



Australian Government

**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program

General Feedback for Applicants

Overview

As part of our commitment to sharing information with the sector and as an acknowledgement of the time and effort applicants put into developing applications, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) is pleased to share this feedback on funding applications to the Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program.

The funding round opened on 4 October 2019 and closed on 13 December 2019. The grant opportunity received 447 applications. The decision maker in DAWE approved 122 applications for funding to a total value of \$20 million (GST excl.).

It was excellent to see the interest shown by stakeholders in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. The applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOG) and outlined in the Selection Process below.

This feedback is provided to help applicants understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant round.

Program background

The Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program was designed to provide funding for the maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure and the purchase, building and construction of new infrastructure and attractions related to the running of agricultural shows on regional showgrounds.

It was an open competitive grants opportunity offering up to \$20 million (GST excl.) for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years to fund projects to:

- keep agricultural shows running
- bring communities together
- bridge the divide between country and city.

The Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program was administered by the Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub (the Hub) on behalf of DAWE under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

Selection process

An open competitive selection process was undertaken to select a range of quality projects from a variety of organisations.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the GOG.

The Hub undertook preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications, scoring each application in relation to three equally weighted assessment criteria.

A Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) considered the outcome of the Hub's preliminary assessment and made funding recommendations to the decision maker. The SAP comprised an independent Chair and five members with expertise and industry knowledge relevant to this grant round.

To do this, the SAP considered:

- how well applications scored against the assessment criteria
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated the project would contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the program
- the extent to which the applicant met the co-contribution arrangements set out in the GOG
- any risks the applicant or project posed for the Commonwealth.

Final approval of projects was made by the decision maker, the delegate from DAWE.

General feedback

Successful applicants proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving the program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met the requirements outlined in the GOG. Applications included strong responses to all three assessment criteria.

Writing and providing details of the activities

Strong applications clearly and concisely addressed the assessment criteria. It is difficult to assess poorly written and verbose applications, so careful editing is advised. The use of sub-headings and dot points can also assist to improve the readability of applications.

A number of applicants did not effectively utilise the word limits in their applications, providing too little information, or too much background information but not enough detail on the proposed project. Low scoring applications often lacked sufficient detail across each of the three criteria.

Specific feedback

Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion and what could have been improved is given below.



Criterion 1 - Describe the need for the project in the proposed community and how it will contribute to achieving the program objectives

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly described:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described the need for showground related infrastructure in your community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the importance and need for the activity with enough information and clear justification how the activity would be carried out.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would deliver a benefit to your broader community including the local agricultural sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the activity would deliver benefits to the broader community how the improved facility would increase the number and frequency of events being run at the showground how the facility would benefit the local agricultural sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly explained how the project would impact on local economic activity and employment during and after its construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the project would help local businesses, including for example how trades persons from the area would be engaged to service the project details of the local businesses that could provide the services to complete the project how the project would boost the local economy and employment, during and after the activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would be used by the local community after its completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of the additional events that would be supported at the showground after completion of the project details of the increased number of people that would use the showground after completion of the project.
Areas for improvement	
<p>Generally, unsuccessful applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 1 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing further detail about why the proposed activity is needed in the proposed community providing clearer justifications and evidence of the need for the activity providing more detailed information about how the activity would deliver benefits to the broader community including the local agricultural sector providing specific details on the type of events that would use the showground and how many people would benefit after the project was complete. 	



Criterion 2 - Describe the impact on the sustainability of the show

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly described:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would contribute to the ongoing viability of the show. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details on how the project was expected to increase the viability of the showground, and how the community would benefit how the infrastructure upgrade would increase showground use and users details on expected outcomes from the project that would impact on the sustainability of the show.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would reduce the ongoing operational, repair and maintenance costs for the showground operator, users and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant evidence that the project would decrease operational and maintenance cost required for the showground operation relevant evidence that the project would reduce cost required to support visitors and showground users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would improve showground amenities including accessibility issues, visitor health and safety, and user experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> detailed information which demonstrated that the project would improve accessibility for showground users and visitors specific details of the health and safety aspects that would be improved as a result of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the project would increase the range of activities and events able to be undertaken at the showground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> detailed information which demonstrated that the project would increase the number of activities and events in the showground how the project would help to bring together all the show events in one location, improving the events for competitors and spectators.
Areas for improvement	
<p>Generally, unsuccessful applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 2 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrating that the activity would effectively contribute to the sustainability and viability of the show providing clear evidence that the activity would reduce the operational and maintenance cost of the showground providing more detailed information on how the activity would increase accessibility and visitors health and safety, and user experience. 	



Criterion 3 - Describe your organisation’s capability to effectively deliver the proposed project

Strong applications:	Example – Quality responses clearly described:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described details of the key staff/personnel engaged in delivering the project/ sub-projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of the persons who would manage the delivery of the project and their experience the applicant’s previous experience demonstrating their ability to deliver the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described the proposed governance arrangements and other processes in place to effectively manage the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appropriate governance structures that would be in place the applicant’s skills and the appropriate processes that would be put in place to ensure the project would be well managed, time lines met, staff in place, outcomes and finances monitored, and project activities reported.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described how the organisation would comply with relevant Commonwealth, state and/or territory legislative requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the timeline of the activities to be completed and, if approval/s would be required for the activities, details of when this would be completed details of the consultations with relevant stakeholders and how legislative requirements would be fulfilled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly described any potential risks to the project and how they would be managed or mitigated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the applicant understood and identified the project risks evidence of processes to be put in place to ensure identified risks would be appropriately managed and mitigated.
Areas for improvement	
<p>Generally, unsuccessful applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 3 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly demonstrating their ability to deliver projects of the size and complexity proposed clearly describing the roles and responsibilities of key staff/people involved in the project detailing the appropriate governance structures to be put in place, including a monitoring and evaluation component including a timeline of the activities to be completed under the project clearly articulating the project’s potential risks and how they would be managed. 	