



THEMATIC ISSUES RAISED BY SUBMISSIONS ON DRAFT GREEN ARMY PROGRAMME STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS (SOR).

| Thematic Issue | Department of the Environment's Response |
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| <p>Submissions recognise the importance of team supervisors and that they will need appropriate skills, qualifications and experience (and not just in environmental management). This may also include social work / counselling skills / Indigenous studies or educational qualifications, management and stakeholder engagement experience. There is concern that it may be difficult to attract suitable candidates. Suggested solutions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing a higher pay rate• Providing funding to train supervisors in the skills they lack (e.g. conservation and land management and/or counselling and managing youth).• Providing teams with access to a social worker and/or other social support services.• Engaging supervisors on a long term basis (minimum of 12 months). | <p>The importance of Team Supervisors to the success of the Programme is recognised, as is the need for Team Supervisors to have skills above and beyond just environmental qualifications. The terms of employment for Team Supervisors will primarily be at the discretion of individual Service Providers, including pay and conditions.</p> |
| <p>There is likely to be a lack of employment opportunities for Participants, upon completion of their Green Army placement, due to the low availability of jobs in the NRM industry. They may also need longer to acquire the relevant skills and experience to be competitive in this industry. It was also suggested that these qualifications can be obtained relatively easily outside the programme and that Certificates I and II are not normally competitive in seeking work (Cert III is often a minimum requirement).</p> | <p>The primary focus of the Programme is the delivery of environmental and heritage conservation projects. The Programme is not a job placement initiative. Training will be provided to assist Participants to obtain a Certificate I or II qualification but will also provide nationally endorsed skill sets to assist Participants' readiness to move into study and employment.</p> |
| <p>There should be support (e.g. identified education or employment pathways) for Participants at the end of their placement.</p> | <p>As above.</p> |
| <p>Green Army Projects may impact on small businesses (and local volunteer organisations) already engaged in environmental restoration work. There is especially concern that the programme may take work away from the existing ecological restoration industry, including seasonal and casual workers.</p> | <p>The Green Army Programme is being designed to complement and not replace existing conservation work.</p> |

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| Project Sponsors should have an opportunity to discuss and develop project proposals with Service Providers, to share relevant information about community needs. Further consideration should go into how this would happen. | Although there is limited capacity for this to occur during Round 1, as Service Providers are being appointed, it is expected that this collaboration will occur in future rounds. This is described in Section 2.5.2 of the Draft Statement of Requirements. |
| There is confusion about the employment status of Participants and their allowance and entitlements. | More information on the status of Green Army Participants will be provided in the Green Army Programme Guidelines. |
| Consider longer project length or allow individual projects to be part of a broader programme of work (e.g. over a couple years), so that more meaningful environmental outcomes can be achieved and Service Providers can build efficiency in implementing the programme (e.g. movement of resources). It is suggested that one to three years should be considered. | Proposals can include a single Project or multiple Projects concurrently or consecutively, up to 24 months. More information on this will be made available in the Green Army Project Guidelines. |
| There should be flexibility in relation to the commencement of Projects to take into account ecological rather than economic timelines. For example requiring a Project to begin on 1 July may not work in a revegetation project as this is not the most appropriate planting season. Formal training and administrative requirements (e.g. police checks) may also require flexibility in project start times. | The first round of projects will commence between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 but there may be flexibility to accommodate seasonal factors. More information on this will be made available in the Green Army Project Guidelines. |
| Projects should have connectivity to existing investments/programmes/plans to ensure lasting relevance. They should link to NRM plans, state initiatives and conservation planning frameworks. Also, a strategic national approach to Green Army projects/deployments should be considered and focus on the most significant Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). | The connection of Green Army projects to existing plans and initiatives is a consideration included in the Green Army Project Guidelines. Green Army Projects are able to focus on MNES. |
| Project Sponsors, particularly small organisations, will have difficulty covering costs of projects (i.e. project management, materials, extra equipment required etc.). There needs to be funding for this either through the programme or through connections to other sources (e.g. state programmes, co-investment from the private sector) | The Green Army Programme will cover basic Project costs associated with Green Army Teams. An average of \$10 000 per project will also be made available to cover the cost of project materials. Project Sponsors will need to negotiate the purchase of these resources with Service Providers. Project Sponsors are also encouraged to apply for funding for project costs from other sources and/or to seek co-investment from the private sector. |
| Better environmental and economic outcomes would be delivered by providing funding directly to environmental organisations and/or by strengthening the capacity in the industry (e.g. skills development for workers currently in the industry) to provide long-term employment and deliver projects. There is some concern that the Green Army may replace NRM funding currently being provided to environmental organisations. | The programme has been designed to complement other government investments and support partnerships and collaborations through project design and delivery. |

