

Enhancing Local Government Biosecurity Capacity (ELGBC) in far north Queensland

Applicant guidelines and how to apply

Building local biosecurity capacity

Applications close at 12 May 2022

**For more information, please email betterpartnerships@daf.qld.gov.au or
phone 13 25 23**

This publication has been compiled by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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Important information

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Regional Collaborative Framework carefully before starting your application.

This funding is eligible within the below local government boundaries:

Aurukun Shire Council	Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
Burke Shire Council	Mareeba Shire Council
Cairns Regional Council	Mornington Shire Council
Carpentaria Shire Council	Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
Cook Shire Council	Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
Croydon Shire Council	Tablelands Regional Council
Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council	Torres Shire Council
Douglas Shire Council	Torres Strait Island Regional Council
Etheridge Shire Council	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council	
Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council	

Eligible organisations include:

- Local governments or
- A regional organisation of local governments or equivalent body

Individual local governments should contact neighbouring local government to discuss inclusion in a regional collaboration.

Integrated regional applications that address the funding objectives and seek to achieve enduring, and public oriented outcomes are encouraged.

Eligible organisations are advised to read the Regional Collaborative Framework (the Framework) carefully and refer as relevant to the Framework when preparing the funding application.

Eligible organisations are invited to submit funding applications for projects of up to two years duration that address the priorities for investment, as outlined in the applicant guidelines.

Closing date for applications – 12 May 2022

More information is available by emailing betterpartnerships@daf.qld.gov.au or by phoning the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on 13 25 23.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Initiative overview	2
1.2	Regionally based service delivery	2
1.3	What will be funded?	3
2	Investment priorities and objectives	4
2.1	Investment priorities	4
2.2	Objectives	4
2.2.1	Building local government capability	4
2.2.2	Building knowledge, engagement and participation	4
2.2.3	Projects are technically feasible, provide value and facilitate local employment	5
2.2.4	Projects including measurable and reportable outcomes	5
3	Eligibility	5
3.1	Eligibility of applicant	5
3.2	Eligible projects	5
3.3	What will not be funded?	5
4	Application and assessment process	6
4.1	Receipt and registration of applications	6
4.2	How will applications be assessed?	6
4.3	Assessment criteria	7
4.3.1	Criteria 1 – Complementary to existing activities	7
4.3.2	Criteria 2 – Strategic and best practice management	7
4.3.3	Criteria 3 – Aligned with local, regional, state and national priorities	7
4.3.4	Criteria 4 – Governance systems established	7
4.3.5	Criteria 5 – Budget and Value for money	8
4.3.6	Criteria 6 – Monitoring and evaluation	8
5	Grant agreement	10
5.1	Project commencement	10
5.2	GST	10
5.3	Monitoring and reporting	10
5.4	Communication requirements	11
6	Rights and responsibilities	11
6.1	Applicants' responsibilities	11
6.2	Queensland Government's rights	12
6.3	Disclaimer	12
6.4	Confidentiality and privacy	12

1 Introduction

The Queensland Government supports an integrated and coordinated approach to the management of invasive plants and animals through regional collaboration with a shared biosecurity outcome. This recognises the commonality of issues that pest managers face and the fact that invasive plants and animals are best managed at a landscape scale. To achieve this, partnership arrangements need to be established and well supported, with the ultimate aim of establishing strong and enduring collaborative relationships. As part of the Regional Economic Recovery Plan, the *Enhancing Local Government Biosecurity Capacity (ELGBC) in far north Queensland* grant funding scheme is designed to assist by building local government capacity in this area.

1.1 Initiative overview

Due to a range of factors, such as its extensive coastal regions, proximity to international borders, and high levels of tourism, far north Queensland is particularly vulnerable to biosecurity threats. The Biosecurity Capability Review (released in September 2015) highlighted the vulnerability of the region, and that enhanced biosecurity capacity can result from building stronger and more effective working relationships.

The *Enhancing Local Government Biosecurity Capacity (ELGBC) in far north Queensland* grant funding scheme is one of a number of activities designed to address these recommendations. The ELGBC builds on work that was undertaken through the Better Partnerships Project (BPP), to provide Queensland local governments with guidance on how to establish effective collaborative partnerships.

