



**COFFS HARBOUR**

**CITY  
COUNCIL**

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# Environmental Levy Grants Program Guidelines

[www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au)

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## 1 Introduction

Coffs Harbour City Council recognises the value and importance in providing an environmental program that offers and delivers opportunities to help sustain and improve the local environment. Funds are raised through a specific levy paid by Coffs Harbour ratepayers.

Council actively seeks ways to enhance the delivery of this program. These guidelines accompany the Environmental Levy Policy to assist in achieving the objectives outlined.

## 2 Objectives

The objectives of the Environmental Levy Grants Program are to ensure that:

- The allocation of Environmental Levy funds support the achievement of the MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan - A natural environment sustained for the future:
  - We protect the diversity of our natural environment (C2.1)
  - We use resources responsibly to support a safe and stable climate (C2.2)
- Council has an established framework to assist in the allocation of funding. This will result in direct benefits to the local environment and the wider community.
- Council has a consistent, equitable and transparent process to respond to requests by community organisations for the funding of environmental projects.
- Council assists in increasing the participation and accessibility for community organisations looking to improve and enhance the environment in the Coffs Harbour City Council area.
- An Environmental Levy Grant Program Panel is supported to enable effective assessment and allocation of funding, within the Environmental Levy Grants Program funding pool.

## 3 What funding is available?

As part of the overall Environmental Levy Program – funding is identified and allocated within two funding pools:

- Major Strategic Programs and Projects initiated through the Council's four year Delivery Program and receives a 75% allocation of annual Environmental Levy funds.
- Environmental Levy Grants Program (ELGP) funding pool made available to community groups and non-government organisations on an annual and/or bi-annual basis, and receives a 25% allocation of annual Environmental Levy funds.

The ELGP funds will be made available on application to fund community driven environmental levy projects. The Environmental Levy Grant Program Panel will consider all applications for funding in accordance with specific assessment criteria. Only projects that are closely aligned with the MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan's objective – A natural environment sustained for the future, will be considered.

Council will allocate the funds at the start of the financial year. Should all the available funds not be allocated in the initial round, a second distribution of funds may be offered. A second round of funding will reduce the term for project completion, as all projects must be completed within that financial year.

Minimum grants are from \$2,000 to a maximum of \$25,000 for the ELGP funding pool.

An organisation may make more than one application for funding for separate projects.

## 4 What projects could be eligible for funding?

As a community initiated project, Council will be seeking to ensure a commitment to the project by the community or non-government organisation, financially and otherwise.

For applications to be considered for assessment they must first meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Projects that align with MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan's objective – A natural environment sustained for the future.
- Projects that look to directly benefit the local environment.
- Innovative projects that serve community benefit.
- Projects on private land must have a "public benefit" rather than of benefit to an individual or individual group. This means that the benefit must be to others in the community; either the general community as a whole or a significant section of the community.
- Projects must be completed by 30 June with a final acquittal to be submitted by 31 July.

Note: If a project is approved in a 2nd round then these projects will have a reduced term for completion as all projects must be completed by 30 June.

## 5 What projects would be ineligible for funding?

Projects that would be ineligible for funding would be any project:

- Not located within the Coffs Harbour City Council local government area.
- Projects that cannot be completed by 30 June
- Where the funding component cannot be distinctly identifiable
- Where the results/outcomes of the project do not have a significant lifespan. This grant program is about providing for environmentally sustainable projects.
- Where the ongoing costs or maintenance burden to the community is assessed as being unacceptable i.e. proposals that may lead to a dependence on Council funds.
- Where community benefit cannot be identified or quantified
- Where funds or projects have commenced and the organisation is seeking a reimbursement of funds.

## 6 Who is eligible to apply?

The following bodies are eligible to apply:

- Any not-for-profit group, community group or voluntary association that is incorporated.
- Any unincorporated group where the grant amount is less than \$5,000.
- Any group or organisation that currently receives funding from Council, providing that they can demonstrate that the project that they are applying for is independent of any current funding.

