

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 384

Program No: Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Grants

Senator Ludwig asked:

Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014:

1. What guidelines are in place to administer grants?
2. How are grants applied for?
3. Are there any restrictions on who can apply for a grant? If yes, please detail.
 1. Can these restrictions be waived? If yes, please detail the process for waiving them and list any grants where the restrictions were waived.
4. What is the procedure for selecting who will be awarded a grant?
5. Who is involved in this selection process?
6. Does the minister or the minister's office play any role in awarding grants? If yes, please detail.
 1. Has the minister or the minister's office exercised or attempted to exercise any influence over the awarding of any grants? If yes, please detail.
7. Provide a list of all grants, including ad hoc, one-off discretionary grants awarded to date. Provide the recipients, amount, intended use of the grants, what locations have benefited from the grants and the electorate and state of those locations.
8. Update the status of each grant that was approved prior to the specified period, but did not have financial contracts in place at that time. Provide details of the recipients, the amount, the intended use of the grants, what locations have benefited from the grants and the electorate and state of those grants.

Answer:

1. Grants distributed by the Our Neighbourhood Trust are administered under a series of governing documents. As a public ancillary fund, the Trust must conform to the Public Ancillary Fund Guidelines 2011 ("the Guidelines"), which includes guidelines on the minimum annual distribution amount. Notably under the Guidelines, no distribution is required during the financial year in which the fund is established (i.e. 2013/14) or during the next four financial years.

The Trust must also be governed and managed in accordance with the Trust Deed.

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Finally, the Trust has developed strategies and policies to advance its mission and objectives – including the Fundraising and Distribution strategy and policy. Within the policy document are parameters and guidelines for the distribution of Trust income to eligible entities for charitable purposes, and appropriate record keeping and reporting measures. The updated strategy document, as approved in December 2014, details the focus and direction of the Trust activities including grant making. Grant making activity is structured so as to align to the strategic objectives and focus areas of the Trust and the strategy sets out key elements such as the approach to grant making, program parameters and timing of activities.

Outside of the specific Our Neighbourhood Trust documents, the Terms and Conditions, and the eligibility criteria and guidelines outlined in the Our Neighbourhood Community Grant Application Kit form the Terms of Agreement for all grants.

2. Grants are applied for by completing and submitting an Our Neighbourhood Community Grant Application during a defined period of opening. Applications can be made either online (via the Smarty Grants management tool) or via a paper-based application. Paper-based applications can be collected from any Post Office or by emailing or calling the Australia Post Our Neighbourhood team who will post the application to a nominated address.
3. Yes. Charities and community organisations are able to apply only if they align with the Key Focus Areas and Primary Audiences, and meet the eligibility criteria as outlined below.

Key Focus Areas

- **Digital Inclusion**
Projects that connect and/or educate regional and remote communities digitally.
- **Community Inclusion**
Projects that foster whole of community spirit through connecting and supporting marginalised Australians.
- **Workplace Inclusion**
Projects that support social enterprises to increase employment opportunities for marginalised Australians.
- **Disaster Readiness**
Projects that support communities to be better prepared for a disaster.
- **Small Business Innovation**
Projects that support the start-up of small business in regional and remote communities through technology.

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Primary Audiences

(applicable to Community Inclusion and Workplace Inclusion Key Focus Areas only)

- Indigenous
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- People with a disability
- The aged; and
- Economically disadvantaged

Eligibility Criteria

The Our Neighbourhood Trust only makes distributions to Eligible Entities as defined by section 4 of the Trust Deed.

Successful Our Neighbourhood Community Grant recipients must:

1. Be a legal entity, in Australia with a current ABN;
2. Be one or more of:
 - a registered charity with the Australian Tax Office (ATO);
 - a not-for-profit community organisation;
 - a deductible gift recipient;
 - a social enterprise; or
 - a small business (less than 15 employees);
3. Have a project idea that helps build healthier, more vibrant and more inclusive communities; and
4. Deliver an Australian-based grant-funded project that will support one of our Key Focus Areas and Primary Audiences.

