



Frequently Asked Questions

Published 21st June, 2019



The Stronger Country Communities Fund was established by the NSW Government to help deliver local projects to regional communities. The fund aims to provide the kind of projects that improve the lives of people who live in regional areas.

Round Three will provide an additional \$100 million for community projects in regional NSW, this includes at least \$50 million for youth-related projects. This brings the total funding for SCCF to \$400 million and the total value of the Regional Growth Fund to \$1.7 billion.

FAQs

What are the main changes to Round Three?

Round Three has an increased focus on young people aged 12-24, a broader scope of eligible projects including programs as well as local infrastructure, longer application and delivery timeframes, and will accept applications from eligible community organisations as well as regional councils.

Who can apply?

The 93 regional councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and the Unincorporated Far West groups (councils), regional Joint Organisations of Councils and eligible community organisations can apply.

What is the eligibility criteria for community organisations?

Community organisations must be incorporated, not-for-profit organisations or other organisations that have a public purpose and carry out activities in NSW, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Applicants must hold an Australian Business Number (ABN), Australian Company Number (ACN) or be registered under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. Applicants must have or be able and willing to purchase at least \$20 million public liability insurance. The cost of public liability insurance can be included in the project budget as part of the administration costs.

Ineligible applicants are:

- an individual or group of individuals
- an unincorporated organisation
- a for-profit commercial organisation.

Where must projects be located?

Projects must be located in one of the 93 regional NSW Local Government Areas, Lord Howe Island or the Unincorporated Far West. Projects in metropolitan Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong are not eligible. For a full list of eligible Local Government Areas, please visit the [Regional Growth Fund eligibility page \(https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund-eligibility\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund-eligibility).

How much funding is available in Round Three?

There is a total of \$100 million available including at least \$50 million for projects aimed at young people (12-24 years). The remaining funding can be provided for other local community and sporting infrastructure, street beautification, and community programs and events.

How much funding is available for each Local Government Area?

A minimum of \$750,000 is available in each regional Local Government Area. Funds will be split across regional NSW according to a funding formula based on population and the cost of construction in each Local Government Area.

When do projects need to start and be completed?

Projects must commence within 12 months of the funding deed being signed, and be completed within three years of the announcement of the project.

What kinds of projects are eligible to be funded?

The SCCF supports projects (infrastructure and programs) that deliver for local young people and the community. Projects for young people must

- develop new, or upgrade existing infrastructure for young people, including local sport infrastructure where used by young people
- deliver programs for young people.

Projects for young people should be aligned to the areas of community, wellbeing, connectivity and work ready.

General community amenity projects must

- construct new, or upgrade existing local community infrastructure
- be capital works related to street beautification and other public 'place making'
- deliver programs that benefit the local community
- be infrastructure to assist the delivery of non-youth community programs.

The purchase of land or buildings is an ineligible cost under the SCCF. If this is an element of your project, you will need to find another source of funding for that component.

What is meant by "projects for young people should be aligned to the areas of community, wellbeing, connectivity and work ready"?

For the purpose of SCCF

- community programs should help enhance young people's artistic, civic, cultural, leadership, recreational and sporting development
- wellbeing programs should support young people to understand, improve and maintain their physical and mental health
- connectivity programs should provide young people access to affordable and reliable transport and digital options
- work ready programs should support young people to pursue further education and training to develop key employability skills.

What are examples of youth-related and general community amenity projects?

Please see the [Stronger Country Communities Guidelines](https://www.nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities) (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities>) for examples.

Are community service projects eligible?

Infrastructure projects relating to the provision of community services may be funded if the project has demonstrated high community support, it is shown to be a considerable priority for the community, and it is not to deliver a core government service.

What should an applicant do if they are unsure if a project is eligible?

Refer to the examples of eligible projects in the SCCF guidelines. If you are still unsure, speak to your allocated Business Development Manager from the department or forward your question to regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au>).

To find your local Business Development Manager, please email regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au>) for a referral.

What information will applicants need to provide?

Applicants need to describe all the project elements and complete questions in the application form, including

- demonstrating that the project meets the requirements of the SCCF guidelines and contributes to the objectives of the SCCF
- a detailed project scope
- a project plan in the template to be provided on the [SCCF webpage](https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/) (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/>).
- a clear and detailed project budget in the template to be provided on the [SCCF webpage](https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/) (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/>).
- information on how infrastructure will be operated and/or maintained when it is complete (if applicable)
- landowner consent (if applicable)
- a letter of support from the relevant NSW state sporting organisation if a sports-related project is seeking over \$1 million in grant funding (if applicable)
- evidence of community consultation and strong community support
- **For all community amenity and infrastructure applications:** information on how the project will help boost the liveability of the local community and evidence of how the project will meet a community need, including who and how many people in the community will benefit and how those benefits will be measured.
- **For all youth infrastructure and program applications:** information on how the project will benefit young people and how young people have been involved and consulted in the development of the proposal and how the benefits will be measured.