Coffs Harbour City Council will only consider applications from groups that operate within acceptable community standards.

As a guide, eligible applicants are seen as those who:

- Can demonstrate the capacity to use the funds effectively for the benefit of the Coffs Harbour environment.
- Will be primarily responsible for the project and continue to maintain the project.
- Respond to a need that leads to tangible outcomes with environmental and social benefits.
- Are willing and able to meet performance measures that focus on outcomes.
- Assist a wider group in the community rather than individuals.

## 7 What will make your application ineligible for funding?

The following will render your application ineligible:

- Applications from groups and organisations which have not adequately fulfilled the obligations from previous Council grant programs or rounds.
- Applications from groups or organisations that are not current in their repayment of loans or funding from Council.
- Applications for projects that have been previously funded, unless the application is for funding for a new stage of your project.
- Applications for commercial activities.

The following costs are also ineligible for receipt of grant funding:

- Money already spent on delivering a project – retrospective costs that have already taken place or began prior to approval of the application.
- Recurrent operational costs (e.g. telephone, electricity, maintenance and public liability insurance, lease costs and accounting fees)
- Costs related to Council fees (e.g. Planning and Building Fees and associated State Government Levies)
- Administration costs (including newsletters)
- Fundraising activities
- Purchase of capital equipment

## 8 General Consideration for Projects

The following factors should be considered when determining whether a project is suitable for receipt of funding:

- Projects should have a community benefit that is clearly identifiable and where possible quantifiable.
- Projects funded must be distinctly identifiable, i.e. they must not be embedded so deeply into a project that you cannot specifically indicate what Council's funding was used for.
- Projects should align with the organisation's goals and strategic plans and not just be a 'good' idea.
- Projects must be completed by 30 June, with a final acquittal to be submitted by 31 July. Should a second round of funds be offered, it will reduce the term for completion, as all projects must be completed by the 30 June of that financial year.
- It is conditional upon receiving a grant under this program, that the successful applicant will assume all normal commercial responsibility including public risk and/or any other appropriate insurance cover for the project.

## 9 Assessment Criteria

The Environmental Levy Grant Program Panel will assess all applications and make recommendations to Council for funding based upon the criteria shown and displayed in the table on page 13, of these guidelines.

## 10 Application Process

The application process for the ELGP is as follows:

### Step One Requests for Applications

- Council will advertise in local media and on Council's website for applicants potentially seeking funding through the ELGP.
- Minimum grant is \$2,000 and maximum grant amount is \$25,000.
- Applications are to close 5pm Friday 16 April
- Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.
- For approved applications Council will allocate the funds after all relevant documentation is returned to Council in the specified time. Should a second round of funds be offered, it will reduce the term for completion, as all projects must be completed by the 30 June of that financial year.

### Step Two Submission of Applications

Upon receipt of the application the following process will be followed:

- Submitting an application does not guarantee funding and the assessment panel may recommend partial or no funding. You should not rely upon only one source of funding for your project as this will be taken into consideration with all applications.

- Application forms must be submitted no later than 5pm Friday 16 April. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted. Online application forms and guidelines are available at [www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/elgrants](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/elgrants)
- Once you have submitted your online application, you will receive an automatic response email to acknowledge receipt of your application.
- Applications will be assessed to ensure that all sections of the application form are complete. Ensure you provide any relevant supporting documentation, as the assessment panel will determine suitable projects solely upon what information has been provided in the application. Incomplete applications will be assessed accordingly and may not be successful.
- If the application complies with the ELGP's eligibility criteria, it will be assessed by the ELGP Panel.

### Step Three Assessment by ELGP Panel

- A recommendation to Council by the ELGP Panel will be based on the eligibility, merit of the project in accordance with the points scoring assessment and the ability of the applicant/organisation to manage the project. The application form includes the information required for this assessment.
- In the event of a member of the ELGP Panel having a conflict of interest in an application, they will take necessary steps to declare and manage the conflict in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.
- The process of consideration and determination may take up to 60 days from the date of submission of the application.
- All applications will be subject to the ELGP panel assessment.

### Step Four Council Approval or Decline

- If an approval is granted by Council, the applicant will be advised of the outcome in writing and Council will request.
  - An executed "Conditions of Funding Agreement" between Council and the applicant.
  - An invoice will be requested in order for Council to make the upfront payment in accordance with the mentioned agreement.
  - Public liability insurance (minimum \$20 million), personal injury income protection for volunteer insurance and/or any other appropriate insurance cover for the project. Council is to be noted as an interested party on all insurance certificates for the purposes of the grant.

**Council will require these items within 14 days of receipt of approval letter. Failure to do so, could result in loss of funding.**

- If the application is not approved, then Council will write to the applicant advising that the project was not approved. Unsuccessful applicants can re-apply in future rounds/years.

## Step Five Project Payment

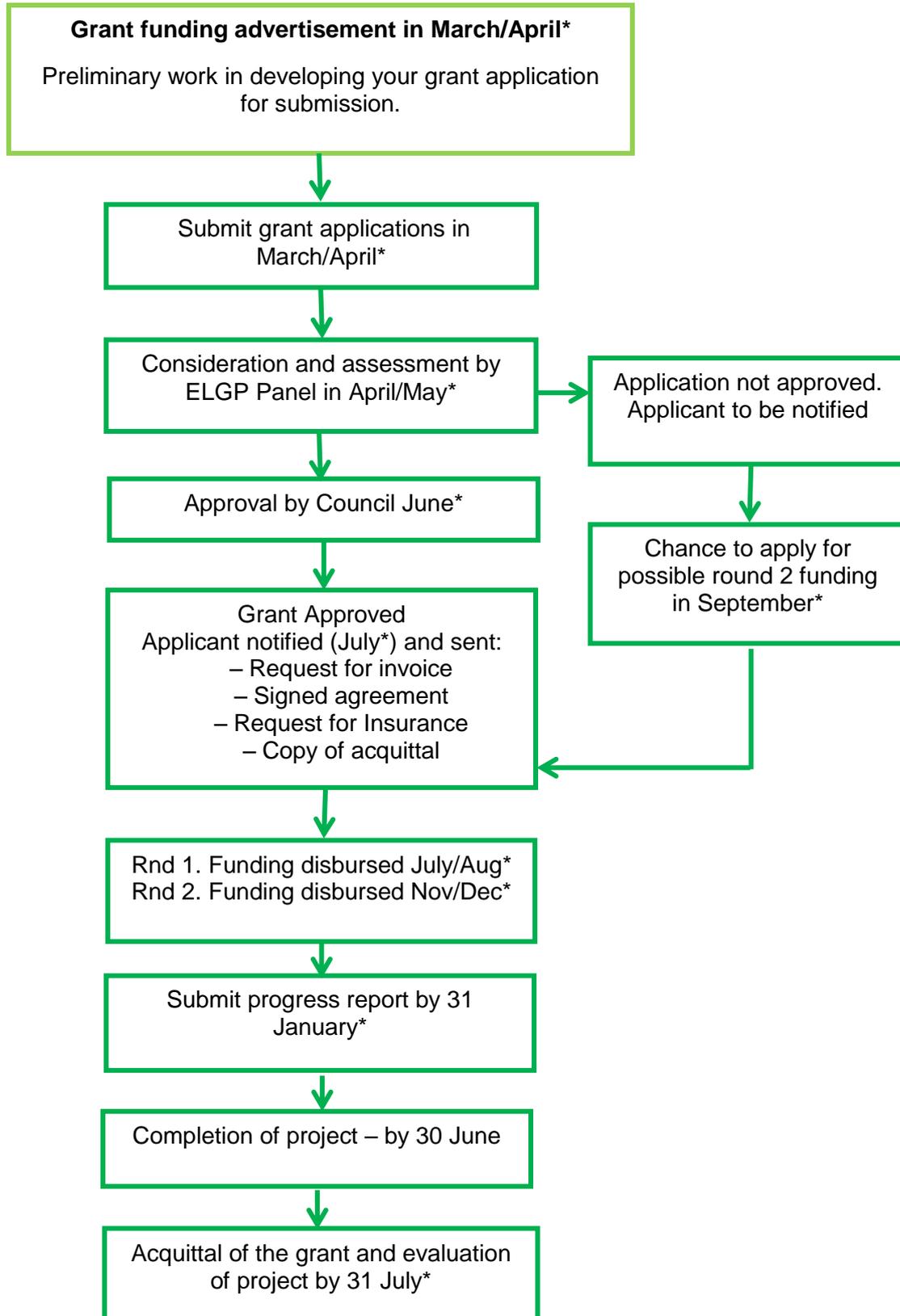
- Council will disburse the funds to the applicant, within 30 days of the receiving an invoice accompanied with the mentioned documents (in step four).

