



GREATER BENDIGO RURAL REGENERATION GRANTS

PROJECT GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Greater Bendigo Rural Regeneration Grants program aims to assist farmers and lifestyle property owners to implement best practice sustainable land management that benefits the farm, community and the environment.

Farmers and landholders in the City of Greater Bendigo are encouraged to submit an application for projects that manage environmental problems or improve the health and productivity of their landscape.

A limited amount of funding is available. Grants will be awarded through a merit-based, competitive process. The eligibility criteria is outlined within these guidelines. Applicants can apply for up to \$2,000, matched by the applicant's contribution.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the program are to:

1. Support and promote the adoption of sustainable and regenerative land management practices.
2. Assist farmers and other land custodians to prepare their properties to be 'climate ready' and resilient in the face of climatic changes.
3. Increase biodiversity and improve water quality and soil health on-farms.

To be eligible, the project needs to meet at least one of these objectives.

FUNDING

Grant recipients can request up to **\$2,000** per year for a project that meets the Program Objectives.

Grant recipients need to co-contribute **50% of the total project cost**. For example, an applicant might request \$1,000 funding for a \$2,000 project, or \$2,000 for a \$4,000 project.

Total project costs can be greater than \$4,000, but the **maximum funding for the grant available is \$2,000**.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who is eligible to apply?

The applicant must be a landholder, or a group of landholders located in the City of Greater Bendigo in one of the following planning zones:

- Farming zone
- Rural conservation zone
- Rural living zone*

* Priority will be given to properties greater than 20ha in size.

Eligible property types may be:

- Farming enterprises* (i.e. operated for commercial primary production), such as:
 - Livestock, including sheep, cattle, alpaca etc,
 - Cropping and horticultural enterprise
 - Artisanal agricultural enterprises i.e. small scale production of a boutique product (honey, garlic, olives, wine etc.)
- Properties that are managed for hobby/lifestyle purposes, or for environmental purposes, such as equestrian enterprises, hobby farms and bush blocks

* Priority will be given to properties that are operating as a farming enterprise.

The proposed project must be situated in the City of Greater Bendigo local government area.

If you are not the land owner (i.e., you are renting or leasing), you may apply, but you must have written consent from the land owner to proceed with the works.

If the project requires a permit to proceed, you must have the permit reviewed and returned to the City and the appropriate authorities before submitting the grant.

Project eligibility

- The project must meet one of the project objectives and refer back to it in their application
- Applicants must make a co-contribution of at least 50% of the total project cost (an exception will be considered for applications from First Nations community members)
- Quotes must be provided for all goods and services. Screenshots from websites and Excel spreadsheets will not be accepted. Only the estimated cost of the service provided from a business on letterhead will be accepted
- All parts of the application form must be completed and submitted by the due date. **No late or incomplete entries will be accepted**
- The applicant must commit to delivering the project within 12 months
- The applicant must provide a report to the City at the end of the 12 months to acquit the project
- The applicant may reapply each year with an additional project, if all previous projects have been fully acquitted

What types of projects can be funded?

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

- Installation of fencing to address land degradation concerns or improve water quality, livestock health and biodiversity, such as:
 - Investment in movable fencing to support rotational grazing practices or restrict livestock to restore degraded areas
 - Animal exclusion fencing for high biodiversity areas
 - Animal exclusion fencing for riparian zones
- Installation of reticulated watering systems in order to restrict animal access to dams
- Emission reduction projects such as solar pumps that replace existing petrol or diesel pumps
- Revegetation of paddocks, dams and other areas using indigenous and/or beneficial pollinator plants to provide a wildlife corridor or to develop a riparian zone. If you need advice on appropriate plants for your region, please refer to [Indigenous Plants of Bendigo](#) on the City website for a list of local revegetation nurseries
- Release of beneficial organisms such as dung beetles, predatory organisms or other biological controls
- Control of declared noxious weeds or high threat environmental weeds. If you need advice on weed management for the region, refer to the [North Central CMA Weeds Identification Guide](#)
- Control of declared pest animals such as rabbits and foxes
- Monitoring and evaluation (i.e. soil tests and water testing)

If the landholder has a project that is not listed here, please submit it and it will be assessed.

