



Department of Planning,
Lands and Heritage



Native Title Party Capacity Building Program 2025 – Round 2

Application Guidelines

June 2025

**SOLUTIONS FOCUSED FOR A
VIBRANT WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of Western Australia. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders, both past and present, and the ongoing connection between people, land, waters and community. We acknowledge those who continue to share knowledge, their traditions and culture to support our journey for reconciliation. In particular, we recognise land and cultural heritage as places that hold great significance for Aboriginal people.

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Gordon Stephenson House
140 William Street
Perth WA 6000

Locked Bag 2506,
Perth WA 6001

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Website: www.dphl.wa.gov.au
Email: info@dphl.wa.gov.au
Tel: 08 6551 8002

National Relay Service: 13 36 77

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Contents

Introduction	3
Capacity Building Program Funding	4
Payment schedule	4
Who can apply?	4
Purpose	5
Assistance with applications	5
Evaluation of applications	6
Assessment criteria	6
What can Capacity Building Program funding be used for?	6
What can funding not be used for?	7
Funding objectives	7
How to complete your application	7
Reporting requirements	8
Native Title Party Capacity Building Grants 2025 – Application Form	7
Appendix A	12

Introduction

The State Government recognises that native title parties across Western Australia have varying levels of capacity. This directly affects their ability to engage with members, proponents, government and other stakeholders on heritage-related matters.

The Native Title Capacity Building Program will assist native title parties to provide heritage services and respond to the engagement, consultation and service delivery needs of proponents and government. This includes improving their capacity to participate in statutory processes under the [Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972](#) (AHA).

Capacity Building Program Funding

The State Government has committed \$8 million per year to the Capacity Building Program from 2024 to 2027. During this period, **\$180,000** per year is available to each native title party that successfully applies.

Due to the high number of successful applications to the 2024 round, the State Government has provided additional funding to support new applications in the 2025 round.

Successful applicants in the 2025 round will be eligible for **\$180,000** per year until the beginning of 2028. This equates to a total of **\$540,000** per applicant, with payments made biannually in accordance with the Payment Schedule (Table 1).

To receive funding, successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (the Department). Throughout the Program, recipients will be required to provide scheduled reports demonstrating:

1. A continued commitment to improving their capacity to engage with proponents, government and AHA statutory processes;
2. How funding has been used to meet the purpose of the program;
3. Quantitative and qualitative information about engagement with proponents, government and statutory processes.

These guidelines support the preparation of an application. Only one application is required to secure ongoing funding through to 2028.

Native title parties are strongly encouraged to contact their relevant Regional Director as a first point of contact for guidance and support with the application process.

Applications must be submitted through the online SmartyGrants platform before the deadline.

Successful applicants will be provided with report templates to complete and return to the Department at scheduled intervals for the duration of the Program.

Payment schedule

Payments will be made to successful applicants according to the schedule below. These dates may be subject to change and will be confirmed in the signed funding agreement. Payments after the first will be made only on the successful receipt of reports, as outlined in table 5.

Payment	Payment date	Payment amount
Payment 1	On execution	\$90,000
Payment 2	January 2026	\$90,000
Payment 3	July 2026	\$90,000
Payment 4	January 2027	\$90,000
Payment 5	July 2027	\$90,000
Payment 6	January 2028	\$90,000

Table 1

Please note: Before the first payment can be released, the native title party must be set up as an active supplier in the Department's financial system. While the Department will process this as quickly as possible, there may be a delay in receiving the first payment.

Who can apply?

Applications are open to all **native title parties** as defined in the AHA, who do not currently have a Capacity Building Program funding agreement with the Department.

Representative bodies acting on behalf of claimants, under this definition, may also apply.

Purpose

The program provides funding to help native title parties increase their capacity to:

Engage with proponents, government and statutory processes.

Successful applicants must demonstrate how the funding will improve their capacity to:

1. **Provide effective heritage services** – engage with and advise proponents and government on activities that may harm Aboriginal heritage.
2. **Manage heritage effectively** – develop heritage management structures and systems, share information in a culturally appropriate way, and upskill staff to engage with proponents and government.
3. **Respond to statutory applications and related processes** – participate in processes including but not limited to:
 - consultation by landowners under the Consultation Policy for section 18 (of the Act) applications;
 - recording and reporting Aboriginal sites for section 18 notices;
 - responding to Regulation 7 and 10 notifications from proponents;
 - responding to procedural fairness processes for section 16 and 18 applications and section 5 assessments, noting the 70-day statutory time limit for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee (ACHC) recommendations for section 18 notices; and
 - applying for a review of ministerial decisions under section 18 via the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT), or making submissions to SAT or the Premier when a decision is called in.

Assistance with applications

The Department's Regional Directors are available to assist native title parties with their applications. It is strongly recommended that applicants first contact their relevant Regional Director.

Region	Regional Director contact details
Southwest / Great Southern	Andrew Bedwell E: Andrew.Bedwell@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6551 8132 Glen Shaw E: glenn.shaw@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6551 7985
Goldfields-Esperance (Kalgoorlie)	Grant Bussell E: Grant.Bussell@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6551 8172
Midwest / Gascoyne	Daniel Oswald E: Daniel.Oswald@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6552 4521
Kimberley	James Dobson E: James.Dobson@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6551 7928
Pilbara	Shanine Ryan E: Shanine.Ryan@dplh.wa.gov.au P: 6551 8094

Table 2

General enquiries about the program or submission of applications can be directed to:

Email: CBprogram@dplh.wa.gov.au

Evaluation of applications

All applications will be evaluated by a panel using the assessment criteria.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome by email to the Authorised Person and Contact Person named in the application.

Assessment criteria

Your application is your opportunity to show how Capacity Building funds will help your organisation improve its ability to engage with proponents, government and statutory processes.

Each application will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Details
Purpose	The application clearly shows how funding will improve the organisation’s capacity to engage with proponents, government and statutory processes.
Management	Measures of success are identified and achievable. The applicant demonstrates community support. A realistic Funding Plan is attached.
Value for money	The Funding Plan offers good value in terms of proposed activities, timeframes and outcomes. The funding addresses a genuine need.

Table 3

What can Capacity Building Program funding be used for?

Funding must be used to improve the native title party’s capacity in line with the Program’s purpose.

This may include:

- hiring staff for relevant duties (e.g., heritage specialists, administrative support);
- training and upskilling existing staff (e.g., recordkeeping, negotiations, compliance, heritage protection and management, governance);
- developing IT systems (e.g., heritage databases, ArcGIS);
- engaging dedicated resources to manage heritage matters; and
- developing heritage management frameworks and guides.

Applicants should refer to **Appendix A** for more information on capability development.

Funding can be used to purchase essential infrastructure (e.g., computers, phones), but applicants must show that these are necessary to deliver heritage services.

What can funding not be used for?

Ineligible activities include:

- interstate and overseas travel;
- maintenance of Aboriginal heritage, culture and Country;
- travel and accommodation for cultural activities or ceremonies;
- purchase of vehicles;
- prizes, gifts, donations or grants; and
- ongoing operational costs
(e.g., insurance, power, water, rent or office purchases).

Funding objectives

Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and Consultation Policy for section 18 applications, proponents are expected to consult with native title parties on activities that may impact heritage. To meet these expectations and ensure effective processes, native title parties must be able to respond to land use and heritage enquiries, provide advice and participate in consultations.

The aim of the Program is to improve engagement quality and reduce response times over the course of the funding period. This includes responses to proponents and to requests from the ACHC as it undertakes its statutory responsibilities under the AHA. Table 4 sets out response timeframe targets.

Action	Timeframe
Respond to proponents on heritage-related matters.	28 days
Respond to the Department as part of the ACHC's procedural fairness process for statutory applications	21 days

Table 4

How to complete your application

Applicants must use the SmartyGrants platform to submit their application. When completing your application, consider the following:

- **What is your funding need?**
Explain why funding is required to help build your organisation's capacity.
- **How will you use the funding to meet that need?**
Describe how the funding will be used to support capacity building.
- The Department's Regional Directors are available to assist native title parties with applications before they are submitted.
Native title parties are strongly encouraged to contact their relevant Regional Director as a first point of contact for guidance and support throughout the application process.

Reporting requirements

To ensure funding is used as intended, successful applicants must submit reports to the Department.

Table 5 below outlines the reporting requirements.

- Regional Directors are available to assist native title parties with reporting obligations.
- Report templates will be provided to successful applicants.
- Reports are not expected to be lengthy or complex and should not require specialist assistance.

