

Level the Playing Field Program 2023/24

Program Guidelines

Open
Close

16 October 2023
30 November 2023 at 1pm





Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of Sport acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Custodians of the Lands and waters of NSW where we work, live and play.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise their strengths, knowledge, and continuing connection to Country.

Artwork

“Jennebe”

By Jasmine Sarin

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Guidelines - October 2023

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Minister for Sport Message

Women's sport has made significant progress in recent years.

From the success of the Australian women's cricket team at the 2020 and 2023 T20 World Cups, including a then world record attendance at a women's sporting event in the 2020 final at the MCG, to the Australian women's netball Diamonds ongoing World Cup success, and the Matildas unforgettable performances at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ that captured the nation's attention for four weeks in July and August.

All these achievements inspire and showcase women's performances at the highest level and leave a legacy for women and girls at all levels.

But for many women and girls, access to safe, welcoming and inclusive sporting facilities remains a barrier.

The NSW Government recognises this and is committed to creating a level playing field for all women in sport.

While the playing field for women's sport is rapidly changing, we want to continue that momentum, that's why we've created the Level the Playing Field Program.

The Program will provide up to \$30 million to grassroots sport to build and upgrade sporting facilities for women and girls across NSW.

Through this program we anticipate a variety of new and upgraded facilities will be built across NSW, including sports fields, courts, playing areas, universally designed changerooms and amenities, along with new and improved lighting. All of which will improve safety and provide increased access for women and girls to participate in sport.

With grants from \$200,000 - \$2,000,000 available, I strongly encourage grassroots sporting clubs and organisations to consult with their communities and members to apply for funding for projects that will create new opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport.

The Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP

Introduction

These Guidelines outline key objectives, eligibility criteria, assessment criteria, assessment process and timeframes for the Level the Playing Field Program 2023/24.

Applicants must read this document before filling out an application.

About the Level the Playing Field Program

The NSW Government has committed up to \$30 million to the Level the Playing Field Program (the Program).

The Program investment will revive sport facilities by providing new or upgrading existing sport facilities, amenities and sporting fields. Funding will also support the provision of new and upgraded lighting that will enable more women and girls to train and compete in sport in a safe and inclusive environment.

But for many women and girls, access to safe, welcoming and inclusive sporting facilities still remains a barrier. And we know that facility upgrades in isolation are only one piece of the puzzle, to make a real difference they need to be accompanied by other initiatives such as equitable access, suitable programs and competition offerings, supportive cultures and leadership that includes women in decision making roles.

The NSW Government recognises this and is committed to creating a level playing field for all women and girls in sport. As such this Program will be prioritised to organisations who already have or commit to having by 30 June 2024 an Equitable Access and Usage Policy in place. Applications will also need to demonstrate current commitment and how this funding will increase participation and utilisation in the future of women and girls in sport and recreation.

The Program will support quality projects that meet community need demonstrated by consultation with women and girls to deliver a quality facility that makes women and girls feel safe, welcome and included. Quality infrastructure is not only reflected in the physical form, but how it is designed, integrated with its environment, maintained and through the ongoing sport activities it supports.

The Program will support the delivery of sport facility projects that can directly support sport participation across all levels by providing programs for women and girls across New South Wales

The NSW Government is supporting local communities to provide sport infrastructure that is universally designed and moves beyond compliant and provides dignified inclusion and accessibility for all.



Key objectives

The primary objectives of the Program are to:

- Ensure women and girls have equitable access to sport and recreation facilities.
- Foster positive sport and recreation participation experiences for women and girls.
- Increase utilisation of sport and recreation facilities by women and girls.

In addition, the Program also seeks to:

- Increase utilisation of sport and recreation facilities for people with disability, First Nations peoples, LGBTQIA+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability and climate resiliency into design, construction, and operation.



Equitable Access and Usage Policy

The NSW Government wants to increase opportunities and participation rates for all people in NSW. We understand women and girls across NSW do not have equal access to community sport and recreation and unfortunately, it is still common for men and boys to be given the best* and most popular training times as well as being allocated to the best and newest facilities.

Through the Level the Playing Field Program the NSW Government wants to ensure public funding is allocated to sport and recreation facilities that are welcoming, equitable, safe and inclusive for all.

As part of the application for the Level the Playing Field Program applicants must commit to a Statement of Intent that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

Applicants must also provide as part of their application an approved or draft Equitable Access and Usage Policy or existing relevant policies that address the aims of the Equitable Access and Usage Policy. A supporting action plan is also required. An approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and action plan is required by 30 June 2024 to remain eligible for funding under the Level the Playing Field Program.

The Equitable Access and Usage Policy should align with existing NSW Government, council and sport policies and plans covering gender equality and discrimination.

The Equitable Access and Usage Policy aims to:

- eliminate gender inequality, ableism and cultural bias in sport infrastructure design and delivery,
- provide equitable facility access to the best* facilities available,
- ensure equity in the allocation for training and competition and address other elements of inequality in program design and delivery,
- ensure all genders have the opportunity to fully participate in sport, be encouraged, welcomed, supported and rewarded.

