



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Stronger Communities Programme Round 9

Opening date:	14 February 2025
Closing date and time:	5.00PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time on 28 March 2025
	Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA)
Administering entity:	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46
Date guidelines released:	18 December 2024
Type of grant opportunity:	Closed non-competitive

Contents

1. Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 processes.....	4
1.1. Introduction	5
2. About the grant program.....	5
2.1. Community consultation.....	6
3. Grant amount and grant period	6
3.1. Grants available	7
3.2. Project period	7
4. Eligibility criteria	7
4.1. Who is eligible?	7
4.2. Project sponsor	8
4.3. Additional eligibility requirements	9
4.4. Who is not eligible?	9
5. What the grant money can be used for	9
5.1. Eligible activities.....	9
5.2. Eligible expenditure.....	11
5.3. What you cannot use the grant for.....	12
6. The assessment criteria.....	12
6.1. Assessment criterion.....	13
7. How to apply.....	13
7.1. Attachments to the application.....	13
7.2. Joint applications	14
7.3. Timing of grant opportunity	14
8. The grant selection process	15
8.1. Replacement nominations	15
8.2. Assessment of grant applications	15
8.3. Who will assess applications	16
8.4. Who will approve grants?	16
9. Notification of application outcomes.....	16
10. Successful grant applications	17
10.1. Grant agreement.....	17
10.2. Approval letter grant agreement	17
10.3. Exchange of letters grant agreement.....	17
10.4. Project/Activity specific legislation, policies and industry standards	17
10.5. How we pay the grant	17
10.6. Tax obligations.....	18
11. Announcement of grants	18
12. How we monitor your grant activity.....	18
12.1. Keeping us informed	18

12.2.	Reporting	19
12.2.1.	End of project report	19
12.2.2.	Ad-hoc reports.....	19
12.3.	Independent audits	19
12.4.	Compliance visits	19
12.5.	Grant agreement variations	19
12.6.	Evaluation	20
12.7.	Grant acknowledgement.....	20
13.	Probity.....	20
13.1.	Conflicts of interest	20
13.1.1.	MP and community consultation committee conflicts of Interest	21
13.2.	How we use your information	21
13.2.1.	How we handle your confidential information	21
13.2.2.	When we may disclose confidential information	21
13.2.3.	How we use your personal information.....	22
13.2.4.	Freedom of information	22
13.3.	Enquiries and feedback	22
14.	Glossary.....	24

1. Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 processes

The Stronger Communities Programme is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' (DITRDCA) Outcome 3. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [*Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)*](#).



The grant opportunity opens

The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government announces the program open and grant guidelines are published on business.gov.au and GrantConnect. Federal Members of Parliament (MPs) must establish a community consultation committee or consult an existing committee to assist in identifying applicants and projects. After consulting with the community, MPs will invite selected applicants to submit an application online.



Invited applicants complete and submit a grant application

Invited applicants complete an application addressing all the eligibility and assessment criteria in order for your application to be considered.



All grant applications are assessed

Applications are assessed against all eligibility and assessment criteria by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR).



Grant decisions are made

The Program Delegate decides which applications are successful taking into consideration the proper use of public resources.



Notification of the outcome

Your MP may advise you of the outcome of your application. DISR will provide you with written confirmation of your outcome.



DISR enters into a grant agreement with you

DISR will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants and pay the grant.



Delivery of grant

You complete the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. DISR manage the grant by working with you and monitoring your progress.



Evaluation of the Stronger Communities Programme

DITRDCA evaluates the specific grant activity and Stronger Communities Programme as a whole. This is based on information you provide to us and that is collected from various sources.

1.1. Introduction

These Grant Opportunity Guidelines (the guidelines) contain information for the Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 grants.

This document sets out:

- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) is responsible for administering this grant opportunity on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA).

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 14.

You should read and understand this document carefully before you fill out an application.

2. About the grant program

The Stronger Communities Programme (the program) supports the Australian Government's commitment to deliver social benefits in communities across Australia by funding projects in each of the 151 Federal electorates. The program provides grants for community projects to strengthen and benefit local communities and is part of the Government's 2024-25 Budget initiatives.

The program falls under DITRDCA's portfolio budget performance measure for Outcome 3, strengthening the sustainability, capacity and diversity of Australia's cities and regions including northern Australia, including through facilitating local partnerships between all levels of government and local communities; through investment in infrastructure and measures that stimulate economic growth; and providing grants and financial assistance.

The objective of the program is to deliver infrastructure projects that provide social benefits for local communities, by supporting one or more of the following:

- support or encourage interstate or international tourism
- support or celebrate Indigenous Australians
- commemorate Australians killed or injured in war or who contributed to Australia's war efforts
- support veterans and defence force members and their families and communities
- support the participation and settlement of newly arrived (i.e. within the last 5 years) immigrants who are not citizens
- support the acquisition or deployment of greenhouse gas emissions mitigation measures
- support the dignity of persons (including children) with disabilities by enhancing their access to public infrastructure
- support access for children to public infrastructure which enables interstate or overseas travel, accommodation, or education or health care infrastructure or services
- address gender inequality or discrimination in access to public infrastructure or sport
- provide medical services or facilities, or services or facilities incidental to the provision of medical services
- provide benefits to a specific cohort or cohorts of students

- enable or foster the use of electronic communications.

The intended outcomes of the program are to:

- encourage and support participation in local projects
- improve local community participation
- contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

Community consultation is a critical element of the program. In consultation with their community, each MP must identify potential applicants and projects in their electorate and invite them to apply for a grant. We will assess invited applications against the program's eligibility and assessment criteria through a closed non-competitive process.

For this round, grant funding will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs for all eligible applicants, except for local governing bodies. Grant funding for local governing bodies will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs. This means local governing bodies must provide at least 50 per cent of the eligible project costs in matched funding contributions.

We will publish the opening and closing dates for MP nominations and for the nominated organisations to apply for a grant and any other relevant information on [GrantConnect](#).

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)¹](#).

2.1. Community consultation

Each MP must either consult with an existing consultation committee or establish a new consultation committee comprised of representatives from the local community, to identify potential applicants and projects in their electorate. The identified projects must be consistent with and give effect to one of the eligible activities and the eligibility criteria. MPs must advise DISR of the basis for project selection, their method of consultation and provide a detailed list of nominated applicants and projects.

The MP will invite identified potential applicants to apply for a grant for identified projects by sending them a link to apply via the grant portal. Only applicants invited to apply can submit an application. Invited applicants must not forward the link to the application form to anyone else.

Invited applicants must submit a completed application via the portal. DISR assess all applications for eligibility and completeness and undertake a merit assessment.

An invitation to submit an application by your MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

MPs and their consultation committees are not responsible for the administration of the grants program.

3. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$22.65 million in 2024-25 for the Round 9 grant opportunity to provide up to \$150,000 in each of the 151 Federal electorates.

¹ <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

3.1. Grants available

Each electorate has total funding of up to \$150,000 that can be allocated to successful applications. A maximum of 20 projects will be funded in each electorate.

The grant amount will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project expenditure (grant percentage) except for local governing bodies where the grant amount will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project expenditure.

- The minimum grant amount is \$2,500.
- The maximum grant amount is \$20,000.

The maximum cost of your project cannot exceed \$50,000.

You are responsible for the remaining eligible project expenditure (where applicable). For local governing bodies, total Commonwealth funding for the project cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total eligible project expenditure. Local governing bodies can fund their matched funding contribution from any other source, including from state government.

3.2. Project period

You must complete your project no later than 31 December 2025.

You may start your project from the date you submit your application. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the date you submit your application is not eligible. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your project before you have an executed agreement, you do so at your own risk.

When calculating the duration of the project, you should factor in additional time for product sourcing and purchasing delays, obtaining approvals, contracting tradespeople, possible weather delays and any other unforeseen circumstances that may prevent you completing your project on time.

4. Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

4.1. Who is eligible?

To be eligible you must:

- be invited to apply by your MP
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)

and

- be one of the following entities:
 - an incorporated not for profit entity, such as:
 - Police and Citizen Youth Clubs
 - childcare centres
 - surf clubs
 - local aged care bodies
 - Parents and Citizens, Parents and Friends groups and equivalent bodies
 - a Commonwealth, state or territory government agency or entity that is a fire service, rural fire service, country fire authority, state emergency service or similar.

- non-distributing co-operatives
- companies limited by guarantee
- Australian Indigenous corporations
- religious organisations incorporated under legislation.
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust with responsibility for a community asset or property. You will be required to provide relevant trust documents
- a local governing body as defined by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

For the purpose of this program, we also consider the following organisations to be local governing bodies:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Maralinga, Gerard, Nepabunna and Yalata local governing bodies in SA
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council
- Lord Howe Island Board
- Norfolk Island Regional Council
- The Outback Communities Authority
- The Shire of Christmas Island
- The Silverton and Tibooburra villages in NSW
- The Trust Account in the NT
- ACT Government.

As a not-for-profit organisation you must demonstrate your not-for-profit status through one of the following:

- state or territory incorporated association registration number or certificate of incorporation, e.g. clubs and other associations
- current Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission's (ACNC) registration, e.g. for organisations registered as a charity
- constitutional documents that demonstrate the not-for-profit character of the organisation
- legislation that demonstrates the not-for-profit nature of the organisation, e.g. religious organisations incorporated under legislation.

Joint applications are acceptable, provided you have a lead applicant who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2.

4.2. Project sponsor

If you are an organisation that may not be able to incorporate, including parish churches, rural fire brigades, scout groups, Parents and Citizens Associations (P&C's) or equivalent bodies, you may be able to nominate an eligible project sponsor.

The project sponsor will need to meet all eligibility criteria, be nominated by the MP, and submit the application under their name on behalf of your organisation. The project sponsor must be authorised to enter into a grant agreement and will be responsible for any obligations under the agreement with the Commonwealth, including the finalisation and completion of the end of project report. If you are a local governing body applying in the capacity of a project sponsor refer to section 3.1 of the guidelines for additional information about grants available and project costs.

4.3. Additional eligibility requirements

In order to be eligible, you must also:

- apply for the project and grant amount as agreed to and nominated by your MP
- if you are a local governing body, declare that you are able to meet your share of the matching funds contribution for the project (at least 50 per cent) as outlined in section 3.1
- provide the relevant mandatory attachments as outlined in section 7.

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

4.4. Who is not eligible?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- a for profit organisation
- an individual
- a partnership
- a Regional Development Australia Committee
- a university, technical college or school
- a hospital
- a Commonwealth, state or territory government agency or body (including government business enterprises) unless listed in section 4.1
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au)
- an employer of 100 or more employees that has [not complied](#) with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible activities

To be eligible your project must:

- deliver social benefits to your community
- be nominated by your MP
- be located at an address in your MP's electorate. (Federal electorate boundaries for the purposes of Round 9 of the program are as at the 2022 Federal election). Use the Nationalmap.gov.au with reference to the Glossary for more information on determining project location eligibility in electorates
- be held within your MP's electorate in the case of events or used in your MP's electorate if it includes portable equipment
- include eligible activities and eligible expenditure
- have at least \$2,500 in eligible expenditure, unless the applicant is a local governing body which requires at least \$5,000 in eligible expenditure be undertaken in the project period and completed no later than 31 December 2025.

