



ACT
Government

Transport Canberra
and City Services

ADOPT-A-PARK

Looking after our urban parks and places

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

2024 - 2025 GUIDELINES

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1. URBAN PARKS AND PLACES VOLUNTEERING

The Urban Parks and Places Volunteering program (UPP) is a partnership between the local community and the ACT Government and is managed and overseen by the City Presentation Branch within the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS).

The program enables the Canberra community to assist with the maintenance, care, and upgrade of local public spaces. There are currently 95 urban volunteer groups that provide their time and assist in these areas. Volunteers can join one of the existing groups already contributing to improving our local parks and places.

Urban volunteer groups have played an important role in maintaining and preserving our local parks and places since the early 1990's. Volunteers help out with activities such as weeding, planting, urban artwork, litter collection, minor tree maintenance, erosion control and citizen science surveys.

2. PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Adopt-a-Park grants program in 2024-25 is to promote long-term landscape resilience that provides benefits for the Canberra community through:

- successfully controlling or removing Declared Pest Plants under the [*Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*](#) (the Act) that potentially threaten the ecosystems of High Value Conservation Sites through Canberra's Urban area;
- strengthening volunteer group capacity and stewardship in urban open spaces; and
- building landscape resilience more broadly across Canberra to complement ecological objectives occurring in Canberra Nature Parks.

Funding through this grant initiative will only consider project proposals that control or remove weeds identified under the Act and are linked to urban assets containing high ecological values.

The 2024-25 program will favour project sites nearby or adjacent to designated Canberra Nature Park sites. Approved weed projects will provide benefits for the Canberra community, through the protection of significant sites for future enjoyment and education benefits, by using the capacity of existing registered and "in-progress" volunteer groups to undertake and manage ACT Government-endorsed projects.

3. OUTCOMES

The intended outcomes of the Adopt-a-Park program in 2024-25 are to:

- control or removal of Declared Pest Plants or Emerging Pest Plants in neighbourhood public spaces through community stewardship; and
- maximise ecological benefit with areas of environmental and biodiversity significance.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be groups who are already existing within the Urban Parks and Places Volunteering Program (UPPVP), or have an application pending with UPPVP, including an activity plan or group information sheet submitted for approval. It is mandatory that the group has a sponsor to apply for a grant.

Gaining a sponsor: A sponsor supports the application of non-incorporated groups. A sponsor can be any related incorporated organisation, such as a Catchment group.

A sponsor organisation will need to be willing to:

- include evidence in writing of authority/consent that they are willing to act as the sponsor of your application;
- be the primary person for correspondence between the Grant coordinator and the applicant;
- ensure your application meets the project objective, and includes all supporting documentation; and
- lodge your application on your behalf and acquittal documents at the end of a successfully funded project.

Further information about eligibility can be sought from [TCCS Urban Parks and Places Volunteering staff](#).

5. FUNDING PARAMETERS

Interested groups must be aware of the following funding parameters:

- groups can apply for a maximum up to \$40,000 in funding for any single application under the Adopt-a-Park program;
- applicants must be groups who are already existing within the Urban Parks and Places Volunteering Program (UPPVP) or have an application pending with UPPVP including an activity plan or a group information sheet submitted for approval, and must have a sponsor (see definition);
- applications for projects will only be considered that can be achieved within budget and within the timeframe of one year from approval;

- applications must be for projects on TCCS-managed land or directly supporting volunteers working on TCCS-managed land; and
- while there is no requirement for any matched funding contribution, evidence of partnerships in the delivery of a project or activity may be favourably considered.

WHAT WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING

- Weed and woody weed control projects by means of spraying, cut and dabbing or mechanical removal to benefit ecosystem and biodiversity functions, fire resilience implementation, or erosion control, will be prioritised for grant funding. This work must be delivered by volunteers or by Government approved contractors.
- Projects that support weed control with succession planting of native grasses, shrubs and trees to maximise ecological benefit with areas of environmental and biodiversity significance, may also be considered as a subsequent priority.

WHAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING

- Mulching¹ or watering shrub beds.
- Requests for retrospective funding for activities.
- Projects that are considered to not have a direct positive effect on TCCS urban parks and places sites.
- Projects that cannot show direct involvement of or benefit for volunteers operating in TCCS managed urban parks and places.
- Projects that require extensive follow up maintenance (of plants, weeding etc.) not able to be undertaken by associated volunteer groups.
- Projects that are seeking to install significant infrastructure (such as play spaces, seating or new toilets).
- Projects that replicate existing works already undertaken by TCCS Place Management staff or established volunteer groups.
- General administrative and management costs associated in operating an organisation that are not directly related to the application project.

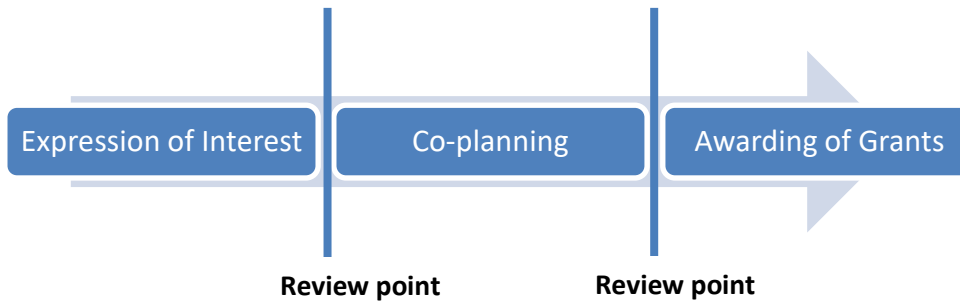
Further information about the suitability or otherwise of other items to attract funding can be sought from TCCS Urban Parks and Places Volunteering staff, via

TCCS.CPUrbanPrograms@act.gov.au

¹ Mulch can be ordered free of charge by registered groups via TCCS.CPUrbanPrograms@act.gov.au

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process involves 3 main stages-



Stage 1 - Expression of interest (EOI):

Interested groups must apply through their sponsor utilising the Smarty Grant system which includes a declaration that certifies all information provided in the application is true and correct.

The Smarty Grants site is where an applicant group can register using an email address and nominate a password. You will then be required to answer a series of questions and where necessary provide supporting documentation such as:

- a brief scope (250 words) outlining how your project meets the objective of landscape resilience;
- a brief outline of how your project meets the assessment criteria;
- an estimated budget breakdown, detailing each component of the bid;
- a mapped proposal on ACTMAPi;
- an estimate of timings for each stage of the project.

Stage 2 - Co-planning:

If an EOI is selected to progress following a review of the project brief and supporting documentation, successful applicants will be contacted to supply further details in support of their application by providing:

- a map using ACTMAPi identifying, itemising and locating the specific details of the project proposal;
- a more refined outline of the project's proposed timeline, identifying key project achievements against appropriate timeframes and against key expenditure timeframes;
- proposed long term maintenance requirements necessary to support the effectiveness of the project objective;

- a more detailed budget and breakdown linked to each component of the proposed project achievements including the total cost applied for;
- if required, planned site visits with TCCS Place Management operations staff to discuss the project; and/or
- undertaking a project risk assessment.

Stage 3 – Awarding of grants

TCCS reviews proposed projects to allow for recommendations to be made to the Minister for City Services. Once Ministerial approval is obtained, a Deed of Grant will be offered to successful applicants before the project commences.

7. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

When TCCS receives an application, it will be checked to ensure eligibility for funding (refer to Item 4 for eligibility requirements). All eligible applications will be given to a panel to be rated. This assessment panel is chaired by a senior staff member of the City Presentation team.

Applications that meet all the general eligibility requirements will be assessed against the following criteria in meeting the primary objectives and outcomes of the Adopt-a-Park grants program:

- 1) **Demonstrated link to pest plant control and/or removal:** The application provides evidence of pest plant control in the description or scope of the project being proposed.
- 2) **Demonstrated link to pest plants identified under the Act:** The application considers pest plants only identified under the relevant legislation.
- 3) **Demonstrated link to the protection of ecosystem high conservation sites:** The application provides evidence of benefit of pest plant control adjacent or near to areas of high ecological value.
- 4) **Demonstrated benefits (expected long term outcomes for the target community):** The ability to identify the benefits likely to be delivered within project timeframe by the project/proposal.
- 5) **Project suitability:** demonstrated evidence that the project proposed is suitable for the location, considering elements like public safety and fire regime.
- 6) **Value for money:** The application provides a realistic budget and includes budget figures at prominent milestones for the project outcomes to be achieved for the funds requested.

