



Telstra's Connected Communities

2026 Grant Program

Round 4 Program Guidelines

Key Dates



Note: Projects funded in this round must be undertaken between July 2026 and July 2027.

All applications close 5pm Victorian time (AEDT).

About FRRR

FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) supports remote, rural and regional communities across Australia to be vibrant, resilient, empowered and sustainable. We work alongside communities to catalyse locally led solutions, especially in areas facing systemic challenges.

To do this, we connect resources, build enduring local skills and knowledge, and reshape how rural and remote Australia is seen, valued and supported.

Learn more: frrr.org.au.

About Telstra

Telstra is Australia's leading telecommunications and technology company, offering a full range of communications services and competing in all telecommunications markets.

Telstra has proudly been at the forefront of technology for 100 years, and as digital technologies grow and they continue leading the way with networks, tech, and experiences, the core of what inspires always stays the same.

Building a connected future so everyone can thrive.

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Program Information

Program Purpose

Telstra's Connected Communities Grant Program will boost support for communities across remote, rural and regional Australia to enhance liveability with digital solutions that harness the power of connection.

The program will support community-led efforts that **embrace new technology and improve digital literacy or digital capability** that enhance social connection, support equitable access to technology, increases cyber security, enable sustainable environmental practices or support disaster preparedness. This can be with new or existing projects, where funds will help to scale their impact, and may include initiatives that can build digital capability by providing access to equipment, information and education and/or enable constructive social networks.

Not-for-profit organisations that are providing access to information, technology, education and facilities to build connected communities that are resilient, sustainable and liveable should consider applying.

Funds Available & Priorities

A total of \$200,000 is available to fund **grant applications up to the value of \$10,000** to support remote, rural and regional communities to **embrace new technologies and digital solutions** to build social capital and digital capability via a grant opportunity fostering:

- **Liveable** communities that have the digital capability to help individuals with the skills to live, learn and work in a digital society;
- **Sustainable** communities that are diverse and inclusive, planning for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of their people and the planet;
- **Resilient** communities that are well prepared and socially connected when disaster strikes, with the ability to renew and recover together.

Important Note: Organisations that received grants through the Telstra Connected Communities Program in Round 3, 2025 are not eligible to apply in this grant round (Round 4, 2026).

What Can be Funded

The program will support a wide range of charitable projects that are aligned to the program purpose and embrace technology to provide digital solutions including:

- Equipment or training to build digital and connectivity literacy for broad community benefit;
- First Nations-led digital initiatives that strengthen culture, Country, economic participation and reconciliation;
- Enabling digital equity by providing access to digital equipment for students in need;
- Building community organisations' operational capacity with new technology and digital solutions;
- Programs that increase communities' digital literacy for better social and economic outcomes;

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- Programs that use digital tools to support remote, rural and regional communities' adaptation to extreme weather events and changing climate conditions;
- Programs to help communities recycle their e-waste;
- Delivery of cyber safety / online awareness workshops to vulnerable cohorts (e.g. seniors, students, First Nations people and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities);
- Cyber security support for community groups to implement or upgrade electronic information security;
- Upgrading emergency meeting places' connectivity in and out of times of disaster;
- Providing essential digital equipment for emergency preparedness.

There are several areas that we **can't fund** through this program. If in doubt, please contact us.



What Can't be Funded

- Projects that support core areas of responsibility of Federal, State and Local Governments;
 - Solely ongoing core organisational (e.g. rent, utilities, regular wages, loan repayments);
 - Non-project related staff training and development costs;
 - The encouragement or advancement of sport, recreation and social activities are not considered charitable activities under Australian law. **Applications from sporting organisations need to clearly demonstrate charitable outcomes and benefit to the wider community that are above and beyond the sporting activities of the club. For example, digital scoreboards only benefit the sporting outcomes and are therefore not eligible. Please contact FRRR to discuss if you are unsure.**
 - Overseas travel and overseas projects;
 - Prizes, gifts, trophies or awards;
 - Political lobbying;
 - Projects that primarily benefit private business(es), a sole trader, or private interests;
 - Projects solely focussed on animal welfare.
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Eligibility

Organisations that were successful in the 2025 Telstra Connected Communities Program Round 3 **are not eligible for funding** through the program in 2026. This grant program seeks to support not-for-profit organisations in remote, rural and regional Australia who have greater challenges in accessing services and/or funding to enable initiatives that can leverage technology and build digital capability to enhance liveability, improve sustainability and strengthen community resilience.

To apply, you must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisations must be a **not-for-profit organisation** with either an **Incorporation Certificate and/or an ABN**. If you are unsure if your organisation is a registered not-for-profit (e.g. if you are a Co-operative, Other Unincorporated Entity, Public Company or Trust), please contact FRRR;
- Projects must be for charitable purposes and offer clear public benefit;
- Not-for-profit organisations with or without DGR-1 endorsement are eligible;
- Projects must benefit communities in remote, rural and regional Australia; and
- Organisations can submit one application per grant round.

Please note, you will be considered ineligible if the:

- Application is submitted by individuals, sole traders, private or commercial businesses (as per the submitted ABN);
 - Application is submitted by an organisation that is a non-legal entity and the nominated legal governing / partnering organisation has not provided written confirmation of their willingness to assume responsibility for management of the funds and acquittal of the project;
 - Application is submitted without required financial information and quotes or rationale for budget items over \$1,000 (see Application Requirements section below);
 - Overdue final report/s from any FRRR grants awarded in the previous seven years (delivery organisations should check with legal organisation to see if there are any outstanding final reports);
 - Application is for a project or activity that has already occurred / is occurring prior to the announcement of funding;
 - Application is incomplete. **NOTE:** Due to the volume of applications received, applications are assessed based on the documentation received at the time of application. **FRRR is unlikely to follow up missing documentation after applications have been submitted.**
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How to Apply

Before beginning your application, please read the information on the following pages. It sets out critical, additional information that we require and explains why it is important.

