

A photograph of three children on a playground structure. A girl in a blue hoodie and shorts is on the left, a boy in a yellow shirt and blue shorts is on the right, and another child is partially visible in the center. They are standing on yellow circular platforms. The background shows a park with trees and a fence. A dashed orange line with circles runs across the top of the image.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

2018 Program Guidelines

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Get in touch with the
Office of Regional Development

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1300 679 673



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER



The NSW Government has put this state in the strongest economic position in Australia. This has led to more investment in our regions than ever before.

Our \$80 billion record infrastructure investment over four years is already having a real impact in regional communities.

Roads are being upgraded. New and refurbished hospitals are being built and opened.

New and improved schools are being designed and are going up.

After seven years of responsible budget management the NSW Government is in a position to create opportunities that will make a real difference to regional communities.

The first round of the Stronger Country Communities Fund saw \$100 million dedicated to making regional communities even better places to live and work. I'm pleased to see that funding is already rolling out, for projects like new playgrounds, town halls, and recreation facilities.

After an unprecedented demand for funding in round one, an additional \$100 million for local sports infrastructure has been added to Round Two. This means a total of \$200 million will be invested in local sports and amenity projects in Round Two. We know how important sport and healthy lifestyles are to people living in the bush and on the coast. It's what brings communities together.

Each local government area in regional and rural NSW will have access to the funds and the opportunity to receive their fair share.

Playgrounds, sports fields, parks, walking pathways, country halls and showgrounds contribute to the social fabric of our wonderful towns and regional cities, and help foster connectedness and town pride.

Our Government has made a strong commitment to regional NSW, spreading the benefits of our economic success across the state.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for country communities to benefit from significant investment in our towns and regional cities.

I encourage communities to make the most of this opportunity by proposing projects to their local council that will make a real difference to the place they call home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Barilaro', written in a cursive style.

The Hon John Barilaro

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW

Minister for Skills

Minister for Small Business

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Fund Overview

The Stronger Country Communities Fund was established by the NSW Government to help deliver local infrastructure projects to regional communities. The objective of the fund is to provide the kind of infrastructure that improves the lives of local residents.

After an unprecedented demand for local projects in the first round of the fund, the NSW Government has doubled the funding total for Round Two to \$200 million.

Opening in March 2018, some enhancements have been made for Round Two including:

- an increased focus on local sporting infrastructure
- a single round for all councils
- expanded scope of eligible projects
- change to the requirements for project costing evidence including quotes.

Eligible applicants

The Stronger Country Communities Fund is available to all 92 regional local government areas, Lord Howe Island and the Unincorporated Far West. Regional local councils are those outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Applications can only be submitted by eligible councils, Lord Howe Island and the Unincorporated Far West.

Councils are asked to make multiple applications with a combined total value that exceeds their funding allocation.

Councils are expected to work with sporting and other community groups to identify priority projects and submit applications on behalf of these organisations. Councils are encouraged to consider project partnerships, however only councils can submit an application. Local Members of Parliament will be working to identify the priority projects in their electorate and will work with councils to ensure projects with high community support are submitted.

Organisations interested in putting forward a project are encouraged to read all the program details and approach their local council early in the application period.



Timing

All projects must commence within a 12-month time period and be completed within two years of funding approval.

The key dates for all councils in Round Two are:

Round Two applications open for all councils	9am, Monday 12 March 2018
Round Two applications close for all councils	5pm, Friday 4 May 2018
Eligibility, assessment and approval process	May to August 2018
Announcement of successful projects	August 2018

Round Two Funding

There is \$200 million available in Round Two for local amenity and sporting infrastructure projects.

Each eligible council will have a specified allocation of funding committed to projects in their area.



\$100 million is for general community amenity and \$100 million is for local sport infrastructure projects. To reflect the funding split, councils are required to submit sport projects that total at least 50 per cent of their total Round Two allocation. If a council does not submit sport projects that total on or above this quota, their full allocation may not be committed.

Where a sports project is seeking over \$1 million in grant funding, a council must obtain a letter of support from the relevant NSW state sporting organisation.

Councils will be sent a letter informing them of their total Round Two funding allocation. The total Round Two amount available to each council will effectively be double their Round One allocation, plus or minus the amount that was committed to in Round One.

