

WestInvest Program Guidelines

WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation

March 2022 - Updated 20 June 2022 to reflect the extension to
WestInvest Community Project Grants applications



Foreword



The Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP, NSW Premier

The NSW Government has launched WestInvest, a landmark \$5 billion program to secure the best quality of life for families and make communities in West and South-West Sydney even better places to live.

For a long time, the focus in West and South-West Sydney has been on the critical major projects.

As more of these projects move closer to completion, we are now turning our mind to complete the picture by working with councils and the community to deliver local projects that enhance liveability.

West and South-West Sydney are already incredible places to live and this investment will deliver improved facilities, more open spaces, convenient services and stimulate the economy for the local community and generations to come.



The Hon. Matt Kean MP, Treasurer, and Minister for Energy

WestInvest is a transformative investment program that will move quickly to ensure the people of Western Sydney see real change, really soon.

This is about funding infrastructure projects that will benefit everyone.

It's about revitalised high streets, improved parks, new sporting fields, more pools, better local traffic flow, active transport links, and much more.

WestInvest will be rolled out as rapidly as possible to ensure communities see lasting benefits quickly.



The Hon. Stuart Ayres MP, Minister for Western Sydney

WestInvest is a fund for Western Sydney, designed by Western Sydney.

Western Sydney is one of the most diverse and dynamic economic centres in the world and WestInvest will support the region's growth to make residents' lives here truly exceptional.

Our communities here are a rich mix, with a huge cross-section of cultures and people from all walks of life, and the programs funded through WestInvest will reflect and enhance that diversity.

As we grow it is clear where we need to do more to improve liveability in our communities and deliver better local facilities.

I am excited to not only see the launch of this program which incorporates such high levels of local community input, but to also see work already underway to turn WestInvest ideas into reality.

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Overview of WestInvest

The new \$5 billion WestInvest Program (**WestInvest** or the **Program**) will fund transformational infrastructure projects across Western Sydney, home to one of the fastest growing and most diverse populations in the nation. These projects will improve the liveability of communities and support economic recovery, making a real difference to the quality of life in 15 eligible local government areas (LGAs).

These are among the State's fastest growing council areas, experiencing large population growth. WestInvest will support this trajectory by funding local projects that support community amenity and liveability.

WestInvest projects will be drawn from proposals put forward by NSW Government agencies, local government and community organisations. Projects will need to

measurably improve liveability and will be selected based on their potential to drive transformational change and make Western Sydney a better place to live, work, play, connect with nature and raise a family – now and for generations to come. WestInvest is designed to deliver transformational infrastructure projects across six focus areas:



Quality green and open spaces:

More parks and healthier natural environments that encourage active lifestyles, restore biodiversity and improve access to the environment. Cleaner natural waterways with improved access for recreation.



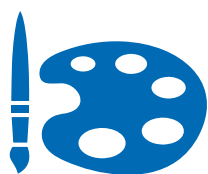
Community infrastructure:

Improved access to quality sport, recreation and other community facilities that bring people together and enable a diverse range of activities.



School modernisation:

State-of-the-art, cooler and accessible education facilities that can adapt to evolving learning standards and student needs. Infrastructure that prepares students for an increasingly digital world.



Arts and cultural facilities:

A broader range of arts and culture venues that reflect the diversity of Western Sydney, encouraging inclusive and regular community participation.



High street activation:

Increasing the vibrancy of precincts to increase footfall for businesses. Targeted improvements to public amenities and allowing easier access to essential goods and services within walking distance.



Local traffic programs:

Local streets are designed as comfortable, accessible and safe places for people with diverse use needs, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

The \$5 billion funding will be administered as follows:

- **\$2 billion for the Community Project Grants:**
 - **Local Government Allocation:** Approximately \$400 million directly allocated to the 15 eligible local councils in Western Sydney
 - **Competitive Round:** Approximately \$1.6 billion in a competitive community grants program
- A further \$3 billion is available to NSW Government agencies to deliver transformational projects of benefit to local communities.

