



Environment Protection Authority

FenceCycle program

Bushfire Recovery Program



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Cover: rural fencing: Photo: Patrick Miyaoka

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ISBN 978 1 922447 13 5
EPA 2021P2983
November 2020
Updated April 2021

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The replacement of damaged and destroyed fencing is recognised as a key part of the recovery for rural landholders in being able to restore essential primary production activities on their properties.

About the NSW Environment Protection Authority

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is an independent statutory authority and the principal environmental regulator in NSW.

It leads the state's response to managing a diverse range of activities that can impact on the health of the NSW environment and its people, using a mix of tools, including education; partnerships; licensing and approvals; and audit, enforcement and financial mechanisms. The EPA is empowered under the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991* (POEA Act).

About the Bushfire Recovery Program Package

In late 2019 and early 2020, bushfires devastated NSW, causing significant damage to communities, infrastructure and the environment. In response, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments established a clean-up program for bushfire-generated waste in January 2020.

In addition to this program, the NSW Government has allocated up to \$95 million for the EPA to deliver a package of five bushfire recovery programs.

The Bushfire Recovery Programs Package addresses ongoing bushfire waste challenges faced by public land managers in NSW. The five bushfire recovery programs are outlined below. For program closing dates, please visit the [EPA website](#)¹.

Bushfire-Generated Green Waste Clean-Up and Processing

This program is a \$45 million initiative to manage up to 500,000 tonnes of green waste generated by the 2019–20 bushfires – waste that would otherwise present significant environmental, safety and bushfire risks.

Aboriginal Lands

The Aboriginal Land Program is a \$20-million support package to help Aboriginal landowners and communities assess, plan and organise the clean-up of waste, and to repair or rebuild infrastructure, following the 2019–20 bushfires.

Note: To reduce double handling, the Aboriginal Lands Program includes relevant aspects of the other four programs. Local Aboriginal Land Councils should apply for funding **only** through this program.

FenceCycle

The FenceCycle Program, covered by this document, provides \$10 million to support councils in collecting and recycling the metal components of burnt rural fencing from bushfire-affected landholders.

¹ <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/grants/bushfire-recovery-programs>

Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills

This program provides \$15 million to support councils in their bushfire recovery. It is intended to ensure councils are no worse off as a result of receiving bushfire-generated waste at their landfills, a commitment made by the NSW Government as part of the statewide clean-up program.

Bushfire Dumping

This is a \$5 million program that seeks to reduce the environmental and financial impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires by helping public land managers:

- clean up and dispose of bushfire-related waste that has been illegally dumped on public land
- implement prevention and deterrence measures that will reduce dumping in the future.

If you are eligible, the EPA encourages you to apply for grants under each of the programs in the Bushfire Recovery Package. Each program has been designed to address specific waste challenges, providing an opportunity to receive assistance to target several bushfire-waste issues.

FenceCycle Program

The 2019-20 bushfire season has resulted in an unprecedented level of damage to rural infrastructure, including farm and rural fencing. A significant number of rural landholders have been impacted, with an estimated 88,000 kilometres of boundary fences alone being damaged or destroyed.

The NSW Government FenceCycle Program provides up to \$10 million in grant funding to assist councils with the collection and recycling of the metal components of burnt rural fencing from bushfire affected landholders. The replacement of damaged and destroyed fencing is recognised as a key part of the recovery for landholders in being able to restore essential primary production activities on their properties.

In January 2020, the Commonwealth and NSW Governments announced they would fund the clean-up of bushfire waste from eligible properties across the state. Funding of the FenceCycle Program builds on this earlier commitment.

Objectives

The objectives of the program are to

- support councils to increase the collection and recycling of the metal components of burnt rural fencing from their bushfire affected landholders
- support rural landholders to remove bushfire-damaged fencing from their properties and avoid future environmental and economic risks associated with on-site disposal which is no longer considered good practice
- divert burnt fencing materials from landfill and where possible, assist councils with the management and disposal of other bushfire disaster wastes
- provide regional employment opportunities in bushfire affected communities.

