



STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

Frequently asked questions

The Stronger Country Communities Fund delivers local infrastructure to improve the quality of life for people in regional NSW. Funding is for projects such as parks, community halls, sports' facilities, playgrounds and amenity blocks.

Q Who can apply?

A Applications can only be submitted by eligible councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and the Unincorporated Far West area. Eligible councils include the 92 regional councils (outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong). A full list of eligible councils is provided at nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities

Q When do applications open and close?

A Round Two opens at 9am on Monday 12 March and closes at 5pm on Friday 4 May. Councils must submit all applications by the closing time and date.

Q What kinds of projects are eligible to be funded?

A The Stronger Country Communities Fund supports projects that deliver local community infrastructure or sporting facilities. Projects must be for:

- construction of new or refurbishment/upgrade of existing community infrastructure such as community halls, playgrounds, or toilet blocks

- construction of new or refurbishment/upgrade of existing local sporting infrastructure such as change room facilities, walking and cycle pathways, public pool upgrades, indoor sports facilities or oval/court lighting
- capital works related to street beautification and public 'place making' such as murals, planter boxes or town and tourism signage.

Q What is meant by refurbishment, enhancement and maintenance?

A For the purpose of the Stronger Country Communities Fund:

- refurbishment is a major renewal or restoration of existing infrastructure. 'Major' means a number of activities are carried out that cause material 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
- enhancement is the addition of a component to existing infrastructure that will increase or improve its quality or value. For example, barbecues and toilet blocks at a local park or new kitchen facilities in a community hall

- maintenance refers to routine activities undertaken to sustain an existing asset in a functional state. For example, painting, changing light fixtures, or replacing worn carpet. Maintenance (as a stand-alone project) activities are not eligible under SCCF.

Q Are projects in council's forward capital works' program eligible?

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

Q Can a project be located on private land?

A Projects can be located on private land but must not be solely for private benefit. Council must endorse and apply for the funding, and be able to show how the asset will be operated and maintained throughout its lifecycle.

Q How many projects can a council apply for?

A Councils are asked to make multiple applications with a combined total value that exceeds their funding allocation. Councils are required to submit sport projects that total at least 50 per cent of their total Round Two allocation. There is no limit to how many project applications councils can submit.

Q How are applications submitted?

A Only eligible councils are able to submit applications via an online grants portal. Councils are expected to work with local sporting and other community groups to identify priority projects and submit applications on behalf of these organisations. Organisations interested in putting forward a project are encouraged to read the Program Guidelines and approach their local council very early in the application period. An information sheet outlining all the information organisations need to provide to their local council – in order to have their project considered – can be found at nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities

Q What should I prepare if council is applying for a project on my organisation's behalf?

A For a council to apply on a community group's behalf, it will need to understand all the project elements and be able to complete the questions in the application form. Organisations interested in putting forward a project are encouraged to read the Program Guidelines and approach their local council very early in the application period. Council will set their own cut-off date by when information must be submitted to them. At a minimum, your organisation should provide council with:

- information that demonstrates the project meets the requirements of the Fund Guidelines
- detailed project budget in the template provided on the SCCF webpage
- detailed project scope and timings template on the SCCF webpage
- at least one quote (from a tradesperson or qualified contractor) or detailed estimate from a quantity surveyor or suitably qualified person for each component of the project
- information on how the project will help boost the 'livability' of the local community
- evidence on how the project will meet a community need, including who and how many in the community will benefit from the project
- information on how the project will be operated and/or maintained upon completion
- a letter of support from the relevant NSW state/national sporting organisation if a sports-related project is seeking more than \$1 million in grant funding.

Submitting the above information to councils does not guarantee that a council will submit your project.

Q I have a project with high community support and council has indicated that they will not submit it. What are my options?

A If projects are brought forward to a council by community groups but are not submitted, an independent review process can be requested to ensure the project is legitimate and councils have given it appropriate consideration. Community groups can email sccf.enquiries@dpc.nsw.gov.au to ask for a Review Request Form and return it no later than 5pm, 20 April 2018. This will ensure there is adequate time to review the circumstances before the application period closes.

A panel will consider each review request against a set of criteria. Panel members may consult with council staff or local Members of Parliament to obtain further information about the proposed project's merit and council's reasons for not submitting the project. Where a project is found to have all the relevant information and is a high priority for the community, the panel may ask council to reconsider submitting the project or an alternative outcome negotiated.

Q What if council does not have enough sports projects to total 50 per cent of their Round Two allocation?

A The additional \$100 million for SCCF Round Two is committed to local sports' infrastructure. Where councils do not submit sports projects that total 50 per cent or more of their allocation, their full Round Two allocation of funding may not be awarded. Councils can approach their local, state or national sports' organisations/clubs, sporting facilities and sporting venue operators to seek suitable projects. Special consideration may be granted where it is evident an area may benefit more from investment in general community amenity, such as in the Unincorporated Far West or Lord Howe Island. Councils seeking exemption from the 50 per cent sports' projects quota should submit a request in writing to sccf.enquiries@dpc.nsw.gov.au at least two weeks before applications close (no later than Friday April 20).

Q Do councils need to co-contribute?

A Applications seeking 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 council co-contributes a minimum of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. Councils may be asked to co-contribute to a project if their successful projects' total amount is above their Round Two allocation.

Q Where can project co-contributions come from?

A Co-contributions can come from council, partner organisations or other external funding sources. Co-contribution amounts must be confirmed before an application is submitted.

Q 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. Councils 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](#).

Q When do projects need to start?

A Projects must commence within 12 months of when a letter of offer is provided. Projects must be completed within 24 months of when a letter of offer is provided.

Q What is the 'Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure Study'?

A The Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure Study is an ongoing study that includes data from State Sporting Organisations and Councils on their sporting facility priorities. Learn more about this study [here](#).

Q What community consultation is needed?

- A** Councils 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
 - community consultation committees or surveys
 - social media interactions
 - feedback via mail-outs, webforms, and a council's complaints process
 - council meetings, council events, workshops, local activities
 - letters of support from local Members of Parliament or community members.

Q Are community service projects eligible?

A Infrastructure projects relating to the provision of community services may be funded if the council agrees to submit the application, the project has high community support and it is shown to be a considerable priority for the community.

Q Can a council submit a single application for a project that has works across multiple sites in the one local government area?

A 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. Councils 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.

Q Should costs in the application form include or exclude GST?

A All costs provided in the application form should exclude GST.

Q How will applications be assessed?

A The SCCF assessment process involves the following steps:

- check that projects and applicants are eligible according to the Program Guidelines
- check that the project scope, timings and budget are viable
- community surveys (choice modelling) that show community preferences for all projects submitted in a local government area.
- review and comment from relevant government MPs or Regional Parliamentary Secretaries
- review and comment from the NSW Office of Sport (for sports projects only)
- review and recommendations by a Final Assessment Review Panel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities