



Grant Application Guidelines

Urban Forest Fund 2018

Key dates

Information sessions	13 August, 12:30pm, Council House 2 6 September, 5:00pm, Council House 2
Applications open	27 August, 2018 9:00am
Applications close	22 October, 2018 12:00pm (midday)
Assessment period	October – December, 2018
Council meeting	March, 2019
Notification of outcome	March, 2019

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Introduction

The Urban Forest Fund provides financial support to new greening projects on private property, such as gardens, tree planting, vertical greening or green roofs.

The Urban Forest Fund provides matched funding grants for greening projects, where we will match successful applicant's investment dollar-for-dollar. In 2018, we are offering grants from \$25,000 to \$500,000.

The Urban Forest Fund will support a wide range of projects, including:

- tree planting
- green roofs, walls and facades
- creation of new green spaces
- vegetation cover to increase biodiversity
- Water Sensitive Urban Design
- improvements to below-ground soil conditions to support healthy vegetation.

Further information is available on the [Urban Forest Fund website](#)¹.

Why do we want to support greening projects on private property?

Trees, plants and green open spaces are essential infrastructure in our city, helping to cool the environment, reduce pollution, support biodiversity, boost the economy and improve health and wellbeing.

The City of Melbourne has a number of strategies and programs in place to increase the quantity and quality of green space in our city. We are working to double our tree canopy cover, increase the amount of open space, green our iconic laneways, improve biodiversity and enhance our urban ecosystems.

While these programs are making an impact on Melbourne's public realm, widespread greening across all areas of the city will lead to much better environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Approximately 75 per cent of the land within the City of Melbourne municipal area is privately owned or managed, so there is huge potential for the private realm to contribute more towards greening our city.

We need greater investment in green infrastructure and that requires a new and innovative approach. The Urban Forest Fund aims to build partnerships between government and the private sector to deliver additional greening above and beyond existing Council capital works investment. Melbourne is a truly liveable city and we want to collaborate across the community to make our city even better.

¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urbanforestfund>

Eligibility checklist

Before you continue, please ensure your project meets the following requirements. Applications that do not meet the requirements or do not provide the correct supporting documentation will not be considered.

Mark Y/N	Your project must:	More information:
	Be located within the City of Melbourne municipal area	To find out if your project location is within the City of Melbourne, head to City of Melbourne municipality map (PDF 315 KB) ² .
	Be primarily focused on creating new green infrastructure	The overall greening outcome must be more green cover than prior to the project commencing.
	Have demonstrated community benefits	As detailed below under 'Community Benefits' on page 10.
	Have demonstrated environmental benefits	Such as urban cooling, stormwater retention, pollution reduction and biodiversity. See page 9.
	Be visible from the public realm or be able to be regularly accessed by a large number of people	The 'public realm' refers to any area that is able to be freely accessed by anyone, such as streets, squares, parks, green spaces and other outdoor places that require no key to access them.
	Have a clear plan for long-term maintenance	A maintenance plan should include types of maintenance activities, who will carry them out and how the maintenance will be funded.
	Have determined if a planning permit is required, and if so, a permit application must have been submitted.	If you are unsure if you require a planning permit, visit the Do I Need a Permit ³ page on the City of Melbourne website. Please note there may be a small cost associated with obtaining written advice.
	Be located on land owned by the applicant or, where greening is to take place on private property that is not owned by the applicant, a secured lease is required for at least five years and written consent must be provided	You'll be required to submit evidence, as detailed below.

² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urbanforestfund>

³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/planning-and-building-services/planning-applications/Pages/melbourne-planning-scheme-need-permit.aspx>

	by the building owner.	
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If you have any questions or wish to discuss these requirements, please contact the team on (03) 9658 9065.