The development and implementation of an Equitable Access and Usage Policy will ensure that sports grounds and facilities are accessible for all genders and will support councils and sporting organisations/clubs undertake the necessary steps to give everyone an equal opportunity to use the best facilities at the best times.

The Equitable Access and Usage Policy must demonstrate how councils and sporting organisations/clubs will effectively drive gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure to improve outcomes for women and girls. The action plan must address how the policy will be monitored and evaluated.

Further information including supporting documents, templates (Equitable Access and Usage Policy Template Framework; Action Plan Template and Example Equitable Access and Usage Policy) and Community of Practice Session registration can be found on the Program webpage.

** best looks different for everyone. For some it may mean more family friendly or convenient training times, safe and private access to change facilities, cultural change to include women and girls in social events and on club committees, increased access to sports fields for training or scheduling of grand finals at a time suitable to allow spectator support.*

Important Dates

Applications open	Monday 16 October 2023
Applications close	Thursday 30 November 2023 at 1pm
Outcomes advised	Mid-March 2024 onwards
Funding Agreements Executed	Within 3 months of notification
Approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy must be submitted	30 June 2024
Project construction should commence	30 September 2024
Project construction must be completed	30 September 2026

The Office of Sport reserves the right to amend any of these dates during the Program, at its absolute discretion.



Funding availability

The NSW Government is allocating up to \$30 million to Level the Playing Field Program.

The Program is for the capital cost of a project only. Applicants are responsible for project administration costs and the ongoing operation costs of the facility.

The grant amount requested by an applicant must be a minimum of \$200,000 and cannot exceed \$2,000,000. All applications from government agencies (eg: Councils) are required to provide a minimum 50% financial co-contribution of the grant amount requested (e.g., if an applicant's grant amount requested is \$200,000, they should demonstrate at least a \$100,000 financial co-contribution, therefore the total project cost including any contingency or escalation costs will be \$300,000).

Applicants that are required to and cannot meet the funding co-contribution expectation may apply for financial hardship. A financial hardship application provides applicants the opportunity to outline why they should be exempt from the requirement to provide a minimum 50% financial co-contribution of the grant amount requested. Financial hardship applications are to be made as part of the application process.

Financial hardship may be granted where a project is located in a disadvantaged area of NSW and/or is recovering from a significant natural disaster or other exceptional circumstances. The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), will provide a guide in measuring disadvantage.

Financial hardship is not intended to include where an applicant has significant assets or have not elected to prioritise the project within available resources. All assessments of financial hardship will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be at the absolute discretion of the Office of Sport. In instances where financial hardship has been requested, applicants who are able to make a partial financial co-contribution will be looked upon more favourably during the merit assessment process.

For non-government organisations where a financial co-contribution is not required (eg: not-for-profit organisations) applicants who are able to make a partial financial co-contribution will be looked upon more favourably during the merit assessment process.

The total project cost and your financial co-contribution should relate only to the scope of works for which you are seeking grant funding. Where your financial co-contribution exceeds the minimum requirement, the project will be looked upon more favourably during the merit assessment process as part of the assessment of value for money.

Applications will be assessed on merit against the assessment criteria and will be recommended for funding in order of merit. The Office of Sport reserves the right to recommend applications for funding based on the merit assessment and rankings as well as consider geographical spread, sport type or project size to achieve the objectives of the program.

All successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Office of Sport. Grant payments will not be made until an executed funding agreement is in place and the Office of Sport will not be responsible for any project expenditure until this time. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the confirmation of funding being approved and a funding agreement being entered into will be at the applicant's risk.

Project construction should commence by 30 September 2024, and project construction must be completed by 30 September 2026. Funding approval may also have specific conditions that have been determined during the assessment process, however no funding will be released until an approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and action plan is provided.

Applicants can submit up to two (2) applications in total. The applicant can advise of their project priority ranking in the application form. All projects will then be assessed in line with the Guidelines.

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are:

- Local government authorities in New South Wales¹.
- Regional Joint Organisations of councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and the Unincorporated Far West groups¹.
- NSW Office of Sport recognised NSW State Sporting Organisations (including National Sporting Organisations where the state body is part of a unitary governance model).
- Incorporated, community-based, not-for-profit sporting organisations (clubs and associations whose primary purpose is to organise sporting activities/deliver sport programs).
- Organisations providing sport and recreation programs that benefit the community, such as PCYCs, YMCA and YWCA.
- Private enterprises (companies established under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), incorporated associations established under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW) or incorporated limited partnerships

established under the Partnership Act 1892 (NSW)).

Applications involving partnerships between groups are encouraged and will be considered favourably, for example a sporting organisation with a council. A council may apply on behalf of a sporting club or association; however, the council will be the grant recipient and responsible for project delivery.

Applicants will be assessed provided they commit to having required insurance coverage at time of entering into Funding Agreement. Successful applicant must have Public Liability Insurance with a minimum \$20 million cover however, in exceptional circumstances, the Office of Sport may, in its sole discretion, consider a lower amount of cover based on the nature and risks of the particular project. The determination will be made on level of risk posed by a proposed project. If an Applicant proposes Public Liability Insurance cover lower than \$20 million then they must outline the exceptional circumstances warranting that lower amount of insurance cover.

