Natural Environment Grants
Guidelines

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 this program. Applicants must contribute a minimum of 30% (cash or in-kind) towards the total project cost.

Applications are open for the months of March and September.

Grant purpose

Council values the knowledge, skills and motivation people have to take action on ideas that contribute to a thriving Surf Coast Shire community and environment.

Natural Environment grants contribute funds towards 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.

The Council Plan provides information and insight into Council priorities and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan identifies our Health and Wellbeing Pillars.

Before you get started

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.

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

Key dates:

Applications are open for the months of March and September annually with notification of outcomes occurring in the following month.

Assessment criteria

All applications for Natural Environment Grants are assessed on their merit using the following 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.	**45%**
The project offers opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and/or involvement from the broader community, other land managers, and Traditional Owners.	**20%**
The applicant has a demonstrated ability to deliver the project.	**15%**

The project contributes to climate change mitigation, adaptation and/or mobilisation.	**10%**
The budget is fully detailed, costed with quotes.	**10%**

Equity and inclusion considerations for your project:

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* means that Council has a legislated requirement and a responsibility to promote and support gender equality. For more information about the *Gender Equality Act*, visit genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/about-gender-equality-act-2020

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to promoting equality and access for all people regardless of race, sex, sexuality, age, ability and disability, socio-economic status, education, ethnicities and faith.

We believe our diversity is what makes our community stronger.

To ensure our grants program is equitable and inclusive, projects that remove barriers to participation for marginalised groups and emphasise inclusion will be given preference over projects which encourage stereotypes or are not accessible to all. This might look like:

- Your facilities, publications and processes are accessible and inclusive as possible

- You make reasonable adjustments for marginalised groups

- You are open to feedback for how you can improve access and inclusion

- You actively promote the participation of women and girls in your project or group.

Important 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).
✓	Charitable organisations.
✓	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 or are licensed to use Council owned buildings.
✓	Schools and kindergartens, if the activity is not part of the standard curriculum/learning framework.
✓	Individuals under an auspice agreement.
Cannot apply	
✗	Individuals who are not applying on behalf of an eligible group.

✖	Groups that do not meet the eligibility requirements specified in these Guidelines.
✖	Groups that have received Surf Coast Shire Council funding for the same project within the same financial year (unless it is a new stage of that project).
✖	Committees of Surf Coast Shire Council, including Advisory Committees, Committees of Management or Sub Committees.
✖	Groups that have an overdue Acquittal Report for previous funding received from Council.
✖	Individual businesses.
✖	Elected members and employees of Council are not eligible to write applications, sign or be listed on any grant.
✖	Private landholders who are not part of a coordinated project run through an appropriate group.

What will and won't be funded

Yes		No	
✓	Projects that align with and support this Grant Program Purpose as found at the top of these guidelines.	✖	Projects that do not align with Grant Programs Purpose.
✓	Activities and projects that support gender inclusion and equality.	✖	Activities and projects that do not support gender inclusion and equality or reinforce gender stereotypes.
✓	Activities that make positive contributions towards First Nations self-determination, Reconciliation and/ or allyship (this means listening to and supporting action on issues of importance to First Nations Peoples).	✖	Projects outside of Surf Coast Shire boundaries.
✓	Activities or resources that support positive outcomes for the environment, sustainability and/or climate action.	✖	Projects that have already commenced or equipment that has already been purchased.
✓	Activities or resources that celebrate and promote diversity and inclusion.	✖	Wages, contracts, registrations and general administration. One-off facilitator/trainer fees are accepted.
✓	Appropriate planting, weeding and revegetation activities that focus on locally indigenous flora and can be maintained successfully into the future.	✖	Operational costs or items purchased on a frequent basis, e.g. telephone, electricity, cleaning/maintenance, utility bills, ongoing insurance, stationary items.
✓	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.)	✖	Prizes, awards, fundraising items or trophies.
✓	Equipment purchases or hire.	✖	Projects that provide direct benefit to a commercial business, individual or landholder without significant community or environmental outcomes.
✓	Activities that increase community involvement and understanding, e.g. citizen science, research, field days, communication and engagement activities.	✖	Projects that support political or lobbying activities.

✓	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.	✖	Projects that do not align with the objectives of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. (e.g. projects that encourage unhealthy eating or include the consumption of Alcohol).
		✖	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.
		✖	Revegetation projects that increase fire risk as determined by Council's Community Emergency Management Department.
		✖	Projects on private land unless community benefit well demonstrated and/or a Trust for Nature Covenant already exists.
		✖	Projects on land that is under a current planning investigation.
		✖	Activities which are not in accordance with WorkSafe Victoria.

*Note: events such as markets must be for the primary purpose of community education and involvement, not commercial gain. Christmas Carol Events must apply for Surf Coast Shire Community Event grant funding.

Eligibility requirements

These are the grant essentials to tick off before your application can be considered by us.

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/projects must not discriminate against people based on gender identity, race, age, socio economic status, education, ethnicity, ability and disability, or faith.

☐ Activities/projects must not contradict the priorities of the Council Plan, including the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

☐ Completed applications must be received 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.

☐ Natural Environment Grants require 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.

☐ The applicant must demonstrate that they can meet the matched project contribution requirement described in these guidelines. The method for calculating in-kind contributions is included in the application 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 applicable Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), 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.

