

What is Green Corps?

Green Corps – *Young Australians for the Environment* - is an Australian Government youth development and environmental training programme for young people aged between 17 and 20 years. Green Corps provides young people with the opportunity to volunteer their time and effort to conserve, preserve and restore Australia's natural environment and cultural heritage.

The aims of Green Corps are to:

- provide high quality, genuine environmental outcomes, which aid in the conservation, protection and restoration of Australia's natural environment and cultural heritage;
- provide youth development opportunities for young Australians, including improved employment and educational outcomes; and
- promote connections between young Australians and their communities.

Green Corps is administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) in consultation with the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH). Green Corps is delivered for the Australian Government by five Green Corps Service Providers.

Green Corps Projects run for a period of 26 weeks and are primarily located in regional and remote areas of Australia. There are opportunities for approximately 170 Green Corps projects each year.

Green Corps can provide on-ground help for environmental and cultural heritage projects and can make a real contribution to the local environment and community by providing labour assistance to land managers and community groups.

Past project activities have included land, water and wildlife survey and data collection, landcare, bushcare, rivercare or coastcare activities, access control, bush regeneration, habitat protection and restoration, weed control, walking track construction, restoration activities for environment and cultural heritage, community education, assistance with schools programmes and community events and preservation of traditional indigenous culture, skills and stories.

What is a Green Corps Project?

Green Corps projects run for 26 weeks and include:

- a major activity which runs for at least 14 weeks and which focuses on conserving, preserving or restoring Australia's natural environment and/or cultural heritage;
- one or more additional environmental or heritage activities which may be linked in theme to the major activity or be an unrelated activity conducted at a nearby location;
- community activities nominated and developed by Green Corps Participants;
- youth development and leadership activities designed to enable Green Corps Participants to improve their confidence and self esteem, team work and leadership skills;
- on-the project training;
- accredited training; and
- career counselling.

Each project must have an environmental and/or cultural heritage focus; provide youth development opportunities to the Green Corps Participants; and facilitate linkages between the participants and their local community.

Projects must be consistent with the environmental and heritage policies of the Australian Government and must use best practice principles. Each project must have clearly identified goals and objectives.

Most Green Corps projects will have ten Green Corps Participants allocated to it, but the size of the Green Corps team can be varied to meet the specific requirements of each project.

Projects include a variety of activities with one or more Green Corps Partner Agencies. Community organisations with an interest in youth development or natural resource management and heritage are encouraged to become a partner agency with the Green Corps programme.

What is a Green Corps Partner Agency?

A Green Corps Partner Agency is an organisation who develops a Green Corps project proposal and works with a Green Corps Service Provider to implement the project. Examples of partner agencies include community, youth and environmental organisations and local, state, territory and Australian Government agencies.

Although private organisations can be partner agencies, Green Corps can not be used to make a profit, to gain an advantage over competitors or to make capital improvements to private property or businesses. In addition, Green Corps can not be used to save money on activities which should be the organisation's responsibility such as maintenance.

What do Partner Agencies contribute to the project?

Green Corps Partner Agencies are expected to make a contribution to the Green Corps project. The amount and type of contribution will be negotiated between the Green Corps Service Provider and the Partner Agency. The contribution can include, but is not limited to:

- providing technical support, plans and assistance;
- the supply of tools, equipment and supplies required by the Green Corps Participants to complete the project;
- access to meeting rooms and office facilities;
- working with the Green Corps Service Provider to ensure any necessary Australian Government, State, Territory or local government building or planning approvals and licences for working with native flora and fauna are obtained; and
- assisting the Green Corps Participants to make linkages with the community.

The project proposal form asks a series of questions on the logistical arrangements which need to be considered before a project is approved. If your organisation is unable to provide solutions to all aspects of the project development, it will **not** mean that your application will not proceed. You are encouraged to work with the Green Corps Service Provider to find an alternative approach. For example, if there are no toilet facilities at the project site and it is not practical to provide a portable toilet, a solution may be to structure the work plan in a way that allows the team to travel to a toilet site during breaks.

How do organisations apply to become a Green Corps Partner Agency?

Organisations interested in hosting a Green Corps activity should complete an expression of interest form and submit it to one of the Green Corps Service Providers within your State or Territory. Forms are available from a Green Corps Service Provider or from the Green Corps website www.greencorps.gov.au.

The Green Corps Service Provider will work with the potential partner agency to develop a project proposal. A copy of the Green Corps Project Proposal Form is also available from the Green Corps website www.greencorps.gov.au

Potential partner agencies should work with a Green Corps Service Provider while developing the project proposal to ensure all aspects of project development are adequately addressed. Incomplete applications or proposals which do not comply with the Green Corps project criteria will not be approved.

