

An aerial photograph of a hot air balloon festival at sunrise. Numerous colorful balloons are on the ground and rising into the air. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the early morning. A large, semi-transparent blue circle with a white dotted border is centered over the image, containing the title and subtitle.

Regional Events Acceleration Fund

Program Guidelines

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER

With stunning coastlines, natural forests and parks, snow-capped mountains, vineyards, historic towns, and the rugged outback, regional NSW boasts some of the very best backdrops for all kinds of world-class sporting, music and other cultural events. Our regions are home to several major events, many of which are known all over the world.

Major events not only showcase our regional places and communities to people across the country and overseas, they contribute significantly to our regional economies by attracting more visitors to the region. Visitors who stay in local accommodation, eat in local restaurants and cafes, and visit local attractions and buy from local businesses.

The cancellation of major events due to COVID-19 over the past year has impacted local event venues, workers and communities who rely on the influx of visitors and tourist dollars.

That is why the NSW Government has established the \$20 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund as part of the recharged \$2 billion Regional Growth Fund, to encourage new domestic and international events to our regions and support existing regional major events to grow bigger and better.

The Fund will support eligible organisations to attract new major sporting, lifestyle and culture events to regional areas, creating more local jobs and driving greater visitation.

The Fund will also support the enhancement of existing events by providing operational support, which could include attracting a major artist to increase an event's appeal, adding more temporary seating for more visitors to attend or establishing a pop-up camping and caravan site to support overnight stays.



Attracting and supporting major events to establish and thrive in our regions also means regional communities can enjoy major events and entertainment in their local area.

The Regional Events Acceleration Fund complements the NSW Government's Regional Event Fund managed by Destination NSW, which to date has supported more than 380 flagship regional events and smaller community-based events impacted by drought and the 2019-2020 bushfire.

I encourage eligible organisations to review these program guidelines, get in touch with the Department of Regional NSW and submit a funding application to help make regional NSW the premier location for world-class major sporting and cultural events.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Barilaro'.

The Hon. John Barilaro MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade



OVERVIEW

Major events bring tens of thousands of metropolitan, interstate and international visitors to regional NSW each year. Visitors not only spend money at these events, but at local cafes and restaurants, service stations, bars, tourist attractions and accommodation.

Major events help boost local economies, create jobs and ensure local communities have access to world-class entertainment at their doorstep. Hosting a major event can also position a regional area as an attractive destination to visit again, bringing visitors back to further explore the region.

The \$20 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund will support organisations to attract new international and domestic events to regional NSW, or to expand existing regional events.

The Regional Events Acceleration Fund will bring new events to the regions and will help make existing events even better. It will stimulate regional economies, supporting recovery from the effects of drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Regional Events Acceleration Fund is to:

- boost the economic and social recovery of regional NSW by attracting major events to regional areas and supporting existing regional events to grow
- allow regional communities greater access to world-class sporting, musical and cultural events and entertainment close to home.

KEY DATES

Applications open	Tuesday, 23 February 2021
Applications close	5pm on Friday, 17 December 2021 or when funding is fully committed
Assessment and approval process	approximately six weeks from submission

FUNDING STREAMS

The \$20 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund will be available through two funding streams:

Stream One – Major Event Operations and Infrastructure

Stream One supports existing regional events by funding (or part-funding) the operational improvements and infrastructure needed to boost event attendance and/or improve the visitor experience.

Funding between \$50,000 and \$200,000 is available to support temporary event infrastructure and operational improvements. Event infrastructure is defined as temporary or hired equipment to improve visitor experience.

Examples of eligible projects for Stream One funding include:

- the introduction of additional seating areas
- the installation of temporary event fencing
- securing a major artist/performance to increase an event's appeal
- improvements to an event's accessibility infrastructure (i.e. improved wheelchair access)
- additional staging for a music festival
- establishing a pop-up camping and caravan site to support more overnight stays
- improving temporary parking areas at an event.

As part of their application for Stream One funding, applicants must demonstrate how the event infrastructure and operational support will help boost event attendance, improve the visitor experience or lead to increased length of stay.

