

# Natural Environment Grants

## Guidelines 2024

Surf Coast Shire Council's Natural Environment Grants fund community projects that protect biodiversity and increase participation in conservation and/or education activities.

### Funds available

Grants of up to **\$8,000** are available in each round of this program. Applicants must contribute a minimum of 30% (cash or in-kind) towards the total project cost.

Two rounds of Natural Environment Grants are offered each year, with applications open for the months of March and September.

### Grant purpose

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to working with our community and other land managers to protect and enhance local biodiversity.

The Natural Environment Grants fund projects that:

- protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular threatened flora and fauna;
- support effective and collaborative pest plant and animal management (in accordance with Council's Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategy 2020 - 2023);
- build and strengthen partnerships to protect biodiversity and manage pest plants and animals; and/or
- improve community understanding of local biodiversity and how to protect it.

### Before you get started

#### Before applying:

1. Read these Guidelines and check your eligibility.
2. Call our Grants Team on 5261 0600 to discuss your idea and ask any questions.

NOTE: Council officers can assist with the application process, but are unable to review draft applications.

#### To apply

Applications must be submitted online at [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Grants](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Grants).

Please contact our Grants Team on 5261 0600 if you require an alternative.

#### Key dates:

Applications are open 1-31 March and 1-30 September annually, with assessments and notification of outcomes occurring in the following month.

### Assessment criteria

All applications for Natural Environment Grants are assessed on their merit using these criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
The project delivers outcomes that protect threatened flora and fauna; help manage pest plants and animals; and/or increase community understanding of local biodiversity.	<b>45%</b>
The project offers opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and/or involvement from the broader community, other land managers, and Traditional Owners.	<b>20%</b>
The applicant has a demonstrated ability to deliver the project.	<b>15%</b>
The project contributes to climate change mitigation, adaptation and/or mobilisation.	<b>10%</b>
The budget is fully detailed, costed with quotes.	<b>10%</b>

Read more about assessment in the Grant Process section of these Guidelines.

#### Note

Council typically receives greater demand for project funding than is available through the annual grants budget.

If applications have equal merit, a lower priority may be assigned to projects/initiatives that:

- Received Council grant funds in the same or previous financial year
- Are recommended/are likely to be recommended for funding through other Council grants
- Receive their core funding from State or Federal governments
- Have greater access to funding from sources other than this grant.

## Who can apply?

Can apply	
✓	Groups that operate in or contribute to the Surf Coast Shire community.
✓	Incorporated not-for profit groups, or unincorporated groups who apply through an appropriate not-for-profit incorporated body that supports the application and is willing to accept responsibility for the funding (i.e. auspice agreement).
✓	Groups that operate as part of a larger governing body, where this grant is outside the scope of what is funded by the governing body, e.g. Churches, Cemetery Trusts, SES, CFA.
✓	Not-for-profit community groups and sporting clubs that lease Council owned buildings within the Surf Coast Shire.
✓	Schools, if the activity is not part of the standard school curriculum.
Cannot apply	
✗	Groups that don't meet the eligibility requirements specified in these Guidelines.
✗	Groups that have received Surf Coast Shire Council funding for the same activity within the same financial year.
✗	Groups that have an overdue Acquittal Report for previous funding received from Council.
✗	Committees of Surf Coast Shire Council, including Advisory Committees, Committees of Management or Sub Committees.
✗	Individuals or private landholders who are not part of a coordinated project run through an appropriate group.
✗	Individual businesses who are not part of a coordinated project run through an appropriate group.
✗	Elected members and employees of Council must not be involved in the development of an application and are not eligible to sign or be listed on any grant.

## What will and won't be funded

Yes	No
✓	✗
Appropriate planting, weeding and revegetation activities that focus on locally indigenous flora and can be maintained successfully into the future.	Projects outside of Surf Coast Shire.
✓	✗
Appropriate, humane, safe and effective pest management activities to limit impact on non-target species and minimise effects on the wider environment.  (Activities must be conducted in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures from Agriculture Victoria.)	Projects that have already commenced or equipment that has already been purchased.
✓	✗
Equipment purchases or hire.	Projects that provide direct benefit to a commercial business, individual or landholder without significant biodiversity outcomes across the broader landscape.
✓	✗
Activities that increase community involvement and understanding, e.g. citizen science, research, field days, communication and engagement activities.	Wages, contracts, registrations and general administration. One-off facilitator/trainer fees are accepted.
✓	✗
Resources to support education programs or activities in line with environmentally sustainable practices, e.g. digital media rather than paper; no single-use plastic items.	Operational costs or items purchased on a frequent basis, e.g. telephone, electricity, cleaning/maintenance, utility bills, ongoing insurance, stationary items.

