

Helping local government
build stronger communities.



Grant Guidelines 2026-27

Local Government Research and Development Scheme

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About these guidelines

These guidelines assist potential applicants for the Local Government Research and Development Scheme (LGR&DS) grants regarding eligibility and in preparing grant applications.

Before commencing an application, you must read:

- These grant guidelines,
- The [LGR&DS 2026-27 Annual Business Plan](#)
- Any relevant information available through the [LGA website](#)

Contact Us

For any queries, please contact the LGR&DS Grants Coordinator:

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Key Dates 2026-2027

Stage 1 Expression of Interest (EOI)	
Expression of Interest (EOI) Open	5 August 2026 - 9am
Online Information Sessions	10 August 2026 - 12 pm
Potential applicants are encouraged to register	13 August 2026 - 12 pm
	17 August 2026 - 12 pm
Expression of Interest (EOI) Close	8 September 2026 - 4pm
EOI's reviewed and shortlisted by LGR&DS Advisory Committee	Late September 2026
EOI Outcomes shared with applicants	Early October 2026
Stage 2 – Invited Applications	
Invited Applications Open	Mid October 2026
Invited Applications Close	Mid November 2026
Applications reviewed and evaluated by LGR&DS Advisory Committee	December 2026
LGA Board approval of applications for funding	January 2027 (date to be confirmed)
Funding announcement	January 2027 (date to be confirmed)
Successful project commencement date	1 February 2027 (date to be confirmed)

2026-27 Grant Funding Round

LGR&DS invites innovative ideas and solutions addressing sector-wide issues for the benefit of SA councils and their communities.

Projects must:

- Align with one or more of the 2026-27 Strategic Research Priorities below, and be aligned with [LGA's Strategic Plan \(PDF 5.0 MB\)](#).
- Deliver a demonstratable and ongoing benefit to the local government sector.
- Demonstrate meaningful engagement and collaboration with the local government sector, emphasising the value of collective effort.

Applications Process

The 2026-27 Grant Funding Round will be assessed through a two-stage process:

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

Applicants will be invited to submit an expression of interest which will be shortlisted based on:

1. Engagement with the Local Government Sector
2. Alignment with the 2026- 27 Strategic Research Priorities
3. Ongoing and implementable benefit to the sector

Stage 2 – Invited Applications

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit full applications which will be scored based on:

1. Engagement with the Local Government Sector
2. Alignment with the 2026- 27 Strategic Research Priorities
3. Project outcomes and ongoing/implementable benefit to the sector
4. Project Evaluation
5. Value for Money

Strategic Research Priorities

The 2026-27 strategic research priorities are outlined below. Applicants should review the 2026-27 Annual Business Plan to ensure their proposed project aligns with the priorities and the [LGA Strategic Plan](#).

Financial Sustainability of South Australian Councils

Innovative solutions and collaborative ideas to improve service efficiency, strengthen the delivery of council services, and develop the capacity and capability of council resources for the benefit of South Australian communities.

Strengthening the Capacity of Councils

Innovative solutions and practical ideas to strengthen governance, capability, leadership and transparency across councils, and improve community confidence and engagement.

Data and Knowledge Pooling and Insight

Innovative ideas to leverage sector knowledge, expertise, data and artificial intelligence to inform strategy, action and direction across a range of sector-wide issues.

Available funding

Approximately \$1.4 million in funding is available for this grant round.

No fixed minimum or maximum amount of funding that can be allocated to each project, nor is there a minimum or maximum number of projects that can/will be funded. Funding allocations will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Co-funding requirements

Co-funding and in-kind funding are not compulsory, but are strongly encouraged.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

The funding round is open to South Australian councils and organisations interested in collaborating with local government in South Australia.

All applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- The financial viability of their organisation.
- Minimum insurance coverage.
- That all reporting requirements have been met from previous projects funded through the Scheme.

