

Green Links Grants Program

Application guidelines 2024



Acknowledgements

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge their ongoing connection to land, water and natural and built landscapes, and acknowledge the ongoing contribution this makes to our iconic urban waterways such as the Birrarung / Yarra, Parwan / Barwon (and Wirribi Yulluk / Werribee rivers).

We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Traditional Owners to support self-determination and the protection of Country. The Victorian Government is committed to working towards equity of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice for Traditional Owners

Author

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Photo credit

Community planting day, Werribee River Association

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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ISBN 978-1-76136-947-6 (pdf/online/MS word)

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Protecting our waterways so wildlife can thrive

Victoria's waterways support biodiversity and are home to more than 1,800 species of native plants and 600 species of native animals. Even in highly modified urban waterways, natural vegetation provides vital habitat corridors for threatened species.

Waterways are sites of significant importance and cultural value to Traditional Owners. Through their ongoing association and relationship with Country, Traditional Owners maintain unique cultural and spiritual connections to the waterways and their lands, plants and animals.

Urban waterways and their parkland corridors also play a vital role in supporting community wellbeing. They provide safe, natural places for people to spend time and engage with nature. This has a measurable impact in reducing depression, anxiety and stress in an individual and community. Increasing urban land use, development pressures, and climate change pose an ever-increasing risk to the health and values of our waterways, and there is a need to act now to avoid an otherwise inevitable decline in waterway health and habitat.

The Green Links Grants Program is helping to address this decline by investing \$10 million in revegetation and associated on-ground actions that improve habitat, water quality and provide cool green spaces for community.

The Green Links Grant Program aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase habitat and improved condition of urban waterways through revegetation and associated activities
- Improve the amenity values of waterways for the community
- Support the management of waterways and their lands as connected living entities in line with the cultural values of Traditional Owners and community visions.

The Green Links program will endeavour to revegetate up to 200ha of land, resulting in healthier local communities and environments by enhancing the values derived from waterways and supporting the management of waterways and their lands in line with the cultural values of Traditional Owners and community visions.

Round 1 was held in November 2023, with the Minister for Water, the Hon. Harriet Shing, announcing the 23 successful projects in February 2024. These projects share a total of \$6.036 million in funding.

You can find out more about the Round 1 projects at water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants.

Guidelines for Round 2

1. Who can apply?

The following organisations can apply for funding under Round 2:

- Community or environmental volunteer groups and networks that are not-for-profit and have a focus on on-ground land and natural environment improvement work. This includes Landcare groups and networks, Friends of groups, Riverkeeper/association groups, Conservation Management Networks and Coastcare groups.
- Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)
- Schools
- Local government authorities
- Land and/or water management authorities.

In addition, to be eligible for funding applicants must be:

- an incorporated body, cooperative or association (including business associations)
- be financially solvent
- hold insurance sufficient to safeguard volunteers and participants involved in the funded activities, including public liability insurance of at least \$10 million and personal accident insurance.

Applicants who are not incorporated or don't have the required insurance listed above can partner with another organisation who does meet the criteria, known as an auspice.

The auspice group or organisation will enter a contract with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and will be legally responsible for the project. They will receive the grant funding and be responsible for reporting and acquittal (they will likely expect you to help or do this, but the legal requirement is theirs).

Please contact urban.waterways@deeca.vic.gov.au to check eligibility.

2. Who cannot apply?

The following cannot apply for funding:

- Individuals
- Private sector business and agencies other than those listed above
- Commonwealth Government and Victorian State agencies (other than those listed above).

3. What might be funded?

Eligible organisations can apply for funding for projects that are for targeted on-ground works for revegetation and associated works.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Site preparation
- Planting
- Establishment or procurement of seed, seedlings and established plants
- Early maintenance works to support plant establishment (such as, watering and follow-up weed and pest control)
- Fencing (e.g. to protect from stock and human trampling, pest grazing)
- Works to improve biodiversity such as habitat restoration, nesting boxes, ground habitat replacement.

Works may complement previous or planned works which contribute to revegetation and habitat restoration.

Project management funding may also be available for applicants from community groups and RAPs. This cannot exceed 5% of total funding requested.

Projects that demonstrate partnerships with Traditional Owners and/or community groups on applications are highly encouraged.

Projects involving community tree planting events and/or other opportunities for involvement for local communities such as Friends groups and schools to participate are also encouraged.

All activities must be completed by 30 June 2027, with final reporting and acquittal required by October 2027.

Program area

In 2024, the Green Links Grants Program will provide funding for revegetation projects along urban waterways across the State.

Any waterway (excluding marine areas)¹ within the State of Victoria that passes through an urban area or receives stormwater run-off from an urbanised catchment will be eligible. This includes waterways outside the Melbourne Growth Boundary which are impacted by urbanisation from regional cities/centres, i.e. Bendigo, Ballarat, etc.

