



# Healthy and Thriving Community Grants guidelines

2026-27



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## 1. Purpose and vision

At Unitywater, our purpose is to keep communities healthy and thriving.

Our desire is to provide a grants program that enhances collaboration, builds strong community connections and delivers outcomes that align with community needs and Unitywater's strategic priorities.

Our Healthy and Thriving Community Grants program is designed to empower local organisations and community groups to deliver Initiatives that protect, support and strengthen our local communities and environment.

Unitywater provides healthy and thriving community grants in the form of financial funding awarded to eligible Initiatives via a competitive application process. Under this grants program, an '**Initiative**' is defined as the specific project, program, item/s or activity for which an organisation is applying for grant funding.

## 2. Grant categories

Grants will be awarded in the following areas that align with Unitywater's strategic priorities. One or more of these categories may be applicable to your Initiative:

- **Natural environment and liveability** - Initiatives that drive community connection to natural spaces, or that protect and enhance local waterways, native habitats, flora and fauna, or biodiversity.
- **First Nations peoples and connection to Country** - Initiatives that shape economic and environmentally sustainable outcomes and support preservation of Country, cultural heritage, and knowledge (First Nations-owned organisations may apply for this or any other category).
- **Innovation and the future of water** - Initiatives that demonstrate or foster innovation in the areas of water-related sustainability, climate change, science or technology, with a specific focus on the future.

## 3. Available funding

- Grants of between **\$2,000 and \$20,000 (excluding GST)** per application are available for applicants that meet all eligibility criteria (see Section 5 below).
- Unitywater has a set pool of funding available in each financial year, and grants are awarded on merit through a competitive grant application process (see below). There is no guarantee of funding.
- The grant amount awarded is at the discretion of Unitywater and may constitute full or partial funding of the requested amount.
- The number and value of grants awarded in any round or year is at the discretion of Unitywater.
- The value of grants awarded in each grant category is at the discretion of Unitywater.
- Applicants will be asked to provide a detailed breakdown of their funding request in the online application form.
- Unitywater will not provide any funding for Initiatives already fully funded by third parties. It will consider sharing the funding of Initiatives with third parties, provided confirmation of that funding can be evidenced.

- The applicant will be responsible for meeting any cost increases in Initiative expenses that may occur after grant funding has been approved but before the Initiative has been finalised.
- Unitywater reserves the right to vary the amount of available grant funding for the Healthy and Thriving Community Grant program each year at its absolute discretion.

## 4. Key dates for 2026-27 funding round

Key dates	2026-27
Applications open	Monday 23 March 2026
Applications close	Friday 1 May 2026
Successful applicants notified	Approx. Wednesday 8 July 2026
Agreements signed before	Approx. Friday 24 July 2026
Funding granted	Upon signing agreement
Final reports and acquittals	Before 31 July 2026

- Only one round of grant applications and funding is available in the 2026-27 financial year.
- Any expenditure incurred before an agreement is signed or before the grant funds are distributed is ineligible for funding in the 2026-27 round.
- Grant funding in this round must be spent and acquitted within 12 months, from the grant agreement date.

## 5. Eligibility – who can apply

To be eligible for a Healthy and Thriving Community Grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be one of the following:
  - **Community organisation\***
  - **Educational organisation#**
  - **First Nations-owned organisation^**

\*The Australian Government Guide to Regulatory Impact Analysis defines a community organisation as ‘any organisation engaged in charitable or other community-based activity operating under Australian law and not established for the purpose of making a profit’.

#Educational organisations must provide relevant registration documentation.

^First Nations-owned organisations must be Supply Nation Certified or a minimum of 51% First Nations-owned.

- The Initiative, including all related benefits, must be delivered in one or more of the following regional council areas:
  - **City of Moreton Bay**
  - **Noosa**
  - **Sunshine Coast**

- The Initiative must be related to one or more of the three grant categories described in Section 2 above.
- Applicants must have all the relevant and necessary insurance and compliance policies and procedures required for their Initiative or must agree to comply with Unitywater's versions of these compliance policies and procedures if they are successful (see Section 8 for details).
- Applicants must agree to work with Unitywater to actively acknowledge and promote their Initiative and Unitywater's support if they are successful (see Section 17 for details).

## 6. Eligibility – Who cannot apply

The following organisations are not eligible for funding:

- entities that do not comply with the eligibility criteria outlined above in Section 5
- organisations with overt political affiliations
- organisations that own/lease/manage/operate premises with poker machines or any form of gambling
- organisations with any outstanding debt owing to Unitywater
- organisations that have outstanding or unsatisfactory Unitywater grant acquittal reports.

## 7. Items or activities not eligible for funding

The following items or activities (which may form part or the whole of an Initiative) are not eligible for funding:

- any activities or expenditure that has already occurred, prior to the grant funding
- non-Initiative-related (business as usual) operating costs, including salaries, wages, rates, rent, fuel, utility costs (electricity, water and wastewater) and insurance
- activities that have a commercial purpose or run solely for making a profit
- new or improved water bubblers and other drinking water infrastructure
- new or improved wastewater infrastructure e.g. toilet
- alcohol, smoking/tobacco products or gambling activities
- gifts or donations
- artwork projects
- development of privately-owned facilities
- payment of debt
- political activities
- judging, adjudication fees, uniforms, trophies, travel arrangements for sporting (individual and teams) and community events.
- Unitywater water and wastewater connection costs or other charges
- First Nations initiatives that do not show genuine engagement with local First Nations peoples and Traditional Custodians (e.g. no evidence of consultation, collaboration or cultural guidance)

## 8. Insurance and compliance

As a requirement for grant funding approval, successful applicants will be required to execute a Grant Agreement that outlines all the relevant insurance and compliance policies, certifications, procedures and documents that are necessary to carry out the approved Initiative (such as a Public Liability Insurance, Workplace Health and Safety Policy, Working with Children Policy, Blue Cards, First Aid Certificates, etc).

If applicants do not have the necessary compliance policies and procedures in place, then Unitywater will provide its own versions of these policies and procedures as part of the Grant Agreement and successful applicants will be required to agree to comply with them when executing the Grant Agreement.

Where mandatory certifications and insurances are required for the initiative (for example Working with Children Blue card or insurances) applicants must provide details prior to signing the Grant Agreement or the initiative will be deemed as ineligible for funding.

## 9. Application process

Funding under the Healthy and Thriving Community Grants program is awarded through a competitive application and assessment process, and grants are awarded based on merit, assessment score and a final review process.

Applications are only accepted via an online application form on the Unitywater grants hub at [www.unitywater.granttoolbox.com.au](http://www.unitywater.granttoolbox.com.au). Applications will not be accepted in person, by email, post, fax, or once the closing date for applications has passed.

The online application form must be completed by a person authorised to submit the application on behalf of the organisation. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Once the application is submitted, the applicant will receive an email notification confirming its receipt. If the applicant does not receive this notification, please contact Unitywater via email at [grants@unitywater.com](mailto:grants@unitywater.com) to confirm that the application form has been submitted correctly.

Applicants may receive a request from Unitywater for more information regarding the application. You have five (5) business days from the date of request to provide this information for your application to be eligible and complete. If you fail to provide all the necessary information, your application will be ineligible.

## 10. Number of applications

Organisations can make only one grant application in each financial year.

Successful applicants that receive a grant can make applications in future years, but there is no guarantee of repeat funding under the Healthy and Thriving Community Grant program.

## 11. Documentation

Where necessary, you may be required to provide a copy of the following documents with your application, as they apply to your Initiative:

- evidence of incorporation or registration for your organisation
- current certificate of Public Liability Insurance or other insurance

- any relevant compliance policies or procedures for your organisation e.g. Workplace Health and Safety, Working with Children, etc
- budget and detailed expenditure for your Initiative
- quotes for any items or expenditure over \$2000
- project plans and timelines for your Initiative
- risk management and safety plans for your Initiative
- letter of support from MPs, councillors, government agencies or community groups.