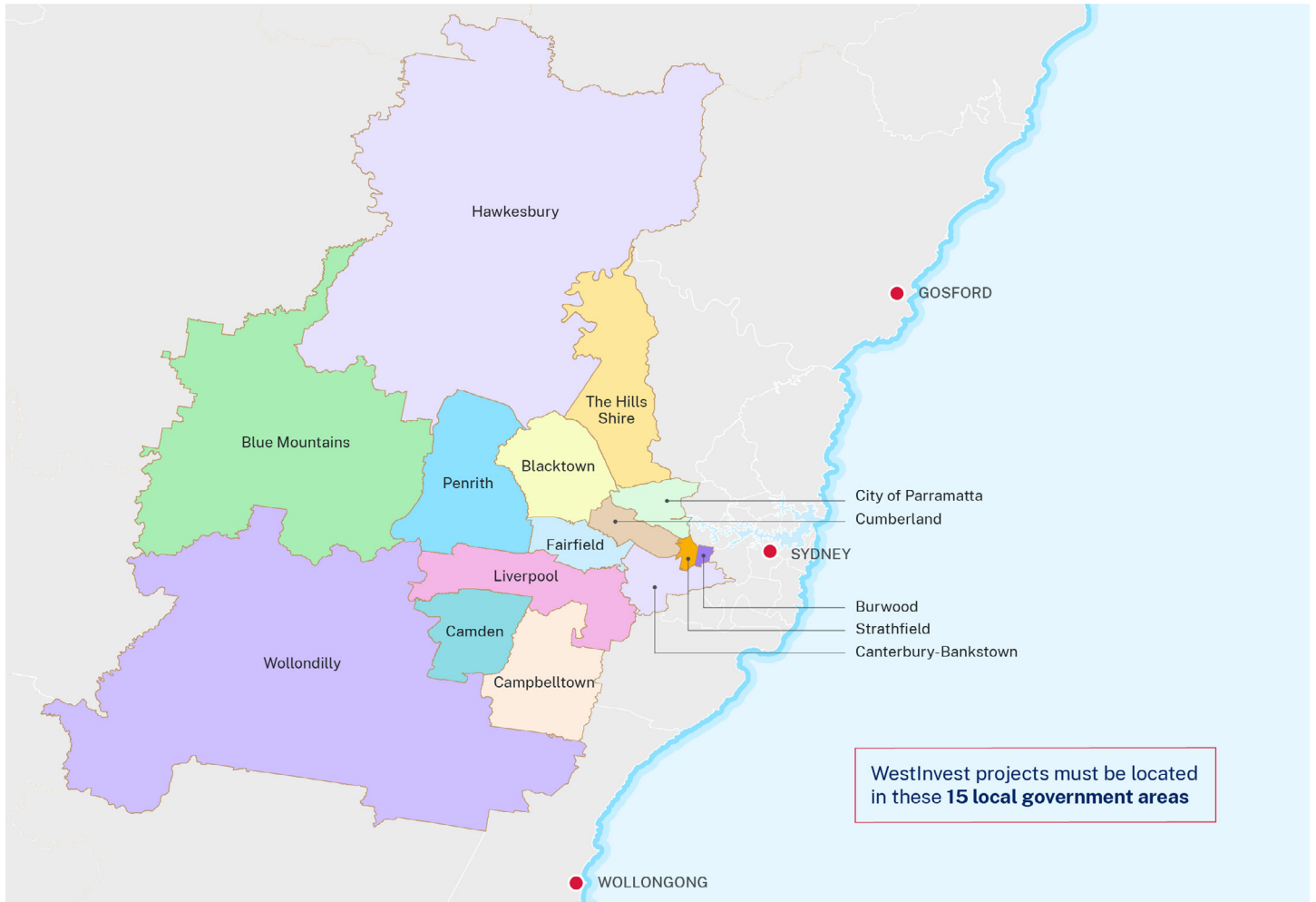


WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation

WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government allocation will provide approximately \$400 million in funding for community projects in 15 eligible LGAs in Western Sydney and is open to local councils.

The following councils are eligible to apply for funding under the Local Government Allocation:

Blacktown	Camden	Cumberland	The Hills	Penrith
Blue Mountains	Campbelltown	Fairfield	Liverpool	Strathfield
Burwood	Canterbury-Bankstown	Hawkesbury	Parramatta	Wollondilly



Purpose of this Guideline

This Guideline outlines key objectives, eligibility criteria, assessment processes and timeframes for the **WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation**.

