



Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program Guidelines

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Administering entity	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 3 March 2019
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Contents

1	Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program: Grant process	4
1.1	Introduction	5
2	About the grant program	5
3	Grant amount and grant period	6
3.1	Grants available	6
3.2	Grant period	7
4	Eligibility criteria	7
4.1	Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	7
4.2	Additional eligibility requirements	7
4.3	Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?	8
5	What the grant money can be used for	9
5.1	Eligible grant activities	9
5.2	Eligible locations	10
5.3	Eligible expenditure	10
5.4	What the grant money cannot be used for	10
6	The assessment criteria	11
7	How to apply	12
7.1	Attachments to the application	13
7.2	Joint consortia applications	13
7.3	Timing of grant opportunity processes	13
7.4	Questions during the application process	14
8	The grant selection process	15
8.1	Financial Viability	15
8.2	Who will assess and select applications?	15
8.3	Who will approve grants?	16
9	Notification of application outcomes	16
9.1	Feedback on your application	16
9.2	Further grant opportunities	17
10	Successful grant applications	17
10.1	The grant agreement	17
10.2	How we pay the grant	17
10.3	Grants Payments and GST	18
11	Announcement of grants	18
12	How we monitor your grant activity	18
12.1	Keeping us informed	18
12.2	Reporting	19
12.3	Financial declaration	19
12.4	Grant agreement variations	19

12.5	Compliance visits	20
12.6	Record keeping	20
12.7	Evaluation	20
12.8	Acknowledgement.....	20
13	Probity.....	20
13.1	Enquiries and feedback	20
13.2	Conflicts of interest	21
13.3	Privacy	21
13.4	Confidential Information	22
13.5	Freedom of information.....	23
14	Consultation	23
15	Glossary.....	24

1 Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program: Grant process

The Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resource's (the Department) Outcome 3. The Department works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)*.



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



You complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant.



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. If you are eligible, we then assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with for money and compare it to other applications.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice, through the selection advisory panel to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program

We evaluate your specific project activities and the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program (the program).

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the program
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how project proposals are considered and selected
- how you are notified of approved projects and receive grant payments
- how your project activities will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The Community Grants Hub and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the Department) will administer this grant opportunity and process.

2 About the grant program

The Murray-Darling Basin (the Basin) is a complex, diverse and dynamic system. The water resources of the Basin are needed to support an irrigated agricultural sector, communities and the environment.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan (the Basin Plan) provides an integrated and strategic framework for water reform consistent with the requirements of the *Water Act 2007 (Cth)* (the Water Act). The Basin Plan aims to find a balance between the water needs of all Basin users, to ensure communities, industries, and the environment share a sustainable future. After several years of research and analysis to help achieve the best balance between water users and the environment, the Basin Plan was made under the Water Act and passed by the Federal Parliament, with bipartisan support, in November 2012,.

A central feature of the Basin Plan is re-balancing how water is shared between consumptive uses and the environment. The transition to the new water sharing arrangements under the Basin Plan is happening over a 12-year period to 2024. Implementing the Basin Plan has resulted in some social and economic impacts arising from the transition to the new water sharing arrangements. The Department is responsible for delivering water recovery programs and projects under the Basin Plan.

The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources announced the program on 7 May 2018, as part of the Basin Plan Commitments Package, to support those communities identified as most impacted by water recovery under the Basin Plan. The Department has identified five communities in the northern Basin and 10 communities in the southern Basin eligible for funding as those most impacted by water recovery activities under the Basin Plan.

The Department considered a range of information, including research by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the MDBA).

The MDBA's research found water recovery under the Basin Plan led to varying economic impacts in communities. The MDBA's 2016 Northern Basin Review and 2017 Basin Plan Evaluation identified varying degrees of social and economic impacts on Basin communities. These community boundaries are not the same as local government boundaries.

The MDBA research considered change to employment in line with a number of factors related to Basin Plan water recovery. These include the scale, pace and method of water recovery, the

influences of temporary and permanent water trade, the change in employment because of factors outside the Basin Plan, the size and economic diversity of each community, and whether employment is increasing or decreasing over the period examined. For example, purchasing water entitlements reduces the volume of water available for crop production and when a large proportion of water entitlements is sold in communities with irrigation-dependent economies there can be a substantive direct and indirect impact on jobs. A rapid change in available water entitlements in an irrigation-dependent community results in a lower ability for local economies to adapt.

More information on MDBA research can be found at the following links, together with separate reports on each relevant community:

- [Northern Basin Review](#)
- [Southern Basin Review](#).

