

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & SUPPORT FUND

SWAN BAY CATCHMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

The City of Greater Geelong is assisting landowners to protect and enhance native vegetation and waterways on their property. The Swan Bay Catchment Grants program is a partnership between the City and Bellarine Landcare Group which offers financial incentives to landowners within the Swan Bay Catchment to address threats to biodiversity.

The program's aim is to reinvigorate, link and improve a range of habitats across the Bellarine including saltmarsh, coastal woodland, grassy woodland, waterways, and wetlands.



Figure 1. Map showing the Swan Bay Catchment Area

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

The Swan Bay Catchment Grants program provides advice, financial assistance and contractor services to owners of eligible properties to help protect or improve native vegetation and waterways.

The City is currently seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from those wanting to be involved in the program.

Participating landowners will receive a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for their property and will be able to apply for funding to undertake works proposed in the CMP.

Works funded through this program include weed control, revegetation, fencing and assistance towards establishing conservation covenants.

For further information please contact:

Sophie Small, Bellarine Landcare Facilitator on 0457 333 727 or sophie@bcn.org.au or

Steven Smithyman, COGG Environmental Projects Officer on 52725339, 0439 326 783 or ssmithyman@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

KEY DATES AND ACTIVITIES FOR APPLICATIONS

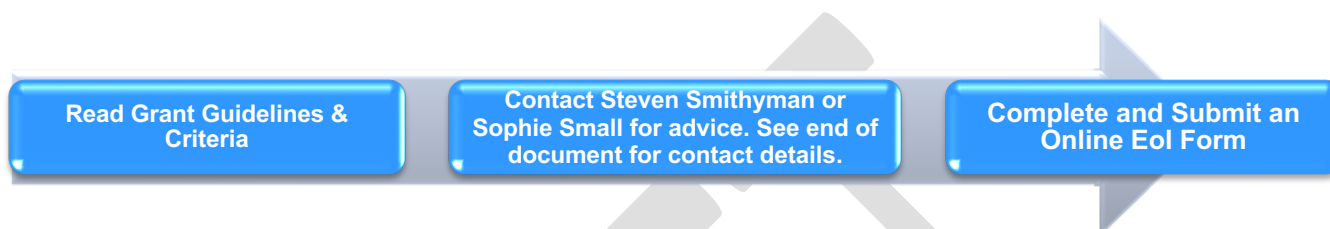
Below are the key dates for the 2022/23 Swan Bay catchment Grants Program.

Please note: EOI Submissions will be accepted until midnight on the final day. Incomplete submissions may not be accepted.

ACTIVITY	Date	DESCRIPTION
Expression of Interest (EOI) (Open for 5 weeks)	Opening – Monday 14th November 2022 Closing – Friday 30 th December 2022	Interested landowners submit an EOI. The EOI must be submitted on-line by midnight Friday 30th December 2022
Site Assessments	January 2023	Officers from the City of Greater Geelong and Bellarine Landcare meet with landowners who submitted an EOI to help them identify native vegetation and other wildlife habitat on their property and discuss how these areas can be protected.
Conservation Management Plans	January 2023	Officers draft a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for each participating property which identifies biodiversity values on the property and recommends conservation works that will help protect these values.
Quotes obtained	January - Early February 2023	Landowners obtain quotes from Council approved contractors for works identified in the CMP. These quotes are to be uploaded when submitting your online funding application.
Application for Grant Funding (Open for 5 weeks)	Opening – February 2023 Closing – Sunday 5 th March 2023	During this period, participating landowners can submit an online application for funding to undertake works identified in their CMP. The link to the online application form will be supplied by the City.
Applications Assessed	Early March 2023	Applications will be assessed by a Panel and ranked according to our selection criteria.
Funding agreements for successful applicants	Mid-March 2023	Successful applicants will be notified and funding agreements sent for signing.

ACTIVITY	Date	DESCRIPTION
Works	Late March – 30 th June 2023	Works conducted by contractors in accordance with the signed funding agreement.
Post-works assessment	July/August	A site visit will be conducted to ensure the works have been completed successfully and so contractor payments can be authorised.

APPLICATION PROCESS



All applications are submitted online via <https://geelong.smartygrants.com.au/SBEOI2233>

WHO CAN APPLY?

This City grant is offered to rural landowners, with a property size of 2 hectares or greater located within the Swan Bay catchment area (see map above).

Participants don't have to have a Australian Business Number (ABN) or be GST registered as funds will be paid directly to the contractor who undertakes the work.

WHO CANNOT APPLY?