Key Dates

Key Phase	Date
Program launch	24 February 2022
Applications open	2 May 2022 at 9:00am
Applications close	25 July 2022 at 5:00pm
Assessment	As applications are received
Successful applicants advised	Progressively, as projects are approved
Funding Deeds executed and works commence	From July 2022
Program and expenditure ends	December 2026. Projects that require a longer delivery timeframe will be considered.

Consultation

The design of the Local Government Allocation component has been informed through consultation undertaken by NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) with community and local government representatives in the 15 eligible LGAs.

The community has been invited to identify its priorities about the type of projects that should be funded through the online “Have Your Say” consultation process.

Probity

The Program will be subject to strict governance and probity with fair and transparent assessment processes. All decisions made under this Program will be made in accordance with the relevant program guidelines and the associated assessment criteria.

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the submission, assessment, and decision processes. This will help ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness, and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

Governance

WestInvest funding is sourced from the NSW Generations (Community Services and Facilities) Fund, established under *NSW Generations Fund Act 2018*.

DPC will lead administration of the Program with assistance from the Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW). DRNSW will manage the receipt and assessment of registrations of interest and applications, entry into funding deeds and grants administration and evaluation.

A WestInvest Steering Committee (the Steering Committee), comprising senior executives of the NSW Public Service, has been established to oversee the WestInvest Program and recommend projects for funding to the Treasurer based on an assessment of eligible applications against the relevant assessment criteria.

The Treasurer will approve the awarding of funding grants. Any departures from the recommendations of the Steering Committee will be documented as part of the approval process.



Destination NSW

Funding and Eligibility



Grant Amounts

Approximately \$400 million has been allocated to the Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation.

Each of the 15 eligible councils eligible for between \$21 million and \$35 million, made up of a base allocation plus \$38 per head of population based on ABS 2020 data.

The minimum funding amount that can be applied per project is \$250,000. There is no cap on the amount of funding that can be applied for as long as the project is of a transformational scale and meets the criteria of the WestInvest program.

Councils are also eligible to apply for funding under the WestInvest Community Grants -Competitive Round of the WestInvest Community Project Grants. The Competitive Round has a separate guideline to assist applicants.

Councils are permitted to submit more than one application for different projects. Councils will be required to provide information in the application that is commensurate to the funding amount sought, total estimated cost of the project, project scale and risk profile of the project.

The type of business case required for the application is dependent on the estimated project cost.

Category	Estimated total cost of the project	Application required
A	\$1 million and under	Simplified Business Case
B	Over \$1 million	Standard Business Case. Projects over \$10 million are required to include additional information regarding quantitative benefits

The Standard Business Case (Category B) template seeks information and data to enable completion of a Cost Benefit Analysis by the NSW Government. All projects, both for Category A and Category B, must have a clearly articulated statement of expected benefits, both quantified and unquantified. A project may be submitted for assessment with a quantified cost benefit ratio of less than one. However, any such project would require a clear articulation of the anticipated unquantified benefits to enable robust assessment.



The Business Case templates and advice about completing them are available at www.nsw.gov.au/westinvest.

Each council can spend up to 10 per cent of their allocated funds for work related to the preparation of their grant bids, scoping of projects and preparation of applications. Councils will need to demonstrate that they have incurred the expenses over and above their normal operations, and how the funding has been used. Costs can include engagement of consultants, traffic studies, and contractors to prepare grant documentation. The 10 per cent can be used to fund the preparation of applications under both the Council Allocation Round and the Community Competitive Round. Further details are available in the Frequently Asked Questions.

Councils are also able to lodge an unlimited number of applications for different projects under the Community Competitive Grants.

Consent

If the council does not own the land on which the infrastructure will be built (for example, where the land is owned by the NSW Government), it must demonstrate that it has, or is in the process of obtaining, the necessary consent from the landowner. Where this process is complex, applications may be approved subject to these consents being obtained within an agreed timeframe.

If the Council does not have a long-term lease over land on which they will build their infrastructure, it will need to demonstrate that they have the ongoing legal management and control of the infrastructure for as long as the infrastructure is expected to provide a public community benefit.

Councils requiring planning or other permissions will need to demonstrate that the intended project is a permissible use of the land and identify all relevant planning approvals and permissions that will be required. Applications may be approved subject to obtaining any necessary approvals and permissions within an agreed timeframe.

Co-Contributions

Co-contributions are not required for the Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocations. However, applications will be considered favourably in the assessment process where a co-contribution strengthens the deliverability of the project. This could include a co-contribution to the project from a ‘for profit’ entity, providing that the primary purpose of the project is to deliver a community benefit and any commercial aspects are incidental.

Where a project has a co-contribution, the council must be the party that:

- Enters into the funding deed
- Delivers the project
- Is able to provide evidence that they will have the ongoing legal management and control of the infrastructure and that the infrastructure funded will continue to provide public community benefit for a reasonable period of time following completion.

Councils may choose to make a co-contribution to the project but must demonstrate the source of the co-contribution.

If the co-contribution will be sourced from a grant received under the Competitive Round, the NSW Government cannot approve a project under the

Local Government Allocation until the outcome of the Competitive Round is known. In this situation, if the Council is unsuccessful for funding under the Competitive Round, the Council will need to identify another funding source, or reallocate its allocation to another eligible project.

Eligible Projects

Infrastructure projects must address one or more of the six focus areas, drive transformational change at a local, LGA or regional scale and demonstrate community support.

By entering partnership arrangements, councils may jointly deliver projects to provide a benefit across multiple eligible LGAs.

Eligible projects can include a commercial opportunity where the revenue supports the ongoing operations and maintenance of the infrastructure. However, applicants must be able to show that the primary purpose of the infrastructure delivers transformational liveability improvements for the people and communities of Western Sydney.

The table below describes potential outcomes for projects that may be eligible against the program focus areas.



Destination NSW

Focus Area	For example, a project that:
Green open spaces	<p>Improves amenities and a variety of existing and new public spaces. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase availability and accessibility to parks and natural environment. • Improves access for water based recreation including swimming. • Improves the biodiversity and environmental sustainability of an area through cleaner and natural waterways.
Community infrastructure	<p>Improves the amount and quality of public and community spaces. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public access to quality sport, recreation and community facilities. • Improve community infrastructure including a reduction in the urban heat island effect. • Demonstrated flexibility and adaptability to emerging community needs and standards.
School modernisation	<p>Improves modernity of schools and student learning outcomes . For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are able to learn in education facilities that are fit for purpose, cooler and resilient. • School facilities are adaptable to evolving educational standards and able to facilitate an increasingly technological and digital focused environment. • Provision of digital infrastructure that continues to improve digital and IT equality between schools, including the next-gen ‘productivity multipliers’ of digital classrooms and virtual reality skills training.
Arts and cultural facilities	<p>Improves community participation and engagement in meaningful and inclusive community arts and cultural offerings. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and culture are accessible and reflect the diversity of the Western Sydney community. • Facilities promote more active and regular community participation in arts and cultural activities. • Facilities that provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to celebrate culture and connections to Country. • Increased access to art and cultural experiences by embedding art installations, sculptures and light shows in new open and green spaces.
High street activation	<p>Improves amenities and safety across vibrant town centres. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer travel after dark and cooler travel by day with improved connections to the environment (e.g. tree lined high streets). • Increased access to essential goods and services, and recreational activities within walking distance (e.g. buy groceries or coffee and walk the dog). • Increased vibrancy of the hospitality and night-time economy, including dining, entertainment, retail and active commercial centres. • Renewal of facilities or public spaces to develop high quality, inclusive and attractive public spaces through public art or other improvements to support community connectedness and belonging.
Local traffic programs	<p>Promotes safer and more efficient travel within communities. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local streets are designed as improved places for a diverse range of needs (e.g. walking, wheeling and cycling, reducing reliance on cars) which would improve the liveability of neighbourhoods. • Safer travel by car, bicycle, foot, or mobility aid around the community. • Sufficient availability of active transport options to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce car dependency.

Ineligible Projects

Projects are not eligible for funding if:

- They are for the day-to-day delivery of essential or core local government services already funded by The Council or alternative funding source
- They would be delivered as part of the usual business of the council
- The primary purpose is to deliver a private or commercial benefit or a third party.

