



Grant Application Guidelines

Urban Forest Fund 2023

Key dates

Applications open	5pm, Monday 25 September 2023
Applications close	5pm, Wednesday 31 January 2024
Assessment period	February – June 2024
Notification of outcome	June 2024

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Introduction

The Urban Forest Fund provides matched-funding grants for new greening projects on private property, where we will match successful applicants' investment dollar-for-dollar. In 2023, we are offering grants under two streams:

- Stream 1 High-impact greening: Grants of \$50,000 to \$500,000 to support high impact greening projects with public benefits
- Stream 2 Laneway greening: Grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000 to support community-led, laneway-specific greening outcomes

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
- laneway greening projects, for example, in privately owned laneways that provide public pedestrian access, or where neighbours within laneways join together to green their building facades.

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. In particular, private green spaces can help to create connected habitat for biodiversity to move through the urban landscape.

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 want to help people create beautiful, cool green spaces on their own properties. These private spaces can include residential communal spaces, rooftops, and laneways.

Why are we offering this scope of grants?

Since the Urban Forest Fund was established in 2017, we have offered four rounds of matched-funding grants to deliver a diverse range of green infrastructure projects, both small and large in scale. Each round, the scope of grants may change based on Council priorities, community needs, and available funds.

Find out about our previously [funded projects](#)² on the City of Melbourne website.

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

In 2023, we have introduced a laneway greening grant stream to the Urban Forest Fund Partnership Program. This will enable more building owners, tenants, and local businesses to improve the amenity of their local laneways through greening privately owned laneways, or building facades that interface with laneways. Laneway greening applications must meet the eligibility criteria for laneway greening (found on page 7) to be considered for co-funding.

² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest-fund/funded-projects/Pages/funded-projects.aspx>

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.

Check box: (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 ³ .
	Be primarily focused on creating new green space or infrastructure.	The overall greening outcome must be more green cover than prior to the project commencing.
	Be completed by 31 May 2025	'Completion' means that the greening component of your project is complete and able to be accessed by the intended users.
	Have demonstrated environmental benefits.	See Assessment Criteria on page 13.
	Have demonstrated community benefits.	See Assessment Criteria on page 14.
	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.
	Have a clear plan for long-term maintenance, for a minimum of five years.	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.	For more information visit the Do I Need a Permit ⁴ 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 not owned by the applicant, a secured lease for at least five years is required, along with written consent from the building owner.	Projects are required to be in place for at least five years. You'll be required to submit evidence, as detailed below.

³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/melbourne-profile/Pages/city-maps.aspx#boundary>

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

Stream 2 Laneway Greening – additional eligibility checklist

If you're applying for a grant under Stream 2 Laneway Greening, in addition to the above checklist, please ensure you meet the following requirements for laneway greening applications:

Check box: (Mark Y/N)	Your project must:	More information:
	Be located on privately owned property that interfaces with a publicly accessible laneway, or be located on a privately owned laneway that allows for daytime pedestrian traffic.	Laneway greening projects typically consist of green walls fixed to privately-owned building facades. If the laneway is privately owned, the greening can be a combination of green walls, in-ground planting and trees, planter boxes, and pot plants.
	Include a detailed landscape plan specifying the green wall system and dimensions (if relevant), the proposed planting, any required irrigation and lighting, and the nominated suppliers for plants and green wall/green infrastructure systems.	Refer to the Required Documentation on page 8.
	Include a structural design with certification for any wall fixings, prepared by suitably qualified persons.	Refer to the Required Documentation on page 8.
	Have at least one person in the local community who will champion this project.	See Assessment Criteria on page 17.
	Demonstrate collaborative greening efforts by the laneway community.	See Assessment Criteria on page 18.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the grant requirements, please contact the team on (03) 9658 9658 or email urbanforestfund@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

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).
- Information about how the project will provide benefits for people and the environment.
- Estimates of plant and canopy cover in square metres, before and after the 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 Permit](#)⁴ page on the City of Melbourne website).
- Formal written advice from a licensed Building Surveyor including whether a building permit will be required for the project, and specific advice regarding structural capacity (for projects that rely on existing buildings or structures).
- Evidence of ownership, or a 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 as either a formal quote from a suitably qualified practitioner, or a licensed quantity surveyor.
- Laneway greening project proposals comprising green wall systems fixed to building facades must include details for the green wall system, nominated suppliers, planting lists, horticultural planting maintenance and irrigation plans, and structural design and signoff where required.

