

Mobile Black Spot Program: West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round

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Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au
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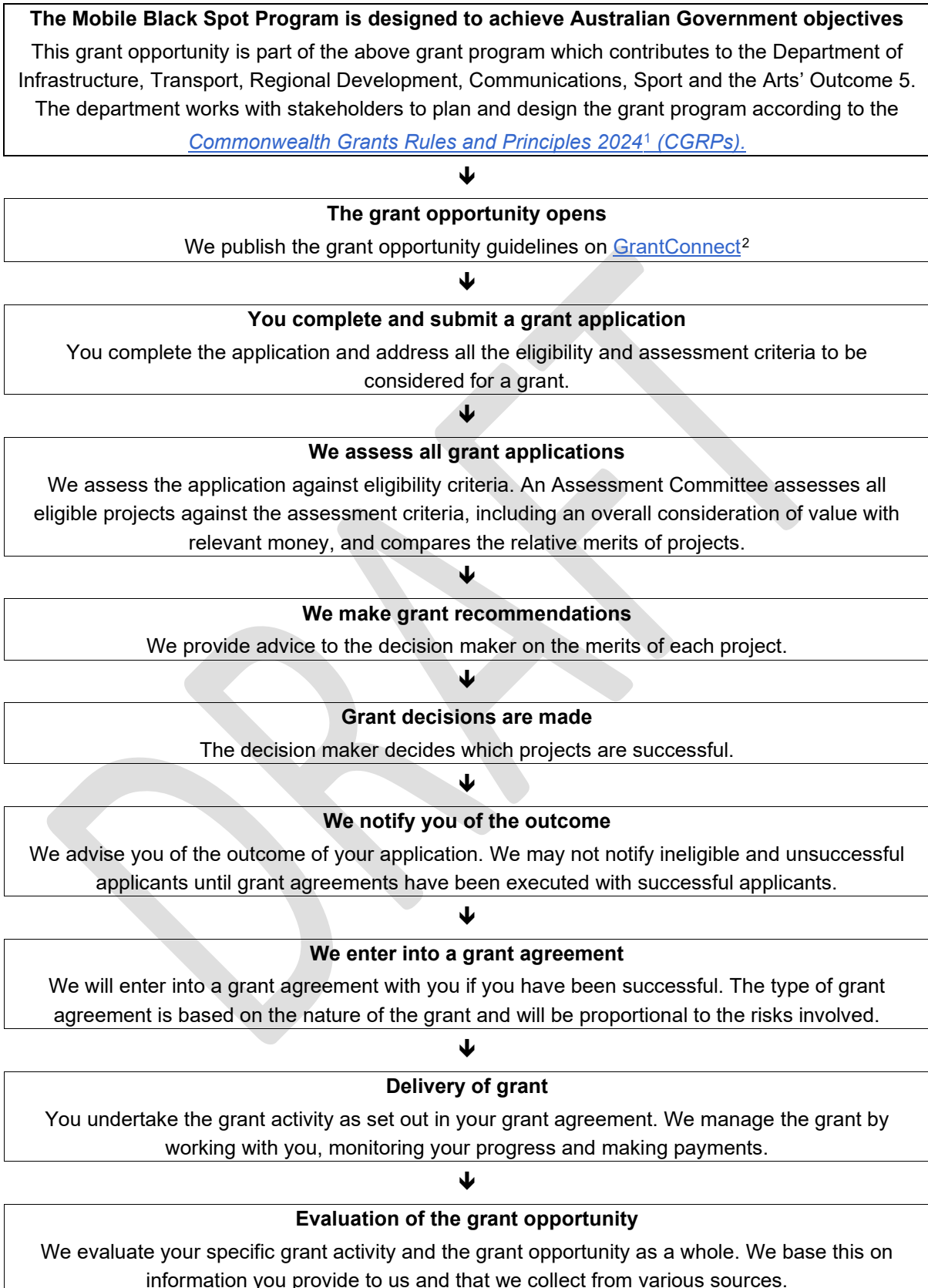
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DRAFT

1 Mobile Black Spot Program: West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round - Process



¹ www.legislation.gov.au

² www.grants.gov.au

1.1 Introduction

These grant opportunity guidelines contain information for the West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round of the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP).

