



ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM 2018-19 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The assessment process and methodology for expressions of interest (EOI) under the Aboriginal Ranger Program will be guided by this document.

1. Overview of the program

The State Government has developed a \$20 million Aboriginal Ranger Program to protect the environment and leverage the social and economic benefits that employment provides in regional and remote areas. The Program will employ Aboriginal people as rangers to undertake land and sea management activities across the State.

The work of Aboriginal rangers will include activities such as:

- biodiversity monitoring and research
- traditional knowledge transfer
- fire management
- cultural site management
- feral animal and weed management
- cultural awareness and immersion experiences for visitors
- guided welcome to country tours and/or talks for visitors
- management of visitors or tourists and tourism assets
- education programs and mentoring.

The Program will also assist Aboriginal communities to identify land management priorities and opportunities, build community and organisational capacity and invest in direct training opportunities.

The Aboriginal Ranger Program is led by the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal organisations with support from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and across government. The Program will support Aboriginal groups and businesses and will be focused on new jobs for rangers across tenures, but inclusive of national parks and reserves, Indigenous Protected Areas, other Aboriginal tenures and Unallocated Crown land (UCL).

The objectives of the Program are:

- To work with Aboriginal communities to develop and implement a successful and sustainable Aboriginal Ranger employment program to provide new jobs, protect

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the environment and provide social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people in regional and remote areas.

- To provide training for Aboriginal people to develop their skills in conservation and land management, tourism and guided experiences to better meet the demand for ranger work.
- To scale up and expand the Aboriginal Ranger Program by leveraging funds from other State and Commonwealth agencies, industry and philanthropic groups.
- To increase Aboriginal ranger employment within DBCA that is additional, but complementary, to the Aboriginal Ranger Program.

The outcomes of the Program will include the following:

- New jobs for Aboriginal people looking after country.
- Enhanced cross-cultural engagement and exchange between Aboriginal people, the broader community and government.
- Increased capacity within the Aboriginal community to undertake land and sea management and tourism operations.
- Strengthened capacity of Aboriginal organisations to facilitate and provide a range of services enabling ongoing employment and income generation opportunities.
- Enhanced protection of cultural and biodiversity values through land management activities undertaken by Aboriginal rangers.
- Empowered Aboriginal communities that can identify and address cultural and environmental priorities, leading to more resilient communities and broader health, educational and social benefits.
- Empowered Aboriginal communities that can jointly manage conservation reserves within DBCA.

A total of \$8.45 million was allocated to 13 Aboriginal organisations across the State under Round 1 of the Program.

A total of \$9 million is available under Round 2 of the program for multi-year projects up to three years.

Expressions of Interest to the Aboriginal Ranger Program were called for on 30 November 2018. Aboriginal Ranger Program *Expression of Interest Guidelines 2018-19* (the Guidelines) and an application form were available for download at www.dbca.wa.gov.au/aboriginalrangerprogram.

2. Internal administrative procedures

Meetings with applicants

All meetings with applicants are to have in attendance the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator or Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services and at least one other person. The meetings are to be based on the principle that they are for discussion purposes only and any request for information or clarification from proponents is to be addressed through written form with only written responses being binding.

All agreed items discussed and actions arising from meetings will be recorded including:

- meeting details

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

A file note is to be maintained of all meetings held.

Records Maintenance

Dealing With applicants - Correspondence (General)

- Copies of all incoming and outgoing material will be held on Objective and/or in the nominated file.

Incoming Material

- Original will be stamped with date and time of receipt and record of file number.
- Original of material will be placed on file.

Outgoing Material

- Copy will be retained on file.
- The copy on file will indicate the method of dispatch (i.e. post, courier, etc.)
- All outgoing material will contain the file reference number.

3. Applicant enquiries protocol

Dealing with applicants – Enquiries

All enquiries from applicants will be required to be submitted in writing. All written enquiries will comply with the procedure regarding 'Correspondence (General)'.

The Enquiries Protocol requires that all enquiries by applicants be submitted in writing to the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator. The Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator will accept verbal enquiries but may require an enquiry to be made in writing at his discretion.

The original of the applicant's enquiry will be placed in the relevant file by the Executive Officers after updating the Enquiries Register. The Executive Officers will, thereafter, prepare an initial draft response and will arrange for it to be reviewed by the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator.

