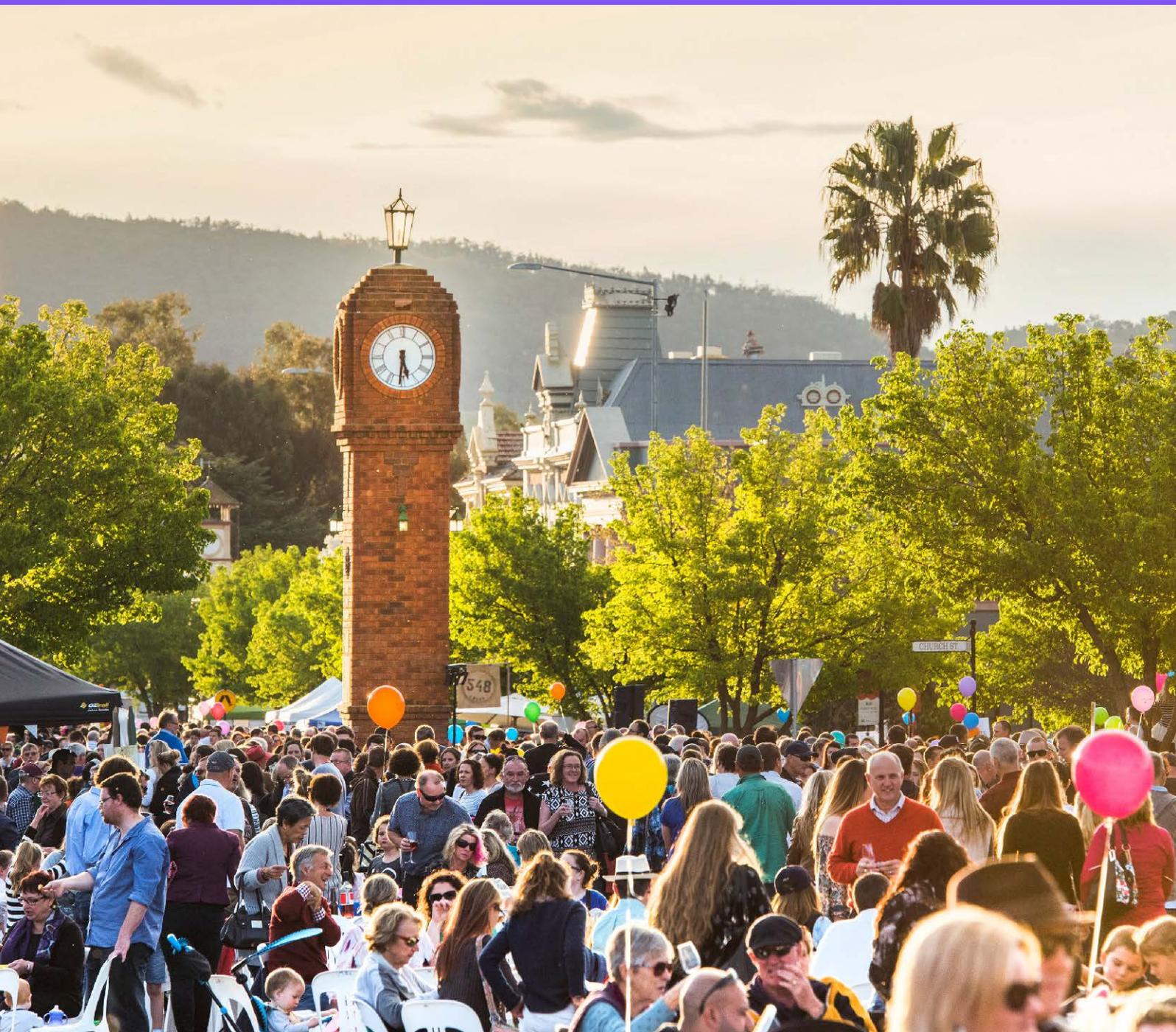


# Reconnecting Regional NSW Community Events Program

## Program Guidelines





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Cover image: Flavours of Mudgee, Mudgee

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## Message from the Deputy Premier



I am proud to see that Regional NSW is stronger than ever after facing many unpredictable challenges over the past few years. Our regions have endured drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, but we know they will come out the other side stronger and more resilient.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the recovery of Regional NSW remains on track. That is why, as part of the \$200 million Regional Recovery Package, \$25 million has been allocated to the Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program.

Regional NSW boasts a diverse range of events throughout the year, from markets to live music gigs, food festivals and field days. These events provide an important economic boost for local economies and an opportunity for communities to reconnect.

The Community Events Program will support local councils to deliver events, boost tourism and create jobs in the process. These events bring regional communities and families together and make a real difference for the regions.

I look forward to seeing regional communities celebrating and enjoying a wide range of events that reflect the charm and vibrancy of regional NSW.

**The Hon. Paul Toole, MP**

Deputy Premier  
Minister for Regional NSW  
Minister for Police

## Program overview

The NSW Government announced the \$200 million recovery package for regional NSW that will create new jobs and support community events, shows and festivals to boost tourism and help young people reclaim the best years of their lives.

This package includes the \$25 million Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program. This Program will promote economic and social recovery across all 93 regional NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs), Lord Howe Island and the Unincorporated Far West. The program will assist communities and businesses to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions and border closures, and cumulative natural disasters.

### The program will:

1. facilitate economic recovery in regional NSW by stimulating activity in the events, hospitality, and accommodation sectors, all of which have been heavily impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, providing opportunities for an immediate revenue boost
2. reconnect communities by facilitating the delivery of events that promote greater social cohesion, bringing people together to create improved social outcomes.

This will be achieved by supporting regional NSW councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and Regional Development Australia Far West to deliver community events and festivals that are open for the entire community to attend, providing immediate, positive economic and social outcomes for regional communities.

The Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program is administered by the Department of Regional NSW.



## Program objectives

The Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program will promote the social and economic recovery of regional communities, by renewing social connections and providing a revenue boost to local businesses, following the extended COVID-19 restrictions across regional NSW and impacts of border closures.

## Key dates

**Applications open:**

Thursday 7 April 2022

**Applications close:**

5pm AEST on Friday 24 June 2022

**Assessment:**

Assessment/approval will be within 20 working days of the application being submitted.

**Funding agreements contracted:**

Contracting will commence and payment released following project approval.

**Projects completed:**

By Friday 31 March 2023

**Program evaluation:**

To commence in April 2023

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

Griffith Spring Fest, Griffith



## Program funding

A total of \$25 million is available under the Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program to be allocated to regional NSW LGAs, Lord Howe Island and Unincorporated Far West.

Each eligible applicant will be notified in writing of the funding available for their LGA.

Eligible applicants will receive an allocation based on their population. Eligible cross-border LGAs will receive an additional weighted allocation due to the impacts of COVID-19 border closures.

Funding is provided to eligible applicants to deliver eligible community events and festivals to be held by 31 March 2023.



Girrakool Blues Festival and BBQ, Kariong



Lost Lanes, Wagga Wagga

### GRANT AMOUNTS

Eligible applicants will have the flexibility of allocating their funding to any number of events or festivals within their funding allocation. A single application is required to receive the grant amount.

Funding will be available from 7 April 2022 and be paid across two milestones. Assessment/approval will be within 20 working days of the completed application being submitted.

Contracting will commence following project approval. All required documentation needs to be complete and submitted before payment will be released. Completion reports will be required within 30 days of the final event being completed.

Costs will be eligible from the opening date of the fund. This will allow applicants to be able to appoint an event coordinator to start planning for their events.

Funding outlined in the funding agreement is exclusive of GST (where council is the applicant).

### CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

Eligible applicants are strongly encouraged to make a financial co-contribution to their projects however this is not a mandatory eligibility requirement. Funding from this program cannot be used as co-contribution towards other grant funds already secured.

