



*your environment levy
your habitat*

Environment Levy Partnerships and Grants Program Guidelines

Sunshine Coast Council has a strong history of partnering with the community to achieve the environmental goals set out in its Corporate Plan and environmental strategies/plans, including the Biodiversity Strategy, Waterways and Coastal Management Strategy and the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area Pest Management Plan.

The Environment Levy Partnerships and Grants Program offers three levels of funding to assist private rural landholders and not-for-profit community groups to achieve a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing the region's natural assets.

For all three categories these guidelines should be read in conjunction with council's *Community Grants Policy* and *Environment Levy Policy*. You can view the policies at www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/grants

Environment Levy Partnerships

The Environment Levy Partnerships funding program provides up to three-year funding towards operational expenses to community organisations whose operations or services contribute to the protection of the Sunshine Coast environment, and whose activities are closely aligned to Council's vision for the future as described in the Corporate Plan.

The inclusion of an Expression of Interest (EOI) period provides the opportunity to develop collaborative partnerships with agreed outcomes for natural resource management of the region.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Community organisations who meet all of the following criteria:

- operate within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area or are able to demonstrate that the program will benefit residents and environment of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area
- are able to demonstrate viability
- are willing to participate with council in defining, through the EOI period, mutually agreed partnership deliverables, measures and reporting requirements
- have no debt to Council, or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with council which are being adhered to, and/or have met acquittal conditions for previous Council grants
- are solely based in and focused on the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area (not state or Australia wide)
- are incorporated, or are an Australian Public Company-Limited by Guarantee
- have appropriate insurance and adhere to sound Workplace Health and Safety practices
- are working towards becoming self-sufficient.

Note: Priority will be given to applications where Council funding can be used to leverage funding from other tiers of government.

Who cannot apply?

- Government agencies or departments of local, state or federal government
- Educational, religious or medical organisations, where the application is for the organisation's core business
- Businesses
- Individuals
- Organisations where the application is connected to political activities

What is eligible for funding?

Up to \$5,000 funding is available as a contribution to support the organisation's general administration and operational expenses.

Applications for additional funding amounts can be made for other expenses; however, this will be subject to mutually agreed deliverables negotiated during the collaborative EOI process.

Application

The Environment Levy Partnerships application is a three stage process:

1. Expression of Interest (EOI) – **applicants must submit an EOI form during the expression of interest period to be eligible to apply**
2. Discussions with council – upon receipt of the EOI, council's Senior Conservation Partnerships Officer will contact the applicant to arrange a meeting to discuss the partnership proposal
3. Online application form – following the discussions with council, applicants must complete an online application form

The delivery of the Environment Levy Partnerships program is subject to annual budget allocations.

Expression of interest (EOI) form

Applicants must use the Environment Levy Partnerships Expression of Interest form to initially submit their interest. The form is

available to download from council's website, or it can be emailed/posted upon request.

Online application form

Applicants must use the online process to submit a valid application. Supporting documentation should also be uploaded to the online application. If you are unable to upload your supporting documentation, it can be lodged at a council office, or posted, no later than 5.00 pm on the closing date.

Assessment

Assessment is based on both general partnerships criteria and environment specific criteria.

General Partnerships Assessment Criteria

Alignment to council's corporate priorities

- Achievement of one or more of council's Corporate Plan priorities
- Contribute to the achievement of environmental outcomes which assist with the realisation of council's vision for the region
- Contribute to the implementation of strategies and actions outlined in Council's environment policy and strategic documents related to biodiversity and waterways

Community need and benefit

- Demonstrate a clear and identified community need for the services
- Demonstrate clear evidence of community support for the services, facilities or programs
- Proven engagement with the community

Planning and delivery

- A collaborative approach to the development of the service, facilities or program
- A well-planned and achievable strategic/operational/business plan for delivery

Organisational capacity

- Demonstrated capacity to deliver for the duration of the partnership

- Evidence of:
 - Sound financial management
 - Sustainable budgeting
 - Effective business planning processes
 - Clear risk assessment
 - Principles of good governance
 - Working towards becoming self-sufficient

Budget

- Appropriate budget allocation reflecting the importance of community benefit/service provision over operational expenditure

Environment Specific Assessment Criteria

Applications must also address the environment specific priorities:

- Contribute to landscape protection, monitoring and rehabilitation of biodiversity and address major ecological threatening processes (e.g. rural & urban runoff, clearing of vegetation, riparian corridors and linkages, pest management)
- Promote waterways and catchment health and reduce erosion and sediment runoff into waterways
- Establish partnerships and links with external agencies and residents which improve the protection, restoration and/or management of the region's environment (particularly on lands adjoining or lying within the immediate vicinity of existing conservation areas, Land for Wildlife properties, conservation/vegetation protection covenants and Volunteer Conservation Agreement properties) and extension activities, e.g. property vegetation management planning
- Facilitate investment by state government, regional bodies for natural resource management, research organisations, community groups and industry in priority environmental projects in the region
- Manage environmental research projects that are directly relevant to improving the protection, restoration or management of the region's environment and are guided by existing environmental strategies

In some instances, part-funding may be offered.

Panel recommendations are reported to council for endorsement.

Applicants will subsequently be notified in writing of the outcomes of their application.

Payment

Environment Levy Partnerships funds must be claimed within three months of notification, except where an extension has been granted.

In some instances, there may be specific funding conditions that need to be met before payment can be made.

Acquittal

All Environment Levy Partnerships funding must be acquitted annually by 31 August.

Organisations will not be considered for further funding from Council where previous acquittals conditions have not been met.

Recipients of multiple-year Environment Levy Partnerships funding will receive yearly payments contingent on the satisfactory completion of a yearly progress report and subject to Council's annual budget allocations.

Environment Levy Grants

Environment Levy Grants provide the opportunity for not-for-profit community based organisations to apply for up to \$5,000 for projects that make a positive and ongoing contribution to the region's biodiversity and waterways values.

Priority is given to non-recurrent projects that:

- contribute to landscape scale protection, monitoring and rehabilitation of biodiversity, which include native plants and animals and waterways
- build community capacity, engagement and participation in biodiversity, waterways and pest management
- adapt and respond to environmental challenges, eg pest plants and animals.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Community organisations which meet all of the following criteria:

- operate within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area or are able to demonstrate that the project or program will benefit residents and environment of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area
- have appropriate insurance and adhere to sound Workplace Health and Safety practices
- are able to demonstrate viability
- have no debt to Council, or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with Council which are being adhered to
- have met acquittal conditions for previous council grants.

If a community organisation is not a legal entity or recognised by the Australian Taxation Office as a not-for-profit type, then the application must be auspiced and administered by such a group.

Applicants may submit only one grant application per round.

Who cannot apply?

- Government agencies or departments of local, state or federal government

- Educational, religious or medical organisations, where the application is for the organisation's core business
- Businesses
- Individuals
- Organisations where the application is connected to political activities

Projects eligible for funding

To be eligible for funding, applications must:

- demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest
- be consistent with council's Environment Levy Policy
- link to council's Corporate Plan and environmental strategies
- adhere to the specific terms and conditions of this funding program.

Projects not eligible for funding

- The development of privately-owned facilities
- Projects run solely for commercial profit
- Activities that have already commenced prior to a grant application being submitted
- Payment of debt
- Political activities
- Core business of educational, religious or medical organisations
- Items included in another council grant application.
- Ongoing operational or recurrent costs including salaries, rent and fuel
- Funding for prize money, prizes or trophies
- Projects run solely for fundraising purposes, without broader community benefit

Lower priority is given to

- Applicants who have been funded within the previous 12 months
- Projects or events that have previously received council funding.

Environment Levy Landholder Environment Grants (LEG)

Landholder Environment Grants (LEG) provide financial assistance for private rural landholders to undertake on-ground projects on their properties, which protect and enhance the natural assets and biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast and promote ecologically sustainable management of the region's environmental values.

Sunshine Coast landholders are invited to submit expressions of interest for assistance to undertake environmental works on private property.

Who can apply?

Private rural landholders of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area, who have satisfactorily met all acquittal conditions of previous council grants can apply.

Priority is given to projects that:

- Will achieve cost effective on-ground outcomes
- Have high ecological value
- Have at least matching co-contribution
- Will deliver benefits to the wider community

Low priority is given to:

- Projects that have previously received council funding, unless the project is clearly well planned with a staged approach.

Note: Landholders can apply for only one grant each round.

Projects eligible for funding

Projects must be on privately owned rural land within the Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area.