The Regional Events Acceleration Fund does not support permanent event infrastructure projects. Future NSW Government funding programs may consider funding fixed capital investments in tourism infrastructure.



Stream Two - Major Event Attraction and Enhancement

Stream Two supports the attraction, delivery and retention of major international and domestic events to regional areas across the state, with a particular focus on major sporting events that provide national or international exposure.

For example, funding may be provided to help negotiate and secure a high-profile game, and its related events, of a major sporting code such as netball, rugby union, cricket or rugby league.

Stream Two funding applications can be made for a minimum of \$100,000 with no cap on the maximum grant application amount. Applications will be assessed in terms of value-for-money and the event's ability to deliver strong economic benefit to regional NSW.

Applicants seeking to attract or retain major events in a regional area are advised to consider holding the event in off-peak tourism periods to ensure there is enough accommodation and visitor services available. Events that are strategically scheduled to boost visitation during off-peak tourism periods are preferable.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make a financial co-contribution to their projects and demonstrate this in their funding applications, however it is not a mandatory eligibility requirement.

GRANT AMOUNTS

Stream One

Major Event Operations and Infrastructure

Minimum	Maximum
\$50,000	\$200,000

Stream Two

Major Event Attraction and Enhancement

Minimum	Maximum
\$100,000	No maximum



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible applicants

To be eligible for funding under the Regional Events Acceleration Fund applicants must:

- be the event owner (i.e. own, or have secured the rights to the event and have the relevant approvals for the event)
- be financially solvent
- be a sole trader, company, incorporated association or trust entity
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance and other relevant insurance cover.

Applicants must also be one of the following entities:

- the event organiser or committee
- a Local Council or Joint Organisation of Councils
- a not-for-profit organisation, including business chambers, industry associations and charities
- a sporting body (i.e. NSW or National Associations)
- a Local Aboriginal Land Council.

For-profit organisations may be considered eligible for funding only where projects will deliver a clear public benefit. A public/private partnership may seek funding where the lead applicant is an eligible entity.

Section 355 Committees of Council are eligible to apply where they have written approval from council and where the council agrees to receive the funding on behalf of the Section 355 Committee.

Events that have already secured or are seeking funding from another NSW Government program, such as Destination NSW's [Regional Events Fund](#), are eligible for funding through the Regional Events Acceleration Fund and are encouraged to apply. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the activities funded by the Regional Events Acceleration Fund are distinct from other NSW Government funded activities in their application.

Eligible applicants can submit multiple applications for different events.

Eligible Event Timing

Events must be held between 1 March 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Eligible event types

The types of events that are eligible for funding include:

- major sporting and lifestyle events
- major food and beverage events
- major music, art and culture festivals.

Ineligible event types

Events ineligible for funding through the Regional Events Acceleration Fund include:

- regular community events such as markets, bazaars, sporting meets (i.e. home/away games, local tournaments), club gatherings (RSL, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce etc.), classes and workshops
- agricultural/country shows and field days
- charity funding events
- regional racing carnivals (i.e. horse or greyhound racing) and events occurring as part of a regular schedule of racing
- touring events and regular theatre programs
- business events and conferences
- events with religious ceremony or celebration as the principal focus (i.e. Easter or Christmas celebrations)
- community public holiday celebrations (i.e. Australia Day or Anzac Day)
- Australian or state/territory government owned and/or operated events.



Eligible locations

Only events hosted in one or more regional NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs), on Lord Howe Island or in the Unincorporated Far West Region are eligible for funding through the Regional Events Acceleration Fund.

A full list of the eligible LGAs can be found at [Appendix A](#).

Events must have the landowner's consent and secure development application approval from the local council if required.

Events held on the border of NSW and other states or territories are eligible to apply, however applicants must show at least 80 per cent of the event's activity will be physically located in regional NSW, or at least 50 per cent of its economic benefit will flow to regional NSW.

Events that are proposing to relocate and be hosted in regional NSW from another location outside of NSW will be strongly preferred.