All responses to the registered applicants will be in writing, signed by the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator or Executive Officers.

The Executive Officers will update the Enquirer Register with the response action.

The Executive Officers will produce a written report as appropriate to the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator, detailing the enquiries received and action taken. Where the enquiry is deemed by the Executive Officers to be confidential in nature, this enquiry shall be immediately referred to the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator for action.

Dealing with applicants - General advice

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In accordance with the Enquiry Protocol above, each enquiry received from applicants will be reviewed by the Executive Officers 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 Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator and Probity Auditor.

Where the enquiry is agreed to be of a general nature, a 'General Advice to all Registered Applicants' will be released to all applicants as soon as possible.

Where the enquiry is determined as 'General', the applicant raising the enquiry will be advised accordingly and given the opportunity to either confirm or refute the determination made by the Executive Officers.

All 'General Advice to Registered Applicants' will be issued in numeric sequence and signed by the Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator. All advice will go to the Probity Auditor prior to issue to registered applicants. A Register, summarising the details of material issued, will be maintained.

4. Office security

General

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 Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator to ensure that reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of information by Government agencies and regional managers of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to which applications are referred.

In referring applications to Government agency staff and DBCA regional managers, confidential information will be redacted.

All office files will be established in accordance with 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.

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 Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator.

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

Computer Security

The computer environments containing confidential procurement information at DBCA shall be secured and accessed only by authorised individuals with their own

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passwords. The system administrator shall ensure individuals only have access to areas of information that are appropriate to the roles assigned to them.

5. Confidentiality

All applications are considered confidential and are not to be disclosed prior to the completion of the assessment process.

Each person having access to confidential assessment information shall sign a confidentiality agreement before being granted access to the information.

All members of the Assessment Panel, and any other persons having authorised access to confidential information, are to sign a declaration document.

6. Probity

In the interests of all parties involved, a probity auditor has been appointed to determine whether the process is conducted according to the Guidelines and to provide a level of independent assurance that the process has been undertaken with due regard to legislative obligations, codes of ethics and conduct and the Guidelines.

The probity auditor addresses accepted principles of probity relating to:

- confidentiality and conflict of interest
- transparency of the process
- accountability
- value for money.

The probity auditor provides advice to the Assessment Panel and Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator in relation to these issues and applicants can also discuss any concerns they have directly with the Probity Auditor.

7. Establishment and role of Assessment Panel

An Assessment Panel comprising representatives from DBCA has been established. The members of the panel represent a broad range of skills and experience related to Aboriginal rangers and are as follows:

- Executive Director of Parks and Visitor Services Division (Panel Chair - Voting)
- Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator (Voting)
- Manager Aboriginal Participation and Involvement (Voting)
- Assistant Director Science (Voting)
- Wellington District Manager (Voting)
- Probity Auditor (Independent - Non-voting)
- Executive Officers (Non-voting)

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8. Procedure for assessment

The procedure for assessment is as follows:



Receipt of applications

All applications to the Aboriginal Ranger Program will be sent an email confirming receipt of their application. Receipt of application letters will be sent by the Executive Officers.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting of applicants will be based on an evaluation against the following Assessment Criteria identified in the Guidelines:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		WEIGHTING
1	Delivers clear land and/or sea management outcomes in areas with significant environmental and/or cultural values and/or an identified conservation or land management need	25%
2	Delivers social and/or cultural outcomes	25%
3	Demonstrates capacity to deliver and increase the capacity of Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake land and sea management which adds value to the local community where the project is located	25%

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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		WEIGHTING
4	Develops partnerships which leverage additional resources to complement the delivery and/or expansion of the Aboriginal Ranger Program and provides opportunities for revenue generation	15%
5	Demonstrates the ability to monitor and report on outcomes achieved and expenditure acquitted	10%
	TOTAL	100%

In shortlisting against the Assessment Criteria, applications will be categorised according to new/emerging and established groups and each category will be assessed separately. Applications will be scored against each criterion using the scoring legend zero to nine identified in Section 9 Assessment Methodology. An average score for each criterion will be determined by combining the individual scores. A total score will be determined by aggregating the combined scores for each criterion.

The top 50 percent of each category in each Aboriginal representative body region will progress to detailed assessment by the Assessment Panel (see Assessment below).

Comments may be provided which can be used in providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants as well as to inform evaluation by the Assessment Panel.