Landholders can apply for assistance to carry out natural resource management activities such as:

- Fencing to restrict stock access to significant vegetation, wetlands or waterways
- Installing off-stream stock watering points and stock crossings

- Revegetation of degraded areas, establish vegetation corridors and buffer zones
- Reducing sediment loss on farmss
- Control of environmental weeds to rehabilitate native vegetation areas
- Modification of existing fencing to make it more wildlife friendly

Other activities may be considered after consultation with a Conservation Partnerships Officer during the site visit.

Projects not eligible for funding

Works or activities that:

- Are not on private land
- Are a condition of a Council or State Government Development Approval
- Are the legal responsibility of the landholder (e.g. control of Class 1 or 2 declared weeds, boundary fencing, property rates, and approval fees)
- Are the normal responsibility of the landholder (e.g. upgrades, maintenance or repairs to property infrastructure such as dams, weirs, drains, fences and tracks)
- Contravene any local, state or commonwealth legislation or policy
- Are focussed on providing private or scenic amenity e.g. landscaping
- Involve projects on urban properties

Claiming funds for:

- Your own, or a relative's, labour
- The purchase, servicing and/or associated costs (e.g. fuel, oil etc.) of equipment
- Works or purchases that have already been undertaken prior to submitting an application

Funding Details

As funds are limited and it is anticipated that many worthwhile projects will be submitted, applications seeking a modest amount of funding are more likely to be successful.

The proposed funding amount should be discussed with a Conservation Partnerships Officer during the site visit.

The following costs are eligible for funding:

- Purchase of materials such as herbicide, tubestock, mulch, fencing wire, posts etc
- Fees for engagement of a suitably qualified and experienced contractor
- Hire of specialised equipment, essential for the completion of the project

The following costs are not eligible for funding:

- Weed management activities in production or domestic areas (e.g. orchards, pastures, crops, gardens, lawns or around dwellings)
- Contractor fees for the purposes of planting tubestock granted from another council incentive program (e.g. Land for Wildlife)

Note: It is generally expected that landowners will undertake revegetation unless physically unable to do so.

Application

The Landholder Environment Grants application is a three stage process.

1. Expression of Interest (EOI) – applicants **must** submit an EOI form during the expression of interest period to be eligible to apply.
2. Site visit – upon receipt of the EOI, a Conservation Partnerships Officer will contact the applicant to arrange an on-site visit to discuss the project.
3. Online application form – following the site visit, applicants must complete an online application form before the closing date.

The delivery of the Landholder Environment Grants program is subject to annual budget allocations.

Expression of interest (EOI) form

Applicants must use the Landholder Environment Grants Expression of Interest form to initially submit their interest. The form is available to download from the website, or it can be emailed/posted to you upon request.

Online application form

Supporting documentation should be uploaded to the online application. If you are unable to upload your documentation, it can

be lodged at a council office, or posted, no later than 5.00 pm on the closing date.

Landholder Environment Grant applicants may start their project as soon as they submit their application, but need to be aware that funding is very competitive and council cannot guarantee that the application will be successful.

Assessment

Landholder Environment Grants are assessed by panels, which include council staff with expertise in natural area management.

Panel recommendations for Landholder Environment Grants are reported to the CEO for endorsement.

What are the grant conditions, if successful?

Successful applicants must:

- claim funds within three months of notification, unless written permission for an extension has been obtained from council
- use funds for the purpose for which the grant was awarded, unless written permission for a variation has been obtained from council
- allow council officers to conduct an onsite visit to inspect the progress of the project, if requested
- obtain all appropriate permits, approvals, insurance etc. relating to the project for which the grant has been awarded
- allow council to use photographs and marketing material relating to the project in the promotion of council's grants and funding programs
- provide council, upon request, information on the progress of the projects
- complete the project within 12 months of receiving council fundings
- submit an acquittal form (including receipts) within eight weeks of the project completion date as nominated in the application.

Successful applicants who fail to comply with any of the above conditions may have their

council grant funding offer withdrawn or may not be eligible for future council funding.

How will I find out if my application is successful?

Applications are assessed by a panel of council officers. Part-funding may be offered. All applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will be notified of the outcome in writing.

Applicant Support

For further information or help completing online applications, contact the Grants Team:

(07) 5475 7272 or

Email: grants@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

Note: Office hours are 8.15 am – 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

If you do not have your own computer, you can access a computer at any of council's libraries. You can use these computers at no cost.

Interpreter services are also available for people who are having difficulty communicating in English. Contact council's customer service centre to organise an interpreter to assist you.