Closing the Gap

Aboriginal Affairs NSW

**Community**

**& Place Grants**

Graphical user interface, application, Teams

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Program Guidelines

Delivering local impact in Aboriginal communities by Aboriginal community organisations.

Program Objectives

The Aboriginal Affairs NSW Community and Place Grants Program aims to deliver tangible local benefit and impact to Aboriginal communities against the Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome targets, recognising that Aboriginal communities have the solutions to problems or issues in their community. Projects funded under the Program must contribute to the Closing the Gap targets specifically, not just the broad outcome area.

**Disclaimer: *While NSW CAPO were involved in the development of the grants program,   
they are not involved in its administration or assessment.***

# Program Overview

The Community and Place Grants Program aims to support one-off projects which include programs, equipment, vehicles and infrastructure developed by local Aboriginal communities and with local community support to drive change and contribute towards the [17 socio-economic outcome targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap](https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets). The projects must contribute to the Closing the Gap targets specifically,   
not the broad outcome area. Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the   
17 socio-economic outcome targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Detailed information can be found [HERE](https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets). A summary of the targets is included at Appendix A.

The Closing the Gap NSW Implementation Plan 2022-24 commits to drive tangible change against all 5 Priority Reform areas and 17 Socio Economic Outcome targets agreed in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Community and Place grants support this objective by supporting communities to drive locally-led solutions in   
their communities.

A total of $15 million in funding is available in 2022/23   
via two streams:

**STREAM 1:** Grants of up to and including $100,000.

**STREAM 2:** Grants between $100,001 and $250,000.

A total of $7 million has been allocated to Stream 1 and   
$8 million has been allocated to Stream 2. If the full amount allocated to Stream 1 ($7 million) or Stream 2 ($8 million) is not awarded the remaining funds will be made available in the other stream.

Projects must be delivered by recipients between   
1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023 (this will be   
a condition of grant funding).

**APPLICATIONS OPEN** 9am Monday 5 September 2022.

**APPLICATIONS CLOSE** 5pm Friday 14 October 2022.

Late applications will not be considered or accepted unless Aboriginal Affairs NSW, in its sole discretion, determines that it is in the interests of the fairness of the program to accept the late application – please see ‘How to Apply’ and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for more detail.

Applications are to be completed online at <https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/>. Applications can only be submitted through this method.

An application toolkit including Applicant’s Guide, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and other useful resources are available from the Aboriginal Affairs NSW [website](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/grants/2022-closing-the-gap-strengthening-community-capability-grants/).

You should read the program documentation and complete the eligibility checklist on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website before starting an application and contact Aboriginal Affairs NSW if you need more information.

# Program Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Task** |
| 9am Monday 5 September 2022 | Applications Open |
| 5pm Friday 14 October 2022 | Applications Close |
| October to November 2022 | Assessment and approval of applications |
| Early December 2022 | Successful and unsuccessful applicants notified |
| December 2022 to January 2023 | Funds released |
| 1 January 2023 | Projects commence no earlier than |
| 31 December 2023 | Projects completed no later than |
| Prior to the end of February 2023 | Project reporting and financial acquittals |

# What can I apply for? What will not be funded?

Funding can be used for projects that meet the outcomes of Community and Place Grants Program,   
i.e. deliver tangible local benefit and impact to Aboriginal communities against the Closing the Gap   
socio-economic targets. The following are examples of the types of projects that may be considered   
for funding. See the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for further information and examples on what could be funded.

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| * **Category** | **Examples of Projects** |
| * **Programs** | Projects may include, but not limited to:   * Health, cultural wellbeing, skills development programs for Aboriginal community members * Delivery of programs or services * Events, workshops |
| **Infrastructure** | Projects may include, but not limited to:   * Construction of new infrastructure * Upgrades, repairs, refurbishments, repurposing, or renovations to a building * Fit out of a building * IT upgrades to a building * Purchase of land or property * Landscaping * Installation of fixed structures on land |
| * **Equipment  and Vehicles** | Projects may include, but are not limited to, the purchase or lease of free-standing equipment such as:   * vehicles, buses, trailers * IT equipment * office equipment * equipment needed for service provision * repair to specialised equipment |

**Funding can be used for:**

Funding can be used for projects that meet the outcomes of Closing the Gap Community and Place Grants program. Project could include:

* Activities, programs, purchase or lease of equipment and capital works.
* A single project or multiple activities that form a larger project.
* Local partnership projects where all parties are Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) or Aboriginal community groups and a tangible program or infrastructure outcome is being delivered in an Aboriginal community.

Applicants may include up to 25 percent of the total infrastructure component of their application as contingency (where relevant) and up to 10 percent of the total application for project management and administration. Design, including regulatory applications and approvals costs, must be listed as administration costs.