Project elements not eligible for funding

The Scheme does not provide funding for:

- Incentives, prizes and sponsorship.
- The purchase of capital equipment.
- Administrative or corporate overhead costs not directly attributable to the project.
- Alcohol and entertainment at project-related events.
- Training (*refer LGR&DS Eligibility Policy 3.2.3.5*).
- Income generation (*refer LGR&DS Eligibility Policy 3.2.4*).

Budget Requirements

Applicants will be required to provide a project budget, including the project stages and costs for each component, excluding GST. GST will apply to projects funded by the Scheme.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Applicants are encouraged to include a Cost-Benefit Analysis that demonstrates the project's monetary value. This is **compulsory** for projects valued at more than \$100,000.

Assessment Process

LGR&DS aims to fund innovative projects that benefit South Australian councils and support them to achieve more for their communities. All applicants must read the 2026-27 Annual Business Plan to ensure that their proposed project is strategically aligned with the LGR&DS Annual Priorities and the LGA Strategic Plan.

In 2026-27, the LGR&DS competitive grants will be assessed through a two-stage process.

Stage 1 - Expression of Interest (EOI)

Eligible applicants will be invited to submit an EOI between **5 August and 8 September 2026**, with shortlisting to be undertaken by the LGR&DS Advisory Committee in late September 2026.

EOIs will be shortlisted against the eligibility criteria set out below:

Criteria
1. Engagement with the Local Government Sector <i>The EOI should identify how local government stakeholders have been engaged in developing the proposal and how they will remain engaged throughout the project.</i>
2. Alignment to Annual Strategic Research Priorities <i>EOI applications should link with one or more of the following 2026/27 Strategic Research Priorities, and with the LGA Strategic Plan:</i> • Financial Sustainability of South Australian Councils • Strengthening the Capacity of Councils • Data and Knowledge Pooling and Insight <i>Proposed projects should address an issue of significant importance to local government and not duplicate existing research or resources.</i>

3. Benefit to Local Government

The likely value, practicality, and transferability of the proposed outcomes for councils and the broader local government sector.

Stage 2 – Invited Applications

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit their application between **mid-October and mid-November** (specific dates to be confirmed), with assessment to be undertaken by the LGR&DS Advisory Committee in late December 2026.

A funding decision for successful applications is anticipated from the LGA Board in January 2027.

The application process will enable the applicant to provide additional information that builds on the EOI. This application will constitute a formal request for funding.

Applications for funding will be assessed against the assessment criteria below.

Further details regarding the scoring matrix will be made available to shortlisted applications in October.

Assessment Criteria
1. Engagement with the Local Government Sector <i>How well does the application demonstrate local government's role in developing the project and its ongoing participation in delivery?</i> <i>How will the project outcomes be shared with, used by and to the benefit of the local government sector?</i>
2. Alignment with Strategic Priorities Research Priorities <i>To what extent does the application address the 2026-27 strategic research priorities?</i> • Financial Sustainability of South Australian Councils • Strengthening the Capacity of Councils • Data and Knowledge Pooling and Insight <i>To what extent does the project address an issue of strategic significance to the Local Government Sector?</i>
3. Project Outcomes <i>How well does the application describe the expected project outcomes and the benefit of those outcomes to the sector?</i> <i>How well is the outcome linked to the agreed purposes of the scheme?</i> <i>Does the application demonstrate a clear link between Milestones/Activities and proposed outcomes?</i>

Has the applicant accounted for the input that will be required to undertake the proposed work, and shown a good understanding of project delivery?

4. Project Evaluation

How the benefits and outcomes of the project will be measured, including:

- *The impact of project outcomes for the sector*
- *Effectiveness of the actions undertaken to achieve the outcomes*
- *The benefit to the local government sector*
- *The ability of the project to deliver ongoing outcomes and benefits for the sector.*

5. Value for Money

- *Is the project budget realistic and does it provide value for local government?*
- *Does the project include a cost-benefit analysis providing benefit for the sector?*
- *To what extent does the project application include co-funding and in-kind contributions?*
- *Does the project application and planning consider potential risks and identify a practical risk management approaches to maximise the use of grant funding?*

How to apply

Funding applications must be submitted thorough the [LGR&DS Online Grant Portal](#).

