

2023-2024 Growing Suburbs Fund

Program Guidelines

OFFICIAL

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne. Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

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Available at the Office for Suburban Development's website:
<https://www.suburbandevlopment.vic.gov.au/>

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend, and we pay respects to their culture and their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, and we acknowledge all other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent living in Victoria.

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Message from the Minister

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I am pleased to provide the 2023-24 round of the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund.

At its core, the Growing Suburbs Fund is focused on the needs of community and the wellbeing and prosperity of people living in Melbourne's suburbs. The Fund supports communities that are living in areas where there is rapid population growth to have the facilities and services they need to thrive.

The Fund has invested over \$425 million since 2015, to support the delivery of local infrastructure in our fastest growing suburbs.

Many communities have already benefited from the more than 346 projects funded over the past 8 years including community hubs, streetscapes, tracks and trails, sports facilities, playgrounds and kindergartens.

Many of these projects also provide local employment, through the construction phase and once programs are implemented. This not only supports the needs of the many beneficiaries of these investments but is also good for the local economy.

Importantly, the program also provides an opportunity for both the state and local governments to partner with First Nations organisations to work on projects together that connect people to Country and to culture.

I encourage you to read the guidelines and eligibility criteria for this new round of the Growing Suburbs Fund.

Through the Growing Suburbs Fund, the Victorian Government is committed to continuing to invest alongside local government.

Together we can deliver thriving places for Victoria's growing population to live, work and connect with one another and build stronger and better communities for us all.



The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Suburban Development

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1. 2023-24 Growing Suburbs Fund Guidelines

1.1 Overview

The 2023-24 Growing Suburbs Fund (GSF) is a contribution by the Victorian Government towards critical local community infrastructure needs for our fast-growing outer suburbs within the 10 interface councils.

The GSF is a response to the pressures being experienced by growing communities through fast-tracking high priority local infrastructure projects. These projects contribute to more resilient and liveable communities and improved capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands.

The Victorian Government recognises that interface councils are diverse and are home to some of Victoria's most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Interface councils are located on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne, marking the interface between the 'city' and 'country.' Interface councils also play a critical role in supporting Victoria's population growth and economy.

As a group, the interface municipalities¹ comprise 23 per cent of Victoria's population². For over two decades, population growth in these areas has exceeded the State's average, and this trend is expected to continue.

The Victorian Government is investing \$10 million through the 2023-24 GSF to continue the timely delivery of critical infrastructure in interface communities.

The GSF will be delivered in coordination with other government infrastructure investments in interface communities. The GSF is overseen by the Minister for Suburban Development and administered by the Office for Suburban Development within the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The GSF will contribute to meeting critical local infrastructure needs for communities in our changing and fast-growing outer suburbs. It is positioned to quickly respond to the pressures being experienced by interface communities by accelerating infrastructure projects that will make a big difference to the liveability and resilience of these areas.

Grants will be targeted towards high priority community infrastructure projects that:

- increase social and economic participation in Melbourne's fast growing outer suburbs
- meet the health and wellbeing needs of people in fast growing outer suburbs
- increase local economic activity
- improve capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands
- deliver integrated or multi-purpose community infrastructure

¹ <https://www.interfacecouncils.com.au/about>

² <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/land-use-and-population-research/victoria-in-future>

- create a safe and engaging environment for disadvantaged community members
- progress key priorities of the [Victorian Closing the Gap implementation plan](#) by delivering important cultural community infrastructure, and further enhancing the partnership between government sectors, First Nations community-controlled organisations, and the wider community
- demonstrate consistency with climate change, environmentally sustainable design, and universal design principles
- deliver the Government's 20-minute neighbourhood principles via a partnership approach similar to that adopted in the [Creating a More Liveable Melbourne report](#).

1.3 Desired Grant Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the Growing Suburbs Fund are:

- more improved and/or new infrastructure is available
- more integrated/shared community infrastructure is available
- more community culturally inclusive infrastructure is available
- more jobs are created through local infrastructure projects.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

The 2023-24 Growing Suburbs Fund is open to Melbourne's interface councils.

Applications for funding are invited from the 10 eligible interface councils:

- Cardinia Shire Council
- Casey City Council
- Hume City Council
- Melton City Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Whittlesea City Council
- Wyndham City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council.

While only interface councils can apply for funding, First Nations community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations are encouraged to partner with these councils to put forward proposals for the 2023-24 GSF.

Projects must be situated in areas zoned for growth in Interface Councils.

2.2 Eligible Activities and Projects

The GSF will support projects that have a direct benefit to communities and surrounding catchment areas across the following infrastructure categories:

- multi-purpose or integrated community facilities

- placemaking, civic amenity, and open spaces
- purpose-built facilities that respond to the needs of First Nations communities
- early education, libraries, learning and training facilities that have dedicated community spaces and facilitate multiuse purposes
- sport, recreation, and leisure facilities that have dedicated community space and support multiuse purposes.

