



Department of Planning and Environment

Environmental Research Grants Technical Review Committee

Information for applicants
NSW Environmental Trust



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Published by:

Environment and Heritage
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment, Energy and Science enquiries)
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Report pollution and environmental incidents
Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only) or info@environment.nsw.gov.au
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Purpose

This document aims to outline the context and expectations to inform applicants' Expressions of Interest for membership of the NSW Environmental Trust's Environmental Research Grants Technical Review Committee (TRC).

Applications are now open and will close **5 pm Friday 29 April 2022**.

NSW Environmental Trust

The NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) is an independent statutory body that supports projects that enhance the environment of New South Wales. The Trust's main function is to award grants and supervise the expenditure of money granted. The Trust was established under the Environmental Trust Act 1998 and administers grants across a diverse range of programs, including contestable grants, major projects, and various NSW Government initiatives.

The Trust is chaired by the NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage, and its members include representatives from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE); local government; the Nature Conservation Council; and NSW Treasury.

The Trust's grant programs are administered by the Grants Branch of the Department of Planning and Environment.

Further information about the Trust and its grant programs can be found on our website.

About the program

The Environmental Research Program (the program) is a contestable grants program funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. It provides funding to support applied research in priority environmental themes to help address contemporary environmental problems in New South Wales.

The objectives of the program are to:

- increase knowledge and advance techniques to solve priority environmental problems in New South Wales
- assess and test the application of innovative solutions to decrease environmental degradation in New South Wales
- discover new methods of operation for NSW industries that are less harmful to the environment and enhance the public good.

Types of research funded

Projects must involve applied research, meaning:

- broadly, the systematic gathering of data, information, and facts to advance knowledge and develop new techniques that can be practically applied
- specifically, scientific research where hypotheses are formulated and empirically tested to guide application over reasonable and practical timeframes.

This definition can apply to biophysical, social, or economic research.

Role of the Technical Review Committee

Technical Review Committees are established under section 9 of the *Environmental Trust Act 1998* (the Act). The TRC's main role is to provide advice and recommendations to the Environmental Trust on the practicability and worthiness of grant applications under the program. Responsibilities may also include monitoring and reviewing the progress of funded projects, where relevant, and providing process improvement feedback to the Trust.

The TRC does not have a role in either awarding grants or approving grants expenditure. The Trust or its delegates award grants and approve expenditure during the life of the grant.

Responsibilities of Technical Review Committee Chair and members

The Chair is responsible for leading the TRC, managing any conflicts of interest, and ensuring that the members work together as a cohesive team.

Members of the TRC (including the Chair):

- actively contribute to the effective governance and oversight of the TRC and its role as an advisory body to the Trust in assessing funding applications and (where relevant) progress of grant projects
- must ensure efficient and responsible expenditure of public funds in accordance with relevant legislation and government policy and guidelines.

Where required, individual experts may provide reports and/or be invited to TRC meetings to provide advice on technical issues. TRC members will undertake an induction process administered by Trust staff to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities.

Benefits of Technical Review Committee membership

Membership of the TRC for the Environmental Research Grants Program brings a range of professional benefits, including the opportunity to:

- play a significant role in helping the NSW Government address priority environmental problems
- help shape the future of the environmental research landscape in New South Wales
- enhance your governance and advisory credentials by offering expert advice and recommendations on the allocation of up to \$1 million annually in grant funds
- build your professional network through interactions with other environmental research experts and the major environmental grant funding body in New South Wales
- contribute to the effective delivery of environmental outcomes in New South Wales through involvement in the NSW Environmental Trust's program improvement initiatives.

Term of appointment

TRC members are appointed for four years including a one-year probationary period. Members may be re-appointed for an additional 3 years by agreement between the Trust and the member. The maximum term is 7 years.

The Trust may cease a member's appointment if the member does not meet performance expectations or the standards of conduct outlined below. A TRC member may resign from the TRC by providing suitable notice to Trust staff (approximately 6 weeks).

Availability of members

The timeframe for reviewing and assessing Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and Full Applications is typically 4 to 6 weeks, depending on the number of submissions. Meetings may last between one hour and a full day in length. Once all members have provided their assessments to Trust staff, the TRC meets to finalise their recommendations.

The TRC is likely to meet at least twice per year to compare individual assessments (at grant EOI and Full Application stages) and to finalise funding recommendations for the Trust.