Ineligible applicants

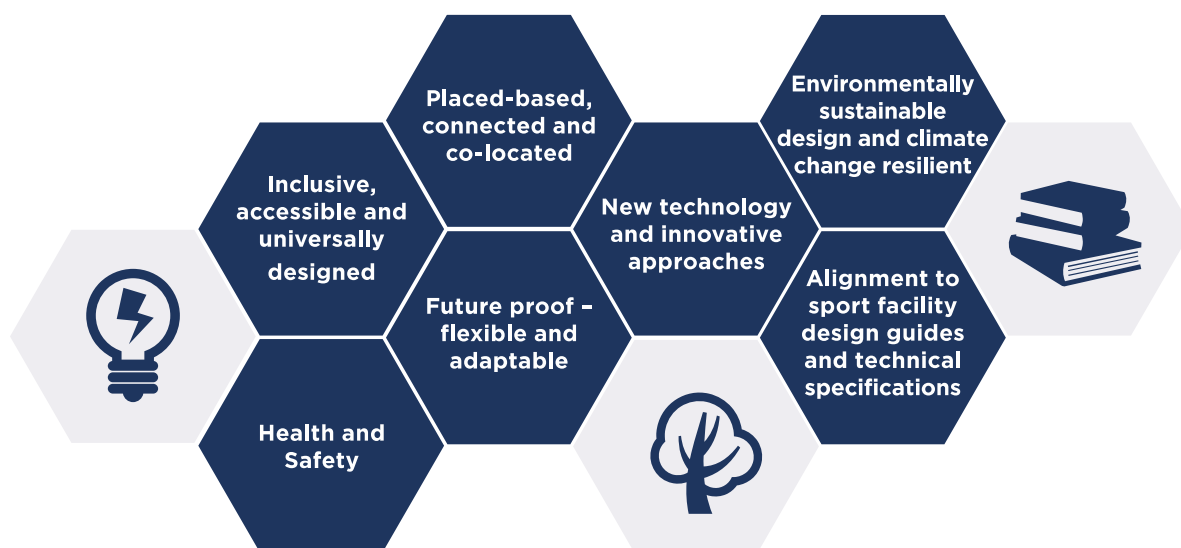
Ineligible applicants are any organisation types not listed in the 'eligible applicants' section, and include (but are not limited to):

- Individuals
- Schools, TAFEs, and Universities
- Parents and Citizens (P&C's) Associations
- Progress Associations
- NSW Government agencies
- NSW Institute of Sport, Australian Sports Commission (incorporating the Australian Institute of Sport)
- NSW Regional Academies of Sport
- Australian Universities with NSW campuses
- Other community based or religious groups that do not have a primary purpose of sport and/or recreation.

An eligible organisation will be deemed not eligible for funding under this program if they are an organisation named: (i) by the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse on its list of institutions that have not joined or signified their intent not to join the Scheme; or (ii) in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that has not yet joined the National Redress Scheme.

¹ Minimum 50% financial co-contribution of the grant amount requested is required.

Design principles



Applicants should focus on the highest standard of design and demonstrate industry best practice in project development, including but not limited to:

- Project's capacity to provide increased participation for women and girls, people with disability, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTQIA+ people through accessible and inclusive facilities with equitable program offerings
- Project's capacity to increase utilisation and user satisfaction
- The development or upgrade of multi-sport facilities which can also be used for other events that contribute to the local community
- Addressing a significant gap in current facilities and/or demonstrated community need
- Demonstrate stakeholder engagement, consultation, co-design and support
- Connecting with Country and/or Designing with Country
- Partnerships and collaboration which maximise outcomes
- Sustainable and climate resilient design incorporating consideration of all-weather uplift (i.e., consideration of flood, drought, fire, sun safe and weather conditions that impact on utilisation)
- Provision of quality social infrastructure including safe places that support community
- Alignment with the infrastructure strategy or plan of the relevant council (local government authority), State Sporting Organisation, and National Sporting Organisation
- Benchmarked to comparable projects and facilities.
- All designs must comply with [National Construction Code](#).

Further information on Universal Design can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Eligible projects

Applications should be limited to:

- Construction of new or upgrade of existing fields, courts or playing areas that deliver and can demonstrate increased training and competition and actual utilisation for women and girls.
- Construction of new or upgraded universal designed* change rooms and/or shower, toilets and parent and child change areas or creche facilities.
- Construction of new or upgraded lighting to fields, courts or playing areas that deliver and can demonstrate increased training and competition opportunities and actual utilisation and/or improve safety for women and girls.



The Program will prioritise facilities that demonstrate inclusive and accessible design, maximise women and girls' sports participation and can demonstrate provision of equitable program content and scheduling for women and girls.

* [Universal Design](#) is about creating an inclusive society. It helps everyone navigate their environment easily and makes them feel that they belong in that place.

By requiring all Office of Sport prospective grant applicants to comply with [Universal Design Goals and Principles](#) and [Designing for Dignity Guidelines](#), the public money provided to successful organisations, will deliver the 'best value for money' outcomes for the community from the government via their proposals, e.g. everyone can use the infrastructure or program that the grant money is to be spent on.

