Environmental Grants Program

Application Guidelines

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1. OVERVIEW

Mount Isa City Council recognises the importance of working together with our community to achieve an environmentally sustainable future.

“A Healthy Environment” is a significant theme of Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2025. As part of this plan, an Environmental Grants Program (EGP) has been developed to support the community projects that contribute to the health of our local environment recognising, protecting, and promoting the sustainable management of the unique natural environment within the MICC Local Government Area (LGA).

The EGP is governed by the Environmental Charge Policy and the Environmental Grant Program Policy.

These guidelines outline the available funding, grant objectives, eligibility, assessment criteria, and terms and conditions of the Environmental Grants Program. The guidelines are provided to assist eligible parties through the application process.

For enquires, applicants can contact the Environmental Services team at enviroteam@mountisa.qld.gov.au

2. OBJECTIVES

The EGP will help to implement Council's key environmental strategies, plans, and actions which are effectively implemented through the grants. The grants respond to Council's environmental strategic document, the Environment Management Plan (EMP) 2020-2025, which is a guiding document to achieve the environmental objective of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025.

The EGP aims to support a healthy, sustainable, and integrated natural environment within Mount Isa Council through cooperative community-based initiatives and/or projects. The main objective of the program is to encourage and assist community involvement in the initiation, development, and implementation of projects/ that enhance our natural environment and drive sustainability within the Mount Isa region.

2.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Environmental Grants Program are to:

- Improve urban biodiversity, conserve natural areas, and connect habitat;

- To increase community participation, support, and encourage volunteering;
- To foster environmental stewardship in our community;
- To empower our communities with relevant skills and resources to conserve and protect our environment;
- To encourage and foster environmental and sustainable ethics and behaviour change amongst the community such as responsible waste and water management.

3. BEFORE GETTINGSTARTED

Applicants must familiarise themselves with the guidelines and application form, and they are encouraged to speak with the nominated environmental officer before applying to ensure the greatest chance of success.

To be successful, applicants must meet the requirements outlined in these guidelines.

The grant guidelines, application, and acquittal forms are available on the Council's website. Completed applications must be lodged by 5 pm on the advertised closing date by one of the following methods:

EMAIL enviroteam@mountisa.qld.gov.au

MAIL Environmental Grants Program
Environmental Service Unit,
Mount Isa City Council
PO BOX 815 Mount IsaQld 4825

IN-PERSON Mount Isa City Council
Administration Building
West Street, Mount Isa Qld 4825

3.1 Further information

Further information on EGP can be obtained by contacting the Environmental Services Team on 07 4747 3200 or enviroteam@mountisa.qld.gov.au.

3.2 Timelines

The EGP program will be offered annually. Relevant dates will be promoted on the Mount Isa City Council Facebook and on Councill website. The application must be postmarked by 5 pm on the closing date advertised.

Table 1 : Timeframe for Grants application

	Application Opening date	Application Closing date	Notification to Applicants
Round 1	First Day in February each year	First Council Business Day in March each year (minimum 4 weeks)	Within 1 week of April Ordinary Meeting

3.3 Funding amounts

The Environmental Grant Program has an available fund of $50,000. The maximum value available per project is $10,000. Grant funds are limited in individual amounts and the total funds available.

Funding is for programs and projects, including 'seed funding[1]' to cover the cost of the initial planning for larger projects.

3.4 Co-contributions

In a competitive grants process, co-contribution is strongly encouraged from all applicants. If the applicant is unable to provide co-contribution, a rationale must be provided in the application form. Co-contributions may be sought from additional partners or sponsors. In such cases, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that such funds are assured.

4. APPLYING FOR THE GRANT

All applications must be made via completing the *Environment Grant Program Application Form* by the advertised closing date. The forms will be available on the Council website and at the front counter at 23 West St, Miles End QLD 4825 (MICC admin building).

Applications will be evaluated on merit against eligibility and assessment criteria. Grants are highly competitive, therefore, although an application may meet the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria, funding is not guaranteed. Approval will depend on available funds, the quality of applications, and community needs.

