

Department of Planning and Environment

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Greening our City Grant Guidelines

Greening our City program – 2022 grant round

October 2022



Photo: David Finnegan



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Introduction

The Department of Planning and Environment is inviting local councils across Greater Sydney to apply for grants to fund tree-planting and green cover projects under the \$10 million 2022 Greening our City grant round. This is the fourth round of funding under the Greening our City grant program.

The Greening our City program supports the NSW Government's commitments to increase tree canopy and green cover in Greater Sydney. This includes a commitment to increase Sydney's tree canopy cover to 40% by 2036 and to plant 5 million trees in Sydney by 2030.

The program also contributes to broader government commitments outlined in documents such as the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the Greater Cities Commission's Six Cities Discussion Paper. These documents identify the need for our cities and urban environments to be greener and more sustainable in response to the increased environmental risks posed by climate change.

Grant funding will support projects that increase urban greening in areas with low canopy cover and high urban heat. Projects will align with outcomes being delivered under the Greener Neighbourhoods Program. Enhanced urban greening means more shade, cooler suburbs and more beautiful places to live and work.

The 2022 grant round follows the success of 3 previous grant rounds in 2019, 2020 and 2021 that have funded the delivery of 110 tree-planting and demonstration projects. These projects will result in over 90,000 trees being planted in areas where they are most needed, creating greener, shadier and more attractive suburbs across Sydney.

Greening our City program

The Greening our City program seeks to mitigate the impacts of urban heat and climate change by increasing Sydney's urban tree canopy and green cover. The program focuses on delivering grants, partnerships, community engagement campaigns and other activities to promote urban greening outcomes. The Greening our City grant program is a central component of program delivery, recognising the critical role local councils play in expanding urban greening and building resilience to climate change.

The program is funded through the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund, which was established to address the impacts of climate change, encourage energy and water saving activities and increase public awareness and acceptance of climate change.

Greening our City grant program objectives

The objectives of the Greening our City grant program are to:

- enhance Greater Sydney’s urban tree canopy and green cover, particularly in areas with low canopy cover
- help prepare for climate extremes and mitigate urban heat islands through tree planting and other green cover initiatives to cool urban areas and provide shade
- promote partnership projects between local and state governments, organisations, industry, the private sector and the community
- support projects that demonstrate a commitment to canopy expansion, including improved outcomes for health, resilience and climate adaptation.

Previous Greening our City grant rounds

Table 1. Results from previous grant rounds

Round 1 – 2019	Round 2 – 2020	Round 3 – 2021
<p>5 Million Trees grant round</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 councils awarded funding • \$5.3M in funding awarded • 32 tree-planting projects • 21,000+ trees planted 	<p>Greening our City grant round - Cooler Suburbs and Green Innovations</p> <p>\$10.2M in total funding across 50 projects in 2 streams</p> <p>Stream 1: cooler suburbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8.1M in funding awarded • 29 councils awarded funding • 38 tree-planting projects • 48,000+ trees planted <p>Stream 2: green innovations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.1M in funding awarded • 10 councils were awarded funding and one regional organisation of councils • 12 demonstration projects • 8 of 12 projects focused on Western Sydney 	<p>Greening our City grant round – Cooler Suburbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 councils awarded funding • \$9.9M in funding awarded • 28 tree-planting projects • 21,000+ trees planted

Benefits of trees



100,000 trees can provide **\$1.45 million** worth of **electricity and water savings** every year



A 10% increase in street tree canopy can **increase the value of a property** by an average of **\$50,000**



Trees provide urban animals with **food and habitat**



Trees can **filter pollutants from stormwater** through their canopy, trunks and roots



The shade trees provide can **reduce temperature**, with every 10% increase in tree canopy reducing temperatures by 1.13 °C



Trees are good for wellbeing – hospital patients with a view of greenery recover faster than those without



Grant round overview

Purpose of funding

The 2022 Greening our City grant round is helping deliver the NSW Government's ambitious target to plant 5 million trees by 2030 and expand canopy coverage across Greater Sydney. This grant round will help local councils undertake priority tree-planting and greening projects in their local government areas, with a focus on cooling and greening streets, parks and active transport routes and aligning with outcomes being delivered under the Greener Neighbourhoods Program.

While trees and canopy continue to be the key element of the grant program, this round will allow funding for green cover as part of tree-planting projects. We will evaluate the success of this component to determine if the approach can be expanded to future grant rounds.

Projects funded under this program will provide vital shade that reduces ambient temperatures for local communities and will help mitigate the urban heat-island effect.

Available funding

Up to \$10 million is being made available through the 2022 grant round. This funding will be available to eligible local councils through a competitive grant process.

