improving public awareness and education so Victorians can act to conserve our biodiversity.

### LEVERS FOR CHANGE

#### Build collaborations and partnerships

Increase collaboration for conserving planning and action

Coordinate conservation planning and actions

#### Build organisational capacity

Improve organisational skills, systems or practices

Improve organisational effectiveness

Improve capacity to advocate

#### Improve public awareness and education

Increase awareness and engagement

Greater concern for biodiversity conservation

Increase biodiversity conservation education

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

Improved strategic land and water management practices

Stronger more sustainable sector

Improved public dialogue, policy and regulation

Increased actions to conserve biodiversity

### INDICATORS OF CHANGE

- Increased long-term partnerships
- Increased proportion or population of native flora/fauna
- Improved extent/quality/quantity/connections of habitats
- Improved control or eradication of invasive species
- Increased Indigenous land/water practices
- Improved staff skills (eg. conservation planning and measurement, advocacy or communications)
- Increased communications activities
- Increased community and/or landholder engagement (# of people)
- Increased proportion of ecological areas covered by protections
- Improved public and/or policy dialogue
- Increased delivery of biodiversity conservation education programs
- Increased understanding of biodiversity conservation value in communities
- Increased conservation actions (# of people/volunteers and activities)

Greater interconnectivity

