DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government



# Advancing Emu Swamp Dam Project

**Grant application guidelines**

**Version 01  10 June 2026**

**Acknowledgement of Country**

The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country. We recognise the ongoing spiritual and cultural connection Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have with land, water, sea and sky. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past and present, support future leaders and acknowledge First Nations People's right to self-determination.

This publication has been compiled by Strategic Policy and Partnership, Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.

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# 1. Introduction

Since the severe drought of 2019–20, the Queensland Government has worked closely with the Southern Downs Regional Council to strengthen long-term water security and improve drought resilience in the Southern Downs region. As part of this ongoing commitment, the government is supporting further investigations into the Emu Swamp Dam proposal. These guidelines are intended to identify a suitably qualified and capable applicant to undertake this next stage of investigation – The Advancing Emu Swamp Dam Project (the project) – by January 2028.

Emu Swamp Dam (ESD) was previously investigated as part of the Granite Belt Irrigation Project (GBIP), which proposed a 12,000 megalitre (ML) water storage on the Severn River. The project included a 117-kilometre distribution network to deliver around 3,900ML per year to irrigation customers and 585ML per year to urban customers.

The Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment (RWA) explored how a mix of existing infrastructure, new infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions could maximise water supply, strengthen water security and support economic growth. The RWA provided updated information on the Emu Swamp Dam option, and highlighted the need for further investigations to address key issues before a final investment decision can be made.

The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) have prepared these guidelines to outline the project's objectives and submission process. They are designed to help eligible organisations understand:

- the project's priorities, objectives and requirements
- the project submission process including timeframes, eligibility and project requirements
- how project submissions will be evaluated
- monitoring and reporting requirements for approved projects, including applicants' rights and responsibilities.

# 2. Overview

## 2.1 Aim

The Advancing Emu Swamp Dam (ESD) project will support a suitably qualified organisation to further investigate the feasibility of the Emu Swamp Dam proposal. As part of this, the successful applicant will be responsible for delivering the required technical, economic, social and environmental investigations, while also identifying a credible pathway they will take to future ownership and operation of the project.

Applications should outline the key steps, deliverables and costs to deliver the project within the available budget and demonstrate that the required investigations will support progression of the ESD proposal to an investment decision. The proposal must align with the Queensland Government's Project Assessment Framework.

Applications should consider, but are not limited to:

- addressing the findings, recommendations and outstanding gaps in the Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment (RWA)
- reviewing and analysing previous investigations to identify key findings, lessons learned and remaining gaps
- conducting required investigations, including geotechnical, environmental, cultural heritage and hydrological assessments

- evaluating social, cultural and environmental impacts to ensure project viability and sustainability
- assessing current and future water demand and ensuring alignment with the Border Rivers and Moonie water plan
- identifying and securing water entitlements and required approvals
- developing an operating model to support the long-term management and sustainability of Emu Swamp Dam
- demonstrating project governance arrangements, including stakeholder engagement and quality assurance processes
- improving water security for Stanthorpe and Granite Belt irrigators
- conducting financial and economic analysis to assess project feasibility and value for money
- delivering a final report or detailed business case addendum with clear recommendations and next steps.

Applicants are encouraged to include any additional work required beyond the scope of this project, that would benefit a final investment decision being made.

## 2.2 Project funding and timing

Funding of up to $3 million (excluding GST) is available for the successful applicant, via this grant program. The project is required to be completed by January 2028.

## 2.3 Applicant eligibility

To be eligible for funding for the Advancing ESD Project, an applicant must:

- be a local government body constituted under the *Local Government Act 2009,* or
- be registered for GST and hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- demonstrate proven skills, capability, and experience required to deliver projects of a similar nature, or demonstrate the ability to manage these capabilities effectively
- demonstrate the capability to deliver technical assessments, including future operations and ownership models/approaches that are relevant to the project
- have proven experience in stakeholder management, public consultation, and the ability to establish community connections within the Southern Darling Downs region
- be able to provide evidence of, or demonstrate the ability to obtain, the required insurances to deliver the project, including public liability, professional indemnity and workers compensation
- be registered and based in Queensland
- demonstrate a credible pathway to future operation and ownership of the project
- demonstrate the financial capacity to successfully undertake and complete the project on time and budget, noting that grant payments will be made in arrears and only upon completion of approved milestones
- not be insolvent and ensure that its owners or directors are not undischarged bankrupts.
- declare any perceived or actual conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to the project and outline how these will be managed

If an applicant does not meet all the eligibility criteria, the department will reject the application and not consider it for any further assessment.

