

Feedback Summary for Website

National Action Plan Community Grants Funding 2009

Thank you for applying for National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (NAP) Community Grants funding. This page provides applicants with information on the assessment process and feedback on the main strengths and weaknesses of applications.

General Overview

The NAP Community Grants funding is aimed at building resilience in Muslim communities. There was a strong response in 2009 with some 96 expressions of interest (EOIs) received. Applicants are commended for their interest in strengthening the cohesion of their communities and providing opportunities for people to get involved in local activities.

The high number of EOIs made the funding round very competitive with 38 shortlisted to submit supplementary information. Information on common shortcomings with EOIs is provided below.

The successful projects for 2009 were recently announced by the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson. Details of these projects are available on the website.

Assessment of Applications

All applications were assessed fairly and consistently against the published criteria for funding. Trained staff from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship assessed the applications and each application was examined by a minimum of two officers.

Feedback According to the Criteria

Eligible Project & Priority Areas

NAP project proposals were expected to focus on Muslim Australians, but with a view of promoting wider community integration, resilience and harmony. All applicants needed to demonstrate how their project would meet the objectives of the NAP.

Proposals which targeted the focus areas were more likely to have been shortlisted over others. The 2009 Guidelines (page 6) stated that focus areas could include:

- encouraging more active participation by members of Muslim communities in mainstream sporting, social, arts-based and other activities to lessen feelings of isolation and marginalisation in some communities;
- promoting the positive contributions of Muslim Australians to Australia;
- encouraging current and emerging Muslim community leaders, particularly women and young people, to participate more widely in community activities, including holding positions of responsibility within organisations and representing their community at various fora;

- providing mentoring and volunteering opportunities to young people, in order to build their leadership and representational skills; and
- outreach projects and activities that encourage interaction among Muslim and non-Muslim community groups.

Proposals that addressed the general principles detailed in the funding guidelines for 2009 were favoured. Many proposals did not put forward convincing plans to engage the wider community, given the NAP's focus to building understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians.

All shortlisted proposals needed to clearly demonstrate how people would be attracted to participate in the activities and what those activities would comprise. A number of proposals failed to adequately provide this level of detail. Additionally, a number of proposals were targeted at the Muslim community only and did not adequately demonstrate how they would engage non-Muslims and the wider community in the project.

Sport can be an effective way of engaging people, however some proposals failed to include a strategy to integrate participants into existing clubs and teams but rather created teams or competitions specifically for the participants.

Stakeholder and Community Support

Applicants were asked to identify any organisations or stakeholders with whom they would work.

Applicants were likely to fail this criterion if they only identified organisations from a single cultural background or did not provide sufficient detail of stakeholders.

Applicants are advised to list the 'mainstream' or 'broad' community organisations that will assist their projects as well as cultural or religious organisations.

Applicants are also advised to be as specific as possible about stakeholders and community groups. For example, it is better to give the name of an individual and their organisation than to generalise – so 'Mr Bill Smith, Valley Community Association' is better than 'local community leader'.

Note that for projects seeking to engage Muslim and Indigenous communities, stakeholders from these communities should be consulted prior to applying for funding.

Shortlisted applicants were expected to provide letters of support from all relevant stakeholders. For example, projects proposing to work with schools must identify the schools and provide a letter of support from these schools. Those letters that indicated commitment to and participation in the proposed project were considered more favourably. Applicants were rated lower on this criterion if the stakeholder support was considered too limited.

Project Budget

Shortlisted applicants were required to provide a detailed breakdown of all budget items over \$2000. Applications that did not provide this breakdown failed the criterion as the Department was unable to accurately assess the eligibility of the items. Budget items were examined to ensure they adequately provided funds for all proposed activities in the work plan.

A number of proposals included ineligible items such as ongoing running costs (rent and electricity) and capital expenditure for computers and other equipment. Applicants wishing to purchase equipment are encouraged to consider other funding programs, such as the Volunteer Grants Program under the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Other Funding Opportunities

Applicants may find other relevant funding programs through the Australian Government's grantsLINK website at www.grantslink.gov.au or at www.ourcommunity.com.au. The department also delivers a Settlement Grants Program, that might be relevant to some applicants. Information on this program can be found at www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants.

Thank you

To all applicants, thank you once again for your interest in the National Action Plan Community Grants.