

Open Spaces Program

# Places to Play

Grant Program Guideline 2022/23

November 2022

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# Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

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**Published by NSW Department of Planning and Environment**

[dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Title: Places to Play

Subtitle: Grant Program Guideline 2022/23

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Artwork (above) by Nikita Ridgeway

Cover photograph: Boronia Park BMX by Matthew Duchesne

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Adventure play</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Nature and water play</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Program objectives</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Funding and eligibility</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Assessment criteria and process for the grant program</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Application process and timeframes</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>How to apply</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Program management</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix A: Grant application checklist</b>	<b>13</b>



# Introduction

The Department of Planning and Environment is inviting councils and eligible NSW Government agencies to apply for funding to help create inclusive adventure playspaces.

The program will also contribute to achieving the Premier's Priority to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023.

Places to Play grant funding is part of the Open Spaces Program, and includes a \$16.7 million investment over 3 years to support access to innovative adventure, water and nature playspaces for people of all ages and abilities across NSW. This can include:

- New and improved open spaces that facilitate adventure sport and recreation (such as mountain biking, scooter and skate places, pump tracks etc).
- Nature and water play for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, promoting connection to nature.
- Providing outdoor recreation spaces for young people in areas where these facilities are in high demand but where there is an under supply.

The program builds on the principles of the Everyone Can Play program and promotes the creation of inclusive public open spaces across NSW.

Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$500,000 for adventure, nature and water playspaces.

# Adventure play

Adventure play is increasingly popular and demand is growing for spaces that support adventurous activities such as mountain biking, BMX, and skateboarding.

The 2019 Greater Sydney Outdoor Survey and initial findings coming out of the 2022 NSW Regional Outdoor Survey highlights the increasing need for a variety of recreation activities, reflecting the diverse communities across NSW.

Places to Play is about providing access to activities that have previously been considered extreme sports in public open spaces.



Tumalong Park - Destination NSW

# Nature and water play

Nature and water play can help make playspaces welcoming, comfortable, interesting and diverse.

## Nature play

Nature play has emerged over the last decade as a critical type of play experience for children, significantly improving their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Society has become increasingly disconnected from the natural environment, which can have a negative impact on our mental and physical wellbeing.

Playing in natural environments regularly has been identified as important in growing children's resilience, self confidence, initiative, creativity and more. Connection with nature is also known for reducing stress and anxiety in people of all ages.

Nature playspaces are environments that include predominantly natural materials, such as plants, trees, rocks, logs, sand, mulch and water, often combined with custom play equipment to provide a variety of experiences.

## Water play

Water is a particularly powerful element, due to the many ways it can be enjoyed and the soothing sensory effects it can have.

Playing with water can be magical. In warmer months, water play areas also become a way of cooling down and appreciating being outdoors, despite the heat.

Water makes playspaces more interesting and distinctive by drawing on local stories and unique characteristics of place.

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# Program objectives

The objectives of the Places to Play program include:

- creating innovative and inclusive open spaces that promote play
- demonstrating how to apply the Everyone Can Play principles to the creation of adventure, nature and water play areas
- supporting investment in the creation of high quality, inclusive public and open spaces to create a lasting community benefit
- supporting community health and wellbeing in rapidly growing communities.
- addressing critical shortfalls in freely accessible public places
- contributing to the post-pandemic economic recovery of NSW through the creation of jobs, stimulating businesses and the recreation and visitor economy
- contributing to the delivery of the NSW Premier's Priority for Greener Public Spaces by increasing the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10% by 2023.



Photograph – Department of Planning and Environment

# Funding and eligibility

There is a total of \$5 million in funding available for 2022/23 through the Places to Play program.

The Department invites all NSW councils and eligible NSW Government agencies to submit an application. Eligible NSW Government agencies include infrastructure agencies who own and manage the public open space

Places to Play is a competitive grant program, and while matched funding is not a requirement, projects that include a financial contribution from council and/or from other grant programs will be prioritised.

