

Guidelines for Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways



What is Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways?

Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways is Melbourne Water's streamlined and flexible incentives program.

The program has a strong focus on innovation, liveability and collaboration across all areas of water management, and allows for increased partnership opportunities with our customers and the community on a broader range of initiatives that contribute to enhancing life and liveability across Melbourne. It offers a streamlined and flexible application process that allows you to apply for an incentive at any time during the year.

The program is open to all our customers and provides a broader range of services offered by Melbourne Water.

Melbourne Water has a proud history of Incentives Programs which have fostered meaningful and long-lasting partnerships. Through Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways we work closely with partners and welcome new partnership opportunities.

Who can apply

To be eligible for funding, your project or proposal must be located within Melbourne Water's operating area. This includes landowners, councils and public land managers, school and community groups, universities and research institutions, not for profit and multi-stakeholder groups.

If you are applying on behalf of a business, registered group, or incorporated entity, you will need to provide your ABN. If you do not meet these requirements, you may want to consider entering an auspice arrangement with an appropriate auspice agency.

We accept applications from groups who are incorporated through Landcare Victoria Limited.

If you are applying as a private landholder or an individual, you do not need to have an ABN or Auspice arrangement.

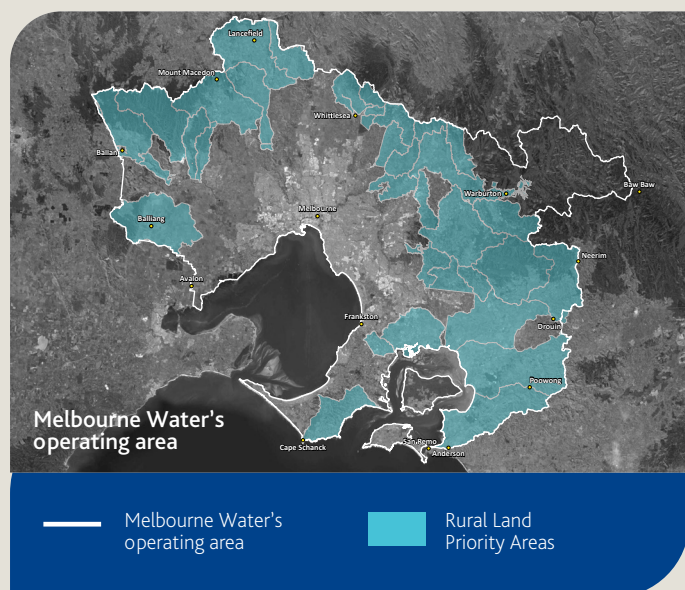
Your proposal must also align with our guiding principles.

Limitations

You will be ineligible for further funding if you have failed to complete and report on previous projects to the satisfaction of Melbourne Water.

How much money can I apply for?

Based on our experience, we have a good understanding of what is an industry benchmark cost to undertake a range of activities. Where published benchmarks exist (for example fencing) we will use these to guide what funding you will get and where these benchmarks don't exist, we will base it on quotes. Our assessors will discuss funding and co-contributions with private landholders.





- Demonstrate collaboration to provide greater value beyond what can be achieved by Melbourne Water alone. Partnering with Melbourne Water is the first step in collaboration however we also look for projects that may provide opportunities for neighbours, community groups and organisations to collaborate.

Melbourne Water welcomes applications for our Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways grants program for projects that cover:



Waterway vegetation management



Stormwater management



Targeted program initiatives



Rural land management to support improved water quality outcomes

What type of projects are we seeking?

We are looking for long term projects and partnerships that provide value to Melbourne Water, our customers, partners and community by aligning with the following and guiding principles.

Guiding Principles

- Have clear alignment with our strategies and services. For example, Healthy Waterways, Flood Management.
- Environmental Stewardship, Melbourne Water System, Sewerage, Drinking or Water Quality.
- Provide multiple community and/or environmental benefits through application of best practice.
- Engage with our customers and community and inform them of our purpose and strategic direction.
- Innovative projects that can be widely adopted (not required for all applications).

Previously funded projects

Over the years Melbourne Water has fostered meaningful partnerships with our customers and community through existing grants in waterway management and stormwater. Previously funded projects have included the following activities:

- Pest animal control, for example; deer monitoring and research
- Stormwater management, for example; investigation, design and construction, pollution tracking
- Waterway restoration
- Habitat creation
- Interpretative signage and educational resources
- Citizen science, for example; frog or fish surveys, water testing, eDNA sampling
- Threatened species management
- Weed management
- Revegetation
- Fencing
- Sediment and nutrient control systems
- Grazing management
- Irrigation and drainage plans or improvements
- Dam decommissioning
- Farm layout and design and farm track design and construction
- Effluent management

- Community group support for building organisational capacity
- Personnel; for example Water Sensitive Urban Design Officers within Council
- Partnerships

This is an indicative list only and we always encourage you to discuss your proposed idea with us. You can find examples of past projects on our [Featured projects and partnerships page](#).

Examples of activities not eligible for funding

- Works that would alter the form of the waterway, for example creating a pool in a creek.
- Waterway or streamside fencing that is less than 10m from top of bank.
- Funding towards compliance activity or rectification associated with illegal works.
- Funding for the delivery of works which form part of the conditions of a planning permit or permit application.

Unsure if your activity is eligible? Contact Melbourne Water on 131 722 to speak to an Incentives Team Member.

Application and funding process



Before applying, applicants need to check their project aligns with the Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Guiding Principles listed above. We always encourage you have a conversation with a Melbourne Water Representative before starting your application.



How to Apply?

You can apply for a Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways incentive at any time during the year, making it easier to partner with us at Melbourne Water.

Before starting your online application, we recommend that you speak to a Melbourne Water representative to discuss your idea before starting your application.

[Click here to apply online](#)

If you need more information, advice or assistance with applying, get in touch with your Melbourne Water representative by calling our Customer Service Centre on 131 722 or emailing: incentives@melbournewater.com.au

How will we assess your application?

We will assess your application against the guiding principles (included above) and the criteria (below) that we are striving to meet. Some of the criteria and principles may not apply to all projects. For example; projects on a privately owned property.

1. **Strategic alignment:** How well does your project align with Melbourne Water strategies and objectives. We will also consider how your project aligns to government plans and programs (for example the Integrated Water Management Forums, Water for Victoria Plan, Yarra Strategic Plan, Waterways of the West).
2. **Benefit impact:** To what extent does your project provide environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits that exceed the project site boundary.
3. **Engagement benefits:** To what extent does your project promote collaboration and encourage participation from others.
4. **Partnership benefits:** To what extent does your project align organisations in a partnership approach.
5. **Capacity building:** Assesses how your project will help build new skills and knowledge.
6. **Innovation and leadership:** Assesses how your project can deliver Melbourne Water's strategies and services in a more effective, efficient and safer way.
7. **Cost effectiveness:** The funding requested is value for money.* *Please see the Applicant co-contributions section below.*

In some instances a site visit may also be necessary as part of the assessment.

*Applicant co-contributions

We assess applications based on a number of criteria including cost effectiveness. While there are no minimum co-contributions specified for the program, applicant cash and/or in-kind contributions will contribute positively to the assessment of cost effectiveness. A matched 50:50 contribution either monetary or in kind is a general benchmark to use as a guide. Our assessors will advise private landholders on funding amounts and co-contributions.



When will I find out if my application is successful?

We may contact you to ask for more information or to undertake a site visit. The time we take to assess your application will depend on the level of complexity, whether a site visit is required, and any internal referrals required within Melbourne Water. An average time from submission of a complete application to notification of the outcome is twelve weeks.

Requirements for successful applicants

Funding agreement and payment

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement that will establish:

1. the terms and conditions of funding;
2. the details of the activity;
3. the deliverables;
4. acquittal, evaluation and reporting requirements; and
5. the schedule of payments.

Melbourne Water uses the DocuSign electronic signature solution for signing agreements. To find out more about the funding process refer to our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

How and when will I be paid?

Once we receive your signed agreement, we will let you know how to provide your payment details to us. We will then pay the funds into your nominated bank account by an Electronic Funds Transfer.

Projects linked to milestones

We may pay projects with higher value in increments as you meet agreed milestones. Your Melbourne Water representative will discuss details of milestone payments with you, and we will include these in your funding agreement.

Project delivery and reporting

Permit requirements and standards

Please note, any offer of funding from Melbourne Water Incentives Program does not negate the need to obtain a permit or other necessary approvals from Melbourne Water or other relevant authorities.

Reporting

The applicant will be required to report to their Melbourne Water representative, usually at the mid-point of the project and on completion. This will be confirmed in your funding agreement, and you will also receive a link to any relevant reporting forms.

What if my project changes?

We understand that things happen which may lead to a need to change your project. If you wish to make a change to your original project scope, you must consult with a Melbourne Water representative to seek approval prior to making any changes.



Photo: Doug Gimesy

