

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the  
Environment and Water

# Far South Coast Community Solar and Battery Grants

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## Application Guidelines

October 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.

Far South Coast Community Solar and Battery Grants

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## Acknowledgements

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## Copyright and disclaimer

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For ECCS documents: <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/copyright>

For any inquiries about the grant program, please contact [rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au).

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# 1 Overview of program

The Far South Coast (FSC) Solar and Battery grant will deliver \$1 million to support community renewable energy projects in the Far South Coast region of NSW.

The funding is provided by the Australian Government and comes from the member for Eden-Monaro the Hon Kristy McBain MP's 2022 commitment for \$1 million to be spent on community clean energy projects on the Far South Coast of NSW.

The grants will be administered by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department). The grant will be an open and competitive process with a single funding round.

The grants will fund solar and battery projects on community and council facilities in the:

- Bega Valley Shire LGA
- Southern part of Eurobodalla Shire LGA.

Applicants must be the asset owner of the community infrastructure on which the solar and/or battery will be installed. The asset owner must demonstrate how the grant will deliver cheaper energy to local communities, reduce emissions, enhance energy resilience and support local employment community users.

Applicants should read all details in the guidelines before applying.

Applicants may seek additional funding from other grant programs available from local, state, and federal government, including grants from federal initiatives such as the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

## Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Far South Coast Solar and Battery grant is to support local solar and battery projects in the Far South Coast region to achieve the following objectives:

- Deliver cheaper energy to local communities
- Reduce emissions
- Enhance community resilience through energy security
- Support local employment.

Enquiries	If you have any enquiries, please contact the team at <a href="mailto:rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au">rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au</a>
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## Program Timeline

Description	Start Date	Notes
Applications open	October 2024	For exact opening and closing dates see the <a href="#">NSW Grants and Funding Finder</a> . Applicants will have up to two months to submit.
Applications close	Mid-December 2024	
Announcement of successful applicants	March 2025	The Department will announce the successful grant applicants.
Start of grant program	May 2025	Initial funds will be given to grantees so they can begin their projects.
First progress report	November 2025	Successful grantees should aim to complete their projects by June 2026. By June 2026, the Grant Administrator will also prepare and submit a report for the federal DCCEEW.  If projects are completed ahead of time, applicants can submit their progress reports early and receive the funds tied to the submission of these progress reports.  If there are delays, grantees will need to submit variations. The process for variations is described in Section 3.3 of the Grants Contract Management Plan.
Second progress report	May 2026	
Commonwealth review and reporting/project finish	June 2026	
Continued operations and maintenance reporting	June 2028	After the completion of the project, grantees will be asked to report back every six months on the operation and effectiveness of their projects completed, over a 24-month period.

## 2 Selection criteria

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### 2.1- Eligibility

The proposed project installation must be located in, or primarily serve, communities in the Far South Coast region of NSW, which is defined as:

- The whole of the Bega Valley Shire LGA
- The southern parts of Eurobodalla Shire LGA.

These areas are defined as the following postcodes:

- 2545
- 2546
- 2548
- 2549
- 2550
- 2551.

This grant program will fund solar and battery related initiatives, including solar systems or solar batteries on community infrastructure such as surf lifesaving clubs, community sports clubs and community centres.

Applications must demonstrate alignment with the Merit Criteria presented in Section 2.3.

The proposed project installation needs to support local employment. This means procuring vendors for the installation and maintenance of solar and battery assets from the Bega Valley Shire LGA and southern parts of the Eurobodalla Shire LGA. Exceptions can be made if there is engagement with industry specialists or procuring materials that are outside of the Far South Coast region.

Applicants will fully deploy their projects by June 2026.

### **Applicant eligibility**

To be eligible, applicants must:

- be a legal entity recognised under Australian law, including government-owned entities
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or be registered as a not-for-profit organisation or charity
- have appropriate insurance cover (public indemnity or public liability) for the proposed project activity
- be registered for the purposes of GST
- have an account with an Australian financial institution.

Applicants are required to self-declare that they are not currently under investigation or involved in any court cases related to insolvency matters. If an applicant becomes aware of any such investigation or legal proceedings after submitting their application, they must notify the grant administrator.

You are not eligible to apply for the grant program if you are:

- insolvent
- an individual
- an unincorporated association.

The Program Manager, at their sole discretion, may decide that an application is ineligible for funding. This may include any person or business activity that could cause reputation and/or other risks to the NSW Government.

## **Eligible infrastructure**

Community infrastructure that may benefit from these grants could include buildings, parks, facilities, or other shared utilities that benefit the community.

Only the asset owners of community infrastructure can apply for the grant. These asset owners include local government, not-for-profits, local Aboriginal Land Councils and other government entities, such as schools.

Buildings and utilities where people gather for recreation, run social and cultural events and support social cohesion, can apply for this grant to use solar and/or battery technology to meet the objectives of this grant.

