

Urban Greening Grant Program

Funding Guidelines

Round 1



Government of Western Australia
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

This program is funded by the State Government

We acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community. We embrace the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including Boorloo (Perth), on the land of the Whadjuk Nyoongar People, where we are located and we acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present. We are committed to fostering respectful partnerships and strengthening relationships with local Aboriginal communities.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Tree Canopy and the Urban Heat Island Effect in the Boorloo and Bindjareb Regions	3
Objectives.....	4
Eligibility Criteria	4
Program Design.....	5
Approved Activities.....	6
Non-Approved Activities	6
Assessment Criteria.....	7
Information on the Assessment Criteria	8
Assessment Criteria 1 - High urban heat and low canopy area	8
Assessment Criteria 2 - High community use and need	9
Assessment Criteria 3 - Biodiversity benefits.....	9
Assessment Criteria 4 – Access to water	10
Assessment Criteria 5 - Value for money and circular economy	10
Supporting Documentation	11
Tree Planting Requirements	11
Monitoring and Evaluation	11
How to Apply	11
Key Dates for Local Government.....	12
Important Information for Applicants	13
Acknowledgement.....	13
Assessment Process.....	13
Future funding rounds.....	13
References	13
APPENDIX 1: Eligible Local Governments within the Boorloo and Bindjareb Regions.....	14
APPENDIX 2: Example of Street Tree Planting Project Areas Overlaid with the Urban Heat Island Index rating and Urban Forest Mesh Blocks	15

Introduction

The Urban Greening Grant Program was created to expand tree canopy and vegetative cover in high urban heat risk areas in 33 Local Governments within the Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel) regions. Funded by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and delivered collaboratively with WALGA, the program provides a total of \$3.75 million (ex GST) to support additional planting or to bring forward future tree planting in winter 2024 and winter 2025. The grant program is offered in two rounds, with Round 1 targeted at planting programs in 2023/24 and Round 2 targeted at planting programs in 2024/25.

Western Australia is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, high-risk bushfire weather, extreme rainfall events and rising sea levelsⁱ. The climate of the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions is projected to be hotter and drier. Planting trees and increasing native vegetative cover in urban areas are key climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce the urban heat island effect, manage hydrology and improve outcomes for biodiversity and human well-being.

The State Government supports a number of urban greening initiatives to create more resilient and liveable communities. The 2021/22 Local Government Urban Canopy Grant Program, funded by DWER through the Water Corporation and administered by WALGA, provided \$750,000 to support the planting of 4,110 trees by 18 Local Governments in the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions. The Waterwise Greening Scheme also provides funding to Local Governments for Waterwise street trees, gardening workshops, demonstration gardens and Waterwise garden competitions.

The Urban Greening Grant Program (the Grant Program) contributes to the achievement of the State Government's [Climate Adaptation Strategy \(2023\)](#) and [Native Vegetation Policy for WA \(2022\)](#). The Grant Program recognises the Local Government sector's lead role in protecting and enhancing urban canopy and builds upon the success of the 2021/22 pilot grant program. Specifically, the Grant Program supports the Native Vegetation Policy Implementation Roadmap; 'Action 4.5 Urban forests and bushland: build on existing strategies to protect and enhance urban forests and bushlands'.

Tree Canopy and the Urban Heat Island Effect in the Boorloo and Bindjareb Regions

Tree canopy across the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions is declining through land clearing for development on private and government land tenures. There was an overall decline in established vegetation across both regions between 2009 and 2016, with 41% of all Local Governments in WA experiencing a significant loss of tree canopy. Eighty five per cent (85%) of this canopy loss occurred on private landⁱⁱ.

Cities are on average 1°C to 3°C hotter than rural areas as a result of the urban heat island effect caused by the prevalence of heat absorbing materials used in roads and buildingsⁱⁱⁱ. The shading and cooling provided by trees and vegetative cover reduces the urban heat island effect and delivers a broader range of benefits for local communities. These include improved neighbourhood liveability and amenity, better air quality, biodiversity conservation and enhancement, reduced cooling costs and positive impacts on psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Local Governments are increasing urban canopy cover by developing and implementing urban forest and greening strategies, and adopting significant tree registers and tree bonds. In recent years, Local Governments have commenced implementing Scheme amendments and Local Planning Policies to regulate the removal of existing mature trees. The State Government is

progressing the review of Liveable Neighbourhoods and finalising the Medium Density Residential Housing Code, both of which are expected to increase provisions for new trees and the retention of existing trees. Both the planting of new trees and retention of existing trees is necessary to address the ongoing loss of tree canopy and vegetative cover.

