

Part A - Grant Guidelines

Active Ageing Grants - Northern NSW, round 2



Key Dates

Round 2 grant applications open	3 September 2026
Briefing session for applicants (Online presentation with Q&A)	16 September 2026, 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Round 2 grant application deadline (Submit via TenderLink)	15 October 2026, 5pm
Round 2 successful applications announced	From December 2026
Contracts executed	From December 2026

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region, which includes the Githabul, Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti and Birpai Naations. We pay respect to the Elders past, present and those on their journey. We recognise these lands were never ceded and acknowledge the continuation of culture and connection to land, sky and sea. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and honour the rich diversity of the world's oldest living culture.

Quick Guide for Applicants

Overview of funding

Healthy North Coast, in partnership with Northern NSW Local Health District, is offering small grants for local providers and organisations, to run physical activity programs for older people in Northern NSW.

From a total grant funding of \$300,000 (excl. GST), providers may apply for individual grants between \$5,000 and \$30,000 (excl. GST).

- Grant Round 1 \$150,000 (excl. GST) closed May 2026
- Grant Round 2 \$150,000 (excl. GST) closes October 2026

Activities delivered between January 2027 – June 2028

Activities must be delivered in one or more of the following LGAs: Tweed, Ballina, Byron, Richmond Valley, Kyogle, Clarence Valley and Tenterfield (Urbenville only).

Who should apply?

We encourage applications from:

- Community groups and not-for-profits
- Local sporting clubs
- Small businesses or sole traders
- Aboriginal organisations
- Local councils.

You don't need to be a large organisation or have applied for grants before. We also welcome activities that are auspiced by others.

What we're looking for

We want to hear about activities that

- Get older people moving
 - Focus on people who are not currently active
 - Help reduce social isolation
 - Support priority populations, and in particular, First Nations people
 - Are low-cost or free
 - Are safe, welcoming and inclusive.
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What a strong application looks like

Strong applications have projects that

- Target people who aren't already active
- Consider or remove barriers (e.g. cost, transport, confidence)
- Are easy to join and regular (not one-off events)

- Create a social, enjoyable environment
 - Are realistic to deliver with the funding provided
 - Are run by people who have the right skills, experience and cultural alignment
 - Are practical to implement
 - Are safe for participants and do no harm.
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Examples of activities we might fund

- Walking groups or walking sports (e.g. walking football/netball)
- Strength and balance classes
- Tai Chi, yoga, dance or aqua programs
- Transport to help people attend activities
- Community-led programs that bring people together through movement
- Communications that encourage older people to get active.

This is not exhaustive, but to get you thinking.

What we're unlikely to fund

- One-off events
 - Activities for people who are already active
 - Business-as-usual programs with no changes
 - Expensive programs with limited reach
 - Clinical or treatment-based services.
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How to apply

1. Check out the grant webpage and read the Grant Guidelines document
2. Register for [TenderLink](#) if not already registered – important for notifications, Q&A's and submitting your application
3. RSVP and attend the online Industry Briefing session. RSVPs required.
4. Complete the application form (Part B: Grant Application)
5. Submit completed application via Tenderlink.

If you're unsure or need help, please get in touch—we're happy to support you.

commissioning@hnc.org.au

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding, you must be one of the following:

- a not-for-profit or charitable organisation (as defined by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission)
- an incorporated association that is either based in Northern NSW or has a branch in Northern NSW
- a Northern NSW local government authority
- a university
- a local sporting club

- a sole trader or a small business that is actively trading and can be an unincorporated or incorporated business that employs less than 20 people.

AND

- have an active ABN
- have been operational in NSW for at least 12 months, and deliver services or support to the Northern NSW community
- have (or agree to obtain) the appropriate type and level of insurance for the proposed activities
- have NO outstanding contractual or financial obligations (including reports, acquittals) for any NSW Government-funded projects/programs
- be willing to agree to the terms and conditions of the new agreement, and
- be able to enter into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with Healthy North Coast.