To be funded, projects must:

* Be delivered in a local Aboriginal community in NSW (state-wide programs or activities are not eligible for funding). Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for guidance on what is considered a local community for the purpose of this grant.
* Show how it will contribute to one or more CTG socio-economic outcome targets.
* Demonstrate community support and involvement in the development and delivery.
* For capital works projects, have property/landowner’s consent and all planning approvals.

Please also refer to examples and program objectives.

**Funding cannot be used for:**

* State-wide projects.
* Projects in a community outside NSW.
* Wages, salaries and on-costs for ongoing staff.
* Sitting fees, travel allowance or costs associated with membership of boards/councils.
* International travel costs. Proposals for domestic travel costs need to demonstrate the benefits of travel to the project, organisation, and community.
* Activities that may create an ongoing dependency on Community and Place Grants Program, i.e. funding over multiple years.
* Costs that are not directly associated with the delivery of the project that is funded by the grant.
* Project costs that are supported by another grant, subsidy or financial assistance.
* Project works or costs that have been or will be covered by insurance claims (for example, repairs following weather events).
* Project costs incurred prior to the earliest possible project start date of 1 January 2023.
* Costs to cover existing debts or budget deficits.
* General operational or business as usual costs.
* Maintenance or construction of residential infrastructure.

# Who can apply for funding?

**To be eligible for an Aboriginal Affairs NSW Community and Place Grant, applicants must be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) or an unincorporated Aboriginal community group[[1]](#footnote-1) with an agreement for an ACCO to auspice the funding.**

An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation delivers services, including land and resource management, that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:

* incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit;
* controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people;
* connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services; and
* governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.

**Eligibility criteria:**

* Applicant organisation must be an eligible legal entity located in NSW and able to enter into a funding agreement with Aboriginal Affairs NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, have an Australian bank account and an Australian Business Number (ABN).
* Applicant organisations must have public liability of at least $10 million per claim or include the cost of insurance within their application.
* An unincorporated Aboriginal community group,   
  which would otherwise not be eligible, may apply if it has entered into an agreement with an eligible applicant organisation, which has agreed to auspice the funding. In this situation the eligible organisation must demonstrate compliance with the two eligibility points above.

Applicants **not** eligible for funding are:

* Individuals.
* Incorporated not-for-profit organisations not controlled or operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
* Unincorporated groups which are not led by Aboriginal people.
* Federal and State Government agencies and bodies.
* NSW Public Schools.
* For-profit organisations, including Aboriginal businesses.
* Unincorporated organisations or groups without an eligible auspicing organisation.
* Organisations that have not met project requirements, including acquittal, and reporting for funding received from Aboriginal Affairs NSW in the previous two years.
* Organisations with redress sanctions, as described in the [National Redress Scheme](https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/institutions).

See the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for further information on eligibility.

**Auspice Organisations:**

An auspicing organisation means that another organisation, which is an eligible organisation under this grant program, agrees to apply for and be responsible for the grant funding, on behalf of your unincorporated association or group.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW has template Auspice Agreements available for funded organisations to use and adapt.

# How to apply

**Applications are to be completed online at the** [**Aboriginal Affairs NSW online grants platform**](https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/)**.**

An Applicant’s Guide and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist applicants are available from the [Aboriginal Affairs NSW website.](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/grants/2022-closing-the-gap-strengthening-community-capability-grants/)

Applicants can choose to submit a video response to application questions on project objectives and outcomes. Aboriginal Affairs NSW staff are available to support applicants with recording and preparing a file for upload,   
if required.

An applicant can apply once per stream for a distinct project in each stream.

An eligible applicant organisation can also auspice on behalf of an unincorporated group.

Applications must be submitted by 5pm Friday 14 October 2022. Late applications will not be considered or accepted unless Aboriginal Affairs NSW determines, at its sole discretion**, that it is in the interests of the fairness of the program** to accept the late application.

This may include that an applicant experienced *exceptional* circumstances that prevented the submission of the application that were:

* reasonably unforeseeable
* beyond the applicant’s control
* unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles. If your organisation is affected by exceptional circumstances, contact Aboriginal Affairs NSW to advise of the circumstances as soon as possible and be able to provide detail and evidence of the exceptional circumstance.

The applicant will be advised of the outcome of their project application by early December 2022.

# Assessment Criteria and Process

This is an open and competitive grants program. Applications will be assessed against the criteria and ranked competitively against each other.

Applications with the highest scores are more likely   
to be funded.

Once the funding round closes, applications will be screened for eligibility. Ineligible applicants will be notified in writing. Eligible applications will then be assessed by a panel comprising of senior officers from Aboriginal Affairs NSW and across NSW government, based on the assessment criteria, within four weeks of submission.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is the final decision-maker and will consider the recommendations of the assessment panel in making a decision.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW staff may request further advice and/or clarification from applicants at any time during the assessment process.

