2014-15 Public Reserves Management Fund Program – Round 2

September 2014

Overview

The Public Reserves Management Fund Program (PRMFP) provides financial support for the development, maintenance and improvement of public reserves. PRMFP funds are allocated each financial year to reserve managers through a robust assessment process.

More than $135m has been allocated by the NSW Government from the Public Reserves Management Fund over the last 10 years. This funding has supported important initiatives such as the maintenance of showgrounds and community halls, the improvement of local parks and reserves and the development of Crown caravan parks.

As the value of applications received is typically twice that of the available funds, priority is given to those applications which best address the prescribed assessment criteria. Applications that do not meet eligibility criteria will not be considered.

The PRMFP application, assessment, payments and reporting processes are described in detail below.

Eligibility

Managers of any NSW Crown reserve, as well as freehold showgrounds and schools of arts, may be eligible to apply to the PRMFP.

The final round of the 2014-15 PRMFP has strict eligibility requirements as follows:

Round 2

The following types of activities (only) will be considered for Round 2 of the 2014-15 PRMFP:

- Showgrounds– any type of eligible activity
- Crown caravan parks, state parks and local parks and reserves – any type of eligible activity
- All other Crown reserves– any type of eligible activity

Please note pests and/or weed management activities are not eligible in this round.
The Application Process

To apply for Round 2 of the 2014-15 PRMFP funding an eligible reserve manager (e.g. a trust board) must complete and submit the online application form before 5pm on Friday 3 October 2014.

An online application process will be used for the 2014-15 PRMFP. Applications will be accepted from 3 September 2014. Instructions for accessing the online application form are available on the Crown Lands website: www.crownland.nsw.gov.au

It is in the interests of applicants to ensure that they:

- Allow adequate time to complete their application. All applications must be received by the closing date. No extensions will be given.
- Provide comprehensive and accurate information in the application form, including financial information (where required)
- Adequately address each of the assessment criteria (refer below)
- Adequately address any regulatory requirements associated with their proposed activity (e.g. planning approval)
- Attach all relevant documentation (Not providing quotes will render application ineligible)
- Ensure relevant Project Reports and CRRS reports are up to date. Trusts with outstanding reports will be ineligible for funding

The Assessment Process

Key steps in the process

Each application received before the expiry of the closing date will be assessed in accordance with the following steps:

1. All applications will be reviewed to ensure they are complete and eligible for consideration (refer to Assessment Criteria below)
2. The applications will be provided to the relevant local Crown Lands office for initial assessment
3. The Crown Lands regional offices will liaise with their local offices to rank the applications from their respective areas
4. The regional and financial assessments will be combined for a final, corporate review by the departmental PRMF Program Assessment Committee (PAC)
5. The recommendations of the Committee will be considered by the Deputy Premier.

Note: financial assessments will be undertaken on all grant and loan applications. Applicants seeking between $10,000 - $50,000 are required to provide information on their financial position, while those seeking greater than $50,000 are required to submit a detailed financial summary statement.

Assessment methodology

A set of assessment criteria (refer below) will be used throughout the assessment process to assist in determining:

1. Whether the application is eligible for consideration in the process e.g. is from an authorised manager of a public reserve.
2. The ability of the applicant (reserve manager) to deliver the proposed activity and to meet the associated governance obligations.
3. The merits of the proposed activity e.g. the nature of the problems it will address and/or the benefits to the community it will deliver.
4. The relative priority (ranking) of those applications deemed to have sufficient merit.

The ranking given to each application will also be informed by the following preferences:

- Activities that benefit Crown land are preferred.
- Activities that address public safety and/or work health and safety requirements.
Activities that benefit the following reserve types are preferred:
- Caravan parks
- Showgrounds
- Local parks and reserves
- Community halls, and
- State Parks.

Applications from caravan parks that contribute to the Caravan Park Levy will generally receive the highest preference.

Loans (full or partial) are preferred to grants (where a loan can be serviced).

Applications that include matched funding

An application’s final ranking will determine whether or not it can be supported from the available funds.

Assessment criteria
Assessment criteria will be used to determine the eligibility, merits and final ranking of each application, based on specific information requested in the official form. Eligibility criteria will be evaluated on a ‘yes/no’ basis, where an answer of ‘no’ to any of these will mean that the application is ineligible for funding consideration. Assessable criteria will be evaluated on a comparative, weighted basis.

Reserve manager criteria
The eligibility criteria are:
- The application is authorised by the official manager of a public reserve.
- The reserve manager has the capability and capacity to ensure the activity is effectively, efficiently and safely completed.
- The reserve manager has no outstanding PRMFP project reports or CRRS annual reports.
- The reserve manager has the ability to meet all the terms of the loan (if relevant).