Do applicants have to use the provided project plan and budget templates?

It is strongly recommended that applicants use the provided SCCF templates to give their projects the best chance of being deemed eligible.

Is there support available for completing an application?

To help you prepare your applications, project plan and budget templates and an application checklist are on the [website](https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/) (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/stronger-country-communities/>).

Webinars will be held during the application open period to assist in application development.

Your local Business Development Manager will also be able to provide information on the program to assist applicants to develop applications.

To find your local Business Development Manager, please email regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au>) and ask for a referral.

How are applications submitted?

Only eligible applicants are able to submit applications via an online grants portal. Applications can only be submitted through this online portal.

How many projects can an applicant apply for?

There is no limit to how many project applications applicants can submit. Funding available for a Local Government Area may not be fully committed for Round Three when there are no eligible projects or insufficient eligible projects for young people.

Can an applicant submit a single application for a project that has works across multiple sites in the one Local Government Area?

Yes. When two or more projects are related (have a similar scope of works at one or more sites) they may be bundled together. For example, lights on two or more sports fields may be packaged together in one application. Applicants should select one primary location site in the application and specify the other proposed locations and the scope of works to be completed at each site. The minimum combined grant amount needs to be \$50,000.

Can an applicant submit a single application for a project that has works across multiple sites across more than one Local Government Area?

No. Project applications must be specific to a Local Government Area and will be prioritised against other projects in that Local Government Area in the assessment process. Applicants can submit multiple applications across more than one Local Government Area for elements of a larger project, but each project application must be deliverable independently of any other application

Can a large project be broken into multiple parts and submitted as separate applications?

Yes, this is possible, but each application should have a very clear and defined project description and scope of activities and be in one Local Government Area. Each application should be able to be differentiated easily and be able to be delivered independently of other components. Applicants should be aware that it is possible that only some components/stages of their projects will be awarded funding and the components/stages cannot be swapped or changed after the assessment process.

Are projects in an applicant's forward capital works program eligible?

Yes. However SCCF funding must not be used for any works that have already been approved and funded in an applicant's budget or forward capital works program. If funding for a project has already been approved from the applicant or another source, the SCCF funding needs to be used for works that are in addition to the scope of works that already have funds committed.

Can a project be located on private land?

Projects can be located on private land but must not be solely for private benefit. The applicant will need to show how the facility will be open to the community.

My project requires roads or drainage works as part of the scope. Are these works eligible?

SCCF funding cannot be used for ordinary road maintenance. Minor road works can be considered where they are a small element of a larger project, such as works related to street beautification. Projects solely for road works are not eligible.

What is meant by upgrade?

For the purpose of SCCF

- upgrade is a major renewal or restoration of existing infrastructure. 'Major' means a number of activities are carried out that cause significant changes to the asset. How it looks or how it is used; for example, replacement of multiple components such as roofs, walls, floor coverings, and external landscapes; or a once simple toilet block is now an amenity block with accessible facilities including change rooms.
- upgrades of infrastructure are eligible activities under SCCF.

What is meant by maintenance?

For the purpose of SCCF

- maintenance refers to routine operational activities undertaken to sustain an existing asset in a functional state; for example, changing light fixtures, cleaning carpets, or testing and tagging of equipment.
- maintenance activities are not eligible on their own but can be incorporated in to a major upgrade or renewal of an existing asset.

Should my grant request include GST?

GST is not payable on grant payments to local councils under SCCF because the payments are between government related entities. For eligible community organisations registered for GST and where it is payable, we will pay the approved grant amount plus 10 per cent. If eligible community organisations are not registered for GST, they will need to incorporate any GST paid by them to third parties into the project budgets and the grant amount.

What are eligible project costs?

Project costs that are associated with

- building local infrastructure
- building a website
- delivering programs
- exhibition displays
- hosting an event.

Can project budgets include a contingency allocation?

Yes. Budgets can include up to a total of 20 per cent of the grant amount requested for all administration costs. Contingency costs will need to be part of this 20 per cent. Should your project be successful and the contingency costs included in your budget not used, this amount will be deducted from the final grant payment.

How does SCCF define contingency?

For the purpose of SCCF, contingency is defined as something that may or may not occur but must be dealt with if it does. They are often known unknowns. Should your project be successful and the contingency costs included in your budget not used, this amount will be deducted from the final grant payment.

Do I need \$20 million public liability insurance to be eligible?

Applicants must have or be able and willing to purchase at least \$20 million public liability insurance. If your organisation does not have public liability insurance, the purchase of the insurance can be included in the project budget, but will be counted as part of the 20 per cent administration cost.

