

Water Stewardship Program

Funding Guidelines for Landholders & Community

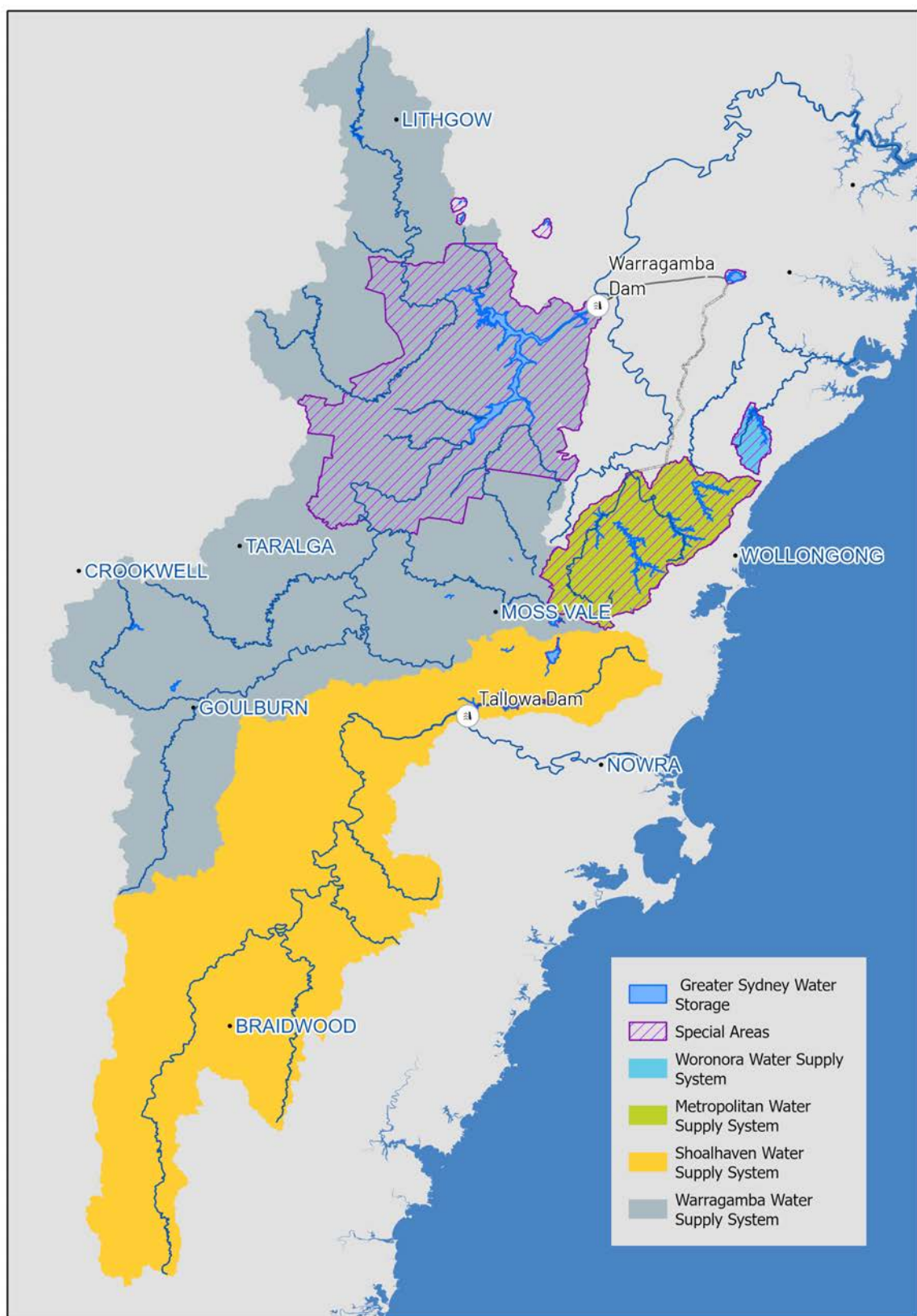
Sydney Drinking Water Catchments



Mulloon
Institute



WaterNSW



Mulloon Institute is a not-for-profit research, education and advocacy organisation. We demonstrate innovative land management approaches that create healthier landscapes more resilient to climatic extremes, rebuild soil fertility, fix more carbon in the landscape, restore lost biodiversity and improve water quality and availability. We believe the long-term sustainability of both agriculture and the environment requires balance and working together. We work collaboratively across Australia with landholders, community groups, First Nations custodians, scientists and government.

The mission of Mulloon Institute is to actively demonstrate, validate and share landscape rehydration, restoration, and regenerative practices to create sustainable and resilient agricultural and environmental systems now and into the future.

These funding guidelines have been developed to support a new Water Stewardship Program in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment area.

The pilot phase of this Water Stewardship Program has been generously supported by The Ian Potter Foundation.

<https://www.mullooninstitute.org/water-stewardship-program>

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Watercolour illustrations by Tilda Joy.

Mulloon Institute acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live, learn and work.