The application form is for the development of a major project of at least 14 weeks duration and associated other minor activities. Organisations interested in hosting smaller activities, should contact their nearest Green Corps Service Provider to discuss what opportunities are available.

After a potential partner agency has submitted a project proposal to a Green Corps Service Provider, the application will be considered by the Green Corps Project Evaluation Panel (PEP). PEP is comprised of representatives of DEWR & DEH, who will evaluate the project against the environment and/or heritage priorities and the youth development priorities for Green Corps. Relevant experts may be asked to provide comments or assist PEP if required, for example, in regard to a specific heritage project. The final approval for project proposals is made by DEWR, based on advice of PEP.

An organisation who has proposed a Green Corps activity does not become a Partner Agency until the project proposal has been approved by DEWR and the organisation has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with a Green Corps Service Provider on the contribution the organisation will be making to the Green Corps project.

Who are the Green Corps Service Providers?

Five organisations have been chosen by DEWR to deliver the Green Corps Programme from 1 July 2006. The Green Corps Service Providers will:

- help develop your project proposal and provide guidance and some assistance on obtaining the relevant licences and development approvals;
- recruit, train and support the Green Corps Team Leaders;
- recruit Green Corps Participants and manage the Participant Allowance;
- supervise Green Corps Participants;
- provide uniforms and some protective equipment to Green Corps Participants;
- provide training and career counselling to Green Corps Participants; and
- work with you to ensure your project aims are met.

There are two different Green Corps Service Providers in each Green Corps region. Organisations interested in hosting a project can elect which Green Corps Service Provider they wish to apply to, though they must apply to a Green Corps Provider in the same state or territory they are located in.

The Green Corps Service Providers in each Green Corps Region are:

Region	Provider
Victoria & Tasmania	Central Victorian Group Training Company Limited
	Conservation Volunteers Australia
Australian Capital Territory & New South Wales	Job Futures Ltd
	Greening Australia
Northern Territory & Queensland	Conservation Volunteers Australia
	Job Futures Ltd
South Australia & Western Australia	Greening Australia
	Mission Australia

Each Green Corps Service Provider has been contracted to deliver Green Corps services across the entire region. Contact details are available from the Green Corps Website www.greencorps.gov.au.

Can an organisation run a Green Corps project without using a Green Corps Service Provider?

Organisations cannot seek funding from DEWR or DEH to run their own Green Corps projects independent of the Green Corps Service Providers. Green Corps is not a grants-based programme.

The Australian Government has selected the five Green Corps Service Providers because they have demonstrated they have the expertise to deliver projects which provide both genuine environmental or heritage outcomes and quality youth development and training outcomes.

Where do the Green Corps Participants come from?

It is the responsibility of the Green Corps Service Providers to recruit the Green Corps Participants, but Partner Agencies can encourage young people within their communities to apply. Where possible, members will be drawn from the local area although all Green Corps projects are open to any young Australian aged between 17 and 20.

Green Corps Participants are selected through a competitive selection process and receive an allowance for participation. They also receive a uniform, accredited training and work experience. Young people do not need to be unemployed or in receipt of income support to participate in Green Corps.

Green Corps Participants

- are paid a participation allowance by the Green Corps Service Provider on behalf of the Australian Government;
- are supervised by a trained team leader provided by the Green Corps Service Provider;
- receive accredited training;
- gain improved career and employment prospects;
- complete structured work experience while on the project; and
- obtain assistance in preparation for employment.

What sort of training do Green Corps Participants receive?

All Green Corps projects must provide Green Corps Participants with training, including:

- accredited training in a field related to the project activities (ie Conservation and Land Management; horticulture or other related field);
- on-the-project training designed to provide practical skills to complete project tasks;
- first aid training;
- occupational health and safety training; and
- career counselling.

Accredited training must be provided by a training officer with qualifications recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The Green Corps Service Provider is responsible for engaging appropriate training officers. In some circumstances the Partner Agency or other organisations involved in the project may deliver training if they are registered training providers under AQF, but the final decision on who will provide training is for the Green Corps Service Provider. Potential Partner Agencies are encouraged to work with a Green Corps Service Provider to develop a training strategy for their project proposal.

What is a Residential Project?

A Residential Project is when the Green Corps Participants live as a group away from their normal home base to undertake Green Corps activities. This normally occurs when the team is working at a remote location where the distances involved make it difficult to commute each day.

