



## Aged Care Capital Assistance Program, Residential-based Aged Care Services Grant Opportunity (GO6989)

### General feedback for applicants

This is a summary of common reasons applicants in this grant opportunity were not successful. It also provides information on areas where less competitive applications could have been strengthened.

The Aged Care Capital Assistance Program (ACCAP) is an ongoing program with multiple grant opportunities. For each new grant opportunity, applicants are reminded to **confirm eligibility requirements** set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines noting the focus for grant activities, locations and expenditure may change. This will help applicants to ensure the proposed activity/expenditure is eligible.

### Significant competition for funding

This was a highly competitive grant opportunity, with demand far exceeding the available funding. In total, **397** applications sought over **\$1.7 billion** (GST exclusive) for the \$200 million initially made available.

### Ineligible and non-compliant applications

For this grant opportunity, all applications were assessed in accordance with the ACCAP Residential-based Aged Care Services Grant Opportunity Guidelines GO6989 (the Guidelines). Applications were not considered further if they did not meet the eligibility criteria.

Some examples of applications that did not meet the eligibility criteria were:

- Aged care providers located in a metropolitan area (MM1) that sought funding for activities that did not specifically target care to First Nations peoples.
- Corporate State or Territory Entities that did not provide a cash contribution of at least 50% of the total activity cost.
- Multi-Purpose Services (MPS) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) services that sought funding for activities to build new services or expand existing services that would require the allocation of additional flexible care places.
- Applicants that were not an approved aged care provider under the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018*.

- Applicants that sought funding for activities that were ineligible under this grant opportunity e.g. staff accommodation.

### Eligible applications

Where the eligibility criteria were met, applications were assessed based on the response to assessment criteria, including value with relevant money considerations (Section 8, the Guidelines).

A score out of five was applied to each of the three assessment criteria. A total of 15 was the highest score any application could receive. Only applications that scored a combined total of 9 (or higher) were considered for funding in the first instance.

Along with an application's score and assessment against the criteria, the Assessment Committee had regard to a range of other information to inform their decision. This information included but was not limited to:

- intelligence on supply gaps and urgency for funding
- financial and other risk indicators (e.g. existing grant funding, quarterly financial reporting, compliance and Star ratings data)
- the level of expected benefits the activity would deliver relative to the grant sought.

The highly competitive nature of this round meant that, in many cases, otherwise suitable applications could not be supported within the available funding.

### Areas where unsuccessful applications could have been strengthened

Overall

#### *Making use of selection criteria character/word allocation*

Each of the selection criteria allowed for 5,000 characters (or approximately 750 words) for the applicant to describe their response. The character allowance should be viewed as a guide to the amount of information an applicant would need to provide to thoroughly respond to the selection criteria. For some applicants, a higher score may have been achieved had they thoroughly addressed the criteria.

Building on the above, each of the selection criteria included prompts or sub-criteria that applicants were asked to clearly describe. For some applicants, a higher score may have been achieved had they directly and/or more clearly addressed each of these sub-criteria.

#### *Information provided in attachments but not in selection criteria response*

Applications are assessed and scored based on the information provided in selection criteria response. Assessments are supported by reviewing the mandatory attachments (e.g. Activity Work Plan, Indicative Budget, Risk Management Plan, photos, and other documents specified in Section 7.1, the Guidelines), and additional attachments. The purpose of attachments is to provide an evidence base in support of the application.

It was noted that some applicants pointed to availability of information in mandatory and additional attachments however did not bring this information into their selection criteria response. For some applicants, essential information that supported, or outlined their primary claims was not included in their criteria response on the application form, which subsequently impacted on the scoring of the response.

## Criterion Feedback

### Criterion 1 – Demonstrated Need

This criterion asked applicants to describe the demonstrated need for the funding, taking into account the intended objectives and outcomes of the program, with reference to information requested in 8 sub-criteria (Section 6, the Guidelines).

