



Diversity and Social Cohesion

Feedback summary

Overview

Diversity and Social Cohesion grants are aimed at building stronger Australian communities. They do so by supporting projects that build the long-term capacities of higher need and at-risk communities, including through the promotion of stronger community relations and the development of sustainable community partnerships.

Communities are considered “at risk” if they experience or are at risk of negative outcomes, such as high levels of unemployment, low education outcomes and low English language proficiency. For Diversity and Social Cohesion grants, higher need communities include those with high levels of cultural diversity and have low levels of social cohesion.

DSS recognises and supports the work of civil society organisations working to support high need and at-risk communities. These organisations have deep experience in the sector and strong commitment to promoting inter-community harmony and understanding. DSS is committed to supporting services which create strong bonds within communities and build feelings of trust and belonging.

Selection results

DSS received 259 applications for this funding round which were of a very high quality. Applicants overall demonstrated a clear understanding of the impact, targeting and reach of their proposed activities as well as specific location-based, known social issues within their areas.

The preferred applicants were offered funding based on proposals with high quality responses for all selection criteria and with consideration for ensuring national coverage of funding of high needs communities across Australia. The number and quality of proposals received demonstrated the wide range of providers skilled and able to offer these important services for the Australian public.

The funding round was very competitive and accordingly only proposals of a very high quality could be funded.

Selection process

DSS considered each proposal against four equally weighted selection criteria which are listed below. Only organisations which rated highly in all aspects of the selection criteria were identified as preferred applicants.

The Department also emphasised that in responding to any of the selection criteria for funding rounds, applicants needed to provide evidence to support claims about how they meet each of the criteria. During the application process, the Department provided assistance for applicants in providing evidence including a fact sheet on the types of evidence that could be used for addressing selection criteria as well as guidance on how to use evidence.

In determining the results of the round, DSS also considered the overall distribution of grants investment to ensure adequate coverage of:

- all states and territories
- the balance between national providers and local grant recipients
- gender, ethnicity and disability within regions as well as intercultural relations of recipients
- impact, targeting and reach of the proposed activity.

Further details about the quality of proposals are detailed for each of the selection criteria below.

Criteria 1: Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity in the chosen community/communities and/or target group/s.

Strong applicants demonstrated key strengths in relation to Criteria 1, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant specifically identified a diversity and social cohesion issue that the proposed activity would address.	Low English language literacy reduced the employability of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) migrants in the community.
The applicant explicitly identified a target community for the proposed activity.	Specific information on the profile, characteristics and geographic location of the target community for the activity.
The applicant provided strong evidence of the existence and importance of the issue in the target community.	Statistical evidence of the impact of the issue on the wellbeing and inclusion of those in the target community.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 1 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating an understanding of the identified issue, target community, and aims of the funding round
- supporting their application with specific and relevant data (e.g. census, survey, academic or other research)
- ensuring the proposed activity is within the scope of the funding round.

Criteria 2: Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.

Strong applicants demonstrated key strengths in relation to Criteria 2, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant provided a clear plan for the implementation of the activity.	The proposal provided an implementation plan including methods to overcome potential risks.
The applicant convincingly explained how the activity would address the identified issue in the target community.	The proposal clearly described the expected outcomes of the activity and their relevance to the identified issue.
The proposal represented value for money.	The proposal provided a detailed budget and involved collaborating with other organisations and leveraging off other funding sources and existing infrastructure.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 2 in a number of ways:

- explicitly identifying and describing the connection between the activity and its expected outcomes
- providing documentation for consortium arrangements
- demonstrating value for money through the provision of a budget which would show that investment would be made in services that cost-effectively address the identified issue.

Criteria 3: Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring activities to achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Strong applicants demonstrated a range of strengths in relation to Criteria 3, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The organisation had demonstrated experience in developing and delivering similar activities to the target community or similar communities.	Specific examples of similar activities developed and delivered for the target community or similar communities in the past.
The applicant had strong governance processes for the activity.	Deliverables and outcomes were clearly specified, with a robust and established governance structure.
The applicant had received and effectively administered government funding in the past.	Details of funding previously received and outcomes achieved, demonstrated capacity to meet reporting and funding requirements.
The applicant had experience monitoring activities and reporting to government and other stakeholders.	The proposal identified the outputs and outcomes of the activity, indicators for the outputs and outcomes, and a system for reporting them.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 3 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating outcomes of similar activities delivered to similar communities
- describing monitoring and reporting systems already in place for other activities
- listing key stakeholders and their involvement in the activity.

Criteria 4: Demonstrate your organisation’s capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the activity’s objectives in the chosen community/communities and/or target group/s.

Strong applicants demonstrated a range of strengths in relation to Criteria 4, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant provided relevant information on staff skills and experience.	Detailed descriptions of key positions and their roles in ensuring the effective delivery of the activity.
The organisation’s structure supported delivery of the activity.	Inclusion of detailed organisational chart highlighting capabilities.
The organisation had mechanisms in place to train, support and develop staff.	Details of support mechanisms and training and development activities to which staff have access.
The applicant had strong links to the target community and the capability to involve the target community in the development and delivery of the activity.	Details of existing activities and partnerships in the target community.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 4 in a number of ways:

- explaining the relevance of staff skills and experience to the activity
- providing information on the resources and infrastructure available to support the delivery of services
- demonstrating experience engaging and managing volunteers (where volunteers are likely to be involved in the delivery of the activity).

Further Feedback

To register to receive further feedback, please email grants@dss.gov.au providing all of the following details:

- Organisation name, as used on the application for funding (legal name or trading name, if different from the legal name);
- The Application ID issued by DSS upon receipt of the application for which feedback is sought;
- The name of the funding round(s) as per the application pack materials and application form (feedback for more than one funding application can be requested in the one email);
- A contact name and telephone number; and
- A contact email address.

To be eligible to receive feedback for the Diversity and Social Cohesion round you must register by **Friday 13 February 2015**.

The Department will undertake to provide individual feedback to organisations within 12 weeks of the closing date for registrations. Please refer to the [DSS Feedback Policy](#) for more information.