Eligibility

Local Government eligibility

Only NSW councils (including regional organisations of councils, or another local government-controlled organisation) with rural lands whose local government area(s) was declared a bushfire

natural disaster during the 2019-20 bushfire season are eligible to seek a FenceCycle grant. Those local government areas are detailed in Attachment 1 of these guidelines.

NSW councils whose local government area was not declared a bushfire natural disaster but are receiving burnt rural fencing for recycling from eligible bushfire affected landholders will be considered on a case by case basis. Councils who fall within this category should speak first with the EPA before lodging any application for a FenceCycle grant.

Only NSW councils (including those associated local government entities above) are eligible for grants under this program. Other public or private organisations and individuals are not eligible.

Project eligibility

To be eligible for a grant under the FenceCycle Program, councils must meet both the rural fencing and rural landholder criteria described below.

Rural fencing criteria

Projects that involve the collection and recycling of the metal components of rural fencing constructed from materials typically used in agriculture and/or rural living and which were damaged or destroyed by bushfire during the 2019-20 bushfire season are eligible for grant funding under the FenceCycle program. This includes, but is not limited to, rural fencing constructed from:

- plain strand metal wire
- barbed strand metal wire
- metal wire netting or mesh
- metal or timber posts
- a combination of the above materials.

Please note, urban type fencing such as solid metal panelling or security fencing, as well as fencing originating from urban zoned lands are not eligible under the FenceCycle program.

Rural landholder criteria

Only projects that involve the collection of burnt rural fencing from private holders of rural land in areas where the 2019-20 bushfires damaged or destroyed fencing on their property are eligible for grant funding under the FenceCycle program. Areas impacted by the 2019-20 bushfire season are those within the local government areas declared a natural disaster as detailed in Attachment 1 of these guidelines.

Funding

Available funding

Funding of between \$20,000 and \$500,000 is available for eligible council projects that collect burnt fencing from private rural landholders and arrange for the recycling of this material.

How funding may be used

Funding can only be used for projects that collect and recycle the metal components of burnt fencing from rural landholders.

To assist applicants, further details regarding project actions for the collection and recycling of burnt rural fencing is provided below.

Collection of burnt rural fencing

Projects are required to have actions and measures that provide for the effective collection of burnt rural fencing from bushfire affected landholders. For example, this can include but is not limited to:

- direct collection of burnt fencing from landholders by the applicant or other parties, including metal recyclers engaged by the applicant on their behalf
- placing of bins or other suitable collection devices by the applicant or other parties engaged by the applicant on their behalf at key locations for the depositing of burnt fencing by rural landholders
- setup and/or use of designated stockpile sites for the receiving of burnt fencing from rural landholders - where practical and suitable, projects should utilise existing council waste facilities for this purpose.

Projects that involve the direct collection of burnt fencing from bushfire affected rural landholders are preferred and encouraged. This will reduce the burden on these individuals and allows their focus to remain on property restoration activities, including primary production. Direct collection methods also provide potential employment opportunities for local or regional contractors with suitable plant and equipment to undertake the collection of burnt fencing materials on behalf of eligible councils.

Councils can use existing arrangements in place with contractors, including metal recyclers for this component of their project, provided such arrangements fully comply with all relevant procurement legislation and policies pertaining to local government administration. The selection process will favour written support from any project partners and/or where the applicant shows they have an existing operational relationship.

