



Biodiversity Incentive Scheme Grant

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1.0 About this grant

- Frequency: Annually (once per year)
- Amount we provide: up to \$2000
- Amount you must provide: varies depending on the project

2.0 Important dates

August	Applications open for all of August.
September	Application assessment period.
October	Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application.
June	Successful applicants must submit demonstrated evidence and documentation for acquittal.

3.0 Purpose of this grant

Do you have plans to improve biodiversity on your property? The City of Casey's Biodiversity Incentive Scheme supports conservation projects within the community.

This grant is open to private landowners and volunteer public land managers who want to improve native vegetation in Casey. Check out the details below to see if your project is eligible. Applicants can choose between receiving monetary support or a donation of indigenous seedlings.

4.0 Grant streams available

- Main grant stream: resident (private land manager) or volunteers (public land managers) receive financial support for projects.
- Revegetation stream: indigenous plants provided to support your revegetation work for public or private land.

This is a competitive grant and all funding is at the discretion of Council.

If you need support in applying for this grant please call Council and request to speak to the Sustainability and Environment Team.

5.0 How to apply

Apply through our online portal using the SmartyGrants program. Follow instructions to fill in the online form. Please provide as much detail regarding your property and the intended project in your application.

6.0 What we can fund – Revegetation Stream

6.1 Plants for revegetation

Council understands the widespread benefits of increasing canopy cover and native vegetation across Casey. To support this approach, 10,000 indigenous plants will be available, with a streamlined application and acquittal process.

Conditions

- Plantings must happen in areas that have little to no native vegetation, or little biodiversity. Note: Enhancement (infill) planting for biodiversity will be considered under 7.4 Conservation Management Plant as part of the standard Biodiversity Incentive Scheme grant.
- Plants will be provided for the current upcoming planting season
- Council will coordinate the supply of plants.
- All plants must be indigenous to the property and sourced from local seed.
- The applicant is responsible for site preparation, planting and ongoing maintenance.
- All planting must be done following best practice.
- Planting of tube stock must take place within the planting season of the year the grant was approved.
- Recipients must provide photographs illustrating works undertaken.
- Council will consider staged planting projects over several years.

- Council can supply up to three plants per square meter unless otherwise negotiated.
- Council will consider applications that involve multiple adjoining properties.
- Projects with a minimum of 100 plants will be considered.

7.0 What we can fund – Main grant stream

7.1 Fencing of indigenous vegetation

Fencing is a valuable land management tool for protecting indigenous vegetation including both remnant and revegetated areas. This subsidy will be provided on a per metre basis and the total funding will depend on the fencing material required. This grant will cover both the cost of materials and installation.

Conditions

- All material must be new.
- The landowner must maintain the fence.
- The landowner and Council will work together to determine the location of the fence. To be considered, applications for fencing must contain the purpose of the fence (ie: rabbit exclusion) and include a map of the proposed location/s and distance.
- The fence must be stock proof.
- Areas fenced to protect remnant vegetation and environmentally sensitive areas must remain stock-free.
- Boundary fencing is not supported and remains the landowner's responsibility.
- All assistance and payments are at the discretion of Council.
- Applications for fencing will require a quote.

Fencing rebates

A standard post and wire fence is based on one post every 5-10 metres. These can be substituted with barbed wire if desired. Landowners are

responsible for extra costs from barbed wire fencing. Wire mesh for rabbit exclusion is included.

We do not restrict the length of a fence, but we do consider the size of the patch and quality of vegetation being protected when we shortlist applications.

7.2 Weed control

Funding is available to control noxious and environmental weeds on private property. See Appendix 1.1 for a list of noxious and environmental weeds covered by this grant.

Conditions

- All works must follow best practice and regulations.
- Follow up weed control must be completed over the following 3 years.
- Residents must be able to show they are already meeting their statutory requirements.
- Council will fund up to half the cost of a suitably qualified contractor or the cost of chemicals if the landholder is carrying out the weed control.
- Funding will not cover weed control equipment such as sprayers etc or personal protective equipment.

