PROGRAM GUIDELINES & APPLICATION TOOLKIT
Community Group Futures
Opens Wed 26 Aug 2020 - Closes 5pm AEST, Wed 23 Sept 2020

Background and Aim of the Program

The Community Group Futures (CGF) program is specifically for not-for-profit organisations working in and for the benefit of communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires. The program provides resources for organisations to consider their viability, sustainability, and future roles in their communities, and to strengthen organisational capabilities to achieve their aspirations. Funds are provided by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund in partnership with the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR).

The program is designed with the recognition that not-for-profit organisations in 2009 Victorian bushfire-affected communities continue to experience operational and service delivery challenges and are working in very changed environments to those prior to the bushfires. Organisations are encouraged to consider which of the three streams illustrated below (*page 2 - What Can be Funded?*) most closely fits their needs now, with a view to supporting future viability and sustainability.

Community Group Futures aims to support the following outcomes:
- Communities enjoy access to a range of high quality, relevant and sustainable local service options;
- Not-for-profit organisations are underpinned by efficient and effective structures, systems and processes;
- Not-for-profit organisations are led and managed by skilled and capable people, whether they be volunteer or paid;
- Innovative and collaborative approaches exist to address community needs and priorities and resourcing challenges for organisations.

Organisational Eligibility

Who can apply?

- Not-for-profit community-based organisations permanently operating in and for the benefit of communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires are eligible to apply. Eligible Local Government Areas and Priority Locations are listed on page 6;
- Organisations with an ABN or Incorporation Certificate;
- Organisations with and without DGR endorsement;
- An organisation is eligible to submit one application per grant round.

FRRR considers all eligible applications on their merit. 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.**

Projects should be undertaken between **December 2020 and December 2021,** as projects cannot be funded retrospectively.

Applications are welcome from any eligible organisation for any approved purpose; however, the following applications will be prioritised:

- Projects initiated and delivered by local community groups;
- Applications from communities fewer than 15,000 people;
- Organisations that do not have Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Tax status.

Who can't apply?

- Individuals, private or commercial businesses are not eligible;
- Projects that support core business and areas of responsibility of Federal, State and Local Governments are not eligible.

If you have any questions about your organisation's eligibility, please call FRRR on free call 1800 170 020.

Project Eligibility

What can be funded?

Applications must clearly demonstrate a focus on project activity area number **2. Developing Organisational Resilience and Capacity** in the Activity Tree, including projects that:

- Strengthen resourcing / delivery capacity;
- Invest in infrastructure / equipment to increase cost efficiency;
- Support organisational skill / capability development;
- Support strategic operational planning and sustainability;
- Foster organisational networks / alliance.

The diagram below shows the three CGF program streams and the types of activities and projects that funds can be used for. These are indicative only and applicants are encouraged to speak with the FRRR Program Coordinator to discuss needs and ideas.

Organisational Capability	Viability and Sustainability	Cost Efficiencies for Community Infrastructure
• **Training** • NFP Committees/Boards in governance, Financial management, planning, risk management, human resource management, asset management • **Paid positions** • Develop and embed policies/procedures, financial systems & processes, evaluation frameworks and processes: positions need to leave a legacy within the organisation • **Requests up to $15k for training and $20k for positions will be considered**	• **Skilled support** • Strategic planning • Business planning and implementation support • Financial analysis & planning for sustainability • Shared back office services across similar geographic or service boundaries • Exploring collective impact approaches to key social issues • Legal support for mergers • Community engagement • **Requests up to $20,000 to engage external expertise will be considered**	• Grants for community asset cost efficiencies such as solar panels, water tanks • **Requests up to $10k will be considered**

Visit the CGF webpage for other examples of what can be funded in each activity area.

What can't be funded?

- Ongoing core organisational operational costs (e.g. rent, utilities, regular wages, loan repayments);
- 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;
- Overseas travel and overseas projects;
- Prizes, gifts, trophies or awards;

- Projects that have already occurred or will occur before the grant is confirmed;
- Political lobbying;
- Projects solely focused on animal welfare cannot be considered;
- Projects that are for private benefit or which are the core responsibility of Government.

It is important to note that applications will be considered ineligible if the:

- Application is submitted without required financial documentation;
- Final report/s from any FRRR grant program from the previous seven years has not been acquitted (auspiced organisations should check with your head organisation to see if there are any outstanding final reports owed to FRRR);
- Application is not for charitable purposes (i.e. only a very limited number of people in the community will benefit);
- Application is for a project or activity that has already occurred / is occurring;
- Application is incomplete.

Funding Available

The Community Group Futures program offers grants of up to $20,000.

Program funds are expected to be fully expended in 2020, bringing the program to a close.

FRRR Assessment Considerations

Please read the table below to support the planning and preparation of your project. A printable copy of the Community Group Futures application form is available here. Please call FRRR should you have any questions about this table or the application form.