A number of strategic water purchases occurred after the Basin Plan review. The Department also identified the community of Cunnamulla as eligible for support because of water recovery and its remote and rural nature as specified in the Basin commitments package.

The objective of the program is to help eligible communities to undertake economic development projects to respond to the impact of water recovery activities under the Basin Plan. The outputs of the program are the number of jobs created because of the economic development projects and the number of projects supporting activities that continue after the end of the projects.

The economic development projects would help with:

- increasing the capacity of communities to diversify and strengthen local economies
- enhancing the resilience of communities to manage current and future economic challenges and changes
- increasing opportunities for employment within communities.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced funding of up to \$20 million (GST exclusive) for 15 eligible communities listed at Section 5.2 of these guidelines and shown in the maps at **Appendix A**.

A notional allocation of around \$1 million (GST exclusive) is available for economic development projects in each eligible community to address the economic impacts faced by the communities because of water recovery activities through the Basin Plan. Communities with a number of highly ranked economic development applications are likely to receive more funding than their notional funding. The amount of funding approved for any particular community is at the discretion of the decision maker.

The set minimum grant amount for each eligible project is \$10,000 (GST exclusive) and the maximum grant amount for each eligible project will be \$500,000 (GST exclusive). The total for all grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds.

An application for grant funding below the set minimum amount will be deemed ineligible and the application will not be assessed. Applications above the maximum amount may be considered if there are funds available for an eligible community.

This program will run over four financial years from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

The program will initially comprise one open competitive round published on GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub website. Further grant rounds will be considered after the results of the initial round are finalised.

Financial co-contributions are encouraged and welcome but it is not a requirement to provide funding from sources other than the Australian Government. Applicants should note that providing cash contributions to the project budget may improve the value with money consideration of proposals.

Applications can include **in-kind contributions** but this does not constitute a financial co-contribution.

To help applicants access other government program funding, where mutually acceptable, **joint investment** sourced through other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government programs may be accepted. Applicants should note that such investment must be for additional activities and for complementary purposes to the objectives of this program and we cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another source for the same purpose.

Program funding to contribute to costs associated with preparing project proposals is not available.

3.2 Grant period

The maximum grant period is up to three years, and all project activities must conclude no later than 30 April 2022. Economic development projects and final reporting (excluding any required acquittal reports) must be completed by this date, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Following the grant period, an evaluation period of the program may commence. We may contact you up to two years after you finish your project for more information to help with this evaluation.

4 Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Organisations must be proposing a project in, or for the benefit of, an eligible community (see section 5.2 and the maps in **Appendix A** for a list and illustration of the eligible communities).

To be eligible, you must be one of the following entity types:

- Local Government¹
- Indigenous Corporation
- Cooperative
- Incorporated Association.

Applications from consortia are acceptable, as long as you have a lead applicant who is solely accountable to us for the delivery of grant activities and is an eligible entity as per the list above².

4.2 Additional eligibility requirements

¹ Includes New South Wales local governments created as Body Politics

² The Australian government recognises that some organisations may seek to form consortia in order to apply for a grant under the Program. Consortia are eligible to apply and the relevant conditions applicable to consortia are at 7.2 'Joint (Consortia) Applications'

Applicants must also meet the additional eligibility requirements listed below:

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or be willing to obtain one prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement
- have an account with an Australian financial institution.

4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are a:

- Company³
- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- Commonwealth Company
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- International Entity
- Sole Trader
- Statutory Entity
- Partnership⁴
- Person⁵
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust⁶
- Unincorporated Association.

Please note:

- The above list is not definitive. If your entity type is not listed in 4.1 above you are not eligible to apply under this program.
- If you are not eligible to apply for a grant or your activity is outside the eligible community areas, you may be able to apply for funding under other Commonwealth and State grant programs. Please refer to the Australian Government website [GrantConnect](#) for further opportunities.

³ Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

⁴ Partnerships are formed by a group of individuals.

⁵ A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

⁶ Trusts are not legal entities in their own right

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your project must be in accordance with these guidelines. Eligible organisations are encouraged to collaborate with the broader community and, as appropriate, act in partnership with other organisations to propose projects that stimulate economic activity and growth to mitigate the effects of Basin Plan water recovery activities in the communities identified in the list in section 5.2 and shown in the maps in **Appendix A**.

Broadly, the program supports projects that create economic development and employment opportunities. This would include innovative projects or proposals to build community capacity to make the most of the resources available. Projects do not necessarily need to relate to irrigation or agriculture. Ideally, applications should bring enduring benefits to the whole eligible community.