Applicants must have made reasonable efforts to source funding from other relevant and available funding sources from within Government.

Projects will:

- be delivered by qualified professionals
- incorporate Universal Design principles
- incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles.

In addition, the program will consider proposals put forward by eligible councils for funding in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations. These proposals must:

- align to the program criteria
- demonstrate the existing partnerships between the sectors, and endorsement of the project evidenced by letters of support from both council and the organisation.

2.3 Ineligible Activities and Projects

The 2023-24 Growing Suburbs Fund is not available for the following activities and/or situations:

- projects that have already commenced construction (including but not limited to site clearing, earthworks, building works and any form of early works)
- land that is not appropriately zoned for the proposed activity and may be subject to a planning scheme amendment
- projects that are sporting pavilions that cannot demonstrate a dedicated community use space(s) to host community activities for groups other than the resident sporting clubs
- projects that are delivering new or upgraded sports fields or sports courts
- projects located on land that is in the process of or yet to be acquired
- infrastructure that is fully scoped and funded through a development contribution plan, Infrastructure Contributions Plan or infrastructure which is subject to a Section 173 agreement unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the program funds will bring forward delivery, or that the actual costs of delivering the infrastructure materially exceed the total of developer and Council contributions
- temporary buildings or improvements undertaken prior the delivery of a future and permanent facility
- routine or ongoing maintenance activities, cosmetic works, repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire or other natural disasters where the damage should be covered by insurance
- recurrent operating costs, including utilities and staffing resources

- projects that only involve civil works such as roads and associated footpaths, drainage, waste, resurfacing, carparks, and public transport infrastructure
- construction of infrastructure that does not have a direct community benefit or address an identified community need
- service connections (while these elements will form part of construction, council contributions should be used for these purposes)
- bundling of small projects into a larger project for submission
- project proposals that have not clearly identified the scope and parameters of the project to be delivered.

3. Application and Project Conditions

3.1 Project delivery dates

Projects are required to commence construction within 18 months of the grant being announced and be completed within 24 months of the commencement of construction.

Councils must submit a detailed Project Plan as part of each application that outlines the activities and timelines for the project/s and demonstrate that project/s will be delivered within the proposed timeline.

3.2 Number of applications and priority order

There is no limit to the number of applications that a Council can submit for consideration. However, there is a limit on the maximum grant amount of \$2 million that can be requested for each application. No more than 20 per cent of the total pool of funding available to councils will be allocated to a single council.

A council resolution providing support for each application and a priority order of projects is mandatory. The priority order will be taken into consideration during the assessment of the applications.

If a Council resolution cannot be submitted by the closing date for lodgment of application, the Department will accept a letter from the Council Chief Executive Officer. A Council resolution for each application will be required within 20 working days of the close of applications for the applications to be fully assessed.

3.3 Project location

The applicant will need to provide evidence of land ownership where the proposed project will be located. If the land is owned by a third party, then the applicant will be required to provide evidence of an agreement with the landowner allowing the delivery of the project. Projects located on land that is in the process of or yet to be acquired will not be eligible for funding.

3.3.1 Facilities on School Land

For projects on school land, a Community Joint Use Proposal (to the Department of Education) which is completed by the applicant and the school must be submitted by the applicant to be eligible for funding (schools can access this document from the Department of Education website).

Applicants must allow sufficient time to complete this document and obtain the necessary written endorsement from the Department of Education.

A letter from the Department of Education central office must also be provided that indicates endorsement of the project. Applicants requesting this letter should contact the Victorian School Building Authority.

3.4 Permits and approvals

Applicants must disclose any land use planning implications that may impact the delivery of the project in a timely manner, such as: permits, authorities' approvals and reports/plans that will be required to be obtained or completed to deliver the project (e.g. building and planning permits, heritage permits, Water Authority permit, Biodiversity Assessment, Environmental Management Plan).

3.4.1 Aboriginal Heritage Regulations Planning Tool

Applicants are required to complete the [Aboriginal Heritage Regulations Planning Tool](https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans) to determine if a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required for their applied project. Further information about the CHMP can be found here: <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans>.

3.5 Grant Funding

Applicants are required to make cash contributions of at least a 1:1 ratio of grant funding.

3.5.1 Funding from other programs

The GSF aims to accelerate the delivery of critical community infrastructure and complement, rather than replace, other funding sources available to these communities.

Projects that receive funding from multiple programs must comply with the conditions of each of the relevant programs.

Applications must identify any additional sources of funding sought, including State and Commonwealth government programs, as well as eligibility for contributions from developers.

Applications must also identify the unfunded element/s to be delivered through the GSF funding.

