RESOURCES FOR REGIONS

Round Seven Program Guidelines

NSW GOVERNMENT

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Have questions about this Program?
Get in touch with your local
Department of Regional NSW office.

Email: regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 1300 679 673

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER

Mining plays a vital role in supporting regional NSW with an estimated 28,600 people working directly in the mining sector, mostly in regional areas. Mining supports regional economies, attracts investment and jobs and helps make regional NSW a place where people can live, work and thrive. Mining also contributes to the delivery of essential NSW Government services and infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads and transport.

While mining towns are vibrant local communities providing residents with the lifestyle and wellbeing that comes with country living and good employment opportunities, the NSW Government recognises mining can place pressure on local infrastructure and creates unique and diverse needs that are specific to these communities.

The NSW Government introduced the Resources for Regions Program in 2012 to support the infrastructure needs of NSW's mining-affected communities.

The Program has adapted and evolved over the years, with six separate Rounds of the Program providing funding of $295 million to 65 projects in mining-affected Local Government Areas. Projects that have been funded include roads, water and sewerage systems, health facilities and childcare centres.

We have listened to stakeholders in mining areas and have again refreshed the Resources for Regions Program to ensure support is delivered where it is needed most. This refreshed Round Seven Program will deliver $50 million worth of new infrastructure projects and programs to towns that are the backbone of the mining industry.

Round Seven will provide funding for a wider range of projects and programs and make it easier for communities to secure funding.

The NSW Government has an unwavering commitment to regional NSW and the Resources for Regions Program will continue to bring tangible benefits to regional communities, creating jobs, driving economic growth and delivering better services despite the challenges that Australia and the world face in 2020.

I encourage potential applicants to review these Program Guidelines and put forward proposals to support regional communities and ensure the long-term economic viability of mining communities.

The Hon. John Barilaro
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade
Minister for Disaster Recovery

OVERVIEW

Following the completion of Round Six in April 2019, the NSW Government initiated a Strategic Review of the Resources for Regions Program to ensure it was fit for purpose and was providing support to those communities most impacted by mining.

The review was completed in November 2019 and makes several key recommendations to reshape and refocus the Program. A Summary Report of the review can be accessed at nsw.gov.au/resourcesforregions

The review recommendations have been incorporated into new Program Guidelines for Round Seven, ensuring the support is provided to the right areas and long term benefits are delivered to NSW's highly valued mining communities.

Mining impacts differ across NSW regional communities.[1] Some communities may have an increased need for new infrastructure and community amenities to support population and industry growth. Others may need infrastructure or other initiatives to support economic resilience, long term sustainability and community wellbeing.

The Resources for Regions Program acknowledges the significant benefits mining delivers to the NSW economy as well as the unique and diverse needs that arise in mining communities. The Program will fund infrastructure projects and community programs that help address these unique and diverse needs.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Resources for Regions Program aims to support the ongoing prosperity of mining communities in regional NSW by providing economic opportunities, improved amenity and positive social outcomes.

KEY DATES

Round Seven applications open
24 June 2020

Applications close
12pm 2 September 2020

Assessment & approval process
3 September – 29 October 2020

Announcement of successful applications
From November 2020

In extenuating circumstances, late applications may be accepted at the sole discretion of the Department of Regional NSW.

1. *Strategic Review of the Resources for Regions Program – Inputs Summary Report*, University of Technology Sydney Institute for Public Policy and Governance, October 2019.

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PROGRAM FUNDING

$50 million is available under Round Seven that will be allocated across the identified eligible Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Prescribed allocations of funding are assigned to eligible LGAs to ensure Resources for Regions is weighted towards supporting the most mining affected communities in NSW.

The funding allocations to eligible LGAs consist of:

- a base allocation of $1 million
- weighted funding to the most mining affected LGAs using the mining employment location quotient.

Each eligible Council will be informed in writing of the funding available for their LGA. Councils are eligible to submit projects up to the maximum funding allocation for their LGA.

If a council submits applications seeking funding above the nominated funding allocation for their LGA, council is asked to rank projects, including joint projects (if applicable), in their order of local priority.