It is important that in collecting burnt fencing, councils have suitable measures to identify and separate eligible burnt fencing material under the FenceCycle program from non-eligible materials. Where councils are proposing to stockpile burnt fencing prior to recycling, suitable arrangements will be required to store eligible burnt fencing materials separately from any other non-eligible materials/waste that is being received or is at these sites. Applicants will need to ensure stockpile sites have any necessary development consent and where required, an environment protection licence from the EPA. Stockpile sites will also need to be operated in an environmentally satisfactory matter that complies with relevant environment protection legislation, including the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

Project actions for the collection of burnt fencing from private rural landholders can be undertaken on a campaign basis or be ongoing throughout the life of the project. Projects do need to include a clear communication strategy that promotes and advises of the collection arrangement(s) for bushfire affected rural landholders as well as how and when they can participate in the project.

Recycling of collected burnt rural fencing

Councils are also required to have actions and measures that provide for the recycling of burnt rural fencing that is collected from bushfire affected landholders. For example, this can include but is not limited to:

- arranging for a metal recycler(s) to collect burnt fencing that has been received from rural landholders and transport this material to a lawful recycling facility
- transporting collected burnt fencing by the applicant or other parties engaged by the applicant on their behalf to a lawful recycling facility.

Councils can use existing arrangements they may have in place with contractors, including metal recyclers, for this component of their project, provided such arrangements fully comply with all relevant procurement legislation and policies pertaining to local government administration. The selection process will favour written support from any project partners and/or where the applicant shows they have an existing operational relationship.

Project actions for the recycling of burnt fencing from private rural landholders can be undertaken on a campaign basis or be ongoing throughout the life of the project.

Councils must be able to show that their project has appropriate governance systems in place to check and ensure that all collected burnt fencing is taken to a lawful recycling facility. This includes but is not limited to the receiving recycling facility having a valid development consent for its operation and any necessary environment protection licence from the EPA.

Further, councils must also include appropriate measures to check and ensure that asbestos containing materials (ACM) are not present in collected burnt fencing that is to be recycled. Should ACM contamination be identified, applicants must handle and dispose of all this waste in accordance with legislative requirements, including the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

Project design and scope

Councils are welcome to design a project scope including the individual actions and measures to collect and recycle the metal components of burnt rural fencing that best meets their needs, resources and circumstances, as well as those of their bushfire affected landholders. In designing the project scope, it's important applicants clearly show how they will meet the objectives and eligibility criteria of the FenceCycle program as detailed in these guidelines.

Grant funding is available to cover up to 100% of project costs, including administration, salaries, use of plant and equipment and engagement of contractors, including metal recyclers. Please note this is subject to the overall project budget/value being within the grant funding range of \$20,000 to \$500,000. If your project budget exceeds the maximum grant amount of \$500,000 please contact the EPA so we can discuss your project with you.

The EPA may consider projects where an eligible council has already collected burnt fencing from bushfire affected rural landholders and the metal fencing components arising from this are yet to be transported to a lawful recycling facility. For such projects, it is important to note the EPA will only consider potential funding for any costs associated with getting these burnt metal fencing materials recycled. Councils who fall within this category should speak first with the EPA before lodging any application for a FenceCycle grant.

Project contingency

It is accepted that councils at the design and scoping phase may have limited information available to them to estimate volumes of burnt rural fencing that is expected to be collected from bushfire affected landholders. Councils may include the option of contingency funding to account for potential higher costs. Councils must specify in their application whether they are including this option and if so, the amount of contingency funding being requested.

It is important to note any contingency amount cannot exceed 25% of the requested grant amount. For example, an applicant seeking a grant of \$100,000 may include a contingency amount of up to \$25,000. Where a project contingency amount is included, councils will need to clearly specify the project scope of works that this extra funding will be used for.

Further, the EPA will only provide a specified contingency amount (or proportion of) upon written request from a successful grantee and where they clearly show that extra burnt rural fencing to that which was originally forecast has either been or is expected to be received by the project.

Project timing

Successful projects will need to start within one month of receiving grant funding under the FenceCycle program, or as otherwise agreed to in writing by the EPA.

Project value for money

Applicants must show that their project represents value for money with all project costings justified and in line with current market competitive rates (for the project location).

Should you need guidance or assistance regarding your project design and scope please contact the EPA to discuss.