Yes		No	
✓	Activities on private land, if they are part of a coordinated program run through an appropriate group or network, e.g. Landcare, and of long term benefit in reducing threats to local ecological values.	✗	Prizes, awards, fundraising items or trophies.
		✗	Projects that support political or lobbying activities.
		✗	Activities on land managed by authorities other than Council (with appropriate approvals and agreements).
		✗	Activities or projects that are not in accordance with State or Federal Government legislation, e.g. the Victorian Wildlife Act 1975.
		✗	Activities required of landholders under the Catchment & Land Protection Act 1994 will not be funded on private land.
		✗	Activities which are not in accordance with WorkSafe Victoria.

## Eligibility requirements

These are the grant essentials to tick off for your application.

### Grant program requirements:

- Activities/projects must take place within the Surf Coast Shire.
- Activities/projects must demonstrate how they act upon the grant purpose described in these Guidelines.
- Activities/projects should demonstrate environmentally sustainable practices and must not have negative impacts on the natural environment.
- Activities must not conflict with the 5 focus areas outlined in the Surf Coast Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Completed applications must be received by the deadline of the funding round, through the SmartyGrants online system. Please contact our Grants Team before the closing date on 5261 0600 if you are unable to access this system and require an alternative format/method.
- The Natural Environment Grant requires a minimum 30% project contribution (cash or in-kind) from the applicant. The method for calculating in-kind contributions is included in the application form.

### Requirements of the applicant:

- Grants can be awarded to incorporated not-for profit groups, or unincorporated groups who apply through an appropriate not-for-profit incorporated body that supports the application and is willing to accept responsibility for the funding (i.e. auspice agreement).
- A certificate of currency for Public Liability Insurance (proportionate to the risk associated with the activity being undertaken) must be provided.
- Groups must have an ABN or be willing to complete an ATO Statement by Supplier Form.

### Depending on what your project is, the following also need to be met:

- Where related to First Nations Peoples or Culture, applicants must demonstrate appropriate consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) or parties, Traditional Owner consultant or First Nations organisation. We recommend reading local RAP Country Plans as a starting point, see links under 'More information' on the final page of this document.
- Projects involving children must comply with the Child Safe Standards [dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards).
- Activities/materials must be accessible and inclusive of all abilities – including physical access, as well as ensuring written materials are visually accessible.
- Any relevant risk assessments, permissions, permits and/or maintenance must be worked through with Council officers prior to funding being distributed (e.g. permission from a facility or land manager to make changes).
- All projects must adhere to the most recent Government advice related to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided at [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au).