Where an LGA's funding allocation is not fully exhausted the ability to utilise these funds in future rounds or for other projects will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Grant amounts

Project type	Minimum grant funding	Maximum funding
Infrastructure	$250,000	The individual LGA's funding allocation
Program	$100,000	$300,000 per program
Business cases	$50,000	$50,000

Where infrastructure and community programs are packaged together to meet minimum funding requirements, the projects must be comprised of projects that are clearly dependent and have the same objective and outcomes.

Co-contributions

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make a financial co contribution to their projects; however, this is not a mandatory eligibility requirement.

Co contributions could include leveraging council funds as well as funding from other sources including other NSW or Commonwealth Government programs.

Project delivery or viability should not be dependent on co contributions that have not been secured.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Projects submitted under Round Seven will need to meet the Program eligibility and assessment criteria in order to receive funding. All applications will be assessed for eligibility. Only applications that are deemed eligible will progress to be assessed against the assessment criteria.

Applicants

Eligible applicants must be local councils located in one of the eligible LGAs identified in Appendix A. These LGAs are eligible because they have been identified as being mining affected communities.

Eligible councils are encouraged to submit joint applications, particularly for larger scale infrastructure projects across LGAs.

Joint Organisations of Councils (JOCs) are eligible to apply as a lead applicant providing the project is located in an eligible LGA/s and the JOC has the support of an eligible council/s to allocate a portion of the Council's allocated funds towards to the project.

Councils are expected to work with community groups to identify priority projects and submit applications on behalf of these organisations. Councils are encouraged to consider project partnerships, however only councils can submit an application on behalf of a community group.

Organisations interested in putting forward a project are encouraged to read all the Program details and approach their local council early in the application period.

Project location

Projects must be located in an LGA that is eligible for funding under the Program or would deliver its primary benefits to one or more eligible LGA/s. This applies to applications submitted by Councils, JOCs and joint applications.

Project type

Projects must be for infrastructure or community programs that support the ongoing prosperity of mining communities by providing economic opportunities, improved amenity and positive social outcomes.

Applications for community programs should not exceed 30 per cent of the total available funding allocation for each LGA.

The specific scope of works and key milestones of the project must be defined in the application.

All applications need to demonstrate that the project can commence within 12 months of the funding deed being signed and be completed within three years.

All projects must deliver public benefit.

Table 1. Examples of eligible projects

Project type	Key objectives	Examples
Infrastructure	Mitigate the impact of mining on local infrastructure in the LGA.	• Service infrastructure such as road or bridge upgrades or waste infrastructure.
	Delivery of new economic opportunities to help strengthen and/or diversify the local economy.	• Upgrading or delivering new or improved tourism projects that align with the region's Destination Management Plan. • Delivery of infrastructure projects aligned to the LGA's local endowments as articulated in relevant Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) or a relevant NSW Government Strategy (e.g. State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038, Future Transport 2056, Regional Growth Plans).
	Improved community amenity through new or upgraded community infrastructure.	• New or enhanced public spaces including recreational facility upgrades, walking and cycling tracks, community centres and halls. • Sports facilities, local pool or other publicly owned health and fitness facility upgrades. • Main street or town centre beautification projects. • Civic centre or art gallery upgrades, libraries or community or cultural spaces.
Community programs	Economic diversification initiatives to support the long-term resilience and prosperity of mining communities.	• Targeted skills development programs. • Industry development or business innovation workshops. • Projects related to the development of tourism products that align with the region's Destination Management Plan including the development of new or enhanced tourism experiences and digital product development.
	Deliver community wellbeing outcomes by enhancing the overall liveability of mining communities.	• Larger scale sporting festivals, arts, culture or cultural heritage projects that support community involvement, promotion of local culture or history or land care projects. • Community programs to support or encourage mining workers or their families to relocate to the region or to support wellbeing outcomes for residents of mining communities. • Indigenous tourism or cultural heritage projects.