The Our Neighbourhood Community Grants program will not fund grants to, or for:

- Membership groups or clubs whereby the project will only benefit its members and not the wider community (ie sports clubs where only players will benefit);

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- Organisations without an ABN seeking to apply via an auspice arrangement;
- Projects which have been completed or will be completed before the grant funding date (ie before 1 October 2014);
- Projects which will not be completed until after 1 October 2015;
- Ongoing operational costs such as annual rent, power or labour/administration costs not directly associated with the implementation of the funded project;
- General fundraising campaigns, activities and appeals;
- Schools/Universities/TAFE's/Colleges and associated building funds (however, Parents & Citizen Groups and Child Care Centres/ Kindergartens are eligible to apply if the project will benefit the wider community, not just those attending the centre);
- Individuals;
- Government entities;
- Organisations that support, or project ideas whereby the primary purpose is for alcohol, drugs or tobacco use or political, gambling, weaponry or military pursuits;
- Organisations whereby the project idea is for religious pursuits;
- Travel, study or conferences (including feasibility studies);
- Medical research and/or treatment or health organisations;
- Animal welfare;
- Environmental sustainability (this is currently supported within the Australia Post Environmental Sustainability Program);
- Emergency Relief or Disaster Appeals (this is currently supported within the Australia Post Community Relations Major Disaster Response Program);
- Overseas organisations or for project ideas to be implemented outside Australia;
- Commercial and community sponsorships or activity;
- Loans of business finance;
- Budget deficits, bequests or endowments;

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- A grant recipient from a previous round for the same project; however new project ideas or extensions to existing projects from previous grant recipients will be considered;
- Organisations where a previous grant has not been satisfactorily acquitted;
- Projects that replicate services or programs that already exist within the community of interest, however, projects that complement or expand the capability of existing programs will be considered;
- Expenses already incurred; or
- Retrospective funding, such as costs already incurred before approval of funding is given.

The above restrictions cannot be waived.

4. The procedure for selecting who will be awarded a grant is as follows:

Step 1. Pre-eligibility assessment:

This stage ensures the applicant meets the eligibility guidelines and criteria outlined in question 3.

Step 2. Internal assessment:

Note: Non DGR1 grants are funded by Australian Postal Corporation and DGR1 grants are funded by the Our Neighbourhood Trust.

This stage involves a minimum of two Australia Post employees reviewing and assessing each grant application based on the projects ability to impact its recipients and the wider community as well as assessing the project need in the community. For Non DGR1 applications, an additional question is asked around the ability of the project to support Australia Post's strategic business objectives.

Step 3. Community Relations assessment:

This stage involves a member of the Community Relations team ensuring the project budget and timeline for the grant project is feasible. At this stage, a recommendation may be made for a potential 'part' fund of the project.

Step 4. Business & Industry View Assessment:

All Non DGR1 shortlisted applications undergo Business View Assessment. This involves an Australia Post representative from each state assessing the shortlisted applications based on the projects ability to support their business and/or geographical areas of focus, and ability of the grant project in helping build the Australia Post brand and reputation. All applications, both DGR1 and Non DGR1 are assessed by external industry experts. Their role is to assess and provide insight in to the shortlisted grants in their relevant Key Focus Area.

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Step 5. Australia Post Executive Committee (EC) approval and Our Neighbourhood (ON) Trust Board approval:

- The shortlist for all Non DGR1 grant applications is presented to the EC for approval.
- The shortlist for all DGR1 grant applications is presented to the ON Trust Board for approval.

5. See response to Question 4.

6. No.

7. The grants awarded from 1 June 2014 to 31 October 2014 are detailed in the attached document. For further information on our successful grant recipients, visit ourneighbourhood.com.au.



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8. Refer to ourneighbourhood.com.au.