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 website](#)¹. 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 website](#)⁵ for more information.

Deadlines

Applications must be submitted no later than **5pm on Wednesday 31 January 2024**. 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.

⁵ <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

Assessment process

The assessment process will take place from February to June 2024 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 experts in green infrastructure, arboriculture, and ecology.

Formal endorsement

The Assessment Panel will provide funding recommendations to the Urban Forest Fund Steering Group. 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.

Applicants should note that Council endorsement allows 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.

Public announcement

Applicants should note that the City of Melbourne will make a public announcement of the successful grant applicants at the conclusion of the assessment process from June 2024 onwards. Information submitted in your application may be included in this announcement.

Funding

How much funding can I ask for?

The Urban Forest Fund provides matched-funding grants for greening projects, where we will match successful applicants' investment dollar-for-dollar. In 2023, we're offering matched-funding grants under two streams:

- Stream 1 High-impact greening: Grants of \$50,000 to \$500,000 to support high impact greening projects with public benefits
- Stream 2 Laneway greening: Grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000 to support community-led, laneway-specific greening outcomes

This means the minimum total project value for a project under 'Stream 1 High-impact greening' must be at least \$100,000, with \$50,000 contributed by the applicant and \$50,000 committed by the Urban Forest Fund.

The maximum grant amount available under Stream 1 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.

The same principles apply for grants under 'Stream 2 Laneway greening'; however, for laneway greening projects, we are offering matched-funding grants from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum \$25,000.

For example (Stream 1 High-impact greening):

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 to cover 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 (Stream 1 High impact greening):

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.

For example (Stream 2 Laneway greening):

A business or tenant plans to green their building wall that interfaces with a publicly accessible laneway. They contact their building owner to obtain approval, then seek designs and quotes for a green wall costed at \$25,000 to supply and install. The person can apply for a grant of \$12,500. They must provide the remaining \$12,500.

The tenant tells their neighbour about the grant and their neighbour, who owns the building next door, plans a larger green wall costed at \$70,000 to supply and install. The neighbour can apply for a grant of \$25,000. They must provide the remaining \$45,000.

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 15 percent of the total project cost.

The majority of the funding request should be allocated towards greening outcomes. Applications will be assessed on '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, however, in-kind contributions are not accepted.

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.

Successful applicants will be established in the City of Melbourne's accounting system as providers and will be required to invoice for grant payments, as stipulated in the funding agreement.

Assessment criteria

Applications will be scored against assessment criteria that correlate with information provided on the application form. The assessment criteria are outlined below and varies slightly depending on which grant stream you've applied for.

General assessment criteria for all applications

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

Please provide an estimate of the total green coverage in square meters 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 (including green walls and green facades). If you are planting trees as part of your project, you will also be asked in your grant submission to provide an estimated breakdown of total tree canopy cover. When calculating tree canopy cover, please estimate the size of the tree canopy at maturity for its location. Be aware that the actual canopy size may be restricted if there is an insufficient volume of soil, such as trees in planter boxes, or inadequate space, such as in a narrow laneway.

To what extent does the project provide environmental benefits?

Under this criterion the panel will assess the extent to which your project delivers environmental benefits, and how broadly the benefits are distributed. This includes a specific section where applicants have the opportunity to tell the panel about any parts of their design or project that are specifically designed for biodiversity. This might include (but is not limited to):

- a range of indigenous and native plants that provide food for native animals
- a variety of plant and tree sizes to create structural diversity
- project supports the movement of wildlife across the landscape (for example, forming part of a corridor for particular species)
- efforts to reduce threats to biodiversity (for example, passively excluding stray cats or dogs, preventing weed invasion into adjacent habitat, reducing artificial light at night)
- additional habitat elements specifically designed to support biodiversity (for example, artificial habitat, logs and rocks)
- biodiversity monitoring that will take place on site to understand the impact the project has had on attracting local wildlife. Note that costs for ongoing biodiversity monitoring will not be funded.

