

## Hepburn Shire Council Biodiversity Grants Program Guidelines

2022-2023



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► HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL

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Applications are now being sought for the Hepburn Shire's Biodiversity Grants Program. Community groups are encouraged to apply for funding (up to \$5000 per group) for projects that will protect and enhance biodiversity in the Shire of Hepburn. Council has committed \$24,000 to this program.

Successful applicants will need to demonstrate how their project links to the seven objectives of the Sustainable Hepburn - Natural Environment and Biodiversity theme 2022-2026 page 97 (Refer Assessment Criteria or download the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy 2022-2026 [here](#).) Funding is available for projects that can demonstrate benefits to biodiversity via on-ground works or increasing the public's interest and capacity to protect and enhance Hepburn's biodiversity

### Funding Objectives:

To support projects which allow community groups to protect and enhance biodiversity through, conducting on-ground works and/or increasing community interest and capacity to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Projects may include:

- On-ground works such as planting or 'assisted natural regeneration', weed control, pest control on public land or private land
- Publications, electronic media or events aimed at raising awareness of biodiversity issues and promoting action
- Activities such as training and networking activities that increase capacity and sustainability of volunteer groups

Council invites community groups to submit applications for their project. Submissions will be assessed for their impact by Council officers and a recommendation made to Council for their final decision. Technical support will be provided to guide and refine scope of potential projects, prior to recommendations being made.

All applicants are advised to contact Council's Biodiversity Officer – Brian Bainbridge on [bbainbridge@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:bbainbridge@hepburn.vic.gov.au) or 0437 048 648 (Mon-Thurs) to ensure that the project meets the funding aims.

### Who Should Apply?

Local not-for-profit and community groups in the Hepburn Shire, which are incorporated with an ABN, or have an auspicing agent, are encouraged to apply.

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## Key Dates:

Grant Application Opening date	<b>Thursday 4 May 2023, 9 am</b>
Grant Application Closing date	<b>Monday 6 June 2023, 5 pm</b>
Notification to all applicants	<b>19 July 2023</b>
Acquittal forms supplied	<b>1 May 2024</b>
All projects completion and acquitted	<b>30 June 2024</b>

## Eligible Projects

### To be eligible for assessment applicants must:

- Request funding of up to \$5000 for a project which is either discrete, or forms a well-defined stage within a longer-term project (i.e. not maintenance).
- Demonstrate links to the objectives of the Biodiversity Theme of the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy 2022-2026
- Be strategically/ecologically sound and identify sustainable improvements (i.e. have an identified source of follow-up resources if required)
- Complete their activity or project before June 30 2024- including acquittal.
- Be within the Hepburn Shire to the benefit of its residents.
- Have an organisation that is a legal entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN). For example; an incorporated body, co-op, trust, or, be auspiced by a suitable group.<sup>1</sup>
- Schools and health services applicants are encouraged to partner with other community organisations to achieve projects (excluding school 'maintenance')
- Have all permits, permissions and approvals for the project.<sup>2</sup>
- Be a not-for-profit<sup>3</sup> or a community group
- Be willing to participate in public relations for the project, including a potential media release and photo with members of the applicants' organisation and funding representatives.

- Involve community in its planning and implementation.

<sup>1</sup> An Auspicing Agent is another organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN. A letter signed by two committee members from the auspice agent confirming they will auspice the application must be provided when the grant application is submitted. Auspicing agents retaining a fee for this service will not be considered.

<sup>2</sup> If the project is to undertake works on land owned/managed by Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning or Parks Victoria, applicants must provide written approval from the relevant land manager.

<sup>3</sup> Your organisation meets the requirements of being a not-for-profit by having specific statements in its governing rules; the not-for-profit and / or dissolution clause <https://www.ato.gov.au/non-profit/getting-started/is-your-organisation-not-for-profit/>.

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## Ineligible Projects

- Individual applicants, profit-making organisations and political parties.
- An activity that is the funding responsibility of the State or Federal government or can be funded by fees, sponsorship or service agreements.
- Applicants that have an outstanding community grant acquittal (excluding Hepburn Shire 'Landcare Grants') or unpaid invoice from Council.
- Projects that have already commenced or already been completed.
- Applications made outside the closing dates.
- Organisations based outside the Shire, unless the project is of benefit to Hepburn Shire Council residents.

If you are unsure of your eligibility, please contact Council's Biodiversity Officer.

## Assessment of Submissions

- As previously outlined, technical support will be provided to assist with refining applications.
- Council Officers will assess applications. A report recommending successful and unsuccessful Community Grants applications will be taken to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held in July 2023,
- All applicants will be notified in writing regarding the outcome of their application.

## Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on their merit, including Return on Investment of the project, expected biodiversity and community impact.

## Funding Conditions and Requirements

- Public Liability Insurance is the responsibility of the applicant.
- An offer of a grant does not mean ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Council.
- Hepburn Shire Council must be acknowledged on any promotional material related to the project/event. You are required to extend a written invitation, a minimum of 2 weeks before any public relations event, to Council. Before and after photos are to be provided to show project outcomes, for use in Council social media and other publications.
- Councillors will attend openings and events when available.

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- Successful applicants, or their Auspicing Agent, are required to complete a Terms and Conditions agreement with Council. If the project/event does not adhere to the conditions of the agreement, Council may require grant funds to be returned.
- All funded projects must complete an evaluation and acquittal including evidence of expenditure, including receipts; and before and after photos.
- In the event of a project/event only being part funded, Council will provide an explanation on request.
- Multiple applications from applicants are accepted; however there is no guarantee of funding any or all applications. Priority to one application should be indicated on the application form.

For applicants who are seeking funding from external grant sources – it is a requirement to advise Hepburn Shire Council as soon as possible on the status of this external grant funding.

If your application includes community grant funds from Hepburn Shire Council and another source of funding that is greater than the community grant amount, and if the external funding source becomes unavailable, you will be required to return the funds within 30 days of the funding decision.

All applications are to be submitted online.

Please contact Brian Bainbridge on 0437 048 648 or [bbainbridge@hepburn.vic.vgov.au](mailto:bbainbridge@hepburn.vic.vgov.au) for any additional information.

## Biodiversity Strategy alignment

The applicant will need to identify how their project aligns with the objectives of the 'Biodiversity and Natural Environment Theme' of the Shire's Sustainability Hepburn Strategy 2022-26. The following is a summary of objectives from the Strategy that may be used for project alignment.

1. Ensure good planning / governance of biodiversity actions
2. Prioritise protection of existing biodiversity & habitat on both Council controlled and private land
3. Increase extent, connectivity & integration of natural ecosystems
4. Identify & reduce threats to biodiversity
5. Improve Council's and community's connection to and understanding of biodiversity
6. Strengthen connection to DJAARA
7. Promote and increase access to expert advice on Agrobiodiversity, Agroforestry and ecologically-informed sustainable management of privately held forests.

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