Residential projects, or residential components within projects, should only be considered if there is no other practical way to undertake an activity. In proposing a residential activity, Potential Partner Agencies must address issues including accommodation, after hour's supervision, transport and costs. The cost of food, accommodation and transport must **not** be passed on to Green Corps Participants.

It is not necessary for every Green Corps project to have a residential component.

Each residential component needs to be approved separately by DEWR.

Community Consultation

In developing a Green Corps project proposal, you should consult with relevant stakeholders, including the community. Appropriate stakeholders to consult should include, but are not limited to:

- Natural resource management regional bodies (contact details can be found on the following website www.nrm.gov.au);
- appropriate heritage bodies;
- environmental community groups, including landcare and catchment bodies and other local environmental groups;
- other community groups including resident's committees and recreational groups who may use the sites involved;
- Local Government;
- Area Consultative Committees;
- Regional development organisations;
- public land and National park agencies;
- Indigenous organisations; and
- landholders of properties adjoining work sites.

It is recommended that you provide letters of support from organisation and community groups you consulted with. If you are unable to provide letters of support, please provide the names and contact details of the organisations and community groups you consulted with.

You should attempt to address all reasonable concerns and suggestions raised in consultations.

Indigenous Consultation

Consultation with the local Indigenous community is required for all Green Corps projects, including work on privately owned land or government land.

If you are unsure on the appropriate Indigenous contacts within your local community to consult with, please contact the Australian Government Indigenous Land Management Facilitator Secretariat on Tel: 02 6274 1111. The Secretariat will advise of the location and contact details of the relevant Australian Government Indigenous Land Management Facilitator who can advise the appropriate contacts within the local Indigenous community in the relevant area.

It is recommended that you provide a letter of support from the local Indigenous community. If you are unable to provide a letter of support, please provide the names and contact details of the members of the Indigenous community you consulted with.

When a project will be occurring near significant Indigenous sites, young Indigenous members of the community should be encouraged to apply to be members of the Green Corps team. Indigenous elders and/or Indigenous park rangers should be invited to explain the importance of sites to the Green Corps Participants.

Where possible, all Green Corps team members should be encouraged to learn of the history and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander occupation of the area and Indigenous approaches to land and other natural resource management.

Consultation with young people and youth related organisations

In developing your proposal, you should consult local young people and local groups with experience in dealing with youth to determine if there will be enough young people available in the area; the proposed work tasks are appropriate for young people and if there are any other youth-related issues that will need to be addressed. Organisations that should be consulted include:

- Centrelink;
- Job Network Members;
- local youth networks or organisations;
- local employers; and
- organisations representing people with disabilities.

Sites of Heritage Value

When developing your project proposal, you should consider if the activity will affect or occur near any sites of heritage value. The Australian Government needs to ensure that proposed projects will not have an adverse impact on a place of heritage value. All project proposals should be consistent with a conservation planning document if one has been prepared.

The Register of the National Estate (RNE) is a national inventory of more than 13,000 heritage places. You can check to see whether your proposed project affects any places on the RNE at the website www.heritage.gov.au. Please note, not all sites with heritage value are listed on the RNE and you should seek advice if you think your activity may impact upon a heritage site.

Sites of heritage value include:

- **Natural Heritage Values**
 - These values include flora, fauna and geoheritage. Where restoration or reinstatement of areas of native vegetation is proposed, appropriate species from locally collected seed stocks should be used.
- **Indigenous Heritage Values**
 - Most areas with natural heritage values are likely to contain some Indigenous sites. For example, Indigenous sites are likely to be found on land adjacent to creeks and watercourses, coastal areas, and areas of remnant vegetation.
 - Projects involving ground disturbance (such as fence construction, dam building, ploughing, planting or removal of vegetation) may be particularly threatening to Indigenous heritage values. To mitigate potential threats to heritage values applicants should:
 - contact relevant State and Territory heritage authorities and obtain advice on whether or not the area has known Indigenous heritage values; and

- consult with relevant Indigenous communities or Land Councils.
- **Historic Heritage Values**
 - Places with historic heritage values may include roadways and tree lines, trees, plantings and gardens, wells, fences, archaeological deposits, buildings and structures, and earthworks, or any other evidence of human activity. In order to protect such values applicants should consult with heritage authorities (such as the relevant State heritage agency, the local council and National Trust) to determine if there are known historic values.

Risk Assessment of Projects

The safety of the Green Corps Participants is of paramount concern and all project activities must be undertaken in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety best practice principles. You should attempt to identify all hazards associated with this proposal, and propose strategies to minimise any risks.

