

Metropolitan Greenspace Program

Program Guidelines
2023-24 grants round

February 2024

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 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: Duck River Parklet,
Webbs Avenue, Cumberland City Council

Artwork (above) by Nikita Ridgeway

Housing Supply and Infrastructure

Housing Supply and Infrastructure group within the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 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.

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Introduction

The Metropolitan Greenspace Program is an annual grants program that provides funding to assist councils in Greater Sydney and the Central Coast region to deliver projects that improve regional open space and community livability. Livability and regional open space are important contributors to the health of our communities.

The program was established in 1983 to invest in links between Sydney's bushland, parks, centres and waterways and to promote public use and enjoyment of these spaces. It has been adapted over time to meet current priorities. Funding is from the Sydney Region Development Fund, which the [Office of Strategic Lands](#) administers.

In Greater Sydney and the Central Coast, the Metropolitan Greenspace Program helps deliver the vision of a Green Grid that crisscrosses the region, allowing residents to connect to a network of open space, natural areas and recreational facilities.

The Green Grid will promote a healthier urban environment and improve access to spaces for recreation and exercise.





About the Metropolitan Greenspace Program

Objectives

Purpose of funding

The 2023-24 objectives are to:

- improve regionally significant open space, including links between bushland, parks, centres and waterways
- enable more effective public use of regionally significant open space
- improve access to a diverse mix of open space opportunities for the community of Greater Sydney and the Central Coast
- promote partnerships between state and local government
- support projects that demonstrate a commitment to improved outcomes for health, sustainability, climate change and communities.
- To provide and Improve open space that supports housing supply.

Funding

\$3 million in funding has been allocated for the Metropolitan Greenspace Program. This funding will be available to eligible councils via a competitive grant process where councils will be required to match the funding granted on a dollar for dollar basis. Funds obtained through the program will be eligible for use towards projects that enhance access to regionally significant public open space and contribute to the Green Grid.

Eligibility

All councils in the Greater Sydney Region are eligible to apply, including:

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.

Central Coast Council is also eligible to apply.

Priorities

Priority will be given to projects that increase and improve open space to support housing supply.

Projects eligible for program funding

To be eligible, applications must demonstrate both of the following:

- **matched funding** – grant funding must be matched dollar for dollar with cash funding; in-kind contributions may be included.
- **regional status of open space** – you must demonstrate the regional qualities of the open-space project for which you are seeking funding and its contribution to the Green Grid.

Types of eligible projects

The types of projects eligible for funding can be either capital works or planning projects.

Capital works

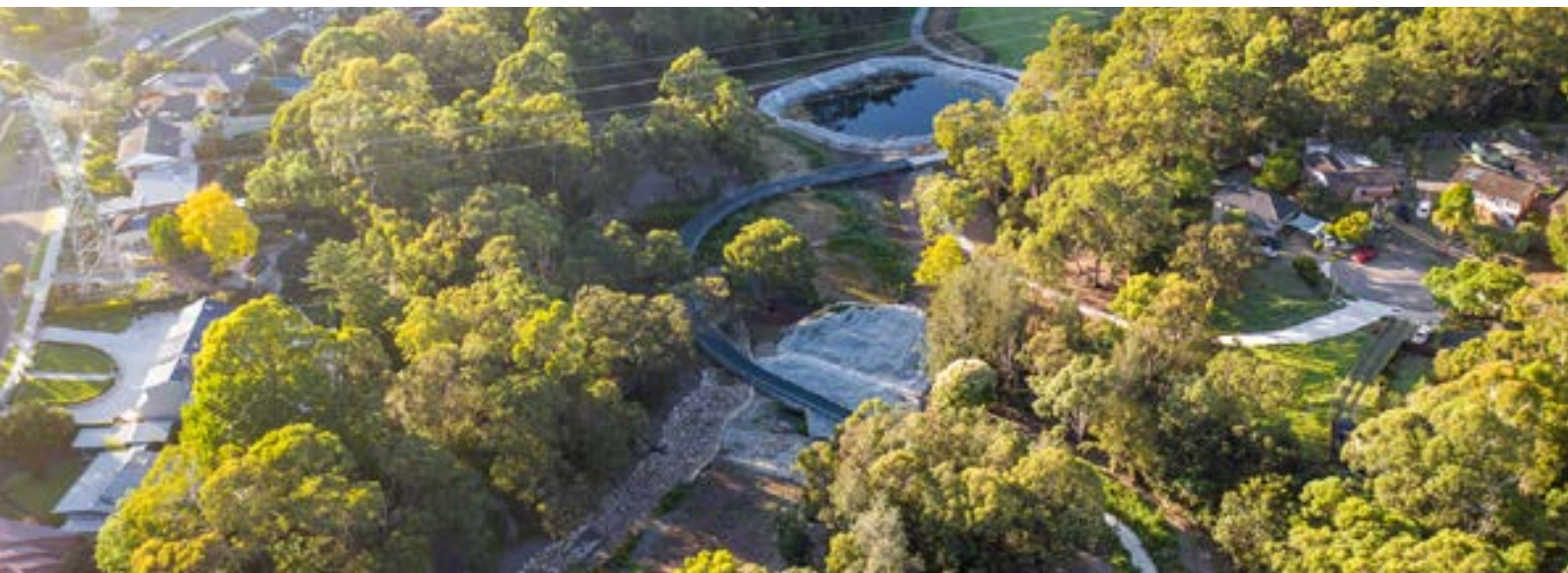
The types of capital works that the program will consider in relation to both new and existing open space include:

- walking tracks and recreational/bicycle trails
- playgrounds
- bushland and environmental management or restoration
- interpretative signage and educational programs associated with trails and greenspaces
- conservation works guided by appropriate planning and assessment
- park and open-space development and upgrading
- recreation facilities
- soft-landscape works
- hard-landscape works.

Planning projects

For planning projects councils are required to demonstrate that projects will lead to capital works within 24 months. The types of planning works that are eligible include:

- open space strategies
- master plans or open space management plans
- recreation trails planning, feasibility or design plans (that must lead to construction)
- natural/cultural heritage studies, interpretation, archaeological investigation, conservation-management plan, bushland - or vegetation-management plans.



Project nominations should align to government strategies such as:

- long-term open space network outcomes, such as the Greater Sydney Green Grid, council open space and recreation strategies that demonstrate a long-term change and benefit for the community
- council strategies, such as local strategic planning statements or other strategic documents such as open space and recreation strategies, urban design plans, town centres or economic strategies, active travel and transport plans.
- to increase and improve open space to support housing supply.

We encourage councils to put forward projects that, ideally:

- acknowledge and incorporate Aboriginal culture and heritage
- create a broad range of community benefit, including increasing the diversity of recreational experiences and opportunities
- build on existing masterplans or spatial frameworks in priority green grid corridors, as identified in the Greater Sydney Region Plan
- help to reduce the impact of urban heat island effect.

Ineligible projects

The following works are not eligible for funding under this program:

- projects outside NSW
- purchase or lease of land
- funding of personnel or staff positions
- civil works associated with car parks
- amenities blocks
- seawalls and jetties
- buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment
- 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



Assessment process and criteria

Assessment process

An independent assessment panel will review and assess all eligible applications against the Metropolitan Greenspace Program objectives and assessment criteria (see criteria and weighting below). The independent panel will make recommendations to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for endorsement. We will notify successful applicants, and release funding once funding agreements have been signed and executed.

Assessment criteria

The table below outlines the assessment criteria. The panel will assess projects against key components including project merit and project deliverability.