You must read these grant opportunity guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program
- the eligibility and assessment criteria and how to apply
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the grant opportunity.

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department). The program contributes to the department's Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome 5: *Promote an innovative and competitive communications sector, through policy development, advice and program delivery, so all Australians can realise the full potential of digital technologies and communications services.*

We administer the program according to the [CGRPs](#)³ This grant opportunity is categorised as a targeted competitive funding round as it is open to a small number of potential grantees based on the specialised requirements of the grant activity. We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the Glossary (Section 14).

2 About the grant program

2.1 West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round

The West Coast Tasmania Mobile Capacity Uplift Round (the Round) will run over two years, 2026-27 and 2027-28. It will be delivered as a round of the MBSP.

The objective of the Round is to boost mobile coverage and capacity in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Circular Head, Waratah-Wynyard, and West Coast (target LGAs) in the West Coast of Tasmania. The Round seeks to address community concerns about capacity and congestion on existing mobile networks.

The intended outcomes of the Round are:

- improved reliability and quality of mobile telecommunications services in the target LGAs, and
- improved access to mobile telecommunications services for communities, businesses and emergency organisations in the target LGAs.

The MBSP is a long-running Australian Government (the Government) initiative that invests in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia. It was established following the 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review, which found that a lack of adequate mobile voice and broadband coverage was a major concern to regional communities, and first opened for applications in late 2014.

³ www.legislation.gov.au

To date (Rounds 1 to 8), the MBSP has funded the deployment of up to 1,418 new mobile base stations across Australia. Further information about projects funded under the MBSP is available at www.infrastructure.gov.au/mbsp.

The department is responsible for administering the MBSP on behalf of the Government.

The Government will not own or be responsible for the operation of the infrastructure funded under the Round. Grantees will own and/or hold the necessary rights to the infrastructure to deliver the contracted services during the minimum 10-year operational period. While we encourage grantees to continue to provide services into the future, asset ownership and operation beyond the operational period is a matter for grantees.

The Commonwealth has the power to make, vary or administer this grant program under Item 211 of Part 4 of Schedule 1AB to the [Financial Framework \(Supplementary Powers\) Regulations 1997 \(Cth\)](#).

2.2 Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia

The Government is committed to increasing connectivity, bridging the digital divide, improving mobile coverage and protecting communities against natural disasters. This opportunity is being funded under the *Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia*, which supports improved mobile and broadband connectivity, resilience and digital inclusion in regional, remote and peri-urban Australia.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Government has announced a total of \$9.8 million (GST exclusive) for the Round over two years (2026-27 and 2027-28).

There is no minimum or maximum grant amount, but grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds under the Round. Grant funding of up to 75% of eligible expenditure will be available for all eligible projects.

We cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same purpose.

The Government will seek to fund at least one project in each of the target LGAs, provided the projects are meritorious (Section 6) and achieve value with relevant money (Section 8). This will help ensure the Round achieves its objective and outcomes across the target LGAs.

3.2 Applicant contributions

You are required to contribute towards the cost of your project, including capital costs and ongoing operational costs during the operational period.

3.3 Third party contributions

To maximise the benefit of the Round, you are encouraged (but not required) to seek financial contributions from third parties. Interested third parties are also encouraged to contact applicants directly in relation to potential contributions.

Details on each co-contribution from third parties should be included in your application. A letter of support from each third party, including a copy of the terms of their commitment to your project, should also be included in your application.

If you have a co-contribution from the Tasmanian Government, we expect you to enter into a grant agreement with the Government, and a separate agreement with the Tasmanian Government.