After you have submitted your project proposal form, you may be contacted by the Green Corps Service Provider to undertake a risk assessment of the proposed activities.

Green Corps Project Criteria

The criteria for Green Corps projects are as follows:

- projects must address the environmental/heritage focus of Green Corps Projects **and** the youth development focus of Green Corps Projects;
- projects must be tailored to the needs and abilities of the Green Corps Participants and have the capacity to provide quality training and developmental opportunities including developing teamwork, leadership skills and work skills and to increase the employability of Green Corps Participants;
- projects must be designed to have the capacity to raise young people's self esteem and ensure pride in the job;
- projects must be designed to promote the contribution of young people in the community, portray a positive image of young people and strengthen links between young people and their community;
- projects must address Occupational Health and Safety and welfare issues and not place participants at risk;
- projects must be supported by the local community, including any local Indigenous community, and, where possible, be designed to encourage the community to take an active role in the project and to provide interaction between participants and the community;
- projects must enable Green Corps Participants to participate in the development of some of their activities;
- projects must be designed to include a cohesive project plan including a data baseline, project map, staged development incorporating achievement milestones and monitoring;
- Major projects must be designed so that an appropriate balance between diversity of tasks and overall theme is struck. Projects should not include any single activity anticipated to take more than four weeks to complete (in blocks or otherwise), including tree planting, seed collection, track building and weeding. Conversely, major projects should not be so diverse that overall narrative or project theme is diluted and rendered meaningless;
- participants must be additional to the existing workforce, and must not reduce, replace or substitute for any existing workers, whether voluntary or paid;
- projects must not involve tasks that are, or should be, the core financial responsibility of a state, territory or local government authority;
- Partner Agencies must not seek to repeat Green Corps projects as a means of minimising their own financial responsibilities or as an alternative to creating on-going employment opportunities;
- Partner Agencies must have strategies for the long-term maintenance and protection of the project site; and

- when projects run concurrently with a project funded by an Australian Government, State, territory or local government authority, partner agencies must not count Green Corps participants in their labour-in-kind contribution for funding for the other programme.

Environmental and/or Heritage Focus of Projects

The environmental priorities for Green Corps Projects have as their focus the following areas of activity as stated under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). Green Corps Projects must be relevant to one or more areas of activity:

1. protecting and restoring the habitat of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and migratory birds;
2. reversing the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation;
3. protecting and restoring significant freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems;
4. preventing or controlling the introduction and spread of feral animals, aquatic pests, weeds and other biological threats to biodiversity;
5. establishing and effectively managing a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas;
6. improving the condition of natural resources that underpins the sustainability and productivity of resource based industries;
7. securing access to natural resources for sustainable productive use;
8. encouraging the development of sustainable and profitable management systems for application by land-holders and other natural resource managers and users;
9. providing land-holders, community groups and other natural resource managers with understanding and skills to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management; and
10. establishing institutional and organisational frameworks that promote conservation and ecologically sustainable use and management of natural resources.

For information of the Australian Government's involvement in Australian Heritage is available on the following website www.deh.gov.au/heritage/index.html

For information on a local or regional heritage project proposal please consult with the relevant State / Territory Heritage Agency. Further information on State / Territory Heritage Agencies is available at www.heritage.gov.au

For further information on Indigenous Cultural Heritage projects see section 8.8.3 (Indigenous Consultation).

Green Corps Projects should satisfy the objectives of the suite of programmes contained under the NHT in that they:

- must be consistent with Australian Government environment and heritage policies, priorities and relevant legislation. Particular attention should be given to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to ensure that any compliance issues are met. Further information can be accessed on the Department of the Environment and Heritage website www.deh.gov.au;
- should be consistent with regional natural resource management plans where such plans exist, and with conserving existing and potential historic, Indigenous and natural heritage values;
- may include land, water and wildlife survey and data collection, Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare activities, access control, bush regeneration, habitat protection and restoration, environmental weed control, walking track construction and restoration activities for environment and cultural heritage and community education. Activities may also extend into World Heritage and protected areas. Further information on the Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare activities can be found at Attachment K;

Data collection techniques or any sort of monitoring should be undertaken according to an approved methodology where it exists (eg. Waterwatch water quality monitoring, flora and fauna surveys). The resulting information is to be provided to an existing database or Government Department responsible for the analysis and storage of such information. This may be the natural resource management regional bodies.

Training must be given in skills relevant to the above projects.

The Australian Government reserves the right to gain access to any environmental data collected by Green Corps Participants while undertaking activities which form part of a Green Corps Project.

