Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program 2023–24

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program 2023–24, grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedures detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 8 February 2023 and closed on 6 February 2024. Three separate batches were considered during the submission period, for the 2023–24 grant opportunity.

The objective of the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program is to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel in wars, conflicts and peace operations, and their families.

The intended outcome of the grant opportunity was to provide funding for projects and activities that:

- promoted appreciation and understanding of the experiences of service and the roles that those who served had played

- preserved, added to the sum of knowledge on, or provided access to information about Australia's wartime heritage.

There were 2 categories of grants available:

1. Community Grants (CG) – grants of up to $10,000 for community-based projects and activities.

2. Major Grants (MG) – grants of between $10,001 and $150,000 for major commemorative projects and activities that have a national, state, territory and/or regional significance.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for the final decision on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all eligible and compliant applications through an open competitive grant process. The selection advisory panel (panel) was established by the department and comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing applications, the panel took into consideration a number of factors including the consideration of late applications which were submitted outside the closing dates for each batch, the volume of applications received, meeting the identified requirements outlined in the guidelines and the available funding envelope.

Applications were initially assessed by the department on merit based on:

- how well they met the criteria

- how they compared to other applications

- whether they provided value for money. Value for money was a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources and was determined from a variety of considerations. Financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal were considered including, but not limited to:

    - the quality of the project proposal and activities
    - fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives

      the absence of the grant would likely prevent the grantee and government's outcomes from being achieved

    - the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant

- the relative value of the grant sought

- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated that it would contribute to meeting the program outcomes/objectives, and

- how the grant activities would be promoted or distributed to reach target groups.

Selection results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines and based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Community Grants Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the eligibility or compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines.

The department notified all other applicants of the outcome of their grant application in writing.

Criterion 1

Explain the importance of the project/activity and outline how it would commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel.

When addressing the criterion, the applicant:

- outlined how the project/activity was significant to the local community (CG) or to the nation, a state and/or territory and/or region (MG)

- outlined how the project/activity would honour and promote understanding of the service, sacrifice, and experiences of Australia's service personnel

- explained how the project/activity would contribute to Australia's understanding of its wartime heritage

- explained how the local community or intended target audience would be involved in and/or use the project/activity.

Strong applications:

- for community grants, applicants outlined how their project recognised personnel from the local community who served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations and the impact this would have for current and future generations.

- for major grants, applicants outlined how their project would attract a significant number of visitors for significant commemorative events such as Anzac Day or Remembrance Day from the broader region, state or across the country, and how they would engage schools and special interest groups to visit the site and learn about the service and sacrifice of service personnel.

- applicants described how their project served as an educational tool, fostering a deeper understanding of Australia's wartime heritage among the broader community.

Criterion 2

Demonstrate how the project/ activity was ready to proceed and how they would deliver it.

When addressing the criterion, the applicant:

- explained how they would implement the project/activity

- outlined how the project/activity was ready to proceed (this could have been demonstrated via confirmation of the budget and financial contributions, confirming there was no financial shortfall)

- attached quotes or a cost breakdown for items that required funding

- provided examples of their organisation's experience in delivering similar projects/activities

- explained the relevant experience and qualifications held by key personnel and their role in managing the project/activity.

Strong applications:

- highlighted how they had liaised with key personnel, suppliers and/or stakeholders to deliver the project, outlined their experience delivering similar projects, or their capability to deliver the new project.

- demonstrated the project's readiness to proceed by detailing project timelines and providing quotes (MG) and demonstrating no financial shortfall. The applicant's responses reflected sufficient planning and preparation to ensure successful completion of the project within a 12-month period. Where applicable, the applicant identified they had the asset or landowner's permission to conduct the project.

- outlined details of how they, as an organisation, successfully delivered a similar project and met their project timelines and milestones.

- outlined the specific experience held by key personnel (such as production staff undertaking filming of a commemorative documentary) and described their background and achievements relevant to the successful delivery of the project.

Criterion 3

Demonstrate community/stakeholder support for their project/activity.

When addressing the criterion, the applicant:

- identified how the project/activity would be promoted or distributed to the community

- described what community consultation had taken place regarding the project/activity and how these stakeholders provided their support for the project/activity (for example letter/s of support from the local community, Federal or State Members of Parliament, local council, or ex-service organisations)

- outlined confirmed financial or in-kind co-contributions toward the project

- demonstrated working relationships with stakeholders and explained how these would improve the organisation's delivery of the project/activity.

Strong applications:

- provided details of the platforms and channels that would be used to promote the project (for example, social media, printed media, television and radio). The applicant described how the project would be showcased and marketed to the community and key stakeholders.

- described the stakeholder consultation that was conducted, including community meetings/forums where the project was discussed, how the community would be engaged to ensure support for the project, and how the community would use and benefit from the project. The applicant described what stakeholder support had been obtained, including letters of support.

- provided details of confirmed co-contributions and in-kind co-contributions toward the project, detailing the source of the funds and the impact to the budget.

- demonstrated working relationships with stakeholders, including how they had formed partnerships and collaborated on previous projects. Applicants explained how their established working relationships would improve the organisation's delivery of the project through sharing resources and effectively managing activities.

General feedback

Read the supporting information before applying.

- It is important to read all grant opportunity documentation when applying for funding, especially the guidelines and any instructions in the application form.

- The grant opportunity documentation is specific to each round and contains important information about the purpose of the program, eligibility and compliance requirements, eligible items, timeframes and how to apply.

- The application form includes helpful information and details on questions relating to eligibility, and mandatory information required by the Community Grants Hub and the department for the selection process.

Individual feedback

The department provided applicants with written individual feedback when notifying them of the outcome of their application.