

Supporting Communities in Bushfire Recovery Community Grants Program

Application Guidance

Introduction

Supporting the Mental Health of Australians Affected by Bushfires is a Commonwealth-funded initiative. It aims to ensure that people and communities have access to coordinated and tailored support to help them recover from the effects of the 2019-20 bushfires.

Under this measure, Healthy North Coast (HNC) is offering the Supporting Communities in Recovery grants program. We are inviting local organisations in bushfire affected communities to apply for grant funding for grassroots community activities that aim to strengthen social connectedness, emotional wellbeing and resilience, and assist communities to recover and heal.

Background

Healthy North Coast

Healthy North Coast (HNC) was established in July 2015. It is one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) established across Australia and one of 10 PHNs in NSW. HNC spans two local health districts – the Northern NSW Local Health District and the Mid North Coast Local Health District. HNC supports and strengthens general practice and primary health care services for approximately 520,000 people across 12 local government areas. HNC works directly with general practitioners, primary and secondary health care providers and hospitals to improve and better coordinate care for people in North Coast NSW.

More information about HNC can be found on our website: www.hnc.org.au

Supporting Communities in Bushfire Recovery - Community Grants Program

Community spirit is vital to the resilience and recovery of towns and rural localities impacted by the bushfires and to the emotional healing of individual community members. While communities have witnessed extraordinary bravery and generosity during and after the fires, people in affected communities often need the support of those around them to recover and rebuild. For many people, the informal support of family, friends and community members will provide what they need to heal and recover over a relatively short time. Others – especially those who experienced the life-threatening frontline impact of the bushfires or lost loved ones, property or animals – may benefit from additional mental health and wellbeing assistance.

Grants of up to \$10,000 (GST exclusive) are available under the Supporting Communities in Bushfire Recovery grants program to fund grassroots activities that help strengthen community connectedness, build peer support and promote mental wellbeing and healing after the bushfires. Suitable activities could also include assisting community leaders and members to identify peers or family members who may need referral to services to address trauma or distress.

Program Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of these grants is to support grassroots community activities that aim to strengthen social connectedness, emotional wellbeing, and resilience and assist communities to recover and heal. Funding is available to local organisations in bushfire-affected communities for activities that promote:

- Social cohesion, connectedness and supportive friendship and relationships.
- Community wellbeing, resilience, mental health healing and post-trauma recovery for communities.
- Information about services and where to seek assistance when needed, and/or assistance to identify and support those in distress.

Applicants must outline how their proposed activities will support one or more of these outcomes.

Who Can Apply?

Organisations and community groups that are based in, or operate within, bushfire-affected areas in the HNC region are eligible to apply. Bushfire-affected communities are located in the following declared natural disaster local government areas in the HNC region:

- Port Macquarie – Hastings
- Nambucca
- Coffs Harbour
- Richmond Valley
- Ballina
- Byron
- Kempsey
- Bellingen
- Clarence Valley
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Tenterfield (Tabulam, Upper Tooloom, Urbenville only)

Community grants may be provided to a wide range of community organisations representing bushfire-affected areas, cultural groups, ages or networks and to those with frontline staff and volunteers impacted by bushfires. Community organisations may include Aboriginal or cultural groups, church-affiliated groups, playgroups and children's groups, groups for older people, women's groups, men's groups, youth groups, sporting groups, local community associations, school-affiliated groups, firefighting brigades, charities, animal welfare and wildlife organisations.

Grant applicants will need an ABN in the organisation's name.

Grant Funding

Funding is available through the Supporting Communities in Bushfire Recovery grants program from September 2020 until 31 March 2021, unless funds are exhausted earlier.

There are two levels of grants available:

- **Level 1: up to \$1,500** (GST excl) – available for new community gatherings or activities which enable communities to continue the journey of healing and recovery. The grants will be assessed and the funding released within two weeks of receiving the grant application for eligible organisations and activities consistent with the grant program's objectives.

