



Extinction Rebellion Australia

Finance Alliance

FINANCE POLICY AND PROCESSES

Part 2 - Expenditures and Budgets

**Note that this document is evolving to reflect the evolving nature of Extinction Rebellion.
Please feel free to provide feedback.**

A. INTRODUCTION

Extinction Rebellion ("XR") is a volunteer-based self-organising system. People join XR because they know that climate change is an urgent and existential threat to humanity and life on earth; and because they recognize we must come together now to bring about the radical change that is required. XR provides a platform to make this happen.

Volunteering and the exchange economy are at the heart of XR's operating model. By contributing their time, skills and expertise to XR, people are able to do more to safeguard the future for themselves and their families than they could by working on their own.

This volunteer ethos is critical to success. A substantial dependency on funding streams would risk:

- Co-option by the carbon-based economy that XR is challenging
- Constraint on the radical scaling-up that is required
- Distraction from operational priorities.

Since Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance is an unincorporated association it cannot have employees and does not pay salaries.

Some volunteers may need support to cover expenses incurred, and in some cases, external contractors may be needed to deliver certain essential services. Clear and accessible policy, however, is essential for ensuring that:

- a) XR volunteers are treated fairly and consistently
- b) Costs are kept to a minimum, and that
- c) Donor confidence is maintained.

The principles contained in this policy are aimed principally at the national level.

The budget process and budget cycle (outlined at Section F) ensure that decisions on expenditure are taken appropriately, in accordance with available funds, collectively by the Executive Committee at a monthly budget meeting. This includes determining what spending should be approved, where there are competing priorities for available funds.

B. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE FIVE STEP CHECK

Only the Executive Committee can approve expenditure on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance and may do so only in accordance with this policy. No expense can be incurred on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance unless *prior* approval is obtained from the Executive Committee in accordance with this policy. All claims for expenditure need to be made on the Claim for Reimbursement Form. Before approving any claim, the Executive Committee must use THE FIVE STEP CHECK:

STEP 1: Does the action or service for which expenditure is claimed advance XR strategic objectives? *Only if the answer is "Yes", progress to STEP 2*

STEP 2: Could the same action or service be performed without incurring expense? *Only if the answer is "No", progress to STEP 3*

STEP 3: Is the sum claimed the most cost effective way to advancing the relevant objective? *Only if the answer is "Yes", progress to STEP 4.*

STEP 4: Is the sum claimed within established limits for the type of expenditure? *Only if the answer is "Yes", progress to STEP 5.*

STEP 5: Has the expenditure been budgeted for (ie is it in the forecast) and is sufficient funding available to cover the claim? *Only if the answer is "Yes", should the claim be approved. If the answer is no, the Executive Committee review the budget.*

With reference to step 3, this may not necessarily be the lowest cost option, but take into account things such as the quality of the product or being in alignment with XR ethos, such as being environmentally sound. In all steps, the judgement of the decision-makers at the time of making the decision is assumed to be correct. If information comes to light after the decisions, the decision-makers can change their decisions and make adjustments to any reimbursements.

There may occasionally be exceptions to this process and the Executive Committee can decide this with the advice of the Treasurer. For example contributing to services we use where they rely on donations, such as the use of secure email services or provision of meeting space.

C. FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

C.1 Expenses

XR's decentralised, holacratic-type structure depends for its integrity on a high level of financial transparency. All expenditure, and applications for expenditure, will be published. Volunteers claiming expenses should first sign a volunteer agreement form consenting to the publication of relevant personal information (ie their names; any payments requested; and the purpose of the request).

C.2 Donations

Donations to Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance will also be published. Donor details won't be published for small personal donations (or donations via a Crowd Fund where the amount and name of the donor is made available via the platform to the extent the donor chose to share their real name). Other than in exceptional circumstances (ie where the donor has provided credible reasons not to want their identity disclosed and this perspective has been accepted by the Executive Committee) donor details will be published for all donations of \$1,000 or more (This is in keeping with current limits for political donations in NSW and the ACT). Where such exceptional circumstances apply, the donation must still be recorded with an accompanying note: "Donor has requested anonymity".

Individuals must ensure that all donations intended for Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance are directed to the appropriate Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance bank account (or the Treasurer) and not placed in personal bank accounts.

D. TYPES OF EXPENDITURE

D.1 Expenditures to be for national requirements

Expenditures out of national funds must be applied specifically for products and services that benefit the entirety of national XR (such as national IT costs), and other expense claims should be directed to state finance groups for attention. Allocations to States and Territories to assist in their specific expenses may be made on an equal share basis providing they are a named XR group following the Principles and Values and incorporating the 3 demands (we understand groups may have variations or additions to the 3 demands) and have a named and contactable presence on organise.earth (Mattermost Chat) in the Nat-finance channel on XR Australia.

Any allocations to States and Territories may only be spent on legal activities. Groups typically need funds to book venues for meetings, materials such as banners, printing and other costs which are legitimate expenses for any campaign. For example, purchasing paint is legal.

D.2 Volunteer expense claims

A volunteer may make a claim for expenses incurred where:

1. The volunteer has completed a volunteer agreement form which covers the publication of any expense claims. This only needs to be done once.
2. Prior approval for the expense was obtained from the Executive Committee, in accordance with the Five Step Check;
3. The Claim relates to an approved category of expense (see below).

To make a claim, you need to complete a Claim for Reimbursement Form. Payment will normally be made within two weeks.

Approved categories of expense

A volunteer may claim for (for example):

- the cost of purchasing materials needed for actions,
- the cost of printing of flyers and posters where there is no cheaper way to produce them,
- the cost of T-shirts for silk-screening, and badge making supplies,
- Hi-vis vests, First Aid equipment, banners and other items authorised by the Executive Committee and that fit within budget parameters and meet the purposes of Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance.
- other materials and services bought on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance with prior agreement

A volunteer may not claim for:

- costs of overnight accommodation or subsistence costs, other than that agreed by the Executive Committee in respect of travel and subsistence costs for rebels from outside the area who are providing services (such as training) to Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance.
- costs of fines resulting from actions taken.

D.3 Payments for services & payments to contractors

Contracts for services should be exceptional and should be entered into only where the service cannot be provided by a volunteer to the requisite standard and time-frame.

A proposal to enter into a contract for services must be considered and approved by the Treasurer for costs under \$250, in accordance with Five Step Process, and by the Executive Committee for costs of \$250 or over.

E. FORM SUBMISSION

Expenditure claims made using the Claim for Reimbursement will be submitted by the person making the claim to the Treasurer who needs to approve the spend preferably within 3 days. Once approved, then the payment will be processed by the Treasurer in accordance with the Finance Policy.

F. BUDGET

The Executive Committee shall continually review and update the budget throughout the year, on a monthly basis, taking account of recurring expenses and likely new demands upon the organisation for spending, so that sufficient funds are available to meet ongoing commitments. From time to time, depending on the flow of donations from the donations page on the Action Network, an amount may be put aside to assist State, Territory, regional and local groups with funding allocations to further their work towards meeting the demands of XR. Where funds are limited, an application process with clear objectives, guidelines and selection criteria may be used to determine how the funds are distributed.

G. QUERIES

Any queries relating to the operation of this policy should be raised with the Extinction Rebellion Australia Finance Alliance Treasurer.

H. FEEDBACK

Please email suggestions for improving this policy to johnsmith51@protonmail.com

VERSION CONTROL

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Release history

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Next Review

Reviewer	Review Date	Version Reviewed
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