

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

2019 Program Guidelines

\$50 million
for youth projects

\$50 million
for community
projects



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER

The NSW Government has a strong track record of delivering infrastructure to meet the pressing needs of regional communities across NSW. We have upgraded roads, refurbished and built new schools and hospitals, improved sporting fields and playgrounds, added accessible facilities to community buildings and brought real, tangible benefits to the people of regional NSW.

This fund means that we are listening to communities and responding to their needs. Through the Stronger Country Communities Fund, we have already provided \$300 million to local infrastructure projects that people use every day - like footpaths, playgrounds and sports facilities - in every Local Government Area in regional NSW.

I am very proud of the projects we have delivered, and will continue to deliver, through the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Since 2017, we have supported more than 1,000 local projects that make regional communities even better places to call home.

In Round One, we invested \$100 million to improve community facilities such as town halls, recreation facilities, shared paths and playgrounds. Through Round Two, we invested a further \$200 million to provide more high quality community and sports-related infrastructure.

Round Three will provide an additional \$100 million for community projects in regional NSW. This includes at least \$50 million for youth-related projects and it brings the total value of the Regional Growth Fund to \$1.7 billion.

These may include indoor sports programs, creative arts and culture projects, mentoring and skills training services, and will reflect the unique conditions and needs of young people in the regions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Barilaro'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'J' and 'B'.

The Hon John Barilaro, MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the NSW Government's first Minister for Regional Youth, I am pleased to be driving NSW's first Regional Youth Strategy, a strategy that focuses on improving the liveability of regional NSW for the youth of today and into the future.

As someone who has raised children in regional NSW I understand the need to provide quality resources and facilities so young people can stay in their hometown to study, to work and eventually raise a family. Regional youth are resilient and smart and it is our mission to help them fulfil their dreams locally.

Our government recognises the need for greater focus and investment in regional NSW and therefore has made connecting young people with quality services and opportunities, no matter where in NSW they live, a top priority. No one in regional NSW should have to choose between access to basic services and where they live and work.

Our government is establishing a Regional Youth Taskforce which will bring together young people from across the state to guide meaningful and relevant change. Through the taskforce, regional youth will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy and its implementation in their local communities.

The focus on young people for Round Three of the Stronger Country Communities Fund will actively encourage local governments and community organisations to engage with and deliver projects that reflect the needs and wants of local youth. It's a chance for us to quickly deliver the infrastructure and programs we know are most important to young people living in our regional communities.

Together we will build a sustainable legacy of programs and facilities that allow young people in regional NSW to remain local by providing them with the support, opportunities and services they need to thrive.

The Hon Bronnie Taylor, MLC
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Regional Youth
Minister for Women

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Get in touch with the
Regional NSW team

regionalsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au
1300 679 673

GUIDELINES

Fund overview

The Stronger Country Communities Fund was established in 2017 by the NSW Government to help deliver local projects to regional communities. The objective of the fund is to provide projects that improve the lives of people who live in regional areas.

Round Three of the Fund will see another \$100 million made available for projects that improve the lives and wellbeing of regional NSW communities. This includes a dedicated \$50 million for projects for young people.

Stronger Country Communities Fund 2019 has:

- \$50m focused on young people aged 12-24
- a broader scope of eligible projects

Fund objectives

The objectives of the fund are:

1. to boost the liveability of communities in regional areas by providing new or upgraded social and sporting infrastructure or community programs that have strong local support
2. to provide programs and infrastructure that enhance opportunities for young people to be work ready and thrive in regional NSW.

Key dates

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Applications open | 9am, Monday 1 July 2019 |
| Applications close | 5pm, Friday 27 September 2019 |
| Eligibility, assessment and approval process | October 2019 to January 2020 |
| Announcement of successful projects | From January 2020 |



Funding available

There is a total of \$100 million available in Round Three, including at least \$50 million for projects that improve the lives of young people (12-24 years old). The remaining funding can be provided for other local community and sporting infrastructure, street beautification, and community programs and events.

Funds will be split across regional NSW according to a funding formula based on population and the cost of construction in each Local Government Area. Each eligible council will be informed in writing of the funding available for their Local Government Area.

Grant amounts

Projects must seek grant funding of \$50,000 or more. Projects requiring grant funding of more than \$1 million will only be considered where there is a financial co-contribution of at least 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The financial co-contribution may be from the applicant or other funding sources, but must be confirmed.

Where a sports project is seeking over \$1 million in grant funding, the applicant must obtain a letter of support from the relevant NSW state sporting organisation.

All projects must commence within 12 months of the funding deed being signed and be completed within three years of the project announcement.