Events hosted in locations that leverage tourism and sporting infrastructure previously supported by the NSW Government are preferable and are encouraged to apply.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications for funding through both Stream One and Two must meet the assessment criteria as outlined below.

Applicants must demonstrate the event:

- will take place in a regional NSW LGA, on Lord Howe Island or in the Unincorporated Far West Region
- is regionally significant, as defined by evidence (i.e. through previous event ticket sales) or letters of support confirming the event is able to attract over 5,000 people. Events that will attract fewer than 5,000 people can demonstrate they are regionally significant by providing strong evidence of economic benefit through visitation and by providing letters of support
- is able to stimulate the local economy by attracting visitors. A target of more than 30 per cent participation in the event from visitors is recommended, with a visitor defined as being someone who lives 50km or more from where the event is being held
- has the support of the local council and the Destination Network and is aligned with the relevant Destination Management Plan.

Applicants must demonstrate they have:

- an event management plan with clear strategies for measuring and evaluating visitation and the visitor experience
- engaged with Destination NSW and the local tourism industry to deliver effective marketing and promotion for the event
- considered how the event can leave a positive legacy within regional NSW and provide benefit to the host community beyond the event itself
- given consideration and can demonstrate a long-term vision for the event so it can provide an ongoing benefit to the region, such as a commitment to be held over multiple years
- a well-structured and organised event management committee or external events company in place with access to operational and marketing expertise, and the ability to handle issues such as public liability and insurance matters
- a risk management plan that clearly outlines strategies and processes to mitigate risks
- sound financial management in place and can provide an event budget as part of the application
- sourced competitive quotes for services and equipment relevant to the funding
- considered scheduling the event in off-peak or shoulder periods and considered if the event will clash with other major events in the region.



ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Regional Events Acceleration Fund Assessment Panel will review applications on an ongoing basis until 17 December 2021 or until the funding is fully committed. The application assessment process will take approximately six weeks from the time an application is received and event owners will be notified as soon as is practical following the assessment outcome. If the application assessment process is expected to exceed six weeks the applicant will be advised.

During the assessment process the Department of Regional NSW may request additional information from the applicant. Advice may also be sought from other NSW Government agencies or other third parties (such as probity advisors) to assist with the assessment of projects.

The Assessment Panel may also recommend part-funding of events where there is insufficient funding available for the whole event, where only a component of the project is considered suitable for funding or a lesser funding amount that what is requested is deemed more appropriate.

Funding recommendations made by the Assessment Panel will be considered and approved by the Department of Regional NSW.

Funding reservations may be considered where decisions are required for time-sensitive events. Other factors may be taken into consideration when determining the final projects to receive funding, including geographical distribution.

The Department of Regional NSW, at its sole discretion, can take other factors into account that may make an application ineligible for funding such as any person or event activity that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit <https://rgf.smartygrants.com.au/REAF> to make an application to the Regional Events Acceleration Fund.



AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Frequently Asked Questions and other resources to assist with funding applications are available at nsw.gov.au/reafund

Staff from the Department of Regional NSW are also available to support applicants with their applications. Please contact regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 679 673 to access this support.

Research and documents including information on how to obtain Destination Management Plans for regional NSW can also be found on the [Destination NSW](https://www.destinationnsw.com.au) website.

Applicants are encouraged to meet with their local council and their regional representative from Destination NSW's Destination Network prior to submitting an application.



SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Successful applicants will be required to enter into and abide by the terms of a Funding Agreement with the NSW Government. The Funding Agreement details a range of deliverables required by the NSW Government.

These include, but are not limited to, a requirement for the event owner to:

- include the NSW Government logo on all marketing collateral and advertising associated with the event
- give the NSW Government the right to approve all marketing and advertising material containing its logo at the artwork stage (i.e. prior to printing or publication)
- create, update and maintain an event listing on [visitnsw.com](https://www.visitnsw.com)
- consult regularly with the local council, Destination NSW and the relevant Destination Network to maximise marketing and event development efforts
- offer the NSW Government signage opportunities at the event
- submit a detailed post-event report and financial statement outlining how the initiatives funded were delivered and highlighting key measures of success, such as the number of overnight visitors generated by the event. This report must be submitted within two (2) months of the event's completion.

