

Dig it! Revegetation small grants guidelines 2022-23



Hunter Local Land Services (LLS) is supporting landholders who are interested in undertaking small-scale native revegetation projects on their properties under our new program, 'Dig It'.

The small grants program aims to improve habitat availability and connectivity for native fauna and to reinstate local native provenance plant species. Revegetation projects include wildlife corridors, habitat plantings, dam and riverbank plantings, erosion control and shelterbelt plantings.

The small grants program will support projects that:

- Extend existing remnant vegetation areas
- Improve structural native diversity of existing remnant vegetation
- Create new shelterbelts or wildlife corridors that link to nearby reserves or patches
- Connect, protect or incorporate existing mature paddock trees into planting sites, or
- Protect and enhance farm dams or riverbanks.

This project is being delivered by Hunter Local Land Services with funding from the NSW State Government.

Grant overview:

Funding source	NSW Government(primary), supported by Hunter Catchments Contributions and National Landcare Program
Grant type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted (invitation to EOIs (Expression of Interest) received that do not meet other Hunter Local Land Services priority major funding programs) Competitive (ranked against each other each round using criteria)
Information	http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter/grants-funding-scholarships/dig-it-revegetation-program
Round Number	2
Applications open	From 22 March 2023
Applications close	1 May 2023 (midnight)
Notice of Outcome	Approximately 3 weeks after the closing date
Funding agreement and requirements	Small Funding Letter- 12 months implementation, 1 final report on project completion (including monitoring photos) and involvement in an evaluation/case study, 3 years maintenance requirements.
Total program	\$100,000 (minimum available in 22/23)
Grant funding	\$3,500-\$6,000 per grant (applications above the maximum may be considered)
General Eligibility (see overleaf for other Conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have submitted Expression of Interest to Hunter Local Land Services, to be invited to the grant round/s (list “revegetation” in Project Activities section) Works involving local native provenance plantings on properties in the Hunter region Landholders must have submitted an EOI to incentives, and demonstrate some skills, understanding or experience in native revegetation* Minimum 1 hectare per planting site per property Minimum 1:1 cash or in-kind contribution to grant fund sought. <p>*EOIs received up to the Application Open date will be invited only, EOIs received after this time will be invited to future rounds, training or advice.</p>
Supporting programs	Local Land Services one on one technical advice (where appropriate), provision of native plant lists, revegetation guidelines, webinar and face to face revegetation and, seed collection and propagation training workshops.
Criteria for assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant has gained relevant capacity, practice, or skills in revegetation Public benefit- the planting will provide broader benefits in the landscape (such as wildlife corridors, stepping-stones, enhanced vegetation around paddock trees) Conservation benefits-plantings will support important or threatened vegetation or native fauna to the Hunter region

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money- such as in kind, cash, or other contributions • Risk management-demonstrate risk management and ensure project success
Grants approval	Healthy Landscapes Manager, Hunter Local Land Services
Publishing	All successful granted projects will be published on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder: http://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding
Lodging applications	Electronically: incentives.program@lls.nsw.gov.au Written: Private Bag 2010, Paterson NSW 2421
Where to get assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Hunter: Catherine Conroy- catherine.conroy@lls.nsw.gov.au or 0427 578 937 • Lower Hunter: John Eaton- john.eaton@lls.nsw.gov.au or 0455 552 697 • Manning/Great Lakes: Abbey Henry - abbey.henry@lls.nsw.gov.au or 0487 560 109

Why revegetate?

Revegetation refers to the process of planting seeds or seedlings using local native provenance plant species where natural regeneration is not possible, or to improve the condition of vegetation structure by reinstating absent canopy or understorey species or connecting existing native remnant vegetation.

Provenance= native plants sourced from local seed stock or genetically suited to the local area

Revegetation provides a range of important benefits including:

- Shade and shelter for livestock
- Wildlife habitat and connectivity
- Erosion and salinity control
- Water filtration
- Carbon sequestration
- Pest control
- Aesthetics
- Ecosystem services.

Historical land clearing practices have reduced areas of remnant vegetation and resulted in widespread habitat fragmentation and loss. The impacts of these historical practices have been exacerbated by recent drought and bushfire events which have impacted many of our unique fauna species.

Even small plantings can provide vital shelter, food and habitat, and corridors for movement for fauna. Revegetation can protect riverbanks from erosion, and buffer flood impacts. Revegetation using local native species also contributes to agricultural productivity by restoring natural capital and ecosystem services on farms, and other benefits for livestock.

The “Dig it” program seeks to address habitat degradation and loss of vegetation through small native vegetation plantings in the Hunter Local Land Services region.

Eligible use of funding

Landholders who have submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to Hunter Local Land Services for support with revegetation will be invited to the Dig It program.

