

Our Catchments Our Communities Leadership Development Grants 2026

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Eligibility

What is an early to mid-career individual?

In the context of this grants program, an early to mid-career individual is a natural resource management practitioner or professional who is building independence and leadership capability, typically taking or increasing responsibility for projects, partnerships, and people.

Leadership is not limited to formal management roles. The program supports people who are developing their leadership potential, and many past recipients did not have formal leadership titles or roles. You can demonstrate impact through collaboration, project involvement, influence within your network, community engagement, or your potential for future leadership.

I'm a landholder or environmental volunteer. Can I apply?

Yes. All applicants, including landholders and volunteers, need to work with or be affiliated with a group or organisation in the natural resource management sector.

Activities and budget

Will applicants be required to match funding?

No, applicants are not required to match funding.

Can I apply for a grant to study at university?

You can apply for funding to complete a stand-alone course or module facilitated by a university institution, but you cannot apply for a grant to complete modules or courses which contribute to your academic/tertiary degree at university.

An exception for the Aboriginal Leadership category is the National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research Innovation (NIKERI) Institute, or a similar institution that specifically provides higher education units such as those listed on [Indigenous Higher Education Units | National Indigenous Australians Agency \(niaa.gov.au\)](#).

I would like to apply for a course/program, but I won't know if I'm accepted until after the application deadline. Can I still apply for a grant?

Yes. In this situation, you should make it clear in your application that the success of your enrolment is not yet known. Please contact us to discuss the status of your enrolment by emailing ourcatchments.ourcommunities@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Is it possible to change what I want to do after I have received my grant?

Yes, it is possible to vary your initiative/project after you have received funding, although we request that the original intent of your grant is maintained. Any changes must be discussed with, and approved by, the appropriate DEECA officer before they can be included as part of the grants program. Please contact ourcatchments.ourcommunities@deeca.vic.gov.au for more information.

How long do successful applicants have to complete their project?

Applicants will normally have 12 months from receipt of payment to spend allocated funds.

What kinds of leadership development activities have been funded in the past?

The program is designed to support activities that strengthen professional skills and leadership capability in integrated catchment management.

Past projects have included:

- Leadership-related training courses
- Technical training courses that allowed the applicant to lead an ICM project
- Structured mentoring
- Research (noting that equipment will not be funded)
- Funding for a small ICM project that creates an opportunity for the recipient's leadership development
- Travel and administrative costs associated with the activities above

Can mentoring costs include an allowance or payment to my mentor?

Yes. Mentoring is an eligible activity, and costs associated with it can be included and will be considered by the assessment panel in the context of your application.

Submitting an application

Can I submit an application on behalf of someone else?

No, applications submitted on behalf of another individual will not be considered.

Can I apply for more than one grant, or under more than one grant category?

Yes, you can submit multiple applications, but you can only receive one grant. You must submit a separate form for each application.

Are joint or collaborative applications allowed?

No. The program provides funding to individuals only. Organisations and groups cannot apply. Individuals may collaborate during their activities, but the application itself must be submitted by one person and can't be dependent on another application also being successful.

How do I submit additional or larger attachments?

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application, you can email them to grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au quoting your application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

For larger attachments, we recommend reducing their size if possible (i.e. the attachment doesn't become blurry or difficult to read) – it makes it easier for the assessors.

Can I edit my application after I submit?

No, you cannot edit an application after submission in the online portal. If you need to submit supporting documents that could not be uploaded, you can email them to grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au with your application number.

Can I attach extra documents after the deadline?

All attachments must be provided before the closing time. If you encounter technical issues, additional documents can be emailed to the [grants team](#) before the deadline, quoting your application number. Late applications or documents cannot be accepted.

Notification, funding agreements, and payments

When will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

All applicants will be notified by email after the assessment and approval process is completed.

Is it possible to change what I want to do after I have received my grant?

Yes, it is possible to vary your proposal after you have received funding, although we would request that the original intent of your grant is maintained. Any changes must be discussed with, and approved by, the appropriate DEECA officer via ourcatchments.ourcommunities@deeca.vic.gov.au as soon as possible. You are ineligible to spend grant funds on any activities not outlined in your application until changes have been approved.

Will I receive feedback if I'm unsuccessful?

Unsuccessful applicants may contact the department to receive feedback on their application.

When will the grant be paid?

Payment is made in one lump sum at the start of the activity, after the funding agreement has been signed by both parties and all documentation needed to set up the grant (such as payment details) has been provided.

Do I need an ABN to receive funding?

No. If you don't have an ABN, you will need to complete an ATO form.

Who will the grant be paid to - me or my employer?

The grant is paid to you, as an individual.

Reporting

What reporting is required?

The final report will need to be submitted by 31 December 2027. It should include:

- a description of the activities undertaken, your leadership objectives and how the activities contributed to these
- an overview of how you will apply your learnings into the future
- records of all expenses including travel, courses, meals, and accommodation
- it is strongly encouraged to provide high quality photos of funded activities for print and online program promotion purposes. Photographs can also be submitted prior to the final report, if available.
- third party testimonials are also welcome.

A template is available for final reports. Please contact ourcatchments.ourcommunities@deeca.vic.gov.au to receive the template.

How will the final report be used?

The report or extracts may be used by DEECA who:

- may make the report available on the DEECA website
- will seek permission of the use of photos to promote the program and will be mindful of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and cultural protocols
- reserve the right to contact recipients at any time for further information and updates relating to their grant

Additional Information

Program enquiries

More information about the program is available online:

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/ococ-leadership-development-grants>

If you have any questions, or require more information, please contact the Our Catchments, Our Communities team via email at ourcatchments.ourcommunities@deeca.vic.gov.au or contact the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 during normal business hours.

Please quote your application number and the grant program in your communications with DEECA.

Technical difficulties

If you require technical assistance submitting your application online email grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au or call the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 during normal business hours.

Please quote your application number and the grant program in your communications with DEECA.

We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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