

Overview

Phase Two of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) will support community recovery by funding \$25 million worth of projects and initiatives that will promote community well-being, social and broader recovery and future disaster resilience following the bushfires. Stream 1 will involve allocation of funds to local councils for smaller-scale, short term community projects. Stream 2 will involve allocation of grants to medium and long-term community projects. This guideline covers BCRRF Phase Two Stream 1.

The funding for the BCRRF is provided through the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. The BCRRF guidelines have been developed in consultation with Emergency Management Australia and are supported by the National Bushfire Recovery Agency. Funding will be made available to support community recovery of areas in New South Wales impacted by the unprecedented bushfires from 31 August 2019 onwards. Resilience NSW are the lead disaster management agency for NSW, responsible for all aspects of disaster recovery and building community resilience to future disasters.

Objective

The objective of Phase Two Stream 1 of the BCRRF is to deliver flexible, small-scale grants to local councils for smaller-scale, locally led community recovery activities. The purpose is to support communities overcome the social impacts of the bushfires.

Funding

Phase Two Stream 1 is a non-competitive funding round that has payments available of either \$250,000 or \$100,000 to eligible, priority bushfire affected local government areas (LGAs) in NSW. Local councils eligible for Phase 2 Stream 1 have been identified through prioritised consideration of social recovery indicators including capturing residential impact, small business support needs and percentage of land scarred by the bushfires. Councils will receive notification in writing advising the total funding amount they are eligible.

Funding will be available from 29 September 2020. Funding Deeds will be executed as quickly as possible and payments made shortly after. All required documentation needs to be complete and submitted before payment will be released. Funding will be administered by Resilience NSW.

Eligibility

Applicants

Eligible applicants are local councils that have been determined as priority social recovery councils and have been declared in New South Wales (NSW) relating to bushfires from 31 August 2019 onwards, and are eligible for Category C funding assistance under the Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. These local councils are:

- Armidale Regional
- Bega Valley
- Blue Mountains
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Dungog
- Eurobodalla
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Greater Hume
- Hawkesbury
- Kempsey
- Kyogle
- Lithgow
- MidCoast
- Mid-Western
- Nambucca
- Oberon
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Queanbeyan-Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Snowy Valleys
- Tenterfield
- Upper Lachlan
- Walcha
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

Local councils are the only eligible applicants for Phase Two Stream 1 funding.

Projects

Phase Two Stream 1 funding is intended to be flexible in order to meet recovery needs of local communities. Local councils are asked to undertake activities within a disaster declared LGA related to bushfires from 31 August 2019 onwards that contribute to community recovery and/or resilience including projects that support community wellbeing.

Projects will need to contribute to fulfil one or more of the following Disaster Recovery Outcomes:

- The needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in disaster recovery
- The community is aware of the disaster recovery processes
- The community can express its changing disaster recovery needs
- Community members are aware of the risks of future disasters
- The community has improved capacity and capability to respond to future disasters
- Business and not-for-profits have in place adequate mitigation practices for risks and threats
- Government, private sector, civil society and organisations are engaged in plans for preparedness and management of the recovery

Local councils are required to use a minimum of 25% of their Phase 2 Stream 1 funding towards a council-led community grants program to target small-scale community activities that meet one or more of the Disaster Recovery Outcomes. The remaining funds can be used towards other projects that meet one or more of the Disaster Recovery Outcomes. Example projects are provided overleaf.

Local council-led grants program

For local council-led community grants program, the application must include a Grants Outline Program that details how the program outcomes are consistent with this guideline, details of eligibility and duration of the program as well as detail on the selection process. Use of BCRRF funds for the administration costs to run the council-led grants program are permissible as reasonable program management costs from the remaining 75% of the overall Phase 2 Stream 1 funds per local council. This may be re-assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Resilience NSW must be consulted with prior to any changes to outcomes or duration to the local council's grants program after award of Phase Two Stream 1 funding. Delivery of the local council's grants program must be consistent with the guideline. Local councils will be responsible for providing evidence that the grants program, as a project, complies with the auditing and reporting requirements outlined in this guideline.