Examples of community infrastructure that could be eligible include, but are not limited to:

- community sports clubs
- scout or guide halls
- surf lifesaving clubs
- welfare centres
- Men's Sheds
- community centres
- showgrounds
- community owned childcare centres
- aged care facilities
- school halls.

## **Eligible equipment**

The following equipment is eligible for funding under the grant:

- solar systems
- batteries
- equipment for building infrastructure that supports new solar and battery installations.

However, it will not pay for ongoing maintenance of these assets.

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## 2.2- Grant value

The Far South Coast Solar and Battery Grant is based on the following information:

1. The total funding available in the program is \$1 million
  2. The minimum funding for a proposed project is \$10,000. Applicants can apply for multiple project installations with a minimum value of \$10,000 each. These must be in separate applications
  3. The maximum grant amount for one project installation is \$1 million
  4. There are no co-contribution requirements for this grant
  5. Applicants are also eligible to seek funding from other grant funds to cover costs on the proposed project
  6. Funding provided by the grant is intended for capital expenditure (CAPEX). However, exceptions may be made to fund operational expenditure (OPEX) on a case-by case basis.
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## 2.3- Merit criteria

Applications will be assessed on the merits of the proposed project activity. The merit criteria to be assessed upon is listed below:



Criteria	Information to be assessed	Weighting
Criterion one: Provide clean and cheap energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in CO2 emissions</li> <li>• Increased production of renewable energy</li> <li>• Reduction in energy costs for the community</li> </ul>	30%
Criterion two: Support local jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring local businesses to install and maintain technology</li> <li>• Other benefits to local businesses</li> </ul>	20%
Criterion three: Improve community resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness in providing benefits to the community in the event of a natural disaster</li> <li>• Increase in emergency preparedness in the community</li> <li>• Opportunities to share knowledge about the project within and between organisations, including replication and/or scalability in the region</li> </ul>	10%
Criterion four: Effective project planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound project planning and methodology</li> <li>• Outputs and milestones clearly targeted towards achieving stated outcomes</li> <li>• Stated outputs and milestones that are quantitatively and qualitatively measurable</li> <li>• Collaboration within and across local government organisations, project partners and with external stakeholders</li> </ul>	20%
Criterion five: Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost effectiveness, including avoided costs, and in-kind support</li> <li>• Well planned and costed budget</li> <li>• Project risks identified and addressed</li> <li>• Technology proposed is mature and to be installed by qualified and licensed installers</li> </ul>	20%

## 3 Application process

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### 3.1- How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Grant Guidelines. The application and supplementary documents must be submitted through the Department's Grant Management System (GMS).

To apply you must:

1. complete the application form
2. provide all the information requested
3. address all the eligibility criteria
4. address all the merit criteria
5. include all necessary attachments
6. submit your application in the GMS.

In addition to the above, the following documents must be submitted as part of the application:

- letter of commitment from each organisation and partner's CEO or delegate
- copy of Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- copy of personal accident insurance
- copy of professional indemnity insurance
- copy of Proof of Incorporation; and
- any other documents that support your application.

You are responsible for ensuring your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Crimes Act 1900 No 40 (NSW). If the Program Manager suspects or discovers the grant applicant has submitted misleading or false information, they may investigate the application further, and if deemed appropriate, may exclude your application for further consideration.

Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related to the selection process or seek to gain an unfair advantage to their application. For further guidance on acceptable communication and advocacy of proposed projects, applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately. Any additional information, or requests to correct your application after the closing time will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants cannot change applications after the closing date and time, without good reason and our written agreement.

If we find an error or information missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application after you submit through the GMS.

## **Multiple Applications**

Applicants can submit multiple applications. Each application must only be for one project proposal. Therefore, if applicants have multiple projects, they must submit multiple applications – one application for each project.

Specifically:

- each project proposal in an application must be a minimum of \$10,000
- applicants must define the cost of each project in their application
- all project proposals in an application must meet all eligibility criteria outlined in these guidelines (see Section 2.1).

## 4 Assessment process

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### 4.1- Assessment of grant applications

An assessment team made up of three to four government experts will be established to assess applications. Each application will be assessed in a two-stage process – Stage One: Eligibility Check, followed by Stage Two: Merit Assessment. If an application is assessed as ineligible against any eligibility criteria, it will be excluded from further evaluation. Only eligible applications will move to Stage Two.

#### **Eligibility check**

The Department will review the applications against the eligibility criteria established in Section 2.1. If deemed eligible to proceed, the application will progress to Stage Two: Merit Assessment.

#### **Merit Assessment**

Eligible applications will be reviewed by the assessment team and assessed against the merit criteria set out in Section 2.3. Applications will undergo a competitive assessment and will be ranked according to how well they align with the merit criteria. The Director, Energy Programs Branch is the delegated decision-maker and will award successful grants. Assessment of applications is expected to take 12 weeks.

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### 4.2- Application outcome and feedback

The outcome of the application will be advised in writing.

