2019-20 Growing Suburbs Fund
Application Guidelines

The 2019–20 Growing Suburbs Fund is a contribution towards meeting critical local community infrastructure needs for Melbourne’s diverse and fast-growing outer suburbs. It is positioned to quickly respond to the pressures being experienced by interface communities by bringing forward local community facilities that will make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of outer suburban families.

Note to users: These guidelines relate to the 2019-20 Growing Suburbs Fund (GSF).
Melbourne’s population is growing at a rapid rate and the Victorian Government is committed to ensuring its’ liveability.

Our fast-growing outer suburbs need our support to help fund vital community facilities.

This is why, in 2015, we created the Growing Suburbs Fund to help support the 10 councils on Melbourne’s interface to respond to rapid population growth and increased demands on services.

The Growing Suburbs Fund responds to the pressures of growth and change on community facilities by bringing forward the delivery projects that improve amenity, liveability and resilience in the outer suburbs.

In the past 4 years $200 million has been allocated to support 161 projects. Seventy-five of these projects are now completed and open to the community.

The $50 million that was allocated in the 2019-20 Victorian Budget will further this investment and provide interface councils with the opportunity to apply for additional funding to build projects that make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of outer suburban communities. Projects typically include family and community centres, town centres, parks and reserves, and playgrounds.

I encourage you to read these guidelines, which are designed to help applicants understand the objectives, criteria and processes of the 2019-20 Growing Suburbs Fund.

They have been developed in collaboration and consultation with the interface councils, reflecting the strong partnership between state and local government, to ensure the best possible outcomes for communities living in Melbourne’s outer suburbs.

I look forward to seeing the Growing Suburbs Fund continue to support the local projects that are helping Melbourne’s outer suburbs meet the challenges they face as a result of growth and change.

The future liveability of Melbourne depends on our ability to maintain the distinctive character, vibrant communities, accessible facilities and services, and green and leafy environments of these important outer suburbs.

The Hon Adem Somyurek MP
Minister for Local Government
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1. Overview

The Victorian Government recognises that Melbourne’s interface councils are diverse and are home to some of the city’s most vulnerable communities. They play a critical role in supporting Victoria’s population growth and economy, contain productive rural land and are responsible for 90 per cent of Melbourne’s Green Wedge areas.

As a group, the interface councils on Melbourne’s urban fringe have been experiencing significant population growth over the last two decades, with growth consistently doubling the state’s average. This will continue with more than 1 million additional residents expected to be living in the interface by 2031.

The Victorian Government is investing an additional $50 million through the 2019-20 Growing Suburbs Fund (GSF) to continue timely delivery of critical infrastructure in Melbourne’s interface.

The GSF will be delivered in coordination with other government infrastructure investments in interface communities. It is overseen by the Minister for Local Government and administered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

2. Objectives

The 2019-20 GSF will contribute to meeting critical local infrastructure needs for communities in Melbourne’s 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 in the liveability and resilience of these communities.

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

- delivery of innovative models of integrated/shared community infrastructure
- improved local economic conditions in Melbourne’s interface communities
- improved capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands.

3. Who can apply

The 2019-20 GSF is open to Melbourne’s ten interface councils.

The ten interface councils are: Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham, and Yarra Ranges.

While only interface councils can apply for funding and enter into a funding agreement with the department, not-for-profit or private sector organisations are encouraged to partner with these councils to put forward proposals for the 2019-20 GSF.

Applicants should review these guidelines to confirm their eligibility.
4. What will be funded

The 2019-20 GSF will fund new, expanded or upgraded infrastructure\(^1\) projects within Melbourne’s ten interface councils.

4.1 Scope

The 2019-20 GSF will fund a mix of projects that have a direct benefit to communities across the following broad infrastructure categories:

- community health and well-being
- early education, learning and training
- sport, recreation, and leisure facilities that support multi use purposes
- environmental and climate change resilience
- placemaking, civic amenity, and community connecting

All infrastructure projects must commence construction within 18 months of the grant being announced and must be completed within three years from the start of construction.

