

# NSW Regional Communities Development Fund

## Fact sheet



### Introduction

The NSW Government has allocated \$80 million to establish the Regional Communities Development Fund. The fund is part of the government's \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund to support growing regional centres, activate local economies and improve services.

Assessment methodologies for funding programs don't always accommodate projects that provide important services or community amenity. Social, environmental and cultural benefits are often difficult to quantify and can result in locally significant projects missing out.

The Regional Communities Development Fund provides an opportunity for projects that are highly valuable to their communities, but may not have a benefit-to-cost ratio above one, to be considered for funding.

### Objectives

The fund is designed to identify and support projects that:

- demonstrate high levels of community support
- deliver social, economic, environmental or cultural benefits to communities in regional NSW
- have not been successful through other Regional Growth Fund or Restart NSW Fund programs.

### Funding

Up to \$80 million will be available in the first round.

### Eligible organisations

Only regional NSW MPs can nominate projects for consideration. Organisations eligible to apply for the Regional Communities Development Fund include:

- local councils
- Joint Organisations of Councils
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations
- peak industry or sporting bodies
- Aboriginal organisations including Aboriginal Land Councils.

### Eligible locations

Projects must be located in one of the 93 regional local government areas in NSW, the Unincorporated Far West area or Lord Howe Island.

## Eligible projects

Only projects nominated by Members of Parliament (MPs) representing regional NSW are eligible. Projects must meet all the following criteria:

- be a capital project involving the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade, refurbishment or extension of existing infrastructure
- seek funding of between \$500,000 and \$20 million
- have a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total grant amount if seeking over \$1 million in grant funds (unless an exemption for hardship or disadvantage has been granted)
- be ready to commence within 16 weeks of executing the funding deed
- have construction completed by 31 December 2020
- have been previously submitted and been unsuccessful or ineligible under a NSW Government Regional Growth Fund program or other Restart NSW Fund program; or the applicant can provide written evidence that the project or applicant has faced significant barriers to submitting the project under a Regional Growth Fund or Restart NSW fund program.

## Ineligible projects

Projects must not:

- be on private land, unless there is a clear public benefit and documented consent from the landowner
- have exclusive private benefits
- relate to buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment
- relate to marketing, advertising, or product or event promotion
- require ongoing funding from the NSW Government or Commonwealth Government
- request grant funding for operational expenditure, including regular repairs and maintenance
- be for any scope of works that has already received funding from the NSW or Commonwealth government.

## Application and assessment process

1. Regional NSW MPs are invited to nominate one project in their electorate to be considered for funding via a nomination form submitted to **regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au**
2. A preliminary eligibility check of MP nominations is conducted by program staff.
3. Applicants for eligible projects are invited to complete a detailed application and/or business case and submit it to **regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au**
4. Applications/business cases are checked for completeness and eligibility.

5. Projects are subject to an appraisal process and due diligence review. Stated preference techniques will be used to confirm community support for projects, and to compare support levels across projects.
6. An assessment panel assesses projects against the fund's assessment criteria.
7. Projects are submitted to the Deputy Premier for consideration with final funding approval made by ERC.

The Deputy Premier, in his capacity as Minister for Regional NSW, may nominate multiple projects.

## Assessment criteria

The objective of the Regional Communities Development Fund is to fund infrastructure projects with high levels of community support. The outcomes of the program are to increase economic, social, environmental or cultural benefits to communities in regional NSW.

The assessment criteria are:

- clearly stated and demonstrated community issue or need
- project affordability
- project deliverability
- demonstrated high level of community support.

Applicants will also be required to clearly articulate the project's economic, social, environmental or cultural outcomes for the local community. Applicants should define, quantify and provide evidence to support the claims.

## Key dates

**MP nominations open | 9am, Monday 20 August 2018**  
**MP nominations close | 5pm, Friday 31 August 2018**

**Applications open | 9am, Monday 10 September 2018**  
**Applications close | 5pm, Friday 12 October 2018**

**Project assessments | October–November 2018**  
**Approval and announcement | December 2018**

## Other information for applicants

Applicants are encouraged to draw information from documents used for previous applications for funding under NSW Government funding programs, including the Regional Growth Fund.

Applicants who are seeking exemption from the requirement for a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent need to submit an 'Exemption for Hardship' form at the MP nomination stage.

Funding deeds for successful projects will require project construction to be complete by 31 December 2020 at the latest.

## Enquiries

Contact the office of your regional NSW Member of Parliament.