

UPDATED: 13 August 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of this grant stream?

Stream 1 is focussed on supporting councils in Greater Sydney to plant trees and increase tree canopy cover in their communities. The grant program is designed to promote tree planting in low canopy suburbs that will benefit the most from the increased shade and amenity provided by trees. The grant program will also support councils with funding to care and maintain trees through their establishment period.

2. 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.

Questions from Webinar July 2020.

3. Is there an upper limit on grants?

There is no upper limit for either stream.

4. Will the grant program be extended to regional areas in the next tranche of funding?

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. Some projects that are funded under stream 2 may produce outcomes that are transferable to areas outside of Greater Sydney.

5. Are links of canopy cover with urban shorelines supported under the program ?

If this is regarded as a council tree planting project, it may fall under stream one. If it is solving a problem or showcasing best practice in tree planting or urban greening, it may fall under stream 2. Eligibility for each stream is identified in the guidelines.

6. 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.

7. Are multiple applications from a single council allowed (e.g. for separate projects)?

Multiple projects are permitted from a single council. For this stream the portal also allows you to group multiple sites into one application, if preferred.

8. Can the grant funding (or Councils' matched funding) be used for staffing / resourcing costs associated with planning and managing the planting?

Under this stream, councils are eligible to include in their grant applications personnel costs (of up to 12 months) that directly relate to the establishment period of trees planted under their projects. However, staff positions that do not relate to the establishment of planted trees are not eligible for inclusion under this funding stream.

9. Can councils apply for both Stream 1 and 2?

Yes

10. Can the money be used to facilitate infrastructure/hard landscaping upgrades to accommodate suitable planting sites?

Under this stream, funding is to support Council planting trees and the infrastructure needed to directly support it. It does not extend to infrastructure to create sites for tree planting. The infrastructure that may be considered includes:

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

11. 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.

12. Will the criteria of matched funding be a decisive factor for assessment of applications?

Value for money is one criterion for each grant stream (weightings are outlined in the guidelines). Dollar-for-dollar matched funding is preferred, however, where a Council cannot match funding, it should show all contributions (both cash and non-cash) that will be used to deliver the project.

Eligible projects

13. What projects are eligible for funding under this grant stream?

The following tree planting projects are eligible for funding under stream 1:

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

14. 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://webmap.environment.nsw.gov.au/Html5Viewer291/index.html?viewer=GreeningOurCity>

15. Can applications be made for projects to fund operational costs (i.e. staffing positions, consultants, advertising)?

No. All funding received must be related to the direct cost of the project. Administration costs for projects must be covered by the applicant.

16. Can projects be funded retrospectively?

No. Successful applicants may only commence construction of a project once funding approval has been confirmed.

Eligible applicants

17. Who can apply for this grant stream?

The cooler suburbs grant stream is open to all 33 Greater Sydney Councils only. 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 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.

Applying

18. 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).

19. Where can applicants find the Grant Guidelines?

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

20. 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.

21. Can applicants submit more than one application?

Yes. Applicants may submit more than one application for separate projects.

22. 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.

23. 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 meshblock 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.

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

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

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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 will make final decisions regarding funding allocations.

Funding

28. What is the program funding for 2020?

Up to \$10 million is available in 2020 for stream one of the Greening the City Grant Program.

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

Councils will be asked to match this funding on a dollar for dollar basis. Less than dollar for dollar matched funding (i.e. in-kind contributions) may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

30. What is the relationship of the Greening our City Grant Program to the Five Million Trees initiative?

Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney (5MT) is the overarching initiative that is delivering Premier's Priority 12: Greening our City. These programs are administered by the Department and were created to expand tree canopy and green cover across Greater Sydney.

31. What is the source of the funds?

The first four years of 5MT is funded through the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund. The Climate Change Fund was established to address the impacts of climate change and encourage energy and water saving activities. A total of \$12.5 million of funding under 5MT has been allocated to deliver the Greening our City Grant Program for 2020.

32. Will all applicants receive funding?

It is unlikely that all applicants will receive funding as it is anticipated that the program will be over-subscribed and applications will be assessed on their merits.

Successful applications will be those recommended by the Assessment Panel as best meeting the objectives of the program, the assessment criteria and can demonstrate the applicant has the capacity to deliver the project from inception through the establishment period.

33. If our council has already received other government funding or co-contributions from external organisations for the project, does this mean the council cannot apply?

No. Projects that have received other Government funding or co-contributions from external organisations are eligible for funding. Applicants must list in their application if the project has received other sources of funding and the amount received.

34. What happens to councils who have limited budgets and are unable to match funding dollar-for-dollar?

In recognition of the challenges faced by councils in recent months due to external forces such as COVID-19, there is provision for councils to provide in kind contributions. As part of their applications, councils must demonstrate why they cannot match funding dollar-for-dollar and the level of in-kind contributions that are proposed. These applications will only be considered where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

Approval

35. 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.

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 19 August grant submission deadline, and
- (2) Approval of the project from the General Manager or equivalent must still be obtained and provided by email to the Grants Manager at GreeningOurCity@lgnsw.org.au or signed letter of support by 5pm on Wednesday, 2 September to meet eligibility criteria. Where approval is not provided, the submitted application will be deemed ineligible.

Timing

36. When are the applications due?

Applications must be received by 11.59pm on Wednesday 19 August 2020. Any application that is late, incomplete or ineligible will not be considered.

37. 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 further 12-month establishment period for trees planted.

38. If successful, when can we expect to receive funding?

As part of the funding agreement, successful applicants will receive grant funding in instalments. These payments are scheduled against the following four (4) project milestones:

1. Commencement of the project (20%)
2. Concept plan finalisation (30%)
3. Commencement of tree planting (40%)
4. Commencement of establishment period / Project acquittal (10%)

Acknowledgements

39. 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.

Reporting

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

All successful 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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