Water Stewardship Program

We're excited to introduce a new program for communities in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchments. The program will support innovative, collaborative projects that restore local water cycles and improve water quality, water security and catchment health. 2025-2027 is the pilot phase of the program

By participating in this program, you'll work alongside other landholders and community members to implement nature-based solutions proven to enhance water filtration, heal erosion, reduce flood peaks, improve stream water quality, and support biodiversity and habitats.

THE KEY OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM

- To establish demonstration projects with landholders in the Sydney catchment area, applying landscape rehydration principles. These projects will repair, build and conserve natural and functional waterway and landscape conditions important to the local setting.
- To encourage landscape-scale works and communities of practice that bring people together and build the foundations for landscape-scale benefits. The program aims to support actions that strengthen local connections, foster resilience to climate change, enable cultural engagement with Country and skills-building to contribute to a Water Stewardship culture across the Catchment.
- To develop projects that vary in scale and scope, from individual properties to community-wide initiatives.
- To improve water quality and catchment health, addressing intact, vulnerable, or degraded waterways, and incorporating diverse landscape features such as wetlands, creeks and gullies.

HOW TO APPLY

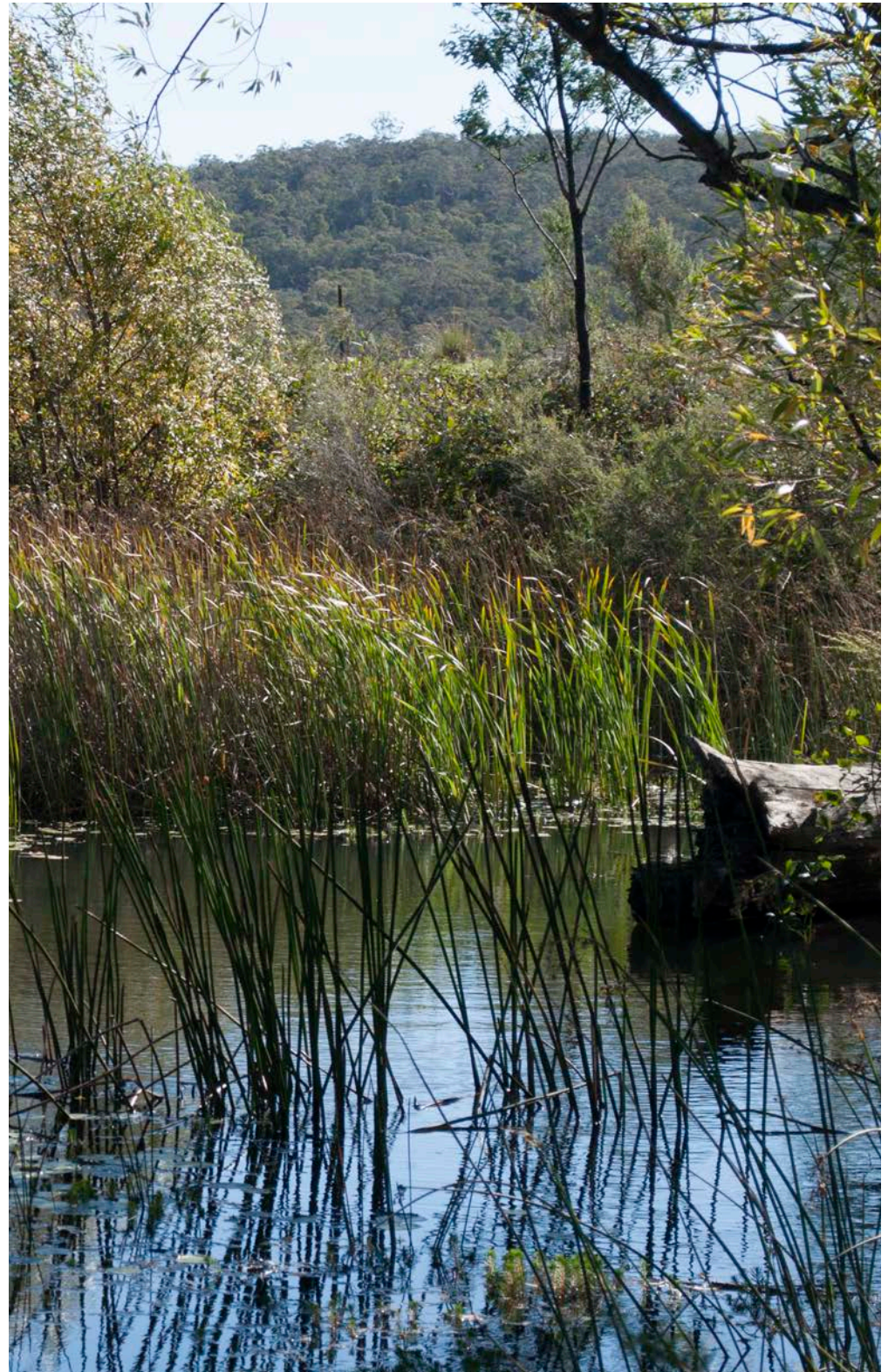
- Complete an [EXPRESSION OF INTEREST form](#) (available to download from [Mulloon Institute website here](#)).
- Submit as a PDF attachment to: wsp.sdw@mullooninstitute.org
- A Mulloon Institute staff member will contact you to discuss your project.
- Got a question? Contact Erin Healy.
E: wsp.sdw@mullooninstitute.org or call M: +61 487 149 670

PROJECT STAGES

1. Submit your interest as an individual or group.
2. Your project will undergo an early eligibility assessment.
3. You will be invited to submit an initial project plan, which will be assessed for feasibility and alignment with program objectives.
4. A Mulloon Institute consultant will work with you to complete your project plan, incorporating detailed designs where natural infrastructure is included.
5. A panel will review your proposal and recommend funding.
6. Final endorsement and funding approval.

