## Frequently Asked Questions the Strong and Resilient Communities grants program

**Q. Why is the Strengthening Communities grants program changing?  
A:** The [Strengthening Communities Activity](https://www.dss.gov.au/communities-and-vulnerable-people/programs-services/strengthening-communities) is being redesigned into the Strong and Resilient Community (SARC) grants to better align and target funding to Australian Government priorities such as building social cohesion and addressing emerging community need.

**Q. Which Strengthening Communities grant programs form part of the redesign?**

**A:** The following grant programs will form part of the redesign:

* [Community Capacity Building](https://www.dss.gov.au/communities-and-vulnerable-people/programmes-services/community-capacity-building)
* [Volunteer Management](https://www.dss.gov.au/communities-and-vulnerable-people/programmes-services/volunteer-management)
* [Diversity and Social Cohesion](https://www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/diversity-and-social-cohesion-program-dscp/diversity-and-social-cohesion)
* [Multicultural Arts and Festivals](https://www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/diversity-and-social-cohesion-program-dscp/multicultural-arts-and-festivals).

**Q. Has funding been cut?  
A:** No. There have been no cuts to funding.   
  
$18 million remains available under the new program as under the Strengthening Communities grants.

**Q: Is the Volunteer Grants program changing?**

**A:** No. The $10 million annual [Volunteer Grants](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/communities-and-vulnerable-people/programmes-services/volunteer-grants) program will continue to be separately funded, acknowledging the valuable work of more than six million Australian volunteers in supporting communities.

**Q: What’s different about the SARC grants??   
A:** Strong and Resilient Communities grants will provide a whole-of-community approach to emerging challenges through three distinct grant programs:

* Community Resilience
* Inclusive Communities
* National Projects and Research.

The Department of Social Services understands that local communities know their local challenges better than anyone else. That’s why, under SARC, grants will provide a more flexible program structure that enables communities to determine how funding can best address their needs.

Local communities can identify needs and a single or multiple organisations can come together to provide local solutions to create a more integrated, cohesive society.

**Q: How can community organisations find out more about the redesign and when the funding rounds open?  
A:** The Department of Social Services has informed all affected community organisations about these changes. Further information will be made available on this web page as consultations continue.

The Department expects to open funding rounds in May 2017.

**Q: Why is the Government redirecting funding from current Strengthening Communities activities such as volunteer management to a focus on programs that address community cohesion and resilience?  
A:** Funding will help build the enabling structures which are vital to well-functioning, cohesive and resilient communities. Volunteering will remain one of a number of community enablers that get people into jobs and reduces social exclusion and marginalisation.

**Q: What kinds of volunteer activities will be supported under SARC grants?   
A:** Projects supporting people and communities experiencing disadvantage will continue to attract priority funding under the new program.

Volunteering is a proven pathway to reduce social exclusion and marginalisation and to get people into jobs.

SARC-funded projects may include volunteering activities, either by referring volunteers to other community organisations or directly engaging volunteers in the SARC-funded project.

Activities that address the needs of marginalised Australians such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and disengaged youth will also be prioritised.