Meetings will usually be by teleconference, but face-to-face meetings at the Trust's Parramatta office may be required from time to time. TRC members are expected to attend all meetings. The Trust will cover costs associated with attending face-to-face meetings.

Code of conduct

At the time of appointment, members must sign a TRC Member Code of Conduct declaration and adhere to the code at all times.

Members must adhere to standards and principles of conduct applicable to the public sector to ensure that public confidence and trust is maintained in the work of the Trust and the TRC. All members need to clearly understand their public duty and legal responsibilities and must act for the proper purpose without exceeding their powers.

Members must disclose in advance any financial or other interests that may be in conflict with their role as a TRC member and must manage any conflicts in accordance with public sector standards. This includes registering the interest and abstaining from decisions that relate to the interest of the member. Members are required to sign a Committee Member Interest Disclosure form on appointment.

Meetings may be recorded to assist with the production of clear and accurate minutes and reports. All recordings will be destroyed after the minutes have been finalised. TRC members must keep confidential all matters concerning TRC business unless advised otherwise by the Chair or Trust staff.

Further information on the standards of conduct expected of NSW Government board and committee members can be found in the *NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines*, section 7.

Nominees of professional bodies or other organisations

Membership of the TRC may include representatives nominated by professional bodies and other organisations, such as academic institutions, not-for-profit environmental organisations, or industry bodies. The Trust Act specifies that each TRC must include at least one industry and one community representative.

Remuneration

TRC members are paid in accordance with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, *NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines* (September 2015).

Table 1 Sitting fees for TRC members established under the NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines

	Chair	Member
Full day	\$350	\$220
Half day	\$175	\$110

Reimbursement of expenses (including out of pocket travelling expenses) is paid in line with NSW Government policy. Travelling time is not remunerated.

In accordance with Section 8.3 of the abovementioned guidelines, public sector employees who undertake work for the TRC during their normal work hours are not paid a sitting fee unless they obtain an exemption from the Public Service Commission.

Pre-reading time (including time for assessing applications) is remunerated at a rate of \$31.42 per hour, which is consistent with established sitting fees for a 7-hour full day. Trust staff will apply a formula that incorporates the number of applications and/or pages to determine the amount of time the Trust expects members to spend pre-reading.

Sitting and pre-reading fees are paid directly to the nominee unless otherwise arranged.

Submitting your application

Applicants are required to complete the online **Expression of Interest form by 5 pm Friday 29 April 2022** and submit it with:

- a brief cover letter (maximum 2 pages) or statement addressing each of the selection criteria
- an up to date curriculum vitae (CV) (maximum 4 pages).

Applications that are incomplete or do not address the criteria will not be considered.

Selection criteria

Applications should include a cover letter (maximum 2 pages) that addresses each of the following selection criteria:

1. High level of professional expertise in the research sector relating to one or more of the following: environmental science and pollution, natural resource management, climate change, threatened species.
2. Demonstrated ability to actively participate as a member of an expert committee in providing strategic and balanced advice, including evidence of integrity, impartiality, good judgement, and environmental and social awareness.
3. Demonstrated experience or capacity to work collaboratively, constructively and productively in a management or governance team.
4. Capacity and flexibility to meet the workload and demands of the TRC.

Referees

Applicants must provide the details of 2 referees, including their current (or relevant previous) positions and contact details. Referees should be able to discuss the applicant's skills, qualifications and ability to discharge the responsibilities of a TRC member.

Selection process

Each application will be assessed on merit. The assessment will include determining suitability for membership and ranking each application against the selection criteria. The skills mix, expertise needs, gender and demographic balance of the TRC is also taken into account when recommending candidates for membership. Authority to appoint TRC members is delegated by the Trust Board to the Executive Director of the Environment and Heritage Group of Department of Planning and Environment.

At the end of the selection process, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. Successful applicants will be sent a letter of offer. Successful applicants will be required to complete and return a response form and (if accepting the appointment) a code of conduct and disclosure of interest form.

Unsuccessful applicants can seek feedback on their application. Unless otherwise requested, the Trust will keep unsuccessful applicant information on file in case any similar opportunities arise in the future.

Protecting personal information and privacy

The NSW Environmental Trust complies with NSW Government privacy legislation and policies.

If appointed to the TRC, the following information may be made available to the public on a NSW Government website, the Trust annual report, and may be included in media releases issued by the Minister for Environment:

- first name and surname
- the term of appointment
- professional position
- the position held, for example, Member/Chair.

More information

- [NSW Environmental Trust](#)
- [NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines](#)