There is no requirement for matched funding from councils for this round. However, councils are encouraged to provide matched funding (cash and/or in-kind) to improve value for money. There is a minimum grant funding amount of \$50,000 (ex GST) per application, with no maximum grant amount.

Eligible councils

All councils in the Greater Sydney region are eligible to apply. Program funding is attached to the Greening our City program. It is therefore limited to the Greater Sydney region.

Eligible councils are:

Bayside Council	Blacktown City Council	Blue Mountains City Council
Burwood Council	Camden Council	Campbelltown City Council
City of Canada Bay	Canterbury-Bankstown Council	Cumberland City Council
Fairfield City Council	Georges River Council	Hawkesbury City Council
The Hills Shire Council	Hornsby Shire Council	Hunter's Hill Council
Inner West Council	Ku-ring-gai Council	Lane Cove Council
Liverpool City Council	Mosman Municipal Council	North Sydney Council
Northern Beaches Council	City of Parramatta Council	Penrith City Council
Randwick City Council	City of Ryde Council	Strathfield Council
Sutherland Shire Council	City of Sydney	Waverley Council
Willoughby City Council	Wollondilly Shire Council	Woollahra Municipal Council

Councils outside of Greater Sydney and Regional Organisation of Councils are **not** eligible to apply.

Timeframes

October 2022: Applications open

November 2022: Applications close

December 2022: Assessment of applications

December 2022: Application outcomes

February 2023 to March 2023: Agreements signed, and milestone 1 payments made

March 2023 to March 2025: Project delivery

April 2025: Program evaluation

Funding opportunities

Desirable projects

The 2022 grant program is seeking projects that:

- enhance Greater Sydney's urban tree canopy and green cover, particularly in suburbs with low tree canopy cover
- mitigate the impacts of urban heat
- create greener and cooler local streets and improve local amenity
- apply Greener Neighbourhood Guide canopy targets (or council targets where available) in streets and open spaces (may include partnership/engagement with utility providers)
- embellish active transport routes, particularly routes prioritised by councils or the NSW Government
- are identified as priority actions in council strategic plans (such as urban forest strategies, street tree master plans and Local Strategic Planning Statements)
- are designed primarily around tree planting, noting that supporting green cover may be considered for funding
- promote the establishment of newly planted trees and green cover to ensure the longevity of the planting
- promote partnership projects between state and local governments, organisations, industry, the private sector and the community.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for funding, applications must:

- be submitted by an eligible council
- have minimum grant amount requested of \$50,000 (ex GST)
- have written endorsement from the council's General Manager (or equivalent)
- include tree planting as a central component of the project
- demonstrate alignment with one or more of the following:
 - Greener Neighbourhoods Program
 - Local Strategic Planning Statements
 - Climate Change Fund objectives

- Greater Sydney District-specific priorities outlined in the Greater Sydney Region Plan and supporting District Plans
- be completed within 24 months (with a following 12-month establishment period)
- allocate grant funding to eligible works only.

Eligible works

The following capital works items are eligible for grant funding under this program:

- tree and green cover planting on council-owned or council-managed land
- street tree and green cover planting
- tree and green cover planting in new and existing open space areas such as corridors, parks, plazas, car parks, roads and pocket forests
- tree and green cover planting undertaken as part of community tree-planting programs
- infrastructure that supports tree and green cover planting projects, such as:
 - tree pits
 - soil/mulch
 - structural soil cells or similar
 - root barriers
 - active, passive and smart irrigation
 - rain gardens
 - drainage
 - tree guards
 - root ball support
 - other protective measures.

Ineligible items

The following items are not eligible for grant funding under this program, but can be funded by councils and included as their in-kind contribution:

- bush regeneration / revegetation works
- direct funding of personnel or staff positions
- planning and strategy projects
- retrospective works or activities
- community tree giveaways.

Application requirements

Number of applications

We encourage councils to combine similar projects into one application. Each council can make multiple applications, provided each application meets the eligibility criteria. Each application will be assessed individually against the assessment criteria.

Council endorsement

The council's General Manager (or equivalent) must approve the application before it will be considered. This is a mandatory step in the application process. This approval is required as the council will be the responsible entity to manage the funding agreement, budget and reporting.

If you cannot get General Manager approval before the grant application deadline we will accept applications with approval from a director with an appropriate level of financial delegation via the grant application portal to meet the grant submission deadline.

The General Manager or equivalent must then approve the application by email to Local Government NSW at GreeningOurCity@lg.nsw.org.au or provide a signed letter of support within one week of applications closing. If General Manager approval is not provided within that timeframe, we will deem the application ineligible.

Commitment to tree health

Councils must commit to establishing and providing long-term maintenance for all trees and green cover planted under the program.