To be eligible, project activities must directly align and give effect to at least one of the objectives of the program (Section 2) and be one or more of the following:

- build, fit out, alterations and/or extensions to a tourism premise available to interstate or overseas tourists
- information signage of people, places, of natural local significance
- establish new or update to a website/social media presence that supports or encourages interstate or international tourism
- establish new or update to a website/social media presence to support newly arrived immigrants who are not citizens
- support towards NAIDOC week celebrations
- information signage for places of First Nations significance
- purchase of First Nation themed uniforms
- installation of First Nations art in public spaces
- construction of or upgrade to a First Nations cultural space
- build, fit out, alterations and/or extensions to a premise for the specific purpose of providing services to First Nations persons
- installation or upgrade to a native garden
- upgrades to existing or installation of new war memorials
- signage or flags (information, themed and or national) that commemorate Australians killed or injured war or who contributed to Australia's war efforts
- build, fit out, alterations and/or extensions to a premise specifically available to support Veterans and/or Defence Force members and their families
- establish new or update to a website/social media presence to support and/or commemorate veterans and Defence Force members and their families and communities
- localised welcoming and/or information events for newly arrived immigrants who are not citizens
- establish new or update to a website/social media presence to support newly arrived immigrants who are not citizens
- acquisition and installation of the highest energy efficient appliances/systems available and relevant to your requirements/available funding
- acquisition and installation of renewable energy sources
- acquisition and installation of renewable energy storage
- acquisition and installation of native or drought tolerant vegetation suitable to local conditions
- acquisition and installation of energy efficient windows and or window attachments relevant to your localised requirements/available funding
- new or upgrades to disability access and or amenities in public buildings or facilities
- construction of or upgrade to child friendly spaces/facilities at airports
- construction of or upgrade to child friendly spaces/facilities at community supported accommodation
- construction of or upgrade to child friendly spaces/facilities at child-care/education/health care services
- provision of women's facilities at sporting grounds/buildings
- provision of gender-neutral facilities for public access
- construction of or upgrade to parent rooms at sporting grounds/buildings and or public spaces

- construction of or upgrade to breastfeeding rooms at sporting grounds/buildings and or public spaces
- purchase and installation of defibrillator/s and or other first aid equipment, including first aid kits
- upgrade to or construction of first aid rooms/spaces
- upgrades to public libraries and/or community facilities to benefit pre-school, school and university students
- purchase and installation of ICT equipment and or software in public libraries and/or community facilities to benefit pre-school, school and university students
- establish new or update to a website/social media presence for a public library and/or community facility to benefit pre-school, school and university students
- purchase, establish new or update to a website/social media presence
- purchase of applications (apps) that deliver social benefits to your community
- purchase of customer relationship management (CRM) systems and/or software that deliver social benefits to your community
- purchase and or installation of audio-visual equipment that deliver social benefits to your community
- purchase and or installation of ICT equipment that deliver social benefits to your community
- installation of or upgrades to electrical works to allow or enhance the use of ICT equipment that deliver social benefits to your community.

Your project may align with more than one of the program objectives.

5.2. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement.

Eligible expenditure items must relate to eligible activities and include:

- the cost of suppliers, consultants and contracted labour undertaking eligible project activities
- the cost of obtaining planning, environment or other regulatory approvals as part of an approved eligible capital works or capital expenditure project such as architecture, engineering, planning, design and consultants fees
- the purchase of:
 - assets such as furniture, TVs and equipment, motor vehicles purchase or upgrade of ICT hardware including:
 - computers, associated software and user licenses
 - tablets, printers or photocopiers that remain the property of the applicant.
- significant upgrades of websites or applications/application software, e.g. booking systems, digital marketplace, accessibility improvements, cyber security
- significant updates of existing ICT systems including:
 - CRM systems, databases etc.
 - the cost of initial subscription-based software
 - initial IT support memberships
 - warranty of the initial purchase, lease or hire of equipment required to complete eligible project activities

- the purchase, lease or hire of equipment required to complete eligible project activities.
- the purchase of assets, equipment and materials required to complete eligible project activities.

We may update the guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your project.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate (who is a manager within DISR with responsibility for the program) makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must be a direct cost of the project.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible.

You may elect to commence your project from the date you submit your application. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed. The Commonwealth will not be liable, and should not be held out as being liable, for any activities undertaken before the grant agreement is executed.