What makes a project viable?

A project will be considered viable if it

- has a realistic budget based on substantiated quotes or assumptions
- is cost-effective and represents value for money
- can be delivered within the program deadline
- demonstrates access to the necessary expertise and support to deliver the project
- does not require ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- demonstrates how it will be operated and/or maintained when the project is completed (where applicable).

The project I submitted has received funding elsewhere. Can I substitute another project?

Not during the assessment period. Once the application period has closed, applicants cannot swap in another project. All projects that you would like to be considered must be submitted by the close of Round Three at 5pm on Friday 27 September 2019. Applicants must notify the Department in writing as soon as possible if a project is funded elsewhere. The project can then be withdrawn from assessment to avoid it being considered against other projects submitted in the same Local Government Area.

What community consultation is needed?

Applicants are responsible for consulting with their communities to ensure the submitted projects have a high level of community support. Evidence of the consultation may be

- information in the council's Community Strategic Plan or other plans or processes that show how community support for projects has been captured
- recent consultation carried out as part of a planning process
- council meetings or council events
- community consultation committees or surveys
- social media interactions
- feedback via mail-outs, web forms, and or an applicant's complaints process
- workshops or local activities
- letters of support from local MPs or community members.

For assistance on how best to engage with young people, applicants can use the Advocate for Children and Young People's Resource: [Engaging children and young people in your organisation](#) .

Will choice modelling be used again as part of the assessment process in Round Three?

No. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of consultation and support for the projects they submit as part of the application (see above).

Do applicants need to work with their local Members of Parliament?

Applicants should work with their Local Member of Parliament and their local communities to identify the priority needs for their area and ensure projects put forward for funding have demonstrated community support. Applications should provide evidence of community support for each proposed project, not just evidence of community consultation.

Do applicants need to co-contribute?

Applications requesting between \$50,000 and \$1 million can seek funds for the entire project cost as a grant. Projects requiring grant funding of more than \$1 million will only be considered where the applicant co-contributes a minimum of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The financial co-contribution may be from the applicant or other funding sources, but must be confirmed.

Where can project co-contributions come from?

Co-contributions can come from applicants or other external funding sources. Co-contribution amounts must be confirmed before an application is submitted. If elements of a project have received funding from another grant, the applicant will need to define the scope of the different elements and clearly show how the SCCF funding will be used.

Do applications for tourist signage require approval from Destination NSW?

Tourist signs in NSW are managed by the Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee (TASAC) through Destination NSW. Projects seeking funding for tourist attraction signposting need to follow the requirements set out by TASAC before funding can be issued under SCCF. Applicants do not need to

have an approval for signage in place before submitting their application, but will need to demonstrate permission has been granted before final milestone payments are processed. Further information about tourist signage is available at [Destination NSW](#) .

What is the assessment process?

The SCCF assessment process involves

- checking that the applicant is eligible to apply for funding and can deliver the project
- assessing that projects are eligible, viable, demonstrate evidence of community support and will contribute to the objectives of the fund
- seeking advice from relevant NSW Government agencies (if applicable)
- seeking advice from local Members of Parliament
- prioritisation by a Final Assessment Review Panel
- submitting a prioritised list of eligible projects to the Deputy Premier for approval.

The Deputy Premier will consider the prioritised list of eligible and viable projects and make final approvals in consultation with Minister for Regional Youth.

What makes a project ineligible?

Projects are ineligible if they are

- located outside an eligible Local Government Area
- exclusively for planning activities (e.g. master planning or heritage studies)
- for the maintenance or construction of local roads or other ongoing core service infrastructure works that are the ordinary responsibility of council or other levels of government
- for the delivery of essential or core government services that should be funded from another source, such as local government, the NSW Government or the Australian Government
- seeking retrospective funding to cover any project component that is already complete before funding is awarded
- seeking grant funding for ongoing staff or operational costs beyond three years from project announcement for programs; or any ongoing staff or operational projects for infrastructure
- seeking grant funding under \$50,000
- for a general works package without specific scope, costs and location (e.g. 'upgrade lighting at sports ovals' without identifying the work required, number of sites or the locations)
- exclusively for marketing, branding, advertising or product promotion
- provide direct commercial and/or exclusive private benefit to an individual or business
- not clearly providing benefits that will significantly contribute to the objectives of the fund and demonstration of how benefits will be measured.

Can ineligible projects be referred to a more appropriate funding program?

Yes. Projects that are more suitable for other NSW Government programs may be referred to those programs by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Applications that are referred will be subject to the full assessment criteria of the other NSW Government program to which they are

referred. Applicants may need to update their application to meet the criteria of the referred program. The referred application will not be given preferential treatment over any other application but will be considered on merit in accordance with the guidelines for that particular program.

Copyright Department of Customer Service © 2019