



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

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

Frequently Asked Questions

Stronger Communities Programme Round 9

Overview

1. What is the Stronger Communities Programme?

The Stronger Communities Programme 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. Round 9 of the program will run through to 31 December 2025.

Round 9 of the program will provide up to \$150,000 to each federal electorate for eligible projects that encourage and support participation in local projects, improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

A maximum of 20 projects will be funded in each electorate.

2. What grants are available?

For round 9 of the program, grant funding will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs, except for local governing bodies where grant funding will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs. Local governing bodies must provide matched funding contributions towards their eligible project.

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

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

All activities and expenditure in the project must be eligible.

3. Who is responsible for administering the Stronger Communities Programme?

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources (the department/we) is responsible for administering the program on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts according to the requirements of the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles¹](#) (CGRPs).

4. What is the department's role in the assessment of applications?

We will assess all applications against the Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 [grant opportunity guidelines](#). We 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.

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.

5. Will the department contact me with questions relating to my application?

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/text>

additional information from you that would change your submitted application after the application closing time.

6. What are the community consultation arrangements within my electorate?

Community consultation is a critical element of the program. Members of Parliament (MPs) must establish a community consultation committee or engage an existing community consultation committee to identify potential applicants and projects within their electorate and invite them to apply for a grant. We will assess invited applications against the program's eligibility and assessment criteria and alignment with program objectives through a closed non-competitive process.

Eligibility

7. How is a not-for-profit organisation defined?

A not-for-profit organisation is an organisation that is not operating for the profit or gain of its individual members. Section 4.1 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#) provides guidance on how to demonstrate not-for-profit status.

For the purposes of this program, not-for-profit organisations must also be an incorporated legal entity with a current Australian Business Number (ABN).

8. What types of organisations are eligible to apply?

Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations are eligible to apply.

Examples of eligible organisations may include:

- Police and Citizen Youth clubs
- childcare centres
- surf clubs
- local aged care bodies
- Commonwealth, state or territory government agency or entity that is a fire service, rural fire service, country fire authority, state emergency service or similar.
- Parents and Citizens, Parents and Friends groups and equivalent bodies
- a local governing body [as defined by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995] such as a local council or a body responsible for providing a particular

service such as the supply of electricity or water

- non-distributing co-operatives
- companies limited by a guarantee
- Australian Indigenous corporations.

Section 4.1 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#) provides more information on eligible organisations.

9. Are unincorporated not-for-profit organisations eligible to apply for a grant?

Not-for-profit applicant organisations that are unincorporated are not legal entities and therefore not eligible to apply. However, these organisations may be able to nominate an eligible project sponsor that is a legal entity that if agreed, could apply on their behalf.

If an unincorporated organisation identified such a project sponsor, this organisation would apply on their behalf. 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.

10. Can funding be used to refurbish a leased building?

Yes. Funding can be used to refurbish a leased building with the approval of the owner, provided the project:

- directly aligns and gives effect to at least one of the objectives of the program listed in section 2 of the guidelines.
- involves at least one of the specific project activities listed in section 5.1 of the guidelines.
- does not involve the development of a private or commercial venture (section 5.3 of the guidelines).

For further details on the above points, please see the listed sections of the Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 [grant opportunity guidelines](#)).

11. Can I apply for a project that has already started or is scheduled to start?

We will not fund projects that you have already started or where contracts are already in place at the time of application. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the date you submit your application is not eligible.

However, you are able to apply for a grant to undertake a new project that may be part of a broader project with a maximum cost of \$50,000 that has already started, provided the new project will start after you submit your application and will be completed by 31 December 2025

For example, a renovation to a public library may already be under contract but we may accept a new project to construct disability access and or amenities that were not part of the original renovation project.

12. When can I start my project?

You may start your project from the date you submit your application online.

However, if you choose to start your project before you enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth, any costs incurred are at your own risk.

You will not receive any funding if your application is unsuccessful.

13. How do I determine my project period?

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

When determining the length of your project you should be aware that your project expenditure must be incurred between the project start and end dates to be eligible.