## Projects can include inclusive:

- water and nature playspaces
- mountain biking tracks and supporting infrastructure
- scooter and skate places and supporting infrastructure
- pump tracks and supporting infrastructure
- other spaces/facilities that offer inclusive adventure play in line with the program objectives and criteria.

Projects funded through the 2022/23 grant program must be delivered by June 2024, and be freely available to the community upon completion. Projects must be located on land that applicants own or are responsible for managing. If the applicant is not the land owner, submissions must include a letter of support from the land owner. For more resources to support your application, visit the Open Spaces Program web page.



Photograph - Department of Planning and Environment

## Ineligible projects

The following projects and works are not eligible for funding:

- projects outside of NSW.
- projects located in sensitive cultural sites or in environmentally restricted areas.
- remediation projects that do not achieve the program objectives of delivering inclusive, public open spaces for adventure and play.
- funding of personnel or staff positions, unless a labour cost exemption request is completed by council and approved by the Department.
- purchase or lease of land for purposes other than open space creation.
- temporary infrastructure or buying/upgrading non-fixed equipment.
- public art pieces as a singular project. Public art that is integrated into a wider public and open space project will be considered.
- projects that require the community to pay fees to access.
- commercial buildings and clubhouses.
- sports fields, full-sized courts, swimming pools, indoor facilities.
- events, marketing, branding, advertising or product promotion.
- projects requiring ongoing funding from the NSW Government.
- retrospective funding to cover any project component that is already complete or underway (under the grant program).
- design services will only be funded as part of the delivery of a project. Master planning or design services will not be funded in isolation.
- maintenance works.
- car parking, unless it directly supports improved access to public open space and an exemption is requested and approved by the department.

# Assessment criteria and process for the grant program

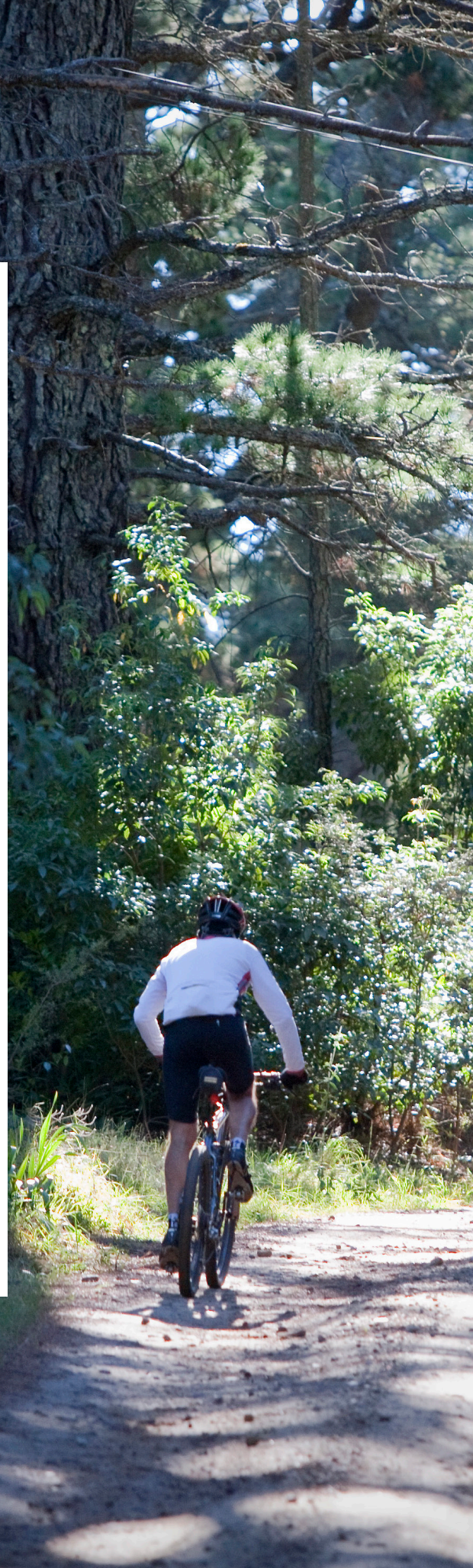
## Assessment process

All applications will be reviewed and assessed by an independent assessment panel against the Places to Play program objectives and assessment criteria (see criteria and weighting). The independent panel will make recommendations to the Department for endorsement.