Required documentation

The Urban Forest Fund supports projects that are well-resolved and demonstrate commitment to delivery. Depending on the project, you will need to prepare some, or all, of the following documentation for your application:

- Concept designs, including detail about irrigation, growing medium and plant details (these don't have to be final construction drawings, but the more detail you provide the easier it will be for the assessment panel to understand your project).
- A project timeline.
- A formal quote or itemised costing from a licensed Quantity Surveyor.
- Formal written advice from the City of Melbourne Planning Department that either:
 - a planning permit is not required;
 - an application for a planning permit has been submitted; or
 - a planning permit has been issued (see the [Do I Need a Permit⁴](#) page on the City of Melbourne website).
- Formal written advice from a licensed Building Surveyor detailing whether a building permit will be required for the project and including specific advice with regards to structural capacity (for projects that rely on existing buildings or structures).
- Evidence of either ownership or lease agreement for the property where the project will take place.
- Written permission from the property owner for the project (where the applicant is not the owner).
- Maintenance plan
- Detailed project costs, either a formal quote from a suitably qualified practitioner or a licensed quantity surveyor.

You will be able to submit up to ten additional documents with your application. This might include visualisations or renders, or any other evidence to support your application.

Submitting your application

Grant applications must be submitted online via the SmartyGrants system. The link to SmartyGrants is provided on the [Urban Forest Fund website⁵](#). In order to access the system, you will need to create an applicant profile. This will allow you to save your application and return to it again.

Visit the [SmartyGrants website⁶](#) for more information.

Deadlines

Applications must be submitted no later than 12:00pm (midday) on Monday 22 October, 2018. The online application system (SmartyGrants) will close at this time, preventing late submissions. To ensure fairness for all applicants, no extensions will be granted beyond this time. We strongly encourage you to submit your application well before the cut off time to allow extra time for any submission complications.

Please note that late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

⁴ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/planning-and-building-services/planning-applications/Pages/melbourne-planning-scheme-need-permit.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urbanforestfund>

⁶ <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

Assessment process

The assessment process will take place from October 2018 to March 2019 and includes the following stages:

Eligibility screening

All submitted applications will undergo preliminary screening to ensure that:

- All required documentation has been submitted
- All mandatory application questions are answered
- All eligibility requirements are met.

Panel assessment

All eligible applications will progress to the assessment stage. Each application will be scored against the assessment criteria and ranked by an assessment panel. The assessment panel is made up of community members and green infrastructure experts.

Formal endorsement

The assessment panel will recommend applications for funding. These recommendations will be submitted to Council via the formal process for consideration and endorsement.

Note that the endorsement process can take up to eight weeks, and may extend longer if amendments are requested by Council prior to endorsement.

Notification of outcomes

After Council have formally endorsed the provisional allocation of funding, all applicants will be notified of the status of their application. Depending on outstanding planning permit applications, a public announcement may or may not take place at this time.

Applicants should note that Council endorsement grants the applicant to progress to the next stage: establishment of a formal funding agreement.

Funds will not be committed until a formal funding agreement is in place, and an agreement will not be signed until all required conditions are met.

Funding

How much funding can I ask for?

The Urban Forest Fund provides matched funding grants for greening projects, where we will match successful applicant's investment dollar-for-dollar. In 2018, we are offering grants from \$25,000 to \$500,000. This means the minimum total project value must be at least \$50,000, with \$25,000 contributed by the applicant and \$25,000 committed by the Urban Forest Fund.

The maximum grant amount available is \$500,000, which would require a minimum investment of \$500,000 by the applicant. If the total project cost is greater than \$1 million, the Urban Forest Fund will offer no more than \$500,000 and the remainder must be funded by the applicant.

For example:

A green roof project is taking place as part of the construction of a new building. The entire project will cost \$10 million, but the green roof and associated works (such as waterproofing) are costed at \$1.4 million. The

applicant may seek half of the cost of the green roof component, up to a maximum value of \$500,000. In this example, the applicant could ask for \$500,000.

For example:

An Owners Corporation plans to install a new garden area at the front of their building. The project has been costed at \$150,000. The Owners Corporation can apply for a grant of \$75,000 from the Urban Forest Fund.

What can I seek funding for?

The Urban Forest Fund grants will co-fund the cost of greening and associated necessary works. You are required to submit either a formal itemised quote or costing from a licensed Quantity Surveyor as part of the application. Projects costs that do not directly relate to the greening project must not be included in the request for funds. Some associated projects costs may be included, such as design and project management, but this should not exceed more than 10 percent of the total project cost.

