Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Factsheet and Frequently Asked Questions

Stronger Communities Programme Round 10

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 150 federal electorates. The program provides grants for community projects to strengthen and benefit local communities and is part of the Government's 2026-27 Budget initiatives. Round 10 of the programme will run through to 30th June 2028.

What does it offer?

For Round 10 of the program, $22.5 million is available to provide up to $150,000 to each federal electorate for eligible community 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 federal electorate.

Round 10 of the program aims to support projects that provide social benefits for local communities. For this round, grant funding will provide up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs except for local governing bodies where grant funding will provide 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.

How does it work?

Local Federal Members of Parliament (MP) may choose to participate in the program. If they do, they must consult with either an existing consultation committee or establish a new consultation committee with representatives from the local community.

The MP and consultation committee identify potential eligible applicants and projects in their electorate. The identified projects must be consistent with the intended outcomes of the program and meet the eligibility criteria.

MPs submit a nomination form for each identified project that includes the basis for selecting the project.

If assessed as eligible, potential applicants receive an email invitation to apply for a grant. Invitation emails provide details on how to apply via the online portal.

To be eligible you must be invited by your MP to apply, and your project must:

- include at least one of the specific eligible activities that align with one or more program objectives in section 5.1 of the grant opportunity guidelines
- deliver social benefits to your community
- include eligible activities and eligible expenditure
- be located in your MP's electorate (Federal electorate boundaries are as at the 2025 Federal election. Use the ABS Mapping Tool with reference to the guidelines glossary to confirm 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
- have at least $2,500 in eligible expenditure, or $5,000 if the applicant is a local governing body. In-kind contributions are not considered eligible expenditure.
- have a maximum project cost of $50,000
- Be completed by 31 March 2028.

The project and grant amount in an application must be the same as that agreed to and nominated by your MP.

Who can apply?

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 (the grant opportunity guidelines provide detail on how you must demonstrate your 'not-for-profit' status)
- a non-distributing co-operative
- a company limited by guarantee
- an Australian Indigenous corporation
- a religious organisation incorporated under legislation
- a local governing body as defined by the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*
- 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.
- 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.

For further information on program eligibility refer to the grant opportunity guidelines.

Who is not eligible to apply?

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 of the grant opportunity guidelines.
- 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'
- an employer of 100 or more employees that has not complied with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*.

Can I apply if my organisation is not an incorporated entity?

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

The project sponsor can apply on your behalf and must:

- be invited to apply by your MP
- meet the program's eligibility criteria
- submit a Stronger Communities Programme Round 10 online application under their name
- if successful, enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth
- ensure that the grant funding is spent on the project and in accordance with the agreement.

What activities are eligible?

Eligible activities are outlined in the table in section 5.1 of the grant opportunity guidelines. Program objectives are listed together with the project activities eligible under that objective. To be eligible, a project must align with a program objective **and** include one of the eligible activities listed under that objective. Some examples of eligible project activities are:

- Acquisition and installation of First Nations art in public spaces
- Upgrades to an existing war memorial
- Installing energy-efficient appliances to upgrade community facilities
- Installation of solar panels at a local community centre
- Constructing a disability access ramp or lift at public facilities
- Purchasing equipment for community infrastructure or sporting grounds that supports positive mental or physical health
- Upgrading facilities at a community centre, Scout or Guides Hall or Men's Shed
- Installation of a native garden to update community facilities and spaces
- Construction of a women's change room at a local football ground.
- Installing shade sails at a public playground to manage heat stress.

Please ensure you read the guidelines thoroughly before applying.

How will my application be assessed?

It is important to note that being invited to submit an application by your MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

The Department will assess your application for completeness and against the eligibility criteria and alignment with program objectives. If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criterion.

To be recommended for funding, your project must meet all eligibility and assessment criteria, provide value with relevant money and be considered a proper use of public resources.

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve taking into account the assessment, the availability of grant funds, whether the project is a proper use of public resources, and any potential reputational risk to the Australian Government.