Projects must demonstrate that there is a reliable water supply to the newly planted trees during the 12-month establishment period. We encourage applications that propose to incorporate efficient water supply, planters, products or systems that enhance water efficiency/retention (especially during establishment) or water-efficient technologies such as recycled water or stormwater.

Ability and capability to deliver within the timeframe

Councils must demonstrate that they can deliver projects within 24 months of execution of the funding agreement. They must also show that they can maintain any trees planted for a subsequent 12-month establishment period.

Applicants are responsible for outlining the necessary labour, equipment and materials, management and supervision to complete the project. This should include how the council is seeking to leverage existing resources and efficiencies. This may require applicants to work cooperatively with the community and relevant government agencies.

Community engagement

Applications must demonstrate how the community will be engaged and involved during the delivery of the project.

Delivery of tree canopy and/or green cover expansion

Projects must demonstrate the extent of impact they will have on local tree canopy and urban greening. The Greener Neighbourhoods Guide lists data and evidence that can be used to measure canopy cover and set targets.

Useful resources

We will make several useful resources available on the Greening our City website. This includes links to current canopy cover and heat data sets, strategic planning guidance offered under the Greener Neighbourhoods Program and water efficiency advice.

Assessment

Assessment process

The department will assess applications as follows:

1. Applications will be reviewed to determine their eligibility.
2. Eligible applications will be assessed by an assessment panel against the criteria in the 'Assessment criteria' section of these guidelines. The panel will be convened following departmental guidelines. The assessment process will be observed by an independent probity adviser.
3. The assessment panel will recommend projects for funding and the Minister for Planning will make final decisions regarding funding allocations.
4. All applicants will be notified by email or letter of the assessment outcome.

Distribution of funding

The allocation of funding will prioritise suburbs with lower canopy. Each project will be assessed on its merits by the assessment panel. The outcomes of this assessment will be compared with projects in similar canopy ranges to determine the recommended funding allocation.

Assessment criteria

Table 2. Explanation of criteria used to assess funding applications

Criteria	Weighting	Assessment criteria
Merit	50%	<p>Clear vision and need for the project</p> <p>Demonstrated alignment with the grant program objectives</p> <p>The existing urban tree canopy cover, urban heat-island levels and heat vulnerability levels of the suburb/s of the tree-planting project</p> <p>Demonstrated alignment with NSW Government or council strategies/priorities to increase urban greening or amenity, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local urban forest strategies, street tree masterplans, Green Grid strategies, etc. • canopy targets included in the Greener Neighbourhoods Guide or other council plans or policies • council active transport plans or NSW Government prioritised routes (e.g. those that have received funding under the Get NSW Active grant program) <p>Prioritisation of trees in the project, the total number of trees and green cover to be planted and the proposed canopy and green cover increase</p> <p>Methodology to ensure the 12-month establishment period of the trees, including commitments to put measures in place to ensure the efficient supply of water for the establishment period</p> <p>Quality of project evaluation methods</p>
Engagement	10%	<p>Strategies for ongoing engagement of the community and participants</p> <p>Consideration of community expectations and how these will be addressed</p>
Viability	20%	<p>The project is well planned with appropriate risk management in place</p> <p>Realistic project scope, resourcing and timelines to complete the project</p>
Value for money	20%	<p>Detailed and realistic budget relative to the scale and impact of the project</p> <p>Value for money, including co-contributions (cash and in-kind)</p> <p>Appropriate use of public funds and provision for contingencies</p> <p>Adequate insurance and other liabilities</p>

How to apply

The application process is as follows:

1. Visit the website at dpie.nsw.gov.au/greeningourcitygrants.
Read the information about the grant program to determine if you are eligible.
2. Read these grant guidelines.
Familiarise yourself with the grant program requirements.
3. Complete and submit the application by 11.59 pm (AEST) on Monday 21st November, 2022.
Follow the instructions on the website.

Applicants must:

- answer all questions in the application portal
- attach copies of plans/reports referred to in your application. Attach only relevant pages or sections, not reports in their entirety.
- provide General Manager (or equivalent) written endorsement at the time of application or within one week of applications closing.

Applications must also satisfy the grant criteria and applicants must accept the conditions outlined in these guidelines.

Advice and guidance

Local Government NSW can provide information on the interpretation of these guidelines, including the types of projects eligible for funding and the application process.

To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff will not be able to edit or correct any applications but can provide feedback if your application is unsuccessful.

For assistance, contact the Local Government NSW Greening our City project team on:

- greeningourcity@lgnsw.org.au
- (02) 9242 4042

Detailed or project specific questions are to be submitted via email. General enquiries can be made via email or phone.

