



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest Program

2026-27 Funding Opportunity Guidelines

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Background

Covering an area of 2,090 km², the Swan Canning catchment includes the Swan (Derbal Yerrigan), Canning (Djarlgarra/Dyarlgarro), Helena and Southern rivers. The Swan Canning Riverpark (the Riverpark) includes 2,600 ha of river foreshore and receives groundwater and surface water from the catchment as it flows along drainage lines and tributaries.

Native plants thrive throughout the Riverpark, including significant areas of remnant riparian and terrestrial native vegetation. However, these areas have become increasingly vulnerable to fragmentation and degradation.

The Riverpark and surrounding areas have undergone significant historical change through altering the natural river system; both in the waterways, and on the coastal plain for agriculture, industry and suburban development.

Large areas of the Swan and Canning catchments have been cleared for agriculture and development. The Riverpark continues to face a range of water quality and other environmental challenges that can have a negative effect on the delicate ecological system and reduce the community's ability to enjoy our natural areas (State of Western Australia, 2015).

In March 2021, the State Government committed \$3 million in funding over four years (2021-22 to 2024-25) to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' (DBCA) Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest program (the Program). In July 2025, a further \$2 million was invested over two years to continue delivery of the Program.

This program is an initiative that allows DBCA to support local and State government agencies to deliver urban forest restoration projects to improve ecosystem health, amenity value and use of the Riverpark and connected landscape (including tributaries and drainage lines in the Swan Canning Catchment).

This program is expected to provide the future benefits as follows:

- improved condition, structure and function of urban forest ecosystems in the Riverpark and along its drainage lines and tributaries
- improved habitat value, connectivity and increased use by native fauna through revegetation
- improved management of the Swan Canning Riverpark and connected urban forest by State and local government
- improved quality of water entering the river via the Riverpark
- enhanced Riverpark amenity value and use.

Initially this program was its own action under the WA Government's Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan (Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2) to establish leading waterwise communities for Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel) by 2030. This aimed to address climate change through water-saving initiatives and the creation of climate-resilient, liveable urban spaces and healthy environments. The program now contributes to action 18 of Waterwise Perth Action Plan 3, Implementation of a River Protection Strategy for the Swan Canning river system.

This program aligns with the objectives and principles of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act), contributes to implementation of the River Protection Strategy for Derbal Yirrigan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system) and delivers on the WA Government's 2025-2029 priority to protect and restore the Swan and Canning rivers, ensuring they continue to provide enduring environmental, cultural, economic and lifestyle benefits for future generations.

These guidelines are intended for project partners and provide an overview of the program and answer key questions relating to the eligibility, available funding and the application and assessment process.

Who is eligible for this funding?

To be eligible for this funding, the proponent must:

- be a local or State government land manager responsible for the proposed project site.
- be able to contribute at least one third of the overall project costs. Contributions can be either cash or in-kind and include contributions from project partners.

Must not:

- be a private landholder or community group. The payee for successful partnership projects must be a local or State government agency, who will be responsible for managing funds and project reporting.
- be using funds leveraged from other funding programs as their contribution to the project.

Eligible items for funding

Projects funded through the program must be consistent with the objectives of the program. Projects financed through the program must:

- be aimed at achieving on-ground urban forest restoration works.
- be in line with identified program objectives.
- be located within or linked to the Riverpark (including tributaries and drainage lines in the Swan Canning Catchment).
- be easily identified as distinct from or additional to previous projects or projects funded through other programs, however infill and weed control for previously funded Riverbank program sites will be considered for funding if it is included as part of a larger project for the site.

Items that will not be funded

The following items cannot be funded through the program:

- the program will not fund activities retrospectively
- staff salaries or wages
- purchase of tools and equipment
- major earthworks and civil construction
- restoration and rehabilitation of buildings
- capital equipment purchases

- works primarily aimed at beautification or improving an amenity without environmental outcomes for the Riverpark
- bioengineering works, including brush mattressing, coir logs and brush walling
- built shoreline stabilisation structures including river walling, revetments and gabions
- assets including drainage and habitat structures
- research projects
- site investigations including acid sulfate soil (ASS) and geotechnical investigations.

Items eligible as the proponent's in-kind contribution

The items that will not be funded are also ineligible as the proponent's in-kind contribution except for staff and volunteer time. Applicants may not seek staff wages through the program funding; however, wages may be used as partner contribution for funding. Applicants can put officer labour toward their contribution for funding as 'in-kind' support at a rate of \$50/hr per adult volunteer, \$20/hr children (6-18 years) volunteer and \$70/hr per officer. The following may also be considered for in-kind contribution:

- costs associated with obtaining relevant permits and approvals
- site investigations which facilitate planting including pre-project flora and fauna assessments
- site preparation
- on-ground materials and labour for site preparation, revegetation and weed control
- interpretive signage highlighting the importance of the project to the site
- auditing costs

In-kind contributions should also be aligned with the program objectives. Proposals with significant in-kind for amenity-focused items (e.g., paths, seating and irrigation) are discouraged and will be assessed against the criteria below.

How much funding will be provided?

DBCA has allocated \$926,667 (ex GST) to on-ground implementation of urban forest projects in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

There is no maximum funding amount available to applicants. DBCA will consider value for money and availability of funds to meet priorities in determining a funding amount. Project implementation should be completed by 30 June 2029. Extension of a project beyond this date will require approval from DBCA's Director General. All funding is exclusive of GST.

Important note: Large scale, multi-year projects are encouraged to help achieve better onground outcomes and to reduce administrative burden on funding recipients.

