



**WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP AUSTRALIA**

[Women's Environmental Leadership Australia \(WELA\)](#) is a community building the leadership and influence of women and gender-diverse changemakers so that together we transform Australia's response to our environmental and climate crises.

2026 WELA GIVING CIRCLE GRANT ROUND ONE - GRANTING GUIDELINES

WELA's Giving Circle is pleased to announce the First round of our Small Grants Program for 2026 to support women and/or gender-diverse people leading environment and climate action in Australia, with a total funding pool of \$40,000.

This grant round is a 2-step process involving an Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted online via Australian Communities Foundations (ACF) grants portal, where shortlisted EOIs will be invited to complete a full application via a short social media style 'piece to camera' (maximum 2min) or a short voice recording (maximum 2min).

Shortlisted applicants must be available to submit this during the full application period from Friday 15 May - Friday 22 May. We strongly recommend video submissions for a stronger impact with our voting Giving Circle members.

The total funding pool of \$40,000 will be distributed as follows:

- 2 x grants of \$10,000
- 4 x grants of \$5,000

Please indicate in your application your funding level preference but the distribution will be decided by the collective votes of our Giving Circle members.

Grant Application Shortlisting and Membership Vote:

- A Shortlisting Committee (selected WELA Giving Circle members) will evaluate all Expression of Interests (EOIs) received and generate a shortlist of applicants, who will be invited to complete a full grant application.
- All of WELA's Giving Circle members will then be presented with the opportunity to vote online for each project in May/June 2026.

Process and Key Dates:

- Expression of Interests (EOIs) open: 8 April - 20 April 2026
- Shortlisting of EOIs: 21 April - 14 May.
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to complete their full application via a short video or voice submission in preparation for member voting before 15 May.
- Full application period: 15 May - 22 May.

- Voting by WELA Giving Circle members: 4 June 14 June 2026.
- Winners announced: Mid-June 2026.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding is available to applicants who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- An Australian registered charity with the [ACNC](#) (DGR status not required) OR Incorporated organisation with an [ABN](#) (Company Limited by Guarantee); OR Sole Trader with an ABN (auspiced by or affiliated with an organisation) AND;
- A small to medium sized organisation with an annual income of less than \$1.2 million. For exceptional projects, we can be flexible on this.
- Organisations and projects based in Australia.

Please note that organisations are eligible for a total of two WELA grants; if your organisation has already received two grants in previous years, you will not be eligible to apply for future grant rounds.

Applications must be:

- Led by women and/or gender-diverse people; and
- Environment or climate action (advocacy, a campaign, and/or project to protect the environment and climate).

What do we mean by women and gender-diverse led?

- Your organisation or project will have women and/or gender-diverse people leading within these areas: your organisational structure, strategy development, storytelling, and organising.
- For example, WELA welcomes applications from organisations that are led by women and gender-diverse people in their development and decision-making. This might look like women and gender-diverse people as CEOs, co-CEOs, and Campaign Managers, on their boards and at the centre of their strategy development and project implementation.

What do we mean by environment and climate action?

- WELA is looking to provide unrestricted, capacity building, core funding to organisations working on impactful, cutting edge and inspiring advocacy, campaigns and projects in the issue areas of environment and climate.
- WELA will support a full spectrum of change making tools for example (but not limited to) events, grassroot organising, creating networks, training and building skills, lobbying, media, and communication campaigns. Or surprise us with something we've never seen before!

Funding considerations

The following areas will be prioritised in WELA's funding considerations but they are not all required for your application:

1. **Women and Gender Diverse Leadership (this is required):** WELA's grants will build a new kind of leadership that is inclusive, collaborative, and relational. They will fund organisations and projects that have women and/or gender-diverse leadership within their organisations.
2. **Creating Impact (this is required):** WELA understands that there are many ways to create change that include differing theories of change, timeframes, and approaches. At the core, we want to collaborate with organisations and projects that create powerful outcomes, impactful movements, address systems change, and have a clear focus on environmental and climate outcomes.
3. **Centering First Nations Knowledges:** WELA values and honours the leadership of First Nations women for Country, community and culture over millennia. We welcome applications from projects and organisations that centre First Nations knowledge systems, science, systems of governance for Caring for Country, and the lived experience of First Nations women and gender-diverse people in efforts to protect nature and secure our future.
4. **Supporting Diverse Voices:** WELA acknowledges the lack of intersectional and racial diversity in the mainstream environment and climate movement as a structural and systemic problem. Through WELA's grants, we aim to diversify the voices in our movements and put justice, equity, diversity, and inclusivity (JEDI) at the heart of WELA's strategy, storytelling, and solutions. WELA welcomes applications that include the voices of underrepresented communities.
5. **Creating Collaboration:** Collaboration is one of the foundations of feminist leadership. WELA will support projects and organisations that prioritise building relationships and networks that enable learning and knowledge sharing across generations, sectors, communities, and geographic constraints.

Type of projects and activities we won't fund:

- Retrospective activities
- Non-charitable activities
- Projects or activities that are politically partisan in nature
- Projects led by individuals who do not have organisational affiliation or support
- Commercial activities including social enterprises
- On-ground environmental actions such as tree-planting or installation of solar on buildings
- Grant funds cannot be used for electoral expenditure or the creation or communication of electoral matters (as defined in the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918) or to incur electoral or political expenditure or communicate political or electoral matters under any similar applicable state or territory legislation
- Green building projects including energy efficiency upgrades
- Political campaigns that support specific parties or candidates
- Straight research, unless it is in direct support of a developed plan for specific action to alleviate an environmental problem

- Land acquisition

Expression of interest and application process:

To view/access and submit an Expression of interest (EOI), you must be logged into a registered account on the [Australian Communities Foundation Grants Portal](#) and enter the access code **WELAGC2026**.

You can create an account on the Australian Communities Foundation Grants Portal [here](#). If you already have an account, please use your existing username and password. Make sure to note your username and password as you will be able to save and continue the form at a later date.

If your EOI is shortlisted, you will be notified by Australian Communities Foundation with instructions to connect with WELA to organise the submission of your video or voice submission.

Contact

- For enquiries relating to the granting guidelines, please contact WELA's Philanthropy Manager, Sumeena Keshow or Philanthropy Coordinator, Tess O'Reilly at info@wela.org.au
- For technical enquiries related to the grants portal, please contact ACF's Grants Team at grants@communityfoundation.org.au or call 03 9412 0412