

# Community Environment Grants Program

GUIDELINES TO APPLICANTS 2016/17

Applications close:  
4.30pm, 23rd May 2016

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# Environment Grants Program

## Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council recognizes the importance and significance of supporting non-profit organisations and community groups which seek to improve the uniqueness of the far south coast environment. Non-profit organisations and community groups play an increasingly significant role in not only for environmental protection, enhancement and education but also through benefiting residents throughout the Shire. The Community Environment Grants Program provides funding support to such organisations and community groups in achieving environmental goals that will benefit Bega Valley Shire environment and residents.

## Aim

The Program aims to encourage and assist community involvement in the management of the Bega Valley Shire environment for the benefit of the whole region.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Community Environment Grants Program are to:

- Support community groups and organisations to enhance, protect and restore the natural environmental assets of the Shire.
- Encourage and foster environmental ethic and behaviour change amongst the community.
- Increase community awareness and understanding of environmental assets.
- Support conservation strategies currently undertaken by Council or State or Federal agencies within the Shire.
- Assist in the provision of innovative environmental management projects.

## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding under Council's Community Environment Grants Program, the community group or organisation and project must meet the following criteria.

- Projects need to be located within the Shire and be for the benefit of the local community.
- Only non-profit incorporated community groups or organisations are eligible for funding.
- Projects involving on-ground works must be undertaken on Council owned or managed lands or on sites providing important environmental benefits to the wider community.
- Project applications should include a Certificate of Currency in respect to public liability insurance.
- Project applications received after the closing date will not be considered.
- Project applications should be supported by 2 letters of support.
- Projects need to be completed by 30 June 2017 with a final report completed within 3 months of this date.
- Projects need to be SMART – specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and able to be delivered in accordance with a time line.

### Projects not eligible for grants

Funding **will not** be provided for:

- Purchase of land
- Day-to-day running costs of the organisation
- Engaging on-going permanent employees (contract labour or consultant for the project may be engaged with Council approval)
- Purchase of tools and equipment which do not remain in place for community benefit at the end of the project unless on-going community benefit can be demonstrated
- Motorised hand tools that would require specialised training
- Projects where the bulk of works have already been completed prior to the grant closing date
- Normal property management
- Commercial enhancement of a property

### Eligible Projects

#### **Habitat enhancement and extension**

These projects cover natural areas of Council-owned or managed bushland including dunes. Projects may include environmental weed control, regeneration and revegetation, stock exclusion/controlled grazing fencing, tree planting, erosion control and environmental infrastructure (eg interpretive trail, signage). Select areas would need to be protected from various threats such as grazing, weeds and fire. Sustainability of the project after the completion date must also be demonstrated.

#### **Riparian restoration**

Riparian areas (wetlands and creek buffers) form major habitat corridors for wildlife. They also protect water quality. Projects that enhance or expand these areas would be supported. Activities may include environmental weed removal, erosion control, tree planting, bank stabilisation, stock exclusion or water quality monitoring.

#### **Wetlands habitat enhancement**

Wetlands on flood plains are of high strategic importance. Projects that increase wetlands habitat would be considered. Projects would need to demonstrate ongoing sustainability and be located strategically in the landscape.

#### **Waterway protection and enhancement**

There are 27 estuaries within the Bega Valley Shire. These waterways provide important environmental, social and economic values. Projects enhancing waterway protection or aquatic habitat are encouraged.

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#### Species recovery activities for Rare and Threatened species

Many properties contain habitat that may contain or support listed Rare and Threatened species. Projects that target these species with specific initiatives would be considered. Activities need to align with any current Recovery Plans and comply with State Government legislation.

#### Environmental awareness campaigns to the community

These projects would cover special initiatives to deliver an environment or conservation message to the community. Campaigns might focus on specific fauna or flora species, general conservation, special climate change initiatives or ecological sustainability.

#### Conservation of environmental areas of cultural significance

Projects within this category may seek to restore or protect culturally significant resources in the region such as indigenous sites, historical and early settlements, man-made structures, trees or other natural features that have significant value to the local and or wider community. Projects would be restricted to the environmental aspects only.

#### In-kind contribution

Applicants are expected to contribute to the project through in-kind use of labour or materials. Labour hours provided by project participants should be estimated and costed at \$37 / hour (*Centre for Volunteering*) (with specialist resources to be agreed in consultation with Council). As the grants program is competitive, the higher the level of in-kind contribution, the more competitive the application will be.

