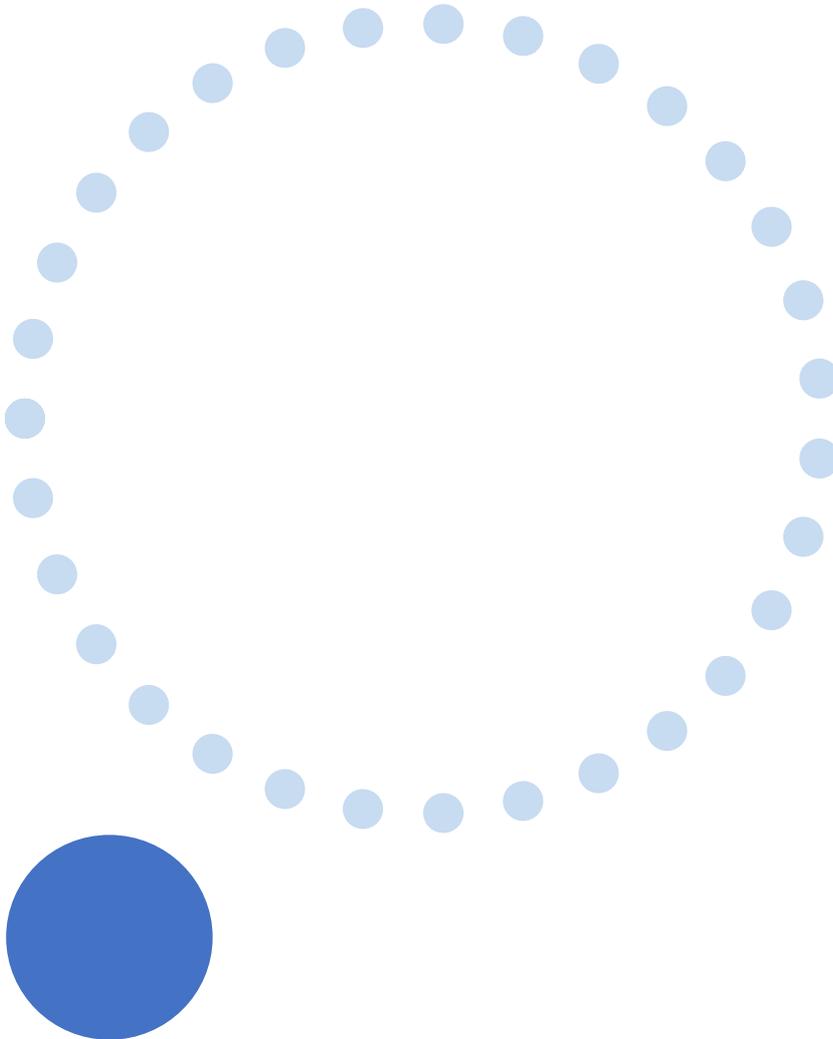
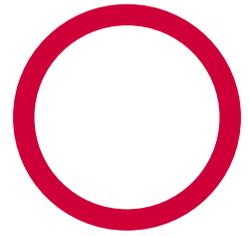


# Sustainable Schools Grants Guidelines

## Round 2



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## At a glance

Applications Open	Friday 20 November 2020
Applications Close	5pm, Friday 11 December 2020
Announcement of Successful Projects	Early Term 1 2021
Funds Distributed	Term 1 2021
Project Report Submitted	Successful grant applicants to upload case report by end of Term 4 2021
Funds acquittal to be reported by	End of Term 4 2021

# Purpose

1. These guidelines set out the policy and processes for administration and delivery of the Sustainable Schools Grants (SSG) (the Grant).
2. The Department of Education reserves the right to amend these guidelines as necessary.
3. These guidelines and other information about the Grant can be found on the School Infrastructure NSW website.

This document sets out:

- Background
- Program rules and eligibility criteria
- Examples of suitable projects
- Monitoring project outcomes
- How to apply
- Evaluation criteria and award of grants
- Implementation of projects
- Where to go for further information

Schools should read this document and the FAQ section of the Sustainable Schools website carefully before completing and submitting an application.

# Background

The Sustainable Schools Grants is a four-year, \$10 million program that gives schools the opportunity to develop innovative hands-on projects that empower students to run learn about sustainable practices and take real steps to enhance the sustainability of their school environment. Projects may include initiatives to save energy or water, reduce waste, improve biodiversity or connect to nature.

All NSW public schools and preschools are eligible to apply for funding up to \$15,000, to deliver hands on, sustainability focused projects that link to the NSW curriculum.

These guidelines relate to Round 2 of this program, for projects or programs to be commenced and completed during 2021.