\$50M
YOUTH-RELATED
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND PROGRAMS



\$50M
LOCAL COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
PROGRAMS



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are:

- the 93 regional NSW councils, regional Joint Organisations of councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and the Unincorporated Far West groups
- incorporated, not-for-profit organisations or other organisations that have a public purpose and carry out activities in NSW, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Applicants must hold an Australian Business Number (ABN), Australian Company Number (ACN) or be registered under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. Applicants must have or be able and willing to purchase at least \$20 million public liability insurance. The cost of public liability insurance can be included in the project budget as part of the administration costs.

Ineligible applicants are:

- an individual or group of individuals
- an unincorporated organisation
- a for-profit commercial organisation.

What types of projects are eligible?

Projects must be located in one of the 93 regional NSW Local Government Areas, Lord Howe Island or the Unincorporated Far West. Projects in metropolitan Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong are not eligible. For a full list of eligible Local Government Areas, please visit nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund-eligibility

Youth-related projects must be for:

- development of new or upgrades to existing infrastructure for young people; or
- delivering programs for young people.

Youth-related projects must be aligned to the areas of community, wellbeing, connectivity and work readiness.

General community amenity projects must be for:

- construction of new, or upgrades to existing, local community infrastructure
- construction of new, or upgrades to existing, local sporting infrastructure

- capital works related to street beautification and other public places that promote the health, happiness and wellbeing of the community
- delivering programs that benefit the local community
- infrastructure to assist the delivery of general community programs.

Projects must deliver benefits and outcomes that contribute to the program objectives. Applicants will be expected to establish monitoring procedures to demonstrate the delivery of the expected benefits.

Applicants should work with their Local Member of Parliament and their local communities to identify the priority needs for their area and ensure projects put forward for funding have demonstrated community support.

What are eligible project costs?

Project costs may include those associated with:

- building local infrastructure
- building a new website or app
- delivering programs
- exhibition displays
- hosting an event.

EXAMPLES OF YOUTH PROJECTS

| Area of focus | Programs/Events | Infrastructure |
|---|---|---|
| <p>COMMUNITY: Enhancing young people's artistic, civic, cultural, leadership, recreational and sporting development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth events or youth-led festivals • Sporting programs e.g. midnight basketball • Creative arts • Holiday and after-school-hours activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative audio arts infrastructure e.g. recording studio • Visual arts infrastructure e.g. wet space art studio • Performing arts infrastructure e.g. rehearsal and performance space for dance and drama • Active spaces e.g. youth centres |
| <p>WELLBEING: Supporting young people to understand, improve and maintain their physical and mental health.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion programs • Support groups • Resilience building events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing hub fitout e.g. upgrade an existing space to create a place where health service providers can provide services for young people • Youth centre fitout • Multi-service hub fitout • Safe spaces • Sport facilities for young people |
| <p>CONNECTIVITY: Providing young people access to activities and digital options.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver training support • Night-time outreach bus • Technology training or events (e.g. coding camps) • Apps or websites for young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive digital spaces fitouts in youth or community centres |
| <p>WORK READY: Supporting young people to pursue further education and training to develop key employability skills.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job readiness training events and expos • Life skills events • Training cafes (youth-run) • Entrepreneurial mentoring and/or pitch platforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study space fitouts |

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY AMENITY -----●

| Community Programs and Events | Community Amenity and Community Service Infrastructure |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community events or film festivals• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community cultural education program for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants• Multicultural festivals• Intergenerational activities – sharing knowledge through activity-based experience• Environmental education and working bees | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community centres and halls• Libraries• Community amenities and barbecue/picnic areas• Recreation facilities• Club houses, change rooms, canteens• Murals or community art instalments• Memorials or statues• Emergency Services infrastructure e.g. aerodrome water refilling• Surf Life Saving Club infrastructure• Aquatic facilities and pools• Amenities for participants and spectators• Playgrounds, parks, shared paths and fixed fitness stations• Seating, planting boxes, landscaping and paving• Street lighting• Street/footpath reconfigurations• Shade cloth, awnings and pergolas• Public toilets• Infrastructure for health and community services facilities, e.g.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• domestic violence centres for women• homeless shelters• men’s sheds• children special needs premises• aged care facilities• Infrastructure upgrade to local community radio station facilities• Town and tourism signage• Main street beautification projects |

CONSULTATION

Ineligible projects

Projects are not eligible for funding if they are:

- located outside an eligible Local Government Area
- exclusively for planning activities e.g. master planning or heritage studies
- for the maintenance or construction of local roads or other ongoing core service infrastructure works that are the ordinary responsibility of council or other levels of government
- for the delivery of essential or core government services that should be funded from another source, such as local government, the NSW Government or the Australian Government
- seeking retrospective funding to cover any project component that is already complete before funding is announced
- seeking grant funding for ongoing staff or operational costs beyond three years from project announcement for programs; or any ongoing staff or operational costs for infrastructure projects
- for a general works package without specific scope, costs and location e.g. 'upgrading lighting at sports ovals' without identifying the work required, number of sites or the locations
- exclusively for marketing, branding, advertising or product promotion
- providing direct commercial and/or exclusive private benefit to an individual or business
- not clearly providing benefits that will significantly contribute to the objectives of the fund.

