



Australian Government

Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Department of Infrastructure
and Regional Development

Business

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Frequently Asked Questions

Stronger Communities Programme – Round 3

1. What is the Stronger Communities Programme?

The Stronger Communities Programme is a grant programme that supports the Australian Government's commitment to help deliver social benefits in communities across Australia.

Round 3 of the programme will provide \$22.5 million in 2017-18, i.e. \$150,000 to each federal electorate for eligible small capital projects that improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

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

2. What grants are available?

For each project, the grant amount will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs.

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

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

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (the department/we) is responsible for administering the programme on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, according to the requirements of the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#)¹ (CGRGs).

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

We will assess all applications against the Stronger Communities Programme Guidelines

(the guidelines) to confirm eligibility and to determine whether the project would be a proper use of grant funding.

The Departmental Approver decides which grants to approve taking into account the eligibility assessment of 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 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 programme. 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 programme's intended outcomes and 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.

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

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

Examples of incorporated legal structures for not-for-profits include:

- Incorporated associations
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Non-trading co-operatives
- Indigenous corporations.

8. What is a legal entity?

A legal entity is an entity in its own right that has capacity to enter into legally binding agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, sue and be sued and be held responsible for its actions.

If you are not a legal entity you are not eligible to apply. However, if you have a parent organisation that is a legal entity, they may apply on your behalf.

The parent organisation (legal entity) can apply as a lead applicant and must:

- meet the programme's eligibility criteria
- be the main driver of the project
- submit the application form
- if successful, enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth
- ensure that the grant is spent on the project and in accordance with the agreement.

9. What types of not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply?

Any not-for-profit organisation that is a legal entity in their own right and is not owned by a state or territory government, is eligible to apply.

If your organisation is not a legal entity you are not eligible to apply. However, you may have a parent organisation that is a legal entity that could apply on your behalf provided they also meet the programme's eligibility criteria.

Locally constituted bodies that are owned by a state or territory government may be eligible to apply if they are providing emergency or fire services to a community.

Examples of not-for-profit organisations include:

- local rural fire service
- local state emergency service

- Police and Citizen Youth clubs
- not-for-profit child care centres
- not-for-profit surf clubs
- not-for-profit local aged care bodies.

10. Are unincorporated 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 have a parent body that is a legal entity that could apply on their behalf.

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

P&Cs are eligible to apply, however, projects that only benefit schools are not eligible.

Projects sponsored by P&Cs may be eligible for a grant if the project benefits the broader community. 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.

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

Yes. Funding can be used to refurbish a leased building with the support of the owner, provided the project does not involve the development of a private or commercial venture (see Section 6.5 of the programme guidelines).

13. What types of projects would be ineligible because they support commercial ventures?

We consider organisations that operate on a full time basis, including licensed clubs and large service delivery agencies that provide disability, aged care, health, indigenous and education services, to be commercial ventures. Projects supporting these commercial ventures are not eligible (see section 6.7 of the programme guidelines).

14. 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.

However you are able to apply for a grant to undertake a new project that may be part of a project that has already started.

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

15. When can I start my project?

You may start your project from the date you submit your application online and receive an automated confirmation from the department.

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.

How to apply

16. How do I submit an application?

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

MPs will invite selected applicants to apply and provide a link to the online application form in their invitation.

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

No. You must wait until the programme is open for applications at 9:00am Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 7 August 2017.

18. 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 electorate as a result of the community consultation process. Projects must be located in the same electorate as the MP nomination.

19. 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](#).

20. When do applications close?

All applications for Stronger Communities Programme Round 3 must be submitted by 5:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 28 September 2017.

21. What types of projects are suitable for funding?

The following projects are a guide to the types of suitable projects. 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
- fit-out of community centres, health centres, e.g. kitchen upgrades and equipment purchases such as computers, TVs and furniture and fittings
- 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 SES
- 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.

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

22. How do I withdraw my application?

If you want to withdraw your application contact your MP and notify the department via the programme's mailbox: strongercommunities@industry.gov.au

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

Section 8.1 of the guidelines, lists the attachments we may require. The application

form will include instructions on the required supporting documentation. These may include:

- where making modifications to leased buildings or grounds, written consent from the owner to confirm approval of the project
- evidence of your not-for-profit status (if applicable)
- photographic evidence of the project site prior to project start (if applicable)

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

24. 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. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, request further information or an independent audit of claims and payments.

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

No. However, you must be aware of and ensure you obtain, any necessary statutory approvals. Where statutory approvals are required for your project you must maintain records of the approvals.

26. 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, you should include the GST inclusive amount, less any GST credits that you can claim in relation to that expenditure.

If you are registered for GST, where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice.

27. 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.

28. 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 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 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.

29. What in-kind contributions can be included as part of my project funding?

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

For example, if you are applying for a grant to build a bike path in your community, your in-kind contribution could be volunteer labour for constructing the bike path.

Other examples of in-kind contributions for your project can include the following activities that are provided free of charge:

- any person undertaking work on the capital project
- professional services specifically related to your project, including legal, architectural, engineering and accounting services
- other project and related services, including site preparation, fabricating and sub-contractors
- items including new or used furnishings, landscape or construction materials (such as appliances, furniture, trees, plants, wood, plumbing, hardware etc.)
- the use of machinery and heavy equipment.

Expenditure items that are ineligible under the section 6.7 of the programme guidelines cannot be included as in-kind contributions.

30. How can I calculate the value of in-kind contributions to the project?

To determine the value of land or property to be provided as an in-kind contribution towards a project, you may get a written valuation of the current market value of the particular land or property. If this is not possible, then you should keep records of how you determined the in-kind value of the land or property. An example of this could be:

“The adjacent block of land is similar in size and nature. In 2016 this block was sold for \$30,000. We have valued the land to be used for this project as \$30,000, based on that sale price.”

To determine the value of volunteer labour, you may use the average hourly rate of \$37.00 (Australian Bureau of Statistics data, May 2016). Where you choose an alternative method of valuing volunteer labour we may ask you to explain the basis of your calculations in your final report.

Assessment

31. How will my application be assessed?

The department assess all applications. We will assess whether:

- you are eligible to apply
- you are a legal entity with a current Australian Business Number (ABN);
- your project is for capital purchases or activities and contributes to an improvement in local community participation and the vibrancy and viability of the community
- funding sought is at least \$2,500 and no more than \$20,000;
- your cash or in-kind contribution match the programme grant on at least a dollar for dollar basis; and
- all partner funding is confirmed.

Funding decision

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

We will assess applications in the order that they are submitted. Funding decisions will be provided on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the programme.

All assessments are expected to be completed and grants awarded by the end of 2017. 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 to your MP who will then be able to notify successful and unsuccessful applicants.

33. What happens next if I am successful?

If you are successful, you must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will send you a ‘Letter of Approval’ 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.

Details of your project will be listed on the [Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's](https://infrastructure.gov.au/)² website.

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://infrastructure.gov.au/>

Payment and reporting

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

No. You will not be required to provide progress reports but you must provide a final report on completion of your project. 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 9 of the guidelines).

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

Grant funding will be made in a single up-front payment.

Before we can pay you, you must provide your bank details and where applicable, evidence that any other conditions of funding requested by us have been met.

Further information

36. Need more information?

For more information, visit business.gov.au or call 13 28 46. More in depth face-to-face assistance is also available from AusIndustry's national network.

We may update this document from time to time to ensure that consistent advice is provided to all applicants.