See *Create habitat* from page 19 for further guidance.

While any greening project will provide some level of benefits for wildlife in the city, locally indigenous plants provide the most benefit to local wildlife. Where it's not possible to plant indigenous plants, native plants are a good substitute.

For the purpose of these grants, we consider 'indigenous plants' as those that are locally indigenous to the Greater Melbourne area. This includes any plants listed in either the Victorian Volcanic Plain ('Basalt Plains') or Gippsland Plain ('Tertiary Sands and Coast') bioregions, as detailed in the book 'Flora of Melbourne: A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area'. This book is available in libraries, or the information can be accessed online via the [VICFLORA website](https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/)⁶. We encourage the use of the Flora of

⁶ <https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/>

Melbourne, as it is an excellent resource for plant information. The [Pre-colonial plant list](#)⁷ for the City of Melbourne can also be used, which specifies species that likely occurred in City of Melbourne municipality prior to European colonisation.

Additional environmental benefits associated with your project might include (but are not limited to):

- shade and cooling from tree canopy cover
- rainwater collection and reuse
- reduction of stormwater runoff
- use of renewable energy
- use of closed waste systems
- environmental monitoring that will take place on site to assess environmental benefits delivered. Note that costs for ongoing environmental monitoring will not be funded.

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:

- Architects
- Landscape architects
- Green infrastructure design and construction specialists
- Maintenance contractors
- Town planners where planning permits are required
- Building surveyors.

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 benefits 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?

⁷ <https://data.melbourne.vic.gov.au/explore/dataset/pre-colonial-plant-list/information/>

- discounted or free services for not-for-profits
- donations of food or other goods
- spaces available for community use
- improved amenity of laneways.
- **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
 - bringing groups of neighbours together in the planning, design, and sharing of ongoing maintenance, especially for laneway greening projects.
- **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. Depending on the location, this means 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? (for example, 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 and improvements to biodiversity, open space, and reduction of stormwater runoff
- strategic benefit for the City of Melbourne
- community benefit
- amenity benefit for the public realm.

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

Stream 1: High-impact greening – additional assessment criteria

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](#)⁸ for your area on the City of Melbourne website 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 \(PDF 12.6 MB\)](#)⁹.

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.

Stream 2: Laneway greening – additional assessment criteria

Describe who will be championing your project?

'Community champions' are vital to the long-term success of laneway greening. Successful laneway greening projects in the past have been driven by people in the community who were engaged, empowered, and closely connected to the greening projects. In particular, once the project is completed, long-term success can depend greatly on the local community's collective continued engagement.

For projects under Stream 2, projects that demonstrate there is someone (or multiple people) in the local community who will champion this project will be prioritised. Ideally, we suggest at least two community champions for a project to support each other and spread the load. The role of the 'community champions' may include (but is not limited to):

- coordinating or leading planning and implementation of the Urban Forest Fund proposed laneway greening project
- developing close connections with neighbours (including local residents and businesses) to create a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the greenery in the laneway, including ongoing maintenance and care
- tracking the project's success once created (for example, monitoring which plants are doing well, any wildlife being observed, or documenting public feedback), with the intention to share findings and provide feedback to Council
- promoting the project to the broader community and advocating for more greening, which may include being interviewed for promotional and communications materials.

⁸ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/parks-open-spaces/urban-forest/pages/urban-forest-precinct-plans.aspx>

⁹ [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)

Can you demonstrate a collaborative greening effort by your laneway community?

For projects under Stream 2, projects that demonstrate a collaborative greening effort by your laneway community will be prioritised.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- Encouraging your neighbours to also apply for a grant within the same laneway to create a greater greening impact
- Bringing groups of neighbours together in the planning, design, and sharing of ongoing maintenance
- Evidence (for example, letter of support) that your neighbours are supportive of you kick-offing greening in the laneway and the benefits the new greening will provide them
- Evidence of existing greening projects already undertaken in the laneway.