Where the application includes ineligible activities or budget items, applicants may be offered part of the funding sought in their application.

Independent probity advisers will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the application, assessment and decision process. This will help ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

**Assessment will be based on the following criteria:**

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| **Criteria** | **What are we looking for?** |
| Alignment with the Community and Place Grants Program objective: deliver tangible benefit and impact against the Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome targets in a local Aboriginal community | Project clearly demonstrates how it will contribute to one or more of the Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome targets for a local Aboriginal community in NSW. The projects must contribute to the Closing the Gap targets specifically, not just the broad outcome area. |
| Demonstrated local Aboriginal  community support | Clear evidence of broad support from the local Aboriginal community and community involvement in the project design and implementation. |
| Value for money | Project budget is realistic and cost effective. There is a clear link between the budget items and the project activities and outcomes |
| Capacity to deliver | Applicant has demonstrated relevant experience and capacity to deliver  the project.  For infrastructure applications, landowner consent and planning approvals have been provided |

See [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/grants/2022-closing-the-gap-strengthening-community-capability-grants/) (FAQs) for more information on the criteria.

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# Other Important Information

**COVID-19 impacts**

Due to the changing impacts of COVID-19 across NSW, projects must be in-line with NSW Government public health orders and advice, for example with regard to social distancing and public gatherings. Up-to-date information is available [here](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules).

If COVID-19 rules in NSW change during the grants   
period, Aboriginal Affairs NSW may request further information from you on how you propose to manage COVID-19 risks for your project.

**Funding arrangements and reporting**

Successful applicants will be required to:

* Enter into a Funding Agreement with Aboriginal Affairs NSW within two weeks of the grant offer being made.
* Start and complete funded activities and events by the dates specified in the Funding Agreement.
* Notify Aboriginal Affairs NSW of any proposed changes to your funded activity.
* Acknowledge the support of the NSW Government in accordance with the [Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/grants/Aboriginal-Affairs-NSW-Funding-Acknolwedgement-Guidelines.pdf).
* Report on outcomes from the activity and acquit the grant within 21 days of project completion.
* If the acquittal is not completed within the required timeframe, you will not be eligible to apply for Aboriginal Affairs NSW grants for the following two years.

**Disclosure of information**

Information relating to the successful applications will be included in:

* public media releases
* an announcement on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website
* Aboriginal Affairs NSW social media.

This information may include the name of the applicant and their business, a description of the funded project and the funding amount.

Applicants should be aware that information provided to Aboriginal Affairs NSW may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW). Information may also be made publicly available as a result of an order for papers made by the NSW Legislative Council under Standing Order 52.

Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

Any Aboriginal Cultural or Intellectual Property submitted in an application remains the property of the relevant community organisation or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person and will be dealt with in accordance with the [Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/our-agency/staying-accountable/aboriginal-cultural-and-intellectual-property-acip-protocol/)

**Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. The authors, publisher and any person involved in the preparation of this publication take no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of information contained herein.

# Support and Contacts

For any questions regarding the Aboriginal Affairs NSW Community and Place Grants Program please contact your nearest AANSW Regional Office on the phone numbers below or email [grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au).

Please note that while AANSW Regional staff will be pleased to answer questions about the application process, they cannot provide advice or comments on the content or merits of your application.

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| --- | --- |
| AANSW Regional Office | Contact Number |
| Batemans Bay | 02 8575 1199 |
| Tamworth | 02 8575 1172 |
| Coffs Harbour | 02 8575 1068 |
| Broken Hill | 02 9228 5224 |
| Bourke | 02 9228 5224 |
| Dubbo | 02 8575 1073 |
| Greater Sydney | 02 8575 1105 |
| Newcastle | 02 9273 3968 |

Appendix A

Closing the Gap socio-economic outcomes and targets

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|  | Outcome Area | Targets that application must address |
| 1 | Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives | Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031. |
| 2 | Children are born healthy and strong | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent. |
| 3 | Children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years | By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent. |
| 4 | Children thrive in their early years | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent. |
| 5 | Students achieve their full learning potential | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent. |
| 6 | Students reach their full potential through further education pathways | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent. |
| 7 | Youth are engaged in employment or education | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent. |
| 8 | Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 per cent. |
| 9 | People can secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent. |
| 10 | Adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system | By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent |
| 11 | Young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system | By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by 30 per cent. |
| 12 | Children are not overrepresented in the child protection system | By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent. |
| 13 | Families and households are safe | By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero. |
| 14 | People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing | Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero. |
| 15 | People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters | By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia’s landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests.  By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests in the sea. |
| 16 | Cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing | By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken. |
| 17 | People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives | By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion. |

1. **Unincorporated Aboriginal groups -** Unincorporated groups must be Aboriginal community groups – that is, they must be led by Aboriginal people. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)