5.3. What you cannot use the grant for

Expenditure items that are not eligible are:

- in-kind expenditure
- the cost of delivering the services of your local governing body, including:
 - volunteer and paid staff time to provide training, education, transport, advisory, respite support, and outreach programs and services
 - volunteer and paid staff time to run organisations and to plan and develop events, programs and services, or travel associated with these operations.
- the cost of business as usual activities including:
 - staff salaries, overheads, and consumables such as paper, printer cartridges, office supplies, brochures and other marketing materials, kitchen supplies including food and beverages
 - memberships and warranties for purchases recurring or ongoing operational expenditure (including annual maintenance, rent, water and rates).
- funding to develop or deliver ongoing training or educational courses
- funding to undertake studies, including feasibility studies, or investigations
- the cost of obtaining planning, environmental or other regulatory approvals that are not part of an approved eligible capital works or capital expenditure project under this application such as architecture, engineering, planning, design and consultants
- purchase of land or buildings
- funding for the development of private or commercial ventures
- capital expenditure on private residential property.

6. The assessment criteria

You must address the assessment criterion in your application. The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criterion below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant

amount requested. The application form displays character limits for your response. We will only consider funding applications that score at least 50 per cent against each assessment criterion.

6.1. Assessment criterion

Project alignment with program objectives (100 points)

You must demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. the benefit of your project to the community, for example, describe how it will encourage and support participation in local projects, improve local community participation and/or contribute to vibrant and viable communities (50 points)
- b. how you plan to manage your project (50 points).

7. How to apply

Before applying you should read and understand these guidelines, the sample application form and the sample grant agreement published on business.gov.au and GrantConnect.

You will need to set up an account to access our online portal.

You can only submit an application during a funding round.

To apply, you must:

- be invited by your MP to submit an application
- complete the online application form on the grants portal
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility and merit criteria
- include all necessary attachments.

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records.

You will receive confirmation when you submit your application. You should retain a copy of your application for your own records.

You will need to substantiate your project expenditure. You should have evidence for the costs that you include in your project budget to provide upon request.

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting your application, we may contact you for clarification if we find an error or any missing information that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

If you need further guidance around the application process, or if you have any issues with the portal, contact us at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

7.1. Attachments to the application

You must provide the following documents with your application (if applicable):

- evidence of your not-for-profit status
- trust deed

- letters of support from project partners for joint applications.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. The total of all attachments cannot exceed 20MB. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

7.2. Joint applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together with their local governing body to deliver a project. In these circumstances, the lead organisation must be the local governing body. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application should identify all members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support should include:

- details of the project partner
- an overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement. We will communicate with the lead organisation, and the lead organisation is responsible for communicating with all other parties.

7.3. Timing of grant opportunity

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4-6 weeks
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	4-6 weeks
Negotiations of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	The date you submit your application. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur and cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed.
Earliest end date of project	After 1 August 2025
Project end date	31 December 2025

8. The grant selection process

Your MP, with the help of their community consultation committee, will identify potential projects, with a total value of up to \$150,000 in their electorate that are consistent with the program outcomes and eligibility criteria and are required to apply the CGRPs in undertaking their roles.

The MP will invite identified potential applicants to apply and send them a link to the online application form. It is important to note that being invited to submit an application by your MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

DISR will assess your application for completeness and against all the eligibility criteria and the assessment criterion. To be recommended for funding, your project must meet all eligibility criteria, provide value for relevant money and be considered a proper use of public resources.

8.1. Replacement nominations

If a nominated organisation is not eligible or the nominated project is not in the MP's electorate, we may seek a further nomination from the relevant MP. This may be for an alternative project in their electorate or for the same project from an eligible organisation to replace the ineligible nomination during the application open period.

The nominated organisation and replacement project must meet all the eligibility criteria to be recommended for funding.

For this round of the program, the replacement nomination process runs concurrently within the application opening and closing dates. There is no additional opportunity for replacement nominations after the round closes.

8.2. Assessment of grant applications

We review your application against the eligibility criteria.

If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criteria. Only eligible applications will proceed to the assessment stage.