Note: If all grant monies have not been expended by the end of the financial year, then these funds will need to be returned to Council and identified on the final acquittal. The acquittal is due for all projects, by 31 July following the end of the financial year. These unspent funds will be added to the following year's ELGP funding pool.

## Step Six Project Completion and Acquittal – see attached annexure 3

- Successful applicant to complete the project by 30 June.
- Formal notification highlighting the completion of the project will be supplied by the applicant. This will be done by the completion of an acquittal form and will include actual financial expenditure, photos and project outcomes.
- A site inspection may be requested by a relevant Council officer.

## Application Process Flowchart



\*dates may vary due to unforeseen issues

## 11 Help, Advice and Additional Information

For help with completion of your application or any additional information you may have, please contact:

Grants Administration Officer

T: 6648 4278

E: [coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au)

### Taxation Information and the Impact of GST

Applicants should be aware of the Federal Government's Taxation requirements, including GST, Australian Business Number (ABN) and the implications that these may have on your project. Coffs Harbour City Council will not offer technical taxation advice to community organisations. Applicants are encouraged to seek independent professional advice.

For information and advice on whether you should be registered for an ABN, or for information on GST, please contact the Australian Tax Office Infoline

Australian Taxation Office

T: 13 28 66

W: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

## 12 Conditions of Funding for Successful Applications

Should an application be approved for funding, Council will provide the applicant with a "Conditions of Funding Agreement", which will include the following conditions:

Council requires the following conditions:

### 12.1 Conduct of the Project

- Completion of the project must be carried out in a diligent, efficient, effective manner and in good faith to a high standard, so as to achieve the project's objective.
- Prior to funding of the grant, the applicant must have in place public liability insurance (minimum \$20 million), personal injury income protection for volunteer insurance and/or any other appropriate insurance cover for the project. Council is to be noted as an interested party on all insurance certificates for the purposes of the grant.
- Your organisation is to ensure that all approvals required to complete the project are obtained prior to commencement of any works. This includes consultation with the relevant Council Departments, for specific Council related matters.
- Council requires that findings from research or testing projects are presented to Councillors in a briefing prior to public release.
- Council requires that all works are to be carried out in a safe work environment in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act, Regulations and Codes of Practice.
- Only licensed contractors are to undertake related works for the project. Council reserves the right to pre-approve contractors for the project.

- Any changes to the project that would result in the funding being expended for activities other than those detailed on the application may not be undertaken without prior written approval of Coffs Harbour City Council.
- Should your organisation cease to operate you are required to negotiate with Council to return the funding.
- All projects must be completed by 30 June in the financial year funding is received.

## 12.2 Records

- Your organisation must keep accurate records and accounts regarding each activity including receipts, proof of purchase and invoices and other documents to show how your organisation spent the grant funds for at least 7 years after the Activity End Date for that Activity (or any such longer period required by legislation).

