

2025/26 Annual Community Grants Guidelines

1. Overview

The Annual Community Grants Program is NRCF's flagship grants program and is currently in its 21st year. The Community Grants Program is funded by distributions from the various Sub Funds that make up NRCF's ethically invested corpus, as well as "flow-through" (direct) donations from individual philanthropists and private foundations.

2. Program Dates

18-27 August 2025	Grant-writing workshops
1 September 2025	Applications Open
22 September 2025	Applications Close
October 2025	Assessment by NRCF Community Grants Assessment Committee
Early November 2025	Applicants notified of outcome - Grant Agreements and funds distributed
20 November 2025	Grant Giving Event
31 December 2025	Projects can begin
12 months from start of project	Acquittal due 30 days after project end date. Must be no longer than 13 months from project start date.

3. Eligibility

Organisation Type	<p>Any not-for-profit group or charitable organisation that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered with the ACNC and/or Incorporated as an Association with NSW Fair Trading <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds DGR-1 tax status; OR can nominate a DGR-1 auspice to receive the funds on their behalf <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who do not already have a relationship with a DGR-1 auspice will be supported to identify and auspice organisation. Please contact us ahead of time to discuss your specific circumstances. NRCF cannot fund applications from businesses, including companies or sole traders, even if they are not
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	generating a profit.
Gross Revenue Limit	An annual gross revenue of less than \$5M.
Location	<p>NRCF supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations based in the 7 LGAs of the Northern Rivers (Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Ballina, Byron and Tweed); OR • Organisations based outside the Northern Rivers that demonstrate local governance through a board or committee based in the Northern Rivers; OR • Organisations based outside the Northern Rivers that are working in partnership with a local organisation to implement a program or service (priority will be given to a local applicant where the project is substantively similar)
Project Dates	Projects must be completed by 31 December 2026.
Other	<p>In addition to the above criteria, applications involving capital works must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the necessary development approval at the time of application (e.g. Development Application or Exempt and Complying Development Certificate). In some cases applicants who have lodged documentation for approval and expect to receive approval before the project begins will be accepted at the Committee's discretion. • Where the applicant is not the owner of the building/land, written approval from the owner.

4. Grant Streams

The 2025/2026 Annual Community Grants Round has two streams. Organisations can submit a maximum of **one application for each stream** (applications must be submitted separately).

4.1 Local Impact Grants (up to \$15,000)

Local Impact Grants support organisations wishing to implement small projects that:

- deliver activities, events, programs and services that support positive social and environmental change in the Northern Rivers; or
- build the capacity of organisations to deliver outcomes (e.g. staff training, project management support)

Note: Budgets for Local Impact projects may include assets, however organisation whose main objective is to purchase assets or infrastructure should apply for the Community Infrastructure Fund (see below).

NRCF invites applications from organisations working across a wide range of impact areas, including but not limited to:

- Disaster recovery and preparedness
- Animal Welfare and Wildlife Conservation
- Arts and Culture
- Conservation and Environment
- Disability and Inclusion
- Education and Training
- First Nations Rights, Culture, Language and Equity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Women's Empowerment
- Housing and Homelessness
- Multicultural Celebration and Inclusion
- Seniors Support
- Youth Programs

NRCF cannot fund projects that:

- Request 100% of project resourcing. The project budget must include in-kind support, volunteer hours, and/or other funding
- Promote religion or a political party (Churches and religious organisations can apply as long as the primary objective of the project is not proselytising)
- Duplicate a project already being run by another organisation in your local area

4.2 Community Infrastructure Fund (up to \$15,000)

The Community Infrastructure Fund is generously supported by the James Frizelle Foundation.

The Community Infrastructure Fund supports the **purchase of assets and other infrastructure to enable more connected and inclusive regional communities**. Examples of eligible purchase include but are not limited to the **purchase, repair or maintenance** of:

- Machinery (e.g. lawn mowers)
- Playgrounds and play equipment
- Computers and IT equipment
- Sporting equipment
- Upgrades and renovations to existing buildings
- Technical equipment (radios, transmitters etc.)
- Furniture

Note: Please refer to additional eligibility requirements for applications to this stream.

Applicants must demonstrate how their purchase will enable more connected and inclusive regional communities. Examples include infrastructure that:

- Improves safety (e.g. an undercover area or fencing)

- Improves access and inclusion (e.g. a wheelchair ramp or accessible bathroom)
- Enables more effective and efficient operations (e.g. the purchase of computers, software and office equipment).
- Supports an organisation to establish a sustainable income stream or deliver core operations (e.g. commercial kitchen equipment)

As part of their application, applicants must submit a quote or cost estimate (e.g. link to a website where the item will be purchased) for any items over \$500. NRCF encourage applicants to purchase from local suppliers to support the local economy.

5. Evaluation Criteria & Assessment Process

Application is via our online grant portal Foundant. All eligible grants are assessed by a panel of community representatives and NRCF board members, who are knowledgeable and experienced in relevant local issues and grant giving. Grants will be assessed on criteria including:

- 1. Demonstrates Need:** The application clearly demonstrates evidence of the need for the project in the community, preferably with localised data (e.g. statistics or administrative data)
- 2. Measurable Outcomes:** This project demonstrates clear, relevant and achievable outcomes that fulfil the identified need.
- 3. Value for Money:** Is NRCF achieving value for money by supporting this project, as determined by comparing the project's activities, outputs and outcomes with the budget allocated?
- 4. Organisational Capacity:** Does the applicant organisation demonstrate capacity to deliver the project (e.g. in terms of prior expertise, relationships etc.)?
- 5. Project Sustainability:** Will the project contribute to the organisation's overall sustainability and/or does the project include a pathway towards ongoing sustainability.

Carefully consider how your project meets the need in your community, and how it aligns to the grant guidelines and streams before taking the time to submit the application.

Our grants rounds can be competitive, and we recognise that there is a huge need in our community with a limited pool of funds to grant. If you are unsuccessful, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on your application and project from NRCF.

6. Successful Applicants

- Successful grant applicants will be advised in early November 2025
- We will partner with you through a Grant Funding Agreement. This will cover key details including use of grant funds and reporting requirements.
- If your organisation requires an auspice arrangement, the Auspicing Organisation will also need to sign the agreement, and grant funds will be released to them. The auspice

may be asked to complete a Partnership Agreement to demonstrate how they will engage with the organisation implementing the project.

- Successful applicants should attend a grant giving event on Thursday 20th November 2025 to celebrate you and acknowledge our donors.
- Your project will be completed by 31 December 2026, we will be in touch throughout the project and love hearing updates.

7. Further support

Our friendly grants team will support you with your application before it goes to the assessment panel. We will support you to make sure you have the right documents uploaded and we may ask for clarification about your project. Talk to us early and we may be able to help you resolve any challenges.

If you have any questions about the Community Grants Program, please contact Mel or Kiri on 0499 862 886 or grants@nrcf.org.au (Monday to Thursday).