



Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Powering Communities Program

Opening date:	9.00 AM 1 July 2021
Closing date and time:	5.00 PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on 20 September 2021 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Administering entity:	Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46.
Date guidelines released:	30 March 2021
Type of grant opportunity:	Closed non-competitive

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1. Powering Communities Program processes

The Powering Communities Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) Outcome 3: Support the affordable, reliable, secure and competitive operation of energy markets for the long term benefit of the Australian community through improving Australia's energy supply, efficiency, quality, performance and productivity. DISER works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#).



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect](#). Federal Members of Parliament (MPs) must establish a community consultation committee or consult an existing committee to assist in identifying applicants and projects. After consulting with the community, MPs will invite selected applicants to submit an application online.



Invited applicants complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form, addressing all the eligibility criteria in order for your application to be considered.



We assess all grant applications

We review the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which applications are successful taking into consideration the proper use of public resources.



Notification of the outcome

Your MP will contact you to advise you of the outcome of your application. We will provide written confirmation of the outcome of your application by email.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants and pay the grant.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the Powering Communities Program

We evaluate the specific grant activity and program as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

2. About the grant program

The Powering Communities Program (the program) will run over 2021–2022. The program provides grants to not-for-profit community organisations to improve their energy efficiency practices and technologies leading to a reduction in energy use, improvement in energy productivity and delivery of carbon abatement.

The objectives of the program are to assist not-for-profit community organisations to:

- upgrade equipment to reduce energy consumption
- undertake energy management activities and assessments, such as energy systems assessments and feasibility studies
- invest in energy monitoring and management systems
- invest in on-site renewable energy and solar-connected batteries.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- improved energy efficiency practices and technologies for not-for profit community organisations
- reduced energy use and lower energy bills
- improved energy productivity
- to deliver carbon abatement.

Community consultation is a critical element of the program. In consultation with their community, each Member of Parliament (MP) will identify potential applicants and projects in their electorate and invite them to apply for a grant. We will assess invited applications against the program's eligibility criteria through a closed non-competitive process.

This document sets out:

- the eligibility criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (the department/we) is responsible for administering this grant opportunity.

We will publish the opening and closing dates and any other relevant information on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect](#).

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs)¹.

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 13.

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an application.

2.1. Community consultation

Each MP must either consult with an existing consultation committee or establish a new consultation committee comprised of representatives from the local community, to identify potential

¹ <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-guidelines>

applicants and projects in their electorate. The identified projects must be consistent with the intended program outcomes and eligibility criteria. MPs must advise the department of the basis for project selection and provide a detailed list of all nominated applicants and projects.

The MP will invite identified potential applicants to apply for a grant for identified projects by sending them a link to an online application form. Only applicants invited to apply can submit an application. Invited applicants must not forward the link to the application form to anyone else.

Invited applicants must submit a completed application via the portal. We assess all applications for eligibility and completeness.

An invitation to submit an application by your MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

3. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$10.2 million in 2021-22 to provide up to \$67,700 in each of the 151 Federal electorates.

3.1. Grants available

Each electorate has total funding of up to \$67,700 that can be allocated to successful applications. A maximum of 12 projects will be funded in each electorate.

The grant amount will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project expenditure.

- The minimum grant amount is \$5,000
- The maximum grant amount is \$12,000.

You are responsible for the remaining eligible project expenditure above the maximum grant amount of \$12,000 plus any ineligible expenditure.

We cannot fund your project if it receives funding from another Commonwealth, State or Territory government grant. You can apply for a grant for your project under more than one Commonwealth, State or Territory program, but if your application is successful, you must choose either the Powering Communities Program grant or the other Commonwealth, State or Territory grant.

3.2. Project period

The maximum project period is one year.

You must complete your project by 30 June 2022.

You may start your project from the date you submit your application. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the date you submit your application is not eligible. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your project before you have an executed agreement, you do so at your own risk.

4. Eligibility criteria

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

4.1. Who is eligible?

To be eligible you must:

- be invited to apply by your MP
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)

and be one of the following entities:

- an incorporated not for profit organisation including:
 - incorporated associations
 - non-distributing co-operatives
 - companies limited by guarantee
 - indigenous not for profit corporations
 - religious organisations incorporated under legislation.
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust with responsibility for a community asset or property. You will be required to provide relevant trust documents.

As a not for profit organisation you must demonstrate your not for profit status through one of the following:

- State or Territory incorporated association registration number or certificate of incorporation, e.g. clubs and other associations
- current Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission's (ACNC) registration, e.g. for organisations registered as a charity
- constitutional documents that demonstrate the not for profit character of the organisation
- legislation that demonstrates the not for profit nature of the organisation, e.g. religious organisations incorporated under legislation.

