



2025–26 Veteran Wellbeing Grants Program

Feedback for applicants

Thank you for your interest in the 2025–26 Veteran Wellbeing 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: opened 20 November 2025 and closed 5 February 2026.

Applications received: 241

Summary of the round: The Australian Government announced up to \$3.827 million (GST exclusive) for the VWG Program for the 2025–26 financial year. Applications were considered under 2 grant categories:

Stream A Small Grants

Stream A Small Grants of up to \$50,000 per grant were available for local, community-based, small-scale projects and activities. These grants were for practical projects and activities that support safe, accessible environments for veterans and families to enable social connection and positive engagement to improve wellbeing. This included small-scale non-capital infrastructure projects.

Stream B Large Grants

Stream B Large Grants from \$50,001 up to \$200,000 per grant were available for large projects that deliver practical wellbeing support projects and activities of broad-scale benefit to veterans and families in the wider community.

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 Decision Maker. 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 Decision Maker.

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

Providing too much or not enough information

It is important to include sufficient information to respond to the assessment criteria, while ensuring all content is relevant to the proposed project or activity. Responses should be proportional to the funding amount applied for:

- Applicants for Stream A (Small Grants) are required to submit a **brief** outline of their proposal against the nominated assessment criteria.

- Applicants for Stream B (Large Grants) must provide **detailed** information addressing the nominated assessment criteria.

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 wellbeing 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 templates and mandatory attachments are completed and attached correctly before attaching to your application. For example, letters of declaration, current public liability insurance, letters of support, evidence of co-contributions and formal quotes.

Use clear scanned copies or originals, where appropriate. Please ensure the validity date of the documents provided are obtained as close to the submission date as possible. This demonstrates evidence that the project is ready to commence.

Value for money and risk:

It is important to acknowledge funding gaps, or potential gaps, and provide mitigation strategies that match the complexity or overall cost of the project. Ensuring that the scope of the project/activity matches the funding requested, and providing evidence of partnerships and in-kind support, all contribute to an application that demonstrates 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 delivered
- explained how the project or activity was identified and needed by the veteran community
- outlined how the project or activity addressed a need, gap, risk or issue for veterans
 - for renovation work only, how the project or activity would improve veterans' use of or access to, the facility
- identified what veteran cohort their project/activity would support
- outlined how many members of the veteran community would directly participate in or benefit from their project
- identified where their project or activity would take place and why this location was chosen.

What strong applications did well:

A strong response clearly described how the project/activity would be delivered and why the project was needed within the veteran community by linking to the wellbeing outcomes of the program, by:

- outlining that the project will increase awareness of veterans' issues and/or services within the veteran community through building safe environments including the impact of a successful delivery of project
- highlighting that the project would specifically target cohort such as younger veterans that are at risk of experiencing poor mental health
- identifying that accessibility upgrades to the venue would allow more veterans to participate in wellbeing events.

Criterion 2: Expected outcomes of the project or activity

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- explained the outcomes they expect to achieve
- identified how their project would achieve the minimum program outcomes
 - Stream A: must address at least 2 program outcomes
 - Stream B: must address at least 3 program outcomes
- outlined how they knew their project or activity would be successful
- gathered evidence to demonstrate the success of their project or activity.

What strong applications did well:

A strong response clearly outlined the outcomes the project would achieve and included evidence showing how the project/activity would be successful. For example:

- outlining the program outcomes that will be achieved, and the impact of the project on the veteran and community
- highlighting that the project will be sustainable beyond the funding period by providing lasting infrastructure that will support veterans and families of veterans into the future
- undertaking pre- and post-wellbeing surveys or participant satisfaction surveys to continuously improve the program.

Criterion 3: Ability to deliver the project or activity

When addressing the criteria, applicants:

- provided examples of their organisation's experience in delivering similar projects/activities, and included the outcomes achieved
- outlined their organisation's community knowledge and links to the veteran community
- outlined their networks or partnerships with other organisations
- outlined how they will leverage these networks/partnerships to successfully deliver the project or activity
- addressed how these networks/partnerships confirmed their support. This was done through letters of support from community representatives, Federal or State Members of Parliament, Council or ex-service organisations
- identified how the project or activity will be delivered within the 12-month grant period
- identified what the risks to their project or activity were, and how the risks would be managed.

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. This was demonstrated through the provision of documents to support delivery and budget readiness, including but not limited to:

- clear scope/timelines of the project
- permissions to undertake project activities, where required
- quotes and any co-contributions to manage funding shortfalls

A strong response also demonstrated both the organisation's and the suppliers' capability to deliver the project by:

- providing examples of their organisation's experience in delivering similar activities, including practical wellbeing activities for current and former ADF members and their families
- providing written quotes from relevant tradespeople which outlined the resources needed and the timeline planned for implementation
- highlighting the contractors' qualifications, tenure within their industry and previous experience in completing similar work
- outlining the successful delivery of a recent project which involved curating and displaying historical photographs
- 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.

Criterion 4: Performance measures and monitoring – ability to measure, report and meet targets (ONLY for activities or projects seeking \$100,000 or more)

Applicants requesting funding of \$100,000 or more, must complete the template with the Stream B application form when responding to this criterion.

When addressing the criteria, applicants:

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

What strong applications did well:

A strong response clearly outlined how they would achieve the mandatory targets listed above. This was demonstrated through:

- digital and paper surveys
- informal feedback sessions
- participant check ins
- budget reviews
- expenditure limits.

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 not be provided for this grant opportunity. For unsuccessful applications, reasons will be provided in the outcome letters.
- 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>