Report	Timing	Form/Content
Progress Report	Every six months starting from December 2025	Completed template reporting how the native title party is meeting agreed success measures
Financial Report (yearly)	Before 30 September	Completed template with a detailed income and expenditure statement specific to the funding, and evidence that funding has been used in line with the Funding Agreement
Evaluation Report	Every 12 months starting from December 2025	Completed template reporting quantitative and qualitative information on engagement activities and cost/time commitments. Includes an updated Funding Plan for the next 12 months

Table 5

Native Title Party Capacity Building Grants 2025 – Application Form

Applicant's details

Native title party:	
ABN:	
Address:	
Contact Person*:	
Phone:	
Email:	
**Authorised Person's Name:	
**Authorised Person's Position:	
**Authorised Person's Phone:	
**Authorised Person's Email:	
Application Title:	
Location of where funding will be spent:	
Time Period: [Can be limited or ongoing]	

- * Contact Person: responsible for engagement with the Department in relation to the funding.
- ** Authorised Person: manages the funds and agrees to abide by the terms and conditions.

Capability gap

What is your funding need?

Why does your native title party require funding to improve its capacity to engage with proponents, government and statutory processes?

(250 words maximum)

Proposal

What do you intend to do?

How will you use the funding to improve your organisation's capacity to engage with proponents, government and statutory processes?

(250 words maximum)

Consultation

What consultation has occurred or will occur with your Board and/or members about the proposal?

You may wish to include feedback or support from members and other stakeholders.

(250 words maximum)

Building capacity

What are the expected benefits of the Program for your organisation?

How will your ability to engage with proponents, government and statutory processes improve as a result of this funding?

(500 words maximum)

Measuring success

What outcome measures will you use to measure success?

Number these for reference in your funding plan. These measures will be used for monitoring and must be reported against to ensure the suitability of continued funding.

(250 words maximum).

Funding plan

Outline how the native title party intends to use the funds over the next 12 months to build organisational capacity.

(Add rows as required.)

Capability	Initiative	Timeframe (from – to, in months)	Budget	Measure of Success	Relevant Program Purpose	Evidence Attached?
Example: Greater responsiveness to requests for information from proponents and government.	Example: Hire new staff to implement a help desk function to support proponents on local heritage matters. Respond to emails, phone calls and other correspondence.	Example: July –December 2025	Example: \$30,000	Example: Timeframes for responding to correspondence decreases.	Provide effective heritage service.	
Example: Improved ability to manage concurrent tasks such as grant applications and negotiations.	Example: Enrol a staff member in a training course on best practice project management skills.	Example: October 2025	Example: \$5,000	Example: Increased number of tasks delivered on time.	Manage heritage effectively.	
Example: Increased ability to engage with applications proponents and provide accurate and timely information.	Example: Develop internal guidelines to respond to statutory process requests – e.g., requests made pursuant to s.18 of the Act.	Example: March 2026	Example: \$10,000	Example: Increased understanding of the Act.	Respond to statutory applications	

Declaration

I understand the responsibilities in making this application and agree to use the funding for the purpose outlined in this application.

Signature of Authorised Person:

Name of Authorised Person:

Authorised Person's Position:

Native title party organisation:

Date: / /

Appendix A

Purpose	Example capabilities
Provide effective heritage service	• Consult on Aboriginal heritage matters with native title parties, government, proponents and/or members in line with statutory requirements • Provide advice on Aboriginal heritage • Undertake or support Aboriginal heritage surveys in relation to proposed land use • Respond to requests from the Registrar or landowners about Aboriginal heritage • Respond to procedural fairness requests • Provide comment on proposed legislative land use approvals that may impact Aboriginal heritage.
Manage heritage effectively	• Prioritise management planning of Aboriginal sites • Prepare funding submissions and other arrangements for heritage protection and promotion • Conduct on-ground works for site protection, rehabilitation and promotion • Build understanding of Aboriginal heritage values and develop management tools • Build capacity within the organisation/community for heritage management • Deliver presentations and attend events to share best practice • Provide training on site identification, documentation and management to groups such as community members and Aboriginal Rangers • Upskill staff or community members in heritage management • Develop heritage-related policies, programs and management documents • Create Aboriginal heritage training and employment initiatives.
Respond to statutory applications	• Understand relevant legislation and statutory requirements • Identify and record Aboriginal heritage • Support lodgement of sites to the Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects • Review and improve Register data • Advise on Aboriginal surveys in relation to proposed land use (e.g., s18 and s16) • Review and respond to Regulation 7 and 10 notifications • Participate in consultation under the Consultation Policy • Record and report sites as required under section 18 • Respond to the ACHC's procedural fairness process for section 16 and 18 applications and section 5 assessments (within the 70-day statutory timeframe) • Make an application to the SAT for review of a Ministerial decision under section 18 and/or make submissions to the SAT or the Premier under the call-in powers.