Joint applications are acceptable, provided you have a lead applicant who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 6.2.

4.2. Project sponsor

If you are an organisation that may not be able to incorporate, including parish churches, rural fire brigades, scout groups or equivalent bodies, you may be able to nominate an eligible project sponsor. The project sponsor will need to meet all eligibility criteria and be invited by your MP.

The project sponsor will need to submit the application on behalf of your organisation, enter into a grant agreement and be responsible for any obligations under the agreement with the Commonwealth.

4.3. Additional eligibility requirements

We can only accept applications where you:

- apply for the project and grant amount as agreed to and nominated by your MP
- have a plan for how you will carry out the project
- provide at least one quote(s) to validate your major project costs (see section 6.1)
- provide a letter of consent from the building or facility owner/manager (where applicable) (Appendix A)
- provide the relevant mandatory attachments
- have not received a grant under the Energy Efficient Communities Program.

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

4.4. Who is not eligible?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au)
- a for profit organisation
- an individual
- a partnership
- a Regional Development Australia Committee
- a university, technical college or school
- an educational facility such as primary, secondary schools, tertiary (universities, colleges, TAFE) and/or related entity such as P&C association
- a group that use the site primarily for gambling or the sale of alcohol
- a hospital
- an unincorporated association
- any organisation not included in section 4.1
- trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government body (including government business enterprises)
- a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible activities

To be eligible your project must:

- be aimed at saving energy and reducing energy bills for your community group
- be nominated to apply by your MP
- be located at an address in your MP's electorate
- include eligible expenditure as defined in section 5.2
- have at least \$5,000 in eligible expenditure
- be undertaken in the project period and completed by 30 June 2022.
- include one or more of the eligible activities listed in Section 5.1.1 to 5.1.6

Eligible activities can include:

5.1.1. Energy generation and storage

- a) design, purchase and installation of new solar photovoltaic generator systems
 - b) design, purchase and installation of new battery systems to connect to new or existing solar PV modules.
- solar photovoltaic modules must not be replacing existing modules. However, you can increase the size of an existing system

- solar and battery systems must be designed and installed by CEC-accredited installers². The accreditation must be appropriate to the type of system being installed (e.g. grid-connect battery / grid-connect solar / stand-alone power system)
- solar PV modules, inverters and lithium ion batteries must be CEC-approved products³
- all solar and battery systems must comply with any Commonwealth, State or Territory rules and requirements
- if solar panels are being installed as part of your project, you must retain documentation (e.g. a quote or an invoice referring to the number and value of Small-Scale Technology Certificates (STCs) that will be created for the project. Your documentation must show that the price has been adjusted to account for STCs. You must not seek grant funding to cover the value of the STCs created for your project.

We recommend that you choose CEC-approved [retailers](#)⁴. CEC approved retailers are signatories to the CEC Solar Retailer Code of Conduct.

We recommend that you choose suppliers and products that participate in the [Solar Panel Validation Initiative](#). The Solar Panel Validation initiative aims to give consumers a way to check that the panels are backed by manufacturer warranties and meet Australian Standards for quality and performance. You should ask your retailer about this when you are getting a quote.

5.1.2. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning

- a) new split system air conditioners to replace existing split systems, packaged air-conditioner or window-wall air conditioners. For example, replace a non-inverter air conditioner with a new inverter-driven unit
- b) install new or replacement controllers for air conditioning equipment, such as timers, sensors, digital controllers, interfaces, Building Management System equipment including head-end computer, actuators, relays, contactors.

All equipment must be installed by licensed tradespeople. Replacement equipment must not provide air conditioning to an area that was not previously air-conditioned.

5.1.3. Bathroom and kitchen hot water

- a) new solar domestic hot water heaters or air source hot water heat pumps to replace existing hot water systems.

All equipment must be installed by licensed tradespeople. New heat pumps and solar water heaters must be listed on the Clean Energy Regulator [website](#).

5.1.4. Lighting

- a) new LED lighting equipment to replace existing non-LED lighting
- b) new or replacement control components or systems for lighting, including timers, sensors, interfaces, digital controllers, relays, contactors.

All equipment must be installed by a licensed tradesperson. All equipment should carry the Australian Regulatory Compliance Mark.

