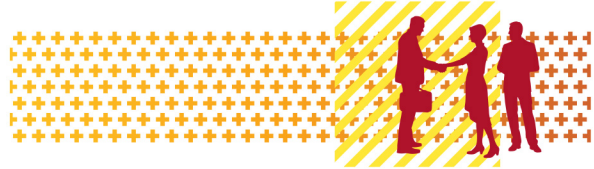




Australian Government

Community
Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience



Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program 2022–23 grant opportunity to assist with understanding what generally comprised a competitive application and how to strengthen future applications.

Overview

The aim of the Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program is to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Australian veteran community and forms parts of DVA's commitment to fund projects and activities that sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing, build community capacity, potentially expand on existing services and raise awareness of important issues faced by the veteran community.

The VWG Program is a targeted competitive program that accepts applications annually, and is an amalgamation of the previous Veteran and Community Grants and Supporting Younger Veterans programs. The VWG Program offers 2 streams of grants:

1. Under Stream A, grants of up to \$50,000 per grant are available for small-scale, local and community-based practical projects and activities that support safe, accessible environments for veterans and their families to enable social connection and positive engagement to improve wellbeing. The majority of grants offered in 2022–23 are for small grants.
2. Under Stream B, grants from \$50,001 up to a maximum of \$150,000 are available for large projects that deliver practical wellbeing support services and activities of broad-scale benefit to veterans and families in the community.

The intended outcomes of the VWG Program are to deliver projects that:

- fund organisations which can sustainably deliver services to the veteran community now and into the future
 - increase opportunities for members of the veteran community to engage in social and community activities and/or improve health behaviours and support healthy places
 - support the development of well-researched and tailored services for veterans, with a particular focus on services supporting those at risk of experiencing poor mental health
 - increase collaboration amongst organisations to expand services and harness existing expertise for the benefit of the veteran community
 - increase awareness of veterans' issues and/or services within the veteran community.
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The Community Grants Hub and DVA (the delegate) administer the program in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017](#) (CGRGs).

The VWG Program intent is to support Australian veterans and forms part of Program 2.4 Veterans Community Care and Support in DVA's Portfolio Budget Statement. The VWG funding round opened on 2 November 2022 and closed on 8 December 2022 with a total of up to \$3,552,000 (GST exclusive) available to applicants in this grant round.

As a highly competitive grant round, there was a strong interest in the VWG Program and successful applications were of a very high standard, with a large number of applications received. Applications were assessed according to the procedures outlined within the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (refer to the selection process below). Following the delegate's decision, 57 applications were approved for funding.

DVA is pleased to share this feedback as part of our commitment to sharing information with the sector and to acknowledge the time and effort applicants put into developing applications. The aim of this feedback is to help applicants to strengthen future applications by understanding how to prepare strong responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity. Each unsuccessful applicant has also received individual feedback.


Future grant opportunities will be made available for the VWG program. You can find out about new grant opportunities on [GrantConnect](#).

Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and application compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. DVA as the policy owner, determined where applicants did not meet the eligibility and applications compliance criteria.

DVA assessed and considered eligible and compliant applications submitted through a Targeted Competitive, grant process. Applications were considered by the DVA Grants Advisory Committee (the committee). The committee, established by DVA, provides a source of advice and assistance for assessing grant outcomes. The committee reviewed applications and provided advice to inform DVA's funding recommendations to the delegate. Assessment included consideration of:

- how well an application met the criteria
- how an application compared to others
- whether an application provided value for money.



The committee considered whether applications provided value with relevant money (as defined by section 8 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth)), taking into account:

- the relative value of the grant sought
- the quality of the project proposal and activities
- the extent to which the geographic location of the application matches the Australian Government's priorities to support those living in regional Australia
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the VWG program outcomes and objectives
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will address a need and demand for the veteran community and families
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates relevant experience and performance history to ensure that it will successfully deliver outcomes.

Preferred applications were identified based on the strength of the responses to the selection criterion and the demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Specifically, the committee recommended applications which best:

- demonstrated a strong understanding of the Australian Government's objectives to sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing, build community capacity, potentially expand on existing services and raise awareness of important issues faced by the Australian veterans community
- demonstrated a strong understanding of the challenges faced by the Australian veterans community
- demonstrated the relevant experience and expertise to deliver services and/or activities in support of the Australian veterans community and meet the intended outcomes of the VWG Program
- demonstrated ability to manage risks and have established governance processes in place to deliver services and/or activities
- demonstrated veteran community knowledge, links, networks and/or partnerships and how they would be leveraged to deliver services and/or activities
- demonstrated ability to achieve VWG Program targets and performance manage service delivery and/or activity outcomes.

The committee recommended organisations to the decision maker, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, for funding. The Minister made the final decision to approve the grant to 57 suitable organisations, including the grant funding amount to be awarded.

Note: applications were also screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, including confirming they were an eligible entity type.

Selection results

The selected organisations provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Criterion 1 – Project need and suitability

Describe your project and why it is needed

1.1. What activities will you undertake and how many people in the veteran community do you expect will participate in the activities (what will you do)?

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications demonstrate what activities would be undertaken by the project and how many people from the veterans' community were expected to participate in such activities.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not clearly address what activities will be undertaken by the project.</i></p>	<p>The application described in detail the project activities, such as who their target audience was and why (older demographic who were identified 'at risk' and how the proposed activity would assist/address the issue), how many classes they were going to hold and for how long during the course of the year and the expected participation rate.</p>

1.2. Who is the target group and why does your target group need this project? Provide data, research, community feedback, surveys and so on (who will it help)? *Note: target group examples could include all veterans, at risk veterans, transitioning veterans, younger veterans, veterans' families.*

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly identify a target group (for example, all veterans, veterans at risk, transitioning veterans, younger veterans or veterans' families) and describe key challenges experienced by the group that would be addressed through the delivery of the proposed project. Competitive applications also provide relevant data and information to support claims made.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not clearly identify a target group, nor describe a need for the proposed project.</i></p>	<p>The application described the target group as ageing veterans experiencing balance challenges. The application demonstrated the need for such a project, identifying the increased risk of falling as we age supported by research on hospital emergency admissions.</p> <p>They also linked how the activity could directly address the risk and improve the wellbeing of the target audience.</p>

1.3. How will the activities address the particular needs of your target group (how will it help)?

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate how addressing the identified need of the target groups will address existing challenges and deliver opportunities for the veteran community.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not clearly demonstrate how addressing the identified need of the target groups will address existing challenges and deliver opportunities for the veteran community.</i></p>	<p>The application described what the activity would include, how it was designed for the target group, including considerations such as age, location, and direct links with the target group.</p> <p>They looked not only at the physical side of the exercise but also the psychological skills improvement needed as a strategy to reduce the risks of falling.</p>

1.4. In what location(s) will the activity be undertaken and how has this been determined in terms of the greatest veteran needs?

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications describe the geographic location in which the project activities will be delivered in, and successfully explains why the specific location has been chosen in terms of the greatest veteran needs.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not clearly demonstrate the extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priority needs of the veteran community.</i></p>	<p>The application outlined their relationships with 3 local ESOs, their member numbers and the age composition of their membership. As an initial audience, this provided a significant base of participants with a plan to expand more broadly to the local veteran community.</p>



Criterion 2 – Achieving outcomes

Describe how the target group(s) will benefit and how you will achieve program outcomes

2.1 Describe the outcomes you expect to achieve from your project, and how do these relate to the VWG Program outcomes? A minimum of 2 outcomes must be addressed (why is it important and what will change).¹

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate how their proposed project would meet the objectives and intended outcomes of the VWG Program.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not provide evidence that demonstrates how the proposed project activities will contribute to delivering the VWG Program outcomes.</i></p>	<p>The application provided a strong response detailing how specific activities of the proposed project would address the identified need to reduce the risk of falls and explained how the approach will contribute to the overarching VWG Program outcomes, such as the additional benefits of engaging in social activities and improved health behaviours.</p>

2.2 How will you know the project has been successful?

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly describe an approach to measuring success and capturing data to verify the success of the proposed project.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not describe an approach to measuring and capturing data to verify the success of the proposed project.</i></p>	<p>The application described in detail how the success of the proposed project would not only be measured by participation rates but also increased collaboration amongst a number of ESOs and wellbeing groups.</p> <p>The success of these collaborations for the veteran community could then result in access to extra services that could be offered to veterans and harness existing experience.</p>

¹ Refer to Overview for the listed Veteran Wellbeing Grants Program outcomes.



Criterion 3 – Ability of organisation to deliver

Describe your organisation’s experience delivering projects that benefit the target group(s)

3.1. Your organisation’s history of past performance or experience in delivering similar projects, including the outcomes achieved (what your organisation offers).

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate the organisation’s capability to manage project outcomes by providing examples of past performance through the use of roles, relevant experiences, skills and qualifications.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not demonstrate the organisation’s past performance and relevant experience needed to successfully deliver the outcomes of the proposed project.</i></p>	<p>The application strongly demonstrated the organisation’s relevant experience in delivering similar and relatable projects that targeted and supported the veteran community, including delivering other initiatives the assessors could see alignments and success.</p> <p>Success of these projects was demonstrated through the high retention rates of up to 94% of veterans completing their program and a growth rate of up to 268% over the past financial year.</p> <p>Furthermore, the application detailed the relevant expertise, skills and qualifications of the organisation’s staff, demonstrating further ability to deliver.</p>

3.2. Your organisation’s community knowledge, links, networks and partnerships and outline how you will leverage these capabilities to successfully deliver the project (how your organisation is connected to the community).

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate strong links to veteran specific communities, networks, and partnerships, and how these links will help deliver the project.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not describe the partnerships and/or networks that play a role in the delivery of a project, rather just provide a list of associated organisations and veteran community groups without any further context.</i></p>	<p>The application strongly demonstrated the organisation’s ability to clearly understand the current issues and challenges for the veteran community, and in particular their target 'at risk' group. The application details a plan to collaborate with ex-service and key organisations in order to enhance their capacity to deliver programs that address the issues that impact their target cohort.</p> <p>The application also details that collaborative partnerships are also leveraged to enhance participant reach and access specifically designed wellbeing support services for participants and their families.</p>



3.3. Detail the specific project risks associated with your activity and how you will manage them (how your organisation plans for success).

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate their project management approach, including governance and planning arrangements to manage risks.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not demonstrate the ability to identify project risks and apply processes to manage them.</i></p>	<p>The application strongly demonstrated their management approach to risks associated with the proposed project, including realistic situational examples and a robust governance approach to mitigating risks.</p> <p>Potential risks identified in the application included physical injury and detailed mitigation strategies to address issues such as veterans pushing through pain that included routine benchmark pain monitoring before and during the sessions to assess how their bodies are responding to the exercise.</p>



Criterion 4: Ability to measure, report and meet targets (for Stream B only)

For grant funding requests of \$100,000 or more.

How will you meet the measurable targets and measure achievement of deliverables for the veteran community? Provide specific detail on each measurement and how you will manage and report. Targets to include are the achievement of:

- >85% of project goals achieved
- >75% of participants completed the whole activity
- >50% of feedback sought from veteran participants, with 95% positive feedback
- >50% of participating veteran participants with demonstrated improvements against program objectives as appropriate. Note: a benchmark measurement will need to be taken at the start of the activity
- <10% variance on forecast costs.

Competitive response	Competitive example
<p>Competitive applications clearly demonstrate their ability in developing a performance measurement system that meets VWG Program targets and ensures that project deliverables are met.</p> <p>Non-competitive response</p> <p><i>Non-competitive applications do not demonstrate the ability to develop performance measures for target-setting.</i></p> <p><i>A number of applications just copied the example targets as their response without applying their own project deliverables.</i></p> <p><i>Value for money is a key consideration for government as these grants are spending public money. Ensuring an organisation has set expectations and targets to strive towards shows consideration that they will deliver and will be able to clearly report on what they have achieved and also how they could have improved.</i></p>	<p>The application strongly demonstrated their ability to develop performance measures to meet VWG Program targets. The application details several key performance indicators and project benchmarks to ensure that targets will be met. These include measuring the increase of participant numbers, the number of new courses developed, the number of courses completed, the establishment of veteran community programs, expansion of partnerships and networks and wellbeing improvement rates.</p> <p>The application also details the mechanisms in which data on key performance measures will be collected including through reporting mechanisms such as budget reports, feedback forms, measuring improved fitness and tracking participation and retention of veterans.</p>