To help organisations to successfully develop their grant proposals, the following Australian Standards legally must be complied with:

- AS 1428.1:2022 Design for access and mobility Part 1: General requirements for access — New building work
- DR AS 1428.2-2022 Design for access and mobility Enhanced and additional requirements - Buildings and facilities (Reconfirmed 2015)
- AS/NZS 1428.4.1:2009 Design for access and mobility Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment - Tactile ground surface indicators
- DR AS 1428.4.2:2022 Design for access and mobility Part 4.2: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment - Wayfinding signs
- AS 1428.5:2022 Design for access and mobility Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired

Further information on Universal Design can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Ineligible projects

The Program will not fund the following projects or project components:

- Costs associated with preparing and submitting the application or feasibility, design, or development stages including feasibility studies, business cases and masterplans
- Projects that do not meet relevant Australian Standards
- Projects on private land unless there is clear and substantial benefit to the community's interest in sport and active recreation and have documented consent from the landowner
- Facilities where little or no public access is available
- Projects related to buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment (e.g., computers, office goods, sports equipment)
- For the purchase or lease of land/facility
- Related to administrative or operational expenditure which are normally the responsibility of businesses, state agencies or local councils
- Administration costs with the exception of direct external / independent project management costs, limited to 10% of the grant amount requested
- Retrospective funding, where projects have commenced construction or are completed prior to the execution of a funding agreement, or which could proceed without any NSW Government financial assistance
- Projects that have already been funded by the NSW Government unless significant new project scope is identified
- Arts, music, craft, and recreation facilities that provide experiences that do not meet the definition of sport and active recreation
- General maintenance or replacement costs through normal wear and tear (e.g., painting, running costs and minor repairs to existing facilities)
- Repair of facilities where the damage can be covered by insurance
- Upgrading or redeveloping public toilet facilities, except as part of a larger project that meets the objectives of the Program
- For the maintenance or construction of car parks.

Please Note:

Project budgets should not include any ineligible costs and these will be removed by assessors if included, at the absolute discretion of the Office of Sport.



What is the application process?

How to apply - Follow the steps below to submit your application.



Step 1 Check your eligibility

- See Eligible Applicants section of these Guidelines to see which organisations can apply for funding.
- If you are not eligible, you can partner with an eligible organisation, although they will need to be the applicant organisation and submit the application.



Step 2 Understand the requirements

- Before you apply, please read these guidelines and related materials to make sure you understand all relevant requirements, including whether you are eligible to apply.
 - Provide approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and associated Action plan; or provide a draft Equitable Access and Usage Policy and associated Action plan and state your minimum commitments (these minimum commitments must not be lessened in the final plan).
- You can find the relevant information on the Office of Sport's website: <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/grants/level-the-playing-field-program>



Step 3 Prepare your application

- Gather your evidence including letters of support, funding commitments, development approvals/exemptions,

landowners consent, images/plans, quotes, participation data etc.

- To submit a complying application all mandatory fields must be completed, and mandatory support documents must be uploaded and submitted.
- SmartyGrants offers a tool, SmartyFile that allows organisations to collaborate with team members, pre-fill information into forms and manage, view, search and sort submissions across multiple funders in one spot. Applicants with an ABN can use this function.
- For questions relating to the grants program or for specific assistance with the online system, email the Office of Sport Grants Unit at infrastructuregrants@sport.nsw.gov.au or call 13 13 02 during standard office hours.



Step 4 Submit your application

- Applying for a grant is a simple process using the [SmartyGrants platform](#)
- The Office of Sport recommends that applicants familiarise themselves with the online application form ahead of preparing the application and plan to submit ahead of the closing date to reduce the risk of missing the deadline.
- Complete your application by filling in each of the sections.
- Upload all required supporting documentation.
- Submit your application before the closing date and time.
- Projects must be submitted through the [SmartyGrants platform](#) to be considered eligible.

Successful submissions will be issued with a SmartyGrants system generated acknowledgement email containing a PDF copy of the application which will confirm the time the application was submitted.

Late application

- Late applications can only be made where an applicant has started an application in [SmartyGrants](#) prior to the closing date/time.
- If for some unforeseen reason you are not able to lodge your application on time, you must contact the Office of Sport at the earliest possible time.
- A late application will only be considered where its acceptance would not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process. The final determination on whether a late application will be accepted will be made by the Grant Assessment Panel supported by a probity advisor.

Late supporting documentation

- If any document is not available prior to the closing date/time and you would like to submit this for consideration you must contact infrastructuregrants@sport.nsw.gov.au Any decision in relation to the acceptance of late supporting documentation will be at the absolute discretion of the Office of Sport.

- Late supporting documentation will only be accepted for applications already submitted in [SmartyGrants](#) before the closing date and time and will only be considered where its acceptance would not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process.
- The final determination on whether a late supporting documentation will be accepted will be made by the Grant Assessment Panel supported by a probity advisor.