- **Level 2: \$1,501 to \$10,000 (GST excl)** – for wider-ranging or more comprehensive projects. Applicants for Level 2 grants will be notified of outcomes and funding will be released within four weeks of receipt of the application. While the emphasis is on prompt turnaround and notification of outcomes to applicants, Level 2 grant applications will be subjected to more detailed assessment.

What Activities Can Be Funded by the Grants

The grant funding is available for grassroots community-focused activities promoting social connectedness and addressing isolation or needs at a community level for rebuilding networks. Activities may target a geographical community impacted by bushfires and/or specific population segments such as children, youth, older people or cultural groups.

The types of activities that may be considered appropriate include:

- Community get togethers, e.g. community barbecues, regular coffee mornings, community meetings which build social connectedness, networks and friendships.
- Projects that are recovery focused and aim to build capacity and enhance the community's wellbeing, resilience and healing.
- Sharing information about available community resources and services and how to access them, including printing and photocopying information sheets and other items for dissemination.
- Assisting community members to identify peers or family members who may need referral to services to address trauma or distress.
- Engaging proactively with bushfire-affected people in remote or isolated areas.
- Initiatives offering comfort, reassurance and assistance to communities and individuals to address practical needs and return to normal routines.
- Practical advice and skills development, e.g. for parents to help provide support for their children, addressing needs of isolated older people, or future bushfire planning and preparedness.

While projects should keep administrative overheads to an absolute minimum, grant funds may be used by small community organisations that do not hold current public liability insurance to purchase such insurance to enable them to hold community meetings and events. Similarly, grant funds may be used to cover the costs of communications and marketing to engage with communities and promote funded activities.

Unspent funds at the end of the activity will need to be used for activities that are consistent with the program purpose and objectives or be returned to HNC.

What Activities Cannot Be Funded by the Grants

Applications which include any of the below elements will be ineligible for grant funding:

- Initiatives that duplicate existing activities and services
- Activities that are more appropriately funded under another grant program or funding source
- Communities that were not impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires
- Communities outside the HNC region
- Activities that are difficult to link to bushfire recovery

- Initiatives that would require ongoing funding
- Alcohol purchases for community or other events
- Projects that subsidise commercial activities (e.g. ongoing business operational costs)
- Capital works or construction, including refurbishment, repair or maintenance of existing community infrastructure and/or purchasing of assets (i.e. buildings or vehicles).

Grant Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed for suitability against the following criteria:

- Evidence that grant recipients are located, or operate, within a bushfire affected area
- Demonstration of need, i.e. how the bushfires impacted the community and how the project will benefit the community
- Evidence that the planned activity is consistent with the grant program's objectives
- Capacity of grant recipient to deliver the activity on time and within budget
- Value for money

How to Apply for a Grant

To apply for a HNC Supporting Communities in Recovery grant:

1. Download and complete the application form from the HNC website (www.hnc.org.au/bushfire-support-grants) and email to commissioning@hnc.org.au, or
2. Complete the online application form: www.hnc.org.au/community-bushfire-grants-application-form

Applicants should ensure each question in the application form is completed, including sufficient details about their organisation and proposed activities. This is to enable prompt assessment of the application and to avoid the need to return to applicants to request further information or clarification.

Applications will be assessed through an evaluation process. Successful applicants will need to enter into a grant agreement with HNC. A sample grant agreement can be viewed here: www.hnc.org.au/bushfire-support-grants

If the application is successful, funding will be paid directly into the bank account provided following the return of signed grant agreement documents and tax invoice. Note, a tax invoice template will be provided for small organisations that require it.

Successful applicants will need to complete a short summary report at the completion of their grant that describes the outcomes achieved. An example of the reporting template can be viewed here: www.hnc.org.au/bushfire-support-grants

HNC reserves the right to directly approach communities in relation to grant program support where necessary to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of grant funding across all bushfire affected areas.