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| Relationship to other Government-funded employment services programs need to be clarified. Some submissions have stated that JSA or DES Providers should be provided an incentive to refer clients to Green Army Programme. | Referrals to the programme will be possible, however, outcome payments will not be provided. |
| Environmental KPIs need to be developed and communicated in the RFT. These should have some long term consideration and not just be based on a 'tree planting' model. Funding should be provided for this. | The KPIs included in the Draft Statement of Requirements concern the performance of Service Providers. Programme outcomes, including conservation outcomes, will be included in broader monitoring strategies for the Green Army Programme. |
| Payment structure (40:20:40) needs revision and clarifying (e.g. is this payment structure per project or across the whole programme). There is concern in relation to the funding provided up front for service providers. | Payment arrangements will be settled in the Request for Tender documentation. |
| More information is needed on what is included in the indicative project costs (including whether they are GST inclusive). For instance do they cover what service providers will be required to do (e.g. administration of projects) or additional costs associated with rural/regional projects and participant attrition. | Information on what Service Providers will be expected to deliver within the scope of the project budget will be included with the Request for Tender documentation. |
| Part-time should not be only considered in 'exceptional circumstances'. This may exclude Indigenous participants and participants with a disability. | The needs of Indigenous participants and participants with a disability are not excluded. Part-time participation is to be negotiated on a case by case basis. |
| Concerns raised that there may be some negative environmental outcomes due to a relatively unskilled GA workforce where appropriate supervision is not provided by team leaders or project sponsors. | Team Supervisors will be required to have relevant conservation management qualifications and appropriate supervision will be required. |
| There are concerns about whether there will be ongoing management of project outcomes after completion and who this would fall to, especially as no funding is provided for this. It is stated that community buy-in and ownership will be needed, if there is to be long-term commitment | Project Sponsors will be asked to provide details on the ongoing management of project outputs and expected community engagement in the project. More information on this will be made available in the Green Army Project Guidelines. |
| Should rethink the age restrictions and other eligibility requirements (e.g. could include people on bridging visa and new immigrants). May not have enough participants in some locations in current age range. Not representative of a real workforce. | The Programme is focussed initially on the 17 to 24 year age bracket. Within this age range, Australian citizens and permanent residents will be able to participate. |
| Consider a time limit on replacement of exiting participants e.g. within 6 weeks of commencement of a project. Participants who are accepted as replacements for people who leave or are exited may be disadvantaged by being regarded as 'outsiders' and being behind in training. Participant replacement will also increase project costs. | More information concerning the requirements surrounding participant replacement is provided in the Green Army Programme Guidelines. |