3.5.2. Key Program Dates

The Key Program dates are:

Applications Open	25 August 2023
Applications Close	20 October 2023
Assessment and Decision Making	October - December 2023
Announcements from	December 2023
Funding Agreements Executed	January – February 2024
Construction Commencement	Within 18 months of the funding announcement
Construction Complete	Within 24 months of construction commencement

4. Application and Assessment Process

4.1 Application process

4.1.1 Pre-application meeting

Applicants must consult the GSF team within the Office for Suburban Development before 20 October to discuss their project proposals. This will provide the opportunity for the Office for Suburban Development to discuss with each council the eligibility of the proposed projects and their alignment with the program objectives.

Where a project has not been discussed with the Office for Suburban Development, the project will not be considered for funding.

4.1.2 Submit application and documentation

Applications will be received through a single application round, opening on 25 August 2023. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted via the link at www.suburbandevlopment.vic.gov.au.

The Department must receive applications no later than 11.59pm on 20 October 2023.

Department staff may contact applicants to seek further clarification of information submitted. Some applicants may be requested to submit further information following initial assessment of applications by the Department.

If you have any queries, please contact the Growing Suburbs Team at email revitalisation.programs@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

4.2 Assessment Process and Criteria

Applications will be assessed by an assessment panel which will provide recommendations to the Minister for Suburban Development for decision.

4.2.1 Assessment Criteria

The Department will assess eligible applications against their response, and any supporting documents, to the criteria listed on pages 10-12. Claims made against each criterion must be substantiated with evidence.

Weightings in percentage show the relative importance of different criterion, in the assessment process.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Description / Questions</u>
Project Aim (30%)	<p>Applications must demonstrate the extent to which the project will deliver on the objectives and the desired outcomes of the Growing Suburbs Fund including:</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase social and economic participation in fast growing outer suburbs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet the health and wellbeing needs of people in fast growing outer suburbs • increase local economic activity • improve capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands • deliver innovative models of integrated or multi-purpose community infrastructure • create a safe and engaging environment for disadvantaged community members • progress key priorities of the <u>Victorian Closing the Gap implementation plan</u> by delivering important cultural community infrastructure, and further enhancing the partnership between government sectors, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and the wider community. • demonstrate consistency with climate change, environmentally sustainable design, and universal design principles <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More improved and/or new infrastructure is available • More integrated/shared community infrastructure is available • More community culturally inclusive infrastructure is available • More jobs are created through local infrastructure projects. <p>Projects must be situated in areas zoned for growth in Interface Councils.</p>
<p>Project Need (30%)</p>	<p>Applications must clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project addresses an identified need and how it will deliver benefits to the community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the forecast population growth in the proposed project site and needs or gaps in infrastructure provision that the project will address • showing the level of community support. This could be demonstrated by engagement activities, co-contributions or in-kind support from community members or groups • demonstrating that the project is a recognised strategic council priority and is consistent with the Precinct Structure Plan, key council plans such as the current Council Plan, Strategic Resource Plan, asset management plan, social and community infrastructure and service plans, long term community plans and/or policy documents • defining how the project will contribute to improved gender equality and the needs of diverse communities • clearly identifying the intended benefits (social, cultural, economic, and environmental) that the project will deliver

<p>Project deliverability (20%)</p>	<p>Applications must provide details that demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sound approach to delivering the project, providing realistic timeframes for delivery, and demonstrating that the project is financially viable based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money – a draft project plan is to be provided as part of the application process • a clearly identified scope and parameters of the project to be delivered • that site/floor plans have been developed • the proposed funding contributions for the project. <p>Projects that have significant council contributions and attract further public, not-for-profit or private sector investment are desirable and strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Applicants must identify whether an application has been made to an additional funding body or program, and the status of this application’s outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications must clearly identify how the concurrent funding agreements, timelines, and milestone deliverables will be managed. • Applications must also identify how council will fund the difference if applications for other funding contributions are unsuccessful.
<p>Capability and expertise (20%)</p>	<p>Applications must provide details that demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staffing capacity to implement and/or source expertise to manage the delivery of the project • the project governance arrangements, processes, tools and methods that will be used to deliver the project • how the proposed infrastructure will be managed, and its benefits sustained once the infrastructure is delivered.

4.2.2 Due Diligence

During the application assessment period, the Department may perform due diligence activities/checks to gain a better understanding of the applicants and their proposed project.

These checks may include:

- o the potential for a reputational risk to the State
- o the applicant’s past delivery performance in relation to any other grant agreements between the applicant and the Department.

Outcomes from such checks may be taken into account in any decision to recommend or award a grant, or in entering into an agreement with successful applicants.

5. Supporting Documentation

To be considered for funding, the applicant must submit the **mandatory** supporting documentation to support the eligibility and readiness of the project.

