

Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program Guidelines



About the program

Tweed Shire Council's Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program was established in 2018 and is proudly one of the first of its kind in Australia. The program assists farmers to implement best land management practices that benefit the farm, community and the environment.

Farmers are encouraged to bring forward project ideas to manage environmental problems or improve the health and productivity of their land. Grants may also be awarded to trial new or emerging technologies and practices where it is 'safe to fail' for the benefit of learning. Grants will not be awarded for capital items or business startups unless there is a clear public and environmental benefit that would result from the investment.

A limited number of grants of up to \$4,000 (GST inclusive) are available for eligible activities each financial year. Grants will be awarded through a competitive, merit-based process.

Applicants are encouraged to seek feedback and assistance from Council's Sustainable Agriculture Program on their applications prior to lodging.

Applications can be made at any time however successful grants may not be awarded until the next financial year depending on budget availability.

Announcement of successful applications will be made publicly at the beginning of each new financial year. All grant funds must be expended by the end of the financial year in which they are awarded.

A brief project report must be provided to share lessons learnt with our farming community.

For more information see www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture-farming.

Program objectives

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

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

Eligibility

To be eligible and for the application to be accepted you must:

1. Be a landholder, a group of landholders, a farmer group or association that actively farms Rural (RU1, RU2) or Large Lot Residential (R5) land in the Tweed Local Government Area. If you are not the landholder, you must have consent from the landholder and/or relevant authority for project works.
2. Meet at least one of the Program objectives.
3. Complete all relevant sections of the *Application Form* (if required our Sustainable Agriculture Program staff are available to help you complete the written application).
4. Provide quotes for all relevant goods and services you are seeking funding for and will be paying for as your contribution to the project. It is recommended you seek a minimum of two written quotes for goods or services over \$3,000. Goods and services to be paid for with the grant need to be addressed to Tweed Shire Council and cannot exceed \$4,000 in total.
5. Be able to provide a cash and/or in-kind contribution equal to or greater than the value of funds requested.
6. If applicable, have the relevant approvals to carry out the project e.g. a controlled activity approval for works within 40m of a waterway.
7. Be willing to work with Council staff in the delivery of the project.
8. Commit to delivering the project and improving farming practices beyond the life of the grant.

Eligible activities

Some examples of eligible activities include (but not limited to):

- Support for installation of fencing and other infrastructure to address land degradation and improve water quality, livestock health and biodiversity such as:
 - Internal fencing to support rotational grazing practices or restrict livestock to restore degraded areas.
 - Cattle exclusion fencing of high biodiversity value areas or water bodies.
 - Stock watering systems to support rotational grazing and cattle exclusion activities e.g. troughs, pipes and header tanks.
- Revegetation of agricultural drains, paddocks (for windbreaks, beneficial fauna habitat 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 or trial more environmentally friendly weed control methods within production areas.
- Support to produce and use 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, predatory insects or other biological controls in combination with cessation or reduced reliance on chemical controls to ensure the survival of beneficials.
- Trialling new or innovative regenerative agriculture methods to determine their suitability for local conditions.

- Assistance controlling priority pest animals in strategic locations
- 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 with clear environmental benefits such as sediment traps, constructed wetlands, and use of low impact soil interventions such as the Yeoman's plough.
- Workshops or training activities that build natural resource management capacity for groups of farmers.

Funding is not available for business start-ups or capital investments unless there is overwhelming public and environmental benefit from the investment.

Selection criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used to determine a project's suitability for funding and overall ranking relative to other applications:

- Potential and scale of environmental benefits arising from the activity.
- Extent to which the project enables transfer of knowledge and lessons learned to other farmers.
- Extent to which the application addresses a gap or underrepresented area within the current pool of applications.
- Feasibility of the project, and the extent to which the project will deliver clear, measurable outcomes.
- Extent to which the project will trial or validate new or innovative practices.
- Clearly defined and achievable project timeframe.
- Risks to project delivery have been identified and appropriate risk management measures have been outlined.
- Value for money and the level of cash and/or in-kind contribution.

Preparing & lodging your application

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposals with Council's Sustainable Agriculture Program staff prior to lodgement to ensure the project idea is both eligible and meets the grant program objectives. Sustainable Agriculture Program staff are available to assist with filling out the application form if required.

Applications forms can be submitted either:

- Online via [Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants | Tweed Shire Council](#) (preferred)
- In hard copy (upon request only)

For list of the questions on the application form see Appendix 3 below.

Appendix 1: Guide to preparing a project site plan

A picture says a thousand words. The following are some of the ways you can prepare a project site plan:

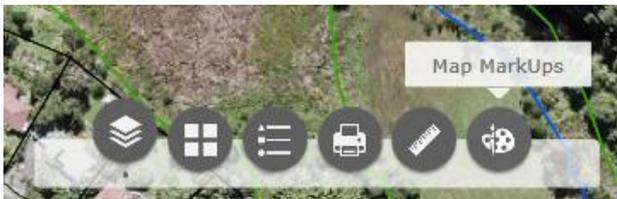
- 1) Use free mapping tools like Council's [Environmental Mapping tool](#) or [Google Earth Pro](#) to prepare a digital map or print a hard copy.
- 2) Contact Council's Sustainable Agriculture Program to request an electronic or hard copy of latest high resolution aerial photography for your property.
- 3) Copy and mark up existing farm plans.
- 4) Use a drone to take an aerial photograph and identify the project areas on the photograph.
- 5) Hand draw the site plan, providing you can accurately show the location of the project site e.g. using known distances from locations such as houses or dams.