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- a NSW Health department, including Northern NSW Local Health District
- an aged care service provider
- a business that employs more than 20 people
- a trust
- an unincorporated Association
- an individual, or an organisation applying on behalf of an individual (as an auspice)
- a Commonwealth, State or Territory government department or agency
- based interstate or overseas
- involved with the tobacco and/or vaping industries
- an organisation with outstanding contractual or financial obligations (including reports or acquittals) for any NSW Government funded projects/programs; or
- an applicant/organisation subject to current or impending legal action which could impact its financial viability.

Auspice Arrangements

If you do not meet all eligibility requirements, you may be able to work with an eligible organisation (under an auspice arrangement) to deliver a project.

‘Auspice’ is defined as an incorporated organisation that receives, administers and acquits NSW Government funding on behalf of an applicant.

The auspice is required to:

- enter into a funding agreement with Healthy North Coast
- accept grant funds and pay the auspiced grant applicant
- monitor and acquit the use of funds at the completion of the project.

Ideally, the auspice will have the technical skills to guide and support the applicant in the delivery of the project, while acknowledging project decisions remain with the applicant.

There is no defined co-contribution amount, however co-contributions can be identified as part of the grants application process.

1. Introduction

1.1 Grant Guidelines

This is a community-led, place-based grants program. funding the delivery of a variety of physical activity opportunities targeting older people on the North Coast, tailored to local community needs. This approach recognises that community organisations are often best placed to design and deliver activities that are accessible, trusted, and responsive to local needs.

Through modest, targeted investments, the program aims to:

- Enable local organisations to establish or expand physical activity opportunities for older
- Improve access in rural, remote and underserved communities
- Reduce barriers such as cost, transport and availability
- Support innovative and culturally appropriate approaches, particularly for Aboriginal communities
- Strengthen local capability and sustainability of programs over time

The program will support multiple, small to medium grants, enabling diverse activities such as group exercise, strength and balance programs, walking groups, and other innovative approaches that increase participation in physical activity. It aligns with national and state-based policies relating to early interventions and prevention and HNC's Healthy Ageing Strategy as a preventive, community-based initiative targeting older people, with a focus on physical activity, social connection, and early intervention to reduce chronic disease, frailty and avoidable health system demand.

Clinical governance for this grants program is proportionate to the nature and risk of funded activities. Providers are responsible for ensuring activities are safe, appropriate, and delivered by suitably qualified personnel.

1.2 Background and Context

The North Coast has an older population than most parts of NSW and Australia, with more than one in four people aged 65 and over. That number is growing quickly — by 2030, around 30% of the population will be over 65, and the number of people aged 85 and over is expected to almost double in the next 20 years.

Healthy ageing is a key focus for both Northern NSW Local Health District and Healthy North Coast and is a priority in our Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023–2027.

What we're seeing across the region is:

- More than 1 in 4 people were aged 65+ in 2021 — higher than the NSW and national averages
- By 2041, the 65+ population is expected to grow by 28%, with those aged 85+ increasing by 86%
- Nearly 60% of older people are living with one or more chronic conditions, many linked to lifestyle factors like low physical activity.

We also know that many older people face real barriers to staying active. These can include health issues, transport challenges, cost, limited local options, and social isolation — particularly in rural and regional areas.

When people aren't able to stay active, it increases the risk of chronic disease, frailty, falls, and poor mental health. Falls alone are a leading cause of injury and hospitalisation for older Australians.

Evidence shows that even small increases in physical activity can make a big difference. Being active helps improve strength, balance and mobility, supports better management of chronic conditions, boosts mental wellbeing, and creates opportunities for social connection. Most importantly, it helps people stay independent and continue living well in their own communities.

This program is designed to support local, community-led physical activity initiatives that are easy to access and tailored to local needs. It focuses on reaching older people who are not currently active, or who may be at risk of social isolation or declining health. And especially vulnerable populations such as First Nations people

By investing in prevention, the program aims to deliver immediate benefits for people 45+, while also helping to reduce longer-term pressure on health and aged care services.

1.3 Program Approach

Physical activity is one of the most effective, evidence-based ways to support healthy ageing and reduce avoidable pressure on the health system.