The Government will not be liable for any costs that may arise in relation to a third-party contribution. For example, if a third party's funding is not secured following the execution of your grant agreement with the Government, you will be required to cover the third-party funding.

3.4 In-kind co-contributions

A third party may wish to support a project or location by providing an in-kind co-contribution. In-kind co-contributions could include:

- assisting with identifying and consulting with the local community on a suitable site
- securing the necessary planning and site approvals
- facilitating lease arrangements
- providing civil works required for access to the site
- assisting with coordinating power to the site, and
- facilitating access to existing infrastructure.

The Tasmanian and local governments may own infrastructure or land in locations that could potentially be used for your project. Any requirements of these governments must be reflected in your application.

Third party in-kind co-contributions are your responsibility and should be reflected in a reduction in the amount of grant funding you are seeking for your project.

3.5 Project period

You must complete your project on or before 30 April 2028.

We may approve a further extension provided you have made reasonable progress and can demonstrate that circumstances beyond your control have contributed to delays in the delivery of your project. We will notify you prior to the grant ceasing whether the asset completion date will be extended.

Your project must provide the contracted services, as outlined in the grant agreement, on a commercial basis for the operational period.

4 Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all the following eligibility criteria.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the purposes of GST, and
- be a National Mobile Network Operator (MNO).

For the purposes of the Round, an MNO means a company that

- supplies a public telecommunications service within the meaning of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cth)
- holds an apparatus or spectrum licence (or both) for the supply of public mobile telecommunications services under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* (Cth), and
- operates a mobile network that provides coverage to at least 80% of the Australian population.

Mobile Network Infrastructure Providers (MNIPs) may participate in the Round by partnering with an MNO.

4.2 Endorsement of local priority

You must provide written endorsement from the relevant local government, confirming the project is a local priority and will meet community needs. If your project crosses more than one target LGA, you must include written endorsement from each of the relevant local governments in your application.

During the application period, you are strongly encouraged to consult with relevant stakeholders about your project including, federal, Tasmanian and local parliamentarians, the Tasmanian and local governments, local organisations and communities, and emergency service organisations.

4.3 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

While you are required to comply with all relevant laws and regulations, you may be asked to demonstrate that you comply with specific legislation, policies or industry standards that may be applicable to your project, including the Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme. Compliance with the Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme, where it applies, will be a requirement in your grant agreement.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

Eligible grant activities must improve mobile coverage, capacity and quality of service in the target LGAs. You can apply for one or more projects in any of the target LGAs or across LGAs (Section 5.2).

To be eligible, each project must include one or more of the following eligible grant activities:

- Mobile base station capacity upgrade - An upgrade to an existing mobile base station including:
 - installing new 4G or 5G equipment to provide new or improved coverage
 - installing new 4G and/or 5G equipment to improve capacity and quality of service, and reduce congestion
 - where a project is only installing 4G equipment, the existing base station must already be providing 5G coverage to the location
 - upgrading backhaul to the mobile base station to increase the capacity of mobile services at the location, or
 - upgrading other active and passive infrastructure at the site to support the provision of new or improved mobile coverage and/or capacity.
- New mobile base station - Deploy a new macrocell or small cell base station to provide 4G and 5G services to deliver new or improved coverage, and/or supplement existing capacity.
- Backhaul network upgrades - Upgrade backhaul networks to improve network capacity and/or congestion, including through leases of existing backhaul.

Projects must also deliver back-up power supply to a minimum of 12 hours to support operation of the site in the event of a loss of external power. Grant funding is available to meet this requirement.

To accelerate the delivery of upgrades to communities, projects on your forward-build network expansion or upgrade plans are eligible for funding where they include one or more eligible grant activities, and satisfy all other requirements of these grant opportunity guidelines.

5.2 Eligible locations

Your project must be located in one or more of the target LGAs on the west coast of Tasmania:

- Circular Head
- Waratah-Wynyard, and
- West Coast.

