Nature Conservation Grants

To support tangible conservation outcomes on private land

Applicant Guidelines

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City of Ipswich

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Guidelines

Grants program overview

The Nature Conservation Grants Program (NCG) aims to support tangible conservation outcomes on private land. The NCG is funded by Ipswich City Council's (Council) EnviroPlan to assist landowners who have an existing Voluntary Conservation or Historical Agreement registered on their property. The NCG provides partnering landowners with an opportunity to undertake on-ground activities to rehabilitate degraded landscapes, protect and improve habitat and biodiversity and improve the climate resilience of Ipswich's natural environment.

Objectives

- Build a resilient natural environment
- Improve and maintain biodiversity
- Invest in nature conservation
- Promote community participation and capacity building

Timeframe

Applications will open on 1 July and close on 31 July each year. Applications must be received by close of business on the identified closure date.

Recipients

This is a competitive grant category open to landowners who have Voluntary Conservation Agreement on their properties whose project meets the eligibility criteria and does not fall within any of the exclusions.

Funding Range

Applicants are eligible to apply for a maximum of up to $6,000 (excluding GST) per project per funding round.

Funding Available

The total funding available for the Nature Conservation Grants each year is subject to variation, depending on Council's annual budget allocation.

Applicants may apply under one of the following categories;

Outcome 1– sustainable natural resource management with primarily terrestrial outcomes.
Outcome 2 – sustainable natural resource management with primarily waterway outcomes.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding under the NCG, landholders must:

- ✓ have a Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) which includes: Bushland Conservation Agreement (BCA), Nature Conservation Agreement (NCA), Koala Conservation Agreement (KCA) or Waterway Conservation Agreement (WCA)

  OR

- ✓ have an historical conservation agreement including a Partnering Agreement (PA), Vegetation Retention Agreement (VRA), Rural Conservation Agreement (RCA) or Nature Corridors Conservation Agreement (NCC)

Two or more eligible landholders can work in partnership on a single project to undertake on-ground activities across two or more properties. Partnership applications must be of a joint nature, where one applicant submits the application with a letter of commitment from the second landholder.

A representative acting on behalf of an eligible applicant may submit an application with a letter of approval from the eligible applicant.

Eligible Projects/Activities Examples

Projects which have an environmental benefit include but are not limited to;

Outcome 1 - Terrestrial projects/activities

- ✓ control invasive plants
- ✓ control pest animals
- ✓ install fauna-friendly fencing to restrict stock access to ecologically significant areas
- ✓ modify existing fencing to upgrade it to be more wildlife friendly
- ✓ increase the area and connectivity of native vegetation by planting native plant species (revegetation) and allowing plants to naturally grow (regeneration)
- ✓ use of fire for ecological purposes
- ✓ native fauna monitoring

Outcome 2 - Waterway projects/activities

- ✓ install off-stream watering points to restrict stock access to significant waterways
- ✓ control invasive plants
- ✓ control erosion and minimises sediment runoff
- ✓ riparian restoration by planting native plant species along waterways to enhance the riparian buffer

> **Note:**
> Other projects/activities may be considered eligible after consultation with your Program Officer. Applicants should consider discussing proposed projects with their Program Officer prior to submission. A site visit may be arranged to discuss these activities with the landholder.

Exclusions

The following will not be funded:

* ✘ a landholder who does not have an existing VCA or Historical Conservation agreement
* ✘ an applicant who has not satisfactorily acquitted a previous NCG
* ✘ projects that do not have a primary aim of improving environmental values of an area (e.g. landscaping and planting of ornamental plants)
* ✘ activities that require planning approval
* ✘ activities that contravene any local, state or commonwealth legislation or policy
* ✘ natural resource management activities in orchards and crops
* ✘ natural resource management in the following domestic areas; gardens, lawns and around dwellings. Such activities include; enclosure for animals, property rates payments, approval fees, upgrades, maintenance or repairs to property infrastructure such as dams, weirs, drains, driveways, roads, boardwalks and formal paths and control of pest plant species that landholders are legally required to report to an appropriate authorised officer
* ✘ hard engineering solutions for waterway restoration

Grant Funding Principles

Ipswich City Council applies the following principles when providing support through its Nature Conservation Grants Program:

* Encouraging best practices conserving natural resources on private land
* Improving and maintaining the condition and status of national, state and local matters of environmental significance
* Recognising nature conservation as a major feature of good governance for the City
* Providing continuous communication and engagement with the Ipswich community in regards to nature conservation and environmental values in Ipswich
* Valuing local collaborations and partnerships
* Valuing the social, economic and environmental sustainability of our City

In addition, Council is committed to the efficient and effective delivery of the Nature Conservation Grants Program and transparency and accountability in decision making.