² <https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/consumers/buying-solar/find-an-installer>

³ <https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/products>

⁴ <https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/consumers/buying-solar/find-an-approved-solar-retailer>

5.1.5. Appliances

- a) new induction cooktops to replace less efficient cooktops
- b) new commercial refrigeration equipment to replace existing equipment.

Induction cooktops and refrigeration equipment other than standalone refrigeration equipment must be installed by a licensed tradesperson.

5.1.6. Other eligible activities

- a) conduct an energy audit of your site or part of your site that meets AS/NZS 3598 2014
- b) measure, monitor and recording energy use. Electricity and gas metering equipment must be installed by a licensed tradesperson.

5.2. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement. You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible.

You may start your project from the date you submit your application. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the date you submit your application is not eligible. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your project before you have an executed agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Eligible expenditure may include:

- the cost of suppliers, consultants and contracted labour undertaking eligible project activities
- the purchase, lease or hire of equipment required to complete eligible project activities
- the purchase of materials required to complete eligible project activities
- design, and reasonable installation costs of eligible equipment
- costs to decommission, remove and dispose of the old equipment that is replaced
- commissioning or tuning of equipment installed or modified as part of the project, and any related equipment that is affected by the project
- building permits or approval costs to install equipment, where required
- costs to upgrade a switchboard to include solar PV generation equipment or a heat pump hot water heater. However, this does not include the cost of grid connection at a site that was not previously grid-connected
- purchase or hire of equipment to measure, monitor and record energy use.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

5.3. What you cannot use the grant for

Expenditure items that are not eligible are:

- the cost of the ongoing provision of services and support activities e.g. volunteer/employee time to deliver a service beyond project completion
- the cost of business as usual activities, including:
 - staff salaries, overheads, and consumables such as paper, printer cartridges, office supplies, brochures and other marketing materials, kitchen supplies including food

- ongoing upgrades, updates and maintenance of existing ICT systems including websites, customer relationship management systems, databases except where this is required as part of an eligible lighting or air conditioning controls upgrade, the cost of ongoing subscription based software; and IT support memberships and warranties for purchases
- recurring or ongoing operational expenditure (including annual maintenance, rent, water and rates)
- funding to stage events, exhibit a display or for filming (includes activities such as marquee hire, guest presenter costs and catering)
- funding to develop or deliver ongoing training or educational courses
- purchase of land or buildings
- funding for the development of private or commercial ventures
- structural modifications or new structures to accommodate new equipment installed under the project (e.g. strengthening of a roof to hold solar panels or a solar hot water unit).
- changes to the building fitout (e.g. new partitions or new kitchen cabinets)
- purchase of office equipment other than the head-end computer of a BMS
- cost of new or second hand vehicles
- expenditure related to a residential property (except for care facilities, refuges or the like that are owned or occupied by community organisations).
- cost of any appliances other than those listed in Section 5.1.

6. How to apply

Before applying, you should read and understand these guidelines, the sample [application form](#) and the sample [grant agreement](#) published on business.gov.au and GrantConnect.

You can only submit one application for this grant opportunity. To apply, you must:

- be invited by your MP to submit an application
- complete the online [application form](#) via the portal on business.gov.au
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria
- include all mandatory attachments.

We may ask you to substantiate your project costs. You should have evidence for the costs that you include in your project budget to provide upon request.

You will receive confirmation when you submit your application. You should retain a copy of your application for your own records.

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

If you need further guidance around the application process, or if you are unable to submit an application online, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

6.1. Attachments to the application

You must provide the following documents with your application:

- evidence of your not-for-profit status
- at least one quote(s) to validate your major project costs. Quotes that relate to solar projects must identify the make and model of any major equipment purchases, such as solar PV modules, inverters and batteries. Quote(s) must be dated on or after 30 March 2021 and for eligible activities listed in 5.1.
- letter of consent from the building or facility owner/manager (where applicable) (Appendix A)
- project plan
- trust deed (where applicable).

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

6.2. Joint applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application should identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support should include:

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

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement.

6.3. Timing of grant opportunity

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence your project around July 2021.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	The date you submit your application
End date of grant commitment	30 June 2022

7. The grant selection process

Your MP, with the help of their community consultation committee, will identify potential projects, with a total value of up to \$67,700 in their electorate that are consistent with the program outcomes and eligibility criteria.

The MP will invite identified potential applicants to apply and send them a link to the online application form. It is important to note that being invited to submit an application by your MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

We will assess your application for completeness and against all the eligibility criteria. To be recommended for funding, your project must meet all eligibility criteria, provide value for money and be considered a proper use of public resources.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, we may contact you to correct or clarify the errors, but you cannot make any material alteration or addition to your application.