## 12. Assessment process and criteria

- Once an application is deemed eligible, it is scored by members of the Community Grants Selection Committee against the Assessment Criteria outlined below.
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider this Assessment Criteria and the weighting applied to each criterion.
- Meeting all the Assessment Criteria does not automatically guarantee grant funding.
- Applications with the highest **Total Score (see below)** will be shortlisted and reviewed by the Community Grants Steering Committee to determine the final successful grant recipients.
- All applicants will be notified by email of the assessment decision.
- Unitywater reserves the right to award grants at its sole discretion.

**See the Assessment Criteria and Scoring Calculation on the following pages:**

Assessment Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
<b>Relevance</b> The extent to which the Initiative's objectives and design respond to identified needs and priorities.		<b>20%</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative is closely aligned with AT LEAST ONE of the grant categories (strategic priorities)	/50	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative is well-defined and easy to understand	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence or research that the Initiative responds to an identified need or gap (e.g. research)	/10	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence of wider community or stakeholder support (e.g. testimonials, letters of support, etc)	/10	
<b>Score out of 100</b>	/100	
<b>Effectiveness</b> The extent to which the Initiative is expected to achieve its goal/objectives and its results.		<b>20%</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goals are well defined, measurable and achievable	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approach is well designed to meet the desired goals/objectives e.g. it is realistic, well thought out, has a documented project plan	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff have skills and experience to deliver the Initiative	/20	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organisation has experience delivering similar Initiatives	/10	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organisation has other tools and resources (in addition to funding) necessary to successfully deliver the Initiative.	/10	
<b>Score out of 100</b>	/100	
<b>Impact</b> The extent to which the Initiative is expected to generate significant impact/benefits and higher-level effects.		<b>40%</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impacts have depth – benefits make a real, positive difference or have deep impact on people's lives / on the environment	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impacts have breadth – benefits reach a large number of people/communities/environments	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative will foster relationships, connections and/ or collaboration with other groups or organisations	/20	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative/benefits cover more than one council area	/10	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organisation has channels and opportunities to promote the Initiative and Unitywater's support	/10	
<b>Score out of 100</b>	/100	
<b>Efficiency</b> The extent to which the Initiative is likely to deliver results in an economic and timely way.		<b>10%</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a well-developed, realistic budget and resources to meet project needs	/30	

Assessment Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has realistic delivery timelines	/30	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has demonstrated environmentally responsible delivery or practices	/20	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a documented project plan	/10	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a documented risk and safety plan	/10	
<b>Score out of 100</b>	/100	
<b>Sustainability</b> The extent to which the benefits of the Initiative will continue or are likely to continue.		<b>10%</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence that the Initiative and/or benefits will continue once the funding period has ended	/40	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence of future funding and resourcing plans	/25	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence of long-term community connections and relationships	/25	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Builds on or enhances an existing, successful program that has been operating for some time	/10	
<b>Score out of 100</b>	/100	

## Scoring Calculation

**Weighted Scores** for each criterion = **Score out of 100** multiplied by **Weighting %** divided by 100 (see example below). Weighted Scores are then added together to give the **Total Score**.

Criteria	Score out of 100 (example)	Weighting %	Weighted scores (example)
Relevance	60	20	12
Effectiveness	80	20	16
Impact	80	40	32
Efficiency	40	10	4
Sustainability	20	10	2
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>= 100%</b>	<b>66</b>

## 13. Notification process

All applicants will be notified by email as their application progresses through the stages of eligibility, assessment and final decline/approval.

Successful applicants will receive a final email notification confirming their approved funding amount and their Grant Agreement document, which they must review and sign to complete the funding approval process.

## 14. Conflict of interest process

During the assessment process, members of the Community Grants Selection Committee and the Community Grants Steering Committee are required to declare if they have any conflict of interest before scoring, reviewing or approving each initiative's grant application.

If a conflict of interest is declared for a particular initiative, the committee member is required to remove themselves from the assessment process for that application.

Conflicts of interest are defined and managed in accordance with Unitywater's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

## 15. Grant agreements

The payment of approved funding is subject to both parties executing a Grant Agreement. Grant Agreements must be signed by an authorised representative of the organisation and returned to Unitywater via DocuSign.