Eligible Costs

The following costs are eligible:

- The delivery of new projects, including planning, selection and implementation including land acquisition, design, construction, and other essential expenditure required for delivery
- Administration costs, not exceeding 20 per cent of the total funding request. Administration costs that may be funded are detailed in the Frequently Asked Questions.

Ineligible Costs

The following operating and ongoing maintenance costs of the infrastructure will not be funded:

- Financing, including debt financing
- Insurance or rental costs
- Plant and equipment beyond the life of the project. The applicant might choose to use WestInvest funding to lease or contribute towards the cost of purchasing plant and equipment, so long as the contribution is solely attributable to the project.

- Depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- Non-project related staff training and development costs
- Ongoing staff or operational costs beyond the scope and timeframe of the funded project
- Business as usual operational expenditure, including but not limited to regular repairs
- Administration cost over 20 per cent of the total funding request
- Incentives or prizes e.g., prizes to support a fundraising activity.

Design Specifications

Works must be structurally adequate, installed in accordance with manufacturer's specification and comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

Any structures that would be located on public land, or on or over a public road (including temporary structures), must have separate approval from the relevant council, or Roads and Maritime Services under the Roads Act 1993 (NSW) and the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).

Proposals seeking funding for sports facilities must ensure the design is compliant with the preferred facility guidelines issued by the relevant sporting body.





Assessment

Projects nominated by councils for funding through their allocated portion of WestInvest funding must meet all the WestInvest Program requirements and will be assessed against the same criteria as the Community Competitive Round.

There are two steps to the assessment of projects under the WestInvest Community Project – Local Government Allocation, consistent with the requirements of this Guideline.

Step 1 – Eligibility review

All projects will be assessed by DRNSW to ensure that the applicant and the project meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this Guideline. Applications that do not meet the criteria set out below will not be assessed through step 2:

- Applicant Council is an eligible Council.
- Project is in one or more of the 15 eligible LGAs.
- Project will address one or more of the six key focus areas.
- If relevant, the Council has provided suitable evidence confirming funding co-contributions(s).
- Applicant has completed the application form (including relevant business case for the project).

Step 2 – Project assessment

- Project assessment will be informed by an analysis of the business case and information provided in the application.
- All eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined in this Guidelines document (see below).
- Initial assessment will be undertaken by a panel of experts and senior government officials (Assessment Panels).
- Project assessment may include seeking expert advice from relevant NSW Government agencies or other subject matter experts.
- Additional information or documentation cannot be submitted by applicants after the closing date.
- Assessors may request further information for the purpose of confirming eligibility or seeking clarification. All applicants will be given the same opportunity if the need for further information is identified.
- Assessors will also consider whether local government projects are complementary or not inconsistent with a State Government project approved under the \$3 billion allocated to State Government projects.

Assessment Criteria

All eligible applications will be assessed against the following five criteria:



Liveability

Demonstrate how the project will enhance or improve liveability for a defined community.



Transformational

Demonstrate how the project's liveability outcomes will endure over time, and /or can augment community benefits with other initiatives and/or capitalises on a time-limited opportunity.



Value for Money

Demonstrate that the project is cost effective and will deliver benefit to the community.



Deliverability

Demonstrate that the applicant has the capacity and expertise to deliver the project within budget and timeframes and has or can obtain all necessary approvals and consents.



Viability

Demonstrate that the owner of the infrastructure can manage and maintain it.

The assessment criteria will be weighted equally and will use information in the applicant's business case to assess how the project meets each criterion. Assessment Criteria