**Table 1: Criteria 1 - Higher scoring applications**

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
Clearly outlined the proposed activity and what it will deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the existing infrastructure</li> <li>described the new activity, including what works will be undertaken and what will be delivered</li> <li>the difference it will make and benefit to residents/staff/the community</li> <li>the urgency to undertake the activity including any difficulties if the activity did not proceed</li> <li>provided strong evidence to support and substantiate statements such as photos of the repairs/maintenance/upgrade.</li> </ul>
Clearly described the current impact of the existing infrastructure on residents and/or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly outlining the specific impact on resident amenity, privacy, safety, security and quality of care, as well as staffing, viability and/or the broader community</li> <li>clearly describing how the current infrastructure contributed to or caused these issues.</li> </ul>
Clearly detailed the aged care demographic of the area and considered the existing capacity to meet current and project needs for residential aged care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data that showed the proportion of older people in the area, length of hospital stays, and local demographic projections</li> <li>the existing capacity in the area (including the capacity of nearby aged care providers), and current waitlist numbers</li> <li>any market failure in the provision of aged care services in the area.</li> </ul>

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
Clearly referenced how the activity aligned with the <a href="#">National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines</a> , and described the benefits for older Australians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where applicable, linked the activity to the Design Principles and Guidelines and described the benefits.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Criteria 1 – Lower scoring applications**

Lower scoring applications	Commonly did not do two or more of the following
Lower scoring applications typically did not tell a consistent and connected story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly articulate the activity and what will be delivered (project scope)</li> <li>describe the benefit of the activity for residents/staff/the community</li> <li>provide information about the urgency to undertake the activity and impact if the activity did not proceed</li> <li>provide adequate demographic data (including sometimes providing no data)</li> <li>where applicable, aligning the activity with the <a href="#">National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines</a></li> <li>provide adequate photographic evidence that supported the repair/maintenance/upgrade required.</li> </ul>

#### Criterion 2 – Management of the Activity

This criterion asked applicants to describe their capacity and capability to deliver the proposed activities, with reference to information requested in 4 dot points (Section 6, the Guidelines).

**Table 3: Criteria 2 – Higher scoring applications**

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
Clearly described the skills and experience of the person/s in the organisation and/or external project manager with responsibility for the successful completion of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying the specific person/s, whether in-house or an external project manager, describing their skills and experience, and relevant examples of work experience and projects previously delivered particularly for the aged care sector</li> </ul>

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the criterion response aligned with the Project Manager/Person Responsible for Delivery identified in the Activity Work Plan.</li> </ul>
Clearly outlined how the activity would be completed in both a timely and cost-effective manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project governance and reporting structure</li> <li>the project stages with a level of detail commensurate with the activity being undertaken</li> <li>cost-effectiveness and timeliness considerations, e.g. leveraging bulk-purchasing to achieve a lower unit price, use of local contractors with capacity to deliver and proven experience, activity to occur in conjunction with other works to achieve timing and cost efficiencies.</li> </ul>
Clearly described the impact of the activity on care recipients and care delivery and how the impacts would be managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the impact, or potential impact, that the activity would have on care recipients</li> <li>the steps that would be taken to manage these impacts</li> <li>any health and safety risks for care recipients and mitigation strategies were included in the Risk Management Plan.</li> </ul>
Provided a clear response to First Nations sub-criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the governance structure that supported their ability to care for First Nations people e.g. First Nations representatives on governing boards, staff that identified as First Nations</li> <li>the type and frequency of staff training to support cultural awareness and safety</li> <li>clearly identified and described partnerships and engagement with local First Nations communities.</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Criteria 2 – Lower scoring applications**

Lower scoring applications	Some key issues were
Lower scoring applications typically provided generalised and non-specific responses with little evidence to support statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>many applicants did not identify the specific person/s, whether in-house or an external project manager, with responsibility for the successful completion of the activity, including describing their skills and experience, and providing relevant examples of work experience</li> </ul>

Lower scoring applications	Some key issues were
	<p>and projects previously delivered in the aged care sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sometimes the responsible person was only identified in the Activity Work Plan without supporting information as required in the criterion response</li> <li>○ sometimes the responsible person identified in the Activity Work Plan was not the same as the person identified in the criterion response</li> <li>○ some applicants included the CVs of their organisational management team as an attachment but did not identify these individuals, or their roles/responsibilities in relation to the successful completion of the activity, in the criterion response</li> <li>● providing high level claims about the applicant's commitment to complete the activity in a timely and cost-effective manner with no evidence or information about how this would be achieved</li> <li>● many applicants did not provide sufficient information (and sometimes provided no information) to provide confidence that the impacts on care recipients and care delivery would be adequately managed</li> <li>● some applicants that selected their project was specifically targeting care for First Nations people did not provide sufficient information (and sometimes provided no information) in support of First Nations sub-criteria.</li> </ul>

Assessment Criterion 3- Efficient, effective, economical, ethical

This criterion asked applicants to demonstrate how the activity was a good use of grant funds, with reference to information requested in 6 dot points (Section 6, the Guidelines).

