

Guidelines

Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program

Round 2 – 2009/10 – \$100 Million

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 25th June 2009, the Australian Government made an additional \$220 million available to boost the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP). This investment is intended to support local jobs during the global economic recession and provide long-term benefits to communities by assisting councils to build and modernise local infrastructure. Under the RLCIP there are two components: a non-competitive, direct allocation of \$100 million shared amongst all local governments; and a competitive component where \$120 million will be made available for a limited number of large strategic projects seeking a minimum Commonwealth contribution of \$1 million. (For further detail about the RLCIP \$120 million program please visit <www.infrastructure.gov.au/local/cip/index.aspx>

Funds under the RLCIP \$100 million will be provided directly to councils as a one-off payment. The funding will be administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (the Department). Eligible projects must be additional, ready to proceed, or additional stages of current projects. Additional projects are those which have not been included in the local government's financial budget for 2009/10 and can be brought forward as a result of RLCIP funding. Projects that are ready to proceed are those that will begin construction within three months of signing the Funding Agreement (contract).

Local governments are responsible for community consultation and determining the priority given to potential infrastructure projects within their jurisdictions. Councils are encouraged to include projects in their application that address the needs of the local indigenous population. Councils are also encouraged to consider environmental sustainability when preparing project proposals, and how their RLCIP activities will promote green building technologies, design practices and operations.

2. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Eligible categories of infrastructure

Funding will be provided to councils for community infrastructure, including new construction and major renovations or refurbishments of assets such as:

- social and cultural infrastructure (e.g. art spaces, gardens);
- recreational facilities (e.g. swimming pools, sports stadiums);
- tourism infrastructure (e.g. walkways, tourism information centres);
- children, youth and seniors facilities (e.g. playgroup centres, senior citizens' centres);
- access facilities (e.g. boat ramps, footbridges); and
- environmental initiatives (e.g. drain and sewerage upgrades, recycling plants).

Projects that can be funded need to be consistent with the attached list at Annexure A.

Funding can be used for:

- construction for new or upgraded facilities; and
- refurbishment and fit out. Fit out is defined by the Department as internal construction of a facility to enable its functional use, for example, the installation of electrical sockets and lighting, or the painting of walls.

Where they are minor components of the RLCIP project, funding may be used for the following activities:

- engineering, geotechnical, or architectural works; and
- land surveys and site investigations.

2.2 Ineligible projects and activities

Projects must provide a clear and direct benefit to the local communities within a council's jurisdiction. Examples of projects that are ineligible for this reason include those which support council operations (such as an upgrade of council offices), those which make a direct contribution to private businesses, or those which benefit specific individuals (such as the renovation of a caretaker's residence).

Funding will not be approved to bolster funding for existing projects which have exceeded their original budget forecasts.

Funding cannot be used for artworks, or for Information Technology and Communications hardware and software. Further information and examples of ineligible projects will be provided as part of the RLCIP Frequently Asked Questions.

Funding cannot be used for:

- ongoing costs (e.g. operational costs and maintenance);
- roads or related infrastructure covered by the Roads to recovery or Black Spots programs; and
- project management costs.

3. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The closing date for applications is expected to be early November 2009. The Department will contact Local Governments to provide details on the exact deadline for submissions and how to submit applications.

4. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Each council receives a minimum payment of \$30,000. Those with populations greater than 30,000 and categorised as 'urban fringe' or 'urban regional' according to the Australian Classification of Local Government Code will receive an additional growth component of \$150,000. All councils with at least 5,000 residents will share in the remaining funds proportionate to their 2008-09 general purpose Financial Assistance Grant.

As part of the application process, councils will be required to submit project application(s) that account for the entirety of their funding allocation. Councils are encouraged to submit a number of prioritised projects, the aggregate value of which may exceed their allocation. Should the Department find that a higher priority project is ineligible, a lower priority yet eligible project may then be substituted in its place.

All project proposals will be appraised by the Department to ensure their consistency with the Guidelines. Following the appraisal of project proposals, the Department will provide councils with a Funding Agreement for execution.

Councils' Funding Agreements may not be available for execution until councils have completed and properly acquitted their projects under the original \$250 million allocated component of the RLCIP.