Assessment process

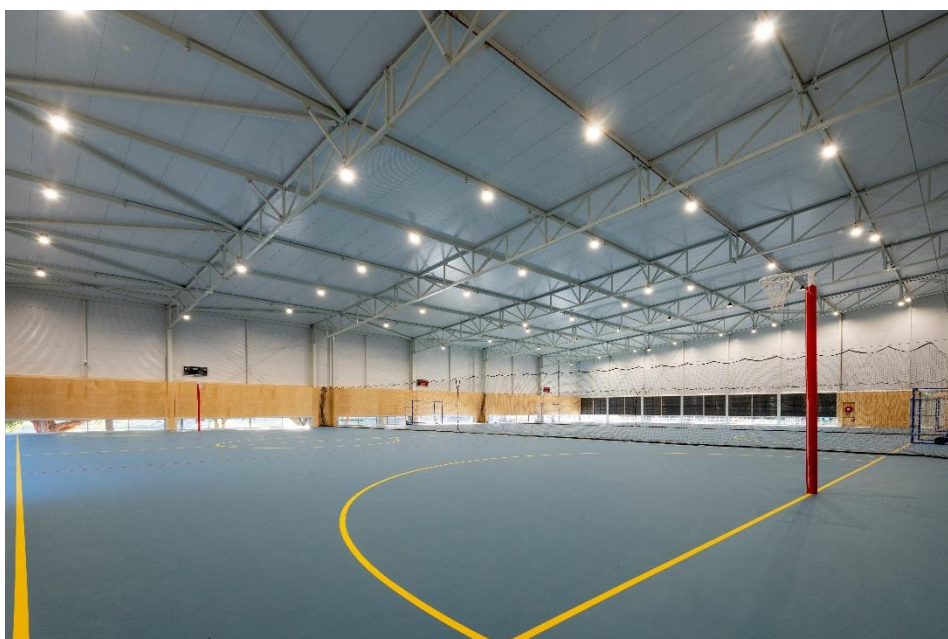
The Program is administered by the Office of Sport in two stages:

1. Eligibility check
2. Merit assessment.

Throughout the assessment process the Office of Sport may request additional information from the applicant.

An independent probity advisor will oversee the grant process and attend all Grant Assessment Panel meetings.

The Minister for Sport will consider the recommendations of the Grant Assessment Panel and make decisions relating to the approval of funding.



Eligibility check

The Office of Sport will undertake an eligibility check of all applications to confirm:

- Applicant organisation is an eligible applicant.
- Applicant has provided an ABN/ACN and/or Incorporation number and/or Indigenous Incorporation Number
- Proposed project is in an eligible location and in NSW
- Grant request is a minimum of \$200,000 and does not exceed \$2,000,000
- Applicant organisation has confirmed that if successful they will provide Public Liability Insurance with a minimum \$20 million cover.

The Office of Sport will undertake an eligibility check on all grant applications, including any late applications and make recommendations to the Grant Assessment Panel on ineligible applications. The Grant Assessment Panel will make the final determination on eligibility.

Merit assessment

The Office of Sport will support the Grant Assessment Panel by conducting a preliminary assessment (including of hardship requests) of all eligible applications against the Program criteria, and provide administrative support.

The Grant Assessment Panel will consider the extent to which the applicant has addressed the assessment criteria and provided supporting evidence to determine the final merit assessment score and whether a hardship request is accepted.

During the assessment process, the Grant Assessment Panel may apply a minimum scoring requirement to one or more of the criteria. Where an application does not meet a minimum scoring requirement, the Grant Assessment Panel reserves the right to remove the application from further consideration.

If ineligible project scope and components are included in the application and seek grant funding, the Grant Assessment Panel will adjust the requested grant amount accordingly. The Grant Assessment Panel may, by agreement recommend a reduced grant amount at their discretion.

The Grant Assessment Panel may seek information from other State Government agencies and other organisations to avoid duplication of funding for the project. Written comment/feedback on applications may be requested from the following stakeholders to inform the assessment:

- Office of Sport
- Local MPs
- Regional Organisation of Councils
- Office of Local Government
- Other State Government entities/agencies providing funding for similar projects
- State/national sporting organisations
- Relevant experts.

The Grant Assessment Panel may consider the geographical spread and may also consider sport type or project size to determine successful projects and achieve objectives of the program. It may also consider projects in low Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) areas more favourably.

The Grant Assessment Panel will make recommendations to the NSW Minister for Sport. The Minister for Sport will have final approval over the distribution of funds.

Merit assessment criteria

Criterion 1: Strategic justification (40%)

- Confirm a commitment to a Statement of Intent that gender equality will be considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.
- Provide an approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and associated Action Plan; alternatively provide a draft equitable access and usage policy and a commitment to have the policy approved by 30 June 2024 and implemented within the following 12 months.
- Provide your current participation plan which identifies programs and initiatives for increasing participation of women and girls. The plan should cover your whole organisation. For sporting clubs you may provide a participation plan of your association or SSO and identify how activities you deliver align.
- Provide an overview of past initiatives you have successfully delivered to increase participation of women and girls in sport and recreation. Include evidence to demonstrate the delivery of these initiatives.
- Provide your current participation levels for the whole organisation (including for men and boys and women and girls).
- Describe how the project creates or enhances a safe, accessible facility that fosters welcoming community spaces and environments for women and girls.
- Explain how the project will lead to increased participation in sport or active recreation, and increased facility utilisation for women and girls and other user groups including People with disability, First Nations peoples, People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ people (attach a Facility Usage Schedule to support such increases).
- Describe how the project aligns with your organisation's gender equity and/or participation plans and will support existing and proposed initiatives and policies to sustain equity for participation of women and girls.
- Explain how the project will support existing gender equity plans of local government, if relevant.
- Provide details of community profile, demonstrated need, key user groups, primary project beneficiaries and the project urgency specifically for women and girls.
- Describe community and stakeholder consultation, management, and project support (provide relevant attachments and support letters).

