



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Science,
Energy and Resources

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications

Frequently Asked Questions

Stronger Communities Programme Round 7

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 small capital projects in each of the 151 federal electorates. The program is part of the Government's 2020-21 budget initiatives focussed on making local economies stronger and boosting community organisations. Round 7 of the program will run through to 31 December 2022.

Round 7 of the program will provide up to \$150,000 to each federal electorate for eligible small capital 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?

Round 7 of the program will support Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. For this special round, the grant funding for each project 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 will be required to provide matched funding contributions towards their eligible project.

- The minimum grant amount is \$2,500

- The maximum grant amount is \$20,000
- 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, Energy and Resources (the department/we) is responsible for administering the program on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, according to the requirements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines¹ (CGRGs).

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

We will assess all applications against the Stronger Communities Programme Round 7 grant opportunity guidelines. We will assess your application for completeness and against all the eligibility criteria. To be recommended for funding, your project must meet all eligibility criteria, provide value for money and be considered a proper use of public resources.

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve taking into account the eligibility assessment by the department, any reputational risk to the Australian Government, information you provide, and the availability of grant funds.

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 additional information from you that would

¹ <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/>

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. The identified projects must be consistent with the program's intended outcomes and eligibility criteria.

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.

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?

If your organisation is not an incorporated not-for-profit entity you are not eligible to apply. However, you may be able to nominate a project sponsor that is an incorporated not-for-profit entity that could apply on your behalf provided they also meet the program's eligibility criteria.

Any incorporated not-for-profit organisation is eligible to apply. (see section 4.1 Who is eligible? In the Stronger Communities Programme Round 7 grant opportunity guidelines)

Examples of eligible organisations may include:

- local rural fire service
- local state emergency service
- Police and Citizen Youth clubs
- child care 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.

- 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
- Indigenous not-for-profit corporations.

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 agreeable, could apply on their behalf.

If an unincorporated organisation identified such a project sponsor, this organisation would apply on their behalf. The project sponsor must be an incorporated not-for-profit entity that meets all of the eligibility criteria. The project sponsor would also need to be nominated by the MP's office, submit the grant application and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

10. Are Parent and Citizens Associations (P&Cs) eligible to apply for a grant?

P&Cs and equivalent bodies that meet all eligibility criteria may apply for a grant. However, projects that only benefit schools are not eligible.

Applications submitted by P&Cs may be eligible for a grant if the project benefits the broader community beyond the school community including students, teachers, parents and school volunteers. Some examples might include:

- upgrade of a hall or sporting facility used by the local community that is on school grounds
- purchase of assets that will be used by the broader community, such as a bus or BBQ.

11. 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 does not involve the development of a private or commercial venture (see section 5.3 of the Stronger Communities Programme Round 7 grant opportunity guidelines).

12. 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 that has already started, provided the new project will be completed by 31 December 2022.

For example, construction of a public library may already be under contract but we may accept a project to fit-out a proposed public computer lab within the library.

13. 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.

14. 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 2022.

How to apply

15. 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 invite selected applicants to apply. Applicants will submit an application through an online grant portal. You must not forward your invitation to the online grant portal to anyone else.

16. 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 26 October 2021.

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.

17. 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.

18. 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](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

19. When do applications close?

All applications for Stronger Communities Programme Round 7 must be submitted by 5:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on 19 January 2022.

20. What types of projects are suitable for funding?

The program funds small capital works and capital expenditure projects. The following projects are a guide to types of suitable projects (however, if you have such a project

it does not necessarily mean it will be supported):

- upgrades, construction and fit-out of community spaces, e.g. men's sheds, halls, parks
- fit-out of community centres, health centres, e.g. kitchen upgrades and equipment purchases such as computers, TVs and furniture, fixtures and fittings
- acquisition and installation of equipment, including ICT hardware and associated operating software and initial user licences
- bike paths
- sporting facilities upgrades including new scoreboards, spectator seating, goalposts, new turf, fit-out of changes rooms, new canteen, new lights, medical equipment, upgrade drainage and water systems, gymnasiums
- streetscapes
- skate parks
- purchase of equipment for local State Emergency Service and rural fire brigades
- upgrade of facilities to provide disabled access
- purchase of vehicles and trailers for community transport/services, surf lifesaving, medical transport
- park furniture upgrade or installation including shade/shelters, BBQs, toilet facilities, drinking fountains
- be operated/used in your MP's electorate if it includes portable equipment.

Other projects that align with the program's intended outcomes may be eligible.

21. 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: SCP7@industry.gov.au

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

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

Section 6.1 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 documents if applicable.

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

23. 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 an independent audit of claims and payments.

24. 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 be aware of and ensure you obtain, any necessary statutory approvals. Where statutory or other approvals are required for your project you must maintain records of the approvals.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. 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.

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

In-kind expenditure is not considered eligible expenditure for this round of funding (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 this round funding is available for up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs (excluding local governing bodies). Eligible

expenditure for this round refers to expenditure that is paid by the organisation to complete the project

30. 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 labour, sub-contract and materials and equipment hire/purchase etc.

For example:

A local governing body has an approved project to update the play equipment in a council park. The project cost is \$10,000 and the grant is for \$5,000. The council must provide a matched funds contribution of \$5,000.

The council has \$3,000 cash and will provide the remaining matched funds of \$2,000 in direct labour costs of a paid staff member to work directly on approved project activities including building and installing new play equipment.

Assessment

31. How will my application be assessed?

The department assesses all applications. We will assess whether:

- you are eligible to apply
- you are an eligible entity
- your project is a small capital works or capital expenditure project and contributes to an improvement in local community participation and the vibrancy and viability of the community
- 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 that matches the program grant on at least a dollar for dollar basis and
 - your matched funding contribution is confirmed.

Funding decision

32. 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 and grants awarded by the end of May 2022. 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.

33. 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 will tell you in this letter of any particular conditions that may apply to your grant funding.

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.

² <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

Payment and reporting

34. 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 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.

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).

35. 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

36. 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.