We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria

- whether it provides value with relevant money.²

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the overall objective/s of the grant opportunity
- the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives
- the relative value of the grant sought

We also consider any national interest, financial, legal/regulatory, governance or other issue or risk that we identify during any due diligence process that we conduct in respect of the applicant. This includes its directors, officers, senior managers, key personnel, its related bodies corporate (as defined in the Corporations Act) or its application that could bring the Australian Government into disrepute if it were to fund the applicant. Such issues and risks include where we consider that funding the application under this grant opportunity is likely to directly conflict with Australian Government policy. Where possible, we will provide you with an opportunity to comment on any material risks identified during this due diligence process prior to our determining the extent (if any) to which those issues or risks affect our assessment of the application and, if so, whether they are sufficient to warrant the exclusion of your application from the assessment process.

8.3. Who will assess applications

We assess all applications for eligibility and completeness. We then assess your application against the assessment criteria.

8.4. Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve taking into account the application assessment, availability of grant funds and whether funding a project will be a proper use of public resources. When assessing whether the application represents value with relevant money, the Program Delegate will consider the overall objectives of the grant opportunity, the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives and the relative value of the grant sought.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the grant approval
- the grant funding to be awarded
- any conditions attached to the offer of grant funding.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The Program Delegate will not approve funding if there are insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

9. Notification of application outcomes

Your MP may advise you of the outcome of your application and we will provide you with notification in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, DISR will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

² See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. Grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We use two types of grant agreements in this program. Our selection will depend on the size and complexity of your project. Each grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on business.gov.au and GrantConnect. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed.

We will manage the grant agreement through the online portal. This includes issuing and executing the grant agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have accepted the agreement. We cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur and cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed.

If you enter an agreement under the program, you cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth granting programs.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

10.2. Approval letter grant agreement

We will use an approval letter grant agreement when we have no need to clarify or amend any details in your application. This grant agreement comprises your completed application and the approval letter we send you advising that your application has been successful. We consider the agreement to be executed (take effect) from the date of our approval letter.

10.3. Exchange of letters grant agreement

We will use an exchange of letters grant agreement when we need to clarify or amend details in your application form. We will provide you with a letter of agreement with attached terms and conditions. You will accept the agreement through the portal.

You will have 30 days from the date the grant agreement is issued to execute the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The offer may lapse if both parties do not accept the grant agreement within this time.

10.4. Project/Activity specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government sanctions in undertaking your project. You must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that you meet these requirements. We will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

In particular, you will be required to comply with state/territory legislation in relation to working with children.

10.5. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount we will pay.

We will pay the grant on execution of the grant agreement. You will be required to report how you spent the grant funds at the completion of the project.

We will not exceed the approved grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

10.6. Tax obligations

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities³.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on tax.

11. Announcement of grants

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#), Section 5.4. We may also publish this information on business.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location
- your organisation's industry sector.

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

³ See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at [ato.gov.au](#)

You must notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2. Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement.

12.2.1. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report.

End of project reports must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money
- be submitted by the report due date.

12.2.2. Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

12.3. Independent audits

We may ask you to provide an independent audit report. An audit report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The audit report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure. The report template is available on GrantConnect.

12.4. Compliance visits

We may visit you during the project period, or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.5. Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you will need to request a variation to your grant agreement, including:

- extending the timeframe for completing the project
- changing project activities.

Note the program does not allow for an increase of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must request the change through the portal. We will only consider a request for a variation submitted before the project end date.

If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome

- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of DISR/DITRDCA
- availability of program funds.

12.6. Evaluation

DITRDCA will evaluate the grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. They may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. We may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

DITRDCA may contact you up to two years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.7. Grant acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

If you erect signage in relation to the project, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the grant.

13. Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

13.1. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you and/or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

As part of your application, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform us in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)⁴](#) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth). Committee members and other officials including the Program Delegate must also declare any conflicts of interest.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00057>

DISR's [conflict of interest policy](#)⁵ is published on the department's website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

13.1.1. MP and community consultation committee conflicts of Interest

MPs, their staff and community consultation committee members must declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interest to the community consultation committee and to DISR.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform us in writing immediately.