## 12.3 Acknowledgement of Support

- The applicant agrees any promotional signs/material or general advertisement of the project, acknowledges that it is “an initiative delivered by Coffs Harbour City Council, as part of the Environmental Levy Grants Program”.

## 12.4 Financial Provisions

- That the funds provided must be used solely for the approved project.
- Formal advice of any unexpended funds is required and funds not expended for the purposes outlined in the application, must be returned to Coffs Harbour City Council.
- The successful organisation is required to issue Council with an invoice for the grant received. This invoice is to state the Australian Business Number (ABN) for the organisation and the name of the organisation.
- Council will provide the approved grant funds to the organisation, once the duly signed agreement and tax invoice are held by Council.
- Council may elect to fund the grant, in instalments where deemed appropriate.
- Allocation of funds to your organisation in any year should not be taken as a commitment for funding in subsequent years.
- The successful organisation is required to submit a half yearly progress report to Council by 31 January.
- Within three months of conclusion of the project, or by 31 July following the end of the financial year – whichever comes first, Council requires that the “Environmental Levy Grants Program Acquittal Form” is completed and returned to Council.

## 13 Assessment of the Application

All applications will be subject to the ELGP panel assessment which comprises:

- One Councillor (as chairperson)
- Two credentialed community members
- One credentialed Council staff member
- One interagency advisor.

They will take into account the environmental, social and strategic factors of the proposed project.

### Environment

Council will assess the merit of the project based on improvements and sustainable ecological benefits to the local environment. Council will also consider the location of the proposed projects in terms of community amenity and acceptance.

### Social

Applications for funding projects that also look to benefit the community directly will be considered favourably.

### Strategic Integration

Applications that align to Council approved action plans or displaying priority in a Natural Resource Management Strategy or plan relevant to the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area, will be considered favourably. Links to such strategies are shown below:

Coffs Harbour Biodiversity Action Strategy:

<http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/environment/Projects-and-Strategies/Pages/Biodiveristy-Action-Strategy.aspx>

Coffs Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan:

[http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/environment/our-coast/Pages/coastal\\_management.aspx](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/environment/our-coast/Pages/coastal_management.aspx)

Coffs Harbour Estuary Management Plans:

<http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/environment/our-coast/Pages/Estuary-Management-Plans.aspx>

Threatened Plants & Animals Resources:

<http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/environment/Plants-and-Animals/Pages/default.aspx>