#### Grant Fund Conditions

- The source of funding for the Community Environment Grants Program is the Bega Valley Shire Environment Levy and \$50,000 has been allocated to the fund.
- A maximum funding limit of \$6,000 has been established for each project.
- Each organisation approved for funding must comply with the terms and conditions set out in this Guide.
- Further conditions may be set by Council as part of any grant offer.
- Unless otherwise specified in writing, grants are paid in advance and in full to the body with legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- Grantees will sign a Confirmation of Acceptance agreement sent out with an offer, prior to receiving funds.
- Grants must be spent by 30 June 2017 unless otherwise specified. All funding expenditure must be reported to Council, with copies of appropriate receipts. Any surplus funds must be returned to Council within one month of completion of the project. Grants must be used for the purpose stated in the submitted application.
- Written approval is required from Council to change the purpose, amount or time for expenditure of grants.
- If your organisation does not meet all the requirements, your organisation may be **asked to repay the grant**.
- Groups and individuals must provide details of public liability insurance cover, if projects involve public land or volunteers.

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- Appropriate Risk Management must be undertaken by the grant recipient, sponsoring organisation, their contractors and volunteers to ensure safety.

#### Educational requirements and grant conditions

Successful applications may be required to display a grant sign (provided by Council) adjacent to the project site.

Every project funded will be identified by the Council in press releases and on Council's web site.

It is a condition of grant that each project be available for a possible field trip by interested residents or the subject of a case study to highlight any educational aspects.

#### How to apply

Please ensure that:

- Your application is completed on the Application Form and is received by advertised closing date,
- Your applications is typed (applicants can download a Word version from Council's website) or neatly hand written,
- You have answered each appropriate question (incomplete applications may result in rejection of your application),
- All budget information is completed and expenditure totals balance,
- Support material (eg videos, photographs, and articles) is clearly labelled with your name and address. Please list the material you have enclosed and indicate what you would like returned. While Council will make every effort to ensure supporting material is returned, it does not accept responsibility for any loss or damage that may be incurred.

*Submit your application via:*

#### **E-mail (preferred):**

[council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Post to:**

Community Environment Grants Program  
Bega Valley Shire Council  
Group Manager - Planning & Environment  
P O Box 492  
BEGA NSW 2550

#### **Hand deliver to** customer service centre at:

Bega Valley Shire Council  
Administration Building  
Zingel Place  
BEGA NSW 2550

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Enquiries regarding applications should be directed to Council's Environmental Services Section on phone (02) 6499 2222.

It is strongly encouraged that you discuss your project with the Environmental Services section of Council prior to submitting your application.

#### Sponsoring organisations

Informal community groups (unincorporated) are required to be sponsored by an incorporated body to ensure appropriate insurances are covered and work health safety obligations are fulfilled. Responsibilities of the sponsoring organisation can include the following;

1. Work Health Safety (WHS) –ensuring the supported community group is aware of and trained in WHS Act and its requirements. WHS responsibilities of the sponsored organisation will include training for volunteers, on-site WHS management and inductions for volunteers (e.g. working bees) and sub-contractors
2. insurance – Public Liability and Personal Accident
3. financial and other reporting – (dependent on capacity of the group and their agreement with the sponsor)
4. administration of money for groups
5. general group support – site visits, meetings, advice

BVSC will allow up to 10% charge (of total grant value) for administration costs by the sponsoring organisations to a maximum of \$500.

BVSC expects a minimum level of service by the sponsoring organisation in regards to covering insurances including Public Liability and Personal Accident, financial reporting and having appropriate processes in place to meet obligations under the WHS legislation for the sponsored group as listed above in point 1.

#### Letters of support for community projects

Community groups proposing to seek funding are requested to obtain appropriate letters of support for their project. Letters of support strengthen your application because they show you have support from the broader community for your project and also emphasise the benefit your project will create. They are also critical if your group proposes to conduct work on any public or private land. Letters of support may be written by:

- Office bearers from community groups who use or know of your service.
- Those who will receive some benefit from your project.
- School teacher or principal.
- Department of Primary Industries – Crown Lands
- Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries
- South East Local Land Services
- Others who will support your project.

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#### Supporting documents

It will be an added benefit to attach any additional supporting documentation to your submission including:

- Information or research which supports your proposed project
- Completed Master Plans, Site Plans and Photographs, etc
- Examples of past projects completed by your group/s

#### Assessment process

Each application will be checked for completeness and compliance with the eligibility criteria. An information request may be issued to the applicant seeking further clarity or information if required. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all appropriate information for assessment is included in the grant application and supporting documents.

Each application will be assessed by Council staff and other expert staff deemed necessary at the time of assessment.

An offer will then be made to each successful applicant. The offer will detail the amount and any conditions. Grants may be partially funded.

#### Government Information (Public Access) Act – Privacy Statement

Applications for funds and other written information provided to Council will be treated in confidence. Applicant information will not be given to any person or agency unless required by law. Applicants may however be named in Council minutes, which are available for public inspection.

Council will not place any personal grant information on Council publications (including web site), unless explicit approval is given by the applicant.