Requirements for successful recipients

The following section applies only to those councils that are advised that they have been successful in receiving grant funding. It provides an overview of the key requirements for grant recipients in delivering their projects under this program. Details will be confirmed within the funding agreement.

Signing the funding agreement

Grant recipients must arrange for the General Manager (or delegated authority) to sign the funding agreement and return it to the department or Local Government NSW for countersigning. No work is to commence until the funding agreement is signed by all parties.

Project launch and promotion

Grant recipients are not to publicly announce the project until advised by the department.

The Minister for Planning and a member of the Resilience and Urban Sustainability Division of the Department of Planning and Environment must be:

- invited to attend any formal launch event (including commencement and completion ceremonies)
- advised 4 weeks before any formal event
- acknowledged for their contribution on all communications and media for the project.

Further details, including acknowledgement of funding, will be detailed within the signed funding agreement.

Payment of grants

Payments of grants will be made at the completion of key milestones, with timing and phasing to be confirmed in the signed funding agreement.

Councils must submit a final project report and invoice as part of the final payment claim. The report must outline the process and outcomes achieved by the project and be accompanied by the tree management plan for a 12-month establishment period for plantings. This should include a commitment to ongoing maintenance of all trees planted as part of the project. The final payment will be subject to the satisfactory completion of the project, demonstrated within the final project report.

Tree management plan and establishment period

Councils must commit to a 12-month establishment period following grant project acquittal to maintain trees and green cover planted.

A tree management plan will be required for all plantings to demonstrate how trees and green cover will establish and grow successfully and how water will be used efficiently throughout the project. The timing of this document will be detailed within the funding agreement.

Registration of trees

Trees and green cover planted by this funding must be provided as spatial data as part of the final report. In addition, all trees planted by councils since the inception of the Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney program (April 2018) that have not been funded by any Greening our City grant must be registered with the department to show the council's and participants' contribution to collective tree-planting targets.

Communication

We expect that grant recipients will maintain regular communication with Local Government NSW. It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to alert Local Government NSW to any issues or risks to the delivery or completion of the project at the first available opportunity.

Reporting and monitoring

Grant recipients must submit project progress and final reports as per the reporting schedule within the signed funding agreement. An indicative reporting schedule is provided below.

Milestone 1

- Completed project plan and budget
- Signed funding agreement
- Invoice 1

Milestone 2 – midway progress report

- Progress update
- Financial report
- Tree management plan
- Invoice 2

Milestone 3 – final report

- Progress and evaluation report

- Financial report
- Shapefile showing locations and details of trees and green cover
- Invoice 3

Reports should include photographs and other evidence of progress, as detailed in the signed funding agreement.

Project management

We ask councils to nominate a project manager and to notify Local Government NSW in writing of any changes in project management. Councils are responsible for project management and budgetary control.

Project completion

Projects must be completed within 24 months (excluding an establishment period for tree planting) of the date of all parties signing the funding agreement. Due to funding constraints, it is unlikely that we will grant variations to extend the time of projects.

Insurance requirements

Organisations applying for funding via this program must have a minimum public liability insurance cover of \$20 million.

We recommend that applicant organisations have personal accident and professional indemnity insurance. However, this is not a condition of funding. Organisations that employ staff must comply with the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* (NSW).

Disclaimer

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The costs of preparing an application are borne by the applicant.

Privacy policy

Local Government NSW and the department will collect and store the information you voluntarily provide to enable the processing of your grant application.

Any information provided by you will be stored on a database that will only be accessed by authorised personnel and is subject to privacy restrictions. The information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected.

Local Government NSW and the department are required to comply with the NSW *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988*. Minimal personal information is collected to enable us to contact an organisation and assess the merits of an application.

Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied in applications are aware that the information is being supplied to Local Government NSW and the department and how this information will be used.

Definitions

Establishment period

The establishment period for trees and green cover is the 12 months following grant project acquittal. During this period, councils must ensure the tree and green cover are watered and managed to maximise its survival and ensure it grows successfully. Councils must commit to ensuring every all planting under this program will have a 12-month establishment period.

Green cover

For this grant round, green cover includes plants and shrubs of less than 3 m in height at maturity, including within planter boxes. It does not include lawn, turf or any planting on rooftops and podiums.

Tree

For the Greening our City program, a tree is a tall, long-lived, woody plant that casts shade and provides a cooling effect.

Tree management plan

Councils must provide a tree management plan that demonstrate how trees and green cover will establish and grow successfully and how water will be used efficiently throughout the project, including during the establishment period.

Urban tree canopy

The urban tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches and stems of a tree that provide coverage of the ground when viewed from above. It refers to trees on public and private land within urban areas and comprises a variety of tree types such as exotics, deciduous trees, and evergreens.