Regular physical activity can:

- Reduce the risk of chronic disease and support better management of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity-related complications, and musculoskeletal issues
- Improve strength and balance, helping to prevent falls — a leading cause of injury, hospitalisation, and loss of independence for older people
- Improve mental health and cognitive function, including reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Strengthen social connections, particularly through group-based activities that help reduce loneliness and isolation
- Support independence and quality of life, enabling older people to remain living safely in their homes and communities for longer.

We know that programs work best when they are local, inclusive, and easy to access. In particular, group-based and community-led activities are highly effective because they combine physical activity with social connection and ongoing engagement.

Despite the strong evidence, participation in physical activity tends to decline with age, and access to suitable programs is not consistent across the North Coast.

This grants program aims to increase participation in physical activity among older people by supporting initiatives that are accessible, locally led, and responsive to community needs. Activities also must have the appropriate governance to ensure participants are safe personnel are suitably qualified. This will vary depending on the nature of the activity and Healthy North Coast will work with successful providers on minimum standards and reporting.

2. Service Requirements and Specifications

2.1 Objectives

Through this flexible grant program, we're looking to support innovative, locally relevant ideas that improve health and wellbeing for older people across the region.

In particular, we're aiming to increase levels of physical activity among older people and improve access to safe and appropriate physical activity options

By funding a range of locally delivered physical activity initiatives tailored to community needs, we aim to

- Improve access to safe, affordable and inclusive activities for older people
- Support participation from people who are not currently active, or who face barriers to getting involved
- Encourage activities that build social connection alongside physical activity
- Strengthen community capacity to deliver sustainable programs that promote good health.

2.2 Outcomes and Impacts

We recognise these are modest, time-limited grants. With that in mind, we're looking for outcomes and impacts that are realistic, meaningful, and build over the overall program.

Short-term outcomes

- Increased availability of physical activity opportunities for older people
- Increased participation in locally delivered activities
- Improved access to affordable and inclusive programs.

Medium-term outcomes

- Increased physical activity levels among participants
- Improved strength, balance and confidence in movement
- Improved mental wellbeing and social connection
- Reduced feelings of isolation.

Longer-term impacts

- Reduced risk of chronic disease and falls
- Improved independence, supporting older people to remain living in their communities
- Reduced demand on health and aged care services over time
- Stronger, more connected and health-supportive communities.

2.3 Scope of Services

2.3.1 Who is it for?

The program is targeted to people who:

- Are aged 50 years and over or 45 years and over for Aboriginal people
- Are not currently physically active
- Are at risk of social isolation or declining health
- Live in rural or underserved communities
- Are from Aboriginal communities and other priority populations

2.3.2 Locations

Activities must be delivered within the following LGAs

Ballina	Byron	Clarence Valley	Kyogle
Lismore	Richmond Valley	Tweed Valley	Tenterfield (Urbenville only)

2.3.3 We are looking for applications that

- Describe the need in your community that your activity will address
- Describe how the activity will
 - Engage older people who are not currently active or are at risk of isolation or decline
 - Deliver safe, inclusive and appropriate physical activity (e.g. strength, balance, mobility, social activity)
 - Improve access for priority populations, including Aboriginal people, rural and remote communities, low socioeconomic groups.
- Show the potential for ongoing impact beyond the funding period.

2.3.4 What types of activities might be funded?

Preference will be given to activities that are open to the broader community or that demonstrate strong community connection, rather than those limited to a closed group of participants.

Proposals that demonstrate a strong balance of safety, accessibility, affordability, and engagement of inactive or priority populations will be viewed favourably.

Examples of how grants could be used include, (but not limited to)

Low-cost exercise groups	Venue hire or purchasing equipment	Transport to and from exercise classes
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New exercise classes for example, Tai Chi, dance, aqua aerobics, strength and balance	Falls prevention classes, workshops or courses	Supporting community owned gyms to replace or update their equipment
Setting up or growing sporting activities for older , such as walking football, walking netball, table tennis or basketball	Activities that challenge the perception of what ageing means and what it means to grow old	

2.4 Requirements for Funded Activities

All funded activities must meet the following requirements.

