



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Social Services**

**Disability, Mental Health and Carers  
Programme**

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**Disability and Carer Service  
Improvement and Sector Support  
Programme Guidelines Overview**

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November 2015

## Preface

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) has a suite of Programme Guidelines which provides information about each Programme that provides grants funding, and the suite of Activities that contribute to that Programme. They provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in a Programme and form the basis for the business relationship between DSS and the grant recipient.

DSS recognises and supports the work of civil society organisations. The DSS approach to working with civil society is based on reducing red tape, providing greater flexibility and respecting the independence of the sector. This approach recognises that civil society organisations should be supported to self-manage the delivery of support to our communities rather than being burdened with unnecessary government requirements.

Programme Guidelines are provided to applicants for each grant funding round. The approach to grants funding described in the Guidelines aims to foster collaboration and innovation in the community across civil society freeing up resources to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

The Programme Guidelines for each grant funding round include:

- a Programme Guidelines Overview document (this document) that provides an overview of how funding rounds may be conducted for each Activity (PBS administered line item) that contribute to the overall Programme outcome, and
- an Application Pack - a suite of documents with information specific to each grant funding round conducted within the Activity.

The simplified Programme arrangements establish the framework for DSS to move towards a single Grant Agreement per provider, implement new and improved financial reporting systems, reduce reporting and regulation, consolidate funding rounds and support greater service delivery innovation to meet the needs of clients.

DSS reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

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# 1 Programme overview – Disability, Mental Health and Carers

## 1.1 Programme outcomes

The Department of Social Services (DSS) funds community organisations to develop and maintain a cohesive Australian community and improved independence and self-sufficiency, recognising that government contributions are only one source of funding for the operation of community services.

The Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme (Programme) provides:

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

The following five priority areas, which sit within the Programme, have been identified as capturing DSS business, in line with the Commonwealth Government's priorities and responsibilities:

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

## 1.2 Programme objectives

The Programme aims to provide a foundation for integrated, community led programme 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 Programme provides support and community-based initiatives for people with disability, mental illness, and for carers so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

# 2 Activity Overview – Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support

The Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity aims to promote an understanding of the lives of people with disability and carers, promote and protect the rights and dignity of people with disability and carers, and foster support for their participation in all aspects of community life.

DSS will continue to work with the states and territories, local government and other Australian Government agencies to bring about improvement through implementing strategies for people with disability and carers to support their participation economically and socially in Australian society; to enhance their independence and wellbeing; to foster a cohesive community and to promote civil society.

Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support funding is provided for enabling grant activities that focus on broad organisational, sectoral and social impacts, and are not generally for the provision of services direct to individuals or families. Activities that are a priority for funding are those that may include representation and advocacy, policy analysis and programme development, research and consultation, awareness raising, information dissemination, sector development, secretariat roles and funding for operational (or core) support to grant recipients to foster capacity building and sector sustainability.

## 2.1 Aims and objectives

The Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity will be achieved through providing opportunities for people with disability, carers, policy makers, researchers, national organisations, service providers, business and community organisations to undertake work to improve the lives of people with disability and carers.

This will be delivered through grants focused on one or all of the following objectives:

1. Sector Development
2. Stakeholder Engagement
3. Service Improvement, and
4. Sponsorship activities.

### Sector Development

Community-based organisations may be funded to support sector capacity building activities, contribute to Government policy on issues that impact people with disability and carers, and to communicate Government information to their memberships and the sectors they represent.

### Stakeholder Engagement

Organisations may be funded to assist people with disability, carers and their representative organisations to engage with, or on behalf of, Government in the development of programmes, policies and systems that affect people with disability and carers.

### Service Improvement

Organisations may be funded to develop, or to implement already developed, strategies to improve services for people with disability and carers. For example, activities that could be funded under this objective could include one-off projects addressing or researching specific areas for improvement, such as identifying innovative housing options for younger people in residential aged care or identifying options for improved protection against violence for women with disability.

### Sponsorship activities

Funding may also be applied for sponsorship activities by organisations to represent their sector and to support awareness raising activities. For example, funding can be provided to host an event, or to organise a week of activities or to help manage the costs of organising a conference or to support representation and participation in key domestic and international events.

## 2.2 Sub-Activity

Not applicable.

## 2.3 Applicant eligibility

The following entity types meet the eligibility requirements to be invited to apply for a grant for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity:

- a. Incorporated Associations (incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' in their legal name)
- b. Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name)
- c. Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* – may be a not-for-profit proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies)
- d. Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*)
- e. Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or state/territory legislation (public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc)
- f. Partnerships
- g. Trustees on behalf of a Trust

Not-for-profit entity types specified above meet the eligibility requirements.

For-profit entity types specified above may be invited in special circumstances.

The following entity types may be invited in special circumstances:

- h. State and territory Governments
- i. Local Governments
- j. Government Business Enterprises
- k. Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* – may be for-profit proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies), and/or
- l. Where there is no suitable alternative, an individual or – jointly and separately – individuals. Where j) is used, it also needs to be stated who the decision maker is on the issue.

## 2.4 Participants/clients/recipients/target group

Target groups under the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity includes:

- people with disability (including as defined by the *Disability Services Act 1986*)
- carers (as defined by the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*) or by equivalent state/territory legislation or policy
- organisations that directly represent people with disability (including Disabled Persons Organisations\*) or that can demonstrate effective networks or lived experience of people with disability
- organisations that directly represent carers or that can demonstrate effective networks or lived experience of carers
- organisations that represent service providers that deliver services / programmes / activities to support people with disability and
- organisations that deliver services / programmes / activities to support carers.

*\* Disabled Person's Organisations (DPOs) are generally organisations controlled by a majority of people with disability at the board and membership levels or independent organisations of persons with disability.*

## 2.5 Funding for the Activity

An amount of \$154.55 million has been allocated over four years from 1 July 2015 by the Australian Government for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity. All amounts are GST exclusive. Of the \$154.55 million allocated for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity \$140.3 million has been allocated to wage supplementation. This allocation of funding will provide supplementation to organisations who have transitioned to a productivity based wage assessment tool, the Supported Wage System (SWS) since 29 April 2014. Supplementation will be payable at 100 per cent for the first 12 months, reducing to 75 per cent for the second 12 months, reducing to 50 per cent for the next six months with 25 per cent supplementation payable for the final six months. There will be no supplementation from 1 January 2021. Retrospective funding will be made available to organisations that have already transitioned to the SWS prior to the opening of the wage supplementation funding round.

Payments will be backdated to 1 February 2015, or from the date the organisation transitioned to the SWS post 1 February 2015.

Funding amounts are inclusive of discretionary grants awarded under these Programme Guidelines and funding provided through other process such as procurement. Funding amounts included in these Programme Guidelines are estimates and may change in the course of the budget year as government priorities change.

The Assistant Minister for Social Services has overall responsibility for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity.

Where DSS has invited applications for grants, the final decision about service delivery areas, sites and proposals for service delivery will be made by the Departmental delegate.

DSS may negotiate grant agreements ranging up to a five year term based on the grant purpose, degree of risk, and priorities for funding.

As a part of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity, organisations may choose to use up to 10% of their funding for innovative projects. This will be negotiated as part of the grant agreement.

DSS works in partnership with other government and non-government organisations to manage a diverse range of programmes and services designed to support and improve the lives of Australians. Australian Government funding is a great way of helping the community expand, develop or start a project. Providers are chosen through selection processes.

DSS encourages all potential applicants to check the DSS website regularly for the latest information on programmes, current selection processes and closing dates for applications.

Funded organisations are required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with DSS, which specifies a range of contractual obligations, including in relation to record keeping and retention, performance reporting and financial expenditure and acquittal.

In accordance with the Fair Work Australia decision of 1 February 2012 to increase wages in the Social and Community Services (SACS) sector, DSS will provide supplementation funding to organisations employing SACS workers delivering Disability & Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity. To be eligible for supplementation funding organisations must be delivering in-scope Commonwealth funded programmes and have employed staff under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SACS Modern Award), specifically under one of the following Schedules:

- Schedule B – Classification Definitions - Social and Community Services Employees; and
- Schedule C – Classification Definitions - Crisis Accommodation Employees.

Organisations affected by the Western Australia Industrial Relation Commission (WAIRC) SACS Decision of 29 August 2013 may also be entitled to SACS supplementation.

## 2.6 Eligible and ineligible activities

Grants may be used for a **range of Activity types** including:

- sector development;
- sector engagement;
- representation and advocacy;
- awareness raising;
- information dissemination;
- policy analysis and programme development;
- research and consultation;
- evaluation;
- capital works;
- non-government secretariat roles;
- transition support; and
- other overarching service improvement and sector capacity building initiatives.

Funding may be used for the following:

*Service improvement and sector support activities:*

- promoting an understanding of the lives of people with disability and carers, promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of people with disability and carers; and fostering support for their participation in all aspects of community life;
- contributing to Government policy
- providing advice and recommendations on proposed legislation or policies affecting the disability and carer sector
- encouraging support for their dignity, rights and well-being
- raising awareness activities, of the benefits of integration of people with disability in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life
- disseminating information between Government and constituents
- collecting and analysing information about the sector and representing the views of an organisation's members
- providing input into Australian Government reviews, inquiries and consultative processes

- providing social policy or research papers to DSS
- domestic consultation with people with disability, their families and carers, and their representative organisation in the wider community on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Convention) in Australia and issues of Australia's adherence and development of resources
- international representation by Australians with disability as part of monitoring and reporting under the UN Convention and related UN Treaty obligations or for other approved international representation events
- accessibility support for people with disability in the process of monitoring the UN Convention and development of alternative forms of relevant resources,
- promotional and awareness raising activities directly attributed to the provision of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity, and
- support for Australian Disability Enterprises to:
  - transition to new productivity-based wage arrangements (SWS), or
  - to exit service provision, or
  - transition low productivity workers with disability to suitable alternatives.

*Governance/ Operational matters:*

- staff salaries and on-costs which can also be directly attributed to the provision of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity
- any identified service area or areas as per the Grant Agreement
- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members, that is relevant, appropriate and in line with the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity, and
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the delivery of services, such as:
  - telephones
  - rent and outgoings
  - computer / IT/website/software
  - insurance
  - utilities
  - postage
  - stationery and printing
  - accounting and auditing
  - travel/accommodation costs, and
  - assets as defined in the Terms and Conditions that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.

Specific details and requirements are negotiated between the relevant DSS programme area and the organisation / provider.

Grants are not provided for:

- purchase of land or buildings
- the covering of retrospective costs except in respect of ADE wage supplementation and SACS supplementation arrangements
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- activities that duplicate the work of existing funded services, including individual advocacy and
- activities that could bring the Australian Government into disrepute.

## **2.7 Activity links and working with other agencies and services**

Activity requirements for linking and working with other agencies and services are negotiated between the relevant DSS programme area and the grant recipient on a case-by-case basis and then specified in the individual grant agreements.



## 2.8 Specialist requirements (e.g. Legislative requirements)

All grant recipients under the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied, and
- services and/or capital works are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth law.

In delivering the Activity, organisations are required to:

- comply with all relevant laws, including (but not limited to):
  - the [Disability Services Act 1986](#);
  - the [Social Security Act 1991](#);
  - the [National Health Act 1953](#),
  - the [Fair Work Act 2009](#); and
  - the [Supported Employment Services Award 2010](#), or as modified.
- comply with DSS Policies as specified at [Doing Business with DSS](#), and
- ensure that workers (paid and voluntary) undertake training appropriate to the service they deliver.

Australia's *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity. Improving responsiveness* obliges Australian government agencies to ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier for people engaging with government and accessing services to which they are entitled, for example, by providing access to language services where appropriate. Grant applicants should consider whether services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with non-English speakers. If required, based on an assessment of the target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications. For further information on the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy please refer to [the DSS website](#).

Other specialist requirements are negotiated between the relevant DSS programme area and the grant recipient on a case-by-case basis and then specified in the individual grant agreements.

## 2.9 Information technology

Grant recipients are expected to ensure they have suitable information technology systems\* in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations.

Grant recipients must have IT systems and software packages that are compatible with DSS's reporting requirements. Any specialised technology is detailed in the grant agreements for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity.

Grant recipients must work towards their website being compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 [click here to access the Guidelines](#)

Other information technology requirements are negotiated between the relevant DSS programme area and the grant recipient on a case-by-case basis and then specified in the individual grant agreements.

Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support grant recipients must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their Schedule.

Performance information (e.g. client characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by service providers at the client level and entered directly into the department's client data capture system, its predecessor or via a DSS approved alternative mechanism.

Where collection of client level data is not appropriate for instance due to the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity involving a large group, aggregate reporting will be permitted.

The Data System protocols and requirements are available on [the DSS website](#).

The new application will:

- Be a web based portal
- Allow submission of data through external approved third party applications, and
- Support submission of data through other approved methods.

Performance information required to be collected may include (but is not limited to):

- Client consent (where required)
- Client identity characteristics
- Client demographic characteristics
- Service delivery information, and
- Client outcomes.

\*Please Note there are no minimum Information Technology requirements for grant recipients.

## **2.10 Activity performance and reporting**

DSS focuses on outcomes; however, other information, not related to outcomes includes information that can be used to monitor ongoing operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project; and track issues that may affect the operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project.

DSS Performance Indicators focus on three key questions:

- 1) Are we achieving what we expected?
- 2) How well is it being done?
- 3) How much is being done?

Performance Indicators based on these questions may be included in the grant agreement for the grant recipient.

Performance against agreed targets for the indicators, and additional information needed to evaluate service delivery/project performance, must be reported in progress reports and a final report as outlined in the grant agreement with DSS.

Full details of reporting requirements will be listed in the grant agreement for each grant recipient.

## **2.11 Financial reporting**

The Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles; the DSS grant agreement and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Acquittal documents must be provided to DSS as outlined in the grant agreement.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

## **2.12 DSS responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity**

The Minister for Social services has overall responsibility for the Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme.

DSS will:

- meet the Governments terms and conditions of the grant agreement established with organisations
- ensure that services provided under the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity are accountable to the Australian; Government under the terms and conditions agreed in the grant agreement
- administer the operation of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity in a timely manner
- identify suitable providers to deliver the activities to be funded under this programme

- work in partnership with the provider to ensure the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity is implemented and will provide the grant recipient with constructive feedback; ensure that the outcomes contained within the Programme Guidelines are being met and evaluate the provider's performance against the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity outcomes, and
- Information on the successful grants will be published on the [DSS website](#) within the required timeframes.

## **2.13 Grant recipients responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity**

In entering into a grant agreement with DSS, the grant recipient must comply with all requirements outlined in the suite of documents that comprise the agreement including these Programme Guidelines, the grant agreement and the Standard Agreement Terms and Conditions ([available at the DSS website](#)).

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations
- ensuring Indigenous Australians have equal and equitable access to services
- working collaboratively to deliver the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity and
- contributing to the overall development and improvement of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity such as sharing best practice.

## **2.14 Risk management strategy**

All DSS Grant Agreements are managed according to their level of risk. Organisations will be subject to a Provider Capacity Risk Assessment prior to the negotiation of Grant Agreements. Organisations may also be required to participate in a Financial Viability Assessment during the Assessment process of an application. A periodic monitoring process is undertaken during the term of an agreement which monitors service delivery and is used to provide evidence for ongoing risk assessments.

## **2.15 Special conditions applying to this Activity**

Any special conditions relating to this Activity are negotiated between the relevant DSS programme area and the grant recipient on a case-by-case basis and then specified in the individual grant agreements.

# **3 Application Process**

## **3.1 Overview of the application process**

All grant processes will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (Commonwealth Grant Guidelines will cease 30 June 2014 and will be replaced with Commonwealth Grant Rules 1 July 2014) and will be for purposes that are consistent with the objectives and priorities of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity.

## **3.2 Programme Guidelines**

Applicants for grants funding rounds conducted for this Activity will be provided with the Programme Guidelines suite of documents comprising:

- the Programme Guidelines Overview (this document)
- an Application Pack - a suite of documents with information specific to each grant funding round conducted within the Activity.

### **3.2.1 Application Pack**

The Application Pack will comprise the following documents:

#### **Funding Round Summary**

This document includes the following information

- objectives and requirements of the funding round
- the type of selection process being used
- opening and closing dates
- the value of the funding round
- how to submit an application
- selection criteria, and
- eligibility criteria.

#### **Application Form**

This document asks you to address selection criteria relating to the particular funding round you are applying for and also requires you to complete general information about you as the provider applying for funding.

#### **DSS Streamlined Grant Agreement template - General Grant Conditions**

The signed Grant Agreement will include information relating to the Grant objectives, the activities to be undertaken, the duration of the grant, payment, reporting requirements, supplementary terms and conditions, and signatures of DSS and providers.

Applicants for funding rounds may also be provided with the following additional information as part of the Application pack including:

#### **Questions and Answers**

This document aims to answer any questions and provide additional information relating to the activity and the application process for each individual activity that you are applying for funding. This will include operational guidelines if applicable.

### **3.3 Achieving value for money**

In assessing the extent to which the application represents value for money, DSS 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
- the geographic location of the proposal, and
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that the proposal will be located in a community with one or more of the following features:
  - the community is identified as a priority community by DSS
  - the community has high levels of the target population or of a special needs group
  - the community has high population growth in the target population or has anticipated high population growth in the target population.

### **3.4 Choice of selection process**

When undertaking a selection process DSS will consider the proportionality of scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and risks involved in the funding round. DSS will consider proportionality to inform the choice of the application and selection process, the type of grant agreement to be used and the reporting and acquittal requirements.

The Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity funds a diverse range of service types and other activities. Due to the size and complexity of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity, access to funding will be available through a variety of means and at various times throughout the funding period. DSS proposes to undertake a mix of the

following selection processes to achieve the objectives and priorities for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity.

### **3.4.1 Open competitive selection process**

An open competitive selection process is open to all providers operating in the market place. Open processes are advertised through the media, the DSS website and other sources in order to attract as much interest as possible. Open competitive grant rounds have open and closed nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the nominated selection criteria.

### **3.4.2 Restricted competitive selection process**

A restricted (or targeted) selection process is used where there are few providers available due to highly specialised services being required, there are geographical considerations, specific expertise is required or there are time constraints. A restricted grant round is still competitive, but only opens to a small number of potential grant recipients based on the specialised requirements of the granting activity or project under consideration. Potential grant recipients are invited to apply and will still need to be assessed against nominated selection criteria.

### **3.4.3 Direct selection process**

A direct selection process is a closed non-competitive process, where an approach is made directly to an existing, high performing provider to expand their current service delivery activities or deliver new services. It involves assessment of a provider's capacity to deliver an expanded service or capability to deliver a new service through use of selection criteria and/or an assessment of a provider's current performance.

### **3.4.4 Expressions of Interest (EOI) process**

DSS may call for EOIs to test the market to ascertain the extent of potential applicants. An EOI will be advertised as the first in a two stage process. The second stage involves applicants selected through the EOI process applying in either a targeted or direct process.

DSS may advertise any funding process:

- in major national newspapers and other selected newspapers
- on the [DSS website](#), and
- on the [Government grants website](#).

Any advertisement will inform potential applicants of where to obtain application information for the relevant process. Processes will be provided on the DSS website under the Grants tab.

DSS from time to time may conduct a direct selection in the event that there is a change in government policy, a shift in demographics, unforeseen circumstances or due to service provider failure.

There is also an expectation that if the service or representation area changes then it's expected that the grant recipient will be able to meet the cost of delivering the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity in the revised area through its own efficiencies and within the funding provided.

## **3.5 Service delivery areas**

It is expected that if a service area changes, the grant recipient will be able to meet the cost of delivering the Activity in the revised area through its own efficiencies and within the funding provided.

Service delivery areas or catchment areas designated within the grant agreement must not change without prior written agreement from DSS. However, grant recipients are encouraged to monitor demographic changes in their broader region and discuss varying their catchment areas with DSS if this helps address an emerging need not being met in that area. Where service delivery areas or catchment areas require definition, this will be provided in the Application Pack.

DSS may also, at its discretion, facilitate flexible grants in circumstances where grant recipients have met grant agreement requirements within a specified service area and wish to reallocate all or part of any remaining funds to another service they are funded to deliver in another service delivery area under the same grant agreement.

### **3.6 Selection Criteria**

This section sets out the full suite of selection criteria that may be used for any funding process under the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity. Some Sub-Activities may have specialist criteria.

Depending on the Activity/Sub-Activity and type of funding process, a reduced set of assessment criteria may be set by the appropriate departmental delegate exercising their ability to waive certain criteria. The final set of selection criteria will be reflected in the Application Pack.

The equally weighted selection criteria are:

1. Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded Activity in the specified community and/or specified target group.
2. Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.
3. Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.
4. Demonstrate your organisational capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives in the specified community and/or specified target group.

When applying for grant funding the following specialist criteria may apply.

#### **3.6.1 Capital works**

- Demonstrate your ability to deliver innovative, high quality capital works activities within strict timeframes.
- Provide evidence that your organisation is contributing to the cost of the capital works activity.
- Provide evidence of planning for operational sustainability for the life of the asset.
- Provide evidence that appropriate technical expertise has been obtained to ensure that all relevant standards / legislation / regulations are met.

#### **3.6.2 Representation of People with Disability and Carers**

a) Organisations representing people with disability (including Disabled Persons Organisations)

Note that consortium arrangements will be considered.

Describe how your current or proposed organisational structure fulfils all of the requirements to:

- Directly represent people with disability or demonstrate effective networks or lived experience of people with disability
- Represent people with disability at a national level
- Represent people with disability on national issues (such as the implementation of the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- Demonstrate effective mechanisms to represent members' views and the capacity to provide input to policy development
- Demonstrate planning to build sector capacity and expertise
- Engage with and maintain links with other organisations and groups representing people with disability, disability services and the broader community
- Represent the disability sector and Government at national or international forums
- Demonstrate capacity to work within a human rights framework consistent with the UN Convention
- Demonstrate capacity to raise and promote community awareness of the challenges people with disability face and promote their rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life

- Contribute to the development of the evidence base in respect of policies, services, supports and programmes for people with disability through the reporting and analysis of relevant research and data and
- Demonstrate evidence of sound governance and financial management practice.

In recognising the shift from a historically based medical model to a social model of disability and in addressing barriers to moving to a more inclusive society, sub criteria may be required to demonstrate how the needs of particular demographic and cross disability groups would be represented. For example, it is recognised that women with disabilities, children and young people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities, and people with disabilities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds may experience multiple and unique forms of discrimination, disadvantage and violations of their human rights and that additional strategies may be required to ensure these groups have the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in the economy and the community.

#### b) Organisations Representing Service Providers

Describe how your current or proposed organisational structure fulfils all of the requirements to:

- Represent service providers that support people with disability
- Represent service providers at a national level
- Represent service providers on national issues (such as the implementation of the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- Contribute to Government policies on issues affecting people with disability and service providers
- Convey information between government, your membership and the broader community on social policy issues and represent constituent / citizen views
- Represent the disability services sector and Government at national or international forums
- Engage with and maintain links with other organisations representing people with disability, other organisations representing disability services and the broader mainstream community
- Demonstrate sector capacity planning and building expertise
- Advise on areas for sector improvement and support
- Demonstrate how the collection and actioning of systemic information can be enhanced and
- Contribute to the development of the evidence base in respect of policies, services, supports and programmes for people with disability through the reporting and analysis of relevant research and data.

#### c) Representation of Carers

Describe how your current or proposed organisational structure fulfils all of the requirements to:

- Directly represent carers or demonstrate effective networks or lived experience of carers
- Represent carers at a national level and on national issues
- Focus on issues of relevance to carers
- Demonstrate effective mechanisms to represent members views
- Demonstrate capacity to provide input to policy development
- Demonstrate sector capacity planning and building expertise
- Develop and maintain links with state-based carer organisations and engage with the broader community on carer issues
- Represent the carer sector and Government at national or international forums
- Demonstrate capacity to raise and promote community awareness of the challenges carers face and promote their rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life
- Advise on coordinated, flexible, appropriate, affordable, inclusive and sustainable services and support for carers
- Contribute to the development of the evidence base in respect of policies, services, supports and programmes for carers through the reporting and analysis of relevant research and data and
- Demonstrate evidence of sound governance and financial management practice.

### **3.6.3 Australian Disability Enterprise wage supplementation and exit / case management**

The equally weighted selection criteria that may be used for any funding process under the Australian Disability Enterprise Wage Supplementation Activity are:

1. Provide evidence that your Australian Disability Enterprise fits within one of the two following categories:
  - (a) Existing Australian Disability Enterprises with a current funding agreement with the Department of Social Services to deliver Disability Employment Assistance;
  - (b) Existing Australian Disability Enterprises in NDIS trial sites that held a funding agreement for the provision of Disability Employment Assistance with DSS for at least the period 29 April 2014 to 30 June 2015.
2. Demonstrate that your organisation has fully transitioned all supported employee assessments from the use of non-productivity wage tool to a productivity based wage tool (the Supported Wage System) within the time period of 29 April 2014 to 31 December 2020.
3. Provide evidence of the financial impact for your organisation of the transition of all your supported employees from the use of non-productivity wage tool to a productivity based wage tool (the Supported Wage System or the new productivity wage tool).

### **3.7 How to submit an application**

To apply under this process, applicants will need to complete the Application Form and respond to selection criteria as detailed above. Applications must be received electronically by the closing date and time as stated in the Application Pack.

All applicants including current service providers will need to respond fully to the selection criteria in the Application Form and provide the information required in the format and to the extent specified.

Applications can only be submitted during the application round for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity and for the locations or sites as defined in the Application Form.

Your application is not an agreement or contract. Meeting the selection criteria does not guarantee funding. Funding is limited and applications will be assessed and prioritised according to the extent to which they meet the selection criteria. Only applications meeting the selection criteria to a high degree are likely to be considered for funding. All information requested on the application must be provided to enable your application to be fully considered.

DSS will **not** issue Application Forms or accept completed applications by fax or mail.

#### **3.7.1 Applicant's Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information to DSS is a serious offence, applicants or their partners who do so may be prosecuted under section 137.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Make sure you keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers, either electronically or in hard copy, for your own records.

Only one application per organisation will be assessed for each activity. If more than one application is submitted, only the latest application will be considered.

#### **3.7.2 What needs to be included?**

DSS will not assess applications that do not contain all required attachments (see Application Form checklist) outlined in the Application Form where an Application Form is provided for completion by applicants.



### **3.7.3 What should not be included?**

Any attachments to the Application Form which are not specifically requested in the Application Form will not be considered as part of the assessment process.

### **3.7.4 What happens if you provide more than the specified number of words?**

The Application Form specifies a word limit for each selection criteria. Text beyond the word limits will not be considered as a part of the assessment process.

### **3.7.5 Closing date and time**

The timeframe for submission of applications for any funding process will be set out in the Application Pack.

In order to be received by DSS, the application must be submitted in full via the method prescribed in the Application Pack.

The applications must be received by DSS within the application period to be considered.

### **3.7.6 Late Applications**

DSS may reject any application lodged after the closing date. If an application is late, DSS may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant the deadline could not be met. The applicant will need to supply documentary evidence to support any exceptional circumstances. DSS has no obligation to accept a late application. Any decision by DSS to accept or not accept a late application will be final.

### **3.7.7 Questions and answers during the application period**

Details of 'Questions and Answers' facilities and contact details will be provided on the DSS website under the Grants tab. DSS will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

**Note:** A list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' is available on DSS's website. Responses to questions of interest to all applicants may be added to the list during the application period.

DSS will only respond to requests for information that seek clarification of issues to allow them to better understand the requirements of the Application Form and Programme Guidelines.

### **3.7.8 Questions after the application period**

DSS will **not** accept or respond to any applicant requests for information or correspondence about the status or progress of their application during the assessment phase.

### **3.7.9 Application Acknowledgement**

Unless prior agreement has been reached with DSS an application will not be considered lodged until it is received by DSS. The applicant will receive email notification from DSS within 48 hours of an application being lodged correctly. If the applicant has not received notification in this timeframe, the applicant should contact DSS to confirm that the form has been lodged correctly.

## **3.8 Conflicts of Interest**

Applicants must identify, in their application, any potential or actual conflicts of interest they believe will or may arise from submitting the application. This should address their responsibilities to the Australian Government and other parties in the course of the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity.

A conflict of interest can arise when an applicant's integrity, objectivity or fairness in performing the services is at risk due to a pecuniary interest of a person or organisation associated with the applicant or a conflicting business arrangement.

Applicants must specify in their applications how any actual or perceived conflict of interest will be addressed and monitored to ensure it does not compromise the outcomes desired for this grant process.

DSS reserves the right to assess the potential impact of the conflict or perceived conflict and what plans, if any, are proposed to address the conflict of interest in relation to the application for funding.

DSS may reject an application if DSS is not satisfied that there are arrangements in place to appropriately address/manage a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

DSS also has mechanisms in place for identifying and managing potential or actual conflicts of interest such as requiring assessment staff to sign conflict of interest declarations prior to undertaking the assessment of applications.

Follow this link for more information on the [Conflict of Interest Policy for DSS](#) employees and contractors (who are treated as agency staff and required to abide by this policy and the APS Values and Code of Conduct).

## **4 Terms and conditions applying to Selection/s**

### **4.1 Liability issues**

DSS is not liable to the applicant in relation to the selection process, including without limitation, when DSS:

- varies or terminates all or any part of the selection process or any negotiations with the applicant
- decides not to acquire any or all of the services sought through the selection process
- varies the selection process and/or
- exercises or fails to exercise any of its other rights under, or in relation to the Programme Guidelines.

### **4.2 DSS's rights**

DSS reserves the right to amend the Programme Guidelines by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

### **4.3 Disclaimer**

DSS, its officers, agents and advisors:

- are not, and will not be, responsible or liable for the accuracy or completeness of any information in or provided in connection with the Programme Guidelines
- make no express or implied representation or warranty that any statement as to future matters will prove correct
- disclaim any and all liability arising from any information provided to the applicant, including, without limitation, errors in, or omissions contained in, that information
- except so far as liability under any statute applies, accept no responsibility arising from errors or omissions contained in any information in this document and the Application Form and
- accept no liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person as a result of that person, or any other person, placing reliance on the contents of these documents, or any other information provided by DSS.

### **4.4 Fraud**

DSS is committed to the Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy and Guidelines. Applicants should familiarise themselves with [the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement](#). The Fraud Control Policy Statement also underpins an applicant's respective fraud and risk minimisation responsibilities when dealing with DSS.

One key responsibility outlined in the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement is to report all fraud concerns by:

- leaving an anonymous voicemail message on the DSS Fraud Hotline (1800 133 611) or
- emailing [fraud@DSS.gov.au](mailto:fraud@DSS.gov.au).

## 4.5 Personal Information

Any personal information you provide is protected under the *Privacy Act 1988*. It can only be disclosed to someone else if you have been 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.

If you have questions or concerns about how your personal information is handled you can contact the Privacy Officer at DSS on 02 6244 1449, the Privacy Commissioner on 1300 363 992 (local call cost, but calls from mobile and pay phones may incur higher charges) or the Australian Government Privacy Officer by emailing: [privacy@privacy.gov.au](mailto:privacy@privacy.gov.au).

## 4.6 Freedom of Information

All documents in the possession of DSS including those in relation to the Activity are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The FOI Act creates a general right of access to documents in the possession of DSS and this right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

Decisions regarding requests for access under the FOI Act will be made by an authorised decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

All FOI requests are to be referred to the FOI Coordinator, Public Law Branch, in DSS.

By mail:

FOI Coordinator  
The Department of Social Services  
Public Law Branch,  
PO Box 7576  
CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE  
ACT 2610

By email:

[foi@DSS.gov.au](mailto:foi@DSS.gov.au)

For more information on making a request for access to documents in the possession of DSS under the FOI Act, please visit the [Freedom of Information](#) page on the DSS website.

# 5 Financial and Other Arrangements

## 5.1 Financial arrangements

DSS uses standard grant agreements. Grants will only be provided in accordance with an executed grant agreement. The terms and conditions of DSS's grant agreements cannot be changed. The grant agreement will contain the entire agreement between the parties. There is no binding agreement on any parties until the grant agreement is agreed to and signed by the delegate and the applicant's authorised representative.

The grant agreement is the legal agreement between DSS and the grant recipient over the grant period. In managing the grant provided, the grant recipient must comply with all the requirements of the grant agreement.

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied and

- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations.

Grant recipients should also be aware of any case based law that may apply or affect their service delivery.

The Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement [are available at this link on the DSS website.](#)

## 6 Complaints

### 6.1 Applicants/Grant Recipients

Applicants and grant recipients can contact the complaints service with complaints about DSS's service(s), the selection process or the service of another of DSS grant recipients.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by DSS. Applicants and grant recipients can lodge complaints through the following channels:

Telephone: 1800 634 035  
Fax: (02) 6204 4587

Mail:  
The Department of Social Services Complaints  
PO Box 7576  
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

If an applicant or grant recipient is at any time dissatisfied with DSS's handling of a complaint, they can contact DSS Ombudsman [via this link to the Ombudsman Website](#) or on 1300 362 072.

### 6.2 Client/Customer

It is a requirement of your grant agreement to have a transparent and accessible complaints handling policy. This policy should acknowledge the complainant's right to complain directly to you, outline the process for both dealing with the complaint and provide options for escalation both within your organisation and to DSS if necessary. Ensure that you provide information about your complaints handling policy and processes in all correspondence to guarantee it is readily available to the public.

## 7 Contact information

Contact information for the Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity:

- Address: Tuggeranong Office Park, Soward Way (cnr Athllon Drive), Greenway ACT 2900
- Mail: PO Box 7576, Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610
- Phone: 1800 625 136. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the [National Relay Service](#) to contact any of DSS's listed phone numbers.
- Email: [grants@dss.gov.au](mailto:grants@dss.gov.au)

## 8 Glossary

Not applicable.