Grant Agreements outline the detailed terms and conditions of the funding, including but not limited to:

- agreed outcomes and performance measures for the Initiative
- conditions of funding
- grant payment terms
- reporting and acquittal requirements
- acknowledgement and promotional requirements.

## 16. Grants payments

### 16.1 Payment process

To receive funds, successful applicants must send their signed Grant Agreement and an invoice for the full amount of the grant to Unitywater by the required date.

Payments of the full grant amount will be made into the applicant's nominated bank account within 30 days of receiving the grant recipient's valid tax invoice.

Grant recipients are required to upload a receipt of acknowledgement within ten (10) business days of receiving the funds in their nominated bank account.

All grant funds must be spent within the specified timeframe (usually within 12 months) and only for the purposes outlined in the Grant Agreement. Unitywater reserves the right to request evidence at any time of where the funds have been spent. Any unspent funds must be returned to Unitywater upon request.

Variations to the Grant Agreement within the specified grant amount may be accepted but must be discussed and agreed with Unitywater prior to any grant expenditure taking place. No additional funding will be given outside the specified amount in the Grant Agreement.

### 16.2 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Applicants do not need to be registered for GST.

#### 16.2.1 Requested funding amount in application:

All applicants are required to enter GST exclusive amounts in the grant application.

If the applicant **IS REGISTERED for GST**, the funding will be provided GST exclusive. GST registered applicants can claim an input tax credit through the Australian Tax Office for the GST component.

If the applicant **IS NOT REGISTERED for GST**, the funding will be provided GST inclusive.

Applicants must notify Unitywater if their GST registration status changes.

### **16.2.2 Receipt of grant:**

For organisations that are registered for GST, the grant received may be subject to GST based on the nature of the services or goods provided by the grant recipient if return for the payment (if any). An additional 10% GST will be added to the approved funding amount, payable upon receipt of a tax invoice from the organisation should there be a taxable supply.

The applicant is advised to seek independent professional advice on taxation obligations or seek assistance from the ATO on 13 28 69 or via its website at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

Unitywater is unable to provide advice on the applicant's particular taxation circumstances.

## **17. Acquittals, reporting and evaluation**

All funded Initiatives will be monitored and evaluated by Unitywater to ensure our grant program is meeting its objectives.

Grant recipients will be required to submit progress and acquittal reports, as specified in their Grant Agreements.

Acquittal is the process where the grant recipient shows how they have spent their allocated funds. Grant recipients must submit an online acquittal, including proof of expenditure, within four weeks of project completion.

**Grant recipients will be required to return funds if they do not submit a satisfactory acquittal.**

Organisations will not be considered for further grant funding from Unitywater if previous grant acquittal conditions have not been met.

## **18. Acknowledgement, promotion and media**

Grant recipients must agree to publicly acknowledge and actively promote Unitywater's support of their Initiative. The level of acknowledgement required will be outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Grant recipients are also required to give Unitywater permission to publish and promote information about the Initiative and Unitywater's funding support in Unitywater activities and communication channels, including but not limited to website, social media, media releases and events.

Unitywater's logo and Brand Guide will be emailed to successful grant recipients.

Grant recipients are required to send all promotional material and media releases about their Initiative and Unitywater's support to Unitywater for review and approval before release or publication.

In addition, grant recipients must also ensure that Unitywater's positive reputation is maintained at all times.

## 19. Support

If you have any questions or need more help, please contact the Unitywater Grants Team via email at [grants@unitywater.com](mailto:grants@unitywater.com).

Information about the Healthy and Thriving Community Grants program can be found at [www.unitywater.com/grants](http://www.unitywater.com/grants).

## 20. Privacy

Unitywater understands that how we collect, use, exchange and protect your information is important to you, and we value your trust.

Our [Privacy Policy](#) outlines how we manage your information, in accordance with both the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Principles.

In submitting a grant application, you agree to Unitywater collecting your personal information, including your name, contact details and role in your organisation, to assess your application and for the purpose of grants administration. If you do not provide this information, we cannot assess your grant application.