

# Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program

## About the Program

Tweed Shire Council's Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program assists landholders to implement best land management practices that benefit the farm, community and the environment.

Farmers are encouraged to bring forward new and interesting solutions to address the environmental problems on their land.

A limited number of grants of up to \$4,000 are available for eligible activities. Grants will be awarded through a merit based competitive process with the funds for successful projects administered by Council. All funded projects are to be completed by 30 June 2019.

**Applications close 4pm Friday 26 October 2018.**

## Program Objectives

The objectives of the Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program are to work with farmers to:

- Support and promote the adoption of improved land management practices.
- Build capacity in natural resource management and sustainable agriculture.
- Increase biodiversity, improve water quality and soil health on farms.

## Who can apply?

Grants are open to individual landholders, groups of landholders, farmer groups and associations that are actively farming Rural (RU1, RU2) or Large Lot Residential (R5) in the Tweed Local Government Area. Grants are also open to secondary schools who deliver agriculture programs.

To be eligible applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Have consent from the landholder and/or relevant authority for project works.
- The project must meet at least one of the Program objectives.
- Preparation of a *Sustainable Farm Plan*. Visit [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture) and download the *Sustainable Farm Plan* template.
- Ability to provide a cash and/or in-kind contribution equal to or greater than the value of funds requested.
- Agree to Sustainable Agriculture Program staff overseeing the activities, administering expenditure and monitoring progress.

- Willingness to host a field day or community event to showcase the project outcomes. Not all projects will have an associated community event however where an event is warranted these will be organised and funded by Tweed Shire Council.
- A commitment to delivering the project and improving farming practices beyond the life of the grant.

## Eligible activities

Eligible activities must align with at least one of the Program objectives. Your project will aim to address issues identified in your *Sustainable Farm Plan*. We are looking for farmers that have a good understanding of their environmental problems or are seeking help to identify and address them. Grants are more likely to be awarded to those applicants who are able to logically link these issues with achievable solutions. Successful projects will also provide good educational opportunities for the wider community. These may include, but not be limited to, activities such as:

- Support for installation of fencing to address land degradation and improve water quality, livestock health and biodiversity such as:
  - Internal fencing to reduce land degradation i.e. support rotational grazing practices or restrict livestock to restore degraded areas.
  - Fencing of high biodiversity value areas.
  - Fencing of water bodies.
- Revegetation of agricultural drains, paddocks (for windbreaks and paddock trees), constructed wetlands and dams with local native species.
- Weed control (particularly for control of problem agricultural weeds) in high biodiversity value areas of the farm.
- Support to produce and use on-farm environmentally friendly soil amendments such as compost and biochar by utilising farm waste and other local waste products.
- Release of beneficial organisms such as dung beetles or predatory insects in combination with cessation or reduced reliance on chemical controls to ensure the survival of beneficials.
- Assistance controlling foxes and feral cats in high priority areas (i.e. Cudgen plateau).
- Installation of artificial hollows and nest boxes for beneficial predators and native fauna i.e. nest boxes for rodent predators in tree crops and orchards.
- Limited earthworks in combination with revegetation to address soil erosion and runoff issues. The costs of such activities would need to be largely borne by the landholder.
- Workshops or training activities that build natural resource management capacity for groups of farmers.
- School excursions for agricultural students to attend local farms practicing sustainable agriculture.

## Ineligible activities

Activities that will not be eligible for funding include the:

- Purchase of farm chemicals and fertilisers;
- Purchase of planting material or livestock for production purposes;
- Purchase of farm machinery and equipment; and
- Activities required to be completed as part of a development consent or terms and conditions of any other contractual arrangement or legal direction.

## Selection Criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used to determine a project's suitability for funding and overall ranking relative to other applications. Applications will be assessed against the selection criteria by a panel of Council staff and you will be notified of the outcome via phone or email.

### Criterion 1. Contribution to improved natural resource management

- Potential and scale of environmental benefits arising from the activity.
- Extent to which the project will meet one or more of the program objectives.
- Degree to which the activity is recognised as best-practice.

### Criterion 2. Likelihood of project success

- Feasibility of the project, and the extent to which the project will deliver clear, measurable outcomes.
- Clearly defined and realistic project timeframe.
- Applicant's capacity to deliver the project in the specified timeframe.

### Criterion 3: Risk management

- Risks to project delivery have been identified and appropriate risk management measures have been outlined.

### Criterion 4: Budget and Costs

- Project budget provides a level of detail sufficient to demonstrate project viability and value for money.
- Level of cash co-investment and in-kind contribution. Proposals with a cash contribution equal to or greater than the amount of grant funds sought are more likely to be successful than those with only an in-kind or small cash contribution.

### Criterion 5: Benefit and Impact of Project

- Legacy of the project, in terms of environmental outcomes and transferrable knowledge outcomes.
- The degree of innovation (i.e. founded on new research or the trialling of new ideas).

### **Preparing & lodging your application**

Application forms can be downloaded from Council's website at [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture) or obtained as a hardcopy at the counter of Council's Tweed Heads or Murwillumbah offices.

Applicants must provide a completed *Sustainable Farm Plan* with their application. The Plan will help applicants document the key environmental challenges they face and help them formulate project ideas. A *Sustainable Farm Plan* template is available on Council's website: [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend an information session with Council staff where they will receive advice on how to prepare an application. The information sessions will be held at the Canvas & Kettle Meeting Room, Murwillumbah Civic Centre, Tumbulgum Road from:

- 5:00pm – 7:00pm Thursday 13 September 2018.
- 10:00am – midday Tuesday 18 September 2018.

To RSVP or for further information prior to lodgement please contact Council's Program Leader – Sustainable Agriculture by calling (02) 6670 2400 or emailing [tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au).

Applications must be received by **4pm Friday 26 October 2018** and are to be submitted electronically to [tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au) or in hardcopy at the Tweed Heads or Murwillumbah office. Late applications will not be considered.