



Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Places to swim

Program guideline

November 2021





Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning, Industry 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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Cover photograph – Gorgio Trovato

Artwork (left) by Nikita Ridgeway



Place, Design and Public Spaces

The Place, Design and Public Spaces group within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) improves people's lives by planning and designing places and public spaces that make NSW a great place to live and work. We enable places in which people love to live and connect, now and into the future, by influencing, designing and delivering great and sustainable places for the benefit of the people and natural environment of NSW. We do this by putting people, place and community at the centre of everything we do.

We help provide homes, services and infrastructure, build great communities, create jobs and protect the environment. We create great places and experiences for all. We plan for a changing and thriving NSW. We inspire strong and resilient communities and regions and ensure the responsible and sustainable use of NSW's resources.

Place, Design and Public Spaces also includes the Government Architect NSW, Greater Sydney Parklands, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Place Management NSW, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, and Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation.

Contents

Place, Design and Public Spaces	3
.....	
Introduction	4
.....	
Water for recreation	4
Funding	6
.....	
Program objectives	7
.....	
Eligibility	7
.....	
Assessment criteria and process – EOI and Grant Programs	9
.....	
Application process and timeframes	11
.....	
How to apply	11
.....	
Program management	13
.....	
Appendix A: Pilot Project EOI and Application Checklist	16
.....	

Introduction

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is inviting all Metropolitan Greater Sydney councils and eligible NSW Government agencies and entities to apply for funding through the Places to Swim program for projects across Metropolitan Greater Sydney that improve access to and recreational engagement with natural waterways.

Access to water for recreation positively impacts people's health and wellbeing. It has been shown to help increase physical activity levels, boost people's mood and lower stress and anxiety levels. Everyone in our community, no matter their age, ability or where they live, should be able to experience the benefits water provides.

The Places to Swim program is about connecting people to water in places that need it most, supporting the health and wellbeing of the community as we re-emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