Further Information

For further information about the Supporting Communities in Bushfire Recovery grants program, contact:

Email: commissioning@hnc.org.au

Phone: 02 6659 1800

For bushfire recovery mental health and wellbeing support, information and resources:

- [Healthy North Coast's bushfire support webpage](#)
- [Connect to Wellbeing for free face-to-face or telehealth counselling](#)
- [Beyond Blue's bushfire mental health resources](#)
- [Beyond Blue's Be You bushfires response resource pack for teachers and parents](#)

Conditions of the Grant Process

General	Applicants should familiarise themselves with this document and the application form and ensure that their proposal complies with the requirements set out in these documents. Applicants are deemed to have examined statutory requirements and satisfied themselves that they are not participating in any anti-competitive, collusive, deceptive or misleading practices in structuring and submitting the proposal.
Acceptance	Non-complying applications may be rejected. Healthy North Coast may not accept the lowest priced proposal and may not accept any proposal.
Explanations	Verbal explanations or instructions given prior to acceptance of a proposal shall not bind Healthy North Coast.
Assessment	Healthy North Coast reserves the right to engage a third party to carry out assessments of an applicant's financial, technical, planning and other resource capability.
Legal Entity	Healthy North Coast will only enter into a contract with an organisation or individual with established legal status (e.g. under Corporations Law, Health Services Act, Trustee Act), or a natural person at least 18 years of age with mental capacity to understand the agreement.
ABN/Taxation requirements	Healthy North Coast will only enter into an agreement with applicants who have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
Expenses	All expenses and costs incurred by an applicant in connection with this grant process including (without limitation) preparing and lodging an application, providing Healthy North Coast with further information, attending interviews and participating in any subsequent negotiations, are the sole responsibility of the applicant.
Additional information	If additional information to that requested in this document is required by Healthy North Coast when proposals are being considered, written information and/or interviews may be requested to obtain such information at no cost to healthy North Coast. Healthy North Coast may also provide additional information or clarification.

Process	Healthy North Coast reserves the right to withdraw from, or alter, the grant process described in this document for whatever reason, prior to the signing of any agreement/contract with any party.
Negotiation	Healthy North Coast reserves the right to negotiate with short-listed applicants after the applicant closing time and allow any application to alter its application. Contract negotiations are strictly confidential and not to be disclosed to third parties.
Part applications	Healthy North Coast reserves the right to accept applications in relation to some and not all of the scope of activity described, or contract with one, more than one or no applicant on the basis of the proposals received.
Conflicts of interest	Applicants must declare to Healthy North Coast any matter or issue which is or may be perceived to be or may lead to a conflict of interest regarding their proposal or participation in the grant process, or in the event their proposal is successful.
Ownership	All applications become the property of Healthy North Coast once lodged. Healthy North Coast may copy, or otherwise deal with all or any part of an application for the purpose of conducting assessment of proposals.
Notification of Probity Breach	Should any supplier feel that it has been unfairly excluded from responding or unfairly disadvantaged by the process, the supplier is invited to write to Healthy North Coast at commissioning@hnc.org.au
Lobbying	Any attempt by any application to exert influence on the outcome of the assessment process by lobbying Healthy North Coast staff, directly or indirectly, will be grounds for disqualification of the proposal from further consideration.
No Agreement	Nothing in this grant process should be construed to give rise to any contractual obligations or rights, express or implied, by the issue of this grant application or the lodgement of a proposal in response to it. No agreement will be created unless and until a formal written grant agreement is executed between Healthy North Coast and an applicant. Applicants will not be considered approved until a final grant agreement is in place.
Credentials	Applicants must have public liability insurance of at least \$2 million, and also professional indemnity and workers compensation insurance (where appropriate) prior to the activity or event. A Working With Children Check (volunteer) is required for activities and events for children and young people where the child or young person is not under the supervision of their parent/s or carer.