What we request from you	Why FRRR requests this information
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, also indicate that your community is ready to deliver the project and if required, can support the initiative ongoing, i.e. awareness of need is widespread, appropriate leadership, resources, skills and knowledge exist in the community.	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 formula 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.
Project Budget A project budget that clearly shows the items that FRRR grant funds will be used for and shows all income and expenses related to your project. Budgets should be realistic and must add up. Applicant contributions in cash or in-kind are highly regarded and quotes or detailed rationale for items over $1,000 are required, where possible. Note: FRRR suggests costing unskilled volunteer labour at $41.00 per hour.	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. For more info on costing volunteer labour, visit: https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/help/valuing-volunteer-labour.

| What we request from you	Why FRRR requests this information
Organisational Financials of the ABN / Incorporation Number Holder **For organisations that have audited financials**: Attach the most recent annual audited statements. **For organisations that do not have audited financials:** Attach most recent 12 months Income and Expenditure Statement. If you have a balance sheet, please also submit. **For organisations less than one year old:** Provide bank statements for the period you have been operating. ➢ If financial documents are over 18 months old, provide an explanation as to why the organisation does not have more recent documents. ➢ Explain any deficits and steps to sustain the organisation financially. ➢ Provide a brief explanation of any large financial surplus or current assets and reasons why FRRR funds are still required.	FRRR uses this information to understand your organisation's ability to manage the grant funds, and its financial viability. Bank Statements are only acceptable as financial documentation if your organisation has been operating for less than one year. Please contact us if you cannot provide required financials, or you are unsure about what to provide. **Applications received without the requested financial information will be deemed ineligible.**
Supporting Materials Supporting materials such as letters of support, community plans, survey results, photographs, media clips and research reports that can show the wider community support and partnerships involved in the project.	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.

Application Checklist

Before you submit your application, please ensure that all items below have been addressed. If you need assistance with any of the items in this list, please contact FRRR.

QUESTIONS	CHECK
Is your organisation and project eligible?	
Has the Project Activity Area (see page 2) been identified?	
If your project involves building, modifying or upgrading facilities or public spaces, do you have the required council permits and permission from the owners of the land or building?	
Have any outstanding FRRR project reports been submitted?	
Have you attached the required financial information?	
Does the project include working with children? If so, does your organisation have relevant working with children policies in place?	
Have you attached quotes for goods and services over $1,000?	
Have you attached support materials?	
Have you answered all the questions in the application form?	

FRRR Grant Application Assessment Process

The process below outlines the FRRR process for assessing all applications.
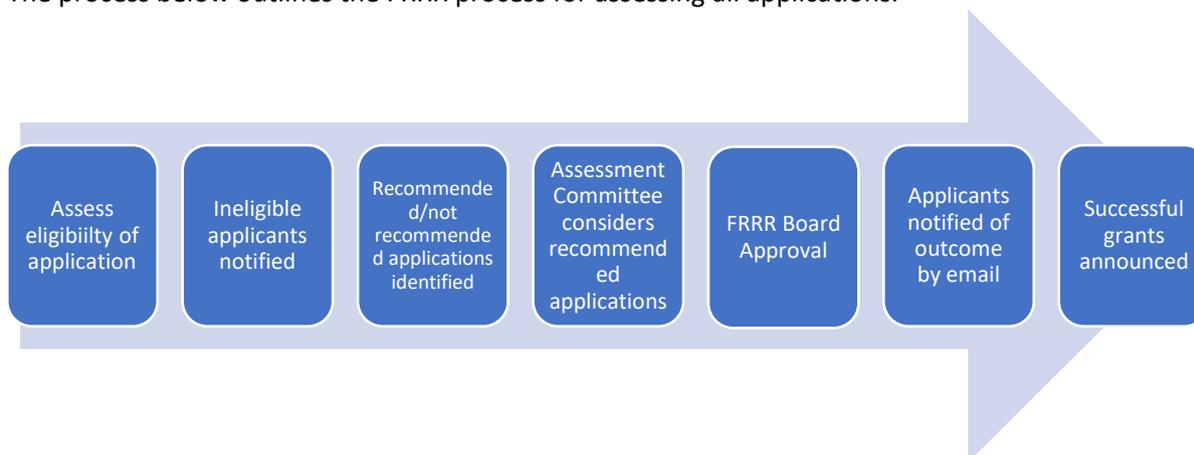
All eligible applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email within 12 weeks of the closing date.

How to Apply

FRRR accepts applications via its online application portal, Grants Gateway.

Applications must be submitted online by 5pm AEST, Wednesday 23 Sept 2020. If you have questions about your project, are unable to apply online, or experience any problems in using Grants Gateway, please contact us on free call 1800 170 020 or email recovery@frrr.org.au.

Click here to apply.

To return to your application once started, you will need to use the application link that is automatically generated by the system and emailed to your nominated Grants Gateway user email account – you will only be able to access your application by using that link.

Our Donor Partner

FRRR's CGF program is funded through the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.

Further Information to Support Applicants

Eligible Local Government Areas

Following is a list of Local Government Areas (LGAs) impacted by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires. Note not all towns in LGAs were affected, and applicants will need to demonstrate that their project is supporting an impacted town / community.

- Alpine
- Baw Baw
- Cardinia
- Casey
- Greater Bendigo
- Hepburn

- Horsham
- Indigo
- La Trobe
- Mitchell
- Mount Alexander
- Murrindindi

- Nillumbik
- South Gippsland
- Wangaratta
- Wellington
- Whittlesea
- Yarra Ranges

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the Community Group Futures program, please call FRRR on 1800 170 020 or email recovery@frrr.org.au.