During Round 1, 194 schools were awarded grants ranging from \$1,100 - \$15,000 for innovative sustainability projects including kitchen gardens, water storage strategies and bee highways to improve biodiversity. A list of [all Round 1 grant recipients](#) and their project categories is included in the Sustainable Schools website.

Many of these projects were delayed due to complications arising from COVID-19 and have received extensions to end of Term 2, 2021. Therefore, the intention to communicate success stories to inform Round 2 applications has not been possible.

# Program rules and eligibility criteria

- The Sustainable Schools Grants are open to any Department of Education owned schools: preschools, primary schools, high schools, environmental education centres and schools for specific purposes. (Non-government schools, non-government preschools and other non-government education facilities are ineligible to apply).
- In any funding round, only one application can be submitted per school.
- Schools that have previously received a grant under earlier rounds are not eligible to reapply for funding during the remaining years of the program.
- Schools that applied but were unsuccessful in receiving a grant are eligible to reapply for one of the remaining rounds in future years.
- Projects can be delivered with the assistance of parents, community representatives and suppliers of goods and services.
- All projects must be carried out in strict accordance with the Department's policies and procedures, and Local and State planning provisions, regulations and legislation if necessary.
- Applications **must** demonstrate how their project will address all of the following criteria:
  - a) improve sustainability in the local school environment
  - b) link to the NSW curriculum
  - c) provide opportunities for hands-on student activities to learn about sustainability
  - d) consider appropriate risks.
- Applicants **must** have a commitment from their Principal/ Pre-school Director to submit an application. A confirmation email for the receipt of the school's application will be sent to the Principal/ Pre-school Director and Project Lead.
- All applicants **must** provide a brief Project Plan including budget breakdown and risk assessment (see attached template) with their electronic application form. The completeness of the plan and application form will be used to assess projects on merit.
- You may attach any existing risks matrixes, or risk assessments, from excursion providers and businesses who you engage with your project.
- Grant recipients will be required to prepare a report summarising the project processes, outcomes and learnings at the completion of the year for which funding was provided.
- It is a requirement of participating in this project that schools will share information about their learnings with other schools. In addition to the mandatory reporting,

schools are strongly encouraged to share updates on the [Sustainable Schools Grants Yammer page](#).

- Schools are encouraged to be innovative and ambitious with their project proposals, and to think about how their experiences may be leveraged for greater outcomes. Proposals which showcase new and innovative practices or inspire and inform other schools by creating new data or resources such as how-to guides, will be highly considered.

## Eligible project expenditure

Funding through the SSG to deliver the eligible projects may be used for:

- provision of goods and services
- administration costs
- teacher release time
- professional development
- external expertise

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, funds must be spent in accordance with the budget provided in the Project Plan. Expenditure may be subject to financial auditing.

## Eligible goods and services

Eligible goods on which funds may be spent include:

- Infrastructure – bins, signage, water saving devices, water tanks, sheds, fencing, seating, paving, bike racks
- PPE – for example gloves, masks, safety glasses etc (in line with needs identified from project risk assessment)
- Landscaping supplies – plants, soil, fertiliser, tools, chicken coops etc
- Other biodiversity supplies – nest boxes etc
- Monitoring equipment – sensors, timers, data loggers, scales
- Materials to support education and awareness raising activities (design and production of posters, information booklets, technology such as cameras and tablets, models etc)
- Other equipment such as food preparation equipment, other waste auditing equipment, etc.

Eligible services on which funds may be spent include:

- Landscapers – for removal of weeds, preparation of areas, construction of planting boxes etc
- Expert advisers such as bee keepers, native animal carers etc
- Auditors to guide and support activities by students and staff
- Trainers or other professional development services
- Release of teachers, general assistants and other school staff to support activities or allowing additional days.

Preference will be given to projects which maximise the value of available funds by incorporating free or low-cost resources including:

- Use of in-house resources such as LinkedIn Learning; Environmental Education Centre staff
- Use of volunteers, particularly parents or community groups
- Formation of partnerships or other collaborations
- Hire of equipment rather than purchase for one-off use.

## Financial recordkeeping and reconciliation procedures

Receipts and documentation of expenditure must be kept for auditing purposes. Grant acquittal and reporting will be provided with the confirmation of receiving a grant. All spending and reporting must be completed by the end of Term 4 in the year of receiving the grant.

An indicative budget template is included in the Project Plan template which must accompany all grant applications.

Schools that are unsure if their project's expenditure is eligible, please contact the SINSW Sustainability Team at **SSG@det.nsw.edu.au** before submitting an application.