How to apply

Applicants will need to use [SmartyGrants](#) to complete their application.

Closing dates are available on the EPA website.

Assessing applications

Applications will be assessed by a technical review committee established by the EPA. This committee will assess all applications received within four weeks of the closing date for this program. An assessment of each received application against the assessment criteria below will be undertaken.

Assessment criteria

To achieve the FenceCycle objectives, the following assessment criteria will be used to assess all applications:

Table 1 Assessment criteria fulfilled

Assessment criterion	Fulfilled
Applicant and project eligibility	Yes/no
Estimate of the extent and amount of burnt rural fencing within the applicant's local government area, including supporting information such as maps, photographs, etc.	Yes/no

Table 2 Assessment criteria weighting

Assessment criterion	Weighting
Proposed actions that provide for the effective collection of burnt fencing from bushfire affected rural landholders	30%
Proposed actions that provide for the effective recycling of burnt fencing collected from bushfire affected rural landholders	30%
Details about project partners, particularly metal recyclers (the selection process favours written support from project partners and/or where the applicant shows they have an existing operational relationship)	20%
A detailed timeline for the project, including clear milestones	10%
A well planned and cost-effective project budget including a comprehensive cost breakdown	10%

Notification of funding

The EPA will notify applicants within four weeks of the technical review committee completing its assessment of all applications.

No applicant can be guaranteed grant funding, nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full amount requested.

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised in writing and given the opportunity to seek feedback by contacting the EPA. Decisions by the EPA are final. There is no appeal process.

Any concerns about the FenceCycle program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au. If you do not agree with the way the EPA handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Successful applicants

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant deed of agreement with the EPA. Funds will be released according to the terms and conditions set out in this agreement.

Successful applicants will need to send the following information before starting the project:

- a project milestone plan in the correct format (to be provided by EPA)
- a signed funding agreement
- an invoice made out to the EPA for the first milestone payment.

During and after the grant, successful applicants will also need to send:

- a monthly progress report, a financial report and an invoice for the second milestone, at the time stated in the grant agreement and on a template provided by the EPA
- a final report, final financial report and an invoice for the second milestone, at the time stated in the grant agreement and on a template provided by the EPA.

What you need to do

Use this checklist to ensure you complete your application for the program.

- Read these guidelines carefully
- Check eligibility requirements
- Check selection criteria
- Submit your application on [SmartyGrants](#) by the closing date.

Key dates

Visit the [EPA's website](#) for closing dates.

Where to get help

Bushfire Recovery Programs Team

- The EPA can assist you with understanding/interpreting these guidelines and developing your application. If you have any questions about these guidelines, eligibility or the types of activities that can be included in your application, please contact us on:
- Phone: 131 555
- **Email:** bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au.

Additional program resources

Additional resources for the program are available on the [EPA's website](#). They include a fact sheet and frequently asked questions.

Attachment 1

Local government areas declared bushfire natural disasters 2019-20

Armidale Regional	Mid-Coast
Ballina	Mid-Western
Bega Valley	Muswellbrook
Bellingen	Nambucca
Blue Mountains	Narrabri
Byron	Oberon
Central Coast	Penrith
Cessnock	Port Macquarie-Hastings
Clarence Valley	Queanbeyan Palerang
Coffs Harbour City	Richmond Valley
Cootamundra-Gundagai	Shoalhaven
Dungog	Singleton
Eurobodalla	Snowy Monaro
Glen Innes Severn	Snowy Valleys
Goulburn Mulwaree	Sutherland
Greater Hume	Tamworth Regional
Gwydir	Tenterfield
Hawkesbury	Tweed
Inverell	Upper Lachlan
Kempsey	Uralla
Ku-ring-gai	Upper Hunter
Kyogle	Wagga Wagga
Lake Macquarie	Walcha
Lismore	Wingecarribee
Lithgow	Wollondilly