Grant Amounts

Individual project applications must seek a minimum of \$50,000. Applications seeking between \$50,000 and \$1 million can be for the entire project cost as a grant. Projects requiring grant funding of over \$1 million will only be considered where there is a minimum financial co-contribution towards the project of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The financial co-contribution to the project can be from council or other funding sources, but must be confirmed.

Community consultation

Councils will be required to provide evidence of community consultation on the projects they submit. This could include information in the council's Community Strategic Plan and other plans or processes that show how community support for projects has been captured. If projects are brought forward to a council by community groups but are not submitted, an independent review process can be requested to ensure councils have given the project appropriate consideration. Details of the review process are outlined in the Fund Frequently Asked Questions.

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Eligible Projects

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
- construction of new or refurbishment/upgrade of existing local sporting infrastructure
- capital works related to street beautification and public 'place making'.





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Eligible Project Examples

Examples of eligible infrastructure include:

General community amenity, place making and street beautification		Local sporting infrastructure	
Community halls	Community kitchens, barbecue and recreation facilities	Oval or court lighting, sports field fencing or surfacing	Amenities for sports participants and spectators
Playgrounds and parks	Murals or community art instalments	Sports field and golf course drainage and irrigation	Indoor sports facilities
Toilet blocks	Town and tourism signage	Sports clubhouses, change rooms and grandstands	Court resurfacing including synthetic surfaces
Libraries	Seating, planting boxes, paving	Skate parks and mountain bike tracks	Community fitness stations (fixed)
Shade cloth and pergolas	Memorials or statues	Aquatic facilities and pools	Accessibility upgrades, walking or cycle pathways

Infrastructure projects related to the delivery of community services may be considered where the council is willing to submit the application and the project is shown to be a priority for the community.

Ineligible projects

Projects must not:

- be located outside an eligible Local Government Area
- be exclusively for planning activities
- be for the maintenance or construction of local roads or other core service infrastructure works that are the ordinary responsibility of council or other level of government
- seek retrospective funding to cover any project component that is already complete/underway
- be for any works that have already been approved and allocated funding in councils forward capital works program
- seek grant funding for ongoing staff or operational costs
- seek grant funding under \$50,000
- be 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)
- be for events, marketing, branding, advertising, or product promotion
- provide direct commercial and/or exclusive private benefit to an individual or business.

Examples of ineligible types of projects from Round One include:

- aerodrome refuelling facility
- master planning for adventure trails
- truck wash facility
- causeway infrastructure
- training and film production.



NEXT STEPS

Applications

All applications will be made online and will be required to provide the following:

- detailed project scope
- appropriate project plan in a provided pro-forma
- clear and detailed project budget in a provided pro-forma
- at least one quote (from a tradesperson or qualified contractor) or detailed estimate from a quantity surveyor or suitably qualified person
- information on how the project will help boost the livability of the local community
- evidence on how the project will meet a need of the community 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 sporting organisation if a sports-related project is seeking over \$1 million in grant funding.

Only eligible councils are able to submit projects for consideration. If projects are brought forward to a council by community groups but are not submitted, an independent review process can be requested to ensure councils have given the project appropriate consideration.

Details of the review process are outlined in the Fund Frequently Asked Questions.

Assessment process

- Applications will be checked for eligibility and viability before entering a community choice modelling process with the other projects submitted in the same LGA.
- Choice modelling is an approach used to understand community preferences. A representative sample of community members in each LGA will be asked to 'state' their preference in a survey in order to quantify the community's preference for each proposed project.
- Sporting projects will be checked by the NSW Office of Sport to ensure they generally align with the results of the Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure Study (if relevant) and the sport facility plans of councils and NSW state sporting organisations.

Referral of projects to more appropriate funding program

Projects that are more suitable for other NSW Government programs may be referred to those programs. 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.



If you are successful

Councils will be asked to review, accept and return a signed funding deed.

Councils must not make financial commitments for funded activities until funding deeds have been executed.

Requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances. Changes or variations may be rejected or accepted subject to certain conditions.

Grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the funding deed.

Councils will be required to pay back unspent funds or those funds which have not been spent in accordance with the funding deed.

Councils may be required to participate in a program evaluation to determine the extent to which projects have contributed to the objectives of the Fund. This would include providing evidence of how projects have resulted in a measurable change to the lives of local residents.

Any information submitted by councils may then be used for material prepared by the NSW Government.





FIND OUT MORE

nsw.gov.au/strongercountrycommunities

Contact us

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