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Funding to support future project planning

Each eligible LGA can apply for up to $50,000 from their total funding allocation for projects that will support the planning of future projects that are of strategic importance to the LGA and are identified in the Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Eligible costs include:

- business case development for specific infrastructure or community programs
- feasibility and other studies to inform future infrastructure projects or community programs
- master planning to inform future developments.

Ineligible projects/project costs

Infrastructure and programs are not eligible for funding if they:

- are not in an eligible location or do not provide direct benefit to an eligible LGA
- are for the day to day delivery of essential or core council services
- are for a privately-owned asset or on private land unless there is a clear public benefit and the landowner has provided documented consent
- have exclusive private benefits or provide direct commercial and/or exclusive private benefit to an individual or business
- are for marketing, advertising or product promotion.

Ineligible project costs include:

- costs related to buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment or supplies
- financing, including debt financing, insurance or rental costs
- costs relating to depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- non-project related staff training and development costs
- operational expenditure, including but not limited to regular repairs and maintenance
- ongoing/recurrent funding that is required beyond the stated timeframe of the project
- for infrastructure projects, funding for any ongoing staff or operational costs
- for community programs, funding for ongoing staff or operational costs beyond the scope and timeframe of the funded project
- retrospective funding to cover any project component that is already complete before funding is announced.

All costs will be assessed against Program criteria with a focus on how the project delivers benefits linked to the key objectives of the Resources for Regions Program.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria must also meet the relevant assessment criteria to receive funding. Eligible applications will be assessed against the following:

- delivery of outcomes aligned with Program objectives
- local need
- affordability
- deliverability.

Projects will be assessed as a 'Yes/No' against the assessment criteria. Projects will not be competitively assessed across LGAs.

1. Delivery of outcomes aligned with Program objectives

Projects must demonstrate they will deliver on one of the five key strategic objectives of the Program.

Infrastructure projects must show the capacity to:

- mitigate the impact on mining on local infrastructure in the LGA, or
- deliver new economic opportunities to help strengthen and/or diversify the local economy, or
- improve community amenity through new or upgraded community infrastructure.

Community programs must show the capacity to either:

- support economic diversification initiatives to support the long term resilience and prosperity of mining communities, or
- deliver community wellbeing outcomes by improving the overall liveability of mining communities.

Applications will need to show measurable outcomes that can be delivered by each project and how the applicant will monitor these outcomes. Projects that are not able to articulate clear outcomes and monitoring and reporting processes will not be approved for funding.

Applicants can refer to the Outcome Reporting Guidance Notes at nsw.gov.au/resourcesforregions for examples on how their project outcomes can be measured.

The outcomes to be delivered and measured for each project should be proportionate to the amount of funding requested.

Applicants may be asked to clarify outcomes and reporting measures during the assessment process. The reporting methodology for each project must be agreed prior to entering a funding deed.

2. Local need

Applications must demonstrate the projects aligns with one or more outcomes in one of the following plans:

- the LGA's Community Strategic Plan or Delivery Program
- the broader Regional Plan of which the LGA or JOC is a part
- the broader Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) for the region or relevant NSW Government Strategy (e.g. State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 2038, Future Transport 2056, Regional Growth Plans).

Where individual projects are not specifically identified in the above plans, applications will need to demonstrate how the project will deliver against one or more objectives identified in the relevant plan/s.

It is advisable that tourism product development projects are developed in collaboration with the local Destination Network and, where the project relates to Indigenous tourism, the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council.

3. Affordability

Applicants will need to demonstrate that projects can be delivered within the identified budget and can be managed independent of further state or other government funding.

Projects should support local procurement, where possible, and articulate how they will do this.

Project costs eligible for funding include those associated with capital costs to build local economic and community infrastructure (including up to 20 per cent for project management costs).

Detailed costings should be provided in each application and should only be for the period required to deliver stated outcomes of the projects.

Projects will need to be delivered within a three year timeframe. Extensions may be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Department of Regional NSW.

Project management and administration costs are eligible for projects to a maximum of 20 per cent of the total project cost.

Project value for money will be assessed by determining that the outcomes to be delivered by a project are proportionate to the amount of funding requested by that project.

