

Comment on proposed guidelines Murray Darling Healthy Rivers Program grant guidelines

1. Please make grazing exclusion fences clearly eligible. (Section 5.4)
2. Please better define rivers and wetlands (section 5.1)

item 1

It is proposed that major capital expenditure is not eligible. Similar words were used in Small Farm Grants Round 4. I enquired whether grazing exclusion fences would be considered capital expenditure and received a cryptic response “Thank you for your email regarding the Smart Farms Small Grant Round 4 grant opportunity. Please refer to the [Hub Glossary](#), it states that the definition of Capital Expenditure is:- “An asset that can be purchased by an organisation that has an expected life span of more than five years, i.e. buildings or vehicles.”. Based on this I assumed that funding for fencing, because it has a life span of >5 years, would not be eligible.

Can the guidelines for small and large grants please clearly allow applications for funding to construct grazing exclusion fences. Our observations from environmental watering at Hattah Kulkyne NP (Vic) are that feral and native grazers can completely undo the benefits of environmental watering by destroying vegetation regeneration. Perversely, increased availability of water from environmental watering also promotes increased abundance of grazers which magnifies the impacts. Fencing for grazing exclusion is absolutely critical in some areas to allow high value native vegetation to respond well following inundation.

Item 2

Eligible grant activities must include one or more of ... protect rivers and wetlands (including Ramsar wetlands).

Can rivers and wetlands be better defined please, eg. Does it have to be a named waterway? Not a Creek? A permanently inundated wetland? For example, we are in the southern MD Basin. Our property is 5km from the Murray River, adjoining Hattah Kulkyne NP. Raakajlim Creek is an unnamed waterway on our property which connects the Dry Lakes in Hattah Kulkyne National Park to the Chalka Creek (which is an anabranch of the Murray River, which also feeds the Hattah Ramsar wetlands). Would works to protect Raakajlim Creek meet the “protect rivers and wetlands” requirement?

As individuals, it is a significant challenge and time commitment to prepare grant applications. We value above all else clear eligibility requirements in the guidelines so we know we are not wasting our time on ineligible activities.

Kind regards
Fiona and Phil Murdoch

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Raakajlim - Mallee Conservation

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