2.4.1 Safety and Risk Management

Activities must be safe and appropriate for older people with varying fitness and mobility levels

- Basic risk assessment and mitigation must be in place (e.g. environment, intensity, supervision)
- Participant pre-screening processes are in place appropriate to the activity type and whether it is low or high risk. Examples include self-reported health conditions, mobility concerns or falls history (where relevant).
- Providers must hold, or be willing to obtain, appropriate insurance (e.g. public liability).

2.4.2 Qualified and Competent Delivery

Activities must be delivered by suitably qualified, trained or experienced personnel

- Staff and volunteers must be appropriately skilled to work with older people
- Adequate supervision ratios must be maintained to ensure safety.

2.4.3 Accessibility and Inclusion

Activities must be accessible and inclusive, with consideration of:

- Physical access (venue, terrain, facilities)
- Transport barriers
- Cultural safety (particularly for Aboriginal communities)
- Language and communication needs
- Programs should actively engage:
 - People who are currently inactive
 - People at risk of social isolation
- Priority populations (e.g. Aboriginal people, rural communities, financially disadvantaged groups).

2.4.4 Cultural Safety

Providers must demonstrate a culturally safe approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people.

- Activities should be culturally appropriate, strengths-based, and responsive to local needs
- Staff should have, or be supported to build, cultural capability
- Programs should create welcoming environments and address barriers such as transport, cost and trust
- Where possible, activities should support connection to culture, community and Country.

2.4.5 Affordability

Activities must be low-cost or free. Any fees must be reasonable and not a barrier. Providers should consider ways to reduce cost barriers (e.g. subsidies, free trials).

2.4.6 Appropriateness for Older People

Activities must be age-appropriate and adaptable to different fitness, mobility and health needs. Where relevant, activities should include strength, balance, flexibility and social components.

2.4.7 Participation and Engagement

Programs must aim to increase participation, not just deliver sessions. Activities should include strategies to attract and retain participants. Preference will be given to ongoing, regular activities rather than one-off events.

2.4.8 Community Need and Local Relevance

Activities must respond to a clearly identified local need. Proposals should demonstrate local knowledge and community support or partnerships. Duplication of existing services should be avoided unless clearly justified.

2.4.9 Value for Money

Funding must be used efficiently and directly support delivery. Costs must be reasonable and proportionate to outcomes. Preference may be applied to applications that leverage existing resources or include co-contributions (financial or in-kind).

2.4.10 Feasibility and Deliverability

Activities must be realistic and achievable within the funding period. Providers must demonstrate capacity to deliver, including basic planning and resourcing.

2.4.11 Sustainability Considerations

How could activities continue beyond the funding period? Applicants should outline in application any possible future support, community ownership or low-cost continuation.

2.4.12 Collaboration

Providers are expected to work collaboratively with the funders to maximise the impact of the program. The provider must

- agree to have their activity listed on the NSW Health Healthy and Active website and to work reasonably with NSW Health in the promotion or evaluation of the activity
- be willing to participate in a Grant Recipients' Community of Practice and any other reasonable capacity building activities requested by NSW Health or HNC

2.4.13 *Monitoring and Reporting*

Successful grant recipients must be willing to:

- Track participation (e.g. numbers, attendance)
- Provide simple outcome information (e.g. participant feedback)
- Reporting will be light-touch and standardised.
- All grant recipients will be required to submit a final activity report and an expenditure declaration at the conclusion of the activity

2.5 Out of scope

2.5.1 *What grants cannot be used for:*

- projects considered to be the core responsibility of other Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Government bodies.
- projects requiring ongoing funding from NNSWLHD
- primarily commercial or fundraising ventures
- projects that support or oppose a political organisation or involve political or lobbying activity
- product branding, advertising or promotion not related to the project
- projects outside of the Northern NSW footprint.