The majority of the funding request should be allocated towards greening outcomes. Applications will be considered with respect to 'value for money', so projects that deliver maximum quantity of vegetation for the cost will be more likely to score well.

Please note that the cost of ongoing maintenance is not covered by the grants. The applicant must be prepared to maintain the green asset to a high standard for at least five years following completion.

Can I seek funding from other sources?

The Urban Forest Fund offers matched funding grants, meaning that applicants must have their own funds available to invest in the project. Applicants may source their portion of the investment from other sources at their discretion.

How will funds be allocated to successful applicants?

Funding will be provided to successful applicants via a formal funding agreement that stipulates milestone payments. Milestone dates and amounts may be negotiable, but are typically set with an initial up-front payment and a second payment upon formal project completion.

Assessment criteria

Applications will be scored against assessment criteria that correlate with information provided on the application form. The assessment criteria are outlined below.

What is the total green cover amount achieved by the project (including horizontal and vertical surfaces)?

Please provide an estimate of the total green coverage expected to be achieved through the project. This should be a combination of any horizontal surface coverage (such as garden bed area, tree canopy cover) and vertical surface coverage (from green walls or green facades). When calculating tree canopy coverage, please estimate the size of the tree canopy at maturity.

Is the project in an area with low tree canopy cover?

This criterion will be assessed based on the location of the project and the City of Melbourne's existing tree canopy cover data. To identify if your project is located in an area of low canopy cover, access the local Urban Forest Precinct Plan for your area on the [City of Melbourne website](#)⁷ and head to the 'Prioritising tree planting in streets' section.

Is the project in an area with low open space?

This criterion will be assessed based on the location of the project and open space data presented in the City of Melbourne's [Open Space Strategy background paper](#)⁸.

Will the project contribute replacement greening in an area where significant tree loss has occurred from development?

This criterion will be assessed based on the location of the project and the spatial distribution of City of Melbourne tree removals and revenue from tree removals.

Will the project contribute to reducing stormwater runoff?

To assess this criterion, the panel will consider whether the project demonstrates any specifically designed measures to capture rain or stormwater runoff. This might include:

- Permeable surfaces in the ground that will absorb water, such as tree plots and gardens beds
- Raingardens
- Passive irrigation
- Water collection tanks.

Additional points will be allocated towards projects that reduce stormwater runoff in the [Elizabeth Street Catchment area](#)⁹.

Does the project provide specific and substantial biodiversity benefits?

⁷ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/parks-open-spaces/urban-forest/pages/urban-forest-precinct-plans.aspx>

⁸ [https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/meetingagendaitemattachments/579/9974/5.3%20open%20space%20strategy%20\(pages%2041%20to%20332\).pdf](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/meetingagendaitemattachments/579/9974/5.3%20open%20space%20strategy%20(pages%2041%20to%20332).pdf)

⁹ http://urbanwater.melbourne.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/COM_SERVICE_PROD-9175506-v1-FINAL_Elizabeth_St_Catchment_Plan.pdf

While any greening project will provide some level of benefits for wildlife in the city, this question is an opportunity for applicants to tell the panel about any parts of their design or project that are specifically designed to:

- Provide habitat (e.g. food resources or shelter)
- Support the movement of wildlife across the landscape (e.g. forming part of a corridor for particular species)
- Reduce threats to biodiversity (e.g. passively excluding stray cats/dogs, preventing weed invasion into adjacent habitat, reducing artificial light at night)

Is the project innovative?

This question is an opportunity to tell the panel any aspects of your project that are innovative. This might include (but is not limited to):

- New approaches to design to deliver better greening outcomes
- Innovative approaches to retrofitting green infrastructure to existing structures
- Innovative research integrated into the project
- New ideas or technology that progresses the greening industry in Australia.

Innovative projects should include an approach for sharing the information with the industry.

Has suitable expertise been engaged for the project?

Green infrastructure projects can be complex so it's important to engage the right expertise. Each project is unique and will require different expertise, but some experts to consider for your project might be:

- Architect
- Landscape architect
- Green infrastructure construction specialist
- Maintenance contractor
- Town planner
- Building surveyor

To what extent does the project provide benefit to the community?

