

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Through the Community Group Environment Grants Program, Council provides financial assistance to eligible community organisations to deliver projects which respond to the environment priorities set out in Council's Environmental Strategy.

There are four pillars to that Strategy and they include:

Priority: Biodiversity and habitat protection

Priority: Adapting to a changing climate and natural hazard management

Priority: Improving land management practices that influence water quality and waterway health

Priority: Energy efficiency and the addition of renewable energy

GRANT CATEGORIES

To be considered for a Community Group Grant the project must align with one or more of the following categories:

- Environmental education and awareness;
- Environmental surveys, monitoring and research;
- Maintenance or improvements at existing revegetation sites on State Government and Council owned or managed properties including weed removal on Council owned or managed properties;
- New rehabilitation/revegetation works on State Government and Council owned or managed properties;
- Breeding and distribution of biological control agents;
- Food, supplies and services for community groups who rehabilitate native fauna (maximum each round total grants \$15,000);
- Small capital purchases used for surveys, monitoring, research or improvement of the natural environment to the value of no more than \$5,000. These items cannot be used for commercial activities that might be undertaken by the not-for-profit group;
- Calibration or servicing of small capital items. These items cannot be used for commercial activities that might be undertaken by the not-for-profit group;
- Organisations are limited to a maximum grant of \$20,000 per round.

KEY DATES

| Funding Round | Applications Open | Applications Close | Outcome Advised | Project delivery timeframe |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Round 1 | 1 August 2021 | 30 August 2021 | 30 October 2021* | 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022 |
| Round 2 | 1 February 2022 | 4 March 2022 | 30 April 2022* | 1 May 2022 to 30 September 2022 |

*Outcome advise date may change depending on Council meeting dates.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants

Community organisations that:

- are an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation, or have an auspice arrangement with an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation (including not-for-profit co-operatives and companies limited by guarantee) with a focus on the environment or natural resource management or would like to contribute to Council's Environment Strategy outcomes;
- demonstrate an ability to deliver on ground and other environmental outcomes in a timely, safe and responsible manner;
- work in partnership with Council with the knowledge that Council makes the final decisions about the project;
- have access to a group of volunteers;
- hold \$20M public liability insurance and other forms of insurance relevant to the project (see Insurance Coverage for External Parties Policy);
- have no outstanding debt with Council;
- are based in, or provide direct benefits to, the Gympie region.

Ineligible Applicants

- individuals, businesses and enterprises
- organisations that have an existing Environment Grant that has not been successfully acquitted at the date the grant round opens (excludes Round 1 & 2 2020/21 for Round 1 2021/22)

Eligible Projects

- the organisation's project must be within the Gympie Regional Council area;
- the organisation must not receive or make a commercial gain from the project;
- the project must demonstrate quantifiable and positive environmental outcomes directly relevant to, and of benefit within the Gympie Regional Council area;
- where relevant, the project must demonstrate how the works will be maintained beyond the project completion date;
- the project must demonstrate how the project assists Council to achieve its environmental outcomes identified in the Council's Environment Strategy.

Ineligible Projects

- activities and events that are undertaken for commercial purposes;
- purchase of large capital infrastructure; for example, buildings and vehicles;
- annual maintenance or repair of large capital infrastructure;
- project expenses that have already been allocated funds from another source;
- using more than 40 per cent of the Environment Grant for wages and administration costs (however if the applicant's project has low levels of on ground costs due to the work undertaken by volunteers and the nature of the project, a higher percentage of wages and administration to a maximum of 60% may apply).

Administration, staff or contractor wages component

Wages for administration, staff or contractors can be funded from the Environment Grants, but the details of such work must be clearly outlined in the application. The funding allocated for this component of the project must not exceed 40 per cent of the total amount funded through the Environment Grants unless approved due to the nature of the application.

On Ground Component

To assist with the protection and enhancement the region's natural assets Council gives high regard to projects where at least 60 per cent of the funds allocated are spent on-ground. The definition of on-ground projects is provided below.

Commercial Gain

Commercial gain means:

- where a product bought by or a service provided by grants monies is sold to landholders or the community at a higher price than has been paid for the product or,
- where an activity undertaken using grants monies allows for a profit that is utilised to support the operations of the group. To be clear, for an application to be successful the organisation must have direct quantifiable outgoing expenses for the project equal to or greater than the amount of monies received from Council.

