

OVERVIEW OF THE HUTT CITY BIODIVERSITY FUND

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND?

Hutt City Council has a fund available to assist Lower Hutt landowners who want to protect, enhance, and manage indigenous biodiversity on their properties.

A broad range of activities, such as pest control, weed control, revegetation planting and more, can be supported by Hutt City Council supplying materials, expertise, or labour. Larger projects can be supported by Council contributing financially to an agreed project plan. Properties just need to meet some basic criteria to be eligible.

Hutt City Council acknowledges that landowners often have deep knowledge of their land and have thought hard about how to manage biodiversity problems. If you have an interest in developing a project plan or a property management plan to protect biodiversity on your land, Hutt City Council can help with that, too. Having project plans and property management plans will make it easier for you to make biodiversity gains and streamlines applications for financial support.

2. FUND DETAILS

Hutt City Council has set aside funds till the end of the 2021/22 financial year that will be made available as grants to landowners to assist them to protect, enhance and manage indigenous biodiversity on their land.

Grants will be made available to landowners in two tiers:

2.1 TIER ONE

Maximum council contribution is \$1,000, which may be provided as delivery of service or materials, or as a rebate for work done. This grant can also be used to develop project management or property management plans, which are required for Tier Two grants below.

2.2 TIER TWO

Maximum council contribution is \$20,000 for projects/properties with a suitable management plan. A plan includes a project overview with targets/aims, a project timeline, and measurable outcomes as progress indicators. Exceptions may be made for larger proposals that have exceptional biodiversity impacts. Once a project is completed, an agreed project completion report should be sent to Hutt City Council.

Fund applications are open from **Monday 15 June to Friday 31 July 2020**. Applications will be assessed by Hutt City Council's Ecology Advisor and Tier 2 applications grants will also be assessed by an Indigenous Biodiversity Fund Working Group.

3. AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must be the owner of the property on which the activity is to be carried out, and must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. the activity area contains or adjoins areas of indigenous vegetation greater than one hectare
- b. the activity area contains or adjoins wetlands, waterways or waterbodies
- c. the activity area contains or provides habitat for organisms that are Threatened, At Risk, or Data Deficient in the New Zealand Threat Classification System by Te Papa Atawhai, Department of Conservation (their documents can be searched here: <https://nztcs.org.nz/>)
- d. Tier Two applications require a property management plan or a project plan.

The funding is not intended to support the following activities:

1. Projects that are created to comply with Resource Consent or other consent conditions
2. The planting of exotic or non-local vegetation, or nursery cultivars.
3. Major changes to the activities in the application may require a new funding application at the discretion of the Hutt City Council Ecology Advisor.

4. HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING?

The fund is open for applications twice a year: in April and November. Please note that in 2020 application dates have been altered due to the impacts of CoVID-19.

The next round of applications will be open from **Monday 15 June to Friday 31 July 2020**.

Application forms will be made available on the Hutt City Council website when applications are open.

Please contact the Indigenous Biodiversity Fund Administrator for an informal chat about your project and how the fund may be able to assist, or by emailing Biodiversity@huttcity.govt.nz.

5. HOW ARE APPLICATIONS ASSESSED?

All applications will be initially processed by the Hutt City Council's Ecology Advisor and Tier 2 applications grants will also be assessed by an Indigenous Biodiversity Fund Working Group. Hutt City Council may contact the applicant for further information if required. If applications for funding exceed the annual availability, applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be prioritised in the following ways:

1. For maximum **protection** of *Threatened, At Risk or Data Deficient* species
2. For maximum **protection** of ecosystems in wetlands, waterways or waterbodies with **high quality** biodiversity
3. For maximum **protection** by area or linkage, of **high quality**, existing indigenous biodiversity
4. For maximum **enhancement** of ecosystems in wetlands, waterways or waterbodies with **medium quality** biodiversity
5. For maximum **enhancement** by area or linkage, of **medium quality**, existing indigenous biodiversity
6. For maximum **enhancement** of ecosystems in wetlands, waterways or waterbodies with **low quality** biodiversity
7. For maximum **enhancement** by area or linkage, of **low quality**, existing indigenous biodiversity.

6. WHAT CAN THE GRANT BE USED FOR?

Although the fund can be used for any activities that support indigenous biodiversity, below are some examples of the types of activities that Hutt City Council expects.

Pest Plant or Animal Control

- Traps, poisons
- Herbicide
- Biodegradable mulch
- Animal exclusion fencing

Revegetation

- Eco-sourced native plants
- Materials, consumables or supplies for eco-sourced native plant propagation

Biodiversity Plans

- Property Management Plans
- Project Management Plans
- Assistance in transitioning to Conservation Covenants

Physical Labour

- Labour contributions are eligible as a project cost as part of the applicant's contribution
- Vehicle expenses are eligible as part of the applicant's contribution
- Contractor costs (e.g. for weed control)

Other activities may be considered for support at the discretion of Hutt City Council.

It is very important to keep proof of expenditure in the form of receipts and/or invoices matched to proof of payment for all project costs.

7. HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS WORKING?

After one year of operation, a review of the operation and performance of this fund will be carried out. This will include information requested by recipients of grants, to understand whether the grant system is achieving its aims and whether amendments need to be made to increase the effectiveness of the programme.

Recipients of grants are invited to provide feedback on improvements to the programme and areas that are working well.

8. WHAT DO MANAGEMENT PLANS LOOK LIKE?

Project and property management plans make it easier to optimise activities for indigenous biodiversity and other outcomes. Both types of management plan have a lot of similarities but usually differ in the context of their application.

8.1 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLANS

A Property Management Plan is an over-arching document that describes the goals for the management an entire property. A Property Management Plan identifies the vision for an entire property and how to overcome the obstacles to achieve it. It will have a description of the background/history, maps, a list of challenges, a list of projects, and in some cases a timeline of achieving the projects. Property Management Plans may contain one or more projects that could each have a Project Management Plan.

8.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLANS

A Project Management Plan identifies the vision for a part of property and outlines how to overcome the obstacles to achieve it. It will have a description of the background/history, maps, a list of challenges, a list of projects, and in some cases a timeline of achieving the projects.