

Hepburn Shire Council Biodiversity Grants Program Guidelines

2020-2021



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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 aims and strategic focus areas of Hepburn's Biodiversity Strategy 2018-2021. (Refer Page 6 or download the Biodiversity Strategy 2018-2021 [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 invite 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 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.

Key Dates:

Grant Application Opening date	Friday 23 April 2021, 9 am
Grant Application Closing date	Monday 17 May 2021, 5 pm
Notification to all applicants	15 June 2021
Acquittal forms supplied	1 May 2022
All projects completion and acquitted	30th June 2022

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 Strategy 2018-2021
- 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 2022- 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.¹
- 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.²
- Be a not-for-profit³ 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.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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 June 2021,
- 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.

- 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 for any additional information.

Biodiversity Strategy alignment

The applicant will need to identify how their project aligns with the goal of the Hepburn Shire's Biodiversity Strategy 2018-21, '...to improve biodiversity of the Hepburn Shire for current and future generations, support others in achieving the same aim and support well-informed decision making by Council'. The following is a summary of aims from the Biodiversity Strategy that may be used for project alignment.

AIM 1. PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Increase the effectiveness or area of;

- weed management
- strategic restoration
- pest animal management

- protection of large old trees

AIM 2. INCREASE HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL'S CAPACITY TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Improve council's performance in;

- strategic planning and compliance or enforcement for biodiversity protection
- building a staff trained and skilled in biodiversity matters
- attracting external government funding
- achieving flood and fire management objectives in a manner that maximises retention of biodiversity
- data collection and mapping of biodiversity in the Shire

AIM 3. SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION AND AWARENESS

Develop

- community knowledge & awareness of biodiversity related issues
- effectiveness of Biodiversity and community group grants supplied by Council
- activities, events and partnerships for protection and valuing of biodiversity.

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