It is recommended to provide clear aspects of the project planning and delivery. Applications should focus on the proposed projects and outline how a proposed activity will be carried out. Applicants are encouraged to attach the following documents (where applicable) to support their application.

[1] Seed funding is the first official equity funding stage. It typically represents the first official money that a business venture or enterprise raises. Seed funding helps a company to finance its first steps, including things like market research and product development.

4.1 Information about the project

- The need for the project and anticipated benefits (i.e., inclusion of a community benefit statement referencing the program objectives, how the project benefits and addresses the environment and/or sustainability
- A realistic and itemised budget including committed financial and/or in-kind support by the applicant, other grant agencies, or sponsorships;
- Letter of support from partnering and /or auspicing organisation;
- Quotes (minimum one quote for projects up to $1,500 and minimum two quotes for projects over $1,500);
- Master plans, site plans and/or photographs.

4.2 Information about the organisation

- A copy of the applicant organisation's Certificate of Incorporation or Certificate of Registration;
- A copy of the applicant organisation's Certificate of Currency (Public Liability Insurance) of at least $20 million;
- A copy of the organisation's audited financial statements for the past financial year;
- Landowner's written permission for the project. This includes Council-owned venues like parks, the Civic Centre, and Buchanan Park.

4.3 Grant process

The application process includes the following:

- Step 1: Applicant to define basic project concept and need in terms of community need and also how it will benefit and addresses the environment and/or sustainability, gain agreement from a relevant committee.
- Step 2: Applicant to contact Council staff to discuss details of the project and eligibility.
- Step 3: Applicant to seek relevant quotes and approvals. Develop a comprehensive project plan including scheduling, budgeting, deliverables, monitoring, and performance evaluation.
- Step 4: Applicant to complete application form and submit to Council with quotes attached and all supporting documentation.
- Step 5: Council staff to assess applications for eligibility and compile a shortlist.

- Step 6: Applications discussed and scored by assessment team.
- Step 7: Staff recommendation submitted to Council meeting.
- Step 8: Successful applicants notified and sent funding agreements for completion.
- Step 9: Application acquit funds and provide evidence as per funding agreement.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must be based within the Mount Isa City Council local government area.
The applicant should be delivering a project or activity that will benefit the wider community of the Mount Isa City Council local government area.

The following organisations are eligible to apply for the Environmental Grant Program:

- Be located within Mount Isa City Council government area;
- Are a legal not-for-profit organisation or community group– refer to Australian Taxation Office (ATO);
- Are a registered charitable organisation (i.e., an incorporated association, non-trading/non-distributing co-operative, and indigenous corporation)– refer to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC);
- Are a primary or secondary registered school or a registered childcare centre.
- Are an unincorporated body with an auspice (administrator);
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) (if applicable)
- Be financially capable of carrying out the project (financial statement to justify the capability).

5.1 Auspice information

An auspicing organisation is one that meets the eligibility criteria and agrees to support the application provided when a not-for-profit organisation is:

- Not incorporated; or
- Is not one of the other legal entities listed above.

If an application is successful, the auspice organisation will take full legal and financial responsibility for the delivery of this project and grant administration. The Funding Agreement will also need to be signed by the auspice organisation. Grant funds will be paid directly to the auspice, who must then pass the funds on to the organisation being auspices. To partner with an auspice, the following must be considered:

- Obtain approval from the proposed auspice before submitting the application;
- Ensure the auspice is involved in all applications and all project-related matters;
- Download the *Auspice Facts and Agreement format*. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the auspice agreement is completed, signed, and uploaded with the application.

6. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/ COMPONENTS

The EGP is seeking to support proposals that improve the health of the local environment. This includes sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, including energy, water, and material. This will enable community strengthening through awareness and education. The grants will be awarded projects that will deliver positive environmental outcomes with a focus on enhancing the local environment through sustainable initiatives, environmental management and conservation, environmental education, and community capacity building.

Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

1) Environmental Enhancement:
   - Revegetation with native plants;
   - Habitat improvement on public lands or community lands;
   - Provide support for Landcare initiatives;
   -

2) Environment or Sustainability Initiatives:
   - Sustainable food production (e.g., community garden);
   - Waste minimisation and waste management (e.g., recycling systems, worm farm, composting system);
   - Purchase equipment for environmental initiatives including local native plants, tree guards, materials that assist plant growth, weed control methods, tools and equipment to care for wildlife;
   - Energy efficient buildings, energy efficient lighting (e.g., Solar PV system installation, inefficient hot water system upgrades).

3) Environment management and conservation:
   - Pest control land used for community purposes;
   - Sedimentation reduction into waterways;
   - Flora and fauna protection and conservation (threatened species recovery, weed control);
   - Native fish restocking;
   - Improvement to native habitat, riverine area, waterways, and parks;
   - Habitat areas for native fauna species, e.g. bird boxes.

4) Environment education and capacity building:
   - Education and awareness on environment and sustainability;
   - An initiative that builds capacity and promotes best practice in the natural environment (e.g., workshops, networking events, training, and skills development)
   - Incorporation or establishment cost of environmental groups;

- Development of educational or capacity building materials (e.g., brochures, booklets, and other resources);
- Development of strategic or business plans, land management plans for community groups.

All project activities must comply with the latest health advice and government restrictions, as detailed on the following websites:
https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/

https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions

7. INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND COMPONENTS

The following are not eligible projects for funding under this grant:

- Projects or activities that occur outside the MICC LGA;
- The cost of Council services where fees are normally charged (e.g., Council rates, waste charges, building or planning permit fees, car parking fees, etc.);
- Requests for retrospective purchases or projects, or where activities commence prior to approval of an application;
- Fundraising events, prizes, gifts, awards, or sponsorship costs (such as trophies, medals, money, or vouchers);
- Political, gaming, or gambling activities;
- Projects and activities which could potentially commit Council funding on an ongoing basis (ongoing projects may be funded up to a maximum of three times);
- Projects and activities which have already received support from the EGP (ongoing projects/programs must re-apply);
- Removal of native vegetation or other environmental assets;
- Re-vegetation with non-indigenous plants;
- Works or equipment for landscaping without positive biodiversity benefits or outcomes;
- Upgrades to facilities where the sustainability outcomes or credentials are minimal or incidental;
- Events or initiatives that do not have a clear focus on environmental or sustainability outcomes.

In addition, the following components are also not eligible:

- Items already funded in other Council grants;
- Grant writer fees or auspice fees;

- Contingency costs;
- Repayment of debts and loans;
- Domestic or overseas travel costs;
- Purchase of equipment/service that benefits an individual;
- Funding for a staff or member social event or uniforms;
- Activities that could be considered core business or operational costs (including but not limited to: salaries or wages, rent or lease costs, fuel, accounting fees, and utility bills;
- Administration expenses (such as stationery, postage, or office supplies);
- Consumable items, including food, beverage, or catering;
- Training other than by an external provider (e.g., in-house training);
- Sponsorship or donation to other organisations.

8. ASSESSMENT

9. PROCESS

Applications will undergo a transparent evaluation process in adherence to the Environmental Grants Program Policy and the outcome will be decided by Council resolution. The Grant Assessment Committee will assess applications against the program objectives and selection criteria.

The assessment process considers 4 steps:

1) Acknowledgment: applicants will be notifying via email to confirm that the application has been received.
2) Eligibility Checks: applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria to determine their eligibility.
3) Internal Panel Assessment: eligible applications will be assessed according to the assessment criteria.
4) Council review and endorsement: funding recommendations will be reviewed by Council then endorsed.

10. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed using a weighted average scoring according to the assessment criteria listed below:

Table 2: Assessment criteria for scoring application.

