



Soil Science Challenge Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	24 November 2021
Closing date and time:	9:00 pm AEDT on 14 February 2022
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Administering entity:	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5:00 pm AEDT on 7 February 2022
Date guidelines released:	24 November 2021
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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1 Soil Science Challenge processes

The Soil Science Challenge is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity contributes to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's outcomes:

Outcome 1: Conserve, protect and sustainably manage Australia's biodiversity, ecosystems, environment and heritage through research, information management, supporting natural resource management, establishing and managing Commonwealth protected areas, and reducing and regulating the use of pollutants and hazardous substances, and coordination of climate change adaptation strategy and climate change science activities

Outcome 2: More sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment works with the Department of Social Services, Community Grants Hub, 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 the [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 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 (the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia) 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 Soil Science Challenge

We evaluate your specific grant activity. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Soil Science Challenge.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department).

2 About the grant program

2.1 National Soil Strategy and National Soil Package

Released in May 2021, the National Soil Strategy (the strategy) sets out how Australia will value, manage and improve its soil for the next 20 years. The strategy prioritises soil health, empowers soil innovation and stewards, and strengthens soil knowledge and capability. The strategy will support Australia's domestic and international commitments towards a more sustainable future, such as the Australian agriculture industry's Ag2030 goal, and the Australian Government's priority of building resilience in our communities and adapting to a changing climate.

Work is already underway to realise the vision of the strategy to ensure Australia's soil resources are recognised and valued as a key national asset. The Australian Government has committed to a \$214.9 million National Soil Package to implement the strategy. This includes \$20.9 million over 4 years for the Soil Science Challenge Grants Program to support researchers to address fundamental gaps in soil science and improve our understanding of how to better manage soil.

More information on the National Soil Strategy and the National Soil Package can be found on the department's [website](#).

2.2 Soil Science Challenge

The Australian Government recognises that healthy soils improve resilience to climate change and natural disasters, contribute to our emission reduction targets, help grow our agriculture industry and secure human health, food and water security, biodiversity and economic growth. Soil provides essential ecosystem services that support food and fibre production, water storage, filtration and nutrient cycling and carbon storage.

Innovation in the way we manage our soil and advances in soil science and technology will be essential if we are to meet the Ag2030 goal of growing the agriculture sector to \$100 billion by 2030 while sustaining the environment.

To better support individual and national-scale decision-making we need to understand more – through better robust, well researched and peer-reviewed science – about how different management practices impact different soil types, soil organic carbon levels, productivity and environmental sustainability.

The Soil Science Challenge (the program) is a competitive grant opportunity aimed at research organisations.

The **objectives** of the program are to:

- support research to address priority gaps in the current soil-related science knowledge base; those findings are to be provided for peer review and should be prepared in a manner suitable for publishing
- support research that contributes to the knowledge base necessary to achieve the goals of the National Soil Strategy
- provide Australia, including industry, farmers and other land managers, with new and improved soil science to influence soil health, leading to improved productivity, profitability, resilience and to assist in mitigating climate change.

The **outcomes** of the program are:

- completion of new research projects that add to Australia's soil health knowledge and address one of the following research priorities:
 - soil carbon dynamics
 - soil hydrology
 - soil biology and nutrients
 - soil/root interface.

2.3 Response to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

At the time of publication, there are a range of public health and other measures in place as part of Australia's response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 represents a significant challenge both in Australia and internationally. Some members of the community may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. For this reason, applicants should carefully consider their project and activities, to ensure that they can be safely delivered, including adhering to COVID-19 social distancing or other public health measures.

Successful projects will need to comply with the relevant social distancing or other public health measures in place at the time they are delivered (this includes national, state and/or local government requirements). Australian Government information and advice for limiting the spread of COVID-19 is available on the Department of Health [website](#).

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$20 million (GST exclusive) for the program, with \$5 million (GST exclusive) available each year for 4 years, commencing in 2021–22.

This grant opportunity will run from 24 November 2021 to 14 February 2022. You may apply for total funding within the following range:

- the minimum total grant amount is \$500,000 (GST exclusive).
- the maximum total grant amount is \$5,000,000 (GST exclusive).

You are required to source and declare any other cash contributions that will be put towards the proposed project.

3.2 Grant period

You must complete your grant activities by 30 June 2025 with a final report submitted by September 2025.

4 Eligibility criteria

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

We cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same purpose.

You can only submit one application for the same project in any grant opportunity. This includes applications which fundamentally have the same research intent, approach and outcomes, regardless of any variations in the research, the named participants and/or organisations.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

The program is aimed at research organisations.

To be eligible you must:

- be a research organisation; a company that fits one or more of the following descriptions: research and development corporation; primary industry and scientific organisation; cooperative research centre; state or territory government; corporate Commonwealth entity; university; or public or private research organisation
- have an account with an Australian financial institution.

and be one of the following entity types:

- Indigenous Corporation
- Company¹
- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Commonwealth Company
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association.

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

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

¹ Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

- 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.
- non-corporate Commonwealth entity
- non-corporate Commonwealth statutory authority
- non-corporate state or territory entity
- non-corporate state or territory statutory authority
- local government²
- person³
- sole trader
- cooperative
- unincorporated association
- statutory entity
- partnership
- international entity
- any entity type not included in section 4.1.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria above, your project must address the program objectives and at least one of the grant program outcomes (refer to section 2.2 above). You must clearly and explicitly state how your project aligns to these within the application, assessment criteria and associated templates.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred in relation to the proposed project. You must incur the expenditure on your project between the activity start date and activity completion date in your grant agreement to be eligible.

Eligible expenditure items include:

- commissioning of studies and/or trials
- laboratory or field work
- data analysis
- travel where it is directly related to carrying out the project and is considered a reasonable and fair travel expense (for example, economy fare for plane flights and excluding overseas travel)
- in case of COVID-19 travel restrictions, alternative activities required to successfully carry out the grant activities
- project administration (for example, report preparations, project planning, equipment resources and supplies) up to no more than 10% of the total funding sought
- salary for staff directly carrying out the grant activities.

² Includes New South Wales local governments created as body politics.

³ A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence in writing such as quotes for major costs.

The decision maker makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for:

- purchase of land
- the covering of retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- major capital expenditure or general infrastructure costs (for example, lab upgrades, purchases of equipment)
- hospitality
- overseas travel
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- activities for which the applicant has previously received funding from the Commonwealth or another source (such as state, territory or local government, or private sector).

6 The assessment criteria

You must address all of the following assessment criteria in the application.

The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount requested.

The application form includes text limits – up to 6,000 characters (approximately 900 words) per criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond this limit. Please note spaces are included in the character limit.

The assessment criteria for the grant opportunity are:

Criterion 1: Researcher(s)/Capability **35%**

Describe:

- Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE), including completion of the application Project Plan template
- time and capacity to undertake the research
- evidence of experience in research training, mentoring and supervision (where appropriate)
- the capability of the researcher or team to build collaborations both within Australia and internationally (where appropriate).

Criterion 2: Project quality and innovation **40%**

Describe the:

- contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem
- novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed)
- clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions

- cohesiveness of the project design and project plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses)
- extent to which the research has the potential to meet objectives 1d and 3a of the National Soil Strategy.

Criterion 3: Benefit

15%

Describe the potential benefits including the:

- new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research
- economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities
- potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government's National Science and Research Priorities and other priorities identified by Government.

Criterion 4: Feasibility

10%

Describe the:

- cost-effectiveness of the research and its value for money, including the completion of the application Budget template
- suitability of the environment for the research team and their project, and for Higher Degrees by Research students where appropriate
- availability of the necessary facilities to complete the project
- extent to which the project's design, participants and requested budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the project.

If the project involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research describe:

- the strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where appropriate (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)
- any existing or developing, supportive and high quality research communities.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the grant program's questions and answers, the sample application form and the sample grant agreement.

These documents are found on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any changes to grant documentation are published on both sites and addenda⁴ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

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

To apply, you must:

- complete the online application form on the [GrantConnect](#) or [Community Grants Hub website](#)

⁴ Addenda can include changes to existing grant opportunity documentation and/or publishing additional documents. Changes include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and system outage notices.

- 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 9:00 pm AEDT on 14 February 2022.

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 Act 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 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub does 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.

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 Joint (Consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The lead organisation of a consortium must also be an eligible entity type as outlined in section 4.1. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group. All members of the consortium must comply with the National Redress legislation.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your project around June 2022.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks

Activity	Timeframe
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 6 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	May 2022
End date of grant activity	30 June 2025

7.3 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within 5 working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The question period will close at 5:00 pm AEDT on 7 February 2022. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

Applications will be assessed based on the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

We will assess all applications for eligibility and compliance against the requirements of the application process. Eligible applications will then be considered through an open competitive grant process.

If eligible, we will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) and against other applications. We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.⁵

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the Selection Advisory Panel (the panel) will have regard to:

- 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 demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives.

8.2 Who will assess and select applications?

The Community Grants Hub will review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will progress to assessment.

⁵ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

The department will undertake a preliminary assessment against the selection criteria. The preliminary assessment will provide an initial ranking of applications to inform the deliberations of the panel.

The panel will be established by the department and may include a mix of employees of the department, experts from the sector, soil scientists or other soil specialists and other Commonwealth officers with relevant specialist expertise.

Any expert/advisor who is not a Commonwealth official will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The department will provide secretariat support to the Selection Advisory Panel.

The Selection Advisory Panel recommends to the decision maker which applications to approve for a grant.

The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information from the applicant to assist in making its final recommendations.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

Based on the value of the grant round, and in line with the department's financial delegations, the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia will be the decision maker for this round. The decision maker decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel, taking into consideration any further information that may become known, including 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
- the 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, you are advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

9.1 Feedback on your application

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

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 terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub 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.

We may manage the grant agreement through our Grant Recipient Portal. Accepting the agreement through the Grant Recipient Portal is the equivalent of signing a grant agreement. After you have accepted it, we will execute the agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have entered into the grant agreement. We will notify you when this happens, and a copy of the executed agreement will be available through the portal. The agreement will not become binding until it is executed.

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

You will have 20 business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The grant agreement is not considered to be executed until 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.

10.2 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contributions you must 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 are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activities.

10.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be 'GST inclusive'. 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 no later than 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 activities or organisation.

We need to know of any 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 because of these changes.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

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

If you become aware of a breach of the 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 every 6 months, in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

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

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the 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, ask for more information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

Activity Work Plan

You must submit a completed Activity Work Plan (AWP) on the template provided with your grant agreement. An AWP will be used to outline the specific grant requirements. The AWP documents planned deliverables, milestones and outputs for the funded project. The AWP also documents risk management and community engagement relevant to the funded project.

Successful applicants' progress and outcomes against the Activity Work Plan will be monitored throughout the grant through regular reports.

Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress toward completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure

- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

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

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 due date and in the format provided in the grant agreement.

12.3 Non-audited financial acquittal

Non-audited financial acquittal report

You will be required to provide a non-audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement and declare unspent funds. The report will be accompanied by statutory declarations by the Chief Operating Officer (or equivalent) and the Chief Finance Officer (or equivalent).

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 Arrangement Manager, Community Grants Hub.

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 grant 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 one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8 Acknowledgement

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

‘This grant activity received grant funding from the Australian Government through the Soil Science Challenge.’

Successful applicants must ensure that financial support from the Australian Government, through the Soil Science Challenge, is acknowledged in any announcement, published extract, poster or paper.

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 by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on the [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Complaints about this grant opportunity

The department's [Complaints Procedures](#) apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about this grant opportunity, including grant decisions, must be made in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to grants.soils@awe.gov.au.

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 [online complaints form](#) on the [Department of Social Services](#) website, or contact the Department of Social Services Complaints line.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: complaints@dss.gov.au

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 has 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 the department's and the Community Grants Hub 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
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program.

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

If you later think there is 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 website](#).

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 and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist 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 would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy 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 3 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 that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

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
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
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.
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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁶ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁷ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth 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.
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.
National Redress legislation	means the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 .
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , 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.
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.

⁶ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁷ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
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>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 the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ quality of the project proposal and activities ▪ fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives ▪ absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved ▪ potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.