**Table 5: Criteria 3 – Higher scoring applications**

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
Clearly outlined why the applicant was unable to fund the activity and the likelihood of the activity proceeding without the grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● specific reference to the financial position of the aged care service which aligned to the quarterly reporting data as provided to the department.</li> </ul>

Higher scoring applications	Response addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the likelihood and extent to which the activity could proceed without the grant in the short term.</li> </ul>
Clearly described how the activity aligned with the 'value with relevant money' principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of the proposed activity, its fitness for purpose in meeting the grant objectives, the impact of the absence of the grant and the applicant's performance history (that previous projects were value for money with good long-term outcomes).</li> </ul>
Clearly outlined how the grant activity will benefit the service and improve the quality of aged care being delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the benefit of the activity with specific reference to improving the quality of aged care delivered at the facility.</li> </ul>
Clearly justified how the costings were derived and outlined whether all required approvals were in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing details and evidence of how project costings were derived, e.g. quotes, cost estimates or workings (where a quote was not available) and this information was consistent with the Budget expenditure</li> <li>providing details of whether all required approvals are in place, applied for, or when they are expected to be received, ensuring these are consistent with the Activity Work Plan.</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Criteria 3 – Lower scoring application**

Lower scoring applications	Some key issues were
Lower scoring applications typically provided inadequate information to demonstrate that the grant would represent value with relevant money and a good use of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some applicants provided information about the financial pressures on the aged care sector more broadly rather than the financial position of their aged care service</li> <li>claims the applicant was unable to fund the activity with inadequate information to justify this claim</li> <li>providing inadequate information about the likelihood of the activity proceeding without the grant funds</li> <li>providing high level claims that the activity aligned with 'value with relevant money principles' with inadequate information or evidence to demonstrate how this would be achieved</li> </ul>

Lower scoring applications	Some key issues were
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the benefit of the grant activity focused on the benefit to the service generally and did not reference any improvement in the quality of aged care being delivered</li> <li>• some applicants did not provide sufficient information, and evidence e.g. quotes and/or project costings to substantiate the funding requested</li> <li>• providing a general reference 'to obtaining relevant approvals where required' that did not provide confidence there was a process in place to obtain approvals.</li> </ul>

### Attachments

The attachments that supported the response to the criterion were the Activity Work Plan, Indicative Budget, Risk Management Plan and a written letter of support from the organisation's decision makers for the proposed activity. Some additional feedback is provided in relation to these documents.

**Table 7: Attachments Feedback**

Attachments	Common issues identified
Activity Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliverables were not tailored to and specific to the activity to be delivered</li> <li>• timeframe for deliverables used was number of months rather than dates e.g. 3 months rather than March 2025 to May 2025, making the timeline to deliver the activity unclear</li> <li>• the 'Expected number of months to completion' did not align with Project/Activity Start Date and Project/Activity Completion Date provided in the grant application</li> <li>• the Budget expenditure was not aligned with the activity milestones/deliverables in the Activity Work Plan.</li> </ul>
Indicative Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grouping together multiple expenses in one expenditure item, making it difficult to determine how the item amount was tallied</li> <li>• budget template was not tailored to the activity and retained sample text (in red)</li> <li>• missing or incomplete income and expenditure items</li> </ul>



Attachments	Common issues identified
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget income and expenditure sections did not tally</li> <li>• Budget expenditure did not align with the deliverables in the Activity Work Plan</li> <li>• inclusion of items that were ineligible for grant funding e.g. travel costs for organisational staff, retrospective costs, in-kind expenditure.</li> </ul>
Risk Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the risks identified were not adequate and/or commensurate to the size and type of activity being undertaken.</li> </ul>
Letter of Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some letters of support did not include the required information, specifically details of the activity and/or the need for the activity.</li> </ul>