Weighting	Criteria
30%	**Well Planned Project** **Evidenced by:** • Project rationale considering the need and reasons for doing it. Includes community benefit statement and grants objective statement. **Well Scoped Project and Sound Budget** **Evidenced by:** • Demonstration that the project is well planned and scoped. Where relevant project plans, risk management plans, required permits, and approvals should be provided. • Provision of a clear, well-balanced budget that details total project costs and all income sources relevant to the project. • Demonstrated capacity of the applicant organisation to support the delivery of the project. • Written quote/s for goods, services, and works that are part of a project. • Applicants leverage Council funding with substantial contribution to the funding of the project, cash at bank, and in-kind or donated volunteer time or materials.
20%	**Community Impact:** **Consider how the project will:** • Lead and support education for business and community to encourage sustainable practice. • Encourage and support local, sustainable food production. • Work with others to achieve better health outcomes for our community. • Harness community knowledge to drive sustainable change.
50%	**Environmental Impact:** **Consider how the project responds to the goals and strategic outcomes of the Mount Isa City Council Environment Management Plan 2020-2025** <u>Goal 1: Natural environment</u> • Restored healthy natural environment with sufficient long-term protection. • Reduced introduced pest species. • Increased biodiversity. <u>Goal 2: Waste minimisation</u> • The amount of waste being sent to landfills is reduce, reuse and recycling of material is increased.

	Goal 3: Water resources • The health of our waterways, riverine corridors and wetlands are maintained, valued, and protected as key parts of Mount Isa's ecology. • water is used more sustainably with best practice water reduction and water reuse principles included in everyday function. • The quality of water in the drinking water supply catchment is protected. Goal 4: Environment health • The environment enables a safe and healthier lifestyle for Mount Isa residents. Goal 5: Community engagement • Increased community connection with nature, which improved physical and mental wellbeing. • Increased implementation of environmental and sustainability initiatives. • Community-based environment and sustainability initiatives are encouraged and recognised.
TOTAL 100%	

11. FUNDING NOTIFICATION

10.1 Successful applicants

Successful applicants will be notified in writing within one week of funding recommendations being endorsed by Council resolution. Successful applicants will be sent an approval letter, a funding agreement, and an Acquittal report. Successful applicants must return the original Funding Agreement completed and signed by the specified date. Once the agreement is received, Council will send the funding within 30 working days.

10.2 Unsuccessful applicants

Not all applications will be successful due to the amount of funding available and competitive nature of the assessment process. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to reapply in the future and contact the Environmental Services Team for feedback.

The Environmental Services Team can be contacted on be on 07 4747 3200 or via email at enviroteam@mountisa.qld.gov.au.

10.3 Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with Mount Isa City Council. Funding agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms and conditions.

It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions in these guidelines before applying. No funding will be released until Council and the applicant have executed the funding agreement.

The funding agreement will establish:

- The terms and conditions of funding;
- The details of the activity;
- The deliverables;
- Acquittal, evaluation, and reporting requirements, and
- The schedule of payments.

10.4 Grant Payments

Grants payments are made to the applicant or Auspice upon receipt of a signed Funding Agreement from the applicant.

10.5 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

All funding amounts are GST inclusive.

A Tax Invoice is required before releasing any grants funds. The Environmental Services team will contact successful grant applicants to arrange this.

10.6 Variation to funded projects

Projects are funded for delivery as described in the Funding Agreement. Successful applicants must seek approval in writing from the Council if changes need to be made to the approved project. This includes delays to the original completion date or the ability to fully expand the grant funds within the agreed timeframes. The Council reserves the right to withdraw funding if the applicant is unable to confirm alternative arrangements within a reasonable time frame.

10.7 Acknowledgement

All successful applicants are required to acknowledge Mount Isa City Council in all published material and online communication associated with the funded project. Mount Isa City Council looks to actively promote the outcomes and accomplishments of grant-funded projects and may produce communications featuring the project.

The acquittal will ask for evidence of at least two examples of acknowledgement of Mount Isa City Council e.g., social media, letter, or newsletter to supporters or members, media releases, videos, signage, speeches, website, etc.