As a guide, small grants from \$3,500-\$6,000* (ex GST) are available to successful applicants for the following activities:

- Site preparation works including ripping, digging, spraying, weeding and slashing
- Plant installation using local native provenance species, including watering and maintenance
- Installation of stock exclusion fencing around revegetation areas
- Ongoing site maintenance and monitoring including weed control and watering
- Materials required for revegetation including native plants, tree guards, stakes, fertilizer
- Up to \$500 for capital items: water tanks or stock watering troughs specific to the project site only**

*Note we may consider applications for larger projects and budgets over \$6,000 on their merit, where the project also provides greater environmental or connectivity benefit.

Ineligible use of funding

Activities that are not eligible for funding include:

- Fencing, other than that needed to exclude stock from project areas
- Stock watering irrigation or pumps
- Retrospective works
- Works that are already required to be undertaken under an existing project or project maintenance clause or funded through other funding sources or any on title agreement (such as set-asides or Biodiversity Conservation Trust)
- Works intended to improve visual amenity or have a private benefit only
- Revegetation using non-native plants (plants not naturally found in the area)
- Capital items other than above**



Dig It: Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

Make sure you are eligible to apply. All these standard conditions apply to this program:

Revegetation Grant Eligibility

- The project must be within the Hunter Local Land Services region
- Revegetation areas must be a minimum of 1ha in total
- If corridors are being planted, these must be a minimum of 20m wide
- Local native provenance plants are to be used only
- Funds sought can only be used for eligible items or activities (see page 2)
- The project area must be fenced from stock for the duration of the project with either temporary or permanent fencing
- Applicant must demonstrate some experience in revegetation including practical experience, completion of training or willingness to attend training event in revegetation (Local Land Services have online resources and future revegetation training available, see previous page)
- Applicants must submit a photo and map of the proposed site. See Appendix A for more information.

Funding, Insurances and Other Conditions

- Applicant must have submitted an EOI to Hunter Local Land Services, and be invited to submit an application form (EOI's received up to the Application Open date only)
- Applicant must be the landowner or have approval from the landowner
- Applicant must contribute a minimum of 1:1 (landholder contribution \$1: Hunter Local Land Services funding \$1) co-investment through cash and/or in-kind (such as labour)
- Applicant must be able to complete proposed works within 12 months (or otherwise agreed time-frame)
- Applicant must be willing to enter into a small grant funding agreement for the duration of the project, including a three-year maintenance period
- Applicant must hold (or be willing to obtain) \$10 million public liability /legal liability insurance for the duration of the project (this is the onus of the applicant, and not able to be funded via the grant)
- Application must meet Hunter Local Land Services minimum standards for on-ground works, as detailed in these guidelines (see Appendix B)
- Applicant must not have previously received Local Land Services or CMA or other funding for the proposed works (unless the work is complementary and not duplicating existing works) or be required to complete works as part of an on-title agreement (such as set asides or Biodiversity Conservation Trust agreements)
- Applicant must have completed all works, including monitoring and reporting, for any previously funded projects (with Local Land Services/CMA) prior to submitting a new application
- You can only apply and receive up to 1 grant per property under this program
- The proposed activities must be consistent with local, NSW and Australian government regulations and legislation, this includes any disturbance to listed vegetation of which a permit is required
- No funding of retrospective works (unless otherwise agreed)

- Applicant must have paid all current Hunter Local Land Services financial obligations (e.g. rates, long term grazing permits) prior to receiving a funding agreement and any Conflict of Interest is declared with your application.

Grants Assessment

You must meet all eligibility criteria and conditions to be able to be assessed under the program.

Assessment is based on a panel consisting of an assessment panel, scoring each application against the criteria identified. Applications are ranked, and then recommended for funding based on available funding. Applications may not be recommended- and feedback will be provided

Successful Grant Requirements

Subject to skills and experience, applicants may use the grant to purchase materials and deliver the project themselves, or to engage a licensed contractor to complete the works, or a combination of materials and contractor engagement.

Landholders may also wish to engage voluntary, Aboriginal or not for profit labour.

Success with your grant:

- Landholders are required to make a minimum 1:1 contribution to the project through in-kind labour and/or cash during the project period (including 12-month implementation and 3-year maintenance periods).
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a small grant funding agreement with Hunter Local Land Services for the duration of the project.
- The agreement will detail the landholders' responsibilities for the project including what works must be completed, completion dates and maintenance requirements.
- Works must be delivered within 12 months from the funding agreement date (although it can be completed earlier).
- Successful grantees will receive funding via an upfront payment at the commencement of works.
- Applicants must submit proof of work, including photos and mapping, as a final report on completion of the project.
- Individuals may also be invited to participate in case studies or interviews on their project.

Following the 12-month revegetation works, a three-year maintenance and monitoring period will apply. During this period, applicants will be required to undertake annual photo point monitoring of their project site.