Projects would involve activities to support the unique situations faced by eligible communities and may:

- focus on future economic development needs through the development of non-technical skills such as business management, risk management, strategic planning and leadership in order to support resilience and adaptive management capability
- strengthen workforce capabilities through skills and capabilities development, entrepreneurialism, resilience and adaptive capacities in ways that are enduring
- deliver Indigenous-focussed outcomes
- develop industry clusters or networks that bring together representatives of regional businesses, research centres and other partners
- integrate new technology or processes for improved capability, productivity and competitiveness
- help local businesses and industries (including tourism) to grow and/or diversify, attracting new investment and new job creation
- address barriers to commerce such as inadequate mobile or internet services, or local banking opportunities
- address environmental needs, including management, education and tourism
- address infrastructure challenges impacting on industry sustainability or expansion
- improve infrastructure, plant or equipment for enhanced efficiency and competitiveness of local industry
- strengthen supply chain efficiencies and linkages
- deliver strategic planning that addresses and responds to the economic challenges a community faces as a result of water recovery activities under the Basin Plan
- leverage other Commonwealth or State grant programs to increase the value of the grant.

The above list is not comprehensive and other project activities will be considered.

With the exception of the activities listed below (in Section 5.4) that we will not fund, we are providing flexibility in the type of project eligible for funding to enable local communities to identify the projects that best address their particular circumstances.

5.2 Eligible locations

Economic development projects must be delivered in or for the benefit of an eligible community. Table 1 below lists the eligible communities that are clearly defined in the maps at **Appendix A**.

Table 1: Eligible community areas

Eligible community areas	State
Dirranbandi	QLD
St George	QLD
Cunnamulla	QLD
Collarenebri	NSW
Warren	NSW
Wakool	NSW
Colignan	NSW/VIC
Red Cliffs	VIC
Merbein	VIC
Rochester	VIC
Berri	SA
Loxton	SA
Cobdogla-Barmera	SA
Swan Reach	SA
Lower Lakes	SA

5.3 Eligible expenditure

The program provides flexibility for eligible organisations to identify projects that best address an eligible community's particular circumstances. Therefore, we are not being prescriptive in the type of project expenditure eligible for funding under the program (with the exception of ineligible expenditure for grant funding listed in Section 5.4).

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you incur on agreed project activities specified in your grant agreement (i.e. we will not pay for any expenses you incur before the grant agreement is signed). You must incur the expenditure on your project activities between the start date and completion date specified in your grant agreement for it to be eligible.

5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

The following list indicates the types of expenditure that we will not consider funding:

- retrospective activities (project activities that have been completed or have commenced prior to signing the grant agreement)
- activities to be funded through other Australian Government or state government investment

- “business as usual” activities for which other Commonwealth, state or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- “business as usual” operation and administration costs of the local government authority or the organisation delivering the project, including maintenance, repairs, utilities and staffing (this does not extend to staff, consultants or contractors engaged specifically and solely for the purposes of the project)
- labour, operational and maintenance costs associated with the project once completed
- projects requiring recurrent funding from a State government or the Australian Government once completed
- projects that only benefit private individuals or enterprises within the community (as opposed to projects that benefit the community)
- projects involving financial or debt restructuring
- research and development projects
- purchase of land, unless as an integral part of an eligible project
- costs incurred in the preparation of a project proposal or related documentation
- any activity which is contrary to the objectives and intent of the program.

6 The assessment criteria

You must address all of the assessment criteria in the application. Applications that score highly against all criteria are more likely to be recommended.

All projects must deliver value with money in the context of the criteria outlined below. We will assess each application on its merits and based on the weighting given to each criterion detailed below. We will recommend funding for projects based on a competitive evaluation against all assessment criteria.

The application form includes character limits for each criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond these limits.

Criterion 1: Economic benefits [weighting of 40 per cent]

In providing a response to this criterion, you must describe your project in detail, identify which community your project relates to, specify the location of the activities, and describe how it will deliver economic benefits that address the impacts of water recovery on the community. Economic benefits may include how the project will:

- diversify and strengthen an identified community’s economy
- enhance resilience of the community to manage current and future economic challenges and changes and
- increase opportunities within the community for employment.

Criterion 2: Community support and benefit [weighting of 30 per cent]

In providing a response to this criterion you must describe how your project will provide support for and benefit to the community, as opposed to only individuals or enterprises within the community. The community must also support projects. These two elements may be evidenced by:

- a description of the linkages to relevant local economic development strategies, including the plans, priorities or challenges outlined in any relevant local, State or Australian Government policies or other documentation that demonstrates that the project is a strategic priority

- an analysis of the public benefit
- written support from key stakeholders, including but not limited to relevant local governments, community stakeholders and Indigenous communities (you may include up to five written letters of support).