Mandatory Supporting Documentation
A business case, feasibility study or cost benefit analysis that may have been completed for the project
Evidence of a council resolution providing support for each application and priority order of projects
Confirmation of other funding sources
Aerial images or plans showing location of proposed project
Draft project plan outlining the project’s timeline and activities (e.g. Gantt chart, project management/delivery plan)
If required, evidence of land ownership or legally binding land use agreement with landowner or in-principal agreement with landowner
For projects on school land, please refer to section 3.3.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed Joint Use Agreement, or a completed Community Joint Use Proposal to enter into a Community Joint Use Agreement • A letter from the Department of Education central office that indicates endorsement of the project. Applicants requesting this letter should contact the Victorian School Building Authority.
Letters of support from groups or organisations clearly demonstrating their support to the project and how they will benefit from it
Evidence of stakeholder and community consultation that demonstrates the support for the project
Evidence that the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations Planning Tool (<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>) has been completed.

6. Funding Conditions

6.1 Funding agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department.

Funding Agreements are legally enforceable documents that clearly set out the obligations of both parties. Funding Agreements aim to protect the Victorian Government’s interests and the efficient and effective use of public money. These also ensure there is appropriate recognition of Victorian Government support in project related publications, media releases and promotional material.

No funding will be released until the Department and the applicant have executed the funding agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the funding agreement has been met. This includes confirmation of construction starting within the 18-month timeframe.

6.2 Project monitoring and delivery

Successful applicants will be required to actively manage and deliver projects and provide progress and final reports to the Department.

The Department will manage Funding Agreements and the payment of funds for approved projects.

6.3 Local Jobs First Policy

The Local Jobs First Policy (LJF Policy) issued under the Local Jobs First Act 2003 supports businesses and workers by ensuring that small and medium size enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for both large and small government contracts, helping to create job opportunities, including for apprentices, trainees and cadets. The LJF Policy is implemented by Victorian Government departments and agencies to help drive local industry development. The LJF Policy applies to grant projects where the value of the grant is above the threshold values of:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne, or
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

Projects funded through the GSF must comply with the Local Jobs First Policy.

Local Jobs First requirements will be built into all funding agreements where these thresholds apply.

Further information regarding the requirements can be found at: <https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au/>.

6.4 Acknowledgement

6.4.1 Acknowledgement and Publicity Requirements

Funding Agreements will require successful applicants to acknowledge the Victorian Government and the Growing Suburbs Fund/Suburban Revitalisation Program's support for funded projects, in accordance with the Department's guidelines. This may include the use of logos or similar on any project related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Guidelines for the acknowledgement of the Victorian Government and use of logos can be found at <https://www.suburbandevelopment.vic.gov.au/home/resources>.

Successful applicants must liaise with the Department's program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

6.4.2 Capital Works Signage Requirements

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the State Government's support for the project through appropriate signage consistent with the Victorian Government's Capital Works Signage Requirements (available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/capital-works-signage-guidelines>) or as otherwise specified by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

Plaque proofs must be submitted to the Department's program area for approval before being displayed at any public event and must contain the Victorian Government logo.

6.5 Privacy

Information provided by the Applicant for the purpose of this application will be used by Department and State Departments and Agencies for the assessment of the application, program administration and program evaluation or review.

In making an application the Applicant consents to the provision of their information, including personal information and supporting evidence to State Departments and Agencies for the purpose of assessing their application and to verify, confirm or audit information provided.

If there is an intention to include personal information about third parties in the application, please ensure they are aware of and consent to the contents of this privacy statement.

Funding approvals require the Department to share applicants and/or third-party personal information with the Minister of Suburban Development and their office staff supporting this initiative.

In order for us to administer your application effectively and efficiently, we may need to disclose your personal details with others for the purpose of assessment, consultation, and reporting. This can include departmental staff, Members of Parliament and their staff, external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other government departments.

Demographic information is collected by the Department for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

The Department will publish a list of successful grants on their website at <https://www.suburbandev.com.au/suburban-revitalisation>.

Any personal information about the Applicant or about a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, securely store, disclosed or shared in accordance with the Privacy and *Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

Enquires about the access to personal information or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information can be emailed to the Department's Privacy unit by emailing privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit or can be obtained from the Department's website at <https://djsir.vic.gov.au/privacy>.

Freedom of Information

Applications to the Growing Suburbs Fund and associated documentation may be subject to requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*. Enquiries about access to information held by DJSIR should be directed to:

Freedom of Information Manager
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, VIC, 3001
Email: foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au

7. Terms of Applying

The decisions on all matters on recommending and awarding of the grant funding is at the absolute discretion of the Department and the Minister for Suburban Development.

The Department reserves the right to request the applicant to provide further information on their application, should it be deemed necessary.

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and the application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

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