Criterion 2:
Project scope
and inclusive
design (15%)

- Describe a clear scope of works proposed for the project and components that are to be delivered. Identify eligible and ineligible project components.
- Provide supporting documentation such as facility design brief, concept, schematic or detailed design plans.
- Describe how elements of the facility design and physical environment will specifically cater to women and girls who use the facility. Include details of who was consulted as part of developing the project proposal and highlight how women and girls were involved in co-creation of the design.
- Describe how the facility design and physical environment will specifically cater to, people with disability, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTQIA+ people.
- Identify Design Principles outlined in the program guidelines that have been incorporated into the project, and specifically how the project incorporates:
 - Inclusive and universal design (compulsory)

Along with any of the following Design Principles:

- Functional design
 - Environmentally sustainable/climate change resilient design
 - Operational sustainability
 - New technology & innovative approaches
 - Future proof – flexible and adaptable
 - Health and safety
 - Alignment to technical specification and facility design guides.
- Describe the choice of materials, technologies and practices that have been incorporated e.g., energy and water conservation, sustainable and climate resilient materials.
 - Outline any other best practice approaches in the design, development and delivery of the project that address the Program’s objectives.
 - Explain any placed-based planning showing:
 - the location of the project
 - any co-location with other key infrastructure
 - if it is accessible and convenient
 - if it has considered Connecting with Country and Designing with Country.

Criterion 3:
Value for
money and
project
affordability
(20%)

- Provide a detailed budget including project capital costs and funding sources. The budget should clearly identify the project components that will be funded by the grant and the components to be funded by the applicant.
- Provide evidence to support budgeted costs e.g., itemised cost estimates, quotes and/or assumptions for revenue projections.
- Provide evidence of committed financial co-contribution(s), where provided. Evidence may include a letter from Council stating the project has allocated funding within the project delivery period and/or a copy of approved budget to support this. All applications from government agencies (eg: Councils) are required to provide a minimum 50% financial co-contribution of the grant amount requested. Applicants that cannot meet a minimum 50% financial co-contribution of the grant amount requested may apply for financial hardship through the application process.
- Provide evidence of the applicant's capacity to fund and manage ongoing operations including routine and lifecycle maintenance costs, including identifying who is responsible for asset management.

Criterion 4:
Project deliverability and applicant capability (15%)

- Provide evidence of landowner(s) consent for the project. Projects must be on land within NSW. Applications should provide landowner consent and must be using the Office of Sport landowner consent form for the project on the land on which the facility is being developed or redeveloped.
- Provide evidence of tenure and lease arrangements.
- Provide evidence of Development Application approval (if required) or demonstrate that a Development Application is not required. Projects with approved Development Applications will be prioritised.
 - If no Development Application exists, confirm there are no serious planning, construction, zoning, environmental and/or Native Title impediments to delivering the project (e.g. Review of Environmental Factors).
 - If a Development Application has not yet been submitted or approved, you must provide an accurate timeframe for this to occur and evidence to support this. Projects should have undergone at least preliminary community consultation and have near final design documentation.
 - Failure to provide evidence in relation to the development application may result in an application being set aside from further consideration at the Office of Sport's absolute discretion.
- Provide a detailed project plan that illustrates key project tasks and milestones and forecast delivery timeline. The project plan must clearly illustrate that construction should commence by 30 September 2024 and must be completed by 30 September 2026.
- List any assumptions, constraints, and dependencies in delivering the project.
- Demonstrate capacity to deliver the project through the provision of documentation such as schematic plans, current cost plans, robust strategies for procurement, project management and risk management.
- Demonstrate proven experience in delivering similar size projects and outline proposed project management resources and any specialist external resources to be engaged to deliver the project.
- Applicant meets key obligations for other Office of Sport funded projects where there is/has been a funding agreement with the applicant.

Criterion 5:
Population Growth (10%)

- Applicants will be given a score between 0 and 10 calculated as the average of the:
 - projected population (in 2033)
 - population growth rate overall
 - population growth rate among 15-24 year oldsfor the location of the facility using Australian Bureau of Statistics census data at suburb level (NSW Statistical Area 3 (SA3))

Available supporting documents

Documents available on [Level the Playing Field Program web page](#) to assist your application include:

- [Program Guidelines](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [State/National Sporting Organisation Statement of Support Form](#)
- [Landowner Consent Form](#)
- [Budget Template](#)
- [Funding Agreement Template](#)
- [Equitable Access and Usage Policy Template Framework](#)
- [Action Plan Template](#)
- [Example Equitable Access and Usage Policy](#)

Contact the Office of Sport at infrastructuregrants@sport.nsw.gov.au or on 13 13 02 for assistance.