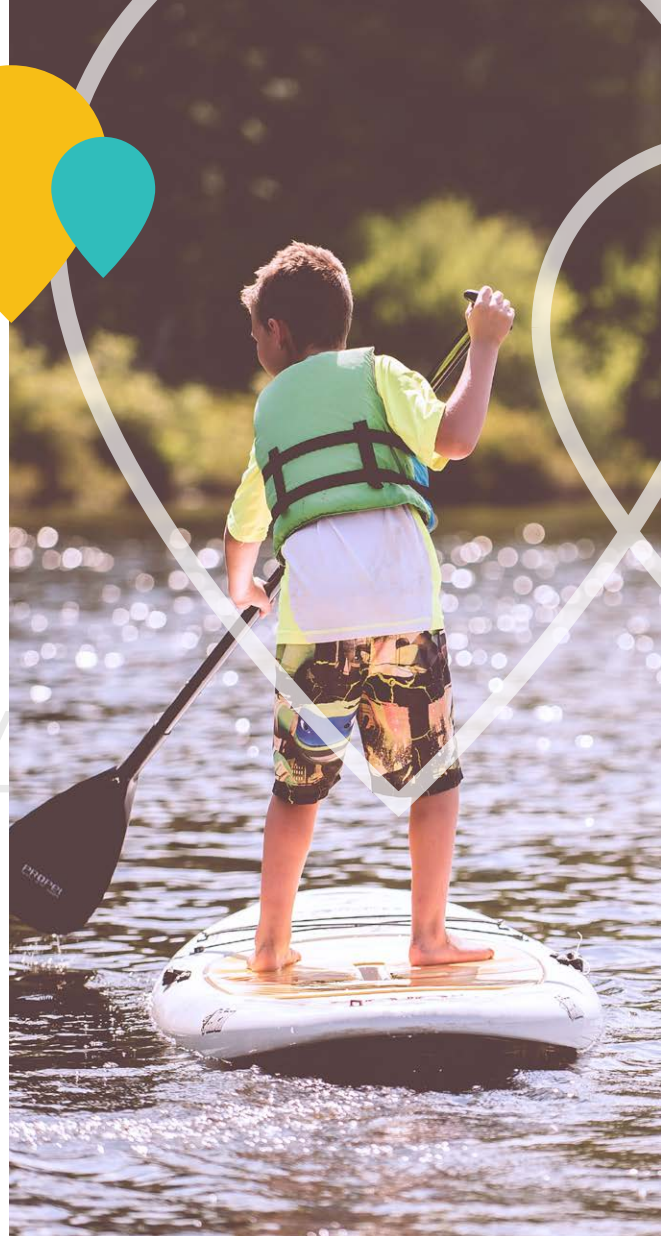
Water for recreation

Places to Swim has been developed in response to the 2018 Greater Sydney Outdoor Survey where more than 7,000 Sydneysiders told us that outdoor recreation plays an important role in their lives, which has been further expressed during the recent COVID-19 restrictions.

We know water plays a particularly important role in many Sydneysiders' lifestyles – and not only for activities that directly involve waterways, like swimming or fishing. People also enjoy walking or relaxing in parks with lakes or other bodies of water, visiting spaces next to beaches and rivers, and being around constructed water features.

The feedback we received from the Greater Sydney Outdoor Survey showed us that:

- Sydneysiders consider water important; about half of Sydneysiders enjoy outdoor recreation involving water at least once a week.
- Swimming in natural areas is increasing in popularity; there is a demand for more clean, safe, natural swimming holes and improved access and amenities at swimming locations.



Photograph – Ben White

- There is an increased demand for access points to water for activities such as kayaking and paddle boarding, as well as storage for these water-based sports.

The survey also showed us that where there are existing swimming areas and access to waterways, they can be under-utilised or prohibited for recreational use. We also found that access to waterways for recreation varies significantly across Greater Sydney. The biggest barriers to people accessing water for recreation included travel distance and financial feasibility to deliver new access to waterways.

The Places to Swim program will help to address these issues by investing \$16.7 million to support councils deliver projects that enable more people in more places to enjoy our waterways.



Case study: Lake Parramatta Reserve

Lake Parramatta is located in Lake Parramatta Reserve, a 73-hectare parkland in North Parramatta. The reserve is a popular destination for picnicking, bush walking and has been used for non-motorised boating for many decades. The lake was officially re-opened for public swimming in 2015, after being closed for 72 years.

Since its re-opening to swimming in 2015 more than 270,000 people have visited the swimming area. The swimming area is safe for children to splash and paddle around in and is big enough for adults to swim laps. People can also spend time kayaking and fishing in the lake. The Reserve provides non-motorised boat launching facilities, boat hire, a children's playspace, walking trails, BBQ and picnic facilities and a cafe.

The City of Parramatta Council manages the site, providing lifeguards during the summer swim season (typically late October to April) and conducting a comprehensive year round water quality monitoring program.





Photograph – Vitolda Klein

Funding

The Places to Swim program includes a \$16.7 million investment over three years for projects across Metropolitan Greater Sydney that improve access to and recreational engagement with natural waterways.

The first year of the Places to Swim program (2021/22) includes a total of \$7.15m million in funding. This includes:

- \$5.4 million for 2021/22 grant program
- \$1.75 million for Pilot projects.

Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$450,000 for individual projects. Places to Swim 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 favoured.

Pilot Project Expressions of Interest

As part of the 2021/22 allocation, eligible councils and eligible NSW Government agencies and entities are invited to submit expressions of interest (EOI) for up to \$450,000 in funding for a pilot project.

The Department is looking to fund pilot projects that involve the creation of new and/or improved access to existing natural waterways for swimming and other water-based recreation. Successful pilot projects will have earlier access to funding than the grant program but must be projects that are advanced in their planning and design and ready to commence immediately with construction to commence no later than 28 February 2022.

Program objectives

The objectives of the Places to Swim program include:

- Create new places to swim and places that support recreation in our natural waterways.
- Improve access to and recreational engagement with waterways in Metropolitan Greater Sydney for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Support community health and wellbeing in rapidly growing communities.
- Support investment in the creation of high-quality, inclusive public and open spaces to create a lasting community benefit.
- Address critical shortfalls in freely accessible public places for water recreation and swimming.
- Contribute to the post pandemic economic recovery of NSW through the creation of jobs, stimulating businesses and the recreation and visitor economy.
- Contribute to the delivery of the NSW Government'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.