Ineligible Expenses

- in-kind services, value of volunteer works (the attraction of volunteers is however considered in criteria 4)
- consumables (e.g. paper, pens, toilet paper, catering, travel)
- ongoing operational, administrative costs or overhead costs (e.g. ongoing salaries, rent, rates, maintenance of office equipment)
- debts or the costs of litigation
- insurance
- prizes, awards or trophies
- merchandise
- purchase of alcohol
- retrospective funding for activities that have commenced or already occurred
- equipment for personal use (e.g. PPE)

Funding Amounts and Contributions

- Grant funding will take the form of a financial payment only
- Part funding by Council may be offered. The applicant may be required to submit a revised budget to Council to demonstrate the project can be delivered with partial grant funding.
- Part of the assessment will be to establish the financial need of the organisation to access Council funded programs.

Number of Applications Per Round

- Only one grant application per organisation per round can be submitted.
- Auspice organisations may submit:
 - one application for its own organisation; and
 - one application on behalf of an un-incorporated group.

Consent to access Council land

- For projects on Council owned or controlled land: To seek this consent, please contact Council via email council@gympie.qld.gov.au before commencing your project.

Other Requirements

- Applicants must ensure that projects comply with all local, state and federal government legislative and policy requirements including COVID Safe requirements, working with children requirements, risk management and building standards/approvals.
- All relevant permits or approvals must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants may be required to attach further documents as specified under the grant categories.
- Direct contact with or lobbying of elected members of Council in relation to the grants application is prohibited and will disqualify the application.
- Contact with Local Government Employee should be restricted to clarification in relation to categories, eligibility or definitions. Lobbying of Local Government Employees in relation to the grants is prohibited and will disqualify the application.

Definition of On Ground

- On Ground means field work including revegetation and habitat development on State or Council owned properties, maintenance including weeding and replanting on rehabilitated land sites, field surveys, bio-control field releases and like in field projects that meet the criterion.

Recurrent Funding

- Applicants should not consider, or structure their organisation, relying on these grants as pseudo recurrent funding. Council reserves the right to change its direction on grant funding based on its own priorities and cost base.

Applicant Financial Status

Council will request as part of the application process a copy of the organisation's most recent audited financial statements and this information will be considered in assessment criteria 3.

GST

Applicants are required to submit their budget inclusive of GST. GST is included in the approved grant funding. For information and advice on GST, call the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) on 13 28 66 or visit the website www.ato.gov.au.

If the organisation is not registered for GST Council will pay the GST exclusive amount.

How to apply

Grants rounds will be advertised on Council's website and social media pages. Applications must be submitted online via Council's website. Late or incomplete applications will be not accepted.

ASSESSMENT

| Assessment criteria | Evidenced by |
|---|--|
| 1) Contribution to the Environment Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributing towards at least one of the four priorities of the Environment Strategy. |
| 2) Environment Benefit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The application meeting one or more of the grant category priorities. |
| 3) Project management capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sound budgeting (e.g. the budget is itemised, complete, balanced and reasonable); ▪ Sound financial status; ▪ Sound project management plan; risk management; ▪ Sound environmental and sustainability practices. |
| 4) Organisational capacity to deliver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes of previously delivered projects; ▪ Prior grant acquittals (if applicable); ▪ The ability to leverage numbers of volunteers to undertake the project. |
| Assessment considerations | |
| Other Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribution of grant funding across the region. |

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Eligibility check:

All applications are checked against the categories, eligibility criteria to ensure the applicant, project, amount requested and timeframes are eligible.

Assessment:

Eligible applications are assessed against eligibility and the assessment criteria by a panel comprised of Council staff who have knowledge and experience in the respective grant category. Panel members participate in a moderation meeting to review the assessments and determine grant recommendations.

Endorsement:

Panel recommendations are provided to Council for consideration and approval.

NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME

- Applicants are advised by email of the outcome of their application.
- Unsuccessful applicants are invited to seek feedback about their application by contacting the Council Officer listed in the email.

FUNDING AGREEMENT, PAYMENT AND ACQUITTAL

- Successful applicants must claim the grant funds by entering into a Funding Agreement with Council within 30 days of notification of outcome.
- If the applicant has an auspice arrangement with an incorporated organisation, the Funding Agreement and payment will be made with that incorporated organisation.
- Grant recipients must complete an online acquittal within four weeks of the project completion date, unless an extension is provided in writing by Council

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Submitted documents may be subject to disclosure and applicants may access information under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, subject to the exemptions under that Act. For more information, see <https://www.gympie.qld.gov.au/access-to-information>