Due to the positive environmental benefits provided by green infrastructure, such as pollution removal and cooling, greening projects will always have some level of benefit to the broader community. However, under this criterion the panel will assess the extent to which your project delivers additional benefit to the community, and how broadly the benefits are distributed.

Community benefits associated with greening projects might include (but are not limited to):

- **Giving back:** will your project be giving back to the community in some way?
 - Discounted or free services for not-for-profits
 - Donations of food or other goods
 - Spaces available for community use
- **Engagement opportunities:** Will your project engage with community groups or organisations to build capacity?
 - Volunteer or vocational opportunities

- Partnership with not-for-profits
- Social enterprise
- **Education:** Will your project contribute knowledge or provide research opportunities to further the green infrastructure industry?
 - Tours for schools and/or industry practitioners
 - Interpretive signage on site
 - Research partnerships with education institutions
 - Formal research integrated into the project (with publicly accessible results)

You should also consider which groups within the community will experience benefits from the project, such as residents, workers, visitors or vulnerable people.

Who can access and enjoy the project?

The Urban Forest Fund supports greening projects on private property and depending on the location, this will mean that people who have access to enjoy the green infrastructure will also vary.

Please use this question to describe the level of access that people will have to the project. In your answer, consider:

- Who will have access to the project? (e.g. residents, staff, maintenance crews, members of the public)
- Roughly how many people can access the project? Everyone? Or a smaller number of people?
- When can people access the project? Is it freely open all of the time, or only during certain hours?

Does the project represent good value for money?

Value for money is a subjective assessment made by the panel based on the overall application, including:

- project cost
- scale of greening outcome
- environmental benefits, such as tree canopy cover, improvements to biodiversity, open space and stormwater reduction
- strategic benefit for the City of Melbourne
- community benefit
- amenity benefit for the public realm.

Projects which deliver high quality and quantity of vegetation and a range of other benefits will be scored more highly.

Frequently asked questions

If my application was unsuccessful in 2017, can I apply again in 2018?

Yes. You may resubmit the same project again in 2018; however it is strongly recommended that you contact the City of Melbourne to seek feedback on why your application was unsuccessful in 2017.

You should also check the 2018 eligibility criteria to confirm that your project still qualifies for funding. You will need to complete a new application form because some of the questions have changed.

Does the Fund support projects that are commercial in nature?

Yes, provided that the primary objective of the project is to increase greening outcomes. For example, a green roof with a café on it is acceptable, but a rooftop café with a small amount of greening may not be.

Can the City of Melbourne provide advice on the viability of my green project?

The City of Melbourne cannot provide technical advice relating to the feasibility or design of your greening project. Independent advice should be sought from a relevant expert. Information about the types of expertise to consider for green roof and wall projects can be found on the [Growing Green Guide](#)¹⁰ website.

Can I include the cost of maintenance in my grant application?

No. Urban Forest Fund grants apply only to design and delivery of your greening project. Ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of the applicant.

Can I include the cost of project management in my funding application?

Project management fees can be included in the funding application, but must not exceed 10 per cent of the total project cost.

How can I find out if I need a planning permit?

If you are unsure if you require a planning permit, visit the [Do I Need a Permit](#)¹¹ page on the City of Melbourne website. Please note there is a small cost associated with obtaining written advice.

Can I seek an extension on the deadline?

No. All applications must be submitted by the final submission date as specified under the application details. Please allow adequate time to submit your application prior to the deadline.

Why do I need written advice from a Building Surveyor?

When considering if a building permit is needed for your project, a Building Surveyor will assess what types of works will be required to deliver your project, including structural enhancements to existing structures. This information is useful for both applicants and the panel when considering the feasibility of a potential project.

Note that a Building permit is not required at the time of application, just advice as to whether one will be required if the project proceeds.

Contact us

We are here to help you craft a high quality application. Please get in touch with any questions or discuss your project idea.

Phone (03) 9658 9658

Email: urbanforestfund@melbourne.vic.gov.au

¹⁰ <http://www.growinggreenguide.org/>

¹¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/planning-and-building-services/planning-applications/Pages/melbourne-planning-scheme-need-permit.aspx>