Once projects are approved and a Funding Agreement has been executed, councils are reminded that they are legally committed to delivering these projects in accordance with the terms of their Funding Agreement.

Councils should exercise particular care when compiling project budgets. Where a council undertakes to deliver a project for an agreed budget and the project exceeds that budget, councils are still required to deliver that project and will need to pay for any funding shortfall.

When submitting an application, councils should exercise extra care and diligence, ensuring they are in a position to deliver their projects within the program's timeframes. Councils should also ensure that project managers are fully aware of the requirement to complete projects and expend all funding by 31 December 2010.

As part of the application process, Councils will be required to provide details of any partnership funding in respect of each of their projects.

4.1 Payments

Requests for additional funding from the Australian Government will not be approved.

Payments will be structured to schedule the release of 100 per cent of funds to councils on execution of the Funding Agreement.

Payment of council allocations will commence early in 2010. Councils should be mindful that the timeliness of payments will be influenced by the quality of their project proposals and their responsiveness when executing Funding Agreements. High quality applications and prompt execution of Funding Agreements will shorten the Department's processing timelines significantly, making a large contribution towards early payment.

Projects must be completed with all funding expended by **31 December 2010**, unless an extension of time has been agreed in writing by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

5. PROGRESS REPORTS

Once funding is confirmed the council will be required to actively manage the project.

It is recommended that councils consider appropriate project management arrangements proportionate to the size and nature of the project.

The Department will monitor the project's progress through reports received under the Funding Agreement and may conduct site visits.

By **31 May 2010**, councils will be required to provide a progress report on their projects.

A second progress report will be due by **31 July 2010**.

A third progress report will be due by **31 October 2010**. Councils may also be required to provide progress reports at other times.

By **28 February 2011**, councils will be required to provide a final report on the expenditure of Australian Government funding and demonstrate that they have spent the funding in accordance with the Guidelines.

Irrespective of the requirement to provide progress reports at nominated times, councils are required to provide the Department with immediate notice whenever their ability to deliver approved projects and meet the terms of their Funding Agreement is compromised.

Councils are required to maintain true, accurate and up to date plans and records, tracking and documenting the progress and history of each of their projects.

As part of progress reporting and final reporting activities, the Department may require councils to provide any or all of the following information:

- An itemised budget for each project, including estimates for individual project components at the time of application, and how these estimates compare with the actual costs incurred by the council.
- Receipts for all expenditure in relation to each of the council's project(s).
- A detailed timeline for each project, including but not limited to community consultation, design, planning, construction and fit out activities. The timeline should estimate dates for the completion of milestones and track progress against these targets.
- At the Department's discretion, councils may be required to provide audited financial statements in relation to their project(s).

Updates to the Guidelines will be published on the website as an amendment addendum. It is the responsibility of each Council to keep monitoring the site to stay informed.

Annexure A

Examples of Community Infrastructure**Social and cultural infrastructure**

- Town halls
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Local heritage sites
- Museums
- Cultural centres
- Enhancement of main streets & public squares
- Theatre/music/art spaces
- Historic buildings
- Parks and gardens
- Internet kiosk infrastructure
- Kitchens for organisations
- Community market areas
- Resources for cultural facilities
- Public marketplaces and saleyards

Recreation facilities

- Sports grounds and facilities
- Sports stadiums
- Community recreation spaces
- Playgrounds
- Rail trails
- Swimming pools
- Walking tracks and bicycle paths
- Skate Parks
- BMX/Mountain Bike parks/trails
- Surf lifesaving clubs

Tourism infrastructure

- Convention or trade centres
- Memorial halls/walkways
- Tourism information centres
- Community public attractions
- Buildings for exhibits
- Local infrastructure to support or provide access to tourist facilities

Children, youth and seniors facilities

- Playgroup centres
- Youth centres
- Scout/guide halls
- Senior citizens' centres
- Community childcare centres

Access facilities

- Disabled access infrastructure
- Footbridges
- Bus/rail terminal upgrade
- Jetties/wharves/piers/pontoons/bollards
- Foreshore development
- Boat ramps
- Airport infrastructure and terminals

Environmental Initiatives

- Water source and treatment
- Drain and sewerage upgrades
- Water conservation infrastructure
- Waste management and processing infrastructure
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Water recycling plants
- Water catchments
- Recycling plants