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

# Eligibility criteria

Projects submitted under the Reconnecting Regional NSW –Community Events Program will need to meet the program eligibility and assessment criteria to receive funding. All applications will be assessed for eligibility and against the assessment criteria. Only eligible applications will be considered for funding.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants must be local councils located in regional NSW, excluding Metropolitan Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Blue Mountains and Wollondilly (see Appendix A). Lord Howe Island Board and Regional Development Australia Far West are eligible applicants. Joint Organisations of Council are not eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants are encouraged to work with local community and business groups to identify priority events. Eligible applicants are encouraged to consider project partnerships, however, only eligible applicants can submit applications.

## PROJECT LOCATION

Projects must deliver all events within their eligible regional NSW LGA (see Appendix A).

Events held on the border of NSW and other states or territories must be physically located in regional NSW.

Events must have the landowner's consent if required.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Grants will be provided to eligible councils, the Lord Howe Island Board or Regional Development Australia Far West to deliver eligible community events or festivals that will provide immediate positive economic and social benefits to regional NSW.

### Events must:

- ✓ be open to all members of the public
- ✓ free to attend or a very small fee to cover any extra costs
- ✓ have a primary purpose of reconnecting communities and improving social cohesion of the local community
- ✓ be planned and delivered using the COVID-19 NSW Public Health Orders current at that time and have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place for all events (the development of these plans is an eligible expense)
- ✓ be held before 31 March 2023.

All events are encouraged to be accessible and inclusive, aligning to the applicant's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Community Strategic Plan.

## Examples of eligible events

Each applicant can apply for any number of events within the one application. Activities eligible for funding through the Reconnecting Regional NSW –Community Events Program include existing or new:

- community markets and bazaars
- festivals and fairs
- sporting events
- food and leisure events
- recovery events
- community classes and workshops
- agricultural field days (run by community organisations)
- regional racing carnivals (e.g. horse or greyhound racing) run by community organisations
- touring events and theatre programs
- community public holiday celebrations (e.g. Australia Day or Anzac Day).

For existing events, applicants are encouraged to use this funding to make the events larger or more accessible.

## INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

### Events must not:

- ✗ have a primary purpose of fundraising
- ✗ have a primary purpose of financial gain for an eligible applicant or a sole stakeholder (events may have commercial activities as a part of the program for example, stalls at a market, food trucks at a festival)
- ✗ promote or be for political purposes.

## Examples of ineligible events

Ineligible events under the Reconnecting Regional NSW –Community Events Program include:

- events with the primary focus on fundraising and charity events
- running grant programs
- business events and conferences
- events where membership is required to attend (for example, club gatherings including RSLs, Rotary, pony and golf clubs)
- country and agriculture shows
- grassroots sporting games (for example, home/away games, local tournaments)
- events with religious or cultural ceremony or celebration as the principal focus (for example, Diwali, Easter, Eid or Christmas celebrations)
- events/festivals already funded by the NSW Government
- Australian or State/Territory government owned and/or operated events.

## What are ineligible project costs?

*Ineligible project costs include:*

- costs related to buying or upgrading fixed infrastructure or equipment unless it is a small component of the event cost
- financing, including debt financing, or insurance
- rental/venue hire costs not directly associated with the proposed activities
- costs relating to depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- awards, gifts or prizes
- non-project related staff training and development costs
- marketing costs for the events exceeding \$10,000
- operational expenditure, including but not limited to regular repairs and maintenance, for both eligible applicant or any community organisations
- ongoing/recurrent funding that is required beyond the stated timeframe of the project
- funding for ongoing staff or operational costs beyond the scope and timeframe of the funded project
- retrospective costs to cover any event or component that is already complete before the opening date of the program
- accommodation and transport costs related to event management fees.

 Moree on a Plate Festival, Moree



# Assessment criteria

All applications will be required to meet the eligibility criteria and the following assessment criteria to receive funding, including:

## 1. Positive social outcomes in local community

Applications must demonstrate that the proposed activities will rebuild local community cohesion and deliver positive social outcomes.

## 2. Local business support

Applications must demonstrate how the proposed activities will support local business. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage external event coordinators and local businesses to run and deliver the events.

Applications will be assessed as a 'Yes/No' against the assessment criteria.