See Appendix A for photo monitoring tips.

Partnerships or collaborative projects between neighbouring landholders are encouraged.



Considerations for planting design

There are several steps to designing your revegetation project:

1. Assessing your site, including:
 - Current condition and structure of existing vegetation
 - Soil types
 - Water, wind and slope
 - Climate
2. Setting your goals and design. This will influence:
 - Plant density
 - Species lists
 - Structure and layout
3. Identifying your timeline, including:
 - Ordering plants/seed collection
 - Ground preparation
 - Fencing
 - Weed control
 - Planting
 - Watering
 - Maintenance

Hunter Local Land Services has several resources available to assist in designing your project, click on these to view:

- [‘Reveg Ready’ webinar video \(1 hr\)- highly recommended](#)
- [Planting your Patch](#)
- [Fenced but not Forgotten](#)
- [Recognising Habitat Features](#)
- [Koala factsheet and species list](#)
- [Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and species list](#)
- [Hunter River Estuary Riparian Revegetation Guide](#)
- [Wollombi Catchment Riparian Revegetation Guide](#)
- [A Guide to Managing Box Gum Grassy Woodlands](#) (external document)
- [Wildlife Friendly Fencing](#)

Revegetation projects are encouraged to meet landholder objectives while also providing appropriate habitat for local native fauna.

Hunter Local Land Services staff can also provide site specific advice in initial planning and implementing the project. This includes general revegetation advice; species lists or to identify local provenance plant suppliers for use in projects. Please contact a staff member early, if you require on-site assistance.

Other natural resource management initiatives and resources:

<http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter/projects-and-programs/NRM-biodiversity>

Check out our Hunter Local Land Services Events Page for upcoming Seed Collection and Revegetation Training events <http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter/events> or follow us on Facebook [@HunterLLS](#)



Appendix A. Submitting photos and maps

Submitting Photos

To assist our review of your proposed project, while not being able to visit your property, we ask that you send at least 2 photos of the proposed revegetation area of your property.

Tips on taking photos:

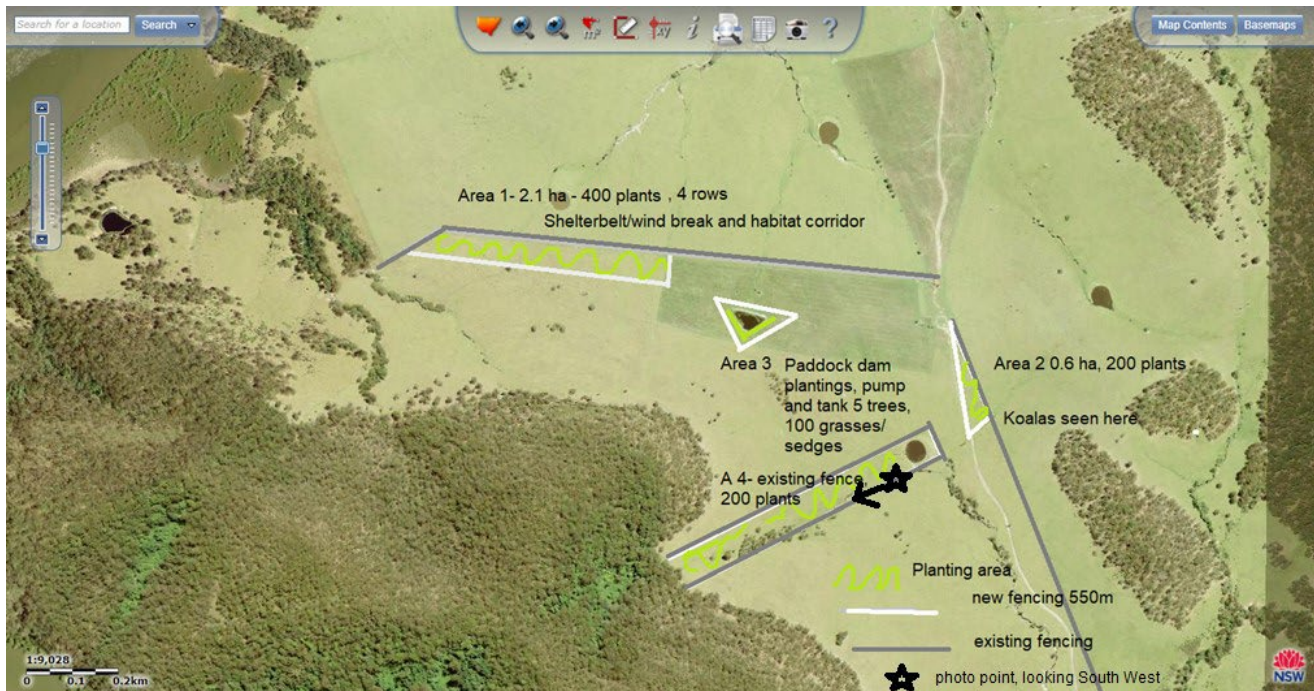
- Take photos of where the revegetation project is planned, including in the photo areas of adjoining vegetation/infrastructure or existing fencing that may be useful reference points
- Take the photos in landscape/horizontal format
- Take a few photos when you are on site, and then when back at your computer you can select 2 of the best ones.
- These photos can also be used as your initial monitoring photos.
- You can also install a monitoring post in the site, as a permanent reference point for future monitoring photos- a photo before you start can also be a great reminder of the work you have achieved when it's a few years down the track!
- Remember to save the photo on your computer/cloud so you can revisit in at a later time (Local Land Services will also have copies that you provide to us on file)