Supporting document checklist

Failure to provide any of this supporting documentation will negatively impact the merit assessment score your application receives. All Applications should provide:

- Approval from landowner for project to proceed (where the applicant is the landowner, evidence to demonstrate this). This must be on the Office of Sport template – see “Available supporting documents”.
- Evidence confirming all financial co-contribution sources (where applicable).
- Supporting evidence for any financial hardship application (where applicable).
- Development approval, application, or exemption.
- Current participation levels (overall, for men and boys and women and girls) for your whole organisation.
- Current participation plan which identifies programs and initiatives for increasing participation of women and girls as well as past initiatives you have successfully delivered.
- Provide an approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and associated Action Plan; alternatively provide a draft equitable access and usage policy, with a commitment to have the policy approved by 30 June 2024 and implemented within the following 12 months.
- Quotes that clearly detail items/scope of works. Any quotes provided must be on company letterhead from the organisation that supplies the goods or services.*
- For larger construction projects a cost estimate prepared by a Quantity Surveyor is preferred.*
- Evidence of Public Liability Insurance.

* Quotes and Cost estimates that are recent (within 3-6 months) will be given higher weighting. Applications where three quotes are provided will be given a higher weighting than only one or two quotes.

Project evaluation and reporting

A milestone based progress report and evidence of expenditure will be required while the project is ongoing and a project completion report will be required within one month of completion of the project as outlined in the funding agreement. The project completion report will require grant recipients to provide detail of the short-term outputs and outcomes that have been achieved since the completion of the project, reflecting on those proposed by applicants in the original grant application.

A Post Project Evaluation Report will be required 12 months after the completion of the project. It will gather further detail on the medium to longer term outcomes and impact of the project including utilisation data for the improved facility.

In addition to these reporting requirements, the Office reserves the right to request grant and project related data from successful applicants on an ad hoc basis for a period of up to five years following completion of the project and/or identified evaluation activities, including by an external evaluator.

Financial acquittal and record keeping requirements

A financial acquittal will be required within three months of completion of the project. This will require preparation of a profit and loss statement relating to the project expenditure and funding sources. For grant amounts of \$50,000 and over this must also be certified by an independent qualified accountant. Acquittal must be for the total project cost for funded scope items (which includes grant amount plus any financial co-contribution that contributes directly to these scope items).

Successful recipients should ensure that all invoices, receipts, remittances and bank transfers are retained in order for this to occur. The Office of Sport reserves the right to reduce proportionally the amount of the grant if the total cost of the project at the completion of the project is less than the amount stated in your funding agreement. In these instances you may be required to repay a proportion of the grant. Applicants that do not provide a financial acquittal and project reports by the required date(s) may be ineligible for future Office of Sport grants until this is provided.

Variations to an approved project

The Office of Sport acknowledges that things may occur that will impact grant recipients and projects at any time. Any variation requested by a successful applicant to a project, for which a grant has been approved, that constitute a change to the original application will require a revised assessment of the application to determine whether the project should still be funded in accordance with the program guidelines. This includes situations where a successful applicant is seeking a significant change the project scope, budget or schedule.

Any variation to the project as detailed in the application form must be agreed to in writing by the Office of Sport and may require Minister approval. In these circumstances, the grant recipients may request a variation via the grant management system SmartyGrants. Requests for variations to the Funding Agreement or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances and are subject to approval in writing by the Office of Sport.

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that your application provides accurate cost and timelines to reduce the need for variations.



Acknowledging the NSW Government

Successful applicants must acknowledge the NSW Government's support through the provision of funding through the Level the Playing Field Program as per the NSW Government Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines and supporting evidence.

The NSW Government reserves the right to be involved in media opportunities and speaking engagements relating to the funded project.

Recipients must ensure that any media opportunities, speaking engagements and signage relating to the Program or project are discussed with, and approved in advance by, Office of Sport.

Further information

Notification of outcomes

Once the recommendations have been made, all applicants will be notified in writing and details of successful projects will be published on the [Office of Sport website](#) and the [NSW Government Funding Finder](#). General feedback for unsuccessful applicants will be provided at the time of notification.

The Office of Sport will contact the successful applicants to finalise the project milestones and establish a funding agreement. Funding Agreements must be executed within three months of notification by the Office of Sport. Failure to execute a funding agreement within three months of notification, may result in the Office of Sport withdrawing the offer of funding.

Conflicts of interest and ethical conduct

A conflict of interest exists when a person might reasonably perceive that the personal interests of a key decision maker of the funded organisation could be favoured over the duties to the funded organisation.

Applicants will be asked to declare as part of their application, and as part of continuous disclosure required by the funding agreement, any perceived or existing situation which could or does give rise to a conflict of interest. If applicants later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, they must inform the Office of Sport in writing immediately. All key

decision makers of your organisations including persons who will be responsible for expending the funds (such as board/committee members, the CEO (or equivalent) and managers of the project) must also declare any conflicts of interest.

With respect to this Program, applicants must not:

- do anything which could place a public official in a conflict of interest
- offer gifts or inducements to any public official.