Youth Development Focus of projects

Green Corps projects must have a youth development focus. Projects must contribute to Green Corps participants':

- personal development, including team work and leadership skills;
- skill development and training through activities that are structured and sequential in their learning outcomes;
- strengthened connections with the community through relationships, participation and contribution to the community; and
- improved career and employment prospects through accredited and on-the-project training.

Community Focus of Projects

One of the priorities of the Green Corps programme is to encourage strengthened connections between young people and their communities, and to promote community capacity building. Involving the community in a Green Corps project may have benefits including:

- local knowledge of environmental issues associated with the project;
- additional resources;
- community education on environmental issues;
- long-term maintenance of the site after the Green Corps project has concluded;
- positive encouragement to the young people; and
- positive links between young people and the community.

Strategies to include the community in projects

Your project proposal should include a strategy to include the community in the project. Your strategy should include opportunities:

- to show a local community what young people can achieve;
- to increase knowledge on the history of land use in the local area – including both Indigenous and European history and land management practices;
- to encourage the local community to become more environmentally conscious or to adopt sustainable land management practices;
- to extend the participants range of community contacts for future employment opportunities; and
- to encourage the community to take an ongoing role in the management of the site.

Activities not suitable for Green Corps

DEWR will not generally approve any Green Corps project proposals that consist mainly of:

- activities that are clearly the core financial responsibility of a state, territory or local government authority or the core financial responsibility of a commercial organisation, business or individual;
- infrastructure development such as construction of car parks, picnic shelters, toilet block construction or development of any infrastructure which is clearly the responsibility of an authority, organisation or agency to manage and finance
 - ⇒ boardwalk and walking track construction will be permitted in a Green Corps project where it is a part of a wider range of project activities or in accordance with relevant management plans which aim to reduce significant environmental pressures associated with visitor access (more than 4-6 weeks of track work per project is deemed inappropriate);
- demolition of standing structures unless the activity is directly associated with the restoration and reparation of cultural or natural heritage sites;
- litter removal where this activity should be a scheduled/budgeted activity of the proposing agency or a state, territory or local government authority;

- roadside (including freeway) beautification including vegetation planting and sign erection
 - ⇒ roadside native vegetation planting which is genuinely a part of a revegetation project is permitted
 - ⇒ sign erection is acceptable where the sign is for the purpose of supporting community awareness of the Green Corps Programme and environmental or cultural heritage outcomes of the project (it is recommended that, where possible, Green Corps participants are engaged in the design and/or construction of the signs they will be expected to erect);
- intensive weeding programmes, where a high proportion of the on the ground time is taken up by manual weeding (more than 4-6 weeks of manual weeding per project is deemed inappropriate and where periods of up to 4-6 weeks are anticipated, Green Corps participants should be exposed to a range of weeding techniques);
- rehabilitation of abandoned tips or quarries unless the activity can be shown to have very significant environmental outcomes; and
- maintenance work on previous Green Corps projects and/or cover the same ground. Such projects should only be repeated if a 'big picture' or staged plan is submitted to prove they are strategic (in the case of planting wildlife corridors for example), or that they add significant extra value such as enhanced youth or community benefits.

Publicity and Promotion

DEWR, DEH and the Green Corps Service Providers may use the information you provide on your project proposal form and the outcomes of your project for publicity and promotion purposes. As part of completing the form, you will be required to consent to the public release of information relating to your project proposal. DEWR, DEH and the Green Corps Service Providers will not release any information identifying individual employees or members of your organisation without the consent of that individual.

More information

For further information on the Green Corps Programme, please contact one of the Green Corps Service Providers or visit the Australian Government's Green Corps website at www.greencorps.gov.au.

Completing the Project Proposal Form

Your application should be typed. The information provided in your Green Corps project proposal needs to be accurate, concise and complete. The boxes on the form should expand when you type in them. If insufficient space is provided, please attach additional pages.

You can provide additional information to support your project proposal, but the additional information should be relevant to the project proposal and should be summarised to highlight the key points. If you provide management plans, you only need to provide a summary. It is not necessary to provide more than a brief history of your organisation unless it is directly relevant to your project proposal.

Please provide four copies of the project proposal form and four copies of any attachments to a Green Corps Service Provider at the address provided on the last page of this document. Alternatively, a completed electronic version of the project proposal form can be submitted to the email address provided. Any attachments must be mailed or faxed to the Green Corps Service Provider.

After you have submitted a project application form, the Green Corps Service Provider may contact you to seek additional information on your project proposal.