## Ineligible project activities

Projects assessed to be high risk and unable to be managed directly by the school, but rather requiring management by the Asset Management Units, are ineligible for these grants. Examples of such activities include the installation of solar photovoltaic systems, LED lighting, covered outdoor learning areas, installation of solar shades, projects at height, projects involving removal or disturbance of hazardous materials, or projects undertaken on, in or near any heritage listed buildings or items.

# Examples of suitable projects

Based on previous applications and successful grant awards, the following may provide some ideas as to how grant funds might be used (noting that many projects will cover more than one of these themes):

## *Improving biodiversity of school grounds and surrounds:*

- Encouraging native animals and pollinators such as bee hotels, nesting boxes and creating bird habitat.
- Planting more native/ local trees to help with biodiversity, reducing heat island effects, improving air, water and soil quality and providing educational opportunities.
- Establishing vertical walls and incorporating biophilic design which will provide opportunities for project-based learning, establishing aquaculture for food, improving thermal comfort, improving air quality, experimental design.

## *Improving resource efficiency:*

- Engaging professional auditors, educators and local Department of Education Environmental Education staff to assist with waste, water and energy audits, developing action plans and carrying out identified actions such as reducing organic waste or litter.
- Purchasing required infrastructure to support audits, subsequent actions and monitoring of performance such as recycling bins, scales and PPE equipment.
- Reducing the use of resources by measuring and taking action to save energy and water
- Measuring and taking action to avoid waste and improve recycling.

## *Raising awareness and/or encouraging behaviour change:*

- Running sustainability awareness days, markets, fairs etc. These may be driven by students, P & C committees and the wider community.
- Providing sustainability-focused professional development, release time, incursions and excursions with NSW Department of Education Environmental Education Centres and other government and private providers.
- Developing gardens which improve knowledge about healthy lifestyle, food, cooking, bush tucker, cultural awareness, saving water - rain tanks for irrigation, water meters, reducing food waste.
- Improving participation of students in sustainable transport methods such as establishing walking bus programs, providing bike and scooter facilities, running education programs or engaging professional expertise to create a green transport plan for the school.

## *Improving the capacity of the school to run future sustainability programs and projects (which will need to be explicitly described):*

- Purchasing tools, equipment and technology enablers to
  - complement hands on learning and field work activities
  - support communication and record keeping such as through filming
  - facilitate learning and measurement opportunities such as field work equipment, data loggers and apps to measure indoor and outdoor environmental quality,

tablets, water testing kits and dip net equipment to measure health of waterways, anemometers, clinometers, soil testing equipment, and other analogue measuring equipment such as quadrats and measuring tapes.

*Building relationships with key stakeholders, particularly community relations:*

- Establishing repair cafes or resources
- Establishing tool libraries or other amenities
- Establishing gardens which can be shared with the community.
- Celebrating the local natural and Indigenous history of the school

# Monitoring project outcomes

Applicants should identify performance metrics and monitoring needs to ensure the success of the project can be measured. Student activities should be designed to collect this data where practical.

Please also keep a record of any local business employment opportunities your project has generated including hours and spend as you will be asked to provide a report on this.

Examples of metrics include but are not limited to:

- Kilolitres of water saved
- Improvements in water quality-pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, nutrients
- Number and size of trees/ bushes/ shrubs planted
- Square metres of garden planted
- Improvement in biodiversity-e.g. birds, bats, bees, native frogs and mammals, insects, native plants, native aquatic animals and plants, reduction in pests, sensitive water bugs
- Kilowatt-hours of energy saved
- Amount of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent greenhouse gas measures saved (describe how calculated)
- Kilograms of waste avoided – possibly broken down by waste type eg paper, plastic
- Kilograms of organic/ food waste extracted for composting
- Number of Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) bottles and cans collected
- Amount of funds raised through CDS
- Percentage reduction in general waste diverted from landfill (calculated based on weight)
- Percentage recovery rate of recyclables (calculated based on weight)
- Number of users of shared space and hours used
- Number of students who used sustainable transport to get to school -walking, scooter, skateboard, cycling and/or % change
- Improvement in thermal comfort measured in ambient air temperature (C°) in days with typical and extreme outdoor temperatures
- Improvements in tree canopy cover (%)
- Improvement in indoor air quality (against specific indicator substances eg CO<sub>2</sub>)
- Improvement in health, well-being, attendance- survey, observation
- Improvement in soil health –% reduction in harmful chemicals
- Number of participants teachers trained - online, face to face, use of experts
- Hours of employment generated by local business services used to assist your project e.g. gardeners, plumber, etc.
- Number of volunteers involved in project
- Number of volunteer hours

# How to apply

A link to an online application form and accompanying Project Plan template will be made available from the School Infrastructure intranet when applications open on 20 November 2020. **Applications must be received via the online form by 5pm Friday 11 December 2020.**

The form may only be accessed by NSW Department of Education Staff via the Intranet using your Department login. Ensure you can open the form well prior to the closing date.