When can I start my project?

You may start your project from the date you submit your application in the portal after being invited to do so by your MP.

If you choose to start your project before you enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth, any costs incurred before the application submission date are at your own risk. You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date in your grant agreement for it to be eligible.

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

What will I need to do if successful?

You must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage).

We will pay 100 per cent of 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.

Is Round 10 different to previous rounds?

Some changes have been made to the grant opportunity guidelines from previous rounds of the program. This includes updates to eligible activities and program objectives.

To be eligible, projects must directly align and give effect to at least one of the objectives of the program and must include one or more of the eligible activities listed under that objective in section 5.1 of the guidelines.

Please ensure you read the guidelines thoroughly before applying.

How do I apply?

You should read the grant opportunity guidelines before you apply.

To apply you must

- be invited by your MP to submit an application for your project
- complete the online Stronger Communities Programme Round 10 application form accessed by the link in the email you receive from your MP
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria
- include all requested attachments.

Where can I find more information?

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

Frequently Asked Questions

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, Sports and the Arts according to the requirements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs).

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.

I received funding under a previous round of the Stronger Communities Programme. Can I apply for Round 10?

Yes, however you must be invited by your MP to apply. You can contact your local MP to express your interest in the program.

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 through a closed non-competitive process.

What is a not-for-profit organisation?

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).

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 2.2 of the guidelines
- involves at least one of the specific project activities listed under that objective in the table in section 5.1 of the guidelines
- does not involve capital expenditure on private residential property or the development of a private or commercial venture (section 5.3 of the guidelines).

You should have evidence of building-owner approval prior to submitting your application. We may request this evidence during the assessment of your application.

For further details on the above points, please see the listed sections of the Stronger Communities Programme Round 10 grant opportunity guidelines.

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 submitting your application. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the date you submit your application is not eligible.

However, you can apply for a grant to undertake a new project with a maximum cost of $50,000 that may be part of a broader project that has already started, provided the new project to be funded starts after the date you submit your application and will be completed by 31 March 2028.

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.

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 including from your local Council, 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 March 2028.

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

The application portal opened for MP nominations and applications at 10:00am Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 21 September 2026.

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

The portal closes to MP nominations on 30 November 2026, and all applications must be submitted by 5pm Australin Easter Daylight Time (AEDT) on 19 January 2027.

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 a community consultation process. Projects **must** be located in the same electorate as the MP nominating it. If your project involves events or portable equipment, they must be held/used in the same electorate as the MP nominating the project.

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.

When do applications close?

MP nominations for Stronger Communities Programme Round 10 must be submitted by 5pm (AEDT) on 30 November 2026.

All applications must be submitted by 5:00pm (AEDT) on 19 January 2027.

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: SCP10@industry.gov.au.

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

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 relevant documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request or does not relate to the application.

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.

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, including from your local Council, and you must keep records of the approvals should we request them.

You should consider the time required to secure approvals when identifying your project start and end dates in your application.

How do I account for GST in my project costs?

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

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.

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.

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.

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 10, 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

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-contracts, and materials and equipment hire/purchase etc.

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 is located at an address in your MP's electorate; and
- your project has a minimum of $2,500 in eligible expenditure unless you are a local governing body, in which case:
  - your project must have at least $5,000 in eligible expenditure
  - there must be a matched funding contribution in cash that matches the program grant on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis.

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.

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

All assessments are expected to be completed by the beginning of April 2027. 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 grants portal. Your MP may also contact you to discuss your project.

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 the grant agreement.

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

We may alternatively 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.

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.

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 paid 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.

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

You will not be required to provide progress reports, but we may contact you during the project period to seek an update on the project.

You should advise us as soon as possible if your project is experiencing delays that might prevent you from completing it by the project end date in your agreement.

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
- provide a breakdown of what the grant money was spent on
- report any underspends of the grant money
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement.

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 12 of the grant opportunity guidelines).