Example Projects

Projects eligible for funding could include but are not limited to:

- Regional social events and digital communication initiatives that support social recovery, commemoration and improve community connectedness;
- Programs and initiatives that support community recovery and well-being including support for connectedness, improved identity of place and cultural heritage;
- Community education programs to improve regional knowledge and resilience in response and preparedness to future disasters and how to be better prepared for hazards into the future;
- Neighbourhood and community strengthening activities that focus specifically on capacity building, and knowledge building and sharing.

Local councils are encouraged to partner with local organisations and community interest groups to design and deliver the projects.

Activities that are not eligible for funding

- Application that seek support for supplementing, increasing or continuing ongoing service delivery that is the core business of the council;
- Applications that request ongoing program funding;
- Applications for projects and/or activities that are not related to the community recovery attributed to the bushfire event;
- Applications that request covering existing debts or budget deficits.

How to Apply

Local councils will be provided a link to fill in a simple [online application form](#) in Enquire2 portal. New users will need to register a new account. Information required includes:

- Local council contact details,
- Grants Outline Program (template provided in the [online application form](#)) for the council-led community grants program,
- Proposed activity(s) and estimated costs,
- Nomination of which Disaster Recovery Outcomes align with the proposed activity(s),

Only one application is allowed per local council. Multiple activities may be included as part of an application. Resilience NSW will review and approve the application. Should insufficient or unaligned information be provided Resilience NSW may request further clarification from councils.

Local councils will need to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with Resilience NSW (NSW Government) to receive funding. Late application requests for submission extension must be made in writing to Resilience NSW setting out the reasons for the request prior to the application close date. A funding agreement will be issued to the local council upon award. Applicants will be expected to have an appropriate level of insurance cover the details of which will be determined in the funding agreement. Applications will be reviewed and awarded as promptly as possible.

At the completion of the project(s), local councils will be asked to provide a brief summary of the activities that were funded and evidence of expenditure via the Enquire2 portal.

Review Process and Timeframes

Local councils are asked to submit the online form as soon as possible. Phase Two Stream 1 funding will be open for applications until midday 27 October 2020. Applications will be reviewed by Resilience NSW to ensure:

- All required documentation is complete and submitted,
- Proposed projects align with funding objectives outlined in this guideline.

Councils will receive notification in writing advising the total funding amount they are eligible for. Funding Agreements will be drafted as soon as possible. Councils will be informed in writing on the status of their application. Successful councils will be informed of the status of their successful application executed as soon as possible and payments released soon after. Further financial management requirements will be outlined in the funding agreement.

Local councils must complete projects and expenditure by 30 June 2022. Extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extensions cannot be granted without prior approval from Resilience NSW and the Australian Government.

Projects will be monitored for compliance and progress during delivery in alignment with the guideline and the funding agreement requirements. Local councils will be required to provide an update report quarterly at the end of each quarter, until the completion of the project. This includes report of actual expenditure under the grant. A short completion report and evidence of expenditure will be required to be submitted within 2-months of project completion.

Contact

For further information and technical queries relating to the application form and Enquire please contact the Resilience NSW via email at bcrrf@resilience.nsw.gov.au.

Public Acknowledgment

Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, all projects under the BCRRF must appropriately acknowledge and recognise that it is jointly funded under the Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Local councils must acknowledge the funding contributions of the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments at any public events, in announcements, or any other promotional material or publicity relating to the projects funded the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Funding Program. Should any materials differ from the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement requirements the local council must seek prior approval from the Commonwealth.

These publications must also include both the State and Commonwealth Government logos and the following disclaimer: 'Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and

New South Wales Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government'.

Governance

Record keeping

For expenditure under the BCRRF, Local councils must keep an accurate audit trail for seven (7) years from the end of the financial year in which the expenditure is claimed, or until such time as the claim is acquitted by the Commonwealth Government. This will require transaction listing of eligible expenditure that reconcile to the claimed amount and support each transaction.

For assurance purposes, the Commonwealth Government may at any time, through the Resilience NSW request documentation request from local councils to evidence the state's compliance under the Disaster Recovery Funding Agreements.

Assurance activities

The Commonwealth Government or NSW Government may at any time undertake assurance activities to reconcile audited state claims either directly or via an independent advisor. Eligible local councils may be required to provide documentation to support assurance activities.

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