 Griffith Spring Fest, Griffith



# How to apply

Eligible applicants can apply through SmartyGrants at <https://rgf.smartygrants.com.au/CEP>:

- only one application is allowed per eligible applicant. Applicants are to specify how their entire allocation will be spent in one application
- multiple events may be included in the one application
- applicants are asked to submit the online form as soon as possible
- applications close at 5pm, on Friday 24 June 2022
- costs will be eligible from the opening date of the program. This will allow applicants to be able to appoint an event coordinator to start planning their events
- funded events are to be completed by Friday 31 March 2023
- the application form is also the funding agreement.

## What needs to be included in an application?

Information required in the application includes:

- basic organisation details including \$20 million Public Liability Insurance certificate for the event organiser
- proposed event(s) and project costs
- response to assessment criteria
- an invoice for 80 percent of the amount outlined in the funding allocation letter (excluding GST council applications).



## Assessment process

### Applications will be reviewed by Department staff to ensure:

- the applicant is an eligible entity
- all required documentation is complete and submitted
- proposed projects align with the program objectives and assessment criteria.

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.

### Moree on a Plate Festival, Moree



### What happens if the application is successful?

Eligible applicants will need to enter into a simple legally binding funding agreement with the Department of Regional NSW to receive funding.

### Important information applicants should note:

- there is no commitment to funding until both parties execute the funding agreement
- funding will be paid upon signing of a funding agreement by both parties
- costs will be eligible from the opening date of the program
- the applicant is responsible for any costs not met by the funding
- all funded events will acknowledge financial support for projects as per the NSW Government Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines available at [nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines/funding-acknowledgment-guidelines](https://nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines/funding-acknowledgment-guidelines). Evidence of acknowledgement will be required in order for projects to be closed

- the applicant will comply with any requests from the Department for reporting on projects
- at the completion of the event(s), applicants will be asked to provide a summary of the activities that were funded, data relating to the outcomes achieved through the event(s), and evidence of expenditure and an invoice for the remainder of the grant, via the SmartyGrants portal within 30 days
- applicants will be required to participate in evaluation activities conducted by the Department and/or third-party evaluators contracted by the Department
- unspent funds will need to be repaid to the Department before the project can be closed.



### AVAILABLE SUPPORT

For help preparing applications, information and resources are available from [nsw.gov.au/CommunityEvents](https://nsw.gov.au/CommunityEvents).

Staff from the Department will be available to work with applicants to identify projects that will benefit the community. The Department can assist applicants to develop strong applications. **Please contact [regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 679 673 for a referral.**

### COMPLAINTS

Any concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to [regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto: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](https://ombo.nsw.gov.au).

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

Applicants must not participate in any anti-competitive conduct. It is a condition of the grant program application process that no gifts, benefits or hospitality are to be given to any Department of Regional NSW employee at any time. Any inducement in contravention of this condition may result in an applicant's proposal not being considered.

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A conflict-of-interest declaration must be submitted with each proposal or included in the application form. Where a conflict of interest detrimental to the assessment process has been identified, mitigation measures must be put in place, or a program person may be asked not to participate in the grant application, assessment or delivery component of the process.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information identified by the applicant as being confidential and agreed to be deemed as commercial in confidence will only be shared within Department of Regional NSW government employees and contractors, the Minister's office, and appropriate bodies for the purposes of assessment and funding agreement management, review

and endorsement or when responding to information requests required by law.

Upon entering into an agreement, details about the agreement may be made publicly available (subject to the redaction of information which Department of Regional NSW deems to be commercial in confidence).

The applicant agrees not to disclose any confidential information pertaining to the grant program application or funding agreement without prior written consent.

### IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

#### Applicants should note:

- the NSW Government may choose to publicly announce funding for individual applications. It may also use information provided in the grant to develop case studies
- all awarded grants will be GST exclusive for councils. 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.

### GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) ACT

Applicants should be aware that 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 that is 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.



## Appendix A – Eligible Councils/entities

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

\*Cross-border communities are defined by the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner.

 KISS Art Festivals, Kiama



Community Events Program

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# Contact

P 1300 679 673

E [regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au)

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