#### Successful applications and GST

##### **Organisations/ Applicants registered for GST**

If your organisation is registered (or required to be registered) for GST, then GST is payable on the grant. Successful applicants will be asked to supply Council with a Tax Invoice for the grant amount plus GST.

##### **Organisations/ Applicants not registered for GST**

If your organisation is not registered for GST (or not required to be registered) for GST, the grant is not subject to GST. Successful applicants will be asked to supply Council with an invoice (not taxed) for the grant amount and a completed Australian Tax Office (ATO) Statement by Supplier form. Where a Statement by Supplier is not supplied, Council will be required to deduct 48% of the approved grant for remittance to the ATO.

Funds will be transferred electronically into a nominated bank account.

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#### Environmental outcomes

Projects will be prioritised according to assessed environmental outcomes. As grant funds are capped, applicants are advised that the program is competitive and **only those projects with the highest outcomes for the environment will be funded.**

Projects involving on-ground works need to deliver biodiversity outcomes or other natural resource outcomes, and be sustainable in the long term. Greater weight will be attached to projects with outcomes for biodiversity of a Regional or State significance, such as:

- Enhancement of regional wildlife corridors ie. those currently identified by the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage,
- Expansion of “endangered” or “threatened” ecosystems,
- Recovery of “endangered”, “vulnerable” or “rare” species,
- Recovery of species nominated by the EPBC Act (Federal Government)
- Water quality improvement in waterways within the region.

Projects in areas within or close to bushland or recognised wildlife corridors may have higher ecological outcomes.

#### Project planning

##### Project plan

Please include a plan or map of the project area and project stages, if on-ground works are to be undertaken. Plans should be approximately to scale.

Include the following:

- Proposed or existing tracks
- Areas for revegetation
- Remnant/existing vegetation
- Existing structures and landscaping
- Waterways
- A scale
- North point

Include any technical drawings or survey plans of the area if available.

##### Other considerations

- Works involving or adjacent to waterways may require an approval from the NSW Office of Water. Queries should be directed to the Bega Office of Water on (02) 64918200.
- Works involving or adjacent to waterways may require an approval from the Fisheries NSW.
- Projects involving on-ground works on Council owned or managed land will require a separate Council approval. Initial enquiries regarding this aspect should be directed to Council’s Environmental Services Section.

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#### **On-going maintenance and monitoring**

On-ground projects may involve aspects of maintenance after the project has been completed. The project plan should identify what maintenance is going to be performed and by whom.

Project progress and success needs to be monitored. Photos are an acceptable method to chart progress. The project plan needs to address the method of monitoring before commencement. Photographs of “before” and “after” would be expected to be included in the final report.

Attachment 1

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	
<b>1</b>	<p>The extent to which the project provides a long-term benefit to the environment of the Bega Valley Shire.</p> <p>The extent to which the project contributes to state or regional biodiversity outcomes. This is an estimate of the strategic value of the project.</p> <p>A. Biodiversity values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation status i.e. rare &amp; threatened species</li> <li>• Position in landscape i.e. part of a corridor</li> <li>• Ecological integrity (core area, shape of remnant, resilience, etc)</li> <li>• Regional Ecosystem status</li> <li>• Fauna habitat improvement</li> <li>• Aquatic habitat improvement</li> <li>• Environmental weed reduction</li> </ul> <p>B. Other natural resource values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stream bank enhancement and protection</li> <li>• Water quality improvement</li> <li>• Erosion / Sediment runoff reduction</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessed completeness / appropriateness: / 10</b></p>
<b>2</b>	<p>Knowledge and use of environmental best practice methods i.e. Is the project technically sound? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic environmental weed management</li> <li>• Rehabilitation/flora regeneration based on natural regeneration</li> <li>• Corridor function and enhancement</li> <li>• Tree planting methods</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessed completeness / appropriateness: / 10</b></p>
<b>3</b>	<p>Long term sustainability of the project: On-going maintenance, on-going monitoring put in place, length of time before the area becomes self-sufficient.</p> <p><b>Assessed completeness / appropriateness: / 10</b></p>
<b>4</b>	<p>Extent to which the project outcomes are defined and achievable – are they realistic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associated budget is reasonable, linked to key stages and value for money</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessed completeness / appropriateness: / 10</b></p>

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<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Extent to which the project is planned and likely to be managed – is there a capacity to complete the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staging sequences well thought out</li><li>• Sufficient level of detail provided ie a project plan</li><li>• Costs are detailed and comprehensive</li><li>• Work Health &amp; Safety risks are measurable</li><li>• Management and organisational capacity to deliver</li><li>• Ability to deliver project by 30 June 2017</li><li>• Ability to complete final report and administration functions associated with the grant</li><li>• Other stakeholder support</li></ul> <p><b>Assessed completeness / appropriateness: / 10</b></p>
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