Applicants should note that a detailed due diligence and probity review may be undertaken on the applicant including, but not limited to, the checks and searches below:

- applicant bona fide checks (status, corporate structure, ownership, directors review etc.)
- background and probity searches (ACCC etc)
- financial capability and viability (funding capacity and sources).

## 2.4 Ineligible project costs

Applicants must identify the expected total project costs including eligible and ineligible project costs.

Applicants will be entitled to claim funding only for eligible project costs incurred and paid by the applicant. Eligible project costs mean those costs and expenses reasonably incurred by the applicant in connection with the project but excluding any ineligible project costs.

Applicants will not be entitled to receive funding to reimburse ineligible project costs. Ineligible project costs include costs and expenses associated with:

- project costs incurred or paid prior to the execution of the grant agreement
- preparation of an application for the Advancing ESD project, including any third-party consultant costs for the preparation of application supporting materials or any associated reports or audits used as the basis for an application
- staff costs including salaries or the costs associated with any human resource activities of the entity
- normal operational costs (e.g., utilities charges, telecommunications charges, rent or lease expenses, licensing fees, membership fees)
- travel and accommodation
- motor vehicle repair, maintenance, purchasing or leasing
- quality accreditation, certification, compliance and fees and charges
- legal advice of any kind
- consultants, contractors or suppliers that are Associated Entities under s50AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001*
- funding for project contingencies or cost overruns
- other project costs the department considers, acting reasonably, are not reasonably incurred by the applicant primarily for or in connection with the project.

## 2.5 Grant agreement

The successful applicant will be required to execute a grant agreement with the department.

The department has no obligation to provide the funding until the grant agreement has been duly executed by both the successful applicant and the department.

The grant agreement will outline the terms and conditions of the proposed grant including milestone deliverables, grant funding, reporting and outcomes to be achieved by the applicant.

Without limiting the terms and conditions set out in Section 5 of these guidelines, the department will not be liable to an applicant for any commitments made, or costs incurred or paid, by an applicant prior to execution of a grant agreement.

The department will not exceed the maximum grant funding amount of up to $3 million (excluding GST). Any additional costs incurred with the implementation of the project must be met by the applicant.

# 3. Project applications, assessments and approvals

## 3.1 How to submit an application

1. Applicants are required to email waterreform@dlgwv.qld.gov.au to express their interest in submitting an application.
2. The department will then provide access to a submission portal to allow the applicant to upload the completed application.

Applications must be submitted by the **5pm, Friday 26 June 2026.**

Applicants should refer to these guidelines when making an application.

Applications must contain all information required at the time of lodgement. The department may decide not to consider applications that do not include all required information.

Despite anything else contained in these guidelines and without limitation, the department may decide to grant an application, or part of an application, in the department's absolute discretion, including where the department considers the grant of the application, or part of an application, supports the achievement of the priorities and objectives of the Queensland Government or is otherwise in the public interest.

The department may, at its discretion, accept or reject any late applications.

Applicants will be responsible for their own costs incurred in the preparation of applications as per Section 2.5 Ineligible project costs. To support their application, the following is required:

1. Mandatory documents for inclusion in an application:
    i. project plan and a risk management plan
    ii. proposed project timelines/activities schedule showing timeframes for all project stages
2. Supporting documents for inclusion in an application (non-mandatory). Applicants should consider including documentation which supports statements/claims made in responses to the selection criteria:
    i. decision-making governance structure or processes of the applicant (e.g., trust deed, company group structure)
    i. financial statements for the year prior to the year of application, including profit and loss, balance sheet and statement of cash flows (where available) that are either CPA/CA prepared, audited and certified (preferred) or CPA/CA prepared and signed financial statements
    ii. certificates of currency for WorkCover, public liability and business risk insurances.
    iii. an estimated project cost breakdown, including the expected total activity costs (including eligible and ineligible project costs) and the grant amount requested.
    iv. evidence that the business can fund any project costs not funded by the project. This must include details of the extent to which this will be financed internally or externally.

## 3.2 Assessment process

The department will assess properly made applications.

During assessment, clarification may be requested where the eligibility of an applicant, project or project item is unclear. If requested, the applicant must provide all clarifications to the department within 5 business days. A late or incomplete response to a clarification request may cause your application to the considered ineligible.