12. PROJECT REPORTING AND ACQUITTAL

The acquittal process is an instrumental part of the grant process and enables Council to continuously evaluate the success and delivery of the Community Environment and Sustainability Grants Program. Reporting and acquittal requirements will be outlined in the Deed of Funding Agreement. The obligations of the successful applicant include, but are not limited to:

- A summary of the project with feedback on the aspects that performed well and any learnings from the projects;
- Organisations will need to provide a financial acquittal within 6 weeks of the funded project's completion;
- Maintaining financial and progress records relating to the delivery of the project.
- Notifying Council if there are any changes to the project within the allocated funding period;
- Evidence that Mount Isa City Council was acknowledged in published material and online communications associated with the project.

13. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants who receive approved funding from the Council are subject to the following terms and conditions:

- All grant applications must be approved before any initiative or purchase is undertaken;
- Grants provided are to be expended on items as described in the application form and budget and not for any other purpose. To vary the purpose for the funds, written permission must be obtained in writing from the Council prior to spending the funds;
- The organisation will meet all reporting requirements;
- Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the Council's contribution to the initiative and must provide evidence of Council acknowledgement, e.g., Branding, Signage, etc;
- Successful applicants must spend their allocated funds within one year of receiving successful notification of grant or for projects which involve ongoing conservation, environmental, or sustainability work (e.g., tree planting is to be held within one year of receiving the grant, but ongoing maintenance is carried out after the initial year) unless their funding agreement extends beyond 12 months or otherwise negotiated;
- If a project is discontinued or the grant funds are no longer required, all funds must be repaid to the Council;
- Within 6 weeks of the completion of the project, the funded organisation must provide a completed Grant Acquittal Form and supporting material to Council;

- Failure to abide by the Terms and Conditions could jeopardise the chance of receiving further funding from Mount Isa City Council;
- Special conditions may be set by the Council as part of any grant offer.

14. PRIVACY STATEMENT

Any application for grant funding to Mount Isa City Council results in Council collecting personal information to assess the applications for eligibility. This is done for operational purposes of managing and allocating the funds available at the Environmental Grant Program.

All information will be treated as confidential. Therefore, it will not be given to any other person or unless express permission has been given, or in case required to by law. All information is handled under the *Information Privacy Act 2009.*

15. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can we get help in developing our project and completing the application?

A. Yes, you can make an appointment to see a Council Officer to discuss the application process and to identify alternative grant opportunities within MICC. if required, by contacting the Environmental Services Team via email enviroteam@mountisa.qld.gov.au or by phone 07 4747 3200.

2. What if our organisation doesn't have an ABN?

A. You can still apply, but you will need to provide us with a copy of the group or organisation Certificate of Incorporation together with a Statement by a Supplier form from the Australian Tax Office. The Statement by a Supplier form is available online at www.ato.gov.au/content/downloads/nat3346.pdf

3. Q. What if our organisation is not registered for GST?

A. You can still apply if your organisation is not required to be registered for GST, but GST will not apply to any grant allocated.

4. Q. What if our organisation is not incorporated?

A. You can still apply. The application must be made under the auspices of an incorporated organisation that will take full responsibility for the grant.

5. Q. Does my project need to benefit all residents of the Mount Isa Local Government Area?

A. No. As long as there is a project being delivered in the Mount Isa City Council Local Government area and there is a benefit to the community within this region.

6. **Q. Can I get funding for more than one year?**

A. You will need to apply each round, and there is no guarantee of repeat funding.

7. **Q. Can Council grant money be used to 'top-up' other grant funds?**

A. Yes. Council funds can be added to funding from other sources to enhance a project that meets the criteria in this guideline, or can be used as seed funding at the 'front-end' to develop project plans and fund application fees, etc.

8. **Q. If my application is unsuccessful, can I apply for the same project in another round?**

A. Yes. However, it is advised to seek for feedback to understand why the application was unsuccessful in the first instance.