### Funding information

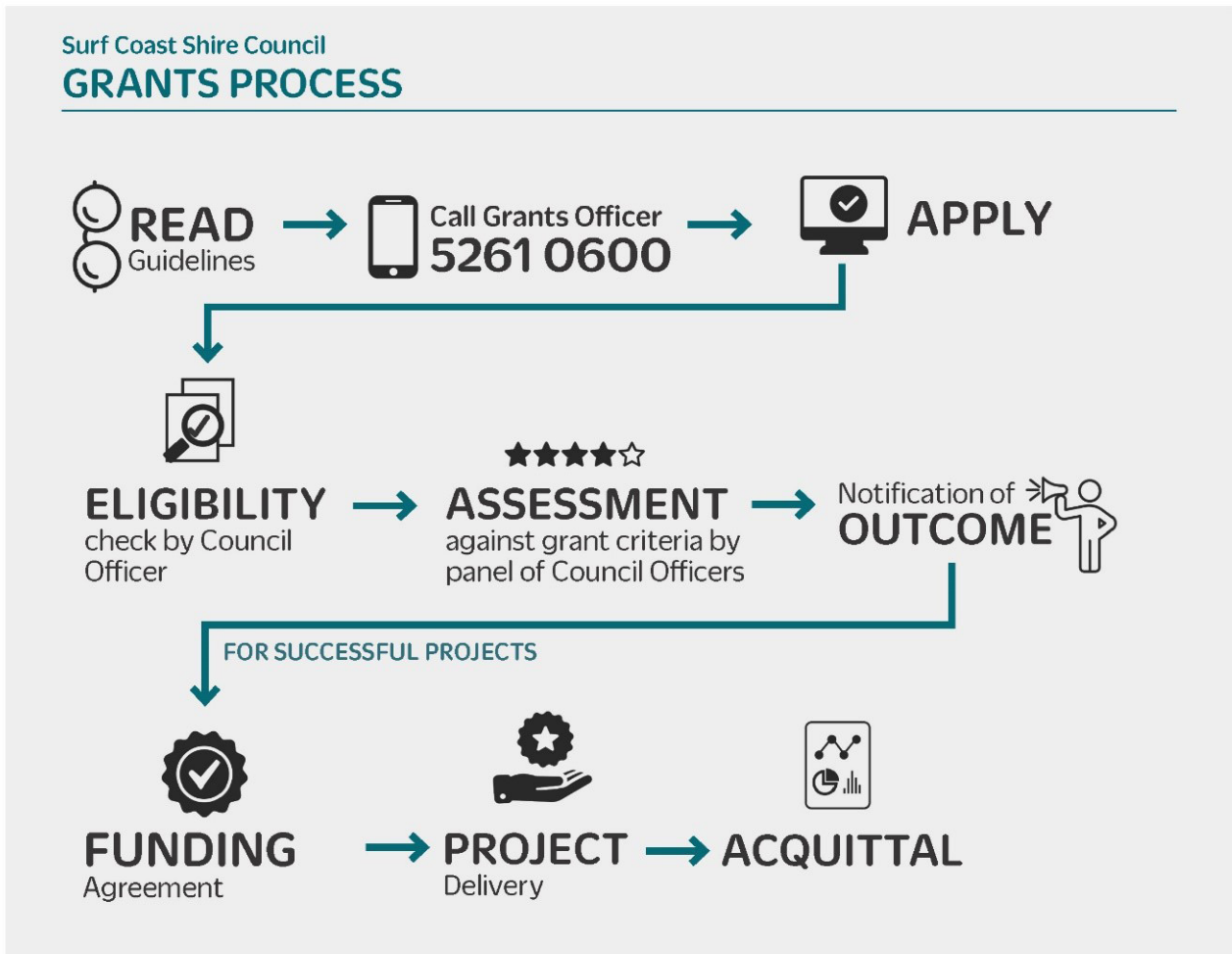
#### Funding details:

- Funds of up to \$8,000 are available per project.
- Grant funds cannot be used for retrospective purchases.
- Applicants may apply for funding in multiple Council grant streams if it is for different projects/purposes.
- When a grant is awarded, payment will be made to the organisation's nominated bank account after all relevant documentation is received by Council, including a signed Funding Agreement, invoice and evidence of Public Liability Insurance. If using an auspice, you will need to provide their banking details and an invoice issued by them.
- Council will not be responsible for costs over and above the grant amount awarded.
- Applicants should be aware of their responsibilities to comply with Federal Government taxation requirements. For information or advice on whether you should be registered for GST or need an Australian Business Number, contact the Australian Tax Office information line on 132866 or visit [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au).

#### In accepting a Surf Coast Shire Council grant these are the things you are committing to:

- Sign a Funding Agreement prepared by Council, specific to your project/activity.
- The funding provided must be used for the approved activities/items. Any changes to budget items in the application may not be undertaken without prior written approval from Council.
- Applicants must obtain any necessary approvals and meet any costs associated with those approvals.
- Where required, the applicant will ensure that the activity complies with all the relevant acts, codes, standards and applicable legislation, including, but not limited to, *Victoria's Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.
- An Acquittal Report, including an expenditure statement, must be provided in line with conditions outlined in the Funding Agreement.
- Council's logo shall be used on all material relating to the funded activities and an appropriate acknowledgement of funding must be given by the recipient in all promotional material, announcements and reports of the activities to the community.

Grant Process



**More Information**

**About this grant**

Online [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Grants](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Grants)

Phone 5261 0600

**Resources**

Depending on the nature of your project, these resources may be useful.

**Registered Aboriginal Parties**

We recommend reading the Country Plans available here:

**Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation**

[easternmaar.com.au](http://easternmaar.com.au)

**Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**

[wadawurrung.org.au](http://wadawurrung.org.au)

**Access and inclusion**

[surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Access-for-all](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Access-for-all)

**Climate change and sustainability**

[environmentsurfcoast.com.au](http://environmentsurfcoast.com.au)

**Community Group Directory**

[surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Group-Directory](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Group-Directory)

Council's Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategy 2020-2023

[surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment/Pest-animals-and-nuisance-native-wildlife](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment/Pest-animals-and-nuisance-native-wildlife)

**Natural environment – including pest plants and animals, native vegetation and wildlife**

[surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment)



Surf Coast Shire Council  
**GRANTS PROCESS**

