



OFFICIAL

2025–26 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program

Feedback for applicants

Thank you for your interest in the 2025–26 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program grant opportunity. We appreciate the time and effort you put into your application.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (the Department) is providing the following general feedback for grant applicants to support future grant applications.

Summary of the Grant Opportunity

Application period Batch 1: opened 31 March 2025 and closed 31 August 2025.

Applications received: 130

Application period Batch 2: opened 1 September 2025 and closed 5 February 2026.

Applications received: 213

Summary of the round: The program forms part of DVA's Program 3.2 – Commemorative Activities Program of the Portfolio Budget Statement.

The objective of the program is to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel who served in wars, conflicts and peace operations, including, National Service personnel and their families.

Conflict of Interest Management for Assessment Staff

All Community Grants Hub and Departmental staff were required to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest before participating in the assessment process. Where a conflict was identified, appropriate steps were taken to manage it, which could include:

- Excluding the team member from undertaking assessment related to the affected application(s).
- Assigning the application(s) to an alternate assessor.
- Documenting the conflict and the management action in accordance with the Department's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub reviewed all applications to confirm they met the eligibility and compliance requirements for the grant opportunity. This information was provided to the Department's Grant Opportunity Delegate, who made the final decision on whether each identified grant application met those requirements. Grant Applicants whose applications were identified as ineligible or non-compliant were notified of the outcome in writing by the Community Grants Hub.

Following completion of these checks, the Department undertook the preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications through an Open Competitive grant process. This involved assessing applications against the published selection criteria and any additional requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Following the preliminary assessment, the Department convened a Grants Advisory Committee to make final recommendations to the Financial Delegate. The Grants Advisory Committee was made up of subject matter experts whose role was to review the assessed applications, provide advice, and make recommendations to the Grant Opportunity Delegate.

Before participating in the assessment process, all Grants Advisory Committee members were required to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. In cases where a conflict was identified, appropriate management strategies were applied to ensure the integrity of the process. These strategies included:

- Excluding the panel member from discussions or decisions related to the affected application(s).
- Reassigning the application(s) to an alternate assessor.
- Documenting the conflict and the management action in accordance with the Department's Conflict of Interest Policy.

In undertaking their role on the Grants Advisory Committee, panel members were required to consider:

- Whether applications met all eligibility and compliance requirements listed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
- How well responses addressed the published assessment criteria.
- The overall quality of applications compared to others received.
- The completeness and relevance of supporting attachments.
- Whether the proposed project demonstrated value for money.
- How the proposed activities aligned with the objectives of the grant opportunity.
- Any risks identified and the strategies proposed to manage those risks.

Selection Results

There was strong interest in this grant opportunity, and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicant(s) demonstrated their ability to meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the published assessment criteria. Applicants were notified of the outcome of their application in writing at the end of the selection period.

The following feedback is provided to assist grant applicants in understanding what comprised a strong application and what quality responses looked like against the requirements of the grant opportunity.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Read the supporting information before applying:

It is important to 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.

It is important to respond to all required criteria relating to the project/activity. Applicants should ensure they respond to each required criterion with specific information linking to the commemorative purpose.

Applicants that would like to be considered for partial funding should indicate on the application form the minimum amount they could accept to proceed with the project. Opting in for partial funding allows the application to be considered for funding even if there are ineligible items and activities.

The criterion feedback and examples provided below are based on successful applications in previous rounds and are intended to be a guide only.

Attachments and evidence:

Ensure the correct template is provided when required and using clear scanned copies or originals when appropriate that have been sought as close to the submission date as possible. This demonstrates evidence that project is ready to commence.

Value for money and risk:

It is important to acknowledge funding gaps, or potential gaps and providing mitigation strategies that match the complexity of the project or overall cost of the project. Ensuring that the scope of the project / activity match the funding requested, and providing evidence of partnerships and in-kind support all lead to an application that has lasting community benefit relative to cost.

Criterion 1: Significance of the project or activity

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- outlined how the project or activity would be significant to the local community (only for Community Grants)
- provided details on how the project or activity would be significant to a broader region, the nation, a state and/or territory (only for Major Grants)
- explained how the project or activity would contribute to Australia's understanding of its wartime heritage
- explained how the intended target audience would be involved in and/or use the project or activity.

What strong applications did well:

- A strong response clearly articulated how the project/activity matters to the local community/region and how it would honour and promote understanding of the service, sacrifice and experiences of Australia's service personnel by linking to the commemorative purpose.
- For example:
 - Outlining the honour board will commemorate local service personnel or that the exhibition is a major tourist attraction.
 - Highlighting that the project will help the local community and broader public appreciate and understand the contributions of Australians in times of conflict.
 - Stating that the target audience will be involved in the project during commemorative events held under the flagpole.

Criterion 2: Delivery of the project or activity

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- explained how they would implement the project or activity
- outlined or attached quotes for items that funding is being sought for
- provided examples of their organisation's experience in delivering similar projects or activities
- explained the relevant experience and qualifications held by key personnel who would be managing the project or activity and their role in delivering the project or activity.

What strong applications did well:

- A strong response clearly outlined how the project/activity was ready to proceed and how it would be completed within a 12-month period through the provision of documents to support delivery and budget readiness including but not limited to clear scope / timelines, permissions (where required), quotes, any co-contributions to manage funding shortfalls and both the organisation and its suppliers capability to deliver For example, by:
 - Confirming a dedicated space for the installation available in the museum.
 - Providing written quotes from relevant tradespeople which outlined the resources needed and the timeline planned for implementation.
 - Outlining the successful delivery of a recent project which involved curating and displaying historical photographs.
 - Highlighting the contractors' qualifications, tenure within their industry and previous experience in completing similar work.

Criterion 3: Delivery of the project or activity

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- identified how the project or activity would be promoted or distributed to the community
- described what community consultation had occurred and how those stakeholders have confirmed their support for the project or activity. For example, this may have been through letters of support from community representatives, Federal or State Members of Parliament, Council or ex-service organisations
- outlined financial or in-kind co-contributions toward the project and provided evidence of these co-contributions
- demonstrated working relationships with stakeholders and explained how this would improve their delivery of the project or activity.

What strong applications did well:

- A strong response clearly outlined how the project would be distributed to the community through practical promotional plans and demonstrated that the project / activity would be visible, and what consultation has been undertaken for the project including support received for application, any active working relationships with stakeholders. For example;
 - Outlining that a publicity campaign delivered both digitally and in collaboration with the local newspaper.

- Consulting with local veterans and service personnel to ensure the event would be sympathetic and relevant or providing letters of support from the community or Council Members.
- Outlining which organisations were providing financial contributions and how much funding would be provided or detailing the in-kind contribution arrangements, including volunteer hours offered, and products and/or services that would be provided.
- Stating that the organisation has an established relationship with the local council and local businesses that had supported similar projects in previous years.

Tips for Future Applications

- Start early and read the **Grant Opportunity Guidelines** carefully.
- Check eligibility and gather required evidence before drafting your application.
- Provide complete, relevant attachments and references.
- Address each assessment criterion directly and clearly.
- Explain how your proposed activities deliver outcomes and demonstrate **value for money**.
- Identify risks and outline strategies for managing them.

Next Steps

- Individual feedback will be provided by DVA and will be included in the written advice about the outcome of your application.
- If you would like to know about upcoming grants opportunities for funding, you can [register](https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Register)¹ to receive email alerts with [GrantConnect](https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Login)² the Australian Government's grants information system.

¹ <https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Register>

² <https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Login>