What makes a project viable?

A project will be considered viable if it:

- has a realistic budget based on quotes or reasonable assumptions
- is cost-effective and represents value for money
- can be delivered within three years of announcement of funding
- demonstrates access to the necessary expertise and support to deliver the project
- does not require ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- demonstrates how it will be operated and/or maintained when the project is completed (where applicable).

Consultation is an important part of the process to ensure that project applications are for infrastructure and programs that help to make regional communities even better places to live. Consultation will be different depending on whether the application is for general community or youth specific funding.

Applicants will be required to provide evidence of consultation and support for the projects they submit, such as:

Community infrastructure and programs – engagement through council's Community Strategic Plan, online surveys, letters of support, or other documents demonstrating community support for the projects.

Youth infrastructure and programs – engagement with local youth councils, interviews or online surveys with young people, or evidence of consultation in a council's youth strategy.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

What needs to be included in an application?

All applications should provide:

- a detailed project scope
- a project plan
- a clear and detailed project budget
- information on how infrastructure will be operated and/or maintained when it is complete (if applicable)
- landowner consent (if applicable)
- a letter of support from the relevant NSW state sporting organisation if a sports-related project is seeking over \$1 million in grant funding (if applicable)
- evidence of community consultation and strong community support for the project
- a plan for how data will be collected to demonstrate the project is meeting the program objectives and providing outcomes for the community
- **for all youth infrastructure and program applications:** information on how the project will benefit young people, how it aligns with the areas of focus and how young people have been involved in the development of the proposal
- **for all community amenity and infrastructure applications:** information on how the project will help boost the liveability of the local community and evidence of how the project will meet a community need and has community support, including who and how many people in the community will benefit.

Is there support available for completing an application?

To help applicants prepare, there are published materials on the website, including project plan and budget templates and an application checklist.

Webinars will be held during the application open period to assist in application development and your local Business Development Manager will be able to provide information on the program to assist applicants to develop applications. If you do not know your local Business Development Manager, please contact regionalsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au for a referral. The webinars will be recorded and made available on the website.

What is the assessment process?

Projects and applicants will be assessed for:

Eligibility

- Projects (including all project elements) are eligible for funding.
- The applicant is an eligible organisation.
- Young people have been involved in the development of youth-related projects.

Viability

- Projects can be delivered by the applicant on time and within the funding available.
- The department may seek information from relevant NSW Government departments to verify the viability of a project or youth or community organisation. The department retains the discretion to disclose information to these agencies where relevant.

Community support

- The project has demonstrated community support.
- Government Members of Parliament will be asked to review each project to verify community support and identify any issues that may affect viability.

Alignment with objectives

- The project clearly demonstrates that anticipated community benefits from the project will directly contribute to the objectives of the fund.
- For youth projects, the project clearly aligns with at least one of the youth areas of focus: community, wellbeing, connectivity and work readiness.

The department may request additional information or clarification from applicants to assist in the assessment.

A prioritised list of projects for each Local Government Area will be submitted to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, based on this assessment and the amount of funding provided to youth projects. The department may recommend part-funding of projects where there is insufficient funding available for the whole project or where only a component of the project is approved for funding.

The Deputy Premier will consider the prioritised list of eligible and viable projects with community support and make final approvals in consultation with the Minister for Regional Youth.

Can ineligible projects be referred to a more appropriate funding program?

Yes. Projects that are more suitable for other NSW Government programs may be referred to those programs. Applications that are referred will be subject to the full assessment criteria of the other NSW Government program to which they are referred. Applicants may need to update their application to meet the criteria of the referred program. The referred application will not be given preferential treatment over any other application but will be considered on merit in accordance with the guidelines for that particular program.

What happens if the project is successful?

- Successful applicants must not make financial commitments for funded activities until funding deeds have been executed.
- Requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances.
- Grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the funding deed.
- Successful applicants will be required to pay back unspent funds or those funds which have not been spent in accordance with the funding deed.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit project progress reports to the NSW Government as outlined in the funding deed.
- Successful applicants will be required to participate in a program evaluation to determine the extent to which their projects have contributed to the objectives of the fund. The evaluation will require applicants to provide evidence of how projects have resulted in a measurable

change to the lives of local residents/young people that is consistent with the objectives of the fund.

- Any information submitted by an applicant may be used for promotional material prepared by the NSW Government.
- All recipients of NSW Government funding should acknowledge this financial support as per the *Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Grants* available at communications.dpc.nsw.gov.au/branding





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