Applications will be initially assessed at the EOI phase, with suitable shortlisted applicants being invited into the co-planning stage. Once co-planning is complete, a final assessment of

the applications will take place before grants are recommended to the Minister and awarded.

Approval

Even though an application may meet the above criteria, the number of successful applications will depend on the number of applications received, the relative merit of an application, government priorities and success in co-planning. The pool of available funding is limited and may not enable all suitable projects to be funded.

When the final assessment is complete, recommendations for funding will then be made to the Minister for City Services for final approval. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after Ministerial approval has been given. TCCS is unable to provide feedback on the outcome of an application prior to the conclusion of the assessment process.

While funding at this stage has been approved, the proposed weed control activities applied for under the Adopt-a-Park Grant scheme will still need to be discussed in detail and approved by City Presentation. This will involve site meeting/s and additional information (if necessary) with the Sponsor before works can commence.

8. CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Should an application be successful, the **Sponsor** will be responsible for:

- entering into a legal agreement (Deed of Grant) with the Territory on behalf of the applicant volunteer groups;
- receiving the grant funding on behalf of the volunteer group;
- entering into a legal agreement with the volunteer group in order for the volunteer group to be able to disburse grant funds;
- where necessary represent the volunteer group at site meetings with a representative from City Presentation;
- holding all permits, insurances, assurances and other obligations under the Deed of Grant; and
- complying with the reporting requirements for the 2024-25 Adopt-a-Park grant program.

Additional conditions of funding

- 1) The declaration on the Expression of Interest form certifies that all information provided in the application is true and correct. Action may be taken for repayment of any grant made where information contained in the application is subsequently found to be false or the grant is not used for its approved purpose.

- 2) All organisations are accountable for funds received from TCCS and must adhere to all conditions and guidelines of the Adopt-a-Park program and the Deed of Grant.
- 3) All organisations must provide suitable acknowledgment for the financial support provided by TCCS under this program. Information regarding this will be provided in the Deed of Grant.
- 4) All organisations must be able to demonstrate that every effort is being made to ensure that the principles of access and equity are guiding any funded programs that it conducts.
- 5) Successful applicants will need to seek written approval from TCCS to make any variation to the project once the Deed of Grant has been finalised. Requests to amend the scope of the project need to be addressed to the Senior Director, Place Management, clearly outlining why the change of purpose is required. Organisations should not assume that a change of purpose request will be approved.
- 6) Funded projects will, at the discretion of TCCS, be profiled and promoted via ACT Government communication channels (website, social media etc.).
- 7) As a condition of funding, TCCS may request the promotion and/or placement of the ACT Government logo in promotional material, electronic communications or physical assets directly linked to the funded activity or project.
- 8) Should a successful grant recipient decide to decline the offer of a grant, TCCS may reallocate the grant funding to another project that had also applied through this grant process.

9. GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST)

GST is payable to organisations that receive financial assistance under this program if they are GST registered with the Australian Tax Office² and can provide an Australian Business Number (ABN), i.e. if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum.

For successful applicant organisations, TCCS will gross up the grant/s by 10% if registered for GST and after receipt of a Tax Invoice. Organisations that are not registered for the GST will not have their grants grossed up.

² <https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/gst-excise-and-indirect-taxes/gst/registering-for-gst>

10. ACQUITTAL OF GRANT FUNDING

Within 30 days after the termination date of the grant period, funded organisations must provide TCCS with the following:

1. a signed Acquittal Form, certifying that the organisation has utilised the financial assistance in accordance with the Conditions and Guidelines of the Adopt-a-Park grants program;
2. a simple project report and accompanying 'before' and 'after' photos demonstrating the achievements of the project, uploaded through Smarty Grants;
3. a copy of the relevant audited financial statement or invoices, receipts, bank statements or other financial documentation that clearly identifies the income and expenditure of the grant.

No further financial assistance can be provided until all outstanding grants provided by TCCS (except for the current year's funding) have been successfully acquitted, including financial acquittals for any other ACT Government agency grant and organisations are compliant under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*.

11. CONTACT US

For further information on Adopt-a-Park grants program, contact the Community Programs Coordinator on urbanprograms@act.gov.au or go to our [website](#).