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

How to apply

14. How do I submit an application?

The program is only open to applicants that have been invited to apply by their local federal MP.

MPs will consult with a community consultation committee and invite selected applicants to apply.

Once nominated, applicants will receive a link to enter their application through an online grant portal in which they must address the assessment criterion in their application. This involves 2 questions worth 50 points each in which they must identify the benefit of their project to the community and how they plan to manage the project.

You must not forward your invitation to the online grant portal to anyone else.

15. Can I submit my application as soon as I get an email from my MP?

You must wait until the program is open for applications at 10:00am Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on 14 February 2025.

Once the program is open and you have received an email with an invitation to apply you can submit your application online via the grant portal.

16. Can I submit separate projects from the same organisation in multiple electorates?

Yes. However, each project must be nominated by the local MP in each federal electorate as a result of the community consultation process. Projects must be located in the same electorate as the MP nomination. If your project involves events or portable equipment, they must be held/used in the same electorate as the MP nomination.

17. What happens if there are technical difficulties when I try to submit my application?

If you experience technical difficulties when trying to submit your application you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) through our [online enquiry form](#) on [business.gov.au](#).

18. When do applications close?

All applications for Stronger Communities Programme Round 9 must be submitted by 5:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on 28 March 2025.

19. What types of projects are suitable for funding?

Applicants must choose at least one of the specific eligible activities which directly aligns to at least one of the objectives of the program. No other activities can be funded under this round of the program. Activities must only be those in the specific list.

Some examples of eligible projects are listed below:

- Holding an event for NAIDOC week to celebrate indigenous Australians
- Installation of a new war memorial that commemorates Australians killed or injured in war
- Installation of solar panels at a local community centre
- Constructing a disability access ramp or lift at a local sporting facility
- Installation of a native garden to educate the community and celebrate indigenous Australians and their culture.
- Establish a new website to provide information and support to newly arrived immigrants in a local community.
- Construction of a women's change room at a local football ground.

A full list of program objectives is included in Section 2 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#). A full list of eligible activities is included in Section 5.1 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#). To be eligible, project activities must directly align and give effect to at least one of the objectives of the program (Section 2). Any eligible expenditure must directly relate to these eligible activities and objectives.

Other projects that align with the program's intended outcomes and specific project activities may be eligible.

20. How do I withdraw my application?

If you want to withdraw your application, contact your MP and notify the department by calling 13 28 46 or via the program's mailbox: SCP9@industry.gov.au

If you have been nominated but do not want to proceed with an application, you must inform your MP immediately.

21. Are there any mandatory documents that I need to provide?

Section 7.1 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#) lists the attachments we may require. The application form will include instructions on the required supporting documentation. These may include:

- evidence of your not-for-profit status
- trust deed documents if applicable.
- letters of support from project partners for joint applications.

You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

22. Do I need to provide quotes?

You are not required to provide quotes for each expenditure item; however we require you to keep evidence of all expenditure for two years after the completion of the project and provide this evidence if we request it.

We will carry out project audits through a representative sample of successful applications. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, request further information or seek an independent audit of claims and payments.

23. If I have a project involving construction, do I need to provide evidence of relevant approvals or licences?

You do not need to provide evidence of approvals or licences. However, you must ensure you obtain any necessary statutory approvals and licences, and you must maintain records of the approvals.

24. How do I account for GST in my project costs?

The application will ask you to provide your eligible project cost over the life of the project.

When calculating the total project cost, if you are registered for GST:

- you should remove the GST components of the project costs and provide the GST exclusive amount, and
- where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice.

When calculating the total project cost, if you are not registered for GST:

- you should provide the cost of your project including the GST components (GST inclusive).

GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities. If you are a government related entity, you should provide a GST exclusive amount, when applying on your own behalf.

If you are government entity applying as a lead applicant or sponsor for another organisation, you should provide GST inclusive amounts.

25. Can I provide extra information to the department once my application has been submitted?

No. However, during our assessment of your application, we may contact you if we require additional information or clarification.