The BPP implemented two pilot projects in central and north Queensland, these projects used differing approaches to provide support for improved collaborative arrangements. Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology assessed the outcomes of this work and the impact of differing governance styles to establish some key guidelines for the development of successful regional collaborative arrangements, from this the Framework was developed. It highlights key principles that support the development of regional collaborations, with the aim of enhancing local government biosecurity capacity, and should be used to support and guide the ELGBC in far north Queensland project development and implementation.

This initiative focuses on biosecurity in far north Queensland, although the identified principles can be adopted to other regions in Queensland. Ultimately, the Framework will guide applicants to develop strong partnerships, leading to comprehensive and collaborative regional biosecurity governance and planning, and bring together regional resources to achieve common biosecurity outcomes and objectives.

1.2 Regionally based service delivery

The Framework provides guidance on how to establish collaborative partnerships that can be used at the regional level. The ultimate aim is to provide strong and enduring collaborative foundations for establishing and tackling joint, regional pest management issues. These partnerships should complement existing biosecurity planning and management activities undertaken by local governments and, where relevant, align with regional level strategies and arrangements such as the North Queensland Biosecurity Initiative.

Where multiple organisations come together to participate in the regional collaboration, the applicant (or lead organisation) will be required to manage the funds and establish joint governance

arrangements. It is important that the grant application clearly identifies the delivery arrangements and funding allocations to respective entities.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) expects all organisations involved in the implementation of the Framework to:

- **Develop or expand an existing formal regional collaboration** through the most appropriate consultation, delivery agents and mechanisms that are agreed in local government biosecurity plans and/or NRM regional plans.
- **Report and promote achievements and outcomes at a regional and broader level.** Organisations are expected to operate in a transparent way. They will be expected to include measurable outputs and outcomes and report to government and their communities on their activities and achievements in relation to projects and related outcomes.
- **Broker partnerships and leverage further sustainable investment for projects.** Organisations should implement projects in partnership with the local communities by engaging investment partners, training and employment agencies, landholders, and local organisations, as appropriate, to achieve optimal outcomes for economic growth.

1.3 What will be funded?

Eligible organisations are invited to submit project application addressing the priorities for investment outlined in Section 2. Projects should be designed to suit a biosecurity requirement with funding and delivery for a period of up to two years.

Integrated applications that address the objectives of this initiative, seek to leave a legacy across the region, show innovation, and a public benefit are encouraged. Applications need to demonstrate how the proposed activities will deliver measurable outcomes to address the relevant priorities.

Where possible projects should capitalise on current and/or previous investments that have progressed biosecurity outcomes and the development of a shared responsibility towards invasive plant and animal management. Projects may also leverage additional and existing complementary investment from other organisations such as other Queensland and federal government agencies, Natural Resource Management bodies, and peak industry bodies. Applications should include details of appropriate financial co-contributions by the applicant and partners in the budget section of the application.

To secure regional outcomes, it is encouraged that the project governance will build on existing and/or create new partnership and cooperative governance arrangements between stakeholders in the region.

Information on priorities for investment, timeframes, eligibility and rights and responsibilities are outlined in the following sections:

- Section 2: Investment priorities and objectives
- Section 3: Eligibility
- Section 4: Application and assessment process
- Section 5: Grant agreements
- Section 6: Rights and responsibilities.

2 Investment priorities and objectives

Queensland Government funding is available to assist in the coordination of regional arrangements to establish and enhance effective collaborative partnerships and is offered to eligible applicants for projects that are delivered over a period of up to two years. The legacy of the project is to enhance the biosecurity capacity within far north Queensland by building stronger and more effective working partnerships across the region.

It is critical that the Framework is implemented on a regional basis and aims to deliver regionally agreed priorities supported by the local government biosecurity plans. A robust overall governance structure should encompass a regionally based service delivery, decision making process and include members from different levels of local government and relevant stakeholders.

2.1 Investment priorities

It is critical that the regional collaborative partnerships leverage additional investment from partner organisations, service delivery is regionally based and decision making involves input from local governments, regional NRM groups, industry and other key stakeholders.

A robust overall governance structure will encompass a regionally based service delivery and include a range of members from key stakeholders.

2.2 Objectives

Objectives are the intended results that contribute to benefits for Queensland. These objectives have been developed taking into account government policy priorities.

