

Introduction and Background

The Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) has a mission to **connect, support and lead the community to maintain and improve the health of Southern ACT landscapes**. For the last 22 years SACTCG has achieved significant outcomes related to this mission working with community in Tuggeranong, Woden, Weston Creek, Tharwa, and the Southwest rural region of ACT.

SACTCG is an independent community-driven association based on a solid governance framework, underpinned by a strategic approach. In partnership with multiple land managers and community groups it operates across land tenure to achieve ‘whole of landscape’ results. We do this by working with ACT Government and community to build synergies with current work programs to increase on-ground efficacy.

We successfully bring in resources and funds for community projects and provide project management to deliver environmental restoration outcomes. We have strong success in delivering capacity building activities and provide opportunities for the community to actively contribute to the health and sustainability of our local ecosystems.

SACTCG leverages in-kind contributions from the community valued at *\$.75 million per annum* providing low cost, high return investment option for environmental management in the ACT. In the past four years we have successfully brought in an average of *\$175,000 per year of competitive project funding* to deliver on-ground biodiversity projects from sources including the Commonwealth and industry, which is not otherwise available to the ACT Government. This funding is distinct from our community support and citizen science programs.

In alignment with the ACT Wellbeing Framework, SACTCG’s work in environmental volunteering and stewardship promotes positive outcomes across key domains such as Environment and Climate, Social Connection, Identity and Belonging, and Education and Lifelong Learning.

Community Environmental Education and Stewardship Program (CEESP)

Funded by ACT Government from 2021-2025 this program delivered strong outcomes overachieving the program goals of:

1. *Community stewardship and shared care for managing ACT Environments is maintained and increased.*
2. *The ACT community has increased environmental awareness.*

Annual outputs averaged over 4 years are:

- **30** projects scoped with community and partners
- **21** funding applications submitted with an **85%** success rate
- **20** information sharing, knowledge brokering sessions and contributions to consultation reports and submissions to ACT Government.
- **36** member groups provided with administration, financial management and communications support, planning, promotions, recruitment, equipment and resources (grown from 29 in yr 1).
- Over **200** communication activities supporting members and educating the general public including:
 - face to face educational events, stalls and presentations and
 - a range of digital media and direct communications
- Engagement with **24** partners



Budget submission 2025-2026
Community Environment and Stewardship Program

This program has been highly successful in building the capacity of the volunteer community in the Southern ACT providing a high level of value for money. With the growth of volunteer groups, SACTCG has been able to provide direct ecological support with its in-house ecologists, improved community planning of projects on public land and developed stronger relationships with Government and non-Government partners.

Total Budget: Over a period of 4 years was allocated as follows:

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
\$131,500	\$135,500	\$142,000	\$150,500	\$559,500

The Future – Funding for 2025-2029

The demand for SACTCG services provided by CEESP funding continues to grow. Community engagement with SACTCG is stronger than ever before and ACT Government requests for our services as knowledge brokers and volunteer support is increasing.

As a NFP charity, grant funds are insufficient to meet this demand and to continue to support community engagement. Whilst the ACT Government has recognised the value of the Catchment Groups and EPSDD support recurrent funding, new contracts have not yet been forthcoming.

To maintain and build on the above successes SACTCG requests a continuation of the CEESP program. The return on investment is significant with the program leveraging \$.75 million per annum in-kind from the community.

Without this ongoing support SACTCG's capacity to respond to demand will be severely limited and achievements made on the past investments will have reduced longer-term benefits.

Total Requested Budget: Over a period of 4 years as follows:

2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
\$165,000	\$175,000	\$185,500	\$197,000	\$722,500

Please contact with any queries regarding this submission.

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