Shortlisting will be undertaken by the Executive Officers. The Executive Officer/s will identify the relevant State Government agencies to which the shortlisted applications will be referred and any confidential information not to be disclosed.

Referral of applications

The Assessment Panel will seek advice from within DBCA and from relevant Government agencies on the shortlisted applications. 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.

Shortlisted applications will be referred to the Assessment Panel, relevant Government agencies and DBCA regional managers immediately once shortlisted. The Aboriginal Ranger Program Coordinator is responsible for referring applications.

Advice received from DBCA regional managers and relevant Government agencies will be referred to the Assessment Panel for consideration.

Assessment

Shortlisted applications will be categorised according to new/emerging and established groups and each category will be assessed separately against the following Assessment Criteria identified in the Guidelines:

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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		WEIGHTING
1	Delivers clear land and/or sea management outcomes in areas with significant environmental and/or cultural values and/or an identified conservation or land management need	25%
2	Delivers social and/or cultural outcomes	25%
3	Demonstrates capacity to deliver and increase the capacity of Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake land and sea management which adds value to the local community where the project is located	25%
4	Develops partnerships which leverage additional resources to complement the delivery and/or expansion of the Aboriginal Ranger Program and provides opportunities for revenue generation	15%
5	Demonstrates the ability to monitor and report on outcomes achieved and expenditure acquitted	10%
TOTAL		100%

Applicants should address each criterion as part of completing the Expression of Interest application form. Failure to satisfactorily address all the criteria or demonstrate how they will be addressed prior to the allocation of funding may result in the application being considered non-compliant.

The following will be considered in the assessment:

- Demonstrates integration and the potential to achieve regional outcomes
- Demonstrates a pathway to self-sustainability
- Demonstrates career pathways to employment in land and sea management as rangers
- Demonstrates proven past performance in meeting objectives where other funding has been received for Aboriginal ranger work.

The Assessment Panel will consider the total scores of applications for each category. Based on the total scores, at least one project will be recommended for each Aboriginal representative body region. The mix of established and new and emerging ranger groups across all Aboriginal representative body regions and female rangers will be considered in making a final recommendation to the Minister for Environment. A total of \$9 million worth of applications will be referred to the Minister for Environment.

Applicants will also be required to meet the eligibility requirements of the Program, including demonstrated support of the traditional owners for the project location; comply with the conditions in the Guidelines; and have appropriate insurances¹ in order to be recommended as suitable for funding.

The assessment will be made in accordance with the Assessment Methodology identified below (see Section 9).

¹ DBCA may request additional insurances if they are not provided but are relevant to the project.

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The advice received from State Government agencies and DBCA regional managers and any relevant additional information available to DBCA will be used in the assessment.

Assessment Panel may seek clarification from applicants

The Assessment Panel may request that an applicant amend their project, including as a result of further consultation or to consolidate the project with other similar or complementary projects. The Assessment Panel may also contact applicants to seek clarification about their application and/or request evidence in support of any declaration made in the application.

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

All communication seeking clarification from applicants will be discussed with the Probity Auditor.

Recommendation to Minister for Environment

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

Notification of applicants

All applicants will be informed in writing of the status of their applications at the completion of the assessment process. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided the opportunity to receive feedback to on their applications.

9. Assessment methodology

DBCA is using a competitive process to allocate funding under the Aboriginal Ranger Program that allows for applicants to use their own initiative to develop applications that will meet the outcomes of the Program and the aspirations of Aboriginal organisations and communities.

In assessing applications, all information requested in the 2018-19 EOI, and any relevant additional information available to DBCA, provided by other Government agencies, or provided by applicants in response to the EOI, will be taken into account. A scoring system will be used to assess the applications, including the shortlisting process. 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 will be met.
- 3 Less than satisfactory understanding or capability, limited confidence that Assessment Criteria will be met.
- 5 Satisfactory understanding or capability, reasonably confident that Assessment Criteria will be met.
- 7 Good understanding or capability, confident that Assessment Criteria will be met.
- 9 Excellent understanding or capability, complete confidence that Assessment Criteria will be met.

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

In assessing shortlisted applications, all members of the Assessment Panel will provide an individual score against each of the assessment criterion. An average score for each criterion will be determined by combining scores of each member of the Assessment Panel. The aggregate of these average scores will form a total score for each applicant, which will be used in the final assessment of applications.