Projects that are physically located outside of the target LGAs but will deliver connectivity improvements to one or more of the target LGAs will be eligible for grant funding where the applicant provides evidence demonstrating the benefits to the target LGA (or each of the target LGAs, as appropriate), including quantifying the connectivity improvements to the target LGAs.

Any connectivity improvements the project provides to areas outside of the target LGAs will not be considered in the assessment process.

5.3 Eligible expenditure

Eligible projects will receive a Commonwealth contribution of up to 75% of total eligible expenditure. The grant can only be used for eligible costs you have incurred on eligible grant activities.

Eligible expenditure items include:

- capital costs of your project, and
- capitalised backhaul operational costs, including leases of fibre.
 - Capitalised costs are the capitalised net present value (using a discount rate equivalent to the 10-year Treasury Bond Rate applied at the date of the application) of the estimated backhaul operational costs over the operational period for a project.

You must incur the expenditure on your project between the start date and end date of your project, as specified in your grant agreement.

The costs of your project will be considered as part of the value with relevant money assessment.

You will be responsible for any actual costs that exceed estimated costs.

5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- operational costs of your project (excluding backhaul) such as land rental, power or maintenance
- access fees
- integration costs
- for mobile base station capacity upgrade projects or backhaul network upgrade projects, any costs that are currently being incurred at the existing site or network
- costs already incurred by you
- costs incurred in the preparation of your application or related documentation, and
- any activity for which you are already receiving funding from the Commonwealth, have an application for grant funding from another Government program under consideration or which is to be covered by your own contributions or other third-party contributions under a Commonwealth grant agreement.

6 The assessment criteria

You must address all the assessment criteria in the application. We will assess each proposed project based on the weighting given to each criterion, and using the information and supporting documents provided in your application (Section 8). Each criterion has equal weighting.

The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the size and complexity of your project, and the grant amount requested.

Criterion 1: Mobile Connectivity Uplift (50 points)

This criterion will assess how, and the extent to which, your project will uplift mobile connectivity by:

- delivering new or improved mobile coverage
- increasing mobile capacity
- reducing congestion on mobile networks, and/or
- improving the quality of mobile service.

You should respond to this criterion by:

- describing the current mobile connectivity, congestion and/or quality of service issues being experienced by mobile phone users in the location targeted your project, and
- providing quantitative and/or qualitative information to demonstrate the improvements in mobile connectivity, reliability and quality of service, and and/or reductions in congestion that will be delivered by your project.

Your response to this criterion must be supported by relevant evidence, including data, graphs, coverage maps and diagrams.

Projects that deliver new or improved coverage must be supported by predictive coverage maps (Section 7.2).

Points for this criterion will be awarded based on the scoring matrix in Table 1 of Appendix A.

Criterion 2: Community Benefit (50 points)

This criterion will assess how, and the extent to which, your project will support, assist or advantage local communities. Benefits could include:

- socio-economic gains, such as improved access to online services and e-commerce, support for tourism and events, access to time-critical information about disasters and emergencies
- improved digital inclusion, including access
- improved coverage to public interest premises
- improved access to mobile services for First Nations communities, isolated or vulnerable communities, and
- improved resilience to natural disasters.

Your response to this criterion should include:

- quantitative and/or qualitative information to demonstrate the benefits that your project will deliver to local communities, and
- evidence of support for your project from relevant stakeholders, including federal, state and local parliamentarians, Tasmanian and local governments, local organisations and communities, and emergency service organisations.

Points for this criterion will be awarded based on the scoring matrix in Table 2 of Appendix A.

For multi-MNO projects, the points for each criterion will be assessed separately for each MNO and then added together into a single score for the project, capped at 50 points for each criterion.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these grant opportunity guidelines and the application form.

These documents can be found at [GrantConnect](#)⁴. Any alterations and addenda⁵ will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes to these guidelines.

To apply you must:

- complete the application (including the application form and supporting documents) in full, and email your application to MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au
- provide all requested information
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria, including providing evidence to support your claims
- include all required or mandatory attachments, and
- submit your application (Section 7.1) on or before the closing date.