☐ Where appropriate, projects must be inclusive of people with a disability or those who are marginalised. Please refer to Council's Disability Inclusion Guidelines. If successful, you may be required to complete Surf Coast Shire's Inclusive Events Checklist.

☐ 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).
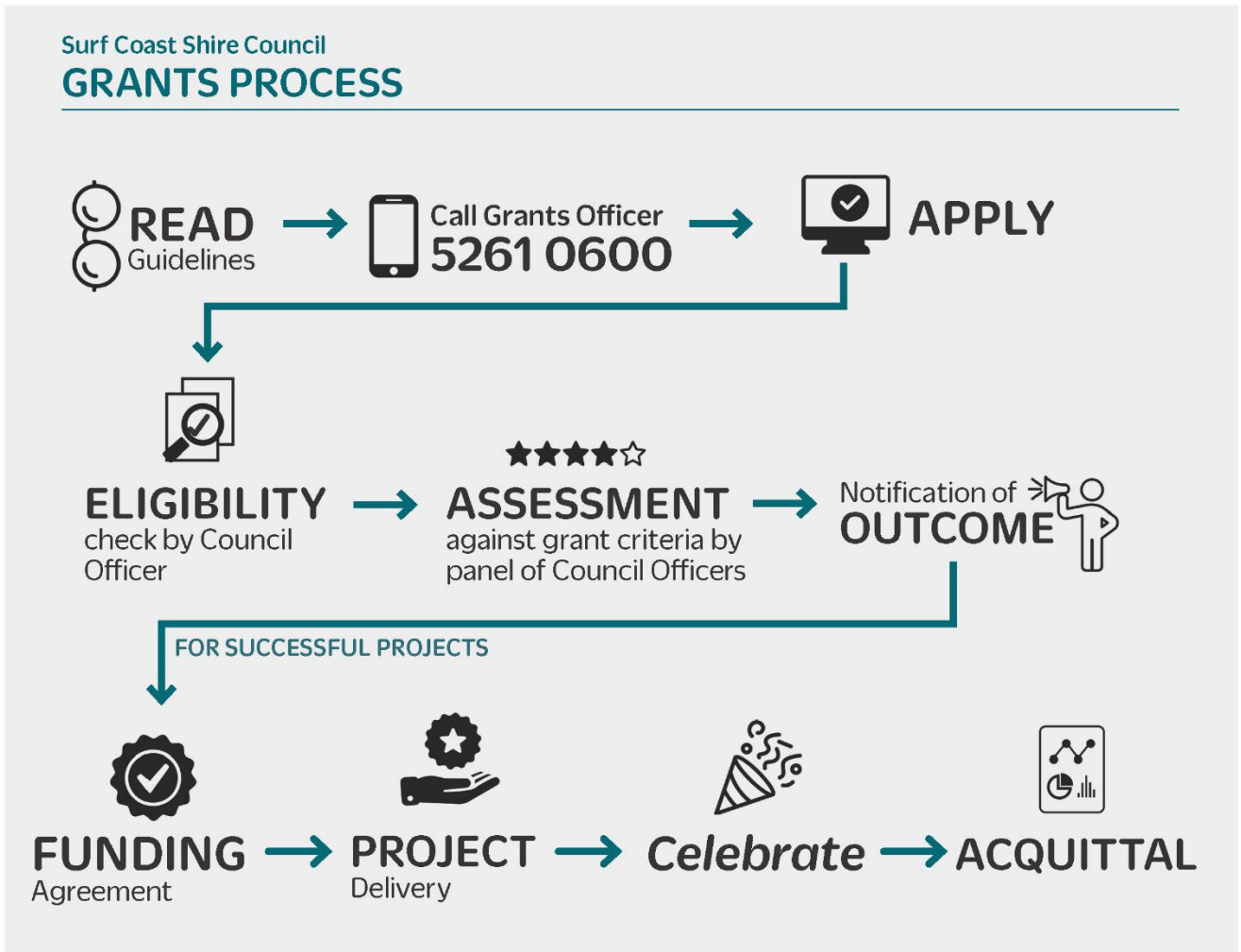
Funding information

Funding details:

• Funds of up to $8,000 per group can be applied for within the grant.

• The applicant may contribute to the cost of the project, but 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.

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.

Grievance Process

All applicants whether successful or not have the opportunity to discuss the application process. Applicants have the opportunity to write to the CEO if they are not satisfied with the grant process. The applicant will be notified of the outcome in writing.

More Information

About this grant
Online 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

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
wadawurrung.org.au

Access and inclusion
surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Access-for-all

Asset Based Community Development
Bank of I.D.E.A.S
Jeder Institute Nurture Development

Climate change and sustainability
environmentsurfcoast.com.au

Community Group Directory surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Group- Directory

Council Plan and Community Vision
surfcoast.vic.gov.au/About-us/Your-Say/People-Place-Future

Reconciliation Australia
reconciliation.org.au

Gender Equality vichealth.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/EveryoneWins_How_ to_use_the_toolkit.pdf

vic.gov.au/gender-equality-what-it-and-why-do-we-need-it

Surf Coast Shire - Natural environment – including pest plants and animals, native vegetation and wildlife
surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment