Saluting their Service (STS) Commemorative Grants Program 2022–23

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has provided the following General Feedback for applicants of the Saluting Their Service Commemorative (STS) Grants Program 2022–23 Batches one to 3 grant opportunity.

Overview

The objective of the STS Program is to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

The intended outcome of the grant opportunity is to provide funding for projects and activities which:

- promote appreciation and understanding of the experiences of service and the roles that those who served have played
- preserve, add to the sum of knowledge on, or provide access to information about Australia's wartime heritage.

There were 2 categories of grants available:

1. Community Grants (CG) – Grants to a maximum of $10,000 are available for local, community-based projects and activities.

2. Major Grants (MG) – Grants between $10,001 and $150,000 are available for major commemorative projects and activities that are significant from a national, state, territory and/or regional perspective.

The application period for the 2022–23 STS Program round opened on 9 February 2022 and closed on 7 February 2023, with assessment of applications divided into 3 batches during this period.

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 and Results

The grant opportunity received 453 applications across the 3 batches. $3.5 million was available to distribute. Using an open competitive selection process, 290 applications were selected for funding, to a value of $3,481,766 (all figures are GST exclusive.).

There was a strong interest in STS and successful applications were of a high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined below.

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to DVA for the final decision on whether an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria.

DVA assessed and considered eligible and compliant applications through an open competitive grant process. All assessed applications were considered by the Commemorative Grants Advisory Committee (CGAC). The CGAC, established by DVA, was comprised of subject matter experts. The CGAC assessed applications and provided advice to inform the department's funding recommendations to the Delegate.

Applications were then initially assessed on merit by DVA, based on:

- how well they met the criteria
- how they compared to other applications
- whether they provided value with relevant money.

The CGAC then considered each eligible and compliant application and the assessment, having regard to:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated that it will contribute to meeting the program outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities will be promoted or distributed to reach target groups.

The CGAC is chaired by the Repatriation Commissioner of the DVA and comprises representatives from the Returned Services League of Australia, Australian Local Government Association, Australian War Memorial, Office of Australian War Graves and policy staff within DVA.

The CGAC made funding recommendations to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, who was the final decision maker.

General Feedback

Successful applicants proposed projects and activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving the program objectives. Successful applicants demonstrated strong alignment to the aim of the grant to acknowledge and commemorate those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Applicants who were unsuccessful could have strengthened their application by ensuring:

- their proposed project met the aim of the grant, that is, acknowledges and commemorates the active service of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations

- all applicable sections of the application form were completed. For example, a number of unsuccessful applicants failed to sufficiently address the criteria. Applicants should pay close attention to the dot point instructions preceding each criterion and ensure their criterion responses address these points

- their proposed project was an eligible project or activity type (as per section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)

- requested funding is for eligible items only (as per section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines). For example, a number of unsuccessful applicants or applicants awarded partial funding included ineligible items in their budget, such as catering and travel costs

- their proposed project represented value with relevant money

- their proposed project was ready to proceed and could be completed within 12 months of the funding agreement being executed, for example, information provided in their application clearly outlined the various steps required to successfully deliver the project

- information provided in their application clearly demonstrated how the community or other stakeholders would access/use the project for commemorative purposes

- information provided in their application form had sufficient detail to allow the CGAC and Minister to understand the scope and relevance of the proposed project

- that if they intend to proceed with the project should a reduced funding amount be offered, 'Yes' was selected to the application form question *'Will the project proceed with reduced funding?'*

- relevant supporting documentation was provided, such as quotes for and letters of support for Major Grants.

Read the supporting information before applying.

- It is important to read all available information provided when applying for funding, especially the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and any instructions included on the application form

- The grant opportunity documentation is specific to each round and contains important information about the purpose of the program, eligibility and compliance requirements, eligible items, timeframes and how to apply

- The application form includes helpful information and details on questions relating to eligibility, and mandatory information required by the Hub and DVA for the selection process