Projects must be located on public land², or land owned by RAPs, adjacent to an urban waterway, connecting to the riparian and/or waterway corridor. Areas that connect waterway habitat to other significant habitat patches are also eligible where habitat value for waterway species can be evidenced.

Projects on private land, excluding that owned by RAPs, are not eligible in this round.

Priorities for funding

The following projects will be given priority:

- Waterways located within the geographic area covered by the:
 - Waterways of the West Action Plan

- Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yulluk) Action Plan
- Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, the Yarra Strategic Plan.
- Waterways identified by the Department of Transport and Planning under the Planning Controls For Waterways Program
- Projects that provide significant new areas of habitat
- Projects that promote the concept of waterways as living and connected systems
- Projects in areas facing increasing urbanisation pressures and population growth.

4. What will not be funded?

The program will not fund the following activities:

- The purchase of land
- Infrastructure works, including major drainage or waterway augmentation
- Undertaking of routine maintenance and pest control activities, i.e. rabbit warren destruction and baiting
- Purchase and planting of non-indigenous vegetation
- Activities that were already planned and funded, without a net expansion on previous project area
- Research, feasibility or other studies or business case activities
- Recurrent personnel and operating costs, for example staffing, rent and utility costs
- Activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding
- Activities located outside the State of Victoria.

5. How much funding is available?

The total funding available in Round 2 is \$2 million.

Applicants can apply for project funding between \$20,000 - \$350,000.

Eligible organisations can apply for funding for different projects as separate and unique applications.

Round 3 is expected to open in 2025.

6. What are the assessment criteria?

All applications will first be checked for eligibility to ensure that the applicant organisation, project site and their activities are eligible for funding.

All eligible applications will then be assessed using the criteria listed below. Each criterion is given a percentage weighting to indicate its relative importance in the assessment process.

¹ Marine focused grant opportunities are available through the DEECA Marine and Coasts grants programs <https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/grants>

² Also referred to as Crown Land or Government Land or considered Public Open Space as defined by the Victoria Planning Authority.

Applications should address all relevant criteria, with the level of detail commensurate to the scale of the project and funding requested. Criteria have been developed to ensure that projects meet initiative eligibility as outlined for Environmental Contribution funds³.

Criterion 1: Why is this project required? (20%)

Applications must demonstrate the need for the project, for example, by describing:

- How the project can help support:
 - riparian habitat
 - high value remanent vegetation or endangered species
 - biodiversity improvements, and/or
 - community amenity and values.
- If it is located in an area or community facing increasing pressures from urbanisation and growth and will contribute to urban greening and heat reduction
- If it represents alignment to, directly addresses or supports any relevant strategies and place-based landscape plans, e.g. Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (the Yarra Strategic Plan), Healthy Waterways Strategy, Regional Catchment or Waterway Strategies, local masterplans.

Criterion 2: What will this project deliver? (30%)

Applications must detail:

- a) What the funding will be used to deliver (the outputs). For example:
- X number of hectares of land prepared and revegetated
 - X number of km of fencing to protect revegetation works
 - X number of hectares of land treated for weeds or pest control
 - X number of community events or volunteer hours.
- b) The benefits of the project. For example, benefits of the project may include biodiversity gains, waterway health improvements, vegetation connectivity gains, improved amenity, and/or community values and social outcomes.

Criterion 3: How will this project be delivered? (35%)

Applicants must submit a completed project plan on the template provided in the application document pack.

The project plan template is designed for applicants to clearly outline how they plan to deliver their project, including:

- Key delivery activities and outputs
- Project timeframe and associated milestones
- Project risks including consideration of flooding, fire and other hazards
- Governance and decision-making frameworks
- Stakeholders, including any potential impact and benefits for Traditional Owners and gender equity impacts.

In addition to the project plan template, applicants can submit additional documentation that supports their project, including (if applicable):

- All relevant planning, approvals and management plans (e.g. cultural heritage) that have been obtained, or relevant approvals that have been factored into the project plan and can be delivered within the required timeframe
- How any passive watering or integrated water management principles would be utilised as the source for watering
- Consideration of and addressing any potential impacts on gender equity
- For projects within the Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, the Yarra Strategic Plan area, how the project is consistent with the Strategic Plan's decision-making framework (Appendix E of the Plan; [Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, the Yarra Strategic Plan - appendix \(water.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.water.vic.gov.au))
- How any potential impacts on and benefits for Traditional Owners, their partnership, values and culture have been considered, and how opportunities for self-determined involvement in delivery of the project have been included.

