

Northern Areas Community Infrastructure Program – Guidelines

8 September 2026

Introduction

The Northern Areas Community Infrastructure Program has been established to support the town of Laura and broader Laura community following the relocation of Golden North. The program is designed to fund projects that contribute to the future economic growth of the region or upgrade key community facilities to improve amenities and attract new residents, visitors and business to the town.

Under the program, the State Government will provide one or more grants to the Northern Areas Council (Council) to deliver community infrastructure projects approved by the Treasurer.

The Treasurer will consult with the Council on priority projects and Council may consider contributing to the project to leverage the investment and deliver the project. The total State Government contribution to the program is up to \$1,000,000 (GST exclusive).

Grant payments will only be made to Council in line with key project milestones (unless otherwise agreed by the Treasurer), and in accordance with a grant deed prepared by the Crown Solicitor's Office.

The program will be administered by the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA) on behalf of the Treasurer.

Eligibility

Only Council is eligible to apply for support from the program.

To be eligible for funding:

- Proposed infrastructure projects must:
 - support the social and economic development of the town of Laura and the broader Laura community; and/or
 - contribute to the future economic growth of the region or upgrade key community facilities to improve amenities and attract new residents and business to the town.
- Eligible infrastructure projects may include but are not limited to, construction or major renewal, replacement or upgrades to community facilities (including the ability to design and construct), tourism facilities, arts and cultural facilities, community centres, early childhood and family support facilities, education facilities, health facilities, or sport and recreation infrastructure.
- Eligible projects can include contributions from third parties including from other State Government programs, Commonwealth Government and local business or community groups.
- Projects must be able to commence (i.e. be shovel ready, with planning and design substantially complete) within six months of the Treasurer's approval and be delivered within a three year timeframe. Preference will be given to projects that can be completed within two years.

- The minimum grant per project is \$50,000 (GST exclusive). No grant agreement will be entered into for amounts less than the minimum. While there is no maximum grant amount per project (up to the \$1 million total funding available under the program), the Treasurer may decline a project or request a change in scope to improve the likelihood of the project outcomes being achieved within a reasonable timeframe and maximise the impact/outcomes of or benefits from the program.

Ineligible projects

The following types of infrastructure projects will not be eligible for program support:

- Proposed infrastructure projects already included in Council's existing budgets.
- Projects that have commenced (including those that have been completed) before approval.
- Projects that are for routine asset maintenance.
- Projects, or parts of projects, relating to Council administrative premises. Projects that include both community facilities as well as Council administrative premises will only be eligible for that part that relates to the community facilities.
- Projects which largely result in commercial profits to private parties.
- Private projects where the private party seeks to invest an amount less than 50% of the overall project cost
- Regular or ongoing events/activities normally funded through other sources.
- Operational expenditure, including wages and utilities.
- Purchase of an operating business.
- Projects that require ongoing recurrent State Government funding.

Assessment and approval

Council will identify, evaluate and assess projects, and make recommendations to the Treasurer for funding from the program. Council will establish a process with the Laura Futures Reference Group to assist in evaluating project ideas identified by the community.

All projects proposed to receive funding must be submitted by Council to the Treasurer for approval prior to commencement, with submissions to include project details, costings, outcomes, funding plans, and timeframes for delivery. Council will be required to demonstrate that appropriate stakeholder and/or community consultation relevant to the project has been undertaken.

SAFA will assess recommendations against the eligibility criteria in consultation with Council. Final decisions as to which projects will be supported through the program will be made by the Treasurer.

Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis only, for eligible expenditure incurred and paid on approved projects within the eligibility period (which will be stipulated in the funding agreement). No portion of the \$1 million will be paid upfront to Council, unless otherwise approved by the Treasurer. Reimbursement will be limited to the approved funding amount for each project.

Eligible project expenditure does not include any amount:

- for which the Council/grantee is entitled to claim reimbursement or funding from the Government of South Australia, Government of Australia or other third party

contributions (e.g. sporting or community clubs) pursuant to an agreement other than under this program;

- incurred prior to the eligibility period;
- incurred in relation to the purchase of vacant land, or an operating business(s);
- incurred in respect of ongoing wages and salaries, recruitment, training, mentoring and procurement fees, rent or other property costs, grant applications and administration costs;
- that are non-cash expenses according to generally accepted accounting principles such as depreciation, amortisation or opportunity costs;
- in respect of feasibility studies, project masterplans or business cases;
- in respect of marketing activities including websites, traditional and digital marketing, subscriptions or contract fees to third party marketing distributors and channel management providers; and
- any other amounts that the Treasurer determines are the usual or direct requirement of local government.

In all cases, the Council will be expected to find alternative sources of funding to cover project expenditure not covered by the grant. Council may agree to contribute to a proposed project. Grant payments will only be made to Council on completion of project milestones. Council will be responsible for the delivery of all approved projects unless otherwise agreed with the Treasurer (e.g. the Laura Community Development and Tourism Association may be involved in supporting delivery of the project).

Individual grant deeds (or other appropriate legal instruments) are to be negotiated with SAFA, in consultation with the Crown Solicitor's Office in respect of each approved project. Agreements will be subject to standard terms and conditions, including that appropriate insurances are held and required consents, approvals and authorisations are in place prior to project commencement.

Further Information

Council can contact SAFA via safaindustryassistance@sa.gov.au in relation to ensuring that applications for funding meet these guidelines.

SAFA reserves the right to amend these guidelines as required, following consultation with Council.

Council should be aware that SAFA is subject to certain legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the Australian Government and Government of South Australia, including public disclosure in accordance with Premier and Cabinet policy.

SAFA will treat all information provided by Council sensitively. Any information contained in, or relating to, an application, including information identified by Council as confidential, may be disclosed by SAFA:

- to its employees, advisers or third-parties in order to assess and process an application;
- within the Government of South Australia or other entities where this serves the legitimate interest of SAFA;

- in response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia;
- where information is authorised or permitted by law to be disclosed; and/or
- where the information is already in the public domain.

These guidelines are a DRAFT provided only for the purposes of furthering negotiations between the parties. The State will not be legally bound unless and until an agreement is executed by the parties and any actions taken in anticipation of such formal execution is at the risk of the person taking them.

DRAFT