All electronic files should be provided in an appropriate Microsoft compatible format. Geo-spatial information, such as maps, should be provided in ESRI Shape, MapInfo TAB or MID/MIF, GML or KML format.

Application files included in each email must not exceed a combined size of 10 megabytes. A number of emails can be provided, where needed. The number of emails being provided should be included in the header to assist in verifying receipt of all information (for example, email 1 of 3, email 2 of 3, email 3 of 3).

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995 \(Cth\)](#)⁶. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, or are having technical issues submitting your application, you should contact us immediately at MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au. We do not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing date.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information. This will only be accepted where the clarification or additional information does not provide you with a material advantage over other applicants in the assessment of eligibility of your application and the assessment of the merit of your proposed projects.

You must agree that information included in your application can be used by the department to prepare promotional materials for the program, to evaluate the program, for policy development

⁴ www.grants.gov.au

⁵ Alterations and addenda include corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers documents and Frequently Asked Questions documents.

⁶ www.legislation.gov.au

and advice, and for any other Commonwealth purpose as agreed between you and the department.

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

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within two business days.

If you need further guidance about the application process, contact us at MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au.

7.1 Attachments to the application

Your application includes the application form, supporting documents and evidence, and coverage maps. We require you to submit the following documents as part of your application:

- application form
- a letter of written endorsement from the local government with responsibility for the area in which your project is located, or from each local government if you are seeking funding for a number of projects in more than one target LGA, or each local government if your project will provide benefits to a number of target LGAs
- letters of support from other third parties (where applicable)
- letters of support for joint applications (where applicable)
- evidence and details of any contributions (financial and/or in-kind) to be received from third parties such as the contribution amount (GST inclusive), and any specific requirements or conditions tied to the contributions, and
- evidence to support your claims that your project meets the assessment criteria, including data, graphs, coverage maps and diagrams.

You must provide all mandatory documents and attach supporting documentation to the application. You should only attach requested documents. We may not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

7.2 Coverage Mapping

Applications for projects that will deliver new or improved mobile coverage must include predictive coverage maps. Mapping data must be provided for 4G and 5G coverage at each of the signal thresholds listed in the [Telecommunications \(Mobile Network Coverage Maps\) Industry Standard 2026](#):

- existing mobile coverage data for Tasmania, and
- proposed 4G and/or 5G coverage to be delivered by each of the proposed projects in your application.

7.3 Joint (consortia) applications

Some organisations may want to join as a group to deliver a project. This may be between MNOs, MNIPs and/or other third-party organisations.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead applicant. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility requirements at Section 4.1. Only the lead applicant can submit the application and enter into a grant agreement with the Government. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the partners.

Each letter of support should include:

- details of the partner organisation

- an overview of how the partner organisation will work with the lead applicant and any other partner organisations in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the partner organisation will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities of the partner organisation and the resources they will contribute (if any), and
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

You must provide evidence demonstrating that contractual arrangements or supporting agreements with third parties are in place within 40 business days of being advised that your project has been awarded funding, unless otherwise agreed by the department. The department may withdraw any offer of funding if evidence of these arrangements is not provided by the agreed deadline.

7.4 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

We will only accept a late application in exceptional circumstances and may not consider any application submitted after the closing date. Without limiting the department’s discretion, exceptional circumstances may include natural disasters or unforeseen and significant technical issues with submitting your application. You should consider any differences in time zones when submitting your application.

If you believe there are circumstances which will affect the timely submission of your application, you must contact us via email at MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au before the closing date to request an alternative deadline for your application.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Guidelines released and applications open	XX [month] 2026
Applications close	XX AEST, XX [month] 2026 [20 Business Days]
Assessment of applications	Approximately 4 to 6 weeks
Announcement of successful projects	From Quarter 4 of 2026
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	From Quarter 4 of 2026
Start date of projects	On execution of the grant agreement
End date of projects	As included in the grant agreement or by 30 April 2028

7.5 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au. We will respond to emailed questions within three business days. Answers to questions will be posted on [GrantConnect](#)⁷.

