

Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Program Guidelines

About the Program

Tweed Shire Council's Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants 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.

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.

All funded projects are to be completed by the end of the financial year in which they are awarded. See www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture-farming for applications opening and closing dates.

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 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 sections of the *Application Form* (if required our Sustainable Agriculture Staff are available to help you complete the written application).
4. Ensure you have supplied quotes for ALL goods and services that you are seeking funding for AND provide any quotes for goods and services you 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. Be willing to work with Council staff in the delivery of the project.
7. Commit to delivering the project and improving farming practices beyond the life of the grant.

Eligible activities

Some examples of eligible activities include:

- 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 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.
- Assistance controlling foxes and feral cats in high priority areas.
- 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, leaky weirs, 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.

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 will meet one or more of the program objectives.
- Extent to which the project enables transfer of knowledge and lessons learned to other farmers.
- Feasibility of the project, and the extent to which the project will deliver clear, measurable outcomes.
- 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

You can apply by completing the application form online. Simply visit Council's website at www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/agriculture-farming. Sustainable Agriculture staff are available to assist with filling out the application form if you have technical or accessibility concerns. Applications must also include copies of quotes for the proposed works. Quotes are to be addressed to Tweed Shire Council in the event that the grant is successful.

Contact the Sustainable Agriculture Program on (02) 6670 2400 if you would like to discuss your application before you lodge, or you are having difficulties with the online form.

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.

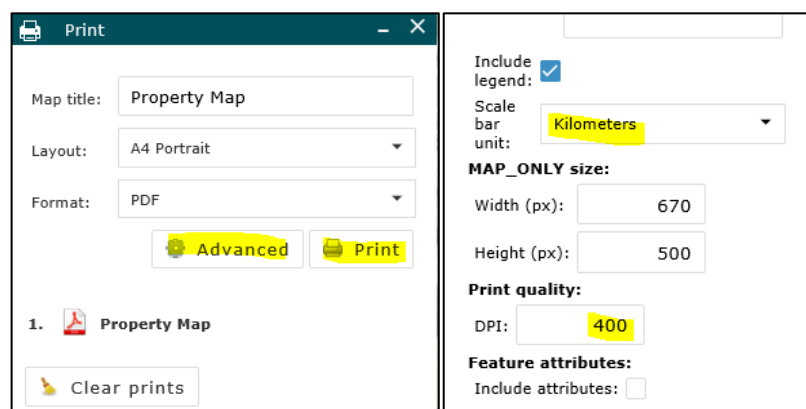
In addition to your site plans, you may also wish to include photos of the project area.

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 cattle and will be using biological controls for pasture weeds as part of an integrated pest management trial. Grant funds are sought to purchase fencing materials as well as biological control agents for pasture weeds.

The farmer is going to pay a fencing contractor to install the permanent fencing, apply the biological controls and monitor (with support from Council's Sustainable Agriculture Program) any changes in pastures and weed abundance.

In-kind and cash contributions provided by the applicant:

Activity	Descriptions	Cost	Grant funded or applicants contribution
Fencing for rotational grazing	\$5/m x 500m electric fencing materials	\$2500	Grant funded (two quotes attached)
Biological control	Weed control	\$1500	Grant funded (quote attached)
Fencing installation by contractor	\$5/m x 500m	\$2500	Applicants contribution (quote attached)
Application of biological control	\$60/hr x 16 hrs inc. machinery costs	\$960	Applicants contribution (In-kind)
Weed surveys before and after	2 transects (one per treatment and control plot), 1 hr/transect x 2 people x \$30/hr x 2 surveys (before and after).	\$600	Applicants contribution (In-kind)
	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS SOUGHT	\$4000	
	TOTAL IN-KIND/CASH	\$4060	