4. Deliverability

Project deliverability refers to the applicant's capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project.

Applicants must demonstrate the project is investment ready by submitting:

- a detailed and realistic project management plan (including risk assessment and management plans)
- evidence the project can commence delivery within 12 months of the executed funding deed and can be delivered within three years
- confirmation there is no serious planning, construction, zoning, environmental and/or Native Title impediments to delivering the project
- evidence that the applicant has the required expertise to deliver the project or program and/or can access experienced and qualified personnel to support the delivery of the project
- for infrastructure, evidence that the applicant has the financial capacity to manage the infrastructure, including its operation and/or maintenance when the project is completed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Round Seven of Resources for Regions Program will be a one stage application process.

Staff from the Department for Regional NSW will be available to work with applicants to prepare high quality projects that will deliver the most benefits to the community.

It is strongly recommended that applicants seek input from the Department of Regional NSW prior to applying to ensure applications are consistent with Resources for Regions Round Seven key objectives, are well developed and investment decision ready.

If projects are brought forward to a Council by community groups but are not submitted, an independent review process can be requested to ensure Councils have given the project appropriate consideration.

In order to facilitate assessment of applications, applicants are required to submit the following application documents via the Program's online portal:

Project category	Application documents required
Category 1 $250,000 to $1 million funding requested	• Completed application form • Completed project plan template • Completed budget template (with evidence of estimated costs)
Category 2 Over $1 million	• Completed application form • Business case in departmental template

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Following receipt of applications, department staff will assess projects against the Program eligibility requirements and then facilitate the assessment of projects against the assessment criteria.

Through the assessment process, the department may request additional information from the applicant. The department may also seek advice from other NSW Government agencies or other third parties (such as probity advisors) to assist with the assessment of projects. The Resources for Regions Project Assessment Panel will review project eligibility and assessment outcomes and form a list of projects that are deemed suitable/not suitable for government consideration.

The Assessment Panel may recommend part-funding of projects where there is insufficient funding available for the whole project or where only a component of the project is considered suitable for funding.

Project recommendations are considered by the NSW Cabinet Committee on Expenditure Review for the final funding decision. Other factors may be taken into consideration when determining final projects to receive funding.

If the project is successful

Successful applicants will be required to:

- enter into a funding deed with the NSW Government
- not make financial commitments for funded activities until funding deeds have been executed
- submit project progress reports to the NSW Government as outlined in the funding deed. Grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the funding deed
- pay back unspent funds or those funds which have not been spent in accordance with the funding deed
- participate in a program evaluation after the project has commenced to determine the extent to which their projects have contributed to the objectives of the fund
- hold all relevant insurances, such as public liability insurance or other insurance depending on the project
- acknowledge financial support for projects as per the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Grants available at nsw.gov.au/nsw-government-communications/branding
- note the NSW Government reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within a period of seven years from the signing of the funding deed.

Requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances.

The evaluation of the Program will require applicants to provide evidence of how projects have resulted in a measurable benefit to the community that is consistent with the objectives of the fund.

Any information submitted by an applicant may be used for promotional material prepared by the NSW Government.

If the project is unsuccessful

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

FIND OUT MORE

To help applicants prepare their application, additional information and resources will be placed on the Resources for Regions web page, including relevant application templates.

A webinar will be held during the open period and will be available at:
nsw.gov.au/resourcesforregions

The Department of Regional NSW can assist applicants to develop strong applications. Please contact:
regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au
or call 1300 679 673 for a referral.

APPENDIX A – ELIGIBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

- Bland Shire Council
- Blayney Shire Council
- Bogan Shire Council
- Broken Hill City Council
- Cabonne Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Cobar Shire Council
- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Lithgow City Council
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Maitland City Council
- Mid-Western Regional Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Narrabri Shire Council
- Narromine Shire Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Orange City Council
- Parkes Shire Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Wentworth Shire Council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Wollongong City Council

Image source: Jack of Hearts Studio

MORE INFORMATION

nsw.gov.au/resourcesforregions

Contact us

Email: regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Call: 1300 679 673

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