The NSW Government makes no binding funding commitment to an applicant unless and until both parties sign a Funding Agreement.

The Funding Agreement will require the successful applicant to provide a copy of all relevant insurances and other supporting documentation relevant to the project or as requested by the Department of Regional NSW.

Grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the Funding Agreement. Timing and requirements will vary depending on the scope and timelines of the project.

Successful applicants will be required to submit progress reports to the NSW Government as outlined in the Funding Agreement.

Applicants may be requested to keep the grant confidential for a period of time if an announcement is likely to be made by the NSW Government.

UNSUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of each application and will be offered a feedback information session for any unsuccessful application.



IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Applicants should note:

- the NSW Government may choose to publicly announce funding for individual applications and the expected jobs created by the funding. It may also use information provided in the grant to develop case studies
- requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances
- successful applicants will be required to pay back unspent funds or any funds not spent in accordance with the Funding Agreement
- successful applicants will be required to participate in a program evaluation after the project has been completed. The evaluation will require applicants to provide evidence of how projects have resulted in measurable benefits consistent with the fund's objectives, focusing on employment and benefits to regional economies and communities
- all recipients of NSW Government funding should acknowledge this financial support as per the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Grants available at nsw.gov.au/nsw-government-communications/branding
- all awarded grants will be GST exclusive. If you are registered for GST, this will be applied on top of the agreed grant value when payment is made to you. Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by taxation law. It is recommended applicants seek independent professional advice about taxation obligations or seek assistance from the Australian Taxation Office. The NSW Government does not provide advice on individual taxation circumstances.
- the Department of Regional NSW reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within seven years.

COMPLAINTS

Any concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au. If applicants do not agree with the way the Department of Regional NSW handled the issue, they may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via ombo.nsw.gov.au

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) ACT

Applicants should be aware information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW). Information deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.



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These Guidelines are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Department.



APPENDIX A - ELIGIBLE LGAs

- Albury City Council
- Armidale Regional Council
- Ballina Shire Council
- Balranald Shire Council
- Bathurst Regional Council
- Bega Valley Shire Council
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Berrigan Shire Council
- Bland Shire Council
- Blayney Shire Council
- Bogan Shire Council
- Bourke Shire Council
- Brewarrina Shire Council
- Broken Hill City Council
- Byron Shire Council
- Cabonne Council
- Carrathool Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- Central Darling Shire Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- Cobar Shire Council
- Coffs Harbour City Council
- Coolamon Shire Council
- Coonamble Shire Council
- Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
- Cowra Shire Council
- Dubbo Regional Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Edward River Council
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Federation Council
- Forbes Shire Council
- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Greater Hume Shire Council
- Griffith City Council
- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Gwydir Shire Council
- Hay Shire Council
- Hilltops Council
- Inverell Shire Council
- Junee Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Kiama, The Council of the Municipality of
- Kyogle Council
- Lachlan Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Leeton Shire Council
- Lismore City Council
- Lithgow Council, City of
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Lockhart Shire Council
- Maitland City Council
- Mid-Coast Council
- Mid-Western Regional Council
- Moree Plains Shire Council
- Murray River Council
- Murrumbidgee Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Narrabri Shire Council
- Narrandera Shire Council
- Narromine Shire Council
- Oberon Council
- Orange City Council
- Parkes Shire Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Richmond Valley Council
- Shellharbour City Council
- Shoalhaven City Council
- Singleton Council
- Snowy Monaro Regional Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Temora Shire Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Upper Lachlan Shire Council
- Uralla Shire Council
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- Walcha Council
- Walgett Shire Council
- Warren Shire Council
- Warrumbungle Shire Council
- Weddin Shire Council
- Wentworth Shire Council
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Yass Valley Council
- Unincorporated Far West Region
- Lord Howe Island



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nsw.gov.au/reafund