Table 1. Assessment criteria

Project Merit 50%	
Criteria	Details
Program alignment and project clarity (15%)	The project scope is clearly stated and supports the objectives of the program.
Inclusion (10%)	The project is designed and delivered to enable all community members to participate. This could be through increased amenity, improved accessibility or improved safety.
Innovation (5%)	The project clearly demonstrates best-practice methodologies and outcomes that offer learnings that can be shared across government and industry.
Collaboration (10%)	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. Any approvals are clearly defined and timeframe stated.
Environmental sustainability (10%)	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. Projects that are climate responsive will be prioritised
Project deliverability 50%	
Criteria	Details
Financial viability (10%)	Project budget clearly outlines the most significant cost line-items required or the development of the project, along with a reasonable timeline for the expenses (direct and in-kind costs are identified). Councils financial risk mitigation measures to be clearly identified eg how councils will manage increasing material supply and costs.
Deliverability (10%)	Project methodology is clear and feasible within the parameters of the program.
Timeliness of delivery (10%)	Applicant demonstrates commitment to roll out project quickly. Project schedule and project plan are clear and identify key deliverable dates and any approvals within program timeframes, including a schedule showing that the project will be completed in accordance with the guidelines.
Risk mitigation (10%)	Risk assessment included with strategies to mitigate project risks.
Value for money (10%)	Project uses funding effectively to maximise the scale and impact of the project. Projects that reduce on-going maintenance and management costs will be assessed favorably.



Application process and timeframes

Table 2 outlines the application and assessment process and timeframes for the 2023–24 funding round of the program:

Month	Milestone	Action
February 2024	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces announces opening of 2023-24 grants round	Councils notified. Online applications open.
29 April 2024	Applications close	Initial check of council information
May 2024	Independent assessment of projects scored against criteria	Recommendations to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for approval of successful projects
June 2024	Announcement of successful projects	Councils notified and funding agreements issued and executed
July 2024- January 2026	Commencement of capital work projects. Projects due for completion within 18 months	Ongoing monitoring of project delivery, councils submit progress reports and final acquittal of grant funding
July 2024 - July 2026	Commencement of planning projects that will lead to capital projects. Projects to be completed and construction started within 24 months	Ongoing monitoring of project delivery, councils submit progress reports and final acquittal of grant funding



The Greater Sydney Green Grid connects communities to the landscape. It is a long-term vision for a network of high-quality green areas — from regional parks to local parks and playgrounds — that connect centres, public transport and public spaces to green infrastructure and landscape features. Within the public realm, it includes enhanced waterway corridors, transport routes, suburban streets, footpaths and cycleways.

The Greater Sydney Green Grid offers a network of green spaces that is far greater than the sum of its parts. It will keep the region cool, encourage healthy lifestyles, support walking and cycling, provide better access to open spaces, enhance bushland and support ecological resilience. Planning and delivery of the Green Grid will be influenced by the ways people move through places and the multiple roles of Green Grid corridors.

The delivery of the Greater Sydney Green Grid will build on past investments in the Regional Tracks and Trails Framework. Transport for NSW established the Strategic Cycleway Corridors Program, which will provide high-quality priority cycling routes across Greater Sydney.

Opportunities to integrate the Strategic Cycleway Corridors Network with local bike networks and the Greater Sydney Green Grid will be an important part of linking centres, precincts and places.



Program management

Successful applicants must 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 the timeframe as per 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 terms of the agreement.

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

Approvals

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

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. Other sources of funding will not be considered as match funding.

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.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Grant recipients must:

1. Provide high resolution 'before' and 'after' images.
2. Provide 'before' and 'after' reporting on core indicators requested by the department.
3. Provide monthly reports and a final acquittal report via SmartyGrants at the completion of project.



Project opening event and promotion

Grant recipients must acknowledge the funding contribution from the NSW Government in all communications and media for the project in accordance with the [NSW Government Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

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 opening and completion ceremonies, consulting beforehand on available dates where practicable); and
- provide 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 Public Spaces, 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.

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.

How to apply

1. Familiarise yourself with the grant requirements set out in these guidelines and determine if you are eligible.
2. Complete and submit your application in SmartyGrants by 4pm, 29 April 2024.

Successful applications will be announced in June 2024.

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. If the problem continues, please contact SmartyGrants at:

- service@smartygrants.com.au
- Telephone support **03 9320 6888**
Support desk hours: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
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.

When you attach files to support the application, we strongly recommend you keep files under 5 megabytes and use concise and descriptive file names.

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: greenspace@planning.nsw.gov.au

Complaints procedure

Any complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

If you have questions about grant decisions for this grant opportunity, please send them to greenspace@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.

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.