26. Do I need to have insurance?

You must have insurance coverage as appropriate for the type of project you undertake. This may include:

- Public Liability (usually a minimum value of \$10 million)
- Workers' Compensation (minimum value as required by State/Territory legislation)
- Comprehensive Motor Vehicle Insurance
- Personal Accident Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance (usually a minimum value of \$2 million).

We do not require evidence, but you will be required to have adequate insurance as part of your grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

27. Can the project involve children?

You must comply with all relevant legislation relating to the employment or engagement of anyone working on the project that may interact with children, including all necessary working with children checks.

You must implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations endorsed by the

Commonwealth and available at:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

You must complete a risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children. You must also establish a training and compliance regime to ensure personnel are aware of the requirements.

28. Can I include in-kind expenditure as part of my project funding?

In-kind expenditure is not eligible project expenditure. For local government applicants your matching contributions must be in cash. (refer to section 5.3 of the grant opportunity guidelines).

In-kind refers to goods, services and volunteer labour provided to deliver your project that have a monetary value, but do not involve a cash payment.

For round 9 funding is available for up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs (excluding local governing bodies which must provide at least 50% in matched funding). Eligible expenditure for this round refers to expenditure that is paid by the organisation to complete the project

29. For local governing bodies can in-kind expenditure be included as part of the matched funding contributions?

In-kind contributions are not eligible as a form of matched funding - contributions must involve a cash payment.

Local governing bodies can claim the direct costs they incur in undertaking eligible project activities as matched contributions including contracted labour, sub-contract and materials and equipment hire/purchase etc.

Assessment

30. How will my application be assessed?

The department will review your application against the eligibility criteria. If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criterion.

We will assess whether:

- you are an eligible entity

- your project includes eligible project activities that align with the program objectives
- your project has a minimum of \$2,500 in eligible expenditure unless you are a local governing body which requires:
 - your project to have at least \$5,000 in eligible expenditure
 - a matched funding contribution in cash that matches the program grant on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis, and
- your project is located at an address in your MP's electorate

We will also consider your application on its merits, based on how well it meets the criteria and whether it provides value with relevant money.

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

Funding decision

31. When will I be advised about the outcome of my application?

We will assess applications progressively. Funding decisions will be provided on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the program.

All assessments are expected to be completed by the end of June 2025. However, the timeframe for finalisation of the assessment process will depend on the quality and quantity of the applications.

We will provide advice on the outcome of each application via the on-line grant portal. Your MP may also contact you to discuss your project.

32. What happens next if I am successful?

If you are successful, you must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We

may use an approval letter grant agreement which along with your application, forms a grant agreement.

We consider the agreement to be executed (take effect) from the date of our approval letter.

We may use an exchange of letters grant agreement when we need to clarify or amend any details in your application form.

Details of your project will be listed on GrantConnect.²

This information may include:

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

We publish this information to ensure open access to non-sensitive data within Australian Government agencies to enable greater innovation and productivity across all sectors of the Australian economy.

Payment and reporting

33. Am I required to report on the progress of my project to the department?

You will not be required to provide progress reports, but you should advise us as soon as possible if your project is delayed beyond the expected project end date. You must provide an end of project report on completion of your project. We will provide a template for this with instructions on how to complete and submit the end of project report in the grant portal.

When you submit your end of project report you will need to:

- provide photographs of your completed project activities
- be able to identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement
- report any underspends of the grant money.

² <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

You are also required to keep records of your project for two years. You may be required to provide them to us for evaluation upon request (see section 11 of the [grant opportunity guidelines](#)).

34. What will I need to provide to the department in order to receive my grant funding?

You will be required to submit your bank details on your online application form.

Grant funding will be made in a single up-front payment upon execution of the grant agreement. You will be required to report how you spent the grant funds at the completion of the project.

Further information

35. Need more information?

For more information, visit business.gov.au or call 13 28 46.

We may update this document from time to time to add further information, where required.