The following types of applications are unlikely to be funded:

- Business-as-usual activities such as
 - Existing programs without a clear plan to reach more people, increase participation, or deliver additional benefits.
 - General operational costs not directly tied to increased participation
 - Activities primarily engaging people who are already physically active
- Programs without a clear strategy to reach Inactive older, socially isolated individuals and/or priority populations
- One-off or low-impact events (e.g. one-off workshops or community days), activities without ongoing engagement or participation or programs that do not show ongoing benefit
- High-cost, low-reach applications for example, activities with limited participant numbers relative to cost or proposals where most funding is spent on staff or equipment without good participation
- Capital-heavy or infrastructure projects including
 - Major infrastructure upgrades
 - Purchase of large or non-essential equipment not clearly linked to participation

- Requests for vehicles or permanent assets
- Primarily clinical or treatment-based services (e.g. rehabilitation or activities that are the responsibility of core health services)
- Activities that create ongoing funding dependency e.g. need external funding to operate or could not be sustained at low cost
- Activities that create barriers to participation for example high cost for the participant, hard to access or are not inclusive or equitable
- Duplicate activities already available locally without clear differentiation or evidence of the need
- Unable to show they have been well planned, have the capacity to safely run the activities or have unrealistic timeframes or budgets.

Proposals that do not clearly demonstrate how they will increase participation in physical activity among inactive or priority older populations are unlikely to be competitive.

2.6 Budget

Applicants may apply for grant funding between \$5,000 to \$30,000 (excl. GST) per grant.

The grant must be used for eligible expenditure, in line with the approved budget in the grant agreement.

If the application is successful, HNC may ask the applicant to verify project costs provided in the application.

Please review **Appendix 1** for a list of eligible and ineligible expenses for the grants.

You will be required to provide a detailed budget breakdown in Schedule 4 of the response.

2.7 Industry Briefing Session

HNC will hold an industry briefing session to provide further information about the grant and answer questions from potential applicants.

Date: 16 September 2026

Time: 3.30 to 4.30pm

Location: Teams videoconferencing, details shared upon completion of RSVP link

Registration: [RSVP to the industry briefing session here](#)

The details of the briefing session will be forwarded, following the completion of the form. Information provided at the session will be made available through potential applicants.

2.8 Submission of grant applications

Grant applications must be submitted via Tenderlink at www.tenderlink.com/ncphn by the published application deadline.

Grant, round 2 deadline	15 October 2026, 5pm
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2.9 Evaluation of Grant Applications

Grant applications will be assessed against the following mandatory requirements and weighted criteria.

Mandatory Requirements

Applicants must complete all schedules in the Part B: Grant Application including

- Has an ABN
- Referees
- Financial Capacity
- Conflict of Interest
- Hold or be willing to obtain appropriate Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurances with a min \$10m liability limit (for any one occurrence), or be covered through an auspice arrangement.

Agree to list the grant funded activity on the [NSW Health Active and Healthy](#) website

Agree to work reasonably with NSW Health in the promotion or evaluation of the activity

Comply with the branding requirements of the program ([Partners - Healthy North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health District](#)). Grant recipients will be required to add both organisations' logos to their promotional materials, as well as the statement: This activity is jointly funded by Health North Coast through the North Coast PHN program, and Northern NSW Local Health District.

Participation in a Grant Recipients Community of Practice and any other reasonable capacity building activities requested by NNSW LHD or HNC

Ensure supervising/facilitating staff have CPR training

Ensure suitably qualified facilitators, conduct appropriate pre- activity screening and ensure appropriate clinical governance or risk management measures are in place.

Weighted Evaluation Criteria

Proposed Activity	15%
Demonstrated Need	15%
Impact	20%
Inclusion, Accessibility and cultural safety	20%
Capability to deliver	15%
Budget	15%

Please note, providers must comply with all applicable New South Wales and Commonwealth health orders, and public health requirements. This includes but is not limited to obligations related to infectious disease control, vaccination mandates, and workplace health and safety.

2.9.1 Preferred Applications

If a large number of grants are received, they may be assessed with preference to:

- People living in rural and remote locations

- Low socio-economic communities (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 1 and 2)
- Programs that demonstrate benefit to Aboriginal communities
- Programs that support culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

3. Conditions of Participation

These Conditions of Participation set out the rules for applying for the grant.

They apply to the grant opportunity, the grant documents, information provided by HNC and all communications about the grant process.

By submitting a grant application, the applicant agrees to these Conditions of Participation.

3.1 Enquiries and Clarification

All questions or requests for clarification must be submitted in writing through the TenderLink Online Forum at www.tenderlink.com/ncphn.

Applicants must not contact HNC staff or Board members directly about the grant process.