Contact [EdConnect](#) or phone 1300 32 32 32 in the first instance if you have any difficulty accessing the form. Contact the Sustainable Schools Grants team at [SSG@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:SSG@det.nsw.edu.au) if you have any queries about the form or the process.

In addition to the online form, you must upload with your application a Project Plan including budget breakdown and risk assessment. This forms part of the evaluation requirements. Applications submitted without a Project Plan will be immediately disqualified. The risk assessment may be preliminary but must be refined prior to commencing works if the application is successful.

Applicants should review the application form before completing it to ensure that they have all the answers and information required. It is recommended that applicants draft their responses in a word document before cutting and pasting their submission into the online form to avoid potential loss of data. A copy of the Application and Project Plan must be kept as a record-keeping requirement.

Once applications have been submitted they are unable to be amended. If an application is submitted in error the applicant should contact the SINSW Sustainability Team to withdraw or resubmit their application before the closing time and date.

SINSW will acknowledge the receipt of your application within three working days. Acknowledgments will be sent to the Principal/ Pre-school Director and Project Leads.

**Late applications will not be accepted unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Late applicants can apply for one of the two remaining rounds in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

# Evaluation criteria and award of grant

The selection of grant recipients will be a merit-based process. There are two stages to the assessment of round two Sustainable Schools Grant applications.

Firstly, applications will be checked to ensure compliance with the following mandatory criteria. Projects which do not meet the criteria will be disqualified and will not be further considered:

- 1) Complete application with Project Plan attached
- 2) Has confirmation of support from the school/ preschool Principal or Director

Applications which meet all of the above criteria will proceed to the second stage of the application process. They will be de-identified and then undergo evaluation by a Sustainable Schools Grant Assessment Committee against the following further criteria:

- Demonstrates how and to what extent it will improve sustainability outcomes in the local school/preschool environment including student involvement/ student voice.
- Demonstrates link to the NSW Curriculum
- Demonstrates how it will provide opportunities for hands-on student activities to learn about sustainability
- Building knowledge and collaborative partnerships around sustainability at the school and with a wide range of stakeholders such as Environmental Education Centres, P&C committees, community members, Councils, Local Land Councils and other organisations.
- Originality or innovation
- Demonstrating adequate project planning of risks, timelines, performance measurement and reporting, ongoing management of program and links to existing school plans
- Value for money

Funds will be allocated to schools from highest to lowest total score until all available funds are distributed for that funding round.

The decision of the evaluation process is final.

All applicants will be informed of the outcomes of the assessment and allocation process at the beginning of term one by email.

A list of successful recipients will also be made available on the SINSW website.

# Implementation of projects

## Payment of funds

Successful schools will be provided account code(s) where funds for the Sustainable Schools Grant will be allocated within their budget. Funds for the project need to be spent by the end of term 4 2021. Any unspent or uncommitted funds must be returned and will be rolled over into the next years Sustainable Schools Grants funding.

## Project reporting

Schools/ Preschools which are successful in Sustainable Schools Grant funding will be required to provide at a minimum a two page report including photographs which may be shared as case studies by the end of term 4. Budget acquittal reporting must also be received by end of term 4 2021.

Grant recipients are encouraged to report their achievements earlier in the year if projects are completed sooner. You do not need to wait until the end of the year to share your Sustainable Schools Grant stories.

Grant recipients will be provided a link to a Google Folder where examples of student work and engagement activities can be shared. High resolution images and videos, are encouraged.

Any images and videos which show students' faces should only be included if guardians have signed permission to publish forms. Please use the publishing, privacy guidelines and permission to publish forms available here:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/communication-and-engagement/services-and-support/planning-your-communication/publishing-and-privacy-guidelines>.

Grant recipients may be contacted by the SINSW Sustainability Team and/ or Communications Team for opportunities to share good news stories and to assist future grant recipients with case studies.

## Significant variation or cancellation of projects

If a project for which funds have been paid are significantly varied, or cancelled, the SINSW Sustainability Team should be advised as soon as possible to discuss required actions.

# Contact information

Further information about the Sustainable Schools Grant can be found at the SINSW [Sustainable Schools Grants](#) website.

Enquiries can be emailed to [Ssg@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Ssg@det.nsw.edu.au)