

## Frequently Asked Questions the Strong and Resilient Communities grants program

### **Q. Why is the Strengthening Communities grants program changing?**

**A:** The [Strengthening Communities Activity](#) is being redesigned into the Strong and Resilient Community (SARC) grants to better align and target funding to Australian Government priorities such as building social cohesion and addressing emerging community need.

### **Q. Which Strengthening Communities grant programs form part of the redesign?**

**A:** The following grant programs will form part of the redesign:

- [Community Capacity Building](#)
- [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Diversity and Social Cohesion](#)
- [Multicultural Arts and Festivals](#).

### **Q: Were community organisations consulted on grants redesign?**

**A:** The Department of Social Services contacted all currently funded organisations to inform them of the changes and in February and March this year met with 74 organisations most affected by these changes.

### **Q: How was stakeholder feedback used by the Department in the design of the grants?**

**A:** Stakeholder feedback has helped to inform the development of the grant guidelines.

### **Q. Has funding been cut?**

**A:** No. There have been no cuts to funding.

\$18 million remains available under the new program as under the Strengthening Communities grants.

### **Q: Is the Volunteer Grants program changing?**

**A:** No. The \$10 million annual [Volunteer Grants](#) program will continue to be separately funded, acknowledging the valuable work of more than six million Australian volunteers in supporting communities.

### **Q: Will the Government continue to support multicultural arts and festivals?**

**A:** Yes. Organisations will still be able to deliver multicultural arts and festivals projects as sub-components of projects under SARC. In fact, the Community Resilience Grants must include a Harmony Day event.

### **Q: What's different about the SARC grants?**

**A:** Strong and Resilient Communities grants will provide a whole-of-community approach to emerging challenges through three distinct grant programs:

- Community Resilience
- Inclusive Communities
- National Research.

The Department of Social Services understands that local communities know their local challenges better than anyone else. That's why, under SARC, grants will provide a more flexible program structure that enables communities to determine how funding can best address their needs.

Local communities can identify needs and a single or multiple organisations can come together to provide local solutions to create a more integrated, cohesive society.

**Q: How can community organisations find out more about SARC grants and when the funding rounds open?**

**A:** Community Organisations can find more information about the SARC funding on the [DSS website](#). The SARC grants will be advertised on the [GrantConnect website](#) when available.

**Q: Why is the Government redirecting funding from current Strengthening Communities activities such as volunteer management to a focus on programs that address community cohesion and resilience?**

**A:** Funding will help build the enabling structures which are vital to well-functioning, cohesive and resilient communities. Volunteering will remain one of a number of community enablers that get people into jobs and reduces social exclusion and marginalisation.

**Q: What is the focus of the two different programs?**

**A:** The Inclusive Communities Grants aim to increase social and economic participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and families and to improve their life time wellbeing and sense of belonging in the community.

The Community Resilience Grants aim to build strong, resilient and cohesive communities to help make Australia more secure and harmonious. These grants will be for projects designed to address issues in high need communities that show early signs of, low social cohesion or racial, religious or cultural intolerance.

**Q: What are the key differences between the two grants programmes?**

**A:** Community Resilience grants are targeted at whole-of-community approaches to address identified issues relating to resilience and community cohesion.

Inclusive Communities grants are targeted at disadvantaged individuals and families within a community to improve their social and economic participation.

**Q: Can organisations apply for multiple grants?**

**A:** Yes. Organisations can apply for grants between \$20,000 and \$150,000 a year for up to three and a half years for each community project they deliver.

**Q: Is the funding ongoing?**

**A:** No. Funding will be available for one-off time-limited projects of up to three and a half years, depending on the project.

**Q: How much funding is available over the two grants rounds?**

**A:** There is no specific funding level allocated to each stream. \$18 million has been allocated for funding over the three SARC grants streams. Funding will be allocated flexibly and will be based on merit and level of need in the community.

**Q: What kinds of volunteer activities will be supported under SARC grants?**

**A:** Projects supporting people and communities experiencing disadvantage will continue to attract priority funding under the new program.

Volunteering is a proven pathway to reduce social exclusion and marginalisation and to get people into jobs.

SARC-funded projects may include volunteering activities, either by referring volunteers to other community organisations or directly engaging volunteers in the SARC-funded project.

Activities that address the needs of marginalised Australians such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and disengaged youth will also be prioritised.

**Q: Can organisations apply together for a grant where the project is delivered by a group of organisations?**

**A:** Yes. Local communities can identify needs and a single or multiple organisations can come together to apply for grants to provide local solutions to create a more integrated, cohesive society.

**Q: Do I need to deliver a Harmony Day event to be considered for SARC grants?**

**A:** All Community Resilience projects must include a Harmony Day event. Applications that do not indicate their project will include a Harmony Day event will be deemed non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment.

Inclusive Communities projects may include a Harmony Day event. This will help increase exposure within the community of issues being addressed by the project.

**Q: When will the National Research Grants open?**

**A:** The Department anticipates opening applications from invited organisations for National Research grants in late 2017. These grants will inform the Government about emerging issues of national significance, such as success factors for community cohesion and harmony and increasing philanthropic partnerships.