Other Funding obligations

The successful applicants approved for funding will be required to enter into a funding agreement that covers their obligations. The project must be completed by 30 September 2026. The standard funding agreement terms and conditions are published on the Office of Sport website and no amendments will be considered unless essential to the delivery of a funded project. The Office of Sport will execute a funding agreement with successful applicants for the project in accordance with the approved scope, budget and schedule of the project set out in the approved application.

The following reflects the intent of some key provisions that will be included in the funding agreement with successful applicants:

- Grant payments will not be made until an executed funding agreement is in place and an approved Equitable Access and Usage Policy and action plan is provided.

The Office of Sport will not be responsible for any project expenditure until this time.

- Successful applicants will be required to complete periodic project updates, project evaluation, and return progress reports on the agreed milestones of the project. This may also include facility use schedules.
- If, for whatever reason, an organisation is unable to proceed with a project, Office of Sport must be informed in writing as soon as possible.
- Photos of the project at key milestones and project completion must be provided.
- Office of Sport reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding to successful organisations within seven years of funding payment.

If a grant recipient breaches any of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, the Office of Sport reserves the right to terminate the funding agreement and reclaim the grant in part or in whole at its discretion.

Payment of grants

Payments will be made against agreed milestones. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Office of Sport and provide a tax Invoice for Milestone one. Invoices should be addressed to:

Office of Sport Locked Bag 1422 Silverwater NSW 2128.

Invoices should be uploaded into the Smartygrants Grant Management System as required.

Organisations that do not have an ABN must provide a signed ATO Statement by Supplier form that can be downloaded from the Australian Tax Office website.

Insurances

Organisations approved for funding by this program are required to have a minimum Public Liability Insurance cover of \$20 million. however, in exceptional circumstances, the Office of Sport may, in its sole discretion, consider a lower amount of cover based on the nature and risks of the particular project. The determination on level of risk posed by a

proposed project will be made by the Office of Sport. If an Applicant proposes Public Liability Insurance cover lower than \$20 million then they must outline the exceptional circumstances warranting that lower amount of insurance cover.

It is recommended, but not a condition of funding, that applicant organisations have Personal Accident, Professional Indemnity and Directors and Officers insurance. Organisations that employ staff must comply with the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 (NSW).

Publicity

The NSW Government reserves the right to be involved in media opportunities and speaking engagements relating to the funded project.

Recipients must ensure that any media opportunities, speaking engagements and signage relating to the Program or project are discussed with, and approved in advance by, Office of Sport.

All recipients of NSW Government funding must acknowledge the NSW Government's support through the provision of funding.

Disclaimer

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The costs of preparing an application are borne by the applicant as are any costs incurred prior to entering into a funding agreement.

Probity

NSW Office of Sport has appointed O'Connor Marsden & Associates Pty Ltd (OCM) as independent Probity Advisors for this program. If there are any concerns regarding the probity or integrity of this program, contact should be made with the NSW Office of Sport in the first instance via email on infrastructuregrants@sport.nsw.gov.au

Records management

The Office of Sport complies with the management, storage and retention requirements of the State Records Act 1998 to the extent it applies to any documents

created by the Office of Sport, funding applicants or funding recipients under this program.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Information received in applications and in respect of applications is treated as confidential. However, documents in the possession of the Office of Sport are subject to the provisions of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. Under some circumstances a copy of the application form and other material supplied by the applicant may be released, subject to the deletion of exempt material, in response to a request made in accordance with the Act.

Privacy policy

The Office of Sport will collect and store the information you voluntarily provide to enable processing of this grant application. Any information provided by you will be stored on a database that will only be accessed by authorised personnel and is subject to privacy restrictions. The information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected (or otherwise with your consent). The Office of Sport is required to comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. The Office of Sport collects the minimum personal information to enable it to contact an organisation and to assess the merits of an application. Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied with applications are aware that the Office of Sport is being supplied with this information and how this information will be used. The Office of Sport may engage external service providers to assist it in assessing applications, evaluating grant programs and/or ensuring probity of programs. Any such service provider is required to comply with privacy laws.

Disclosure of project information

Information submitted in the application will be shared with the NSW Government. Should your application be successful, the Office of Sport may provide certain information to the media and Members of Parliament for promotional purposes. This information may

include applicant name, project name, project description, location of the project, location of the grant recipient and amount funded and total project cost. Information provided in the grant application/milestone and project completion reports may be used to develop case studies including photos. The contact details supplied by the person submitting the application may also be provided to the relevant Members of Parliament.

Declaration by applicant

The declaration section of the application should be approved by a person who has delegated authority to sign on behalf of the organisation e.g. Chairperson, President, CEO (Chief Executive Officer), General Manager, or authorised member of the Board or Committee of the applicant.

Contact information

Office of Sport staff are available to provide information to potential applicants on interpretation of these Guidelines including types of projects eligible for funding. They can also provide advice relating to the online application process. Please direct enquiries to infrastructuregrants@sport.nsw.gov.au

If you require additional support, including the use of a translator, please call the National Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450, and ask them to call us on 13 13 02 (option 5, option 2). The service provides immediate phone interpreting.



Office of Sport

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Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

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