Eligibility

Funding is available to all Metropolitan Greater Sydney councils and eligible NSW Government agencies and entities for projects that improve access to and recreational engagement with waterways in Metropolitan Greater Sydney.

Eligible councils and NSW Government agencies and entities are invited to submit an application for one or more projects up to a total of \$450,000.

This can include:

- Harbour, lakes and riverfront precincts, including improvements for water-based recreation such as launching small non-powered watercraft (such as kayaks, canoes and paddle boards) and access to waterways for swimming.
- Walking tracks/trails and infrastructure that directly connect to and support access to water for recreation (not including boat ramps, fishing infrastructure and boating infrastructure).
- Water playspaces that offer a place to enjoy water-based recreation for those local government areas that do not have direct access to lakes, rivers or the Harbour.
- Amenities and facilities that directly support the recreational use of the waterways (change rooms, toilet facilities, picnic and bbq facilities, foreshore works, netting, pontoons, signage).

Projects funded through the 2021/22 grant program must be delivered within 18-months of funding agreements being executed and must be freely accessible to the community upon completion. All projects selected as pilot projects must be advanced in their planning and design and ready to commence immediately with construction to commence no later than 28 February 2022.

All projects must be located on land that applicants own or are responsible for managing. If the applicant is not the landowner, submissions must include a letter of support from the landowner.

Further resources to support your application are available on the [Open Spaces Program website](#). This includes FAQs, fact sheets and webinars designed to help you to address the program guidelines.

Eligible applicants

Eligible NSW Government agencies include infrastructure agencies who own and manage the publicly accessible land on the which the public spaces improvements would be built. The facilities must be freely and publicly accessible upon completion.

Metropolitan Greater Sydney councils that are eligible for funding include:

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

The following projects and works are not eligible for funding:

- Projects outside of Metropolitan Greater Sydney
- Projects located in sensitive cultural sites or in environmentally restricted areas
- Remediation projects that do not achieve the program objectives of improving access to water for recreation
- Projects to support motorised watercraft – such as a boat ramps, jetties and wharfs
- Boat ramps, roadworks, carparks, fishing infrastructure and boating infrastructure
- Purchase or lease of land for purposes other than open space creation
- Funding of personnel or staff positions, unless a labour cost exemption request is completed by council and approved by the department.
- Temporary infrastructure or buying/upgrading non-fixed equipment
- Public art pieces as a singular project. Note public art that is integrated in to a wider public and open space project will be considered
- Projects that require community to pay fees to access
- Commercial buildings and clubhouses
- 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.
- 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.
- Projects which are considered to be part of council's usual ongoing maintenance and management of a site.
- Pilot project EOIs and applications will not be considered unless:
 - They are sufficiently detailed and specific to allow consideration against the program objectives.
 - They are accompanied by a support letter from a General Manager or council CEO.
 - They are submitted by the deadline and can meet the delivery timeframes.
 - They are accompanied by in-principle support of the landowner, where the land is not owned or managed by council.
 - They identify all necessary approvals and include evidence of in-principle support from relevant authorities.
 - They include detailed costing, tender or detailed design plans and planning approval documentation.