Grant Funding Priorities

Ipswich City Council's Nature Conservation Grants Program support projects that:

Native vegetation
* Protect or enhance native vegetation cover
* Protect or enhance iconic species habitat
* Improve ecosystem resilience
* Enhance climate change refugia areas
* Reduce threats to biodiversity

Ipswich Habitat Network – Connectivity
* Improve and enhance ecological connectivity within identified corridors

Waterway Quality Improvement

- Reduce the risks of sediment loss and improve waterway stability
- Improve the quality of stormwater run-off and reduce nutrient levels

Riparian Corridor Management

- Protect and/or enhance riparian buffers
- Protect and improve the quality of natural wetlands

Grant Funding Process

Demonstration of how the project addresses the criteria in Outcome 1 or Outcome 2 for Part A

Outcome 1 – sustainable natural resource management with primarily terrestrial outcomes

Part A Assessment Criteria	
Criteria	Consideration
Native Vegetation	
Native Vegetation Cover You can download pre-clearing and remnant Regional Ecosystem maps of your property here https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/map-request/re-broad-veg-group/	Will your project enhance native vegetation cover? Is the project maintaining an existing Regional Ecosystem? Is the project aiming to restore a pre-clearing regional ecosystem? Is there a Threatened Ecological Community within your project site?
Significant Habitat for Native Flora and Fauna You can check if you have EVNT species here http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl Essential Habitat Mapping https://spp.dsdip.esriaustraliaonline.com.au/geoviewer/map/planmaking	Is there an Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened or Threatened species recorded within 1km of your project site? Is the project site mapped as essential habitat?
Ipswich Iconic Species found here https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_ipswich/environment/wildlife/iconic-species	Are there recorded sightings of Ipswich iconic species or does your project enhance iconic species habitat?
Climate Change Refugia	Does your project-site or property, border an area identified to support high climate change refugia? White Rock Spring Mountain Conservation Estate Flinders Goolman Conservation Estate Little Liverpool Range Sapling Pocket
Ipswich Habitat Network – Connectivity	
Priority Zones Can be found in figure 7, pp. 31 https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/43083/nature_conservation_strategy.pdf	Is your project site within a priority conservation zone? Is your project site within a priority rehabilitation zone? Is your project site within an; Urban Corridor Mt Walker Corridor Rosewood Corridor Project site is not within an identified corridor

Outcome 2 – sustainable natural resource management with primarily waterway outcomes.

Part A Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Consideration
Water Quality Improvement	
Sediment	Does your project reduce sediment loss by bank stabilisation through planting and small scale erosion control
Nutrient (Primarily Bremer and Lower Brisbane River estuaries)	Does your project reduce the risk of run-off from storm water, irrigation, herbicides or pesticides
Riparian Corridor Management	
Riparian Buffer can be found in table 6 & 7 pp.53 in the Waterway Health Strategy 2009 https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/waterway_health_strategy	Is your project meeting the minimum riparian corridor widths of the waterway? Or Is it your project's objective to restore the riparian buffer to meet the minimum standards? How are you reducing biodiversity threats?
Native Vegetation Cover you can download pre-clearing and remnant Regional Ecosystem maps of your property here https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/map-request/re-broad-veg-group/	Will your project enhance native vegetation cover? Is the project maintaining an existing Regional Ecosystem? Is the project aiming to restore a pre-clearing regional ecosystem? Is there a Threatened Ecological Community within your project site?
Significant Habitat for Native Flora and Fauna You can check if you have EVNT species here http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl Essential habitat mapping https://spp.dsdip.esriaustraliaonline.com.au/geoviewer/map/planmaking	Is there an Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened or Threatened species recorded within 1km of your project site? Is the project site mapped as essential habitat under the VMA 1999?
Ipswich Iconic Species found here https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_ipswich/environment/wildlife/iconic-species	Are there recorded sightings of Ipswich iconic species or does your project enhance iconic species habitat?