PROJECT TYPES

- Individual landholder projects
- Multi-landholder projects (each landholder needs a separate plan and agreement)



Eligibility

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Project is located on a private and rural land holding within the declared Sydney Drinking Water Catchments.

Project aligns with the program objectives and funding guidelines.

Property is used for agricultural production.

Landholders must be willing to collaborate with Mulloon Institute for field days and project monitoring, accept conditions of project maintenance and cooperate with others on larger projects.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Project works are already underway or complete, or proposed under other projects.

The proposed project is under a legal obligation (e.g. regulation, consent conditions, covenants, compliance notices, court orders, offset arrangements, or existing landholder agreements).

What funding is available?

This program will provide funding and technical support (via a Mulloon Institute consultant) for the following activities, subject to project assessment and selection.

Funding amounts are subject to change.

ACTIVITY	AMOUNT \$	DESCRIPTION
Stock removal fencing along riparian areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$8.50 per metre (ex GST) on agreed alignments for minimum post and wire (5 strand) fencing• \$5.00 per metre (ex GST) on agreed alignments for electric fencing	New gully, creek or streamside fencing that enables the removal of stock for a minimum of 10 years for riparian recovery and on-ground works. Around 10 m fence setback (from top of bank) depending on topography.
Water supply systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trough: \$800 per trough (ex GST)• Piping: \$3.00 per metre (ex GST)• Pumps: \$1,500 per pump (ex GST)• Header tank: \$2,000 per tank (ex GST)	Water supply components to set up supply systems for stock (based on current needs) as an alternative to creek and stream access. Does not include farm dams.
Standalone waterway crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80% of cost capped at \$7,000 (ex GST) per crossing (up to 3 crossings)	Standalone stock and vehicle crossings are required within fenced riparian areas. Upgrades or relocation are possible if they support riparian management and/or erosion control.
Native revegetation / assisted regeneration	<p>Projects with <500 plants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to \$5.00 (ex GST) per plant and stake/ guard <p>Projects with >500 plants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of cost capped at \$30,000 (ex GST) and based on agreed plan.	Native revegetation or assisted regeneration of more than 500 plants, where a contractor supports planting and maintenance.
Natural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of cost based on agreed plan	<p>Funding is available for natural infrastructure constructed in streams, gullies and on hillslopes. Natural infrastructure is defined as engineered structures made from materials such as rock, logs, brush, natural geo-fabrics and living vegetation. Works could be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide stabilisation to eroded banks• submerge and/or stabilise active head cuts within the stream channel• slow and de-energise stream flow (flood attenuation)• capture mobilised or eroded sediment• build and raise stream bed within an incised channel• promote the establishment of riparian and in-stream vegetation• re-create or enhance the function of the channel bed• re-establish functional connections between the stream and adjacent floodplain and groundwater systems.

Funding conditions:

The following conditions of funding will apply:

Project Delivery Timeframe and Maintenance Agreement

All project works must be completed within 24 months from the agreement date, subject to an acquittal. The agreement will last for 10 years after the completion of on-ground works.

Controlled Activity Approval

As the primary contractor, Mulloon Institute will obtain and manage any necessary approvals. There may be exceptions to this, such as if you wish to undertake particular works yourself, like waterway crossings.

Stock Management

To protect the health of your waterway, ensure safe access during construction, and allow sufficient recovery over time, we recommend complete stock exclusion for at least 10 years. A strategic grazing regime in fenced riparian areas is only acceptable in clear and beneficial circumstances and must be negotiated and documented as part of the project agreement.

Exchange of Information

Under an agreement with Mulloon Institute/Consulting, please be aware that personal and project information will be shared and managed with WaterNSW in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

Community Engagement

Project sites should be made available for the Mulloon Institute to conduct community engagement and educational field activities, and to provide information for case studies.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage sites identified within the project area will be maintained and protected. Project activities and ongoing site management must not cause damage to any known cultural heritage sites. Any cultural heritage sites discovered within the project area will be recorded in the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System.

Work, Health and Safety Obligations

As a landholder, you must be aware of your Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations. Revegetation and erosion management plans and works are subject to individual safety plans.

Monitoring and Access

You must agree to allow Mulloon Institute and/or WaterNSW to undertake monitoring activities over time. This includes capturing imagery during the project for reporting purposes and during the maintenance period.