



Gas Community Benefits Fund

Funding Guidelines

Overview/Purpose

The NSW Government has established the arrangements for a voluntary Gas Community Benefits Fund (“Fund”) being an authorised fund under Section 24AB of the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991*. The Fund will allow for the sharing of the benefits of coal seam gas production with the local communities where the gas is extracted.¹

The principal objective of the Gas Community Benefits Fund is the provision of benefit to the local community.

The other objectives of the Gas Community Benefit Fund are to ensure that:

1. lasting and mutually beneficial relationships are developed between gas companies and the communities in which they operate;
2. local communities are involved in decisions to fund projects in the local communities;
3. funding decisions promote community development projects that support local and social enterprise, are transparent and there is accountability for these decisions; and
4. efficient, effective and transparent governance and administration arrangements for the Fund.

Administration of the Fund

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority (Fund Administrator) has been appointed under the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991* to administer the Fund.

The Fund Administrator may recover its ongoing administrative and operating costs from the Fund. The amount recovered will be the lesser of:

- (a) the actual amount of the Fund Administrator’s ongoing administrative and operating costs; and
- (b) 10 percent of total contributions by holders of petroleum titles to the Fund.

Available Grant Funding

A maximum of \$500,000 per project is available.

The Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy may give special consideration to projects seeking more than \$500,000 of funding.

Following assessment of an application, an independent Assessment Panel may recommend that a project be funded for a lesser amount than requested by the applicant.

¹ For every \$2 paid into the Fund by a gas producer (holding a petroleum title for the production area) the NSW Government will provide a \$1 rebate on the producer’s gas royalties, up to a maximum of 10% of the royalty due in each year.

Important Dates

Applications will be open for a period of three (3) months after the announcement date of the funding round.

Who Can Apply

Individuals, organisations or enterprises that deliver local and social community development initiatives in the areas of:

- | | |
|--|--|
| - health
- education
- environment | - economic development and heritage
- sport, arts and culture |
|--|--|

Eligibility Criteria

If you wish to apply for funding you must:

- be solvent, and believe that it will remain solvent during the project;
- have the legal capacity and powers to enter into a funding agreement;
- not have been wound up or had its legal registration cancelled;
- not have been prosecuted and had an infringement notice or penalty notice issued against it for a breach of a law which is relevant to the project.

What is an eligible project?

- Projects that benefit the community within the geographical area for the Fund.
- Projects that meet one or more of the Fund Objectives (see Table 1 for Strategic Focus Areas).
- Projects that will result in direct and lasting benefits to the local community.
- Projects that have ways to measure project performance.
- Projects that meet the strategic focus of the funding round.
- Projects that have not previously received monies from the Fund.
- Projects with a proposed delivery time of less than 2 years.

What type of project will not be funded?

- Projects outside the geographical area for the Fund.
- Applications submitted after the final closing date for the funding round or after funds have been exhausted.
- Projects which exceed the maximum funding amount for a single project.
- For ongoing operating costs of existing projects.
- For projects spanning more than 2 years, (unless the applicant clearly states this in the application; the CBF Committee gives the reasons for the longer term, special consideration; and the longer term is approved by the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy).
- Projects with political or religious purposes.
- Projects that predominantly benefit landholders who already receive compensation from a titleholder.

Table 1 – Gas Community Benefit Fund Strategic Focus

Type of Project	Fund Objective
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support projects which target health, safety and social wellbeing of the community
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support projects in the field of education ie: education infrastructure, learning tools and sports programs
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement community generated environmental programs that will improve the quality of the environment
Economic Development & Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement programs to boost economic development and promote the heritage of the geographic area.
Sport, Arts & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide the community with new or improved facilities, programs and resources ie: sporting facilities, museums, theatre and galleries

Application Process

Steps of the application process:



What Information Should My Application Contain?

Your application should:

- Include information in all the required sections, try to include as much information as possible in the optional sections
- Provide details of all the costs involved, including overall project costs and costs being requested from the Fund
- Provide a timeline containing the start date of the project, key milestones and the completion date
- Detail the project outcomes and ways you will measure performance of the project.

Lodgement of Applications

Applicants can lodge completed application forms including required documentation to the NSW Rural Assistance Authority by post, email, facsimile or personal delivery at:

Post: Locked Bag 23
Orange NSW 2800

Email: rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au

Fax: (02) 6391 3098

In person: 161 Kite Street
Orange NSW 2800

Applications must be received by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority no later than the closing date.

Applications received after the advertised application period closing date, in any other circumstances will not be accepted.

Assessment Criteria

Projects will be assessed and recommended based on whether the application meets the eligibility criteria provided at page 2. Where a funding round has a strategic focus, projects addressing that focus will receive a higher ranking in the assessment phase.

Ineligible applications will not progress to the assessment phase.

Eligible applications will be assessed on the comparative merits of an application against the below evaluation criteria and relative to other applications. The applications will then be recommended to the CBF Committee for approval.

Evaluation Criteria

- clearly defined project proposal and detailed project activities
- clearly identified and satisfactory project timeline
- demonstrated relevant community and industry support for project
- clearly identified project team with demonstrated skills and experience to deliver the project
- itemised budget with clearly identified project tasks/activities and costings
- amount of eligible funding requested
- identification of other sources of confirmed funding, if required
- demonstrated understanding and controls for project risks
- demonstrated relevance to strategic focus of funding round (where applicable).

Project Outcomes

Clearly identified:

- issues and/or needs the project is addressing and how the project will meet those needs;
- businesses and others within the Community who will directly and indirectly benefit from the project and how they will benefit;
- other expected outcomes of the project.

What Happens If My Application is Successful?

If your application is successful you will be required to:

- By the date required by the Fund Administrator, sign a funding agreement in the form required by the Fund Administrator;
- Spend the allocated funds within the project time line;
- Spend the allocated funds on items/ eligible project costs directly relating to your project, as specified in your application and the funding agreement;
- Hold appropriate insurance, including public liability insurance, to cover all risks for the project and provide copies valid and current certificates of currency for each of these policies;
- Submit project updates to the Fund Administrator as required in the funding agreement;
- Provide a report on the outcomes achieved and the use of funds, when the project is complete;
- Pay back any unspent funding at the end of the project or funding which has not been spent in accordance with the funding agreement;
- Allow the NSW Government and/or Gas Title Holder to utilise information about the project for external communication and promotion purposes.

You must not make financial commitments for funded activities until your Funding Agreement has been executed by the Fund Administrator and all other parties to the funding agreement.

The Fund Administrator will consider requests for changes or variations to the project in limited circumstances, and may reject or accept the request on the conditions set by the Fund Administrator, in its absolute discretion.

Unsuccessful Applicants

The Fund Administrator will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing.

GST

All applicants must have an ABN.

If you are registered for GST, the Fund Administrator will pay you an additional amount for the GST.

Contact details:

NSW Rural Assistance Authority
161 Kite Street, ORANGE NSW 2800
Freecall 1800 678 593

Calls to "1800" numbers from your home phone are free.
Calls from a public phone and mobiles may be timed and
attract charges.

Facsimile 02 6391 3098
Email: rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au