## 13.1 Assessment Criteria and Scoring

Eligibility Criteria		Desired Outcomes of objectives			
<p>Does the project address one of the key objectives as defined by the MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan – <b>A natural environment sustained for the future.</b></p> <p><b>OBJECTIVES:</b></p> <p>1. We protect the diversity of our natural environment (C2.1)</p> <p>2. We use resources responsibly to support a safe and stable climate (C2.2)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Through collaboration, we protect and enhance our natural environment</li> <li>• We understand the challenges to our natural environment and act to mitigate them</li> <li>• Community involvement in actively protecting the natural environment is increased</li> <li>• We manage public access to natural areas to enhance environmental experience and preserve ecological values</li> <li>• Pollution from human activities is minimised</li> <li>• The environmental impact of agricultural production is minimised</li> <li>• Resource consumption is reduced and waste minimised</li> <li>• The use of renewable resources increases and the use of non-renewable resources decreases</li> <li>• As informed consumers, we reduce our impact on the environment without affecting quality of life</li> <li>• The reuse and recycling of resources increases</li> <li>• Water-use and water-cycle management is sustainable and meets current and future demand</li> <li>• We are adapting for climate change and we work collaboratively to mitigate our impacts</li> <li>• Our use of public transport increases</li> </ul>			
Assessment Criteria					
Protect and / or Rehabilitate the Natural Environment		Does the project protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment in accordance with a Council adopted policy or strategy. Please consider the physical environment (biosphere) as well as the atmosphere.			
Strategic Integration		Is the project directly linked to any of Council's relevant strategic documents – i.e Biodiversity Action Strategy, Coastal Management Plan and/or Estuary Management Plans and/or Threatened Plant and Animal resource document(s). See relevant links in the guidelines.			
Community Benefit		Will the project's results benefit the wider community, a small group of people or an individual? What is the extent of the benefit? Will the benefits be within the local area, the Local Government Area (LGA) or are they inter-regional? Is the benefit of short term or long term?			
Community Based		Is the project affiliated with/managed by an established community group?			
Attract Other Funding e.g. Matching Grants		Is the project likely to attract other funds? Does the proponent offer in-kind contributions? Would the project more appropriately be funded from other sources?			
Improve aesthetic quality of our natural environment and / or raise community awareness or education		Does the project improve the "visual" wellbeing of the natural environment, i.e. replacing weeds with native plants, revegetating areas, protecting existing vegetation? Does the project raise community awareness or seek to educate the community about the natural environment?			
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA					
MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan A natural environment sustained for the future		YES CONTINUE ASSESSMENT		NO FURTHER ASSESSMENT NOT REQUIRED	
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA					
Score Value	0	1	2	3	4
	No Value	Minimal Value	Good Value	High Value	Very High Value
Protect and / or Rehabilitate the Natural Environment	Project does not protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment.	Project will minimally protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment.	Project will have good outcome/s to protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment in one or more areas.	Project will have high outcome/s to protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment.	Project will have very high outcome/s to protect and / or rehabilitate the natural environment in multiple areas.
Strategic Integration	Project is not integrated into any existing Council Management Plan(s), Strategy or Resource document.	Project is not well integrated into any existing Council Management Plan(s), Strategy or Resource document.	Project has good links with existing Council Management Plan(s), Strategy or Resource document.	Project has high links with existing Council Management Plan(s), Strategy or Resource document.	Project has very high links with existing Council Management Plan(s), Strategy or Resource document.
Community Benefit	Project has no community benefit and very high individual benefit.	Project has minimal community benefit and high individual benefit.	Project has good community benefit and moderate individual benefit.	Project has high community benefit.	Project has very high community benefit
Community Based	Private venture with no community involvement.	Semi - private venture with minimal level of community involvement.	Good level of community involvement.	High level of community involvement with private /other organisation.	Very high level of community involvement responsible for the project.
Attract Other Funding e.g. Matching Grants	Project has no other funding and is solely dependent upon EL for all components.	Project has minimal value of other funding and is dependent upon EL for most components.	Project has good value other funding of in-kind and/or other financial contributions.	Project has high value other funding and is only partly reliant upon the EL and may attract other grant funds.	Project has very high value other funding and is likely to attract other grant Funds.
Improve Aesthetic Quality of Natural Environment and / or Raise Community Awareness.	Project is not going to improve aesthetic quality or raise community awareness.	Minimal improvement to aesthetic quality or community awareness.	Good improvement to aesthetic quality or community awareness.	High improvement to aesthetic quality or community awareness.	Very high improvement to aesthetic quality or community awareness.

## 14 How do I lodge an application?

Applications are to be submitted by completing the “*Environmental Levy Grants Program Application Form*” via the online form from Council’s website at [www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/elgrants](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/elgrants)

If you have any problems with the lodgement, please contact the Grants Administration Officer on 6648 4278.

Note: Applications received in hard copy or after the closing date will not be considered.

## Annexure 1 - Steps Prior to Lodging a Grant Application



## Annexure 2 – Environmental Levy Grant Acquittal

# GRANT ACQUITTAL - OUTCOME REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY GRANTS PROGRAM



Locked Bag 155, Coffs Harbour 2450  
Administrative Centre, 2 Castle Street, Coffs Harbour  
Email: [coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au) Phone: (02) 6648 4000 Fax: (02) 6648 4199  
Website: [www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au) ABN 79 126 214 487

### 1. Introduction

Coffs Harbour City Council requires that all recipients of the Environmental Levy Grants Program must complete a Grants Acquittal – Outcome Report and return to Council. This must be done within three months of conclusion of the project or by 31 July, whichever comes first.