3.2 Changes to the Grant Documents

HNC may issue Addenda to clarify information, correct an error, provide additional information or change the requirements or timing of the grant process.

3.3 Preparing an application

Applicants must provide all information required in **Part B: Grant Application**.

Applicants are responsible for

- reading and understanding the Grant documents;
- making any enquiries or investigations they consider necessary;
- ensuring their Application is complete and accurate; and
- meeting all mandatory requirements.
- all costs of preparing and submitting an application.

3.4 Non-conforming grant applications

An application may be considered non-conforming if it does not meet a mandatory requirement.

HNC may:

- exclude a non-conforming Application;
- ask the Applicant to clarify or provide further information; or
- consider the Application at HNC's discretion.

3.5 Evaluation Process

HNC's independent evaluation panel of experts will assess applications against the criteria set out in the grant documents.

As part of the evaluation process, HNC may:

- seek clarification or further information;

- ask an Applicant to attend an interview or provide a presentation;
- check references and referees;
- review an Applicant's previous performance;
- conduct due diligence checks, including company and financial checks; and
- undertake any other checks HNC considers appropriate.

HNC is not required to seek further information, conduct interviews or undertake negotiations with Applicants.

HNC may:

- select one or more successful Applicants;
- reject one or more Applications;
- decide not to award any Grants; or
- suspend or end the Grant process.

3.6 Successful Applications

HNC will notify successful applicants in writing.

Being selected as a successful applicant does not create a binding agreement with HNC. A Grant agreement must be signed by both HNC and the successful applicant before the Grant is legally binding.

Successful Applicants must sign and return the Grant agreement within the timeframe specified by HNC.

3.7 Unsuccessful Applications

HNC will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing.

HNC may provide feedback on unsuccessful applications, when requested by the applicant, at its discretion.

3.8 Confidentiality

Applicants must keep confidential all non-public information provided by HNC in connection with the grant process.

Applicants must only use this information to prepare and submit their application.

Applicants must take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information.

3.9 Collusion and Anti-Competitive Conduct

Applicants must prepare their applications independently.

Applicants must not:

- agree with another Applicant about the content of their application;
- share confidential information about their Application with another Applicant; or
- engage in any conduct that could improperly influence the Grant process.

This does not prevent organisations from working together where they are applying as a partnership or consortium, where this is permitted under the Grant documents.

Applicants must immediately notify HNC if they become aware of any conduct that may affect the integrity of the Grant process.

3.10 Contact with HNC

Applicants must not contact or seek support from HNC Board members or staff about their application, except through the communication channels specified in the Grant documents.

This includes asking HNC staff or Board members to influence the assessment or outcome of an application.

HNC may exclude an Applicant from the Grant process if it considers that the Applicant has breached this requirement.

3.11 Conflict of Interest

Applicants must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that may affect their application or their ability to deliver the grant activities.

Applicants must notify HNC of any new conflict of interest that arises during the Grant process.

3.12 Applicant Declarations

By applying, for this grant opportunity the applicant confirms that:

- the information provided is true, accurate and complete to the best of its knowledge;
- it has read and understood the Grant documents and these Conditions of Participation;
- it has made its own enquiries about the Grant opportunity and the requirements of the Application;
- it is responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting its application;
- it has not received or used any improper assistance or confidential information from HNC;
- it will provide further information or clarification if reasonably requested by HNC; and
- it will comply with these Conditions of Participation.

3.13 Applications Become HNC Property

Applications submitted to HNC become the property of HNC.

HNC will handle Applications in accordance with its legal and organisational obligations, including any applicable confidentiality and privacy requirements.

3.14 3.8 HNC's Rights

HNC reserves the right to:

- change or clarify the Grant documents;
- change any date or deadline;
- exclude an application received after the closing time;
- exclude an application that does not meet the requirements;

- request further information or clarification;
- conduct due diligence;
- select one or more successful Applicants;
- reject any or all Applications;
- decide not to award any Grants;
- suspend or end the Grant process; or
- run a new Grant process.

HNC is not required to accept any application.

HNC may exercise these rights at its discretion and in accordance with its legal and funding obligations.