⁷ www.grants.gov.au

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

We will undertake an initial check to ensure each application is complete and that all mandatory documents have been submitted with the application.

We will review complete applications against the eligibility criteria set out in Section 4. We will review each project against the eligibility criteria set out in Section 5. If your application and projects are eligible, an Assessment Committee will assess your application against the assessment criteria (Section 6) and against other applications. The Assessment Committee will consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria
- how it compares to other applications, and
- whether it provides value with relevant money.⁸

8.1.1 Value with relevant money

When assessing the extent to which your project represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the extent to which the project will contribute to the Round's objective and outcomes
- the relative value of the grant being sought
- additional connectivity or competition benefits to target LGAs, particularly where the project is located outside a target LGA
- distribution of projects across the target LGAs, with the intent of funding one project in, or providing benefit to, each LGA
- the extent to which the project leverages partnerships, and financial and/or in-kind contributions, and
- any risks associated with delivery of the project, including the applicant's track record of delivering similar grants.

Based on the overall value with relevant money assessment, the department may recommend:

- funding projects which are lower ranked against the assessment criteria, or
- not funding projects which are highly ranked against the assessment criteria, for example to ensure distribution across the target LGAs.

Any other value with relevant money considerations will be documented and form part of the advice to the decision maker.

8.2 Who will assess applications?

An Assessment Committee will assess each project on its merits and compare it to other eligible projects before providing recommendations on which projects should be awarded a grant. The Assessment Committee will be made up of a chair and panel comprising appropriately skilled officials from the department. Committee members may also be drawn from other Commonwealth agencies.

We may ask external experts to inform the assessment process. Any expert who is not a Commonwealth official will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

⁸ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

The Assessment Committee may seek additional information about you, your application, project partners, related bodies corporate, related entities and associated entities (as defined in the [Corporations Act 2001](#)⁹) and related personnel from third party sources, including other Commonwealth entities, the Tasmanian Government and the local governments of the target LGAs. We may use sources that are not nominated by you. The Assessment Committee may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The department will provide advice to the Decision Maker (the Minister for Communications) on projects to be approved for grant funding, based on the Assessment Committee's recommendations.

Recommendations to the Decision Maker will be ranked according to the outcomes of the assessment, from highest to lowest, and annotated to identify when available funding has been exhausted.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The Decision Maker is the Minister for Communications (the Minister).

The Decision Maker decides which grants to approve, taking into account the recommendations of the Assessment Committee and the department, and available grant funds for the Round.

The Decision Maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- allocation of funding between LGAs, and
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9 Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, you will be notified by the department in writing. You may ask for feedback on your application within one month of being advised of the outcome. We will provide written feedback within one month.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. A sample grant agreement is available on GrantConnect.

You may ask to use a grant agreement from a previous round of the MBSP or the Peri-Urban Mobile Program as the basis of the grant agreement (previous grant agreement) for the Round. If you wish to do so, you must include a marked-up version of the previous grant agreement in your application, with any necessary amendments to align with the requirements of the Round. We do not have to agree to use the previous grant agreement or to any proposed amendments.

⁹ www.legislation.gov.au

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your project before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Minister. We will identify these in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

10.2 How we pay the grant

Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement.

The grant agreement will state:

- the maximum grant amount to be paid
- the proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial and/or in-kind contributions you must make, and
- any financial and/or in-kind contributions provided by a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances.

You must meet any additional costs you incur.

10.3 Grants payments and GST

This grant is Goods and Services Tax (GST) inclusive.

If you are registered for [GST](#)¹⁰, where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#)¹¹.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).¹² We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11 Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.4 of the [CGRPs](#)¹³.