The commencement of construction does not include early site works such as drainage, service connection or earthworks.

The 2019-20 GSF will not fund:

- projects that have already commenced construction
- land acquisition as an isolated activity (e.g. purchasing land for future use) as the fund is designed to support delivery of urgently needed local infrastructure, unless land acquisition forms part of the delivery of an implementation-ready\(^2\) infrastructure project
- infrastructure that is fully scoped and funded through a development contributions plan, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that GSF funds will bring forward delivery, or that the actual costs of delivering the infrastructure materially exceed the total of development contributions
- routine or ongoing maintenance activities, cosmetic works, or repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire or other natural disasters where the damage should be covered by insurance
- recurrent operating costs, including for utilities and staffing resources
- drainage, waste, roads and associated footpaths, 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

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1. Expansion or upgrades to leased premises may be considered based on cost-benefit over the length of the lease.
2. Implementation-ready infrastructure is defined as infrastructure for which, if funding were committed, construction works would commence within 18 months of funding announcement.
4.2 Project specific criteria for 2019-20 GSF

- There is no limit to the number of projects council can submit for consideration
- A council resolution providing support for the application and a priority order is essential

4.3 Funding from other programs

The GSF should 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 received for the 2019-20 GSF that are eligible for, and primarily within, the scope of other funding programs should clearly identify the additional value to be achieved through GSF funding. They should also identify any additional sources of funding sought, including State and Commonwealth government programs, as well as eligibility for contributions from developers.

4.4 Assessment criteria

Percentage weightings are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criterion in the assessment process. Applications should address all relevant criteria and provide relevant supporting documents as set out in section 4.5.

Information contained in the applications may be shared with other State Government agencies in order to assist with cross government coordination and enable the department to seek clarification on an application or applicants.

**Individual project assessment**

Applications for infrastructure will be assessed against five individual project assessment criteria:

**Criterion 1 – Why is this project required? – 25%**

Applications will be required to demonstrate the extent to which the project addresses an identified need in the community by:

- clearly identifying the need or gap in infrastructure provision that the project will address
- demonstrating (by quantifying) the breadth and depth of the need or gap in infrastructure provision
- demonstrating how the project aligns with and delivers against current state policy objectives

Applications that directly address needs resulting from population growth will be favourably considered.
Criterion 2 – Who will benefit and how? – 25%

Applications must clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project will deliver benefits to the locality and:

• contribute to improved gender equality and the needs of diverse communities
• clearly identify the expected benefits (social, economic, and/or environmental) that the project will deliver
• demonstrate the breadth and depth of the expected benefits including who will benefit and how
• demonstrate how the project will deliver on the purpose of the GSF and the desired outcomes

Criterion 3 – What will be delivered – 20%

Applications must provide details of what the funding will be used for and:

• demonstrate the relationship between what the project will deliver, the need for the project, and the expected benefits
• demonstrate and provide documented evidence that the facility will be a multi-use facility
• demonstrate consistency with climate change, environmental sustainable design, and universal design principles
• explain how the project benefits will be sustained once the infrastructure is delivered

Criterion 4 – How will the project be delivered - 20%

Applications must provide details that:

• demonstrate a sound approach to deliver the project, providing realistic time-frames for delivery, and demonstrate that the project is financially viable and represents value for money
• demonstrate capacity to implement and/or source expertise to manage the delivery of the project
• outline the proposed funding contributions for the project

Projects that have significant council contributions and attract further public, not-for-profit or private sector investment are desirable and strongly encouraged. Applicants must contribute resources and funding to any GSF funded project.

Council’s previous performance in delivering state funded projects, including projects funded under previous GSF funding rounds, will be considered in the assessment of this criterion.

Where there are concurrent funding applications, applications must identify how council will fund the difference if other applications are unsuccessful.
Criterion 5 - The extent of council and community support for the project – 10%

Applications must:

• demonstrate that the project is a recognised strategic council priority and is consistent with key council plans such as the current Council Plan and Strategic Resource Plan, community plans or structure plans and/or policy documents

• demonstrate the level of support at the community level. This could be demonstrated by engagement activities, co-contributions or in-kind support from community members or groups

• where appropriate, demonstrate the increase in activities and community use of the facility the project will support.