Objectives

The objectives of the Grant Program are to support urban greening projects that:

- Accelerate the establishment of tree canopy and vegetative cover in the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions;
- Reduce the impacts of the urban heat island effect;
- Provide positive outcomes for urban biodiversity;
- Improve human health and well-being;
- Improve urban hydrological functions; and
- Improve social and visual amenity of neighbourhoods.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding, applicants will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be a Local Government as recognised under the *Local Government Act 1995*;
- Be located within the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions, as defined by the Metropolitan and Peel Region Schemes (refer to Appendix 1);
- Demonstrate Council and community support for increased urban tree canopy cover through a Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan, or Urban Forest Strategy or similar; and
- Undertake planting programs that are not required under statutory or legislative planning frameworks e.g. clearing permit, offsets, vegetation conservation notices or equivalent.

Program Design

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has provided a total of \$3.75 million (ex GST) of funding for a Grant Program to be delivered during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. Round 1 of the Grant Program has a funding allocation of approximately \$1.11 million for tree and understorey planting programs, which are to be completed in 2023/24. Round 2 of the Grant Program has approximately \$2.27 million provided for tree and understorey planting programs to be completed in 2024/25.

The Grant Program is designed to accelerate the delivery of urban canopy and vegetative cover in the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions. For example, the Grant Program will fund new initiatives or bringing forward the planting of trees scheduled for future financial years (2025/26 and beyond).

Local Governments can apply for funding in one or both funding rounds. Applications are currently being invited and accepted for Round 1 only. Should the available funding be fully allocated following both rounds and award of successful grant recipients, there will be no further rounds of funding available under this Grant Program.

The Grant Program is competitive and funding will be awarded to Local Governments that best demonstrate how their project(s) meets the assessment criteria. There is no guarantee that a project will be funded and offers may be made to partially fund projects.

As a guide, Local Governments can apply for between \$50,000 (ex GST) and \$150,000 (ex GST) under Round 1 of the Grant Program. Applications outside of this range will be considered on merit.

Applicants are required to provide a minimum 50% contribution (cash and/or in kind) towards project delivery.

Local Governments are able to submit one funding application in Round 1, and one funding application in Round 2. Funding applications can include multiple projects and/or sites.

Example of a grant application with multiple projects – City of Treeville

The City of Treeville wishes to apply for a total of \$150,000 to support a greening project in 2023/24. The City provides an overview of the project and total cost, which is then supported by a detailed budget breakdown of the funding request and in-kind contribution for the project.

Project 1: Increasing canopy and vegetative cover at the Treville Leisureplex	\$25,000
Project 2: Increasing canopy cover along streetscapes in an urban grown corridor	\$40,000
Project 3: Increasing canopy and vegetative cover in public open space	\$85,000
TOTAL	\$150,000

Approved Activities

Funds are provided primarily for the purchase of tree stock and understorey species. Where possible, understorey species should be planted together with trees to help create functional ecosystems. It is noted that understorey planting will not be able to be delivered in certain contexts e.g. street tree planting on residential verges. Projects that request funding for understorey species only will not be approved for funding.

Supplementary services or items necessary for the installation, growth and survival of planted trees are also eligible for funding under the Grant Program, with a maximum cap of 35% of the total funding request. These include:

- Tree pits;
- Structural soil cells or similar;
- Soil improver;
- Mulch;
- Tree stakes;
- Tree guards;
- Deep root watering bowls (e.g. greenwells);
- Site preparation to remove non-growth mediums (e.g. turf or bitumen); and
- Earthworks for installation of tree pits or structural soil cells

Non-Approved Activities

The following activities are not eligible for funding under the Grant Program, but may be included as cash or in-kind contributions by applicants:

- Purchase of seeds for planting;
- Contracted tree planting labour;
- Funding of staff positions;
- Urban forest strategy development;
- Permanent irrigation systems;
- Truck watering programs;
- Tree ties;
- Fertiliser;
- Tree planting equipment;
- Traffic management; and
- Underground service location.

Assessment Criteria

Applications for Round 1 of the Grant Program must address the following five criteria. Mandatory deliverables are highlighted in bold text, while the non-mandatory deliverables will gain applicants additional points for each criteria.

