



BELLINGEN  
SHIRE COUNCIL



# Environment Levy Community Fund

## Grant Guidelines 2023/24

### How to submit your application

- Applications must be submitted online
- Access to the internet and an email address will be required
- The link to the Application Form is available on Belling Shire Councils [Website](#) or at <https://bellingen.grantplatform.com/>
- The application must be submitted by the due date
- Late or incomplete applications will be not considered

**The scheme opens on 13th April 2023**

**Closing date for applications 9th May 2023**

If you require assistance to use the online grants platform contact Councils Grants Officer on 6655 7300.

## **Program Background**

Bellingen Shire Council (BSC) established the Environment Levy Fund in 2005, after gaining approval from the NSW Minister for Local Government for a special rate variation of 4% to the General Income for environmental projects.

From this, Council has approved funding to be allocated to the Environment Levy Community Fund (ELCF) to support community-initiated projects with the principle purpose to achieve environment or sustainability outcomes.

A limited number of grants are available to a maximum value of \$5,000 excluding GST per each. Projects are selected on merit in accordance with these Guidelines.

BSC will issue external advertisements to inform the community of the Environment Levy Community Fund (ELCF) opening.

All potential applicants are advised to view documentation and apply via Council's grant management system, found here - <https://bellingen.grantplatform.com/>

**Should interested applicants have any specific questions regarding their project application content, they should be directed to the River and Biodiversity Officer on 6555 7300.**

## **Important things to note**

- Grants are for amounts up to \$5000 (ex GST).
- The organisation or group applying for the grant is referred to as the 'applicant'.
- The applicant is the organisation, not the individual representative or person, completing the application form.
- Applicants need to plan in advance and consider the timing of their projects or purchases.
- Projects must be completed within 12 months of signing a funding agreement with Council.

## **Objectives and Funding Principles**

The aim of the ELCF is to support environmental sustainability and on-ground projects.

Types of projects may include but are not limited to:

- Energy and water saving initiatives
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives
- Waste minimization and recycling
- Fauna and flora protection and conservation
- Environmental education and community capacity building

Some examples of previously funded projects are available on the Council website.

Council reserves the right to part-fund projects.

So that funding is allocated equitably and effectively successful applications must meet the following criteria:

### Projects MUST (Essential Criteria):

- Concentrate their activities at a local level
- Be implemented on public lands or land that is readily accessible by the public
- Meet environmental and/or sustainability priorities identified in BSC's Community Vision 2027
- Demonstrate a commitment to maintenance of project outcomes beyond the funding period, if required. Applications must clearly describe how maintenance will be carried out and for what length of time. Proposals which are able to show commitment to longer periods of maintenance, when required, will be considered more favorably.

### Applications will be considered favorably where (desirable criteria):

- Applicants consider seeking funding from other sources using the ELCF as matching funds or make a co-commitment to for delivery of initiatives
- Activities are actions identified in the Bellinghen Shire Biodiversity Strategy 2019
- There is capacity for the project to be implemented by, or used as a model or case study for, other groups/school
- The project maintains / protects existing environmental achievements / assets
- The project builds community capacity and/or contributes towards behavioral change outcomes
- The project fosters innovative and creative solutions that meet an environmental and/or sustainability need

### **Who can apply?**

- Incorporated not for profit organisations
- Schools and pre-schools
- Groups and unincorporated associations with a nominated auspicing body (see definitions).

### **Who cannot apply?**

- Individuals
- Commercial enterprises
- Organisations which have outstanding reports or acquittals for past funding programs administered by Bellinghen Shire Council
- Organisations which do not have public liability insurance to cover the timeframe in which the project would be undertaken
- Organisations that are outside of the Bellinghen Local Government Area

### **Activities NOT funded**

- Core, ongoing administrative costs of organisations, such as rent, phone, internet, insurance, and wages for regularly employed staff
- General operating expenses or ongoing costs
- Competitions or fundraising events
- Projects which charge attendance fees for participation, to ensure that projects funded by Council are inclusive of people on low incomes. However, nominal attendance fees for workshops etc. may be considered
- Projects which have already commenced or been completed i.e. no retrospective funding
- Projects undertaken on private land which is not readily accessible to the public

The River and Biodiversity Officer can assist with checking eligibility of projects prior to the lodgement of applications.