13.2. How we use your information

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per 13.2.1, or
- personal information as per 13.2.3,

we may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

13.2.1. How we handle your confidential information

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

13.2.2. When we may disclose confidential information

We may disclose confidential information:

- to our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to the Member of Parliament representing the Federal electorate where the project is located
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or

⁵ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy>

- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

13.2.3. How we use your personal information

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on departmental websites.

You may read DISR's [Privacy Policy](#)⁶ on the department's website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

13.2.4. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

13.3. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification you can contact us on 13 28 46, by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

⁶ <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

General Manager

External and Design Branch

Business Grants Hub

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

GPO Box 2013 CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/)⁷ with your complaint (call 1300 362 072).

There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

⁷ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
applicant	An entity that meets the eligibility requirements and is applying for funding under the program. In the Guidelines the term 'you' refers to the Applicant.
application form	The document issued by the Program Delegate that applicants use to apply for funding under the program.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application ranking.
community consultation committee	Committee either established or identified by the MP who assist the MP to identify the projects for consideration by DISR.
closed non-competitive process	Applicants that have been identified by the community consultation committee and invited by the MP to apply to the Stronger Communities program are assessed through a closed non-competitive process. Applicants are not assessed against other applicants' submissions but assessed individually against the eligibility and assessment criterion.
eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in section 5.1.
eligible application	An application or proposal for grant funding under the program that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
eligibility criteria	The mandatory criteria, which must be met to qualify for a grant.
eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.2.

Term	Definition
electorate	The project must be located within the MP nominating electorate. The electorate boundaries are the 2022 Federal electorate boundaries. Determining whether the project location is in the MPs electorate can be done by using the mapping tool How to use National Maps to check a project location is in the nominating electorate: - Click on the Nationalmap.gov.au mapping tool <i>The Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (2022) data is pre-loaded in this link.</i> - Enter a project site address in the white box on upper left of the screen “Search for Locations”/ Key “Enter” - Click on the closest address match in either “Locations” or “Addresses” in the column on the left side of the screen. - Click on the blue dot Location Marker on the map – the electorate information for that address will be displayed in a dialogue box on the upper right of the screen. We recommend that you use the following browsers for optimum functionality: - On Windows: The latest versions of Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge - On Mac: The latest versions of Safari and Google Chrome.
federal electorate	A geographical area of Australia (known as an electoral division) represented by a Member of Parliament elected at a House of Representatives election.
grant agreement	A legally binding contract between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding.
grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
GrantConnect	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	The recipient of grant funding under a grant agreement.
guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to DITRDCA and DISR to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.

Term	Definition
local governing body	As defined by the <i>Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995</i> . For the purposes of the program additional local governing bodies are identified in 4.1 of the grant opportunity guidelines.
Minister	The Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.
MP	Federal Members of Parliament (MPs)
personal information	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth), which is: Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable: a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
program delegate	A Senior Responsible Officer (who can be a General Manager or Program Manager) within the Department of Industry Science and Resources with responsibility for the program.
program funding or program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.
project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
project Sponsor	A sponsor is an entity that meets the eligibility requirements of the program who agrees to sponsor an organisation (sponsor organisation) to apply for the grant opportunity. In this case, the project Sponsor is considered to be the applicant. The project Sponsor enters into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The sponsor must be nominated by the MP for the grant opportunity.
public infrastructure	Infrastructure for public use (in particular owned by local councils), such as libraries, airports, sporting facilities, community centres, and performance theatres
sponsor organisation	A sponsor organisation is the organisation undertaking the project for the purposes of the grant, but is not the organisation entering into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. Organisations that require sponsorship are usually groups that cannot meet the entity eligibility requirements for the grant program and cannot submit applications in their own right.

Term	Definition
value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations. When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to: ▪ the quality of the project proposal and activities; ▪ fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; ▪ that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and ▪ the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.