Criterion 4: Project finances and risk (15%)

Applicants must demonstrate value for money. This can be done by outlining:

- Who will be undertaking the works
- Supplier(s) expertise, experience and capacity to deliver
- How will the project be delivered in a timely manner
- What risks are there to delivery
- Does the project attract delivery partner contributions and/or further public, not-for-profit or private sector investment.

Additionally, a budget template is provided in the application document pack for applicants.

This should be submitted as part of the application and will outline total project income and expenditure, including additional cash and in-kind contributions.

³ Environmental contributions are funds collected from water supply authorities under the Water Industry Act 1994 (the Act). Under a 2004 amendment to the Act, environmental contributions are collected to fund initiatives that seek to promote the sustainable management of water or address adverse water-related

Additional contributions can include in-kind support (time spent planning and delivering the projects) as well as cash contributions (such as planting and maintenance costs).

All quotes and detailed costings for materials and contractors should be provided where available.

Program-wide considerations

The following program-wide factors will also be considered:

- Equitable distribution – alongside assessment criteria consideration is given to program funds being distributed as equitably as possible across eligible organisations and program area
- Delivery partners previous performance in delivering DEECA projects.

7. What supporting documents will need to be provided?

Please submit the following documents with your application:

- Project plan (template supplied)
- Budget (template supplied), including any relevant quotes
- Location with a map, if possible, of target area/site of works

You may also include:

- Evidence to verify confirmation of other funding sources or in-kind contributions
- All relevant planning, approvals and management plans (e.g. cultural heritage), or demonstration that those planning considerations can be factored into the projects and still be delivered within the required timeframes
- Permissions from landowners or land managers to conduct the project on their land e.g. letters of support
- Any relevant supporting strategies or plans (e.g. Action or Master plans, Urban Forest, Urban Cooling or Vegetation strategies, etc).

8. What are the funding conditions?

Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with not-for-profit organisations and Local Government Authorities.

The DEECA Transfer Payment Funding Agreement is used for Victorian public entities, as defined under section 5 of the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on

<https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

The activity does not include using the funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity, grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislations and regulations, including but not limited to:

- The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Heritage Act 2017
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic).

Tax implications

Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant funding.

Successful applicants without an ABN will need to provide a completed Australian Taxation Office form 'Statement by a Supplier' so that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support and follow promotional guidelines (<https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/grants>). This acknowledgement will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Payments

Payments will be made as long as:

- both parties have signed the funding agreement
- grant recipients provide reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the activity is progressing as expected
- other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

9. Ongoing evaluation/reporting requirements

Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement.

In addition to regular progress reports, a final project evaluation is required as part of the project acquittal. Evaluation is essential to ensure the best use of public monies and for making informed future policy and

investment decisions. The evaluation will seek to answer questions such as:

- Did the project achieve its desired/intended results or outcomes?
- What benefit did the project create for the local community?
- How did the project contribute to the Community Vision and/or Traditional Owner self-determined priorities?
- What is the long-term sustainability of the work undertaken?
- Were there undesired/unintended outcomes?

Reporting templates will be supplied to grant recipients with the grant agreement.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by DEECA for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications. Personal information may also be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other Government departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and other applicable laws.

DEECA is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing Foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au

10. What is the application process?

Applications are submitted online using the Grants Online portal.

To apply, go to the grant program web page www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants and click on the 'Start New Application' button. To return to a saved draft application, click on the 'Access Saved Application' button.

Attaching required documents:

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, (Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG). The maximum file size for each file is 10MB.

You will receive an application number when you submit your application online. Please quote this number in all communications with DEECA relating to your application.

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application, you can email them to grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au quoting your application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

Make sure your application is submitted by **5pm on Thursday 5 December 2024**

Note: No hard copy applications will be accepted. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

11. Additional information

Additional information is available at the program web page www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants

If you require assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au.

12. What is the notification process?

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback on their application.

13. Key dates

Applications open	Midday 24 October 2024
Applications close	5pm 5 December 2024
Applicants notified	February 2024
Activities commence by	No later than June 2025
Activities completed and	June 2027
Final and acquittal reports submitted	October 2027

14. Checklist

Read these guidelines and the information about this grant program at www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants before applying and complete the following checklist.

Have you:

- Read these guidelines carefully?
- Checked if you are, or your organisation is, eligible for this grant funding?
- Checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding?

- Checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity?
- Prepared the appropriate supporting documents?

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million (12.5% of the population).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. Another is that the public sector has become more efficient. A third is that the public sector has become more attractive to workers. A fourth is that the public sector has become more diverse.

The public sector has become a more important part of the economy because of the increasing importance of services. The public sector has become more efficient because of the increasing competition from the private sector. The public sector has become more attractive to workers because of the increasing demand for public services. The public sector has become more diverse because of the increasing demand for a wider range of services.

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