Successful applicants will be notified, and funding will be released once funding agreements have been signed and executed. The assessment panel will be made up of NSW Government representatives from different agencies and external landscape and open space design experts. The assessment will be overseen by a probity advisor.

## Assessment criteria

The following table outlines the assessment criteria that applications will be assessed against. Projects will be assessed against key components including project merit and their ability to be delivered.





**Table 1. Assessment criteria**

Project Merit 50%	
Criteria	Details
<b>Program alignment and project clarity</b>	The project scope is clearly stated and supports the objectives of the program.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The project will be designed and delivered to enable all community members to “get there, play and stay”. This could be through increased amenity, improved accessibility, improved safety, and provision of more diverse opportunities.
<b>Innovation</b>	The project clearly demonstrates best practice methodologies and outcomes that offer learnings that can be shared across government and industry. The project does not revert to a ‘business as usual’ approach.
<b>Collaboration</b>	The project drives collaboration and partnerships with community, businesses and institutions, taking a place-based approach. Plans for collaboration between individuals and/or institutions to develop the project are clearly articulated. Approach to engaging the community in the project is clearly articulated including ensuring engagement is inclusive.
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	The project demonstrates how the health and safety of the community and the local environment will be sustained and enhanced during construction and in operation of the facility.
Project deliverability 50%	
Criteria	Details
<b>Financial viability</b>	Project budget clearly outlines the most significant cost line-items required for the development of the project, along with a reasonable timeline for the expenses (Direct and in-kind costs are identified).
<b>Deliverability</b>	Project methodology is clear and feasible within the parameters of the program.
<b>Timeliness of delivery</b>	Applicant demonstrates commitment to roll out project quickly. Project schedule and project plan is clear and identifies key deliverable dates within program timeframes.
<b>Risk mitigation</b>	Risk assessment included with strategies to mitigate project risks.
<b>Value for money</b>	Project uses funding effectively to maximise the scale and impact of the project. Projects that include applicant contributions will be considered favourably.



Photograph - Department of Planning and Environment

# Application process and timeframes

Table 2 outlines the application and assessment process and timeframes for the program.

Date	Milestone
11 November 2022	2022/23 Grant applications open
15 December 2022	2022/23 Grant applications close and assessment begins
January 2023	2022/23 Successful grants announced
June 2024	2022/23 Grant projects to be completed

## How to apply

- Visit the [Open Spaces website](#) to access resources to support your application.
- For 2022/23 Grant applications, complete and submit your application in SmartyGrants by 15 December 2022. Successful applications will be announced in January 2023.
- The Department can provide information to potential applicants on how to interpret these guidelines, including the types of projects eligible for funding. Please contact the team at [open.space@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:open.space@planning.nsw.gov.au)
- When you attach files to support the application, we strongly recommend you keep files under 5 megabytes and use concise and descriptive file names.

### Need advice?

If you are having difficulty with your application on the SmartyGrants system, check out the help guide for applicants at [www.applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au](http://www.applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au)

- If the problem continues, please contact SmartyGrants at:
  - [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au)
  - Telephone support 03 9320 6888  
Support Desk Hours: 9:00am - 5:00pm AEST, Monday – Friday
  - Visit [www.help.smartygrants.com.au](http://www.help.smartygrants.com.au)

## Complaints procedure

Any complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing to the Department of Planning and Environment.