2.2.1 Building local government capability

Applications must demonstrate how the project will build the capacity within the far north Queensland in the development and planning processes that will assist with ongoing, effective biosecurity management of invasive plants and animals.

Applications must highlight how they link to existing pest management priorities in local, state, and national strategies and/or national threat abatement plans.

2.2.2 Building knowledge, engagement and participation

Applications that include significant participation of relevant local governments and key stakeholders will be considered favourably.

Eligible organisations should identify agreed project proponents and develop projects collaboratively and in consultation with other local governments and may also include:

- Regional organisations of local governments
- Relevant regional pest management groups
- Regional Natural Resource Management groups
- First Nations groups, Landcare groups, Catchment management groups, Environmental organisations and other community groups
- State and Federal government stakeholders involved in invasive pest management

2.2.3 Projects are technically feasible, provide value and facilitate local employment

Applications must demonstrate the level of contributions from local governments, and other project partners including the ongoing level of stakeholder and public support.

Applications must include information regarding the technical expertise and an assessment of its operational feasibility and value for money including investment from other parties.

The application should identify and integrate labour and skills-based organisations to be directly involved in projects to maximise the use of regional labour and skill development initiatives funded by the Queensland and Federal Governments. This should aim to generate a positive impact and demonstrated a commitment to supporting local employment, where applicable.

2.2.4 Projects including measurable and reportable outcomes

Applications must include key success indicators and measures including the expected sustainable agricultural and biodiversity outcomes and capacity building outcomes that the project will aim to achieve.

3 Eligibility

Organisations should consider the eligibility criteria outlined below before applying and identify biosecurity proponents and implement the Framework in consultation with affected stakeholders.

3.1 Eligibility of applicant

Eligible organisations must be either:

- local governments or
- regional organisation of local governments or an equivalent body

The applicant must not have any overdue project acquittals from Queensland Government funding at the time of contracting.

3.2 Eligible projects

Applications that address funding priorities, objectives for investment and target strong collaboration across the region in a cost-effective and justifiable way will be considered for funding.

3.3 What will not be funded?

ELGBC will not fund projects or activities that:

- Are solely for the undertaking of on ground control of invasive plants and animals
- do not address the priorities for investment in Section 2
- have been undertaken before executing a grant agreement with the Queensland Government
- are a current or previous recipient of government or third-party funding for essentially the same project
- the activity results in a direct breach or likely to cause a breach of State and/or Commonwealth legislation
- are required to meet the core “business as usual” requirements of the applicant, particularly statutory responsibilities

- are likely to have a significant adverse impact on Indigenous cultural heritage and/or have not received approval for the proposed activities through relevant State legislative requirements
- predominantly support research, tool building and/or modelling approaches except where it is demonstrably required to achieve regional collaboration outcomes in line with priorities and the needs of the particular project
- are for political advocacy
- deliver a purely private or business development/commercial benefit
- involve the purchase of equipment or materials that are normally part of an applicant's responsibility, unless a critical link to funding priorities and objectives of the project can be demonstrated prior to execution of the grant agreement
- provide bounties for the control of vertebrate pests
- are not best practice
- are outside of Queensland.

DAF reserves the right, during the assessment process, to adjust project allocations within or across financial years and to impose conditions on approvals. DAF also reserves the right to redirect investment at any stage if applications do not meet these guidelines.

4 Application and assessment process Applicants must submit an official application and budget on the department templates, without any alterations. The completed application, budget template and supporting documents should be submitted electronically via email betterpartnerships@daf.qld.gov.au by 5 pm on 12 May 2022.

Requests for an extension should only be sought in extenuating circumstances. DAF has no obligation to accept a request for extension or late applications. DAF will make a case-by-case assessment as required.

4.1 Receipt and registration of applications

DAF will as part of the assessment process acknowledge all application and provide a reference number.

As part of the assessment process, applications will be screened by DAF to confirm whether the eligibility criteria in Section 3 have been met. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria, at DAFs discretion, may be excluded from the remainder of the assessment process.

4.2 How will applications be assessed?

Project applications will be assessed by a ELGBC oversight group.

To ensure objectivity, members of the oversight group, will declare any conflicts of interest, including discussions that have taken place with applicants that may represent a real or perceived conflict of interest. Where a conflict of interest exists, the relevant member will abstain from participating in the assessment of the project application in question.