12 How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name

¹⁰ www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/gst-excise-and-indirect-taxes/gst/registering-for-gst

¹¹ www.ato.gov.au/forms-and-instructions/recipient-created-tax-invoices

¹² www.ato.gov.au

¹³ www.legislation.gov.au

- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details, and
- business structure.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports as required by the grant agreement. We may provide sample templates for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- contributions of participants directly related to the project
- expenditure of the grant, and
- the project activities over the operational period.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of your project and grant amount.

When you complete your project, you must submit a final report. The department will only make the final grant payment after we have received and confirmed the acceptance of a satisfactory final report.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.3 Financial declaration or audited financial acquittal report

We will ask you to provide a financial declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report at your expense. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement in writing.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5 Compliance visits

We (or entities acting on our behalf) may visit you during or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the program to measure how well the outcomes and objective have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about your project, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

13 Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, conducted according to the published grant opportunity guidelines, consistent with the CGRPs and incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud and corruption, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

These grant opportunity guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the department. When this happens, we will publish the addendum on [GrantConnect](#)¹⁴. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes to these grant opportunity guidelines.

You should be aware of your obligations under the [National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022](#)¹⁵, noting that under the Act grantees will generally be considered ‘contracted service providers’ [see [NACC fact sheets](#)¹⁶].

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

The department’s [Client Service Charter](#) applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the department has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)¹⁷. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest can affect the performance of the Round. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the department’s staff, any

¹⁴ www.grants.gov.au

¹⁵ www.legislation.gov.au

¹⁶ www.nacc.gov.au/resource-centre/nacc-fact-sheets

¹⁷ www.ombudsman.gov.au

member of the Assessment Committee or external expert and/or you or any of your personnel, including sub-contractors have a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, such as a Government official
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the program.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there are no conflicts of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the department in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#)¹⁸ of the [Public Service Act 1999](#)¹⁹ and section 29 (duty to disclose interests) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. Assessment Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#)²⁰ and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#)²¹. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information, and
- who we give your personal information to.

'Personal information' means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not, and
- (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption under the Australian Privacy Principles applies.

The Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare that you will comply with the *Privacy Act 1998* and the Australian Privacy Principles and that you will impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the project, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the project. Accordingly,

¹⁸ www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/integrity/integrity-resources/code-of-conduct

¹⁹ www.legislation.gov.au

²⁰ www.legislation.gov.au

²¹ www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles

you must not do anything, which if done by the department would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

13.4 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with your application and the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive, and
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the Assessment Committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively, including for an integrity purpose
- employees and contractors of the department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies
- local governments in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, Privacy Commissioner or National Anti-Corruption Commissioner, or staff of their agencies
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and their advisers, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)²² (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and

²² www.legislation.gov.au

exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests, and the private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Coordinator
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications,
Sport and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email: foi@infrastructure.gov.au

DRAFT

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
4G	Fourth generation mobile telecommunications service.
5G	Fifth generation mobile telecommunications service.
Access fees	Fees incurred by an access seeker as part of an active or passive sharing arrangement with an MNO or MNIP.
Accountable authority	See subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 ²³ (PGPA Act).
Administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
AEST	Australian Eastern Standard Time.
Application	Comprises the application form and any other required documents. Supports the assessment of your application.
Assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
Backhaul	A link between the core or backbone of a network and sub-networks, transporting data from a series of disparate locations to a more centralised location.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth entity	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs) ²⁴	Establishes the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
Completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.

²³ www.legislation.gov.au

²⁴ www.legislation.gov.au

Term	Definition
Contracted service provider	A person who is a party to a Commonwealth contract or is a party to a subcontract with a contracted service provider and is responsible for the provision of goods or services under contract, either directly or indirectly.
Co-sponsoring entity	When two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it.
Date of effect	The date on which a grant agreement is signed or an alternative specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
Decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
Department	The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts.
Eligibility criteria	Mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Existing handheld coverage	<p>Coverage able to be obtained with a handheld mobile device within the applicant's mobile network that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is currently available • will be provided by any base station that will be delivered by the applicant under a round of the Peri-Urban Mobile Program, MBSP or other Commonwealth grant program, or • will be provided by any applicant base station funded under a state program.
Grant	<p>For the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money²⁵ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund²⁶ (CRF) money²⁷ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
Grant activity/activities	The project the grantee is required to undertake.
Grant agreement	Sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement and details of the grant.

²⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act.

²⁶ www.finance.gov.au/about-us/glossary/pgpa/term-consolidated-revenue-fund-crf

²⁷ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act.

Term	Definition
GrantConnect ²⁸	The Government's whole-of-government grants information system which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
Grant opportunity	The specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
Grant program	A 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single departmental Portfolio Budget Statement program.
Grantee	The individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
Integration costs	Direct incremental costs associated with the establishment of an active sharing network.
Lead applicant	The entity responsible for submitting the application and entering into a grant agreement with the Government.
Macrocell	The widest range of cell sizes used in a mobile phone network served by a mobile base station, often used in rural areas and along highways. Macrocells generally provide larger coverage than small cell base stations or microcells, with a typical power output of tens of watts.
Operational period	A 10-year period over which a project must deliver the contracted services, as set out in the grant agreement, on a commercial basis.
National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)	An independent Commonwealth agency which detects, investigates and reports on serious or systemic corruption in the Commonwealth public sector. The Commission operates under the National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022 ²⁹ .
New or Improved Handheld Coverage	The amount (in square kilometres) of coverage from a project that can be obtained with a handheld mobile device in areas that do not receive Existing Handheld Coverage in the applicant's network at the signal levels specified in Section 7.2.
Previous Grant Agreement	An executed grant agreement between the Commonwealth and the applicant under a previous round of the MBSP or the Peri-Urban Mobile Program.

²⁸ www.grants.gov.au

²⁹ www.legislation.gov.au

Term	Definition
Public interest premises	<p>A premise or location that is used on a continuing basis for a public interest purpose such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an economic centre (e.g. tourist site, park or wildlife facility, local business centre, or an industrial precinct) • an emergency services facility • a health facility • an educational facility • an indigenous community organisation • a local government facility • a not-for-profit organisation.
Selection criteria	Comprises the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
Selection process	The method used to select potential grantee and may involve comparative assessment of applications and projects or the assessment of applications and projects against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
Small cell	<p>A small cell in a mobile phone network, with a typical range less than two kilometres. Often used to add network capacity in areas of dense population or very remote locations, utilising power control to limit coverage area. They are also known as microcells.</p>
Value with money	<p>A judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A: Assessment Criteria Scoring Matrices

Table 1: Mobile Connectivity Uplift Scoring Matrix

Rating	Score	Definition
Very Good	39-50	The project fully addresses the described connectivity issues and will provide very significant connectivity improvements. Evidence fully supports the applicant's claims.
Good	26-38	The project mostly addresses the described connectivity issues and will provide significant connectivity improvements. Evidence mostly supports the applicant's claims.
Satisfactory	13-25	The project generally addresses the described connectivity issues and will provide some connectivity improvements. Evidence generally supports the applicant's claims.
Poor	0-12	The project partially addresses the described connectivity issues and will provide minor connectivity improvements. Evidence is limited and does not support the applicant's claims to a satisfactory degree.

Table 2: Community Benefit Scoring Matrix

Rating	Score	Definition
Very Good	39-50	The project offers a broad range of benefits and will deliver very significant improvements and outcomes for local communities. Evidence fully supports the applicant's claims.
Good	26-38	The project offers some benefits and will deliver significant improvements and outcomes for local communities. Evidence mostly supports the applicant's claims.
Satisfactory	13-25	The project offers modest benefits and will deliver some improvements and outcomes for local communities. Evidence generally supports the applicant's claims.
Poor	0-12	The project offers minimal benefits and will deliver minor improvements and outcomes for local communities. Evidence is limited and does not support the applicant's claims to a satisfactory degree.