Assessment Criteria – Part B

Demonstration of how the project addresses the criteria in Part B. Projects for Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 need to ALSO address the criteria in Part B

Part B Assessment Criteria

On-ground value	Assessment Criteria
Value for money and landholder commitment	
Landholder contribution	Your project contributes greater than 50% to the project costs Your project contributes 50% to the project costs Your project contributes less than 50%
Cost effectiveness	Effective budget breakdown and total budget costs Effective use of funds across all expenditure items. Are your expenditure items related to project objectives and eligible for Council funding? Appropriate use of contractors which meets the guidelines Appropriate submission of two quotes
Landholder commitment to delivery	Will your project be completed by end of financial year? *a detailed action plan will be useful to submit with your application
Landholder commitment to maintenance	Description of on-ground monitoring e.g. photo monitoring at different times of year How will you balance the monitoring for any previously funded projects?

Best practice methods SEQ Ecological Restoration Framework – Manual can be found here https://hlw.org.au/resources/seqecologicalrestorationframework/	*Some may not be applicable to your project* Appropriate application techniques for weed control Appropriate chemical use for weed control Use of fauna friendly fencing Appropriate fire management techniques Suitable plant species and technique for planting As close to Regional Ecosystems on property as possible Works undertaken demonstrate minimal negative environmental impact	
Catchment Wide Benefits	Will your project have any catchment wide benefits or collaboration with other landholders?	
Landholder understanding waterway health?	Does your project demonstrate understanding and knowledge about issues affecting waterway management? Does your project demonstrate decision making and ownership over activities?	
Community Participation	Are you a Landcare, Catchment, bush care or environmental education group in the greater Ipswich region?	

Ethics Framework

Ipswich City Council will not support any activities, entities, or individuals associated with entities, that are considered to:

- Discriminate, or encourage discriminatory behaviour, including discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, religion, sex and/or sexual orientation
- Contribute to, or advocate for, the infringement of human rights
- Demonstrate behaviour that does not align to Council's strategic intent for the City and community of Ipswich
- Pollute land, air or water, or otherwise damage the natural environment
- Market, promote or advertise products or services in a misleading or deceitful manner
- Produce, promote or distribute products or services likely to be harmful to the community
- Entice people into financial over-commitment
- Exploit people through the payment of below-award wages or poor working conditions
- Represent a reputational risk for Ipswich City Council to partner with or support, or be seen to partner   with   or   support

Grant Funding Approval Process

Final decisions and approval of successful applications are made by Council at a designated Council meeting.

All applications will be assessed in two parts and is reflective of the category chosen to apply for. Part A assesses the strategic alignment of the project / activity and is a desktop assessment completed by Council Officers in SRNR.

Part B assesses the value of the project. Both Parts are assessed by an assessment panel made up of at least three (3) Council Officers with expertise in natural area management or similar.

Terms and Conditions That Apply to Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will receive the approved funding from Council subject to the following terms and conditions:

- The applicants proposed project must be completed within 12 months

- The applicant will be required to enter into a funding agreement which details all grant conditions and agreed outcomes. This must be signed before grant funds are issued

- Applicants are required to complete an acquittal at the completion of the funding period. If Council grant funds are not spent, all remaining funds must be returned to Council

- Council may make funding conditional on other specific conditions being met

Grant Acquittal

To ensure appropriate accountability by grant recipients, all funding provided by Council will require a report and financial acquittal, outlining the use of the funds (including proof of expenditure) and the achieved outcomes of the project/activity.

Landowners who have not satisfactorily acquitted Council funds within the appropriate timeframe agreed by Council will be deemed ineligible for Council funding or in-kind assistance for 12 months from the acquittal due date.

All applicants must:
- ✓ answer all application questions on the online SmartyGrants form
- ✓ clearly demonstrate how the project outcomes address the selection criteria in Part A for Outcome 1 or Outcome 2 and Part B for both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2.

> **Please note:** Co-contribution is your contribution to the project. This can either be your own financial or labour contribution. The current wage rate for volunteers in Queensland is $40.35. Your labour can be charged at this rate. (*https://volunteeringqld.org.au/volunteers*)

Application process

Applications must be made using the appropriate online application forms. Additional information can be attached as required.

Applicants will be notified via email of the outcome of their application.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. This includes applications **without** essential documentation.

Please contact Council on (07) 3810 6666 if you have any questions regarding the Sport and Recreation Grants Program.

Funding applications must be submitted via the <u>online application form</u>

Once submitted you will receive an electronic confirmation notice.

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