The assessable criteria are:
- The reserve manager has a good (or bad) record in relation to the delivery of previous PRMFP supported activities.
- The reserve manager has a good (or bad) record in relation to making repayments on previous and/or current PRMFP loans.
- The reserve manager has met its governance obligations e.g. annual reporting.
- The reserve manager could not readily fund the activity from their own cash reserves or from another, more appropriate, funding source (for grants).

Activity criteria
The eligibility criterion is:
- At least one written quote must be provided for projects costing under $30,000, with at least 3 written quotes* required for project elements over $30,000 up to $250,000. Quotes must clearly itemise each element of the proposed project and provide a breakdown of GST. Amounts over $250,000 will require an acceptable cost estimate and a commitment to procurement via a competitive public tender.

Please note – if you do not provide quotes your application will be ineligible for funding.

Cost estimates will be accepted from Councils where they are the Reserve Manager and will be undertaking the work themselves. The document provided must clearly indicate this and provide a breakdown of costs.

*Reserve managers in remote locations may be granted an exemption in respect to the need for 3 quotes (at least 1 will be required). Please contact Crown Lands urgently if you wish to request this exemption – Crown Lands will provide written confirmation.

The activity is consistent with the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987. Specifically, that it is for the cost of the:
- purchase or acquisition of land required for public reserves
- maintenance, improvement or development of public reserves, or the
The assessable criteria are:

- The activity will advance the purpose of the reserve.
- The activity will enhance the financial sustainability of the reserve.
- The activity will address one or more of the PRMFP objectives.
- The activity will address one or more of the PRMFP priorities.
- The activity will fix a significant problem and/or meet a legislative or regulatory requirement.
- The activity will deliver substantial benefits to user groups and/or the broader community.
- The activity is supported by user groups, the local community, council, sponsors or other funding programs.

Objectives of the PRMFP

The objectives of the PRMFP are to:

- Maintain and develop recreational and tourism facilities on public reserves for community use and enjoyment.
- Facilitate improved management of community facilities on public reserves, including community halls, showgrounds and parks.
- Manage and renovate infrastructure and other assets on public reserves to optimise value to the community and comply with regulatory obligations, in particular to ensure public safety and work health and safety is maintained on Crown reserves.
- Enhance environmental assets by supporting conservation initiatives, bushfire management and weed and pest control on public reserves.
- Support business opportunities that realise the potential of the Crown land estate, support regional economies and promote greater financial sustainability.
- Support the important role that volunteers play in the ongoing management of the Crown reserve system, and
- Ensure the PRMFP is self-sustaining and managed in a contemporary and efficient manner, with appropriate planning and administrative processes.

Priorities for 2014-15

The following types of activities are priorities for funding in 2014-15:

- Compliance with legislative and/or regulatory obligations, in particular to ensure public safety and work health and safety is maintained on Crown reserves.
- Substantial repairs, maintenance or upgrades that preserve or broaden the reserve user base, especially where this promotes greater financial sustainability.
- Environmental management, such as for conservation, contaminated site management or remediation, bushfire management, and pest and weed control.
- Collaborative projects which address common issues across multiple reserves, particularly those which involve more than one trust.
- Projects of regional or state-wide significance, particularly where these facilitate increased regional investment and employment.
- Business support and planning, including for concept development and asset management, and
- Projects that facilitate the development of tourism and events-based activities, especially where this features investment in long-term infrastructure that benefits regional communities and multiple user groups.

The Payments and Reporting Process

Overview
Following assessment and approval of applications the following steps will occur:

- The Minister will write to the successful applicants (reserve trusts) offering them a grant and/or loan.
- Crown Lands will write to the unsuccessful reserve trusts.
- Successful reserve trusts will have two months to accept the offer and the associated terms (see below), otherwise the offer will lapse.
- Crown Lands will deposit the agreed amount into the official account of the reserve trust upon receipt of the offer acceptance.
- The reserve trust will need to complete the activity within 12 months of the deposit of funds.
- The reserve trust will submit the prescribed post-activity project report and return unspent funds to Crown Lands within 2 months of the activity's completion.
- Recipients of loans will commence their repayments 1 year after the date of the deposit of funds, and
- The reserve trust will acknowledge the grant and/or loan in its annual report and in its financial statements submitted to the Crown Reserve Reporting System (for Crown reserves).

**Standard terms of PRMFP grants and loans**

Successful applicants will be required to comply with a number of specified terms. These terms typically cover the following matters:

- The time limit for the completion of the activity and the post-activity report (and return of unspent funds)
- The conditions attached to loans e.g. interest rate and repayment schedule, and
- General compliance with relevant legislation and policy.

**Assistance**

Instructions for accessing the online application form are available at the following Crown Lands webpage: [www.crownland.nsw.gov.au](http://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au)

If you have read these document and still require assistance with the application process, please contact Crown Lands on 1300886235 (option 7) or via email (PRMFP@crownland.nsw.gov.au).