- Government agencies
- Commercial businesses
- Not-for-profit community organisations
- Applicants who have not fully acquitted previous Swan Bay grants or have outstanding debts or arrears to the City of Greater Geelong.
- Conservation areas which are, or have been, part of a native vegetation offset are not eligible for funding.

WHAT CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

Funding can be sought to employ City approved contractors to undertake environmental works listed below, or where appropriate, for the purchase of selected materials from an authorised supplier.

FUNDED WORKS	YES	NO
Weed control in conservation areas	✓	
Revegetation with indigenous species	✓	
Waterway protection and restoration	✓	
Fencing areas of remnant vegetation, corridors linking remnant vegetation, waterways, or dams	✓	
Assistance towards establishing conservation covenants.	✓	
Pest animal control		✗
Boundary fencing		✗

1. Weed control

Funding can be sought to:

- Control weeds within, or prevent future weed invasion into, conservation areas and along waterways.
- Remove non-indigenous plant harbour for pest animals (rabbits and foxes).

2. Revegetation with locally indigenous plants

Funding can be sought to:

- Revegetate areas to improve the habitat value of waterways, dams, wetlands, drainage lines and/or to create corridors that link patches of remnant vegetation.
- Improve indigenous plant diversity, structure, and patch size of remnant vegetation within a conservation area.

3. Fencing to protect waterways and remnant vegetation

a. Funding can be sought to:

- Fence areas of waterways, wetlands and dams to exclude stock and protect native vegetation.
- Fence and, or link patches of native vegetation including large old paddock trees.

b. Funding will not be available for fencing which:

- Is boundary fencing.
- Does not provide protection to native vegetation, revegetation or waterways.

c. Fencing requirements:

- Fencing areas around existing planted or new revegetation sites will require a 50% monetary contribution from the landowner.
- Fencing areas of remnant vegetation will not require a landowner monetary contribution.
- Fencing should comply with the standards below:
 - Wires: Seven strands of High Tensile plain wire.
 - Posts: 1.8m treated pine or steel, no more than 8m apart, with droppers in between.
 - Strainers: 2.1m treated pine or large diameter steel posts.
 - Stays: 3m treated pine or steel.
 - Barb wire must not be used because of its impact on wildlife.

- It is known that wider or larger projects are considered better for long-term environmental benefits. A wider waterway corridor, bio link corridor or fenced remnant vegetation area will have better expected long-term biodiversity outcomes, compared to narrow or small ones. If you want to fence a remnant patch of vegetation or a waterway, consider adding extra area for natural regeneration or planting.
- Consideration should be given to providing future access to project sites. It is advised that a gate be included fencing to allow future site management.

4. Conservation covenants

a. Funding can be sought to:

- Assist in the establishment of conservation covenants on areas of land used for conservation purposes.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

Swan Bay Catchment grants are for amounts up to \$10,000 per property per year.

- The total funding pool is approximately \$90,000.
- Grant amounts offered to successful applicants are based on outcomes determined during the assessment process and in line with budget limitations.
- Funding co-contributions from the applicant landholder towards the cost of the project are strongly encouraged and will be evaluated during the application assessment process.
- The City will pay approved contractors or suppliers for materials directly. Funding is not available for landowners to undertake their own works or engage contractors not approved by the City.

HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE ASSESSED

Applications will be assessed on how well the criteria are addressed.

To assist in determining priority projects, a weighted scoring system forms part of the assessment process as follows:

- a. Size and quality of the conservation area, the presence of any threatened plants or animals and how well the vegetation connects to other remnant vegetation in the area. 50%
- b. Level of in-kind contribution by the landholder. 25%
- c. Expected long-term biodiversity outcomes and benefits of the project. 25%

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Funding Agreement to:

- Complete initial works as outlined and within three months of the signing date of the Funding Agreement.
- Maintain the site for a minimum of 4 years, including:
 - manage pest animals
 - ongoing weed control
- Continue to protect the conservation area(s).

CONTACT

For further information regarding this grant program please contact:

Sophie Small

Bellarine Landcare Facilitator

Ph: 0457 333 727

Email: sophie@bcn.org.au

Steven Smithyman

Environmental Projects Officer

City of Greater Geelong

Ph: 5272 5339 0439 326 783

Email: ssmithyman@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

(Monday – Thursday)

PRIVACY INFORMATION

The personal information on Grant Application Forms is collected by Council for the primary purpose of processing your grant application. Should you wish to access this information, you may contact Council on 5272 5272.

Council will publicly report grants awarded on an annual basis.

OTHER CITY OF GREATER GEELONG FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

For more information, visit: <http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/grants>