FRRR accepts applications online via the Blackbaud Grants Portal.

We recommend you download this [sample copy of the application form](#).

[Click here to apply.](#)



BLACKBAUD
Grants Portal



FRRR

Need help?

If at any time you need help with your application, don't hesitate to contact the FRRR office on free call 1800 170 020 or email us at granting@frrr.org.au.

IMPORTANT NOTES RE: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Please read the information below to support the planning and preparation of your project. It also sets out what you **MUST** include for your project to be considered. The FRRR website also includes a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) that provide valuable information. Contact FRRR if you have any questions about this information or any aspect of the application form.

Eligible Legal Entities

Every application needs to include an organisation that holds either an **ABN or Incorporation Certificate**. If your organisation doesn't have that, FRRR may still fund the project but you need another organisation's support, which we refer to as the '**legal organisation**' (with your organisation being the **delivery organisation**). This situation often occurs when the organisation **delivering** the activity or project is a branch of an overarching organisation - such as a local CWA or YMCA branch. In this case, the CWA or YMCA would be the legal organisation.

Even though your organisation may complete the application (and will be doing the work), **it's the 'legal organisation's' legal and financial information that needs to be provided**. They need to provide a letter of support, confirming they are willing to play this role. You can use the template available [here](#).

Applications from ACNC and/or unincorporated associations are required to submit their organisation's Constitution.

Why is this important?

This program is only able to distribute funds to not-for-profit organisations with an ABN or Incorporation Certificate, and FRRR needs to know that the organisation with that ABN / Incorporation Certificate understands and agrees to carry out their responsibilities in relation to your project, if successful.

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Financial Information

Applications received without the requested financial information are ineligible. You must include the following:

- Annual income (total income in your financial year);
- Annual expenditure (total expenses in your financial year); and
- Current assets (from your audited financials or bank balance minus any debts).

Provide a brief explanation of any large financial surplus or current assets and reasons why FRRR funds are still required.

Please contact us if you cannot provide required financial information or are unsure about what to provide.

Why is this important?

FRRR uses this information to understand your organisation's financial viability and ability to manage grant funds.

Project Budget

You must include a project budget that clearly shows the items that FRRR grant funding would be used for and that also shows all income and expenses related to your project.

Budgets should be realistic and must add up – i.e. total expenditure must match total income.

Applicant contributions in cash or in-kind are highly regarded. Quotes or detailed rationale for items over \$1,000 are required.

Note: FRRR suggests costing unskilled volunteer labour at \$45 per hour.

For more info on costing volunteer labour, visit: <https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/valuing-volunteer-labour>.

Why is this important?

A clear budget helps FRRR to understand the size of your project, exactly how FRRR funds will be spent and helps demonstrate community support for your project through in-kind contributions either from your organisation or partners / community members.

Community Photo

Applicants are required to provide a high-resolution photo (between 1MB and 10MB). The photo can be a group shot of staff or volunteers in your Community Organisation OR an action shot relevant to the project you are applying for that includes people. If you are successful, FRRR may utilise this photo in grant announcements and/or associated communications.

Why is this important?

A picture may speak a thousand words, meaning that multiple ideas can often be conveyed in a single image – it can improve FRRR's understanding of your community.

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Supporting Materials

FRRR also strongly recommends that you provide supporting materials such as [letters of support](#), [evidence of permission from the property owner](#), community plans, survey results, photographs, media clips and research reports that can show broad-community support and partnerships involved in the project. For more information on supporting documentation, [watch this recording](#).

Large documents should be referenced and explained in the application.

Why is this important?

FRRR seeks to fund projects that are well-supported by the broader local community, are locally-led and delivered, show good partnerships and benefit multiple parts of the community. As FRRR is not always familiar with your community, our staff consider support material as evidence toward understanding level of community need, benefit and support.

Clear Project Information

A clear description of exactly **what** the grant funds will be used for, **when** and **where** the project will happen, **who** will benefit and **who** will be involved in delivering the project, **why** the project and grant funds are needed, **how** funds will be spent and **how** the activities and success of the project will be recorded, evaluated and shared.

Where possible, we encourage you to make it really clear that your organisation is ready and able to deliver the project and, if required, provide ongoing support for the initiative.

Why is this important?

FRRR needs to clearly understand your project to assess its merits. Applicants should focus on addressing the what, when, where, who, why and how of the project, as this is the best way to clearly communicate the details of the project.

A ready community is best placed to achieve the aims of your project, so during assessment, our staff look for information that tells us that good leadership, skills and awareness exist in your community to support the project now and in the future.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANTEES

Bank Account

To receive the grant funds, successful grantees (the legal entity) must have a bank account registered under the organisation's name. Without a bank account, the grant funds cannot be disbursed, and the grantee will not receive the funds.

Reporting Requirements

When the project is complete, the grantees will be required to provide a [Project Report](#) on the project's activities, impacts and outcomes, and include a **financial acquittal** of your grant. Project reporting is an opportunity for the organisation to reflect on and celebrate what has been achieved and to share learnings.

Grantees have up to 12 months to deliver their Telstra Connected Communities grant project. **The online Project Report is due 8 weeks after project completion.**

Organisations with an overdue Project Report are not eligible to apply for further FRRR funding until the report is received. If the Project Report is not received, the applicant organisation may be suspended from applying for any FRRR grant programs until it is supplied.