Feedback on applications can be requested following the determination of successful and unsuccessful applications and will be provided in writing either via email and/or in a letter.

There are no appeal processes for this grant program. Requests for re-review of applications will not be accepted unless specifically determined by the Department.

#### **Publication of grants information**

The publication of successful grants will be publicly available on the NSW Grants and Funding Finder. This information will also be circulated to relevant stakeholders to assist in disseminating the information with the government.

## 5. Successful grants

Successful applicants will be notified in writing. Applicants will commence their project by May 2025.

Applicants should not make financial commitments reliant on this grant process until the Department has formally advised that you are successful, and a funding agreement is signed and executed.

The funding agreement will include the following information:

- regular project progress reports and other reporting requirements
- milestones or targets to be met for payments to be made
- acknowledgement of the financial support by the NSW Government and Commonwealth Government
- repayment of any unspent funds
- clarity as to termination rights
- monitoring and acquittal requirements
- responsibility on project cost overruns and operational expenditure
- participation in a program evaluation or audit to determine the extent to which projects have contributed to the program objectives.
- communication protocols.

Variations may be made to the funding agreement when a grantee has a requirement to modify a funded project due to changes in resources, milestones, or expenditure.

Variations are permanent, legal adjustments to a funding agreement which must be executed by all funding agreement signatories. If a variation becomes necessary, the Grantee is responsible for providing detailed information regarding the project's status and outlining the specific proposed changes to the agreement.

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### 5.1- Grant payment

The grant will be paid in a maximum of three milestone payments based on reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement.

#### **Unspent funds**

Any unspent funds must be returned upon the completion of the project.

Unspent funds may be used to extend the scope of the project. However, this is at the discretion of the Department and the provision of supporting information.

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### 5.2- Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

The funded projects will be monitored through reporting measures tracking progress and other metrics. Grantees are required to submit three milestone reports:

#### **Milestone 1 – May 2025**

- Start of Grant Program
- Signing of Funding Deed by grantees
- Disbursement of 10% of grant funds.

#### **Milestone 2 – November 2025**

- Progress update
- Submission of report detailing quotes obtained, installation conducted and any issues that have emerged.
- Provide photos of any progress made.
- Disbursement of 60% of funds, if appropriate milestones achieved

#### **Milestone 3 – May 2026**

- Final report detailing project outcomes and alignment with objectives
- Provide photos of final installations
- Disbursement of 30% of funds, if appropriate milestones achieved
- Successful applicants must submit a case study on completion of the project, noting measurable outcomes, community benefits and economic benefits. Applicants are also required to submit a report detailing project design and data metrics on the proposed project activity.

After installation, grantees will be asked to provide six monthly reporting of the operation and effectiveness of the solar systems and/or batteries for 24 months.

Specific milestone requirements and schedules will be detailed in the funding agreement between the Department and the grantee.

Successful applicants must also provide information if their circumstances change and a variation to the funding agreement is required.

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## **5.3- Evaluation**

The Department will evaluate the program at its end to assess outcomes against objectives. We may contact you for more information to assist with this evaluation.

## 6. Additional information and resources

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### 6.1- Complaint handling

Complaints in relation to the process can be made to the Energy Programs team and these will be reviewed and investigated on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us with any concerns at [rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rcef.projects@planning.nsw.gov.au).

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### 6.2- Access to information

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Applicants may be able seek access to private information if they submit a GIPA request.

More information can be found at [Information and Privacy Commission website](#).

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### 6.3- Ethical conduct

#### **Conflict of interest management**

All applicants must submit a declaration of any conflicts of interest.

Mitigation measures are in place to ensure conflicts of interest that may arise throughout all stages of the grant program are adequately addressed to ensure a fair grants process.

A register of interests will be established to manage any conflicts of interest, and an assessment panel will be created to promote equity against the merit criteria.

#### **Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Unless otherwise stated, any confidential information provided by you as part of, or in connection with, a registration, application or negotiation process will be treated confidentially by the Department. We may disclose confidential information provided by you to the following parties:

- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- NSW DCCEEW staff, consultants and advisers
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the Department to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where the need or entitlement to

know that information arises out of, or in connection with, the Department's assessment, verification or due diligence of any aspect of your application

- where authorised or required by law to be disclosed, to those parties.

If we disclose confidential information to any of the above parties, we will inform the party that the information is strictly confidential. We will otherwise only disclose confidential information provided by you with your consent.

## **Privacy**

We use the information you supply to us for processing and assessing your application. While we do not publicly release your application as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the GIPA Act or another lawful requirement.

The Department may also disclose information you supply to us for the purpose of evaluating and/or auditing its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application. More information on the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 is available on the [website](#).

## **Probity**

The Energy Programs team will make sure the funding opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines and incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

An independent probity oversight will be involved in this grant assessment and approval process.

## **Project advocacy and lobbying**

This program requires grant applicants to adhere to the [NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct](#).

Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related to the selection process or seek to give an unfair advantage to their application.