Further guidance for designing your project

Growing healthy, shady trees

Trees are critical infrastructure in our city, helping to cool the environment, providing shelter for people and wildlife, and improving amenity. Nearby trees have also been shown to increase property values.

Trees need access to a sufficient volume of good quality soil and regular watering to enable good canopy growth. For this reason, in-ground planting typically leads to much better outcomes and allows the tree to reach its full potential with minimal maintenance.

Soil improvement

Good quality soil is critical for the success of any garden or landscape project. A landscaper can provide specific advice for your soil, but general principles to consider include:

- volume – is there enough soil for the plants to grow?
- nutrients – does the soil provide enough organic matter for plant survival?
- moisture – does the soil have enough organic matter to retain water for plants, while allowing for drainage?
- compaction – is the soil loose enough to allow root growth, access to oxygen, and infiltration of water?

Creating habitat

There are a number of things to think about when creating a green space that will attract and protect wildlife.

Indigenous and native plants

By planting native (ideally indigenous) plant species, you will be more likely to attract local wildlife. Native animals have evolved alongside indigenous plants; consequently, many either depend on, or have become adapted to effectively utilise the resources from these plants. Integrating indigenous and native plants into gardens therefore provides the best possible food and shelter opportunities for native wildlife. No matter how big or small your garden is, planting indigenous and native species in these spaces will form important stepping stones between isolated areas of habitat, helping local wildlife to move around the urban landscape.

Vegetation structure

Establishing structural diversity is key to creating successful habitat – this involves having a wide variety of plants at various heights and densities. Adding layers of complexity in the garden will increase the variety of resources (for example, hollows, nectar, pollen, and leaf litter) and enable a greater diversity of animals to feed and shelter. For instance, native groundcover plants like nodding saltbush and ruby saltbush produce fruit loved by Blue-tongue Lizards, while small birds like Eastern Spinebills require thick, spikey shrubs to provide protection from larger aggressive birds, cats, and dogs. Where possible, aim to integrate a mix of groundcovers, grasses, shrubs, and trees.

Artificial habitat

Artificial habitat such as nesting boxes and native bee 'hotels', provide opportunity to support biodiversity in urban areas. Introduction of artificial habitats will need to be informed by research to achieve the best outcome. If artificial habitat is used, explicit detail is required, including materials, intended target species, location in the garden, and where the artificial habitat will be sourced from. Unsuitable integration of artificial habitat will be disregarded by the assessment panel.

Logs and rocks

Large logs and branches are rare in urban areas, often being removed by urban landscape managers because of their perceived safety risk or untidiness. Logs could be salvaged from urban development projects or trees removed for other purposes (for example, safety). Large rocks provide habitat for lizards – they often use them to sun themselves on, or hide under. To be effective in attracting wildlife, rocks, branches, and logs should to be integrated in areas of vegetation to provide animals with shelter if approached by a predator.

European Honeybees

European Honeybees are the most recognisable bees observed across the city, with a banded dull yellow and brown abdomen. Introduced into Australia over 180 years ago, European Honeybees provide us with a supply of honey and play an important role as pollinators of some crops and wild flowers. This widespread invasive species, however, has been found to have adverse impacts on local biodiversity. They have the potential to displace local wildlife from tree hollows, outcompete native fauna for floral resources, and disrupt natural pollination processes. Nevertheless, there are lots of local pollinator species that provide similar ecosystem services to European Honeybees. Efforts therefore need to be directed at creating spaces that will support these local pollinator species to maximise biodiversity outcomes.

Further resources

Urban Nature Planting Guide

The [Urban Nature Planting Guide](#)¹⁰ provides information on over 100 suitable indigenous plants species for urban landscapes. The webpage includes plant selection filters to help choose suitable understorey species for urban plantings, including plants that attract different types of wildlife, like birds, bees, butterflies, and lizards.

Pre-Colonial plant list

The [Pre-colonial plant list](#)¹¹ for the City of Melbourne is a report produced by expert botanists from the Arthur Rylah Institute that specifies plant species that likely occurred in Melbourne prior to European colonisation.