### 3.2.1 Application criteria

**Assessment criteria — Proposed solution (weighting 100 per cent)**

The application needs to demonstrate:

- how the proposed solution aligns with the project aim
- feasibility of delivering the project within the identified budget and timeframes
- how the project will support future infrastructure asset/s
- a pathway to a comprehensive project plan
- capability and experience in developing suitable governance and risk management arrangements
- experience in undertaking technical assessments
- experience in developing effective communication and reporting frameworks
- demonstrate a feasible pathway they will take to ownership and operation of the project
- an economically feasible pathway to improving water security for Stanthorpe's urban water supply and Granite Belt irrigators
- a suitably experienced project lead with a proven track record in delivering comparable projects
- organisational capability, including business skills and financial capacity to successfully deliver the project
- clear evidence of demand for, or support from identified end-users and/or industry partners

## 3.3 Approval process

1. The department will assess applications against the assessment criteria using the weighting indicated (see Section 3.2) and against other applications.
2. Applications will then be referred to a moderation panel for final consideration.
3. The moderation panel will make recommendations to the Director-General of the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.
4. Applicants may be asked to clarify or provide additional information that will not change the nature of the application.
5. The Director-General has absolute discretion in relation to any decisions and is under no obligation to consider applications made after the designated closing date and time.
6. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.
7. The successful applicant will be invited to accept and execute a grant agreement to release funds in accordance with agreed milestones, and to enable the commencement of the project.
8. The project must not commence until a grant agreement is fully executed by both parties, unless otherwise approved by the department.
9. Nothing in this section limits the department's discretions under Section 5.1 of these guidelines.

## 3.4 Tax obligations

Grants may be treated as assessable income for taxation purposes. The department does not provide advice to applicants and recommends applicants seek independent professional advice on their tax obligations.

# 4. Funding acknowledgement

## 4.1 Acknowledgement and media communications

Recipients who receive funding from projects administered by the department are required to acknowledge the funding provided by the Queensland Government.

Any reference to Queensland Government funding in communication materials requires prior written approval from the department. Copies of any planned project-related communication materials must be provided to the department before the intended release date so approval can be arranged.

All media enquiries or public announcements relating to the project will be coordinated and handled by the department's media team.

Applicants must seek and obtain the department's approval before contacting or responding to the media in connection with successful or unsuccessful applications for funding support under or in connection with the project, and comply with the department's requirements about the form, content, timing and manner of any proposed media statement or event.

Where possible, all media and communications will be undertaken jointly with the successful applicant.

## 4.2 Confidentiality, privacy and use of information

The department will maintain controls in relation to the management of confidential information provided by applicants. Applicants should specifically mark any information the applicant considers to be confidential.

An applicant must keep the following confidential:

- its application
- any information provided to the department in connection with its application
- its dealings with the department about its application
- any information designated by the Queensland Government as confidential.

The applicant may make disclosures if required by law or to its representatives or advisors who are under an obligation of confidentiality.

The department may disclose information, including confidential information, of or provided by an applicant:

- to its representatives and advisors for any purpose
- to any government agency or authority and its representatives and advisors, including for the purpose of assessing and verifying such information
- to comply with or meet applicable standards of accountability of public money or established government policies, procedures or protocols; or
- if required to be disclosed by law.

The department collects personal information during the application process. Personal information will be used and may be disclosed for the purpose of processing, assessing and making a decision about the application, and as authorised by law. This may include personal information being disclosed to third parties and other government agencies for purposes in connection with the assessment of applications (and if an application is successful, in connection with administration of any subsequent agreement). The State will otherwise deal with personal information provided to it in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the Privacy statement of the Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au/legal/privacy).

For audit purposes, the State is required to retain applications and other supplied supporting material.

## 4.3 Complaints

The department's decision in relation to an application outcome is final and may not be appealed. If, however, an applicant has any dispute in relation to the application process or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the department via the department's website.

# 5. Terms and conditions

In these terms and conditions, a reference to:

- an application means an application (or relevant part of an application) made to the Advancing Emu Swamp Dam project and any other supporting or additional information in whatever form provided by the applicant in connection with an application
- Guidelines is a reference to these guidelines.

## 5.1 Reservation of rights

The department reserves the right to administer the project and grant funding and conduct the process for the assessment and approval of an application to the project in such manner as it thinks fit, and to:

- change the structure, procedures, nature, scope or timing of, or alter the terms of participation in the process or overall project (including submission and compliance of applications), where in such circumstances notice will be provided to applicants
- consider or accept, or refuse to consider or accept, any application which is lodged other than in accordance with these guidelines or is lodged after the relevant date for lodgement, or which does not contain the information required by these guidelines or is otherwise non-conforming in any respect
- vary or amend the eligibility or assessment criteria
- take into account any information from its own and other sources, including other government agencies and other advisors
- accept or reject any application, having regard to these guidelines, the eligibility criteria, the assessment criteria or any other item, matter or thing which the department considers relevant, including the limitations on the funds available for the project
- give preference by allocating weighting to any one or more of the eligibility criteria or assessment criteria over other criteria
- seek clarifications or additional information from or provide clarifications or additional information to any applicant, or to negotiate or deal with or seek presentations or interviews from any applicant
- conduct due diligence investigations in respect of any applicant and subject applications to due diligence, technical, financial and economic appraisals
- require an applicant to clarify or substantiate any claims, assumptions or commitment contained in an application or provide any additional information
- terminate further participation of any applicant in the application process
- terminate or reinstate the project or any process in the project
- not proceed with the project in the manner outlined in these guidelines, or at all
- allow the withdrawal or addition of an applicant
- take such other action as it considers in its absolute discretion appropriate in relation to the project processes.