Budgetary requirements

Project applicants are expected to provide indicative annual budgets. Quotes for any goods and services, including consultant's fees, where available, should be used to inform the project proposal.

When calculating the costs for the proposed project, project applicants should exclude the GST component for all items. Project budgets should indicate the estimated total value of the project including funding being sought and any partnership contributions.

Please note that cost sharing arrangements allow:

- up to two-thirds of the total project cost to be requested from the program
- funds available to local or State government agencies and community from other sources to be considered as part of the partnership contribution however evidence of the availability of matching funds must be provided.

Projects that receive \$50,000 or more will also require an itemised audit of expenditure from an independent auditor (at the expense of the funding recipient).

The program's projects must be demonstrably distinct from or additional to previous DBCA projects or projects funded through other DBCA programs.

Application process

The method by which funding is administered through the program is a competitive process through the submission of a project proposal via the SmartyGrants administration system.

The application process is as follows:



The provision of funds will be made upon the execution of a funding arrangement. It is through the establishment of these agreements that the final project details, including a project schedule, and detailed budget arrangements will be negotiated.

The assessment criteria

All project proposals are scored against the following criteria and must achieve a minimum score to be considered eligible. All project proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

CRITERION 1: How effectively does the project address the program's objectives?

We will consider:

- how effectively the proposed activities are expected to improve condition, structure and function of urban forest ecosystems in the Riverpark and along its drainage lines and tributaries.
- how effectively the proposed activities are expected to improve habitat value and increased use by native fauna through revegetation.
- how effectively the proposed activities are expected to improve management of the Swan Canning Riverpark and connected urban forest by State and local government.
- how effectively the proposed activities are expected to improve the quality of water entering the river via the Riverpark.
- how effectively the proposed activities are expected to enhance Riverpark amenity value and use.

CRITERION 2: Other Swan Canning Waterways Branch-funded projects

We will consider:

- the project partner's record of delivering Swan Canning Waterways Branch funded projects (if applicable).

CRITERION 3: The project activities are in alignment with an existing management or strategic plan.

We will consider:

- how the proposed activities contribute to and align with strategic planning and/or site management planning.
- how the proposed activities assist land managers to achieve urban forest/greening targets identified within strategic planning documents.

CRITERION 4: The project is feasible, technically sound and achievable.

We will consider:

- if timeframes are feasible for achieving proposed objectives; and
- if the proposed methodologies and technical oversight proposed are adequate.

CRITERION 5: Demonstrates value for money

We will consider:

- if the proposed budget is a reasonable estimate of what might be expected to achieve the objectives of the project.
- if all budgeted items are eligible for funding (see pages 4 and 5).

CRITERION 6: Demonstrates financial or in-kind contributions

We will consider:

- the level of financial or in-kind contribution being made by the funding recipient. Funding recipients need to meet the minimum requirement of 1/3 cash or in-kind contribution.

CRITERION 7: Project maintenance

We will consider:

- if the proposed maintenance budget/timeframe is a reasonable estimate of what might be expected to achieve the project objectives and sustain it in the long-term.

CRITERION 8: Proposed monitoring, evaluation and reporting approach

We will consider:

- the suitability and comprehensiveness of the monitoring, evaluation and reporting approach.

The BMT is responsible for determining if proposed projects fit the overall intent of the program. In situations where project proposals are considered to be of merit, yet outside the intent of the program, the Program Coordinator can discuss opportunities for project refinement or potential alternatives for project implementation with applicants.

Talk to us about your project

If you have a project in mind, please contact our Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest Coordinator. We will work with you in the development of your project.

Telephone: 9278 9000

Email: riverbank@dbca.wa.gov.au

Website: <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/urbanforestprogram>

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Statutory Approvals

Proposed works may require a permit or development approval under the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* or Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations 2007. Statutory approval requirements should be established as early as possible.

Project applicants should refer to the DBCA's website: www.dbca.wa.gov.au for clarification of approvals required for their proposed works.

Queries can be directed to the Statutory Assessments Unit (SAU) by emailing rivers.planning@dbca.wa.gov.au or calling 9278 0900.

Statutory approval for proposed projects is a separate process to funding assessment and allocation and must be addressed through a formal process. Proponents are encouraged to consult with the SAU prior to the submission of a project plan if planning input is required to shape the project.

Aboriginal consultation and authorisation

Consultation with Aboriginal Traditional Owners is an important part of any environmental project and is the responsibility of the project partner. The Swan and Canning rivers are registered sites under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (the Act), and the land adjacent may also contain Aboriginal heritage.

The Act protects and manages Aboriginal heritage by requiring approval for activities that may cause harm. The onus is on the project partner to check for Aboriginal heritage and allocate adequate time and resources for appropriate authorisation. Further information can be found on the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) website at www.wa.gov.au/aboriginal-heritage.

The Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation represents the Whadjuk people, the native title holders of the Perth metropolitan region, and is the organisation to contact regarding statutory consultation. Additional Whadjuk people with knowledge and rights to the project area should also be appropriately consulted. DPLH should be contacted for assistance with this on 6551 8002 or info@dplh.wa.gov.au.

Media protocol

The Program's projects are collaborative partnerships, and it is a condition of funding that all communication activities are shared equally between DBCA and the funding recipient. Successful projects will be subject to communications and media requirements, which will be outlined in the Collaborative Arrangement, and further guidance provided by the Program Coordinator.

References

Government of Western Australia (2025). *Our Priorities for Government 2025-2029*. Perth, Western Australia.

Government of Western Australia (2024). *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3*. Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Perth, Western Australia

State of Western Australia (2015). *River Protection Strategy*. Department of Parks and Wildlife. Perth, Western Australia