The assessment process will encompass all applications and will:

- undertake a thorough assessment of all proposals against the set assessment criteria (as outlined below, Section 4.3)
- recommend removal of ineligible activities or sub-projects

- propose any necessary conditions to be applied to applications or budget
- moderate the applications overall with a view to recommending an appropriate funding allocation, based on regional capacity and total funding available to meet the allocated budget priorities
- consider the balance of funding between activities and recommend any adjustments to projects to support funding allocations.

The assessment will also identify any issues requiring attention before final approvals are given. These may include opportunities for cross-jurisdictional or regional collaboration, budgetary and contracting issues.

Organisations will be advised of the application outcome following an official announcement of the funding and successful applicants.

4.3 Assessment criteria

All applications will be assessed by the ELGBC oversight group against the following criteria.

4.3.1 Criteria 1 – Complementary to existing activities

The proposed project will compliment work undertaken or underway that has been shown to be effective in managing biosecurity risks and seek to leave a legacy within the region. Projects must not undermine or replace existing activities that have proven to be effective. The applicant must detail work that is being undertaken and demonstrate how the proposed project will complement the existing activities.

By following the Framework, engagement mechanisms are used to aid the development of local or regional biosecurity plans, that have had extensive community and stakeholder consultation and are representative of community and regional priorities.

4.3.2 Criteria 2 – Strategic and best practice management

Applicants must provide details of the strategic and best practice management that will be incorporated into the project. Applicants must demonstrate extension/engagement expertise or how they will provide extension/engagement expertise and support for the regional collaborative group.

The project should increase local government capacity and willingness to work together to combat invasive plants and animals. Applicants must demonstrate how they will reference and utilise the Framework during the implementation and delivery project.

4.3.3 Criteria 3 – Aligned with local, regional, state and national priorities

Applicants must demonstrate how they will gain local government and stakeholder support for the projects outcomes by targeting the high priorities within the region.

4.3.4 Criteria 4 – Governance systems established

The Framework is designed to be implemented on a regional basis that crosses council boundaries with a goal to share knowledge, skills and resources. Project partners may include regional NRM

organisations, state and federal government agencies, industry and additional relevant stakeholder in the planning of management of regional invasive plants and animals.

Nil tenure is a management approach that is currently used for feral animals like wild dogs and feral pigs, as they naturally move widely across landscapes. Nil tenure could be an approach that the project could use to manage high biosecurity priorities across the region.

The applicant is considered the lead organisation and is responsible for the project governance including the administration of funds. Queensland Government staff may provide advice and input into the implementation of the ELGBC project. The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) provides a fee-for-service grant preparation assistance to local governments.

4.3.5 Criteria 5 – Budget and Value for money

Applications must demonstrate value for money and clearly detail anticipated project costs, including administration expenses, not exceeding 7.5%, such as:

- corporate governance and compliance costs
- reasonable office/equipment operating costs
- project proposal planning and development
- performance monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems
- management of staff costs including salary and travel.

Applicants must provide details of any other state or federal government funding sources which an application has been made (awaiting assessment/outcome) or funds granted for the proposed or complementary activities; how much, for what purpose, current status of the application and any other relevant information.

4.3.6 Criteria 6 – Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the project is critical to ensuring that biosecurity objectives and achievements are demonstrated and documented. This should be done through the measurement of activities, outputs and outcomes. Examples of monitoring activities can be found in Table 1.

Applications must include baseline information and manageable targets to allow progress to be measured and outputs to be reported. Baseline data can be gained from local government databases, previous or complementary projects.