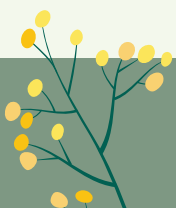
Who is not eligible to apply?

Community groups or organisations, or any individual with an overdue acquittal from a previous City grant.

What projects will not be funded?

Examples of projects that will not be funded include:

- Projects that occur outside the City municipal boundary
- Applications seeking retrospective funding and projects that have already been completed before submitting the application
- Projects where the applicant is contributing less than 50% of the project cost (an exception will be considered for applications from First Nations community members)
- Projects cannot be used to purchase inventory items such as livestock and machinery (i.e. things that can be on-sold for a profit)
- Projects cannot be used to create/progress a native garden
- Projects that do not progress sustainable land management outcomes, such as removal of native trees or native vegetation or the planting of non-indigenous plants
- Natural disaster preparedness works i.e. fire breaks



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (CONT.)

Assessment criteria

Funding decisions will be informed by:

- The co-contribution proposed. Applications with a high co-contribution will be highly regarded, as this demonstrates high value for money
- The longevity of the project outcome. Projects that support long term sustainable land management outcomes will be highly regarded
- If the project applicant is actively farming, these will be prioritised. Farming enterprises may include livestock, cropping and horticultural enterprises, and artisanal agricultural enterprises i.e. small scale production of a boutique product (honey, garlic, olives, wine etc).
- If the project applicant identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or culturally and linguistically diverse, preference may be given

If previous projects under this or related grant programs have not progressed according to their original time frame, the application will be given less priority.

Applications are assessed and prioritised by an assessment panel of two senior City staff that includes agriculture and biodiversity experts. Recommendations are submitted to the Manager of Climate Change and Environment, who provides the final approval of projects to be funded by the City.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the application process? How do I apply?

Complete an online application form through SmartyGrants. This requires access to a computer, the internet and an email address. If you do not have access to these, contact the City's Agribusiness Officer on 1300 002 642.

- **Step 1** - Go online to SmartyGrants by following the link at the City of Greater Bendigo website
- **Step 2** - Create a login to access the application form. Login to SmartyGrants using an existing account, or 'Register a new account'. This is a free user account. You will need to use your email address as a username, then create a password. Please ensure that you record your login details. Once registered, you can then login and start an application. All of your future forms will also be stored in the Smarty Grants portal
- **Step 3** - Preview the form if you want to review the questions before you start
- **Step 4** - Select Start a New Application when you are ready to begin SmartyGrants allows you to save your progress. You can return to your application to complete sections and to upload supporting documents

SmartyGrants will not accept applications with incomplete sections. No late applications will be accepted.

What if I don't have access to a computer or an email address to use smarty grants?

Landowners who have difficulty with the application process can contact the City's Agribusiness Officer for assistance on 1300 002 642.

Landowners are welcome to discuss their project with the City's Agribusiness Officer prior to applying, however this is not a mandatory requirement.

How do I know when the Greater Bendigo Rural Regeneration Grant open?

The opening dates of the grant will be published on the City's website. We may also advertise in local newspapers and newsletters. You can also stay in touch by subscribing to the [Environment Matters e-newsletter](#)

How much funding is available?

Applicants can apply for up to \$2,000 per project. Applicants should demonstrate co-contribution for each project (an exception to the 50% co-contribution will be considered for applications from First Nations community members).

Applications from farming enterprises, and properties that are greater than 20ha in size will be prioritised.

What if I need to change my original application, due to extenuating circumstances?

Requests to change your project should be submitted in writing to the City's Agribusiness Officer before commencing the changes. Please submit requests to change the project to agriculture@bendigo.vic.gov.au

If I am unsuccessful in year one, can I apply again?

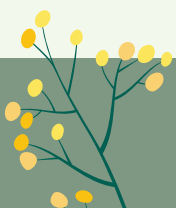
Unsuccessful applications will not hinder future applications. If you are unsuccessful, you will receive a letter from the City outlining why, and please apply in future years.