Category and Weighting	Detail
Liveability (20%)	<p>Applications need to demonstrate how the project will deliver enhanced liveability for the community.</p> <p>Enhancements to liveability anticipated from each project will be assessed by considering information and measures provided by the applicant in the project's business case.</p> <p>The level of information and measures required is dependent on the project's size. Projects that are \$1 million and under are required to submit a Simple Business Case with information to outline the project's anticipated impact on liveability. Projects above \$1 million are required to complete a Standard Business Case, including information about how enhanced liveability will be measured. Those projects above \$10 million must also provide quantitative information regarding benefits.</p> <p>Applicants have flexibility to demonstrate the unique benefits relevant to their project. Applicants are encouraged to use the specified benefits as outlined in this guideline.</p> <p>The NSW Government has developed a list of measurable benefits that applicants might consider using when assessing how the project will enhance liveability. This information will assist you to complete the outcome logic map required in the business case and will support the NSW Government to assess applications.</p> <p>The list of benefits developed by the NSW Government are:</p> <p>Improved access and amenity of public spaces, facilities and town centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for different levels of mobility: increased physical access for people with different levels of mobility (e.g. lifts, ramps). • Amenity benefits: increase in customer satisfaction ratings as a result of renovating/ building a community facility (seating, equipment, cleanliness and lighting) or increased aesthetic amenity in town centres or increased amenity of local neighbourhoods along road corridors. • Improved access to a diverse range of community facilities and infrastructure that meets community needs, standards and cultural preferences. • Safety benefits: reduced crash and casualty rates from traffic accidents, or increased perception of physical and psychological safety in the local community. • Use value: monetary value derived from individuals directly interacting with public space (e.g. the amount an individual would otherwise be willing to pay to access the space). <p>Improved individual/group health and wellbeing outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use value (health benefits): use of public open space may be associated with improvements in general health and wellbeing associated with regular active and passive recreation. • Improved access to the environment or areas of natural scenic quality: increased public access opportunities to access nature or places of scenic beauty and wonder. • Social inclusion and connectedness: increased perceptions of inclusion for people from a range of ability, cultural, religious, gender, sexuality perspectives to participate fully in local and regional communities or increased level of engagement or sense of belonging to the community. • Improved connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture and Country. • Active transport benefits: better health outcomes for active transport users (cyclists, walkers). • Air quality: increased air quality, resulting in improved health and wellbeing outcomes, resulting in reduced public health costs. • Urban cooling benefits: reduced ambient temperature (resulting in a reduction in the urban heat island effect), resulting in reduced demand for cooling energy and greenhouse gas emissions, reduced energy costs and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

- Community resilience: improved community resilience to help withstand external stresses and shocks e.g. to climate change effects.
- Access to goods and services: improved access to essential goods and services.
- Standard of living: reduced cost of living resulting in increased lifestyle happiness.

Improved environmental protection

- Environmental externalities: for example, reduced carbon emissions and a decrease in pollution as a result of reduced use of cars due to a mode shift to cycling because of the provision of a new cycleway.
- Biodiversity: increased variety of plant and animal life as a result of providing habitat, ecosystem support and planting initiatives.
- Greenhouse gas impacts: mitigation of the impacts of climate change (contributing to greenhouse gas emissions reduction) by urban planting initiatives.
- Stormwater management: reduced volume of stormwater runoff, and reduced flood damage and improved accessibility.
- Improved blue and green networks that support wildlife and biodiversity: increased biodiversity, environmental attributes and air quality or cleaner and more sustainable natural waterways.
- Future biodiversity security: securing an area or infrastructure assets for future purposes.

Improved economic value of public spaces and community facilities

- Avoided costs: reduced ongoing operations because of an initiative.
- Residual value: components of the investment that have significant life remaining at the end of the evaluation period.
- Land use-value: Higher and better use of land as a result of an infrastructure investment.
- Aboriginal cultural and heritage value: value of protecting and preserving sites and onsite artefacts.
- Infrastructure and service delivery savings: Reduction in the cost of providing core infrastructure to service a property (water, stormwater, sewer, gas, electricity, information technology).
- Non-use value: when people value a good, such as biodiversity, for its existence independently of any use value.

Improved school modernity and amenity

- Improved adaptability of schools to meet changes in educational standards and the need for digital learning platforms: increased number of digital learning platforms in classrooms or increased ICT connectivity and bandwidth in classrooms.
- Improved community access to the use of school facilities: increased use of school playgrounds outside school hours by sporting groups, or increased use of modernised school halls for charitable or community events.
- Improved temperature control in the school environment and classrooms, and increased comfort to students.

Improved travel efficiency

- Travel time savings: reduction in travel time as a result of a traffic management initiative for example a new cycleway.
 - Vehicle Operating Costs savings: reduction in basic vehicle operating costs as a result of improved traffic flow or operational efficiencies.
 - Reliability benefits: Reduced variation in travel time as a result of a transport improvement.
 - Active transport benefits: reduced local traffic congestion or increased active transport options (cycleways, walkways) or increased number of children who walk or cycle to school.
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Category and Weighting	Detail
	<p>Improved economic prosperity in Western Sydney town centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved employment and business opportunities in town centres: increased number of jobs located in Western Sydney directly related to the project deliverables, or increased number of local businesses, or increased visitation and usage rates of local commercial centres, or increased access to community centres, education and employment opportunities, or increased outdoor dining options. Increased vibrancy of the hospitality and night-time economy: increased provision of safe and accessible places for dining, entertainment and retail places. <p>Note: The business case templates include more information on the liveability outcomes and benefits.</p>
<p>Transformational (20%)</p>	<p>Transformational projects have a positive impact on a community at a local, LGA or regional scale.</p> <p>Applicants must demonstrate how their project will deliver across one or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enduring benefits: the project will deliver benefits both immediately and for future generations. Enhancement: the project will bring a significant or exceptional increase to the relevant measures of liveability referred to above. Enabling: The project acts as an enabler to other projects or activities within the LGA to provide greater benefit to the community. Leverages an available opportunity: The project exploits an opportunity that will otherwise be lost if the project did not proceed. Not business as usual: The project is an opportunity that would not normally be funded by government, the applicant, or another organisation, but it will enhance liveability.
<p>Value for Money (20%)</p>	<p>Demonstrate how the project is cost effective and will provide value for money in terms of overall benefit to the community. This will be assessed through evaluation of the information set out in the appropriate Business Case.</p> <p>There is a requirement in the Category 1 and Category 2 Business case to provide a qualitative cost benefits analysis.</p> <p>The assessment process will recognise the challenges in quantifying benefits from the delivery of social and environmental capital. An assessment will be made about whether the costs are reasonable in comparison to the project's overall enhancement to liveability. Quantitative costs and benefits are being sought for projects over \$10 million to assist in assessing the overall financial viability of the project.</p>
<p>Deliverability (20%)</p>	<p>Demonstrate capacity to deliver the project within budget and timeframes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a detailed and realistic project management and risk management plan, and post evaluation plan. Provide evidence of the necessary capacity and expertise or plan to access experienced and qualified personnel to support the project delivery including associated costings. Where partnership arrangements are proposed to deliver projects, provide in detail the arrangements including governance proposal, confirmation of any co-contribution funding, and evidence of any land access and planning approvals that may be required and status and plans to obtain all required approvals to realise the project.
<p>Viability (20%)</p>	<p>Demonstrate the viability of the project deliverable (infrastructure) after the project is completed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly identify the entity that will own the infrastructure at the completion of the project and demonstrate they have agreed to assume responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance. Provide evidence that the owner/custodian has agreed and has capacity to fund the ongoing operating and maintenance costs of the infrastructure. Demonstrate the ongoing financial viability of the entity responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the infrastructure.



The Application Process

Applications must be completed in full and submitted online via the WestInvest website (www.nsw.gov.au/westinvest) to the Department of Regional NSW Online SmartyGrants Portal. Applicants will receive email notification when applications are submitted.

Late applications will not be considered except where DPC is satisfied that the integrity and competitiveness of the assessment process has not been compromised. DPC will not penalise any applicant whose application is received late, if the delay is due solely to mishandling by DPC or DRNSW

Approval Process

The process for the approval of Community Competitive Grants projects is outlined below.

- Assessment Panels comprising experts and senior government officials will assess applications for eligibility, and project merit.
- The Steering Committee will consider advice from the Assessment Panels on each application and will make recommendations to the NSW Treasurer.

- The NSW Treasurer makes the final decision about which projects are to be funded.
- Any departures from the recommendations of the Steering Committee will be documented as part of the approval process.

If the application is successful

The NSW Government will notify councils of successful applications in writing and councils will be required to enter into a funding deed prior to the payment of any funding. Special conditions may be required to be included in the funding deed depending on the nature and scope of the project.

A list of steps to be taken once an application is successful is included in the Frequently Asked Questions.

If the application is unsuccessful

The NSW Government will notify councils of unsuccessful applications in writing including why their application was not successful. Unsuccessful applicants may request a feedback session.

