The 2023 Cumberland Plain Research Grant

Western Sydney University is excited to announce that applications are now open for the 2023 Cumberland Plain Research Grant, supported by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

Please read the details of the proposal requirements and related information below before completing the application.

Applications must be submitted using the template provided by 5pm AEDT Monday, 6 March 2023 to Vera Brinkel (V.Brinkel@westernsydney.edu.au). Decisions will be made, and successful applicants notified in writing at the beginning of April 2023.

Proposal requirements

We invite applications for funding proposals from individuals to undertake research in support of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Research Program. Applicants should be either a higher degree research (HDR) student, early career researcher (ECR) (≤5 years post-PhD excluding career interruptions), or a person able to demonstrate their ability to undertake high quality research. Applications should include investigators from universities or other research agencies. Only one proposal per lead investigator will be considered.

Your proposal must address at least one of the four research themes:

- Theme 1: Supporting Aboriginal connections
- Theme 2: Engaging with peoples and cultures
- Theme 3: Conserving threatened species and ecosystems
- Theme 4: Restoring and reconstructing ecosystems

Your proposal can only include funds to be used for travel, participant remuneration, field work, lab work, consumables, equipment, maintenance, or any other resources to support your research. Funding cannot be used for salaries or conferences.

The funding scheme will be administered by the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment (HIE) at Western Sydney University. The submitted proposals will be assessed by the selection committee based on the pre-defined selection criteria (Table 1). This will include a peer review process supporting the final funding decision made by a committee with representatives from Western Sydney University and NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

We value diversity in all aspects and encourage applications from people with diverse backgrounds. Aboriginal peoples are specifically encouraged to apply.

Budget

We have $60,000 available for the 2023 Cumberland Plain Research Grant. We can offer two tiers of funding:

- Tier 1: up to $7,500
- Tier 2: up to $15,000
Funds will be provided in full at the commencement of the project. The successful applicant will need to complete a funding agreement and issue an invoice with an ABN, address, contact and banking details (as required). Once all relevant documents have been received the funds will be dispersed. Following budget allocation variation to items >30% require approval.

Reporting Requirements

1. Provide a mid-project update confirming progress and flagging issues, along with a brief (200 word) summary and images to promote activities by September 2023.
2. Prepare a final project report written as a short article highlighting the work conducted and outputs achieved by April 2024.
3. Present project findings in a seminar to the Cumberland Plain Research Program by April 2024.
4. Prepare a financial statement outlining the expenditure including proof of spending by April 2024.
5. Acknowledge the support received in any publications, media, or other work arising wholly or partially from the research supported by this funding.

Table 1. Selection Criteria for Proposals

Criteria necessary to secure funding

- Project will be completed within 12 months from the date of commencement
- Less than AU$7,500 requested for Tier 1 & less than AU$15,000 requested for Tier 2
- If applying as individual, you must have an ABN, provide us with a tax invoice for payment
- Demonstrate your capacity to deliver research. This may be in partnership with a university or research agency
- A 2-page CV for each investigator.

Major assessment criteria

- General proposal merit
- Aligned with at least one of the CPCP Research Strategy key themes
- Addresses multiple knowledge gaps listed in the CPCP Research Strategy
- Appropriate and efficient use of the budget.

Desirable attributes

- Involve partnerships with multiple organisations
- Leverages in-kind funding and resources
- Involves participants with diverse backgrounds.

The committee will review and assess project proposals and consider whether they:

- cost-effectively deliver high-quality research
- address knowledge gaps in multiple research themes and contribute to Stage 1 objectives
- support effective delivery of CPCP commitments
- have multiple partners and foster meaningful collaboration
- are Aboriginal led or co-led and/or engage and inform local Aboriginal stakeholders
- leverage additional co-funding, such as grants and partnerships
- effectively manage risks.