GRANT CONDITIONS

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement and adhere to the conditions of the agreement
- Spend the grant money as stated in the original application. Approval for proposed variations must be sought in writing via the Agribusiness Officer and permission received, prior to committing to changes
- Obtain all necessary approvals (e.g. permits or other statutory requirements) associated with your project. Failure to do so will result in the funding being delayed or stopped

Further information is outlined in the terms and conditions.



EXAMPLE PROJECT AND BUDGET

Objective of the project: Increase biodiversity, improve water quality, and soil health on-farms

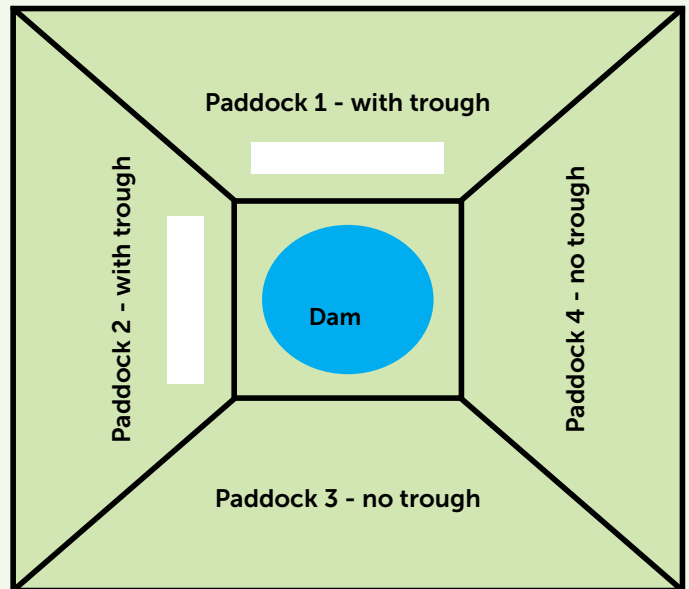
Scenario: A farmer in Heathcote is seeking to exclude their stock from an open dam on their property. They hope that over time this will increase water quality, water security and support biodiversity on their property as the area is revegetated over time.

Two of the paddocks surrounding the dam have troughs, but two do not, so the farmer has historically left the animals to have free access to the dam so that they always have access to water, no matter what paddock they are in. As they have two existing troughs, they already have a solar pump and tank to connect the troughs to.

The farmer has found that their stock having open access to the dam has led to increased turbidity and nutrient growth in the water. Animals also restricted the growth of vegetation because they tend to congregate around the dam, and so they trample and graze the edges, and pug up the dam walls during dry times as the dam evaporates, leading to erosion.

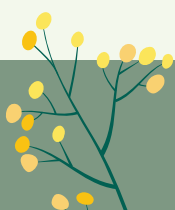
Their aim for the project is to install a trough in the two paddocks without a trough surrounding the dam. This farmer has an existing fence, so can begin excluding stock as soon as the reticulated watering system is underway.

The farmer expects that some natural regeneration of the area will occur over time, but will also commence a regeneration project to plant native trees and shrubs around the dam. This will provide windbreaks, shade and reduce evaporation from the dam, as well as providing a habitat for wildlife. They will also plant dense rushes and sedges to improve the dam's water quality and habitat values.



Grant funding expenses (what items will the grant pay for?)	Dollar figure
Supa Poly Trough x2	\$1,120
Poly fittings – 3-way joiner	\$120
Poly fittings – elbow x2	\$80
Poly fittings – stop tap x3	\$90
Tubestock of indigenous vegetation, including trees, sedges and shrubs x250	\$437.50
Total grant	\$1,847.50
Co-contribution from grant applicant	Dollar figure
Soil testing	\$160
Weed matting (2000mm x 100mm rolls) x4	\$1,000
Bamboo stakes (100 stakes per pack) x6	\$600
Mallee carton cardboard tree guard x2	\$270
Total co-contribution	\$2,030.00
Total project	\$3,877.50

In kind contribution cannot be counted as part of the grant.



For more information, contact the City's Agribusiness Officer on 1300 002 642 or at agriculture@bendigo.vic.gov.au