

Overview

Biolink funding

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has \$80 000 budgeted to support biolink projects in 2020-2021 and is seeking applications for projects aligning with the objectives and actions of the Mornington Peninsula Biodiversity Conservation Plan.

Eligibility

Incorporated bushland friends groups, landcare groups, and other interested community groups working to contribute to on-ground biodiversity outcomes through biolinks on private and/or public land are invited to apply.

Assessment

The Shire has developed a biolink decision support tool with help from members of landcare and friends groups which will provide the key mechanism for assessment of applications through a feasibility checklist in the pre-selection stage and a comprehensive set of criteria for project assessment including criteria for site values and suitability, community and economic considerations, feasibility and effectiveness, and monitoring and reporting.

Funding Support

The Shire may provide either direct funding or in-kind support such as plants and materials for revegetation to successful projects as appropriate to the project.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

Details

Background

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is committed to working in partnership with other stakeholders to support community aspirations aligned with adopted Council strategies and policies.

The Biodiversity Conservation Plan adopted in 2019 has the vision that:

“The Mornington Peninsula’s biodiversity is healthy, valued and protected”.

The Plan contains six strategic directions highlighting the main areas of focus:

1. Engaging with the community and building stewardship
2. Facilitating biodiversity conservation on private land
3. Protecting biodiversity through planning and policy
4. Building a strong knowledge base
5. Demonstrating and leading best-practice land management
6. Building ecosystem resilience in a changing climate

One action is directed to supporting biolinks:

Action 6.2: Provide ongoing support to the community in planning and developing biolinks on the Mornington Peninsula:

- a) Develop a decision tool for the prioritisation of biolinks, that integrates natural landscape links and considers the social, environmental and economic values of different options, to assist with biolink planning;
- b) Provide advice, technical and on-ground support to the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network for the delivery of their biolinks plan; and
- c) Provide overall co-ordination of biolink planning across the Peninsula.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

What is a biolink?

Habitat loss and fragmentation are key threats to biodiversity in Victoria. For native wildlife, vegetation clearance not only results in less habitat being available; remaining habitat is frequently fragmented, degraded and less connected across the landscape.

Wildlife populations can become isolated in fragmented habitats, if their movement capabilities and dispersal are restricted, leading to increased vulnerability and reduced long-term population viability. A biolink, also known as a habitat corridor, links separate habitat patches and aims to support biodiversity by:

- reducing fragmentation by building upon and ultimately connecting habitat patches that have been subdivided, reduced and/or isolated
- providing habitat for wildlife that can persist in narrow corridors, or use them for foraging, breeding or sheltering
- providing pathways for individual animals to move between patches
- facilitating genetic exchange between populations in isolated habitat patches, therefore reducing their risk of local extinction
- enabling recolonisation of patches where species are locally extinct; and
- enabling species to disperse to areas with more suitable climatic conditions in the face of climate change.

Biolinks have been found to effectively increase movement between patches for a broad range of species. Species that cannot move through unsuitable habitat or that rely upon metapopulation dynamics to recolonise habitat following population declines, are thought to benefit considerably from biolinks.

Connections between habitat patches can also help to maintain species richness and can also act as habitat themselves.

While groups of species that can move through unsuitable areas surrounding habitat patches (the “matrix”), such as birds, may not rely upon biolinks for dispersal, they may still benefit from additional foraging and sheltering resources.

For a list of references that support the above explanation please refer to the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

General Eligibility Criteria

Minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for funding under the Mornington Peninsula Shire Grants Policy:

- It is the Shire's intention to ensure funds are available to assist as many eligible groups as possible therefore only one application per incorporated organisation can be accepted. Exemptions are for auspice organisations applying for multiple organisations and cluster management organisations for different sites
- All projects, programs and activities nominated in the application must take place within the Mornington Peninsula Shire Local Government area
- The organisation/applicant must have an adequate level of public liability insurance
- The organisation/applicant must have acquitted or is compliant with all grants previously awarded by Council
- Eligible organisations must be an incorporated association (registered by Consumer Affairs Victoria), cooperative community group and be a not-for-profit organisation (registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission) based in the Mornington Peninsula Shire's Local Government area. Smaller community groups without incorporation status are able to be auspiced by an eligible organisation. An auspice form must be completed with the application. The organisation that agrees to auspice another group must be involved in the conduct and financial management of the project for which a grant is being sought;
- Council does not fund individual applicants unless otherwise stated in the specific criteria. If eligible, the applicant must be a resident of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Local Government area
- The organisation/applicant must not be in debt to the Council, have any outstanding commitments with the Shire and be able to provide an ABN, GST and not-for-profit status.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

Ineligible for Funding

The following areas are considered not eligible for funding and will not be considered by the Assessment Panel:

- Projects and activities held outside of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Local Government area;
- Organisations not located within the Local Government area of the Mornington Peninsula Shire. An exception would be if an organisation is assessed as delivering significant services that directly benefit the community, or they are auspiced by an incorporated organisation located within the Shire's Local Government area;
- Applications for core business activities for which an organisation is already funded by Government;
- Projects/events already funded by another Mornington Peninsula Shire grant stream and/or sponsorship program;
- Ongoing, repeat activities in the same place;
- Costs such as utilities (electricity, gas and water), staff wages, rent/room hire, travel or private expenses or insurance;
- Politically based organisations or those who operate principally as a lobby/pressure group;
- Organisations that operate on a commercial and/or 'for profit' basis or are unable to provide satisfactory evidence of their not-for-profit status;
- Festivals – a separate scheme exists for festivals through the Shire's Community Events Grants. Projects may still be considered under the Community Grants Program if the public outcome is part of an event, launch or placemaking;
- Groups previously funded who have failed to comply with the financial (acquittal) and project evaluation;
- Requests for contributions toward major capital work projects should be referred to the Shire's Capital Works program;
- Requests for funding that would otherwise be covered by insurance;
- Appeals, donations, campaigns and generals fundraising;
- Applicants in receipt of gaming machine revenue;
- Projects which have occurred prior to a funding decision; and
- Proposals from current Mornington Peninsula Shire Councillors, employees and contractors.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

Application Process

Applications must be submitted online via the 'Apply Now' button on the relevant grant stream web page at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Grants-Awards>.

- Register at <https://morpen.smartygrants.com.au> to prepare an application online;
- Specific criteria to be addressed will be on the application form;
- Complete and submit the application and any additional documentation as necessary; and
- Applications received after the closing date will not be eligible for consideration and there will be no appeal process for late applications.

Do not start a project that depends on a grant until all relevant parties have agreed and accepted the grant conditions and the Mornington Peninsula Shire has evidence of such acceptance on file. Grant funding will not be made retrospectively.

Assessment Process

- An eligibility check is conducted following submission of the application and progressed to the Assessment Panel after the closing date;
- Applicants may be requested to provide additional supporting information to assist with the assessment of their application;
- The Assessment Panel will make site visits to evaluate and score applications using the Biolinks Decision Support Tool;
- Where an amount requested is more than the funding pool allocation, Shire officers may be required to reduce the funding amount requested to meet the broader community's needs;
- The Biolinks Decision Support Tool's ranking will determine the successful applications and a briefing will be provided to Council Meeting advising of the final decision; and
- All applicants will be notified in writing of the Assessment Panel's decision.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>

General Assessment Criteria

Biolink projects will be assessed by the Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects developed by Ecology Australia which included involvement of members of landcare and friends groups.

Project proposals will be initially checked through our feasibility checklist also prepared by Acology Australia.

Post Grant Report (Aquittals)

A report and photographs, with consent from individuals in pictures, is required within 8 weeks of the completion of the project. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility for future grant applications.

Projects unable to be delivered within the 12-month timeframe must seek an extension from the Team Leader – Natural Systems. All requests must be in writing.

Applicants will receive a reminder email prior to the acquittal due date.



This document is to be read in conjunction with the Ecology Australia report: A Decision Support Tool for Biolink projects on the Mornington Peninsula and the Biolink decision support Tool provided at <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/>