



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

# Submission Cover Sheet

## Inquiry into Grants Management

**Submission Number: 08**

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Submission addressed to;

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
LCommitteePA@parliament.act.gov.au

#### **RE: Inquiry into Grants Management**

The Ginninderra Catchment Group welcomes this opportunity to provide a submission for this inquiry and extends our thanks to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts within the ACT Legislative Assembly, for recognising the importance of the process and management of grants programs within the ACT.

The Ginninderra Catchment Group [GCG] is both a community-based natural resource management organisation and a Landcare network, operating primarily in the northwest ACT Region. This community-driven organisation supports 29 Landcare Groups (including Parkcare, urban, rural, junior, and Aboriginal Landcare Groups) and coordinates numerous community engagement and landscape-scale restoration programs. GCG also facilitates citizen science and community education programs. GCG's mission is to 'connect, support and lead local communities to maintain and improve the health of the Ginninderra Catchment and surrounding environments'. Through our organisations work, we are regularly involved with various grants programs run across different ACT Governemnt Departments.

This submission is made on behalf of the GCG and its current 29 member groups, as listed below;

Budjan Galindji (Franklin)  
Crace Landcare Group (Crace)  
Croke Place Lions Landcare Group (Evatt)  
Emu Creek Landcare Group (Belconnen)  
Friends of Aranda bushland (Aranda)  
Friends of Gossan Hill (Bruce)  
Friends of Harrison Wetlands (Harrison)  
Friends of Mt Painter (Cook)  
Friends of Mulligans Flat (Forde)

Friends of the Pinnacle (Hawker)  
Friends of Wangara Parks (Aranda)  
Friends of Yerrabi Pond (Gungahlin)  
Flea Bog Creek Landcare Group (Bruce)  
Giralang Pond Landcare Group (Giralang)  
Hall Landcare Group (Hall)  
Hawker Community Landcare (Hawker)  
Holt Micro-Forest (Holt)  
Jarramlee Park Landcare (Dunlop)  
Kuringa Woodlands Landcare Group (Fraser)  
Landcare of Lawson (Lawson)  
Macgregor Landcare Group (Macgregor)  
Maribyrnong Community Climate Action Group (Kaleen)  
Mt Rogers Landcare Group (Flynn)  
Mulanggong Traditional Aboriginal Landcare Group (Various)  
Native Grassland Restoration Landcare Group (Various)  
North Belconnen Landcare Convenor (Evatt)  
Umbagog Landcare Group (Latham)  
Wallaroo Landcare Group (NSW)  
Sutton Landcare Group (NSW)

GCG looks forward to the positive outcomes from this Inquiry into Grants Management, with greater benefits to our on-ground volunteers and community groups for an improved process for grants management.

## **1) the range and availability of funding for grants programs;**

The Ginninderra Catchment Group has been pleased to see the recent increases to total funding for grants under the EPSDD ACT Environment / Nature in the City Grants Program. In addition, we appreciate the revitalisation of the TCCS Adopt-A-Park grants program.

There are some issues around grant funding and budget allocation, as indicated below

- Grants should allow funding for project management, including community and Government Liaison, contract management, M and E , communications etc.
- In addition, grants should allow for 10% administration costs to cover financial management , insurances, office costs etc.
- Requirements for in-kind contribution are often larger than can be reasonably provided by organisations and volunteers. Grants should not require the explicit in-kind contributions, equal to or greater than the grant value. In addition, the costing of volunteer hours at \$33.71/hr is too low.
- Many grants program including ACT Enviro and AAP would benefit by multiyear funding as opposed to 1 year funding to achieve the best outcomes. In addition, there would be benefit to consider running these two grants programs as smaller rounds twice a year rather than once every 12months.

## **2) the manner in which grants are determined, including the:**

### **a. oversight of funding determinations;**

- Consistency across grant programs, as each program often has different requirements in information and level of detail they require not consistent with the calibre of funding provided.

### **c. independence of the assessment of projects;**

- It is recommended that for grants implemented for the community, there should be inclusion of a community representative on the panel

### **e. adequacy policy and legislative frameworks under which grants are administered;**

- Deed of Grants and procurement processes are different across different Government Agencies, with Deeds often difficult to interpret for small NFP organisations and community groups or individuals who are new to the grant program.
- Acquittal requirements are also inconsistent across ACT Gov Agencies, with some grants programs requiring extensive financial acquittal processes which indicates a level of mistrust from ACT Gov towards community based NFP organisations. Acquittal requirements should focus on reporting of outputs, achievements and grant deliverables rather than financial reporting.

#### 4) any other related matter.

##### General ACT Grants Feedback

- Grant Timelines need to be flexible to account for many variabilities, including weather and climate changes, land manager permissions and processes, community engagement and unforeseen disasters eg. covid, severe storms.
- Suggestions for grants to include an initial EOI before requiring more detailed write-up to avoid time wasted by volunteers, putting together detailed project plans that do not receive funding.

##### ACT Enviro Grants

- Please review the previous **Review of the ACT Environment Grants** where GCG and other organisations made considerable contributions
- We greatly appreciate the increased flexibility from EPSDD and ACT NRM regarding grant administration, especially considering uncontrollable variants in delivery such as covid, weather/site conditions over the last 2-3 years.

##### Heritage Grants

- Heritage Grants have been difficult to manage when navigating ACT Government Heritage requirements, including engaging with the local Aboriginal community and on Aboriginal Heritage places. This has reduced the potential for beneficial Ngunawal/Ngunnawal grants to get up and running.