Check out this handy photo monitoring guide for establishing initial photos of your proposed project location: [LLS Photo Monitoring Fact Sheet](#)



Creating and submitting a project map

To assist our review of your project, and understand where you propose to conduct your planting, submitting a simple map with your application is required. An example map is below.



Don't panic! If you aren't an expert at developing maps online, we have a few options for you:

- For more advanced users: you can draw your map with Google Earth, Six Maps or related programs, save it as a JPEG file and upload it into the application form. These programs are great as they not only include recent aerial imagery, but they can also measure the area of your proposed planting.
- For more entry level users: If you need a basic map of your property, you can screenshot (ALT+PRT SCRN)/ print an aerial map of your property and use Microsoft Paint or hand draw the area you are proposing to revegetate. This can then be scanned (or use your mobile to take a photo) and saved to your computer as a JPEG file and uploaded to your application form.
- Feeling technologically challenged? Contact us! We can also assist you by providing a base map of your property or support you with your map.

If you require assistance, please contact the relevant Hunter Local Land Services staff member for your district, by referring to the "How to Apply Page". We are here to help.

Appendix B. Best Practice Standards for Local Land Services funded projects

Revegetation

All revegetation activities funded by the Local Land Services must achieve and maintain at least an 80% survival and establishment rate and stock exclusion fencing must be installed where stock could potentially access the site. Local provenance seed/planting stock must be used on revegetation sites. The following standards apply to specific revegetation activities:

- Revegetation of gullies, rivers, and creeks: Any plantings along riparian lands must use local native species (and additional species as advised by Hunter Local Land Services staff). Riparian revegetation projects should aim, if possible, to cover both sides of the flow line/riverbank.
- Revegetation for biodiversity, habitat, and conservation purposes: A mix of local native species suitable for the site must be used (please seek advice from your Hunter Local Land Services contact, in general a mix of 40-50% canopy and 50-60% understorey shrubs/forbs are standard).
- Wildlife corridors must link existing areas of remnant vegetation or established revegetation sites and must be at least 25 m wide or have an average width of at least 30 m, and more than 1 hectare in size.

Fencing (including wildlife considerations)

All fencing (electric or standard) to be managed in a stock-proof condition for the term of the agreement. Fence to be installed where stock could potentially access the site so that it provides long term protection and/or restriction to stock within the project and maintenance periods, permanent fencing is preferred. In addition, the following standards apply to new fences:

- Permanent fencing is recommended to include bottom and top as plain wires to allow animal movement and reduce risks of entanglement if adjoining river zones or existing remnant vegetation.
- Ring lock fencing is not permitted as this reduces the ability of wildlife to move through the landscape.
- Fencing to follow the guidelines published by Hunter Local Land Services Wildlife Friendly Fencing
- Keeping stock out of fenced areas also protects the seedlings as they grow and protects native fauna. Stock have been recorded to harm/injure native animals, including Koalas and turtle nests.



Weed Control

Weed control for treating weeds or regenerating or protecting native vegetation will need to demonstrate that weed control is integral to achieving good biodiversity outcomes and/or addressing broader environmental issues. While weed control to comply with a landholder's general biosecurity duty may be required on a given site by legislation, funding for the control of weeds is permitted where weed control is not the primary activity.

More information on your general biosecurity duty here:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/managing-biosecurity/the-general-biosecurity-duty>

The Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan contains information on regional weed priorities.

Weed control activities must achieve at least an 80% reduction in cover of the targeted weed species and this should be maintained for the term of the agreement. Directions on appropriate herbicide use must be adhered to and relevant permits must be acquired if undertaking weed control near waterways or water bodies. Permits may also be required from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to control weeds in Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs).

Fire Management

The landholder must not carry out any burning in Local Land Services funded project areas to conserve native vegetation unless required to do so under the Rural Fires Act 1997, or in accordance with Local Land Services approved Fire Plan.

Burning must involve an ecologically appropriate fire management regime that promotes biodiversity outcomes. Technical advice should be sought from Local Land Services staff or other suitably qualified persons, and agreement reached with Local Land Services staff prior to an area being burnt.

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