Outcome reports are essential in maintaining accountability for the use of public funds. Failure to complete a satisfactory acquittal of the grant funds may jeopardise future funding applications.

Please ensure that all attachments required within the acquittal form are submitted, including reports and photographs.

It should be noted that Council reserves the right to print or publish information contained in this Grants Acquittal – Outcome Report for the purpose of promotion of the Environmental Levy Grants Program.

Should you require any assistance with completion of this report, please contact Council's Grants Administration Officer on 6648 4000.

Completed outcome reports and supplementary material can be:

**Emailed to:** [coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au)

Please retain a copy of your outcome report, for your records.

### 2. Organisation information - applicant and contact details

Name of organisation/group

Name and title of person completing the Outcome Report

Title of project

Commencement date of project:

End of project date:

### 3. Funding information

Grant funding provided:

Funding amount used:

Is there any funding to be returned to Council

 Yes  No



## 5. Actual project costs

Summary of total project costs	\$
Materials (to be purchased or donated)	\$
	\$
	\$
Equipment (please specify where applicable)	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Plans / specifications / engineering	\$
Compliance / approvals	\$
Professional labour (e.g. tradespeople)	\$
'In-kind' labour (at \$45.10 per hour)	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Insurance	\$
Other	\$
	\$
<b>Total project cost</b>	<b>\$</b>

## 6. Actual Project Funding

Environmental Levy Grant Funding	\$
Cash contribution	\$
Other grant income (please provide details)	\$
Sponsorships (please provide details)	\$
Donated materials or equipment (please provide details)	\$
'In-kind' labour (at \$45.10 per hour)	\$
Other	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>Total project funding</b>	<b>\$</b>

## 7. Evaluation of grant process

How would you rate the grant process?

Very poor

Poor

Satisfactory

Good

Very good

Would your organisation apply for a grant under the Environmental Levy Grants Program again?

Yes

No

Would you like to make a comment about the grant program and provide any suggestions?

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## 9. Privacy Advice

The personal information that Council is collecting on this application and in any information submitted with the application is personal information for the purposes of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA).

The supply of personal information requested on this report is voluntary and if it is not provided, Council may be unable to process the report.

The individual to whom the personal information relates, may request Council to make appropriate amendments to ensure that their personal information is accurate, and having regard to the purpose for which the information is collected (or is to be used) and to any purpose that is directly related to that purpose, is relevant, up to date, complete and not misleading.

Council will not use personal information for any other purpose for which it is collected, without seeking the consent of the person to whom it relates, or as required by law.

This report with supporting information will be retained in Council's Records Management System and will be disposed of in accordance with the Local Government Disposal Authority.

Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision making processes. The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 requires Council to provide public access to information held unless there are overriding public interest considerations against disclosure. Your application will be made publicly available unless you can demonstrate that the release of part or all of the information would not be in the public interest. However, Council would be obliged to release information as required by court order or other specific law.

## 8. Certification and undertaking

I certify that all details supplied in this grant acquittal / outcome report and in any attached documents are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the grant acquittal / outcome report has been submitted with the full knowledge and agreement of the applicant group/organisation.

I understand that Coffs Harbour City Council may request further information in the acquittal of this grant.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### OFFICE USE ONLY

#### Assessment Outcomes

ECM record number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date report received: \_\_\_\_\_

Further information requested: \_\_\_\_\_

### Table of Amendments

<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Authoriser</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>
Section 12.1 Additional requirement for research or testing projects	Mark Griffioen	Approved	15/03/2022
Update Section 12.4, add 2 <sup>nd</sup> last bullet point	Council resolution	2019/193 – guidelines updated in line with adopted Environmental Levy Policy	14/11/2019