

Biodiversity Grant

Scheme Criteria 2024-25

Please read this information prior to completing your application.

Introduction

Ashburton District is rich in biodiversity that forms the district's natural identity and local environment. Protecting this environment requires protecting the processes which ensure its continuing survival – an important function of biodiversity.

Council recognises the importance of indigenous biodiversity to the district and the shared responsibility it has with the community to ensure it is sustained and enhanced, both now and into the future. Council provides annual biodiversity grants through two contestable grant application processes held in August and February of each financial year.

Purpose

The purpose of the Biodiversity Grant Scheme is to assist projects that aim to protect and/or enhance biodiversity in the district.

Grant Eligibility

All Biodiversity projects **must** meet the following criteria:

- Aim to protect, maintain and/or restore biodiversity.
- Be within Ashburton District boundaries (between the Rakitata (Rangitata) and Rakaia Rivers').
- Applications must be from individuals, Businesses, Trusts and Societies, Schools, Clubs and Landcare and Catchment Groups. Applicants must provide landowners' agreement if making the application on behalf of a landowner.

Assessment Considerations

- The degree to which the project will improve, protect, benefit, enhance, restore or reinstate indigenous biodiversity;
- The biodiversity values of the area to which the project relates, including such things as representativeness, distinctiveness, rarity, and long term sustainability;
- The degree of current risk or threat to the biodiversity values being restored, enhanced, protected or maintained as a result of the project;
- Evidence of the applicant's commitment to the project, particularly if it is a long term project;
- The degree of on-going and legally binding protection provided to the project site-
- The use of eco-sourced native plants for planting projects.

Funding

The maximum individual grant available is \$7,500 and can be no more than 50% of the total project cost.

The applicant's share of the project's costs includes volunteer time, donated/gifted goods and services and/or financial contributions. Volunteer time shall be estimated using the minimum wage at the time of the application.

All grants must comply with Council's Community Grants and Financial Assistance Policy.

Funding Priority

The fund is contestable and each application will be assessed on its merits on a case by case basis. Council will prioritise applications that meet one or more of the following funding priorities:

- Projects that will achieve positive biodiversity outcomes.
- Sites that have been the subject of an ecological assessment by a suitably qualified ecologist or biodiversity specialist;
- Sites that have ongoing and legally binding protection, such as a QEII open space covenant;
- Sites within areas of significant conservation values (ASCV) in the District Plan;
- Projects with a purpose of habitat protection or restoration;
- Initiatives or projects that will enhance environmental education or school programmes in the District.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be:

- Based in the Ashburton District.
- Applications from a national organisation must be made from the local branch of that organisation.
- Applications will only be accepted on the **completed** Biodiversity Application form.
- Incomplete applications that do not provide all of the requested information will be excluded from funding assessment.

Ineligible Projects

The following projects are **ineligible** for Biodiversity Grant Funding:

- Purchasing of capital items such as motorbikes, trailers, spray units, and tools;
- Projects that generate profit or are for commercial gain;
- Projects which are required by or are the responsibility of a government agency.
- Projects that have been completed at the time of application. Retrospective costs incurred in delivering the project cannot be funded.
- Maintenance of existing fences.
- Planting projects using exotic plant species.

Funding Agreement

Successful applicants must complete and return a funding accountability form on the completion of the project, and within the financial year which funds were granted.

Receipts are required for all expenditure.

Applicants that do not return a completed accountability form will not be eligible for future Council grant funding.

Disclaimer

The final funding decisions are made at the discretion of Ashburton District Council. Successful applicants' project details may be used for publicity purposes and all funded projects will be mapped on Council Biodiversity GIS page.

Application Dates

The Biodiversity Grant is available through two contestable grant application processes held in August and February of each financial year.