Assessment criteria and process – EOI and Grant Programs

Assessment process

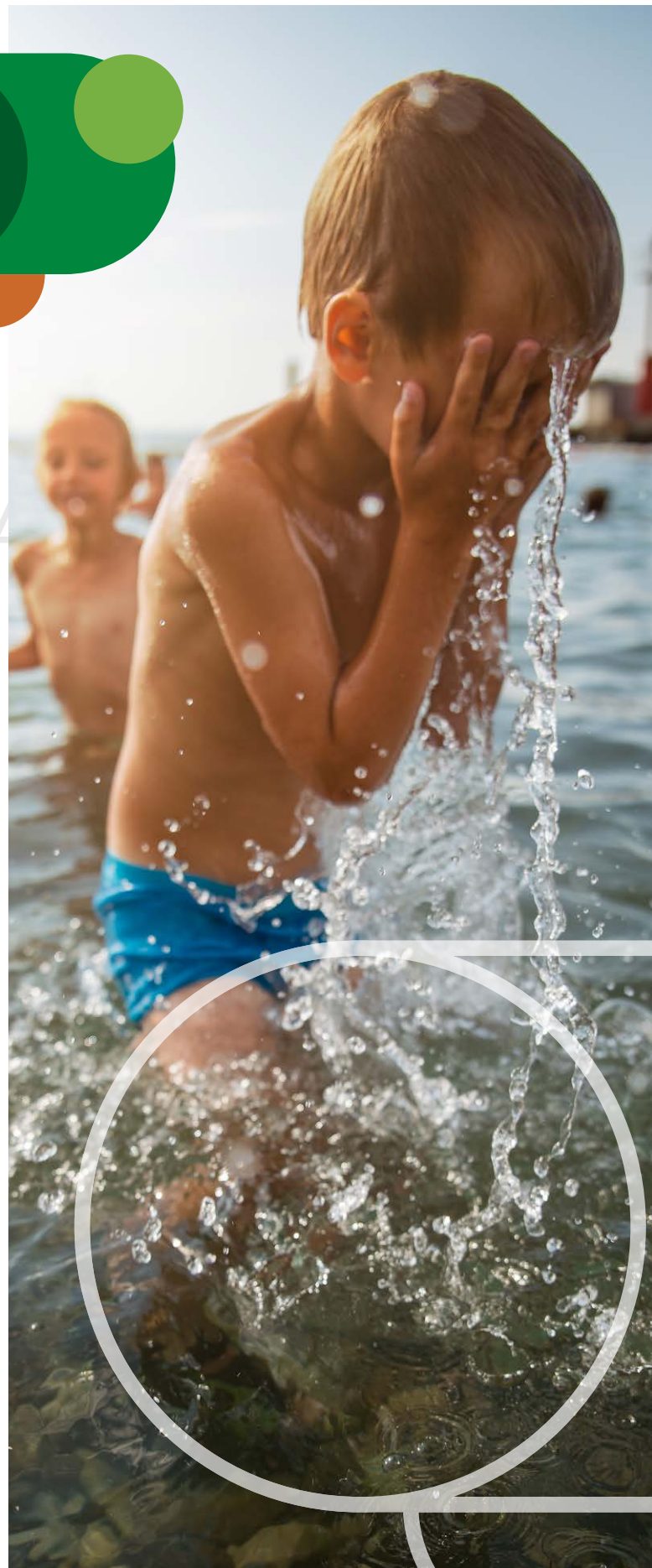
All applications will be reviewed and assessed by an independent assessment panel against the Places for Swim program objectives and assessment criteria (see criteria and weighting below).

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 project deliverability.



Photograph – Janco Ferlic

Table 1. Assessment criteria

Project Merit 50%	
Criteria	Details
Program alignment and project clarity	The project scope is clearly stated and supports the objectives of the program.
Inclusion	The project will be designed and delivered to enable all community members to 'get there, stay, play, participate and connect'.
Innovation	The project clearly demonstrates best practice methodologies and outcomes that offer learnings that can be shared across government and industry in the creation of water recreation spaces in Metropolitan Greater Sydney. The project does not revert to a 'business as usual' approach.
Collaboration	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.
Environmental sustainability	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
Financial viability	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).
Deliverability	Project methodology is clear and feasible within the parameters of the program.
Timeliness of delivery	Applicant demonstrates commitment to roll out project quickly. Project schedule and project plan are clear and identify key deliverable dates within program timeframes.
Risk mitigation	Risk assessment included with strategies to mitigate project risks.
Value for money	Project uses funding effectively to maximise the scale and impact of the project. Projects that include applicant contributions will be considered favourably.



Application process and timeframes

The application and assessment process and timeframes for the 2021/22 funding round of the Program are outlined below.

