



Position Description:

Grants and Contracts Manager – Safe on Country Fund

Position title	Grants and Contracts Manager – Safe on Country Fund
Program	Strengthening Families and Communities – Safe on Country Fund
Classification / salary	\$107,055 to \$121,804 plus superannuation
Tenure	Full-time, fixed term to 30 June 2028 (subject to funding)
Location	Desert Knowledge Precinct, Mparntwe/Alice Springs NT, with occasional travel to remote communities
Reports to	Program Manager – Safe on Country Fund
Direct reports	Coordinates the work of consultants, contractors and administrative support resources engaged in grants administration and program delivery.
Funding source	Australian Government Department of Social Services grant (program-funded position)

About Desert Knowledge Australia

Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) is a statutory corporation of the Northern Territory established under the Desert Knowledge Australia Act 2003 (NT). Our purpose is to encourage and facilitate learning, research and sustainable economic and social development relating to deserts and arid lands. DKA is governed by a First Nations–majority board appointed by the NT Government for their knowledge of and deep connection to desert Australia. DKA is based at the Desert Knowledge Precinct on Arrernte country, 9kms south of the centre of Mparntwe/Alice Springs.

Find out more about DKA at www.dka.com.au

About the Safe on Country Fund

DKA is administering the Australian Government's Strengthening Families and Communities – Safe on Country Fund in Central Australia: a flexible funding model operating to 30 June 2028 that will on-fund community-led projects to reduce family and domestic violence, strengthen families, and improve safety and wellbeing on Country.

Funding decisions will be led by a Safe on Country Fund Community Panel – a majority Aboriginal committee of the DKA Board, with representation from across the Alice Springs, MacDonnell and Central Desert regions. The program gives practical effect to the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and is delivered in coordination with a Capability Uplift Provider and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Position purpose

The Grants and Contracts Manager is responsible for the strategic leadership, governance and operational management of the Safe on Country Fund grants program and associated on-funding pool of approximately \$8.36 million.

The position is accountable for the integrity, compliance, performance and continuous improvement of all grants and contract management functions, ensuring funding is administered in accordance with Commonwealth funding requirements, legislative obligations and Desert Knowledge Australia policies. The role exercises a high degree of professional judgement and autonomy in managing complex contractual, financial, governance and risk matters.

As DKA's principal advisor on grants administration and contract management, the position provides expert advice and recommendations to the Program Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Safe on Country Fund Community Panel and Board on funding decisions, program performance, financial stewardship, risk management and compliance issues.

The Grants and Contracts Manager leads the development and implementation of grants governance frameworks, systems, policies and procedures, and is responsible for monitoring funded projects, managing program risks and ensuring public funds achieve intended outcomes. The role contributes to organisational planning and decision-making and works collaboratively with government agencies, Aboriginal organisations, community partners and service providers to support community-led initiatives that strengthen safety, wellbeing and resilience across Central Australia.

Key responsibilities

1. Grants and Contract Management

- Manage the grants lifecycle from application intake through to final acquittal and project closure.
- Undertake eligibility assessment, due diligence, risk assessment and evaluation processes for funding applications.
- Lead funding assessment processes and provide recommendations to the CEO, Community Panel and Board on funding allocations, contract variations and risk management actions.
- Draft, negotiate, execute and manage grant agreements, variations and extensions in accordance with Commonwealth and DKA requirements.
- Ensure funded organisations understand their contractual obligations, milestones, reporting requirements and acquittal responsibilities.
- Prepare feedback for unsuccessful applicants and respond to enquiries regarding funding processes and decisions.
- Oversee project monitoring activities, including milestone reviews, site visits and performance assessments.

2. Financial Management and Budget Oversight

- Manage oversight of the Safe on Country Fund on-funding allocation of more than \$8 million.