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| There is some concern around Service Providers being Project Sponsors as well as Service Providers – consider a limit on percentage of projects sponsored by Service Providers. | All projects will be assessed on individual merit by the Department of the Environment and approved by the Minister for the Environment. |
| There is concern around the motivation of participants to work on projects, particularly those referred by JSAs. Attendance and placement completion were issues for the Green Corps and this is thought to be because the programme was not voluntary. All participants (even referrals) should undergo selection process. One submission suggests that individuals should be matched to the projects on grounds of motivation, capacity to undertake the project and group/social dynamics. | The Green Army Programme is voluntary and all participants (including any referrals) will undergo the Service Providers' selection processes. This will include consideration of Participants' suitability for project activities. |
| Reporting should be streamlined and user friendly with an aim to minimizing administrative requirements. Currently suggested reporting requirements are considered excessive by some submissions. | Green Army Programme reporting will be streamlined, while still ensuring appropriate contract management. |
| Training activities need not be exclusively outdoors. There could be appropriate office work that would provide participants with useful skills- report writing, website maintenance, project mgmt/activity coordination, business administration. | Service Providers will develop individual training plans with participants taking into consideration their personal needs and interests. |
| Literacy and numeracy training may be required for a number of participants. Some submissions recommend that the Australian Core Skills Framework should be used to assess all participants and determine if they have any needs in this area before projects commence. | As above. |
| Teams may need to be smaller to be effective or due to low participant numbers (e.g. Regional/rural area). There should be flexibility in team sizes and/or strategies to address this (e.g. Flexibility in project timing and for participants to enter more than one placement). | The standard will be teams of 9 participants and 1 Team Supervisor but there may be provision for teams with less than 9 participants. More information on this will be provided in the Green Army Programme Guidelines. |
| Service providers should have a good working relationship with a range of organisations, including community organisations and other likely Project Sponsors. | It is agreed that this will be critical to the delivery of the Green Army Programme. There will be Selection Criteria in the Request for Tender process which considers this. |
| In relation to transportation costs, the SOR states that "Sponsors are encouraged to seek to lease appropriate transportation vehicle/s and large equipment, rather than purchase these". Elsewhere it says that the service provider will provide transport. Need to state which of these parties will actually be responsible and correct the other statement. | The Service Provider is responsible for providing an appropriate vehicle to transport Green Army Teams to and from project sites. |

| Submissions on Draft SOR received from: | Submissions on Draft SOR received from: |
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| <p>Significance International P/L Trees For Life Conservation Volunteers Australia Coochin Ck Bushland Group Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. WWF-Australia WetlandCare Australia Australian Association of Bush Regenerators Nature Foundation SA Inc. Conservation Council of South Australia Incorporated Great Eastern Ranges Initiative Australian Seed Bank Partnership Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia Georges River Combined Councils Committee Inc. Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council Sunshine Coast Council's Environmental Operations Branch Eastern Hills & Murray Plains Catchment Group Inc Riverina LLS National Rangeland NRM Alliance Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) North Coast Local Land Services Central West Lachlan Landcare Upper Barwon Landcare Network Monbulk Landcare Landcare Association of South Australia Incorporated Landcare Australia Limited Northern Landcare Support Services National Landcare Network North East Victoria Landcare Team Yarra Ranges Landcare Network Nillumbik Landcare Network National Disability Services</p> | <p>Southern Aboriginal Corporation Port Phillip and Western Port CMA Auswide Projects NRMjobs.com.au Parks Forum Ltd EnviTE Incorporated Maxima Group Inc. East Kimberley CDEP Pty Ltd. Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory National Trust of Australia (ACT) National Sea Change Taskforce MAX NetWork Pty Ltd Trading as MAX Employment John Oxenford and Associates Challenge Employment and Training Environments by Design Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association Inc. Maroochy Waterwatch T/A ECOllaboration Katanning Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) Bolwarra Environmental Services Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee North Central Catchment Management Authority Molonglo Catchment Group Inc SEQ Catchments LTD Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs Local Land Services (NSW - Dubbo) Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Cumberland Conservation Network Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material IBM Australia LTD North East Bioregional Network Inc. Skillset Macedon Ranges Shire Council</p> |

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| Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association BoysTown Disability Employment Australia Brotherhood of St Laurence Job Futures Ltd Jobs Australia AMES Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Private Individuals (9) Organisations that requested anonymity (12) | GHD Pty Ltd Australian Council of Trade Unions Connecting Country (Mount Alexander Region) Inc. Native Title Services Victoria Cape York Natural Resource Management Ltd. Save Our Waterways Now (SOWN) Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority National Trusts of Australia National Employment Services Association (NESA) |