

2021 Greening our City Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions



GENERAL

1. Who can apply?

All 33 Greater Sydney Councils may apply for grant funding:

Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Burwood Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Cumberland Council, Fairfield City Council, Georges River Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Hills Shire Council, The Hornsby Shire Council, The Council of the Municipality of Hunters Hill, Inner West Council, Ku-ring-gai Council, Lane Cove Municipal 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 Municipal Council, Sutherland Shire Council, City of Sydney, Waverley Shire Council, City of Willoughby, Wollondilly Shire Council, Woollahra Municipal Council.

2. When do applications close?

Applications close at 11:59pm on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

In response to councils' feedback, the department has extended the closing date by 7 days.

3. How many applications can Councils submit?

There is no limit to the number of applications Councils can submit. The online portal also allows Councils to group multiple sites into one application.

4. What is the minimum and maximum amount Councils may apply for?

The minimum grant amount Councils may apply for is \$50,000 (ex-GST) per project. There is no maximum grant funding amount under this funding round.

FUNDING

5. How much funding is available for this program?

The total funding available for this program is \$10 million.

6. Do Councils need to provide dollar for dollar matched funding?

No. Under the 2021 grant round, the program will fully fund tree planting projects.

7. Are Councils able to include cash and in-kind contributions in their application?

Yes. Councils may include cash and/or in-kind contributions in their grant applications to increase the value for money offered by their projects.

8. Can projects be funded retrospectively?

No. Successful applicants may only commence projects once funding approval has been confirmed.

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9. Can the grant funding be used to directly fund personnel or staff positions for the project?

No. Grant funding cannot be used for direct funding of personnel or staff positions. However, staff and resource time, as well as project management costs can be included as an in-kind contribution to the project. These contributions can relate to the planting, establishment period and/or long-term maintenance of the planted trees. These contributions will be considered when assessing the value for money of the project.

10. Is funding available for the green innovations stream in 2021?

No. The 2021 grant round only has one stream for tree-planting projects.

11. If Councils have already received other government funding or co-contributions from external organisations for the project, does this mean the Council cannot apply?

Projects with committed funding from other sources are not eligible to seek a grant to replace these funds. Where applicants wish to expand or enhance existing funded projects, grant funding is available for works additional to the original project scope.

12. When will councils receive payments?

Payments will be made at milestones, with timing and phasing of payments to be confirmed in funding agreements.

13. What is the source of the funds?

The NSW Climate Change Fund is the source of the funds for the grant program. The Greening our City Premier's Priority forms part of the broader Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney initiative, which received a four-year funding allocation from the Climate Change Fund. The Climate Change Fund was established to address the impacts of climate change and encourage energy and water saving activities.

14. Why is grant funding limited to the Greater Sydney region?

Program funding is attached to the Greening our City Premier's Priority and the Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney initiative. It is therefore limited to the Greater Sydney region.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

15. What projects are eligible for funding?

The following tree planting projects are eligible for funding:

- street tree planting
- tree planting projects in new and existing open space areas that include but are not limited to:
 - corridors
 - parks
 - plazas
 - carparks
 - roads
 - pocket forests
- community tree planting programs.

Infrastructure to support any of the tree planting projects listed above is also eligible for funding, including but not limited, to the following:

- tree pits
- soil/mulch
- structural soil cells or similar
- root barriers
- irrigation
- drainage
- tree guards
- root ball support
- tree grates, vertical guards and other protective measures.

16. Is there a preference for tree planting in specific locations (e.g. parks, plazas etc.)?

No. Locations can include streets, corridors, parks, plazas, carparks and other open space areas. However, suburbs with lower canopy levels will be prioritised and consideration will be given to the location of sites against the following criteria (as per data provided in the online spatial tool):

- tree canopy level
- urban heat island level
- heat vulnerability index
- soil infiltration rate

To view these datasets for your planting locations please go to the Online Spatial Tool at <https://webmap1.environment.nsw.gov.au/Html5Viewer4122/index.html?viewer=GreeningOurCity>

17. Can planting only occur on Council-owned land?

Planting can occur on all land where Council can manage the ongoing maintenance of the trees planted and has secured the agreement of the landowner.

18. What is classified as a tree?

A tree has been defined under the Greening our City Program as a tall, long-lived, woody plant that casts shade and provides a cooling effect.

19. Has the Department set a minimum size of a canopy tree to achieve the target?

There is no minimum size tree required for grant applications. Applications will be required to identify the species being planted. This information can be used by the independent assessment panel when assessing merit and value for money.