Program wide criteria

A program assessment panel will consider four program-wide factors. These factors are:

• consistency with state priorities – the panel will consider how each project aligns local and State priorities

• leveraged funding - Councils are expected to contribute some funding to the delivery of projects and a program wide funding leverage of $1 for $1 has been set.

• geographic distribution - no more than 20 per cent of the total 2019-20 GSF funding pool will be allocated to a single council

• diversity of infrastructure/project types - the assessment will seek to ensure that funded projects represent a mix of targeted infrastructure

4.5 Supporting documentation

The following supporting documentation can be attached as part of your application:

• key project governance, management and milestone management documentation such as a project plan

• a business case or cost benefit analysis that may have been completed for the project

• relevant sections of council reports/plans/strategies/community consultation that demonstrates support for the project (please do not attach entire documents)

• concept or schematic plans for the project

• confirmation of other funding sources

• relevant quantity surveyor (QS) reports where appropriate

• applicable permits if available
5. How to apply

5.1 Application process and key timing

Applications for eligible projects will be received through a single application round, opening in August and closing in September. The assessment process is designed to ensure that fully scoped, eligible and high priority projects can be funded as soon as possible for works to commence. Applicants must consult the GSF team before 16 September 2019 on (03) 9948 8536 to discuss their project proposal and arrange a site visit. Project proposals that have not been discussed and a site visit arranged with the GSF team prior to that date will not be considered.

A brief overview of timeline for the 2019-20 GSF is summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications Open</td>
<td>20 August 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications Close</td>
<td>2pm on 30 September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment and Decision Making</td>
<td>From October 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>From November 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Agreements Executed</td>
<td>From December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Commencement</td>
<td>No later than June 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Complete</td>
<td>Within 3 years of commencement</td>
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5.2 Application requirements

Applicants should:

- address the 2019-20 GSF project assessment criteria in their response to each question
- include all key information, data and evidence to support responses
- provide a primary contact for any follow-up

DELWP staff may make contact with 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.

Applications must be submitted via the link at www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/gsf. These should be received by the department no later than 2pm, Monday 30 September 2019.

If you have any queries, please contact DELWP on (03) 9948 8536 or email GSF@delwp.vic.gov.au.
5.3 Funding conditions

**Funding agreement**

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DELWP. Funding agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms and conditions. It is recommended that applicants review the Common Funding Agreement standard terms and conditions before applying. No funding will be released until DELWP and the applicant have executed the funding agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the funding agreement has been met. DELWP reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where evidence has been provided but the Department deems that there are concerns relating to the delivery of the project. In this instance, the Department will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the funding project is delivered within the agreed timeframes.

In the event of a project completed for less than the original total project budget stated in the funding agreement, applicants will be required to return unspent funds negotiated on a pro rata basis.

**Project monitoring and delivery**

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

Councils are responsible for project delivery, including any project cost overruns should they occur. In cases where applications are submitted in partnership with third party organisations, it is expected that councils will take responsibility for project delivery. Councils must also take full responsibility for the cost of ongoing operation and maintenance of any facilities through their asset management processes.

In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, where substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a project fails to be delivered, DELWP reserves the right to cancel the grant and, if applicable, recoup any payment that has already been provided.

Successful applicants must comply with the requirements of the Victorian Industry Participation Policy where applicable. Further information regarding the requirements, go to https://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/victorian-industry-participation-policy

An outcomes report is required to be submitted to DELWP within 12months of construction completion. This will need to include information and data demonstrating:

- increased usability
- increased activities and programs
- visitation, including age breakdown where applicable
- new initiatives that have been implemented as a direct result of funding from the GSF
- the delivery of innovative models of integrated/shared community infrastructure (e.g. partnerships formed, service delivery model developed)
Acknowledgement

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government’s support and promotional guidelines will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in program evaluation or in the department’s communication materials.