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# First Nations Family Dispute Resolution

## Feedback for applicants

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The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) has provided the following General Feedback for applicants of the First Nations Family Dispute Resolution (First Nations FDR) grant opportunity to assist with understanding what generally comprised a competitive application and how to strengthen future applications.

### Overview

The First Nations FDR grant opportunity is for the provision of funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver culturally safe and appropriate family dispute resolution for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

First Nations FDR services are part of the suite of Family Law Services funded under the Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP). The objective of the FRSP is to improve the wellbeing of Australian families, particularly families with children who are at risk of separating or have separated. Family Law Services are child-focused and have an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The services aim to provide alternatives to formal legal processes for families who are separated, separating or in dispute to improve their relationships and make arrangements which are in the best interests of their children.

The First Nations FDR grant opportunity application period opened on 22 July 2022 and closed on 18 August 2022.

The grant opportunity received 21 applications. There was a strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the Selection Process below.

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

### Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The Community Grants Hub did not identify any applications which did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria.

Following on from the eligibility and compliance screening the Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment of all applications in line with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

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Following preliminary assessment, all assessed applications were referred to AGD for consideration by its Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel).

The Panel, comprising of policy makers and subject matter experts, assessed applications and provided advice to inform the AGD's funding recommendations to their Delegate for decision.

Applications suitable for funding were identified based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria and demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Specifically, the Panel took into consideration:

- whether the proposed project is in scope of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and policy intent
- the initial preliminary score against the assessment criteria
- the relative value of the grant sought and value for money
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates the proposed project will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the First Nations FDR activity
- the risks, financial, fraud and other, the applicant or project poses for the department
- the risks the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth.

## Assessment Criteria

Each application was required to address the following selection criteria:

### Criterion 1: Meeting local needs

Outline where the service would be located, why the location/s has been chosen and how the organisation is connected within this community/location to deliver this service in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector.

When addressing the criterion, strong applications:

- defined the proposed service delivery area (based on ABS Indigenous Regions), including any physical locations and broader service coverage areas
- included information on demographics of the expected client base within the area, the demonstrated need for the service in the location, and how the service would meet the need
- demonstrated the organisation's connection to the communities they serve, how they would involve the community in the design of their service model according to place-based principles, and their commitment to delivering culturally safe services
- defined how the organisation is controlled, operated and governed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



| Sub Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <p>Strong applications were required to define the proposed service delivery area which was based on ABS Indigenous Regions. This also included any physical locations and broader service coverage areas.</p>                  | <p>Stronger applications clearly described where the proposed services would operate. They explained how the broader coverage areas would benefit from proposed project.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Strong applications were required to include information on demographics of the expected client base within this area; the demonstrated need for this service in this location; and how the service will meet this need.</p> | <p>Stronger applications described the demographics of the expected client base within the regions where their organisations would operate, identified gaps and opportunities in service delivery, and demonstrated partnership with other FDR providers in the region to enhance capacity building, service provision and client outcomes.</p> <p>Stronger applications were able to demonstrate that larger numbers of potential clients would be accessing the service, which contributed to demonstrating value for money would be obtained by the investment.</p> <p>Stronger applications identified and demonstrated an understanding of community needs, how these needs aligned to the grant opportunity, and provided a clear description of how the proposed project would meet these needs.</p> |



| Sub Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate their connection to the communities they serve, how they will involve the community in the design of the service model according to place-based principles, and their commitment to delivering culturally safe services.</p> | <p>Stronger applications demonstrated connection to the communities they serve through long-standing engagement and existing service provision, local membership on governance boards and inter-agency networks.</p> <p>Stronger applications provided detail on how the new service model would be co-designed with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities in the region and other key community stakeholders. They demonstrated how the proposed project and community engagement could be sustainable beyond the initial co-design period.</p> <p>Stronger applications provided detailed information on how their organisation currently provides culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and will continue to do so in the delivery of First Nations FDR services.</p> |
| <p>Strong applications were required to define how their organisation is controlled, operated and governed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.</p>                                                                                                               | <p>Stronger applications demonstrated the organisations' established local governance structures, commitment to employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, strong connections with local communities and connections with other local community-controlled organisations.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



## Criterion 2

Describe how the organisation would deliver the service in accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants:

- described the services they would provide, including an outline of the culturally safe service delivery model which the organisation would use to deliver the activity;
- explained how the proposed service model would meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing additional vulnerability and disadvantage such as those with a disability and/or experiencing family violence, including the relevant safety protocol which would be in place for service delivery;
- provided details of the organisation’s relationship with organisations which provide support services to the client groups to ensure clients have access to multi-disciplinary assistance; and
- explained how they will address and mitigate conflict of interest, and ensure client confidentiality.

| Sub Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p>Strong applications were required to describe the services they would provide, including an outline of the culturally safe service delivery model their organisation would use to deliver the activity.</p>                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Stronger applications demonstrated how the proposed services aligned with the specific grant opportunity, and a strong understanding of the FDR process and requirements. The applications clearly described how the proposed project would be delivered in accordance with requirements under the <i>Family Law Act 1975</i> and the <i>Family Law (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners) Regulations 2008</i>, and how personnel performing work in FDR services will be appropriately skilled and have the relevant mandatory qualifications (including through existing qualified staff, recruitment and staff training) and accreditation status. They demonstrated their partnership with existing FDR providers, and capacity building activities including clinical supervision for FDR Practitioner trainees.</p> |
| <p>Strong applications were required to describe how the proposed service model would meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing additional vulnerability and disadvantage such as those with a disability and/or experiencing family violence, including the relevant safety protocol which would be in place for service delivery.</p> | <p>Stronger applications described the existing policies and processes in place to support individuals and families experiencing additional vulnerabilities and/or requiring additional assistance, and their ability to implement these for FDR clients. They described the existing safety protocol of the organisations and the planned adaptation of the safety protocol to ensure relevance in the FDR context.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



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| Sub Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p>Strong applications were required to describe details of their organisation’s relationship with organisations who provide support services to their client groups to ensure clients have access to multi-disciplinary assistance.</p> | <p>Stronger applications described how the applicant currently partners with other organisations to ensure multi-disciplinary assistance and wrap-around service provision for their clients, and how they would develop additional partnerships to assist with the delivery of the new FDR services and client referrals.</p>                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Strong applicants were required to describe how they would address and mitigate conflict of interest, and ensure client confidentiality.</p>                                                                                          | <p>Stronger applications described current policies and procedures to deal with conflict of interest and client confidentiality, and the planned adaptation of these to ensure their relevance in the FDR context. They provided examples of practices to adhere to these policies and provide greater protections for the clients and organisations, e.g. ensuring families are able to choose their FDR Practitioner and/or support staff.</p> |