

February 2022

## NSW Regional Housing Fund FAQs

### What is the Regional Housing Fund?

The NSW Regional Housing Fund (RHF) is a \$30 million grant program to support NSW regional councils experiencing high growth and/or housing supply pressures.

The objectives of the fund are to:

- unblock and accelerate new housing capacity in regional NSW
- bring forward construction and the opportunity for jobs and economic activity in the short to medium term
- support investment in critical development infrastructure and high-quality public and open spaces projects.

### What can funding be used for?

Eligible councils will be offered funding to deliver upgraded infrastructure and open space projects that directly support the delivery of new housing.

### Is my council eligible for funding?

Eligible councils include Ballina, Bathurst Regional, Bega Valley, Broken Hill, Central Coast, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Griffith, Kempsey, Lismore, Lithgow, Mid-Coast, Mid-Western Regional, Orange, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Richmond Valley, Singleton, Snowy Monaro, Tamworth Regional, Tweed and Wagga Wagga.

### Why is the fund only open to 21 large regional councils?

The 21 councils eligible to apply for the NSW Regional Housing Fund are assessed as experiencing some of the highest levels of housing growth and/or under housing supply pressures. Due to their size, these councils are expected to have a significant role in providing new housing supply for the local government area and surrounding regions.

These 21 councils also did not receive funding under the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, which was announced on 5 August 2020. For more information about the program, visit the [NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program webpage](#).

### How much funding will be available to each eligible council?

Up to \$1.4 million in funding is available to each council. Councils are encouraged to part fund projects, however this is not a mandatory.

### What type of projects can be funded?

Councils should nominate projects that support or unblock new housing supply, such as active transport, roads, water, wastewater, public lighting, telecommunications assets, detention basins, drainage and open space.

Councils can also apply to upgrade local high streets and public domain, open spaces and sports facilities.

### How do I apply?

Eligible councils should submit an application through the Smartygrants portal on the NSW Regional Housing Fund webpage by 11 March 2022.

The department will invite councils to participate in the program if their application includes a program outline plan that meets the program objectives. Councils will be asked to commit to the program via a participation agreement by 22 April 2022.

The initial application should include a 250-500 word high-level description of the development infrastructure project(s) that council may seek to fund. Councils that are approved to participate in the program will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal for their infrastructure project in June 2022.

### What information should I include in the program outline plan?

Program outline plans should demonstrate new or existing initiatives to be delivered by council that will contribute to the delivery of new housing supply and align to the recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce. Councils will be required to set out a clear implementation plan for each initiative and include relevant background information.

Councils should identify where information is currently not available or will only become available once initiatives are complete.

Councils requiring support to complete their program outline plan can email the team at [regionalhousingfund@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalhousingfund@planning.nsw.gov.au). In addition, a program outline plan template can be accessed with the application form.

### When should I nominate my development infrastructure or public and open space project(s)?

The initial application should provide a 250-500 word description, outlining the type of project(s) likely to be developed if funding is approved. This should include a very high-level description of the type of project, how the proposed infrastructure enables or supports planned housing, and its location, cost and schedule.

The department recognises that it takes time to prepare a well-considered project proposal. Councils that are approved to participate in the program will be invited to nominate a more detailed proposal in June 2022.

### How does council demonstrate that the infrastructure will support new housing supply?

Council needs to show that the infrastructure is included in its approved Contributions Plan (i.e. S7.11), Local Strategic Planning Statement or in a social infrastructure audit or similar study. If this is not available, other evidence, or a business case showing that the infrastructure enables new housing supply, must be provided with the application.

### What are the assessment criteria?

The program outline plan will be assessed on whether the proposed project(s) address one or more of the following criteria:

- enable new housing supply
- improve monitoring and forward planning for future housing supply
- increase housing diversity
- increase the availability of affordable housing.

Council's project nomination to deliver a development infrastructure project(s) must meet the criteria as outlined in the guidelines.

### How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by an independent selection panel overseen by an inter-agency oversight committee made up of assessment panel of NSW Government representatives. A probity advisor will also oversee the program.

### What support is available to councils?

Program guidelines and fact sheets are available on the [NSW Regional Housing Fund webpage](#) that will assist you in preparing your application. Councils will also be invited to attend a webinar in the week commencing 7 February 2022. Further details will be provided on the program webpage.

Our team will also be available to provide any advice or assistance you might require and can be contacted at [regionalthousingfund@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalthousingfund@planning.nsw.gov.au)

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