Criteria	Value	Deliverables
1. High urban heat and low canopy area	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target high urban heat risk areas ($\geq 3C$ UHI) • target low canopy areas ($\leq 10\%$ existing canopy cover). • accelerate tree planting programs beyond current plans for the 2023/24. • establish tree canopy in constrained environments (highly urbanised environments). • utilise tree species identified as being more resilient to the impacts of climate change, with preference for native Western Australian species. • where permissible, select wide canopy forming species for maximum canopy gain.
2. High community use and need	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target a location that is highly used by the local and/or broader community or has a high proportion of vulnerable groups. • target a socio-economic disadvantaged area. • demonstrate community engagement and input to support urban plantings (place and plant species).
3. Biodiversity benefits	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select local provenance or Western Australian native species to increase biodiversity values. • include understorey vegetation to provide vegetative structure and to maximise biodiversity. • utilise food species for local wildlife, particularly endangered Black Cockatoos. • support the development of an identified ecological linkages regionally and across local government boundaries. • exclude species that are known biosecurity risks, or susceptible to key pests and diseases.
4. Access to water	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilise waterwise tree species. • select sites supported by long-term access to water sources through water sensitive urban design elements.
5. Value for money and circular economy	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate trees into existing maintenance programs (watering, pruning, safety audits). • planting occurs on secure tenure land • provide a commitment to return to supplier,

		<p>reuse or recycle any plastic pots associated with the tree planting to minimise waste generation in the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase smaller tree (e.g. ≤35 L pots) and understorey stock (tubestock). • engage with existing community groups or establish new stakeholder partnerships. • seek non-plastic alternatives for tree pots and guards. • deliver planting events that are single-use plastic free.
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Information on the Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria 1 - High urban heat and low canopy area

Applicants are required to provide a map of the project area within the Urban Heat Index rating and urban canopy cover layer overlays. The map of the project area should delineate the area where planting will occur but does not need to include the location of each individual tree or understorey species. Polygons can be used to indicate planting areas, with the total number of trees and understorey species to be installed in each area provided. The Urban Heat Index (UHI) is a measure of the deviation of urban temperatures relative to a non-urban baseline (e.g. native vegetated sites). The 2019 UHI mapping (CSIRO) measures the resulting increase in atmospheric temperatures on a scale from <0, 0-1, 1-3, 3-5, 5-7 and >7°C. The Grant Program prioritises applications that address areas mapped as ≥3°C.

If preferred, Local Governments are able to use their own thermal imaging to demonstrate the selection of high UHI areas. It is acknowledged that the UHI mapping does not extend to the Peel region. If no data is available on localised UHI estimates, applicants should include an aerial image with a description of prevailing surfaces in the proposed project area and the 20 m surrounding buffer zone.

The UHI mapping can be affected by the cooling influence of waterbodies and air-conditioning systems of large buildings, such as those in commercial and industrial areas. In these instances, the evaluation panel will refer to evidence that the project area has low urban canopy cover.

Urban Canopy Cover for the project area(s) is based on the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage 2020 Urban Forest Mesh Blocks data layer. Vegetation coverage greater than 3 meters in height is deemed tree canopy. The Grant Program prioritises applications that address areas mapped as ≤10% existing canopy cover, and that have little existing understorey.

The UHI rating and urban canopy cover mesh blocks for the project area(s) can be accessed from WALGA's [spatial data viewer](#) for the Grant Program.

Applications are required to demonstrate that the proposed tree and vegetation planting is above and beyond current works schedules for 2023/24, as scheduled in a short-term works program or equivalent.

The [Which Plant Where](#) web tool can be used to assist local governments select climate resilient species suitable for their local area and help predict life expectancy. Preference for Western Australian native species should be considered, as they are better adapted to local soils and climate. Trees with the largest crown shape should be selected, where possible, to maximise canopy gain.

Assessment Criteria 2 - High community use and need

Highly used locations for proposed project areas can include central business districts, key transit routes, regional recreational reserves and more. Members of the community particularly vulnerable to the impacts of heatwaves include small children and the elderly, and project areas could be focused around retirement villages or primary schools.

Higher temperatures are a significant contributor to negative health outcomes and exacerbate cost of living pressures. These impacts fall disproportionately on the most disadvantaged groups in society. The socio-economic index rating of the project area(s) can be accessed from the [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\) Australia](#).

Projects that involve communities in the design, implementation and delivery of greening programs help to build ownership and create a sense of place.

Assessment Criteria 3 - Biodiversity benefits

Use of local provenance species endemic to the specific soil complex of the project area is encouraged where possible. These species are better adapted to local conditions. There are many biodiversity benefits for planting natives species, including foraging, linked habitats for fauna and providing buffers for existing native vegetation.