Table 1. Examples of activities/outputs and possible measures

Activities/Outputs	Measures	Baseline	Target/Indicators
Regional collaboration established	a. number of local governments involved b. governance arrangement adopted c. number of meetings held d. number of workshops held	Amount of coordinated activity at time of contract agreement	Regional partnerships strengthened and enduring
Comparison of local government biosecurity plans and identification of common objectives	a. number of local government biosecurity plans compared b. number of common objectives	Situation at the time of contract agreement	Amount of coordinated activity required to achieve regional collaborative objectives and outcomes
Development of or amendments to local government and/or regional biosecurity plans	a. number of local government biosecurity plans amended b. regional biosecurity plan developed, amended, adopted	Situation at the time of contract agreement	Amount of coordinated activity required to achieve regional collaborative objectives and outcomes
Development of formal agreement/s to share resources, data, reporting across the region	a. gap analysis of resourcing, data systems and reporting arrangements b. adoption of resource sharing agreement c. adoption of data sharing agreement d. adoption of a regional reporting framework	Situation at time of contract agreement	Amount of coordination (formal agreements) required to achieve regional collaborative objectives and outcomes
Engagement and involvement of stakeholders in project activities	a. number of people actively recruited to the regional collaborative group b. number of awareness raising activities held within local governments and number of people engaged c. number of awareness raising activities and number of people engaged d. amount of active management by collaboration participants (number of person-days ¹)	Situation at time of contract agreement	To be determined by applicant (Number of local governments and stakeholders and network growth)
Capacity building event/activities (e.g., training to build skills in collaboration/partnerships)	a. number of capacity building events/activities for regional collaborative group b. number of person-days ¹ .	Number of events prior to the framework implementation.	To be determined by applicant (Number of activities required to achieve project outcomes)
Regional employment associated with framework implementation	a. number of people employed b. number of hours	Employment at time of contract agreement	Expected numbers of people employed/hours of employment directly associated with project investment
Amount of funding leveraged	c. in-kind contributions (calculated in dollar terms) d. cash contributions (clearly identified)	Existing investment in weed and pest management at time of contract agreement	Expected additional investment in regional collaboration activities

¹To calculate person-days, multiply the number of participants by the amount of a day or days the event/management activity ran for (use only half or full day units) and round totals to the nearest whole number.

Applicants are required to include, as a minimum, quantitative measures regarding the increase of skills, knowledge and engagement and Indigenous employment/engagement.

Progress towards long-term benefits should be evidenced by measurable outcomes. Examples of measurable outcomes are shown in Table 2 as a guide for this purpose.

Table 2. Examples of measurable outcomes to demonstrate project outcomes

Outcomes	Measures	Baseline	Target/Indicators
Increased local government participation in regional collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. increased capability and willingness of local governments to engage in regional collaboration b. increase in number/frequency of regional planning activities c. ownership of problem (intention to continue regional collaboration) 	Information on participation levels at the time of contract agreement	Expected participation levels to achieve project goals and enduring collaboration
Collaborative and enduring partnerships supporting the objective of reducing biosecurity impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. increased sharing resources b. improved communication between neighbouring local governments on biosecurity threats, c. more consistent and regular sharing of invasive species information 	Situation at the time of contract agreement	Expected participation and formal/informal arrangements
Increased stakeholder participation in best practice weed and pest management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. increased capability and willingness of stakeholders to engage in best practice weed and pest management b. increase in number/frequency of weed and pest management activities c. ownership of problem (intention to continue weed and pest management activities) 	Information on participation levels at the time of contract agreement	Expected participation levels to achieve project goals

5 Grant agreement

The Queensland Government, through DAF, will negotiate a grant agreement (the agreement) with each successful applicant. This agreement will be executed once any specified conditions of funding have been met and is a performance-based, legally enforceable agreement, setting out the terms and conditions governing the funding.

If the agreement is not finalised within 20 business days from the date the offer is made, the offer of funding may be withdrawn by DAF.

5.1 Project commencement

Organisations will be advised of the outcome of their applications in writing by email.

Project activities undertaken prior to the execution of the agreement, are at the full risk of the applicant and will not be funded under the agreement. Until the agreement is fully executed (signed by both parties) the project funds are not guaranteed and can be redirected by DAF at any stage.

5.2 GST

The agreement is subject to normal taxation treatment and no special arrangements will apply. You should seek independent advice on the taxation implications of receiving a grant. Project budgets in applications should be GST exclusive. GST will be added to funding payments (as applicable) to meet legislative obligations under *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 (Cth)*.

5.3 Monitoring and reporting

Reporting on project performance will provide evidence about the appropriateness, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and overall outcome of the ELGBC.

The Queensland Government requires each applicant to include, as a minimum, quantitative measures regarding the increase of volunteer, landholder and industry skills, knowledge and engagement and Indigenous employment/engagement.

5.4 Communication requirements

Successful applicants shall be required to keep DAF and the community informed of the delivery of progress of ELGBC project/s and delivery of outcomes through web content, social media and the release of annual reports.