Project site plans must clearly show the location of ALL proposed project activities and any other noteworthy site features. If you are wanting to show several pieces of information without losing readability, clear plastic (acetate) overlays may be helpful.

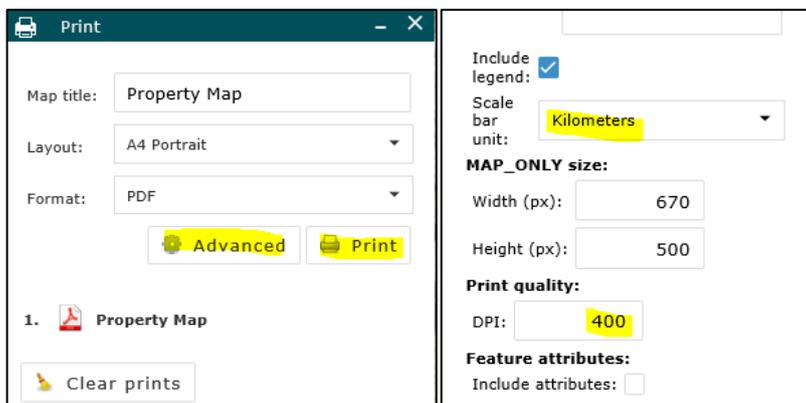
In addition to your site plans, you may also wish to include photos of the project area.

Tips for using Council's [environmental information mapping tools](#)

- Turn on/off any relevant layers in the "Layers List" by clicking the  symbol e.g. turn on contours (10m).
- Use the Map MarkUps tool to show the location of the proposed project area and other noteworthy site features.



- When you've finished your site plan, click the printer icon in the same toolbar above to generate a downloadable file for sending or printing. Note the advanced settings allow you to increase the print quality and change the scale bar units as below:



Appendix 2: Example project and budget

This farmer is seeking support to establish a rotational grazing system for their beef cattle.

Grant funds will cover the electric fencing materials and a trough and poly pipe. The electric fence will be 2 strands with simple tread in posts.

The farmer's contribution will be to purchase a tank and install the tank, trough and their existing pump. The farmer will also monitor the results by comparing pasture growth, pasture species and weed abundance with a nearby set stocked paddock.

Budget:

Activity	Descriptions	Cost	Grant funded or applicants' contribution
Electric fencing materials	1xS20 energiser \$450 3x500m braid \$680 40 Star pickets \$390 93 tread in posts \$1100 3 gate handles \$80	\$2700	Grant funded
Plastic water trough	Rapid Plas Pro Tub 600L	\$600	Grant funded
Poly pipe and fittings	Poly pipe and fittings	\$700	Grant funded
Poly tank	20,000L tank	\$2500	Applicants' contribution (Cash)
Installation of electric fencing and water troughs, irrigation lines and tank.	Installation of fencing and irrigation: 3 days x 8hrs @ \$60 per hour	\$1440	Applicants' contribution (In-kind)
Pasture and weed surveys before and after.	Monitoring and data recording - 2hrs per month @ \$60.00/hr over 10 months	\$1200	Applicants' contribution (In-kind)
	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS SOUGHT	\$4000	
	TOTAL IN-KIND/CASH	\$5140	

Appendix 3: Example application questions

- 1. Land address and zoning.**
- 2. Describe the main uses/products** of the farm (e.g. are you producing cattle for live sale or markets, dairy, fruit, vegetables etc.) and in particular the current use of the project area.
- 3. Is the property categorised as Farmland (Section 515 of the Local Government Act 1993)? (Y/N)**
- 4. As required, are you willing to host a community workshop funded and supported by Tweed Shire Council to showcase your project? (Y/N)**
- 5. What are the main environmental issues on your farm that you are trying to address through this project**
- 6. Project details**
 - a. Project name/title.
 - b. What do you plan to change on your farm?
 - c. How will you do this?
 - d. Are your methods based on best practice or new innovative approaches?
 - e. Who will be involved? e.g. landholder, site manager, employees, researchers
 - f. When will the project take place include start date, various project stages and completion date.
 - g. What do you anticipate the project will achieve? What are the expected environmental outcomes?
 - h. Provide a budget for your project and include quotes as applicable.
 - i. Describe how you intend to monitor and measure the success of the project. If you haven't already done so, provide timing of monitoring and reporting.
Note: One of the key objectives of the Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program is to promote and educate the project outcomes to others.
- 7. Project site plan** – show where the project will take place in the context of your farm. Include pictures as appropriate.