Trees for Melbourne's Climate Future

The University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne collaborated with industry experts to deliver a world-first research report: [Trees for Melbourne's Climate Future \(PDF 8.8 MB\)](#)¹². This research explores the vulnerability of tree species currently planted in the City of Melbourne, and identifies some potential new species that may be more suitable for the city's climate future.

Climate Assessment Tool

The [Climate Assessment Tool](#)¹³ (CAT) developed by Botanic Gardens Conservation International, is an online tool that provides guidance on the likely suitability of taxa based on the predicted future climate scenarios of a specified location.

Adoption Guidelines for Stormwater Biofiltration Systems

The [Adoption Guidelines for Stormwater Biofiltration Systems](#)¹⁴ published by the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities, provide research-driven guidance to planners, engineers, landscape

¹⁰ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-nature/Pages/urban-nature-planting-guide.aspx>

¹¹ <https://data.melbourne.vic.gov.au/explore/dataset/pre-colonial-plant-list/information/>

¹² <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/122913/2016-CoM%20Future%20Urban%20Forest%20Final%20Report.pdf?sequence=1>

¹³ <https://cat.bgci.org/>

¹⁴ <https://watersensitivecities.org.au/content/stormwater-biofilter-design/>

architects, developers, and constructors involved in urban design, on biofiltration systems (a WSUD option) and their benefits, technical considerations, and practical implementation.

Growing Green Guide

The [Growing Green Guide](#)¹⁵: A Guide to Green Roofs, Walls and Facades in Melbourne and Victoria has been developed with advice from industry experts and knowledge from academic research, to explain how to create high quality green roofs, walls, and facades.

Burnley Green Roof Plant Guide

The Burnley Green Roof Plant Guide has been developed by researchers from the Green Infrastructure Research Group at the University of Melbourne, to provide proven plant palettes for a range of green roof types, including green roofs for biodiversity, well-being and social interactions, and food production.

The guide will be available as a free, downloadable resource on the University of Melbourne [Green Infrastructure Research Group](#)¹⁶ website from 12 October.

Guidelines for Biodiversity Green Roofs

The [Guidelines for Biodiversity Green Roofs](#)¹⁷ has been developed by researchers from the Green Infrastructure Research Group at the University of Melbourne, to provide advice to building owners, landscape architects, landscape construction contractors, and horticulturalists wanting to design and build a green roof that has a primary purpose as provision of habitat for biodiversity. To guide the design of future biodiversity green roofs in Melbourne, a list of suitable plants has been compiled, comprising mostly native plant species known to grow successfully on green roofs, the biodiversity resources they can provide, and fauna taxa recorded using them.

Rooftop Project

In 2014, the City of Melbourne [mapped all of the rooftops](#)¹⁸ in the municipality to see if they have the potential to be turned into solar, cool, or green roofs.

Green Factor Tool

[Green Factor](#)¹⁹ is a green infrastructure assessment tool designed by City of Melbourne to help with designing and constructing new environmentally-friendly buildings. This online tool is designed to help landscape designers, architects, planners, and developers benchmark and improve their greening designs.

Green Factor is free and available for anyone to benchmark their greening designs. At present, its primary use is to help new developments in Melbourne to get the most benefits from their green designs. The tool is currently voluntary, but we are encouraging Urban Forest Fund grant applicants to submit a green factor scorecard if appropriate. Your application supports the early adoption of the Green Factor tool and will help the Green Factor development team analyse the tool's usability.

Note – when asked to submit a Planning Application Number for your green factor scorecard, fill out NA if it's not applicable for your Urban Forest Fund proposed project.

¹⁵ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/green-infrastructure/Pages/growing-green-guide.aspx>

¹⁶ Green Infrastructure Research Group | We grow greener cities where people and nature thrive (unimelb.edu.au)

¹⁷ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/guidelines-for-biodiversity-green-roofs-2023.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/sustainable-building/Pages/rooftop-project.aspx>

¹⁹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/green-infrastructure/Pages/green-factor-tool.aspx>

Green Your Laneway Project Evaluation

The [Green Your Laneway Project Evaluation](#)²⁰ provides information about laneway greening based on the initial Green Your Laneway projects that were delivered at Coromandel Place, Guildford Place, Katherine Place, and Meyers Place.