Recipients are required to acknowledge the funding source in all project materials, publications and activities. This statement and approval process for the material will be discussed further with all successful applicants.

6 Rights and responsibilities

6.1 Applicants' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the applicant to:

- inform themselves fully and properly of the requirements of the ELGBC, these guidelines and the requirements of the application process
- ensure that their application is complete and accurate, as DAF are not obliged to request additional or missing information
- identify any information contained within their application that they consider should be treated as confidential and provide reasons for the request (noting that the DAF will not be in breach of any confidentiality obligations where disclosure is required as outlined further in section 6.4 below)
- keep a copy of their application and any attachments, for their own records
- inform the DAF of any changes to their circumstances which may affect their application or their eligibility for funding under these guidelines.

If an applicant is successful in obtaining funding, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they hold the relevant insurance(s) at the time of entering into the funding agreement and prior to any project activities being undertaken. DAF may require the applicant to provide copies of the relevant certificates of currency for their insurance.

Applicants are also required to declare in writing to DAF where a real perceived conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to their application, the proposed project delivery, or any funding agreement it may enter into with the Queensland Government.

The applicant's participation in any stage of the application process, or in relation to any matter concerning the process, is at the applicant's sole risk, cost and expense. The Queensland Government will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by an applicant in preparing, lodging and taking part in the application/assessment process.

The Queensland Government will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with these guidelines, or arising from any discrepancies, ambiguities, inconsistencies or errors in their application.

Applicants are entirely responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted in their application. If applicants knowingly provide inadequate, false or misleading information, the application may be excluded from the assessment process.

If an applicant discovers any material discrepancy, ambiguity, inconsistency or error in their application, they must immediately bring it to the attention of DAF by emailing betterpartnerships@daf.qld.gov.au. DAF may request further information from an applicant and allow an applicant to remedy any discrepancy, ambiguity, inconsistency or error in an application. DAF reserves the right to accept or disregard clarification information provided by the applicants and will not consider clarification information that materially improves or amends an applicant's original application.

Applicants should be aware that the giving of false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.

6.2 Queensland Government's rights

The Queensland Government, through DAF reserves the below rights:

- to amend these guidelines in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments where possible.
- to vary, suspend or terminate the assessment process at any time.
- to the ownership around any data collected from participants at implementation, during and after closure of the ELGBC, subject to privacy and commercial considerations.

6.3 Disclaimer

The Queensland Government, including the DAF and their officers, employees, agents and advisors:

- are not, and will not be, responsible or liable for the accuracy or completeness of any information in or provided in connection with these guidelines
- make no express or implied representation or warranty that any statement as to future matters will prove correct
- disclaim any and all liability arising from any information provided to an applicant, including errors in, or omissions contained in that information
- except in so far as liability under any statute cannot be excluded, accept no responsibility arising in any way from errors or omissions contained in these guidelines
- accept no liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person as a result of that person, or any other person, placing reliance on the contents of these guidelines or any other information provided by the Queensland Government in respect of the ELGBC.

6.4 Confidentiality and privacy

Applicants must identify any information contained within their application that they consider should be treated as confidential and provide reasons for the request.

DAF will only consider a request for confidentiality where:

- the information to be protected is identified in specific rather than global terms
- the information is by its nature confidential
- disclosure would cause detriment to the parties concerned.

DAF is subject to the legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the Queensland Government, including disclosures to the parliament and its committees.

Notwithstanding any obligations of confidentiality, DAF may disclose, or allow at any time the disclosure of, any information contained in or relating to any application:

- to their advisers, employees or internal management for purposes related to the application and assessment processes, including to evaluate or otherwise assess applications and manage any resultant funding agreement
- to the responsible Minister
- in response to a request by a house or a committee of the parliament of the state of Queensland
- within DAF, or with another agency, where this serves the Queensland Government's legitimate interests
- where the information is authorised or required by law to be disclosed, noting that information submitted to the Queensland Government is subject to the *Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)* and its requirements
- where the information is already in the public domain otherwise than due to a breach of any relevant confidentiality obligation by the Queensland Government.

In submitting an application, applicants consent to DAF using the information contained in their application for the above-mentioned purposes, for administering the ELGBC and any other incidental or related purpose.

DAF will store and use the personal information collected by it in compliance with its obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.