APPLICATION PROCESS

20. What is the role of Local Government NSW?

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is administering the Greening our City Grant Program on behalf of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department).

21. Where can applicants find the Grant Guidelines?

A copy of the 2021 Greening our City Grant Guidelines can be found at www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/greeningourcitygrants.

22. How do I lodge an application?

Applications, including supporting documentation, must be submitted via the LGNSW application portal. A link to the portal can be found at www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/greeningourcitygrants.

23. What is the Online Spatial Tool, Water Efficient Trees Report and Water Matrix?

The [Online Spatial Tool](#) provides a range of spatial data tailored to inform councils' decisions on need, location, and landscape suitability for tree planting. Its outputs are to be included as part of each grant application.

The Water Efficient Trees Report and Water Matrix are the result of a study commissioned by the Department to provide advice around tree planting and maintenance in the context of drought and water restrictions. These documents are available for councils to use as reference materials to explore low cost innovations to use water more efficiently to plant and maintain trees.

24. How do I use the Online Spatial Tool?

A link to the [Online Spatial Tool](#) is available via the application portal. A quick reference guide and more comprehensive user guide (that includes case studies) is also available to help you navigate the tool. These will assist you in answering questions in your application that require the use of the Online Spatial Tool.

The data on the Online Spatial Tool displays data at the mesh block level (a small geographic mapping unit). When applying the spatial layers to your proposed site/s you may find your site sits across a range of values. Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions in the user guide to help address this scenario.

25. Can the budget be amended during the application process?

No. Budgets relating to the project cannot be amended during the application process.

26. Who needs to approve my application?

The council General Manager (or equivalent) must approve the application prior to it being 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.

27. What happens if General Manager approval cannot be achieved prior to the closing date for applications?

Where General Manager approval cannot be achieved prior to the grant application deadline, the following process may be followed:

- (1) Applications will be accepted with approval from a Director with appropriate level of financial delegation, via the grant application portal in order to meet the 21 April 2021 grant submission deadline, and
- (2) Approval of the project from the General Manager or equivalent must still be obtained and provided in the portal, by email or signed letter to the Grants Manager at GreeningOurCity@lgnsw.org.au by 11:59pm on Friday 30 April 2021 to be considered eligible. Where approval is not provided, the submitted application will be deemed ineligible.

28. Will assistance be available to support the preparation of the application?

LGNSW, as the grant program administrator, can provide information on the interpretation of the grant guidelines. For enquiries or more information, contact LGNSW on (02) 9242 4042 or email GreeningOurCity@lgnsw.org.au.

A webinar will also be scheduled to assist applicants in preparing their applications. Details will be posted on the Department's website www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/greeningourcitygrants.

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

29. What criteria apply to the assessment of the applications?

Applications that are eligible and comply with the application requirements will be assessed against four assessment criteria (merit, engagement, viability, and budget). Further details about the assessment criteria are provided in the grant guidelines.

30. What is the role of the Assessment Panel?

An Assessment Panel comprising members with relevant expertise will be established to assess applications against eligibility and assessment criteria. The Assessment Panel will be guided by advice from an independent probity advisor who will also attend the meeting as an observer. The Assessment Panel will recommend projects for funding and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will make final decisions regarding funding allocations.

DELIVERING PROJECTS

31. How long do applicants have to complete a project?

All tree planting must be completed within 18 months of signing a funding agreement. Under the funding agreement, councils will be required to commit to a subsequent 12-month establishment period for each tree planted.

32. What is the 12-month establishment period?

The establishment period for a tree is the 12-month period beginning immediately after the tree has been planted. In this period, Councils must ensure the tree is watered and managed to ensure it grows successfully to maximise tree survival. Under this program, Council is to commit to ensuring every tree planted under this program will have a 12-month establishment period.

33. How do successful applicants acknowledge the funding when projects are underway?

It is a condition of grant funding that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are:

- invited to attend any formal launch event (including commencement and completion ceremonies)
- advised four weeks prior to any formal event
- acknowledged in all communications and media for the project.

34. Do successful applicants need to report on the delivery of their projects?

All successful applicants must submit a project progress report at a minimum every six months. Progress reports must include the spatial location of each tree planted and may also include photographs and other evidence of progress. Applicants will receive detailed information about requirements to report on the implementation and success of their project.

For more information

Please visit www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/greeningourcitygrants or contact Local Government NSW on (02) 9242 4042 or email GreeningOurCity@lgsw.org.au.

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