7.1. Replacement project

If a nominated organisation is not eligible, we may seek a further nomination from the relevant MP for an alternative project in their electorate or for the same project from an eligible sponsor organisation to replace the ineligible nomination.

The nominated organisation and replacement project must meet all the eligibility criteria to be recommended for funding.

7.2. Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate (who is an AusIndustry Senior Responsible Officer with responsibility for the program) decides which grants to approve taking into account the application assessment and the availability of grant funds and whether funding a project will be a proper use of public resources. When assessing whether the application represents value with relevant money, the Program Delegate will have regard to the overall objectives of the grant opportunity, the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives and the relative value of the grant sought.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the grant approval
- the grant funding to be awarded
- any conditions attached to the offer of grant funding.

We cannot review decisions about your application.

The Program Delegate will not approve funding if there is insufficient program funds available in your electorate's allocation under the program.

8. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in an email. If you are successful, we advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant. Your MP may also contact you to discuss your project.

If you are unsuccessful, we will notify you by email.

9. Successful grant applications

9.1. Grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We use two types of grant agreements in this program. Our selection will depend on the size and complexity of your project. Each grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample [grant agreements](#) are available on [business.gov.au](#) and GrantConnect. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample [grant agreement](#) is available on [business.gov.au](#) and GrantConnect. We will manage the grant agreement through the portal. This includes issuing and executing the agreement.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

If you enter an agreement under the Powering Communities Program, you cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth, State or Territory granting programs. You must not have received a grant under the Energy Efficient Communities Program.

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

9.2. Approval letter grant agreement

We will use an approval letter grant agreement for small projects when we have no need to clarify or amend any details in your application. This grant agreement comprises your completed application form and the approval letter we send advising that your application has been successful. We consider the agreement to be executed (take effect) from the date of our approval letter.

9.3. Exchange of letters grant agreement

We will use an exchange of letters grant agreement for smaller projects where we consider your project to be relatively straightforward. We will send you a letter of offer advising that your application has been successful. You accept the offer by signing and returning to us. We consider the agreement to be executed from the date we receive your signed document. You will have 30 days from the date of our letter to sign and return to us otherwise the offer may lapse.

9.4. Activity specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws and regulations in undertaking your project. You must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that you meet these requirements. We will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

In particular, you will be required to comply with:

- State/Territory legislation in relation to working with children
- Local government planning requirements
- State/Territory legislation in relation to Workplace Health and Safety
- State/Territory electrical safety regulations

Energy audits should meet AS/NZS 3598 2014

9.5. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will pay 100 per cent of the grant on execution of the grant agreement. You will be required to report how you spent the grant funds at the completion of the project.

9.6. Tax obligations

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities⁵.

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](#). We do not provide advice on tax.

10. Announcement of grants

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) unless otherwise prohibited by law. We may also publish this information on business.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location

⁵ See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at ato.gov.au

- your organisation's industry sector.

11. How we monitor your grant activity

11.1. 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
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

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.

11.2. Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide the requirements 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
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds

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

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits 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.

11.2.1. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report.

End of project reports must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the installer or your project, if your project was a solar or battery system. We will use this information to confirm if the solar system was installed by a Clean Energy Council Accredited Installer as required in these Guidelines (refer to Section 5.1.1).
- identify the product make and model and number of units purchased. We may use this information to confirm if the product meets any performance requirements specified in Section 5.1 of these Guidelines.
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money

- be submitted by the report due date
- be in the format provided in the grant agreement.

11.2.2. Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

11.3. Compliance visits

We may visit you during the project period, or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement or inspect the safety and quality of the installation. We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

11.4. Grant agreement variations

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

- changing project milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the project but within the maximum one year period
- changing project activities

The program does not allow for:

- an increase of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the project end date. We can provide you with a variation request template.

If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of the department
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

11.5. Evaluation

We will evaluate the program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and project 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 two years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

11.6. Grant acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

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

12. Probity

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

12.1. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- has a 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
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/ grant opportunity.

As part of your application, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

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

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)⁶](#) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest. If we consider a conflict of interest is a cause for concern, that official will not take part in the assessment of relevant applications under the program.

MPs must declare any conflicts of interest to the community consultation committee and the department. We publish our conflict of interest policy on the department’s [website⁷](#).