Evaluation

Evaluating government programs enables the success of programs to be robustly assessed, provides confidence in program integrity and informs improvements for future programs. Successful applicants may be required to participate in the evaluation of the whole of the WestInvest Program after their project has commenced to determine the extent to which their project(s) have contributed to the overarching objectives of the Program.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Program will be undertaken in-line with best practice to determine the effectiveness of the Program including the *NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines* (2016) and the requirements set out in the NSW Treasury *TC18-03 Program Evaluation*.

Terms of Reference for the Program evaluation will be developed and will address the following areas:

- The effectiveness of Program design, implementation and delivery of the Program objective(s)
- The progress towards achieving Program outcomes
- The alignment of delivered Program outcomes to the Program objective(s).

General requirements for monitoring individual programs and the acquittal process for successful applicants is outlined in the Frequently Asked Questions and will be subject to funding deeds executed between the successful applicant and the NSW Government.

Getting started and access to support to assist with preparing applications

Applicants are strongly advised to read this Guideline thoroughly before commencing their application. Support for applicants can be found on the WestInvest website www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/westinvest.

Information to assist with preparing the application

The WestInvest website at: www.nsw.gov.au/westinvest provides access to resources to help applicants prepare their applications. Resources include guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions, and templates including simplified and standard business cases, examples of completed business cases, and a draft funding deed.

A series of information webinars will be held during the application open period to enable applicants to ask questions and seek specific information about the Community Projects Grants – Competitive Round and the application process. Details of these webinars will be available on the WestInvest website.

For more information, please contact us at:

Email: westinvest@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Call: (02) 9228 5555

Complaints

Any concerns about the WestInvest Community Project Grants – Competitive Round should be submitted in writing to www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/complaints. DPC is committed to responding to external complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. Concerns and complaints procedures for the WestInvest Community Grants Program follow the processes set out in the DPC External Complaints Handling Policy available at www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/assets/dpc-nsw-gov-au/publications/DPC-plans-frameworks-and-policies-listing-417/External-Complaints-Handling-Policy.pdf. This policy sets out the steps for managing an external complaint received by DPC and/or DRNSW regarding the WestInvest Program. If you are a person with a disability or experience difficulties in providing your complaint in writing, you can make a verbal complaint by contacting 02 9228 5555. DPC may require a verbal complaint by made in writing in circumstances where the matter is complex or contentious.

Privacy statement

NSW departments and agencies are required to comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) (the Privacy Act) and any personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act) collected by DRNSW in relation to the WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Act and DRNSW's privacy policy and privacy management plan (available at: www.regional.nsw.gov.au/privacy)

Information provided by applicants to DRNSW in connection with this application will be collected and stored on a database held and managed by DRNSW in accordance with the Privacy Act and the State Records Act 1998 (NSW) and will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected (including, assessing the funding application or a directly related purpose (for example, program evaluation). DRNSW may also disclose information provided by applicants to DPC, other Government agencies and external subject matter experts or advisers for the purpose of the agencies, external subject matter experts or advisers assessing the application in connection with the WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation or as otherwise permitted by the Privacy Act.

Applicants must take steps to ensure that any person whose personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act) is included in their application has authorised collection of their personal information and is made aware of the purposes for which it has been collected and may be used (which include assessing a funding application), and the fact that the personal information will be collected by DRNSW and may be disclosed to DPC and other Government agencies for this purpose.

Disclosure of information

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act).

- The GIPA Act gives the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- Restricts access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

Information may also be made publicly available as a result of an order for papers made by the NSW Legislative Council under Standing Order 52.

Applicants should be aware that information included in their application may be shared with persons from other government agencies, third party subject matter experts and other professional advisers to facilitate the assessment process.

If an application is successful, information about the project and the applicant may be shared in media releases, NSW Government websites and social media accounts. This information may include the name of the applicant and their business, a description of the funded project, the project's expected community benefits, and the funding amount.

COVID-19 impacts

Due to the changing impacts of COVID-19 across NSW, projects must be in line with NSW Government public health orders and advice. Up to date information is available at nsw.gov.au/covid-19.

If COVID-19 rules in NSW change during the grants period, DPC may request further information from you on how you propose to manage COVID-19 risks for your project.

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