7.3 Conservation Management Plan Actions

Funding will be considered for any action from a Council-approved Conservation Management Plan and in some cases the development of a Conservation Management Plan by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Actions that will be considered may include, but are not limited to; enhancement planting, purchase and installation of species-specific nesting boxes, eco thinning, biomass removal - as part of habitat improvement, installation of habitat features such as frog bogs and wetlands.

Conditions

- Management or planting plans can be developed by the landholder and must clearly show goals and actions.
- All works must be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor or in-kind by the landholder.
- Equipment and materials can be applied for to undertake the work.
- All works must follow best practice.
- Permit conditions or any actions linked to a permit condition will not be funded.
- Works resulting from a planning enforcement order or any other forceable undertaking such as direction from a VCAT ruling will not be covered.

Gaining Council approval for a Conservation Management Plan

- Plans must be requested or submitted at the time of the grant application.
- A council officer will review your plan and may contact you to discuss the details of the plan.

7.4 Pest animal control

Landowners and Council fund the control of pest animals together. In some cases, neighbours on surrounding properties will also need to participate.

Examples of pest animals include:

- red fox
- European rabbit
- feral cats

These animals have a significant impact on the natural environment.

Conditions

- All works must follow best practice and regulations.
- Where appropriate, a landscape approach should be initiated. Projects that involve many neighbouring landholders will be highly regarded.
- Pest animal control works are to protect remnant vegetation and areas of high environmental significance.
- All pest animal work must be delivered so that it does not cause off target damage to native wildlife e.g. protecting wallabies and possums from consuming bait set for rabbits. Steps that will be taken need to be provided prior to approval and evidence demonstrated in your acquittal.
- Council will fund up to half the cost of a suitably qualified contractor.
- Funding assistance is at the discretion of Council.

8.0 Technical support

The City of Casey's Environment Department can provide technical support to residents regarding this program. This includes reference material and appropriate referral to other relevant organisations.

9.0 What we cannot fund

Council will not fund:

- Applications linked to planning permit conditions.
- Activities required as part of planning enforcement.
- Boundary fencing.
- Tools and machinery - unless it applies to actions in a Council approved Conservation Management Plan (See section 7.3).
- Personal protective equipment.
- Conservation work not listed in this document - unless it applies to actions in a Council approved Conservation Management Plan (See section 7.3).

10.0 How we decide on successful grants

We will give preference to applicants and applications that:

- Meet the required conditions
- Protect large patches of remnant vegetation
- Demonstrate a contribution to the biodiversity of the property and surrounding environment.
- Proximity of significant species found on or adjacent to the property.
- Location and connectivity of the property with other areas of quality vegetation.
- Are requesting revegetation, with preference to use of indigenous native plants.
- Provide a Conservation Management Plan and are well planned, including a maintenance program.
- Have undertaken training.
- are proposing works that align with or support Council's existing biodiversity improvement programs.
- Demonstrate a level of in-kind contribution.

11.0 If your application is successful

Successful applicants will be notified in writing. Once you are notified you may begin the work.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the works completed are following the conditions stated above. It is the landholder's responsibility to pay for the approved work, Council will reimburse you once your grant is acquitted.

12.0 Receive funding - Tell us how your grant was used

Once you have completed the work it is time to acquit your grant. The deadline for this is 1 June the following year. You must supply all the relevant documents (receipts and photographs of the work undertaken) for the acquittal process. If acquittal is approved, Council will reimburse funds via an electronic bank transfer.

Appendix 1.1 - Noxious and environmental weeds

The biodiversity incentive scheme grants can be used on the following weeds:

- Any weeds listed within the Victorian consolidated list of noxious weeds [which can be found here](#)
- Any weeds listed in the [Casey weed identification guide](#)