- Monitor grant commitments, expenditure, cash flow and program budgets against approved allocations.
- Ensure timely and accurate processing, reconciliation and reporting of grant payments.
- Identify emerging financial risks and recommend mitigation strategies.
- Prepare financial reports, forecasts and expenditure analyses for the Program Manager, CEO, Community Panel, Board and Department of Social Services.
- Support external audits and financial assurance activities relating to the grants program.

3. Governance, Compliance and Risk Management

- Provide expert advice on grants governance, compliance, contractual matters, probity and funding risks.
- Develop, implement and maintain grants administration policies, procedures, templates and governance frameworks.
- Ensure compliance with Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines, funding agreement requirements and DKA policies.
- Lead risk assessment processes for funded projects and maintain a program risk register.
- Manage fraud prevention, conflicts of interest, records management and probity controls.
- Investigate and manage instances of non-compliance, contractual breach, complaints or suspected misuse of funds.
- Escalate significant risks and compliance issues to senior management as required.

4. Reporting, Governance Support and Strategic Advice

- Prepare Board papers, executive briefs, Community Panel reports and funding recommendations.
- Provide high-level advice to the Program Manager, CEO and Community Panel on funding decisions and program performance.
- Coordinate governance processes associated with grant recommendations and funding approvals.
- Present reports and recommendations to Community Panel and governance meetings as required.
- Ensure accurate documentation of decisions, conditions and actions arising from governance processes.
- Contribute to strategic planning and future program development activities.

5. Program Performance, Systems and Continuous Improvement

- Lead administration and continuous improvement of the grants management system and application portal.
- Ensure grant data is accurate, secure and capable of supporting reporting, evaluation and audit requirements.
- Analyse program data and prepare performance reports, case studies and program insights.
- Lead grants program performance monitoring and continuous improvement activities, ensuring funding outcomes, compliance requirements and contractual obligations are achieved.

- Identify opportunities to improve funding accessibility, efficiency and outcomes for remote communities.
- Coordinate and provide guidance to administrative staff, consultants or contractors supporting grants delivery, where applicable.

6. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain productive relationships with Aboriginal organisations, community groups, government agencies and service providers.
- Support applicants and grant recipients to understand and meet funding requirements.
- Work in culturally safe and respectful ways with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations throughout Central Australia.
- Facilitate access to support services, including capability-building assistance where required.

Selection criteria

Essential

Qualifications

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in business, finance, accounting, governance, public administration, law, project management, community services or a related discipline; or
- An equivalent combination of qualifications, skills and extensive experience managing grants, contracts or funding programs of significant scale and complexity.

Experience and Knowledge

- Demonstrated experience managing complex grants, contracts or funding programs, including assessment, contracting, monitoring, reporting and acquittals.
- Demonstrated experience managing significant budgets and financial reporting responsibilities.
- Strong understanding of governance, compliance, risk management and audit requirements.
- Demonstrated knowledge of Commonwealth grant administration requirements and reporting obligations.
- Experience providing high-level advice, recommendations and reports to senior management, boards or governance bodies.
- Demonstrated ability to assess and manage program and project risks.
- Strong analytical, written communication and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal organisations and remote communities.
- Experience using grants management systems, databases or CRM platforms.
- Sound judgement, integrity and discretion in handling sensitive information.
- Current C class driver's licence and willingness to travel to remote communities, including overnight stays and travel on unsealed roads in a 4WD vehicle.



Desirable

- Experience working in the community services, family safety, social services or Aboriginal community-controlled sector.
- Experience establishing or improving grants management systems and governance frameworks.

Special requirements

- Satisfactory National Police Check.
- Completion of a conflict-of-interest declaration and compliance with DKA's Code of Conduct and policies.

How to apply

Applications are to be submitted via the following online form by August 31 2026:

➔ <https://wkf.ms/45EBL1A>

For a confidential discussion about the role, contact Jimmy Cocking, DKA CEO on 08 8959 6012.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply. DKA values the knowledge, connections and lived experience that Aboriginal people from Central Australia bring to this program.

DKA is committed to child safety and to providing a culturally safe workplace. Employment is subject to the satisfactory completion of pre-employment screening.