

National Disability Conference Initiative Guidelines

Opening date:	6 February 2018
Closing date and time:	2 pm AEDT on 20 March 2018
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Social Services
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact: Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions and answers close 13 March 2018
Date guidelines released:	6 February 2018
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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1. National Disability Conference Initiative Processes

The Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above Grant Program, which contributes to the Disability Carer and Support Activity within Outcome 3.1 (Disability Mental Health and Carers). The Department of Social Services works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*.



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines and advertise on GrantConnect.



You complete and submit a grant application



We assess all grant applications

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



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant Decisions are made

The decision maker decides which grant 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 letter of agreement

We will enter into a letter of agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

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



Evaluation of the National Disability Strategy 2018-19

We evaluate the National Disability Strategy 2018-19 as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Social Services (DSS) under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

1.2 About the grant program

The Disability, Mental Health and Carers Program (the Program) will undertake an open selection process to provide funding of \$315,000 (GST exclusive) from the 2018-2019 financial year for the National Disability Conference Initiative under the Disability and Carer Support Activity (DaCS) in Outcome 3.1 Disability Mental Health and Carers.

The Program provides:

- support and advocacy for people with a disability and carers;
- disability employment, and
- community mental health services.

The objectives of the Program are to provide a foundation for integrated, community led program delivery that understands and meets local needs and promotes innovation and collaboration. This will include the establishment of a platform for continued improvement in the way DSS does its business, clarifying and strengthening Commonwealth and state/territory government responsibilities and fostering stronger relationships with civil society and partnering with service providers.

The Program provides support and community-based initiatives for people with disability or mental illness and for carers so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

The expected outcomes of the Program are

- Disability Employment
- Disability and Carer Support
- Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support
- Community Mental Health
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Transitioning Grants.

The 2018-19 National Disability Conference Initiative is offered under the DaCS and provides grants to conference organisers to enable them to help people with disability to participate in nationally focused disability-related conferences held in Australia.

The DaCS Activity aims to improve access, support and services for people with disability and carers. The DaCS Activity includes providing appropriate means of self-reliance, communication, education services and advocacy as captured under the following headings:

Providing and improving access to services and support

Organisations may be funded for a range of services, including, but not limited to, those covered under the *Disability Services Act 1986*. Grants may also be provided for services and supports for carers including, but not limited to, services to support young carers aged 25 years and under.

Stakeholder engagement

Grants may be provided for support and services including, but not limited to, funding for people with disability and carers to participate in stakeholder engagement.

The program will be undertaken according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#).

1.3 About the Grant Opportunity

These guidelines contain information for the National Disability Conference Initiative grants. This grant opportunity is offered under the DaCS under Outcome 3.1 Disability Mental Health and Carers.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

You must read this document before filling out an application.

2. Grant amount

A total of \$315,000 is available under the 2018-19 National Disability Conference Initiative.

A maximum of \$10,000 per conference is available for this grant opportunity.

The maximum grant period is one financial year. Your conference must be held within the financial year specified in the funding round. In exceptional circumstances, an extension may be approved by the Grant Agreement Manager.

3. Grant eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible, applicants to the National Disability Conference Initiative must fall into one of the following categories.

- Indigenous Corporation
- Company
- Incorporated Association
- Cooperative
- Partnership
- Statutory Entity
- Incorporated Trustee on behalf of a Trust
- Consortium with a lead organisation

Applications from consortia are acceptable, provided you have a lead applicant who is the main driver of the project and is eligible as per the list above.

3.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- State or Territory Government
- local government organisation
- an individual
- unincorporated association
- an overseas company, association, organisation, partnership, trustee or cooperative.

4. Eligible grant activities

4.1 What can the grant money be used for?

Eligible applicants may apply for funding of up to \$10,000 for disability-related conferences with a national focus planned for the 2018-19 financial year to:

- assist people with disability with the costs of attending conferences, (for example, conference fees, accommodation, travel for domestic participants); and/or
- assist family members or carers providing support to a person with disability attending a conference (for example with costs associated with conference fees, accommodation, travel for domestic participants); and/or
- facilitate access so that people with disability can participate in conferences (for example, by funding accessible materials, Auslan interpreters, assistive computer devices or software, aids or appliances or other costs of ensuring venue accessibility).

Disability-related conferences are considered to be conferences for which at least half of the schedule focuses on people with disability and issues that affect the lifetime wellbeing and social participation of people with disability.

A 'nationally-focused' conference is considered a conference:

- (1) for which the majority of the conference schedule focuses on national (rather than state, local or regional) issues; and
- (2) which is open to participants from across Australia (rather than being restricted to participants in a particular state or territory).

You can only spend grant funds on eligible grant activities as defined in the grant details in your grant agreement.

We may update the guidelines on eligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when your grant agreement takes effect will be the version that applies to your project.

4.2 What the grant money cannot be used for?

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- conferences which are not nationally-focused;
- conferences which are not disability-related;
- a person without disability, unless they are a family member or carer who is attending specifically to support a person with disability to participate;
- international travel, international conferences, or international participants;
- presenters/speakers without disability to present at a conference; and
- general administrative costs such as advertising, telephone, printing/publishing, staff expenses, catering or venue hire

- audio-visual expenses/live-streaming expenses, unless expressly provided to enable the inclusion and participation of people with disability.

5. The grant selection process

First, we will assess your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. Eligible applications will be considered through an open competitive grant process.

We will then assess your application against the criteria set out below and against other applications.

Your application will be considered on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications and
- whether it provides value for money.

In assessing the extent to which the application represents value for money, the Community Grants Hub will have regard to the following:

- the relative merit of each application
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the funding
- the relative cost of the proposal, or of elements of the proposal
- the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a capacity to fund the proposal taking into consideration all possible sources of finance, including debt finance and
- the geographic location of the proposal.

6. The assessment criteria

You will need to address all of the following assessment criteria in your application. The information requested under each criterion must be provided. The selection criteria are equally weighted.

Criterion 1 Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity (assistance for people with disability to participate in your 2018-19 national disability-related conference).

In providing a response to this criterion, you **must** include:

- how the conference is disability-related;
- how the conference has a national focus; and
- the specific ways the grant funds will be used to assist people with disability to participate in the conference (for example travel for domestic participants, accommodation, live captioning, accessible materials, etc. and how this represents value for money).

Criterion 2 Demonstrate your organisation’s capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Disability and Carer Support Activity objectives for people with disability.

In providing a response to this criterion, you **must** include:

- your organisation’s capacity and capability to administer the grant; and
- the relevant experience and skills of the members of your organisation in delivering the project

Criterion 3 Demonstrate how grant funding will be used to provide value for money.

7. The grant application process

7.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the application form, the Questions and Answers document, and the draft grant agreement before you submit an application.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration.

You must address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant. Please complete each section of the application form and make sure you provide the information we have requested.

Please keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers.

7.2 Application process timing

Submit your application by the closing time and date below. Late applications will not be accepted.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	Open: 6 February 2018 Close: 20 March 2018
Assessment of applications	6 weeks (approximately)
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks (approximately)
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks (approximately)
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks (approximately)
Activity commences	July 2018 (approximately)

Activity	Timeframe
End date	July 2019 (approximately)

7.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application on the application form, which can be downloaded at [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#). The application form includes help information.

The Department of Social Services/Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax, email or mail.

You must make sure that your application is complete and accurate and submitted on time in accordance with these Guidelines.

You cannot change your application after it has been submitted.

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, but before the application submission period has closed, you should contact the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 or by email at support@communitygrants.gov.au straight away. The Community Grants Hub may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

7.4 Applications from consortia

Some organisations may apply as a consortium to deliver grant activities. A consortium is two or more businesses who are working together to combine their capabilities when developing and delivering a grant activity.

If you are submitting a grant application on behalf of a consortium, a member organisation or a newly created organisation must be appointed as the 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation will enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth and will be responsible for the grant. The lead organisation must complete the application form and identify all other members of the proposed consortium in the application.

7.5 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email to support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Answers to questions may be posted on [GrantConnect](#) and on the [Community Grants Hub](#).

The question and answer period will close at **5pm AEDT on 20 March 2018**. Following this time, only questions relating to using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

8. Assessment of grant applications

8.1 Who will assess applications?

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

An Expert Panel comprised of Policy and State Office staff, will then review all ranked applications to inform the final recommendations for funding.

The Expert Panel will make recommendations having regards to:

- overall objectives for each Program;
- conformance with eligibility criteria;
- how the services and/or project will be delivered;
- existing and/or potential market failure;
- value for money; and
- (if known) minimise possible duplication with other Commonwealth/State/Territory government programs/service delivery.

The expert panel may seek information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The expert panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

8.2 Who will approve grants?

The Expert Panel will make recommendations to the delegate. The delegate will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The delegate'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.

The delegate must not approve funding if they reasonably consider the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or the application does not represent value for money.

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

9. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing, following a decision by the delegate. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the Letter of Offer (grant agreement).

9.1 Feedback on your application

The Feedback Summary will provide general round-specific information and will include main strengths and areas of improvement for the applications received in this round.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

The Letter of Offer forms the Grant Agreement for the National Disability Conference Initiative and is a performance-based, legally enforceable agreement between the Commonwealth (represented by DSS) and successful applicants that sets out the Terms and Conditions governing the grant.

The Department of Social Services will issue a Letter of Offer (grant agreement) to successful applicants.

You should not make financial commitments until the Letter of Offer (grant agreement) has been executed by the Commonwealth.

10.2 How the grant will be paid

The Letter of Offer (grant agreement) will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra eligible expenditure, you must pay it yourself.

The amount of each payment will be based on agreed funding ratio for the project as set out in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement).

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 days after the date of effect¹ as required by Section 5.3 of the *CGRGs*.

¹ See glossary

12. Delivery of grant activities

12.1 Your responsibilities

You must submit reports in line with the timeframes in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement).

You will be responsible for:

- meeting the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer (grant agreement) and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement)
- participating in a grant program evaluation as specified in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement).

12.2 Department of Social Services' responsibilities

The Department of Social Services will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement);
- provide timely administration of the grant;
- evaluate the grantee's performance.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be made as set out in the Letter of Offer (grant agreement).

A single payment will be made once the Letter of Offer (grant agreement) is signed by the Commonwealth or following completion of the projects/tasks/services and/or on receipt of an invoice.

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the [Australian Taxation Office website](#) for more information.

12.4 Evaluation

The Department of Social Services will evaluate the National Disability Conference Initiative to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your Letter of Offer (grant agreement) requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

12.5 Acknowledgement

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

All publications related to grants under the program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

13. Reporting

National Disability Conference Initiative grant recipients must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their Letter of Offer Terms and conditions (grant agreement).

14. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the program 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.

Note: These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the Department of Social Services. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#).

14.1 Complaints process

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

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can lodge complaints by using the [online complaints form](#) or by phone or mail:

Phone: 1800 634 035
Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If an applicant is at any time dissatisfied with the Department of Social Services or the Community Grant Hub's handling of a complaint, they can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman on:

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

Mail: Commonwealth Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Further information can found on the Commonwealth Ombudsman's website.

14.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Social Services and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or adviser 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
- has a relationship with an organisation, or in an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program.

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 that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform the [Community Grants Hub](#) in writing immediately. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

The chair of the Assessment Committee will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. 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. We publish our conflict of interest policy available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

14.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting you know:

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

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the [Privacy Act 1988](#), including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under the Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- *the committee and other 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.*

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

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995*

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four 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*
4. *you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.*

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

14.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, 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 Coordinator
The Department of Social Services
Public Law Branch
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@DSS.gov.au

15. Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	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 granting activity, to determine applicant rankings.
commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date in 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.
double dipping	Double dipping occurs where a grant recipient is able to obtain a grant for the same project or activity from more than one source.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant. Eligibility criteria may apply in addition to assessment criteria.
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.
cost shifting	Involves 'substitution of effort' by the Commonwealth for activities of another organisation or level of government. For example, cost shifting occurs where the Commonwealth provides a grant for an activity that would usually be paid for by a state, territory, or local government, such as municipal services.
grant	a grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

Term	Definition
	<p>a) under which relevant money or other CRF money, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth; and</p> <p>b) which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals; and</p> <p>c) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives; and</p> <p>under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.</p>
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the Grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement. (Proposed definition in the grants taxonomy).
grant agreement	Grant agreement means the contract template used by Australian Government entities to set out the mutual obligations relating to the provision of the grant. The Australian Government is standardising and streamlining grant agreements between the Commonwealth and grant recipients to allow grant recipients to engage more easily and efficiently with the Commonwealth.
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants. (Proposed definition in the grants taxonomy).
grant program	May be advertised within the 'Forecast Opportunity' (FO) section of GrantConnect to provide a consolidated view of associated grant opportunities and provide strategic context for specific grant opportunities.
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant. (Proposed definition in the grants taxonomy).
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.

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.