Where, under these guidelines, it is stated that the department may exercise a right or discretion or perform any act or omit to perform any act, then unless stated otherwise the department may do so at its sole and absolute discretion and will not be required to act, or be restrained from acting, in any way or for any reason nor to take into account the interests of any third party (including an applicant).

## 5.2 No relationship

The department's obligations regarding the application process are limited to these expressly stated in these guidelines.

Subject to Section 5.7, no contractual or legal relationship exists between the department and an applicant or its clients in connection with the project, these guidelines or the application process.

An applicant, or its representatives:

- has no authority or power, and must not purport to have the authority or power to bind the department, or make representations on behalf of the department
- must not hold itself out or engage in any conduct or make any representation which may suggest to any person that the applicant is for any purpose an employee, agent, partner or joint-venturer with the department
- must not represent to any person that the department is a party to the proposed project other than as a potential funder, subject to the competitive application process detailed in these guidelines.

## 5.3 Participation at the applicant's cost

Each applicant participates in the application process at its own cost and risk.

To the extent permitted by law, no applicant will have any claim of any kind whatsoever against the department (whether in contract, tort (including negligence), equity, under statute or otherwise) arising from or in connection with:

- any costs, expenses, losses or liabilities suffered or incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting its application (including any amendments, requests for further information by the department, attendance at meetings or involvement in discussions) or otherwise in connection with the project;
- the department at any time exercising or failing to exercise, in its absolute discretion, any rights it has under or in connection with the project; or
- any of the matters or things relevant to its application or the project in respect of which the applicant must satisfy itself under these guidelines.

Without limiting the foregoing, if the department cancels or varies the project at any time, or does not select any applicant following its assessment of the applications, or does (or fails to do) any other thing referred to under clause 5.1 of these guidelines, no applicant will have any claim against the department arising from or in connection with any costs, expenses, losses or liabilities incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting its application or otherwise in connection with or in relation to (whether directly or indirectly) the project.

## 5.4 Non-exhaustive

These guidelines do not contain all the information that applicants may require in reaching decisions in relation to whether to submit an application. Applicants must form their own views as to what information is relevant to such decisions.

Applicants must make their own independent investigations of the information contained or referred to in these guidelines or made available by the department. Applicants must obtain their own independent legal, financial, tax and other advice in relation to information in these guidelines, or otherwise made available to them, during the application process.

The department makes no warranty or representation express or implied and does not assume any duty of care to the applicants that the information in these guidelines or supplied in connection with the project is accurate, adequate, current, suitable or complete, or that the information has been independently verified.

The department accepts no responsibility whether arising from negligence or otherwise (except a liability that cannot lawfully be excluded) for any reliance or interpretation placed upon that information by applicants.

## 5.5 Intellectual property

Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of an applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights. Any part of an application considered to contain intellectual property rights should be clearly identified by an applicant.

The applicant grants to the State (and will ensure relevant third parties grant) a non-exclusive, royalty free and irrevocable licence to use and reproduce the intellectual property for the purpose of administering the project.

## 5.6 Law

These guidelines are governed by the laws applicable in Queensland.

## 5.7 Acceptance

By submitting an application, each applicant:

- warrants to the department that the information contained in its application is accurate and complete as at the date on which it is submitted and not by omission misleading, and may be relied on by the department in determining whether to select the applicant for the project
- undertakes to promptly advise the department if it becomes aware of any change in circumstances which causes the information contained in its application to become inaccurate or incomplete in a material respect
- acknowledges that the department will rely on the above warranty and undertaking when evaluating the application
- acknowledges that the department may elect to remove an applicant at any stage as a result of material changes to the information presented in its application
- acknowledges that the department may suffer loss or damage if the applicant breaches the above warranty and undertaking
- is taken to have accepted these guidelines, including these terms and conditions.

# 6. Enquiries and contact details

For more information about the application process and general enquiries about the project, contact the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.

Email: waterreform@dlgwv.qld.gov.au

Website: www.dlgwv.qld.gov.au

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