



**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program 2024–25

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program 2024–25 grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 12 November 2024 and closed on 17 December 2024.

The objectives of the VWG Program are to:

- maintain and improve the independence and quality of life of members of the veteran community, by providing funding for activities and projects that sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing
- deliver activities and projects not already provided by Commonwealth or state funding to the veteran community to build future community capacity
- expand on existing activities and projects offered to veterans in new regions within Australia or in the development of new activities and projects that will be offered in more than one location
- raise awareness of the important issues faced by the veteran community.

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

- organisations can sustainably deliver 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 or support healthy places
- support the development of well-researched and tailored activities and projects for veterans, with a particular focus on activities and projects supporting younger veterans and vulnerable cohorts such as veterans transitioning from the Australian Defence Force or veterans at risk of experiencing poor mental health
- increase collaboration amongst organisations to expand activities and projects and harness existing expertise for the benefit of the veteran community
- increase awareness of veterans' issues and/or activities and projects within the veteran community.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all eligible and compliant applications through a Targeted Competitive grant process.

The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Decision Maker (the Minister for Veterans' Affairs).

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was based on:

- meeting the compliance and eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria and aligned with the VWG Program objectives and outcomes
- the volume of applications received and how each application compared against other applications
- the provision and appropriateness of the requested attachments
- the extent to which the project or activity demonstrated value with relevant money
- whether risks and proposed mitigation strategies were suitably identified
- the extent to which the application met the requirements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

All applicants were notified of the outcome of their grant application in writing.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what were quality responses to the assessment criteria.

Criterion 1

Project need and suitability

Describe the project or activity and why it was needed. The response was required to address the following:

- what project or activity would be delivered (that is, what they would do) and how many people in the veteran community were expected to participate. If other community groups such as first responders were involved, the percentage of veterans compared to other groups was identified.
- how they identified that the project or activity was needed (for example, research, data or other supporting evidence), and which target groups would be involved (that is, who they would help).

Note: examples of target groups could include all veterans, at risk veterans, transitioning veterans, younger veterans, or veterans' families.

- how the project or activity would address an identified need, gap, risk or issue for veterans, improve use of a facility, or enhance services provided to veterans (that is, how would it help)
- the location where the activity would be undertaken and why that location(s) had been chosen (that is, where and why).

Strong applications

The strongest applications were those which best demonstrated:

- a deep understanding of the objectives to sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing, build community capacity, expand on existing services and raise awareness of important issues faced by the veterans' community
- a strong understanding of the challenges faced by the veteran community
- the applicant's ability, experience and expertise to deliver services and/or activities in support of the veteran community and meet the intended outcomes of the VWG Program
- the applicant's ability to manage risks and implement governance processes to ensure delivery of services or activities.

Criterion 2

Achieving outcomes

Describe how the target group(s) would benefit and how they would achieve program outcomes.

- The response described the outcomes expected to be achieved by the project, and how these related to the VWG Program outcomes. A minimum of 2 outcomes for stream A or 3 outcomes for Stream B were addressed (that is, why it was important and what would change).
- For small value equipment funding requests of \$5,000 or less only, applicants needed to address at least one of the Program outcomes and provide details of how the support equipment would enable delivery of one of the outcomes.
- Applicants identified how they would determine the project had been successful and how it would be reported. This included what and how data/information would be collected, who it would be collected from, and how it would be analysed and reported.

Strong applications

The strongest applications were those which best:

- outlined veteran community knowledge, links, networks and/or partnerships and how this would enable them to deliver the project or activity
- identified the target group requiring the project or activity, described why the proposed project or activity was needed, and how it would solve challenges and provide opportunities for the veteran community
- outlined the applicant's ability to achieve VWG Program targets and outcomes, including how the project or activity would deliver a minimum of 2 outcomes for Stream A applications and 3 outcomes for Stream B applications
- explained the funding required for the project or activity, any other financial or in-kind co-contributions, and included written confirmation of these co-contributions

- explained how the project or activity would increase opportunities for the veteran community to engage in social and community activities, improve health behaviours, and/or support healthy places and safe environments
- provided additional information demonstrating the requirement for the project or activity
- showcased how the applicant would collaborate with other organisations and harness existing expertise, to deliver benefit to the veteran community
- outlined how the applicant would increase awareness of challenges and issues faced by veterans and services to address these needs
- described how the applicant would measure the benefit delivered to the veteran community, for example a formal evaluation of the service delivered using standardised tools.

Criterion 3

Ability of organisation to deliver

Applicants described their organisation's experience in delivering similar projects that benefit the target group(s). Their response addressed the following requirements:

- the organisation's history of past performance or experience in delivering similar projects, including the outcomes achieved (what the organisation offers)
- the organisation's community knowledge, links, networks and partnerships
- how the organisation would use its networks to successfully deliver the project (how the organisation is connected to the community)
- how the organisation planned for success, including:
 - identifying project risks and how they would be managed
 - how the project would be delivered within the 12-month activity period.

Note: identification of project risks was not required for the purchase of low value equipment/assets and funding requests of \$5,000 or less.

Strong applications

The strongest applications were those which best:

- described strong community engagement and veteran community knowledge, links, networks and/or partnerships
- outlined how the organisation would deliver the project or activity through collaboration (such as through shared resources or joint delivery of activities)
- explained how the project or activity would be delivered and the timeline for completion
- detailed how the organisation had delivered similar projects or activities and how the project or activity milestones would be met, and outcomes would be delivered
- outlined possible risks associated with the project or activity and these would be managed (such as low participant numbers or a wet weather plan for outdoor activities)

Strong applications also included detailed quotes or evidence of costs to support the funding request, where relevant.

Strong Stream B applications provided information on planning and preparation to ensure successful project delivery within a 12-month period. These applicants provided a detailed scope of works to be undertaken, detailed quotes, floor plans, council approvals, and asset or landowner's permission to conduct the project, where applicable.

Criterion 4

Performance measures and monitoring – ability to measure, report and meet targets (ONLY for activities or projects seeking \$100,000 or more)

Where a response to criterion 4 was required, applicants completed an additional template.

In the template, applicants:

- described how their project would achieve each of the following mandatory measurable targets:
 - more than 75% of participants to complete the whole activity
 - feedback would be sought from more than 50% of veteran participants, with 95% positive feedback attained
 - more than 50% of veteran participants to demonstrate improvements against program objectives (note: a benchmark measurement would need to be taken at the start of the activity)
 - less than 10% variance against forecast costs
- described how they would measure, manage and report on each of the mandatory measurable targets listed above. These were identified as being related to short, medium or long-term outcomes.

Strong applications

The strongest applications were those which:

- included up to 3 additional targets and goals specific to their activity type, such as more than 80% of participants demonstrating competency in a new skill, following delivery of training
- clearly explained the goals of the project or activity, how delivery would be achieved, how outcomes would be monitored, and how identified risks would be managed
- detailed connections with veteran participants after the program and how feedback would be collected and used
- outlined how the project or activity would support the target group that is known to be vulnerable
- described the use of collaborative partnerships or networks to deliver the project or activity, as opposed to simply providing a list of associated organisation and community group names.

General feedback

Read the supporting information before applying.

It is important that applicants read all grant opportunity documentation carefully when applying for funding, especially the grant opportunity guidelines and any instructions 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 information about eligibility and outlines the mandatory information required by the department and the Community Grants Hub.

Applicants should also develop expectations and targets to show what they will deliver, how they will deliver it and how it will be measured and reported on.

Individual feedback

For eligible applications, the department provided individual written feedback about the outcome of the application.