Table 2. Timeframes for program

Date	Milestone
15 November 2021	Pilot project Expression of Interest and the 2021/22 Grant application open to receive applications
30 November 2021	Pilot project Expression of Interest closes 4pm
December 2021	Pilot projects assessment Announcement of successful pilot projects and funding offers made. Construction on pilot projects to commence no later than 28 February 2022
4 March 2022	2021/22 Grant applications close 4pm
March 2022	2021/22 Grant assessment
April 2022	2021/22 Grant announcement and notifications
October 2023	2021/22 Grant projects to be completed prior to October 2023

How to apply

1. Familiarise yourself with the grant requirements set out in these guidelines and determine if you are eligible.
2. Visit the [website](#) to access resources to support your application and attend a webinar, with a registration link soon to be updated on the website.
3. For Pilot projects, complete and submit your EOI in [SmartyGrants](#) by 4pm, 30 November 2021. Successful pilot projects will be announced late 2021.
4. For 2021/22 Grant applications, complete and submit your application in [SmartyGrants](#) by 4pm, 4 March 2021. Successful applications will be announced in April 2022.

Need advice?

If you are having issues with your application on the SmartyGrants system, check out the help guide for applicants at www.applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au

If the issue remains, please contact SmartyGrants at:

- service@smartygrants.com.au
- Telephone support 03 9320 6888
- Support Desk Hours: 9:00am - 5:00pm AEST, Mon - Fri
- Visit www.help.smartygrants.com.au

Please note, when attaching files to support the application, it is strongly recommended you keep files under 5 megabytes and use concise and descriptive file names.

The Department is available to provide information to potential applicants on interpretation of these guidelines, including types of projects eligible for funding. Please feel free to contact the team at: open.space@planning.nsw.gov.au

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing. Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to openspace@planning.nsw.gov.au. If you do not agree with how the Department has handled your complaint, you may complain to 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.

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 will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Department. 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 18 months.

Funding recipients will need to supply a project plan to be included in the funding agreement that set 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 commencing construction.

Approvals

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

Applicants do not need to have obtained all approvals in relation to the proposed project prior to submitting an EOI or application. However, they must identify all necessary approvals and evidence of in-principle support from relevant authorities must accompany the application. The application will also need to factor in appropriate time to obtain approvals in the project plan. Please note the delivery expectations for the Pilot projects and ensure that all required approvals are on track to ensure commencement of construction prior to 28 February 2022.

EOI submissions and applications must be accompanied by a letter of support from the General Manager or council CEO.

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.

Applications will be reviewed to ensure that the applicant is not seeking or receiving multiple sources of funding for the same works.

Consultation with the community and other key stakeholders

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.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Grant recipients are required to:

5. Provide before and after reporting on core indicators requested by the department.
6. Collect data both before and after using the [Evaluation Tool for Public Space and Public Life](#), and analyse the results
7. Provide high quality before and after images.
8. Provide milestone reports and a final acquittal report via SmartyGrants at the completion of project.



Photograph – Quentin Menini

Project opening event and promotion

A communication pack will be provided to grant recipients to provide 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 Public Spaces or a Departmental representative on the Minister's behalf to attend any formal launch event (including commencement and completion ceremonies with prior consultation on available dates where practicable); and
- provide no less than 30 business days' notice prior to 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, the Department 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 following completion of the project.



Photograph – Linda Hinton

Project responsibility

The recipient will be required to 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 (e.g. subcontracting, partnerships).

Insurance requirements

Recipients will be required to 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.

Appendix A: Pilot Project EOI and Application Checklist

Council is required to submit the following documentation at EOI and application stages.

Table 3. Pilot Project EOI and Application checklist

Pilot Project EOI	Application
• Detailed design /tender plans • Planning approval documentation • Council (or land owner) endorsement • Concept reports and imagery • Evidence of detailed community engagement undertaken to inform the design of the project • Project scope • Detailed costing • Project plan with timeframes and methodologies • Details of water quality management that details the water is safe for access by people and the program for ongoing water quality checks. • Detailed risk assessment	• Concept plan and imagery to communicate the design of the project. • General Manager letter of support for 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) • Details of water quality management that details the water is safe for access by people and the program for ongoing water quality checks. • Letter/s of support from local businesses or local business associations, community groups, institutions (e.g. schools, universities or cultural institutions) (optional)





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