Criterion 3: Organisational Capability [weighting of 30 per cent]

In providing a response to this criterion you must include:

- a detailed itemised budget, including contingency allowances, in the template provided
- details of your proposed governance arrangements and how you will manage the project
- a summary of your plan to deliver the projects, including subcontracting arrangements
- a description of the experience of the personnel who will be delivering and managing the project/s.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the terms and conditions, sample grant agreement, and Questions and Answers.

These documents are available at [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any alterations and addenda⁷ will be published on [GrantConnect](#) and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. [GrantConnect](#) is the authoritative source for grants information.

A separate application form must be submitted for each project. You may submit more than one application form for each community. If more than one application is submitted for the same project from the same applicant the latest accepted application form will progress.

To apply you must:

- complete the online application form
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application/s to the Community Grants Hub by 11.00PM AEDT on 10/03/2019.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

The application form includes help information. You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code 1995 and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you need more help about the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub do not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

⁷ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to any closing times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents.

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

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

7.1 Attachments to the application

All of the following document/s should be attached to your application for it to be considered compliant and for it to proceed to assessment. Templates are provided where appropriate to help you with developing your application as specified below:

- a project proposal, including description of the proposed activity, resourcing, justification for grant amount, and outline of plan for project and risk management
- project budget – a template is provided for your use in the grant opportunity documents
- copies of written support as requested in Section 6 Criteria 2 – consolidated into a single attachment.

If a mandatory template is not used your application will be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment.

You must attach supporting documentation according to the instructions provided within the application form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments we have not asked for.

Please note: There is a 2mb limit for each attachment.

7.2 Joint consortia applications

We recognise that some eligible organisations may want to join as a group to deliver a project or eligible organisations may wish to collaborate with other organisations that may not be eligible.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead organisation' that is eligible for funding. Only the lead organisation can apply and enter into a grant agreement with us. The application should identify all other members of the proposed group as well as the 'lead organisation'.

You must have a formal arrangement (for example, a memorandum of understanding) in place with all partner organisations prior to execution of an agreement with us.

7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Late applications

We will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application. Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a late application request to the Community Grants Hub via support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time. Where appropriate, supporting evidence can be provided to verify the claim of exceptional circumstances.

Written requests to lodge a late application will only be accepted within three days after the grant opportunity has closed.

The delegate or their appointed representative⁸ will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the delegate will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, we will advise the applicant if their request is accepted or declined.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your project no later than mid-2019.

Table 2: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications and notification of ineligible applicants	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 6 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	TBC
End date of grant activity	30 April 2022

7.4 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. Only eligible applicants' questions will be responded to during the application submission period

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The question period will close at 5:00PM AEDT on 03/03/2019. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

⁸ This may be the Hub delegate or nominated staff member of the client agency at the EL2 level or above.

8 The grant selection process

The assessment centre in the Community Grants Hub will review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage.

Eligible applications will then be considered through an open, competitive grant process administered by a Selection Advisory Panel convened by the Department. The Selection Advisory Panel will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) and against other applications.

The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (decision maker) will make decisions on grant funding based on recommendations by the Selection Advisory Panel.

8.1 Financial Viability

Applicants may be subject to a financial viability assessment. The financial viability assessment forms part of the risk mitigation strategy and can include:

- establishing whether relevant persons have any adverse business history (for example current or past bankruptcy)
- assessment of the financial health of an entity.

8.2 Who will assess and select applications?

The Selection Advisory Panel will compare each application to other eligible and compliant applications,

The Selection Advisory Panel will assess each eligible and compliant application on its merit based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- its merits relative to other applications

The Selection Advisory Panel will also assess the extent to which the application represents value with money⁹, with regard to the:

- overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities
- extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives.

The Selection Advisory Panel may establish an order of merit based on assessment against the selection criteria for the purpose of recommending projects to the decision maker in the first round, and also for the purpose of recommending additional projects to the decision maker after the first round of decisions are made.

The Selection Advisory Panel will comprise Departmental officers, one (or more) economic development expert(s), and other members at the Department's discretion. During our consideration of proposals, we may seek external advice on any aspect of a proposal to inform the

⁹ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

assessment process including from relevant local government agencies, state governments and/or the Australian Local Government Association.

The Department and the Community Grants Hub administer the program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)*¹⁰. Any expert/advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will also be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs to provide a consistent approach to fairness, probity and confidentiality.

The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information about you or your application and this may delay completion of the selection process. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if you do not nominate the sources as referees. The selection advisory panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The selection advisory panel recommends to the decision maker which applications to approve for a grant.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (the decision maker) decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the selection advisory panel, the amount of funding available for the relevant community and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- any specific terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9 Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, we reserve the right to:

- negotiate the scope of a project under the fund.
- specify conditions attached to the grant
- impose conditions that must be met before funding is provided.

If you are unsuccessful, you may have the opportunity to submit a new proposal for the same (or similar) project should a subsequent funding round occur. If so, you should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous application from being successful.

9.1 Feedback on your application

A feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all organisations with easy to access information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

¹⁰ <https://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/>

Individual feedback will be available. The process for requesting individual feedback will be included in the letter advising of the outcome of your application.

9.2 Further grant opportunities

Should funding remain available and/or there are insufficient suitable applications to meet program objectives following the initial round, we may approach organisations directly and invite them to apply through a closed non-competitive selection process, or we may run a subsequent funding round (at the discretion of the decision maker). Should this occur, we will then assess future applications against assessment criteria and consider proposals on their merits as outlined in these program guidelines. Any subsequent rounds will be published on GrantConnect and the [Community Grants Hub](#). Any subsequent funding may give priority to proposals from eligible communities not previously funded through the program.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will offer successful applicants a Commonwealth standard grant agreement for this grant opportunity.

Each agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites as part of the grant documentation. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. These are identified in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Commonwealth standard grant agreement

We will use a Commonwealth standard grant agreement.

You will have 20 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any changes to make sure they do not affect the grant as approved by the decision maker.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

10.2 How we pay the grant

The successful applicant must sign a grant agreement with the Australian Government before funding is available.

Payments will be made in accordance with the agreed milestones and payment schedules.

The grant agreement will specify matters such as the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contributions you will make
- any in-kind contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments will be subject to meeting milestones and satisfactory progress on grant project activities, with an amount set aside for the final payment. We will pay this when you submit a satisfactory final report demonstrating you have completed outstanding obligations.

10.3 Grants payments and GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a Recipient Created Tax Invoice.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11 Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

12 How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details
- ABN.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to provide evidence on:

- progress against agreed milestones and outcomes
- expenditure of the grant.

The evidence required will be specified in the grant agreement and the amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress towards completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

We will only make any associated grant payments when we accept your progress reports.

Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the grant activity.

Final report

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit a final report.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted by the report due date.

We will only make any associated grant payments when we accept your final report.

12.3 Financial declaration

You will be required to provide a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by contacting your Funding Agreement Manager.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the program to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to two years after you finish your grant for more information to help with this evaluation.

12.8 Acknowledgement

All publicity for activities under the program must give appropriate recognition of Australian Government support.

This includes invitations to participate in formal project openings or launch ceremonies and any other publicity event.

Projects will be required to include appropriate branding and written acknowledgement of the program and the Australian Government on publicity materials developed. We will work with grantees in relation to publicity and acknowledgement.

The Australian Government logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Australian Government as follows:

'Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program – an Australian Government initiative'.

If you make a public statement about an activity or project funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program project received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

13 Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Complaints about the selection process

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the selection process.

Details of what makes an eligible complaint can be provided by asking the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can use the complaints form on the Department of Social Services website, by phone or mail.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or the Department have handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or the Department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer [or member of an external panel]
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/ grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian government may also use and give out information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to help with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

13.4 **Confidential Information**

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to give out to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery

- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Team
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 Department of Social Services (DSS)
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14 Consultation

These guidelines have been informed by discussions and consultation with the following bodies:

- Basin Community Committee (BCC)
- The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
- Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities
- Community Grants Hub.

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the PGPA Act
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
Commonwealth entity	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
<u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)</u>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant, in this case, the relevant Australian Government Minister
Department	The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria
funding arrangement manager	is the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money¹¹ or other CRF money¹² is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
<u>GrantConnect</u>	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
Outcome 3	Improve the health of rivers and freshwater ecosystems and water use efficiency through implementing water reforms, and ensuring enhanced sustainability, efficiency and productivity in the management and use of water resources.

¹¹ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

¹² Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) program	described within the entity's <u>Portfolio Budget Statement</u> , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant programs. A PBS program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act)	applying to all <u>Commonwealth entities</u> and Commonwealth companies, the PGPA Act provides a governance and accountability framework for public resources, with an emphasis on planning, performance and reporting
selection advisory panel	provides strategic oversight, advice and recommendations to the decision maker on assessed applications from the program specific, service provider composition and service location perspectives
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities; • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.