Submitted applications will receive a receipt acknowledgement via email.

Funding Conditions

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email following the assessment process.

Successful application will receive a grant funding agreement. The agreement will include requirements concerning:

1. Project details
2. Funds management requirements
3. Reporting requirements
4. Ownership and intellectual property requirements
5. Acknowledgement of support and project promotion requirements.
6. Insurance requirements
7. A payment and reporting schedule
8. Any conditions imposed by the LGR&DS Advisory Committee or the LGA Board of Directors.

An authorised officer of the successful grant recipient must sign and return the funding agreement to formalise the application and be eligible to receive the funding.

Projects must be completed in line with the requirements of the grant agreement; unspent grant funds must be returned to LGA South Australia.

LGA Research Library

All project details, outcomes, and final reports will be publicly available through the [LGA Research Library](#).

Reporting Requirements

All successful applications must submit a written report on the progress of their projects every 6 months and a final report upon completion of the project.

LGA South Australia may request additional reports if required.

Failure to adhere to the reporting requirements may result in the project funding being withheld or withdrawn. If this is the case, all funding must be returned to the Scheme.

Final Report and Evaluation

At the completion of the project the recipient must provide the Scheme with a Final Report, via the template available through smarty grants. The final report must include:

- A summary of the:
 - Impact of the project outcomes
 - Effectiveness of the actions undertaken to achieve the project outcomes
 - Benefits to the local government sector and how this has been communicated and how they can be realised by others in the sector
 - The ability of this project to deliver ongoing outcomes and benefits to the sector.
- A detailed financial statement of how the Scheme's funds were used in accordance with the agreement.
- An electronic and unrestricted copy of final publications
- Any additional evaluation requirements as described in the Assessment Criteria.

Further information

Further information can be found on the LGA - Local Government Research and Development Scheme [website](#)

Appendix 1 – LGR&DS Logic

Goal								
Ongoing development of local government so that								
- Councils achieve more for their communities								
- Councils are equipped for the future								
Outcomes ¹	Collaboration across the local government sector	Councils have knowledge and capacity to improve services	Councils deliver more with less	Councils are thought leaders and ready for the future	Communities understand the role and value of local government	A clear return on investment from research and development		
Outputs	Wide research dissemination across the local government sector Communities of practice New or strengthened partnerships Co-delivery of projects by multiple councils and their partners	Resources and guidance on initiating, delivering, improving, reviewing, commercialising, or closing of council services Strong alignment of council services with community aspirations and legislation Performance measurement and reporting tools	Evidence base to identify new efficiencies Reduction in the duplication of effort Leverage government investment in programs/projects	Evidence base for local government improvement Research and analysis that generates new ideas and strategic insights Partnerships and networks that generate new thinking	Resources and guidance on improving community engagement, transparency, and accountability Collateral and campaigns that measure and communicate the role and value of local government	Measurement of the impact and effectiveness of the Scheme		
Activities	• Research and case studies • Resources, tools and templates • Partnerships and networks • Training Implementation support • Mentoring and guidance • Marketing the Scheme							
Foundations	Principle of the Scheme: <i>The grant must be applied for local government development purposes, and the funding must be used strategically for the benefit of Local Government as a whole.</i>	MOU between Treasurer and LGA President	Funding from the Local Government Tax Equivalent Fund in accordance with the Local Government Finance Authority Act	Oversight by Scheme's Advisory Group and LGA Board of Directors	Smart Grants Grant Management System	Grant administration by LGA staff	Scheme Policies and Procedures that address: - Eligibility - Application process - Shortlisting and selection - Project delivery - Use of grant funds - Project duration - Promotion of the scheme.	LGA Website, including R&D Library

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