### **Clarification regarding potential allocation of funding to projects**

- Groups will only be funded for one project in each funding round. *An organisation may act as auspice for more than one group.*
- No more than 10% of funding should be allocated to co-ordination costs, unless the applicant can make a case that more than 10% co-ordination costs may be appropriate. These costs must be exclusively related to the specific delivery of the proposed project.
- No more than 50% of funding should be allocated to workshop facilitator or contractor fees, if required. The remaining funding can be allocated to items such as materials, catering and Development Application fees, for example. Workshop facilitator fees will only be funded if the engagement of a professional facilitator is deemed essential for project delivery by the evaluation panel and Council. The sourcing of particular expertise must be fully justified and a facilitator brief provided. Funding will only be allocated for facilitators who are not office bearers or sitting on a governing committee within the organisation applying for funding.
- Notwithstanding the previous point, up to 100% of funding can be spent on contractors for on-ground works which deliver the main objectives of the project, such as bush regeneration works including weed control and revegetation.
- No more than 5% of funding may be allocated to transport and associated costs for projects which entail travelling to and from locations more than 30km apart, if required. Transport costs can only be allocated funding if the applicant is able to demonstrate that travel to several locations across the shire is essential for effective project delivery. Proposed travel costs are to be calculated at the standard per kilometre rate and successful applicants will need to keep a log of travel undertaken, to be submitted with the final acquittal report.

### **Important things to remember**

- All submissions must be completed and submitted using the Bellingen Shire Council Good Grants platform Environmental Levy Community Fund application form
- Applications must be received on or by the due date. Late applications will not be accepted
- Groups will only be funded for one project in each funding round
- Council reserves the right to provide partial funding for projects

- A project work plan must be completed
- Applicants must provide details of the skills and experience of project coordinators
- The proposed budget must include full disclosure of all income and expenses relating to the proposed project. If it becomes evident that this requirement has not been met, Council has the right to withdraw funding
- Projects which require ongoing maintenance, after the funding period, must clearly identify maintenance required, how this will be addressed, and the length of time maintenance will be carried out. Commitment to longer periods of maintenance, when required, is considered favorably
- Staged projects, to be implemented over more than one year, must provide a long-term plan that encompasses the entire life of the project
- Successful applicants must return signed documentation by the due date, or funding may be withheld
- Funding for successful applications will not normally be available until all works are completed and inspected by Council. However, progress payments and up-front payments may be considered at Council's discretion
- Funding is not recurrent, and priority will be given to applicants and projects that have not been funded previously.

### **Support Material**

It is strongly recommended that appropriate and relevant support material be submitted with your application to assist in its assessment. This might include;

- evidence of similar projects previously undertaken by your organization
- letters of support from organisations and/or the community involved in your project
- quotes from contractors or for materials or labour

### **Evaluation Process**

To ensure continuing objectivity in the funding evaluation process, the following procedure will be strictly adhered to:

- Applications will be considered on their merits, taking into account the circumstances of each case, the availability of funds and the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, or any other Act or Acts authorising Council to provide grants, subsidies or donations.
- All information provided will be treated as confidential.
- Applications will initially be processed for eligibility in accordance with these guidelines by Council's Sustainable Environment & Waste unit.
- Applications may then be assessed and ranked according to priority by Council's Manager Sustainable Environment and Waste and relevant Council staff based on the specific assessment criteria.
- Suitable projects will then be presented at a BSC Councillor workshop where project assessment and 2022/23 ELCF allocations will be completed.
- Following this process, a recommendation of successful applications based on the outcomes of this engagement will be provided in a report to Council for adoption at a Council meeting.
- Successful applicants will be formally notified via email.

- Successful applications will be provided with a funding agreement and will be requested to return this and a current public liability insurance certificate within fourteen days.

### **Funding Agreements and Accountability**

If successful, you will be required to:

- Sign and return to Council a signed funding agreement
- Provide proof of public liability insurance for the time period covering your project; and
- Provide a tax invoice for the approved amount, as follows:
  - Organisations registered for GST will need to forward a Tax Invoice for the grant plus 10% GST; or
  - Organisations not registered for GST will need to forward an Invoice for the amount of the grant.

All successful applicants must submit a project report within one month of the project's completion. A final report and acquittal template example is available on the BSC [website](#).

Final Reports should include:

- Any photographs or media references
- Receipts for purchases, including invoices from workshop facilitators and/or contractors, made with ELCF funds

### **Assistance to Complete Your Application**

If you need assistance with the online application form or with any aspect of completing your application please contact the River and Biodiversity Officer on 6655 7300.

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### **Definitions:**

*Community Capacity Building* - is the capacity of the people in communities to participate in actions based on community interests, both as individuals and through groups, organisations and networks. It is defined as the activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills and abilities of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.

*Sustainability* - acting sustainably embodies a vision of achieving social, environmental and economic well-being. It aims to ensure that we have enough for all, forever.

*Auspicing Body* - a legally constituted organisation that will take legal and financial responsibility for a grant if awarded. If a grant is awarded, the auspicing body **must** sign the funding agreement and is responsible for reporting and acquitting the grant within a month of the project being completed. All correspondence and monies will be directed to the auspicing body. It is recommended that the successful grant applicant enters into a written agreement with their nominated auspicing body that clearly outlines each party's rights and responsibilities.