Indicators for Valuing Laneway Greening

The [Developing Robust Indicators for Valuing Laneway Greening](#)²¹ document was developed by the City of Melbourne, Victoria University, and the University of Melbourne, to provide a baseline for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of inner-city laneway greening projects.

²⁰ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/green-infrastructure/Pages/greening-laneways.aspx>

²¹ <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/41147/1/Final%20report%20laneway%20indicators%20last%20edits%20Nov%2018-clean.pdf>

Frequently asked questions

If my application was unsuccessful in previous years, can I apply again in 2023?

Yes. You may resubmit the same project again in 2023; however, it is strongly recommended that you contact the City of Melbourne to seek feedback on why your application was unsuccessful in past rounds.

You should also check the 2023 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.

Can I apply for a grant to incorporate greening into a new development?

Yes. The Urban Forest Fund will consider applications where greening is to be integrated into the design of a new property, provided that the application complies with the eligibility requirements.

Can I apply for a grant to retrofit new green elements onto an existing building or property?

Yes. Urban Forest Fund partnership grants apply to both new buildings and retrofits.

Can I apply for a grant to refurbish or replace existing green infrastructure on my property?

Yes, provided that either the replacement or refurbishment project will increase the total amount of new green cover, or quality of green space (for example, converting lawn to a biodiversity planting).

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. Additionally, commercial projects will still need to demonstrate the public benefits (For example, be visible from the public realm, or be able to be regularly accessed by a large number of people).

Can I seek funding from other sources to make up my component of the matched-funding arrangement?

Yes. The Urban Forest Fund will match successful applications dollar-for-dollar. Applicants can seek funding from other sources to subsidise their total investment in the project, however, in-kind contributions are not accepted.

Can the City of Melbourne provide technical advice on my proposed greening 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](#)²² website.

However, if you are unsure of whether your project fulfils the grant requirements, please contact the team on (03) 9658 9658 or email urbanforestfund@melbourne.vic.gov.au. We'd love to chat about your application.

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 or preliminary work on my greening project (such as feasibility studies, structural assessments, design development) in my funding application?

²² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/green-infrastructure/Pages/growing-green-guide.aspx>

Project management and preliminary work fees can be included in the funding application, but together, must not exceed 15 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](#)⁴ page on the City of Melbourne website. Please note there is a small cost associated with obtaining written advice.

If greening is a requirement of an existing Planning Permit for my project, can I apply for funding through the Urban Forest Fund to support the delivery of this greening?

No. Greening works detailed as part of an existing Planning Permit are mandatory requirements that need to occur anyway for that city development project delivery. The Urban Forest Fund will not support co-funding towards this greening.

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.

Can I submit the same application to both streams?

No. Please choose the most appropriate stream for your project and apply to one grant stream only. You are ineligible to receive multiple grants for the same project proposal.

I live in a laneway and want to apply for a grant under Stream 2: Laneway greening, but I don't have my neighbours on board to green their properties, can I still apply?

Yes. You can still apply provided that the application complies with the eligibility requirements. Evidence of support from your neighbours will assist the success of your application, however, this is not a requirement. Please note that we prioritise laneway greening co-funding where multiple neighbours have each applied for a grant within the same laneway.

I live in a laneway and want to apply for a grant under Stream 2: Laneway greening – can my application include funding to undertake greening on both privately-owned and public spaces of the laneway?

No. Funding as part of the Urban Forest Fund Partnership Program will only be eligible to greening works being undertaken on privately-owned space.

If your proposed project includes greening the public interface of the laneway (for example, Council-owned footpaths), you will require a Greening Melbourne Permit. Visit the [Greening Melbourne Permit](#)²³ page on the City of Melbourne website for more information. This part of your project will be considered separately by Council, and will not be eligible for co-funding within the Urban Forest Fund Partnership Program.

²³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/green-infrastructure/Pages/greening-melbourne-permit.aspx>

Is there someone at the City of Melbourne who I can talk to specifically about my laneway greening project?

Yes. Please contact the Urban Forest Fund team (urbanforestfund@melbourne.vic.gov.au) and we will put you in contact with the right person to answer your questions.

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