However, it is recognised that urban environments such as streetscapes are modified landscapes. In these instances, there are a number of factors involved in determining the best tree for the location, including site constraints, such as the presence of underground utilities or overhead powerlines, amenity considerations such as seed drop, and tolerance of extreme heat and drought. In these situations, a multiple-criteria analysis should be demonstrated to support the selection of the best fit tree species. Ornamental trees planted for amenity value, with minimal potential to ameliorate the urban heat island effect or contribute to ecosystem services, will in general not be supported by the Grant Program.

Birdlife Australia provides a list of [Food plants for WA's threatened black cockatoo species](#), and recommends that at least 3-5 m is provided between roads and plants to minimize vehicle collisions. Local Government's with [Keep Carnaby's Flying](#) projects in place should consider vegetation requirements and demonstrate how funding would improve outcomes for black cockatoos.

Creating regional links between trees and understorey vegetation both within and across Local Government areas will improve biodiversity outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate collaborations between Local Governments to develop vegetated [nature links](#) across boundaries.

Species selection should avoid using species that known biosecurity risks, or susceptible to key pests and diseases. These include:

- species listed as [Weeds of National Significance](#);
- species declared under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) on the [Western Australian Organism List \(WAOL\)](#) or otherwise known to be invasive; and
- species that are susceptible to current declared pests or diseases under the BAM Act (for instance host plants of the [Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer](#)).

Assessment Criteria 4 – Access to water

The Water Corporation's [Waterwise tree list](#) provides a guide to assist with selecting tree species based on their water rating and level of root invasiveness. If the proposed tree species is not on the list, please provide other evidence of the waterwise status.

The watering requirements of trees can be lowered if they are supported by water sensitive urban design elements. A range of design options exist to ease the integration of trees into the urban environment, including:

- Supporting natural hydrological processes – minimising the impact of development on local hydrology;
- Vegetated bioretention basin – captures and infiltrates stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces;
- Structural cells – modular manufactured cells that support pavement and are filled with loose soils that encourage root growth;
- Suspended sidewalks – sidewalks with a supporting under-structure that allows soils to remain uncompacted, creates space for root growth and accommodates runoff;
- Structural soils – specific soil/gravel mix that can support pavement as well as root growth and stormwater infiltration;
- Permeable pavement – decreases stormwater runoff by directing water to infiltrate into roots; and
- Flush kerb lines – direct stormwater runoff to vegetated areas.

DWER have a series of resources offering further information on [Water Sensitive Urban Design](#).

Assessment Criteria 5 - Value for money and circular economy

Applicants are encouraged to plant in locations where the most trees can be installed at the lowest cost to maximise canopy gain and vegetative cover, such as where minimal earthworks are required.

Smaller tree (≤ 35 L) and understory (tubestock) stock is preferred, where considerations such as vandalism are not an issue, due to the lower cost, higher quality of tree stock and faster tree establishment.

Local Governments are strongly encouraged to partner with community groups or not-for-profit organisations to enhance the education benefits and expert input into projects. Suggestions include, where appropriate, community participation in planting days and ongoing tree care, and partnerships with organisations that can provide expert guidance on areas such as biodiversity enhancement and water management.

The State Government is committed to transitioning WA to a circular economy, which means moving to a material efficiency approach where products, components and materials are kept at their highest utility and value for as long as possible^{iv}. Biodegradable pots and tree guards, or a commitment to return plastic posts to the supplier for reuse or recycling, is required to minimise waste generation from the Grant Program.

The State Government is also implementing the WA Plan for Plastics, which encourages the use of reusable items and to avoid single-use products. Successful grant applicants will be required to ensure that any community planting events avoid single-use plastic items and use reusable containers.

Supporting Documentation

Applicants are required to provide the following documentation to support their application:

- Demonstrated Council and community support for increasing urban tree canopy and vegetative cover
- a map of the proposed project area(s) showing the planting locations, selected tree and understorey species, overlaid with the 2019 Urban Heat Island Index rating and 2020 Urban Forest mesh blocks;
- Detailed project budget, project plan and risk assessment strategy;
- A Dial Before You Dig check of proposed project area(s); and
- Written quotation(s) from suppliers supporting the amount of grant funding requested.

Tree Planting Requirements

Trees must be planted in accordance with the [Utility Providers Code of Practice for Western Australia](#), which states that trees must be planted 2.7m from the property boundary line and a minimum of 0.5m from water assets. Please refer to the [Technical Guidelines for safely working near Water Corporation assets](#), and Western Power's [Clearance Zones](#) for safe distances between trees and overhead powerlines, which are typically 2.5m to the side and 2m below powerlines.

Dial Before You Dig checks are required for projects to determine the location of underground assets and avoid damage. Where large items such as structural cells or tree pits are being installed, Local Governments are required to confirm there are no sub-surface obstructions through an on-site assessment prior to the signature of their Grant Agreement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At the completion of the project, Local Governments are required to submit ArcGIS shape files with the mapping coordinates of the final tree planting locations and species, and polygons of understorey planting locations and species.

Successful grant recipients will also be required to provide WALGA with information, upon request, on the condition of planted trees two years post establishment.

How to Apply

Local Governments can participate in the Urban Greening Grant Program by completing the Application Form. A supporting Excel Template provides guidance on the recommended components of a detailed budget, project plan and risk assessment. All documents are available on WALGA's [website](#).

Applications close at 5.00 pm on **Thursday 25 January 2024**. To apply, please complete and submit the Application Form to planning@walga.asn.au.

WALGA's Planning and Building team are available to assist applicants on interpretation of these guidelines and the assessment process, and provide feedback on the assessment outcome. For more information, please email [Melanie Davies](#), Urban Forest Facilitator, or call (08) 9213 2065.

Key Dates for Local Government

Application Period and Grant Assessments		
Applications open	Local Governments notified	Monday, 11 December 2023
Information session	Eligible Local Governments invited to join an on-line information session	Thursday, 14 December 2023
Applications close		Thursday, 25 January 2024
Successful applicants notified	Local Governments advised on outcome of application	Friday, 16 February 2024
Agreements signed	Grant agreements signed and returned	Thursday, 29 February 2024
2023/2024 Planting Projects		
First payment made	First instalment paid upon invoice	Friday, 15 March 2024
Activities commence		Wednesday, 1 May 2024
Progress report due	Local Governments to provide progress report as per grant agreement	Friday, 24 May 2024
Final payment made	Subject to progress report approval	Friday, 14 June 2024
Final report due	Local Governments submit final report on project outcomes and expenditure	Monday, 30 September 2024

Important Information for Applicants

Acknowledgement

All funded projects must acknowledge the funding provided by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (with provided logos and branding), delivered via WALGA.

Assessment Process

Each application will be assessed by an Evaluation Panel, comprised of representatives from WALGA and the State Government. The assessment will be based on the information contained in the submitted application form and supporting documents.

Future funding rounds

Round 2 of the Grant Program (2024/25) will target projects which will require more complex planning and greater technical guidance to support the achievement of the eligibility criteria. A Technical Advisory Group of specialists will develop the technical guidance for the Urban Green Grant Program Guidelines - Round 2, which will assist maximise the program's outcomes.

References

ⁱ Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, 2023, *Climate Adaptation Strategy: Building WA's climate resilient future*. Government of Western Australia.

ⁱⁱ Amati M, Boruff B, Caccetta P, Devereux D, Kaspar J, Phelan K., 2017, *Where should all the trees go? Investigating the impact of tree canopy cover on socio-economic status and wellbeing in LGA's*. Sydney (NSW): Hort Innovation.

ⁱⁱⁱ Government of New South Wales, 2022, *Climate change impacts on Urban Heat*, <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/urban-heat>

^{iv} Waste Authority, 2018, *Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategy 2030: WA's Waste Strategy*. Government of Western Australia.

APPENDIX 1: Eligible Local Governments within the Boorloo and Bindjareb Regions

City of Armadale	Town of Mosman Park
Town of Bassendean	Shire of Mundaring
City of Bayswater	Shire of Murray
City of Belmont	City of Nedlands
Town of Cambridge	Shire of Peppermint Grove
City of Canning	City of Perth
Town of Claremont	City of Rockingham
City of Cockburn	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale
Town of Cottesloe	City of South Perth
Town of East Fremantle	City of Stirling
City of Fremantle	City of Subiaco
City of Gosnells	City of Swan
City of Joondalup	Town of Victoria Park
City of Kalamunda	City of Vincent
City of Kwinana	City of Wanneroo
City of Mandurah	Shire of Waroona
City of Melville	

APPENDIX 2: Example of Street Tree Planting Project Areas Overlaid with the Urban Heat Island Index rating and Urban Forest Mesh Blocks