12.2. How we use your information

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per 12.2.1, or
- personal information as per 12.2.3,

we may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00057>

⁷ <https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/g/files/net3906/f/July%202018/document/pdf/conflict-of-interest-and-insider-trading-policy.pdf>

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

12.2.1. How we handle your confidential information

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

12.2.2. When we may disclose confidential information

We may disclose confidential information:

- to our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

12.2.3. How we use your personal information

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our [Privacy Policy](#)⁸ on the department's website for more information on:

⁸ <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

12.2.4. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

12.3. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

Head of Division
AusIndustry
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
GPO Box 2013
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)⁹ with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

⁹ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Application form	The details that applicants provide in the online portal to apply for funding under the grant opportunity.
AusIndustry	The division of the same name within the department.
Clean Energy Council (CEC) Accredited Installer	A person who is accredited to install solar PV generators and/or batteries by the Clean Energy Council. Only CEC Accredited Installers can install PV modules and inverters for use in projects that receive Small Scale Certificates (STCs) under the Small Scale Renewable Energy Scheme. To find an installer, visit https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/consumers/buying-solar/find-an-installer
Clean Energy Council (CEC) Approved Product	A product (PV module, inverter or battery) that is approved by the Clean Energy Council as meeting certain Australian Standards for use in the design and installation of solar or battery systems. Only CEC Approved PV Module and inverter products are eligible for use in projects that receive Small Scale Certificates (STCs) under the Small Scale Renewable Energy Scheme. To find approve products, visit https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/products
Clean Energy Council (CEC) Approved Solar Retailer	A business that is a signatory to the Clean Energy Council Solar Retailer Code of Conduct. The Code sets out requirements around practices in quoting, sales contracts, financing, cooling off and refunds, grid connection and handover.
Community consultation committee	Committee either established or identified by the MP who assist the MP to identify the projects for consideration by the department.
Department	The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.
Eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in 5.1.
Eligible application	An application or proposal for grant funding under the program that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
Eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.2.
Eligible expenditure guidance	The guidance that is provided at Appendix A.

Term	Definition
Federal electorate	A geographical area of Australia (known as an electoral division) represented by a Member of Parliament elected at a House of Representatives election.
Grant agreement	A legally binding contract between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding.
Grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
GrantConnect	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.
Grantee	The recipient of grant funding under a grant agreement.
Guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to the department to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.
Minister	The Commonwealth Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction
Personal information	<p>Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is:</p> <p>Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Program Delegate	An AusIndustry manager within the department with responsibility for the program.
Program funding or Program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.
Project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
Project Sponsor	A sponsor is an entity that meets the eligibility requirements of the program who agrees to sponsor an organisation (sponsor organisation) to apply for the grant opportunity. The sponsor enters into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The sponsor must be nominated by the MP for the grant opportunity.

Term	Definition
Sponsor organisation	<p>A sponsor organisation is the organisation undertaking the project for the purposes of the grant, but is not the organisation entering into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. Organisations that require sponsorship are usually groups that cannot meet the entity eligibility requirements for the grant program and cannot submit applications in their own right.</p>
STC (Small-scale Technology Certificates)	<p>STCs are a financial incentive for consumers purchasing solar systems, solar hot water or heat pump hot water systems. Usually, solar suppliers will offer you a discount off the up-front price for your system if you agree to assign the rights to the STCs for your system to the supplier or an agent that they nominate. Sometimes, the supplier will offer you a cash-back payment instead. You must not seek grant funding to cover the value of any STCs created under your project. If your quote does not mention STCs you should discuss this with your supplier. Your quote or invoice must indicate that the price has been adjusted to include the value of STCs.</p> <p>STCs are created under the Australian Government's Small Scale Renewable Energy Scheme.</p>

Appendix A. Letter of consent from building or facility owner/ manager

Name of building/ facility owner or manager providing consent	
Street address of building or facility	
Name of applicant organisation	
Name of system(s) being installed or replaced	
Name of witness to this letter of consent	

I am the authorised building or facility owner/representative of the above building/facility.

This letter confirms my support for the grant application from the above mentioned applicant organisation who occupies the building/facility and is seeking financial assistance under the Powering Communities Program to install new energy efficient equipment at the building.

I endorse the grant application from this applicant organisation for the installation of the system described above being installed or replaced.

I note that the applicant organisation will enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth Government in relation to this grant.

I acknowledge that, as the building/facility owner/manager, I am responsible for obtaining advice on, and being satisfied as to, the suitability of the energy efficient or solar generation/storage system for the building.

I agree to work with the applicant organisation to manage the installation of the system identified according to product specifications. I acknowledge that I will take on all rights and responsibilities for the ownership and ongoing maintenance, including costs and insurance obligations of the assets, including the system, installed.

Signature

Date

Signature of witness

Date