If you have any questions about grant decisions for this grant opportunity, please send them to [openspace@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:openspace@planning.nsw.gov.au)

If you do not agree with how the department has handled your complaint, you may raise this with the NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the relevant department. Visit the NSW Ombudsman at [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)

## Privacy policy

The department is required to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988*. The department collects the minimum personal information you voluntarily provide to enable it to contact an organisation and to assess the merits of an 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. Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied with applications are aware that the department is being supplied with this information and how this information will be used.

## Disclaimer

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

# Program management

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Department and will be required to sign this funding agreement in February 2023. The funding agreement will set out the obligations of the recipient of the funding, including, but not limited to, in relation to monitoring and reporting, project completion, and milestones and payment.

## Project management

Funding recipients will be responsible for delivering and meeting the project milestones and delivering the project within the terms of the funding agreement.

Funding recipients will need to supply a project plan to be included in the funding agreement that sets out the works and deliverables, costs and schedule, and must carry out the project in accordance with the project plan.

Funding recipients must also provide a final concept plan before beginning construction.

## Approvals

Applicants must ensure they are aware of all approvals required and consult with relevant authorities in preparing the grant application.

Submissions and applications must be accompanied by a letter of support from the General Manager or equivalent.

## Other funding

Applicants must disclose whether any aspect of the proposal for this funding program has either:

- received funding through another NSW Government funding program, or
- applied for funding through another NSW Government funding program that may currently be in consideration.

We will review applications to ensure that the applicant is not seeking or receiving multiple sources of funding for the same works.

## Consultation

The recipient will be required to demonstrate that it has undertaken community and stakeholder engagement on the project or that it intends to do so before finalising concept plans. Evidence of the consultation will be required.



Kosciusko National Park – Destination NSW

## Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

### Grant recipients must:

1. Provide 'before' and 'after' reporting on core indicators requested by the department. This will include visitation, social and environmental impacts of the project.
2. Provide high-quality 'before' and 'after' images.
3. Provide milestone reports and a final acquittal report via SmartyGrants when the project is complete.

## Project opening event and promotion

The Department will provide grant recipients a communication pack with approved key messages, branding, logos and multimedia to help promote the project and acknowledge the funding contribution.

Grant recipients must acknowledge the funding contribution from the NSW Government in all communications and media for the project.

### If holding a formal launch event, the recipient must:

- invite the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Homes, and a Department representative on the Minister's behalf to attend any formal launch event (including commencement and completion ceremonies, consulting beforehand on available dates where practicable); and
- give no less than 30 business days' notice before any formal event.
- To make the invitation, the recipient should access the Minister's [web form](#). It is for the recipient to decide if there is to be an opening event. Recipients should invite the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Homes, and departmental and other dignitaries, and consult on a preferred date. If the invitation is accepted, a department media officer will work with the recipient on the arrangements and media protocols.

## Payment of grants

Payment of funding will be conditional on the funding being used only for the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement. Payment of funding will be made in accordance with the milestones and payment schedule set out in the funding agreement and will be subject to compliance with the recipient's obligations. A final acquittal and project report will be required when the project is completed.

## Project responsibility

The recipient must acknowledge and agree that it is solely responsible for delivering and completing the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, and will not be relieved of that responsibility because of any involvement with a third party (for example, subcontracting, partnerships).

## Insurance requirements

Recipients must maintain a minimum Public Liability Insurance cover of \$20 million, workers compensation insurance for people involved in delivery of the project and insurance over assets used in connection with the project.

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# Appendix A: Grant application checklist

**Council is required to submit the following documentation at application stages:**

- Concept plan and imagery to communicate the design of the project
- Community engagement outcomes report or plan for community engagement
- In-principle support from partners if needed
- High quality images of project location
- Aerial map showing project location
- Risk assessment
- Project budget breakdown
- Project plan (maximum 10 pages)
- Project schedule
- Image/s of desired materials for implementation (optional)
- Letter/s of support from local businesses or local business associations, community groups, institutions (e.g. schools, universities or cultural institutions) (optional)



Wyld Mountain Bike and BMX - Western Sydney Parklands

