

AusNet

Energy Resilience Community Fund

Grants information session

Thursday 10 July 2025

6.00-7.00pm





Acknowledgement of Country

AusNet acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay respects to Elders past and present and celebrate their continuing connection to Country.

Housekeeping

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Have a question?

- Please **type your question** in the **chat** or use the "Raise Hand" 🙋 feature
- For detailed or follow-up questions, **contact us after the session**

Mute, please

- Stay on **mute** unless you're asking a question – this helps everyone hear clearly

Be brief & respectful

- Keep questions **short and to the point**
- Please be **respectful** — we want a space where **everyone feels comfortable** speaking up

Recording

- This session **is being recorded**. By attending, you consent to your **name** and any **questions or comments** being included in the public recording.

Thank you for helping make this session respectful, and valuable for everyone

Purpose



- To help you submit a **strong application**
- We are **only discussing** the **grants programs** and **application/assessment process**

What we will cover

6.00pm

Welcome

Eligibility and funding guidelines

Our grants programs

How to submit a stand-out application

Assessment process

Case studies - What we've funded and why

6.45pm

Live Q&A with AusNet specialists

Important dates and next steps

7.00pm

Session close

Introducing our specialists

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Craig Velt
Program Operations
Manager



Paul Hoffman
Community Energy
Partner



Kellie Nicols
Manager, Statutory
Planning and
Environment



Brett Millsom
Bid Manager



Nicci de Ryk
Manager,
Communications
and Media



Kathy Burgstahler
Communications
Adviser



Tex Lindner
Major Customer and
Community
Engagement Lead
(Central)



Jackie Johnston
Strategy Specialist
(WRL)

Our grants programs

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Major Grants \$50-250k

- **Community resilience hubs** 'shower and power' centres
- **Fixed assets** - generators, solar, storage solutions, backup for critical businesses or sections of main streets
- **Mobile assets** such as shower facilities or kitchen, trailer mounted generators
- **Electrical modifications** to ensure sites can accept upgraded or new energy resilience systems
- **Micro-grids or batteries** that fit with network considerations
- **Large energy resilience** solutions for single or multiple premises or facilities

Energy Resilience Grants \$5-50k

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Education and Literacy Grants \$5-25k

- **Multi-media and promotional** campaigns or forums to educate community members about using energy wisely
- **Resources and tools** that help communities prepare for and respond to an electricity outage **Short courses or programs** on maintaining equipment such as generators
- **Allocation for specialists** to deliver energy education or resilience programs.

Please note: all grants are inclusive of GST

The Energy Resilience Community Fund

AusNet announced the **Energy Resilience Community Fund** following severe storms in February 2024 to help communities strengthen their energy resilience so they can better prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme weather events and other electricity reliability challenges.

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Who we fund

- **Councils**
 - **Community** and not-for-profit organisations
 - **Small business** that support essential community services
 - **Community and small business** peak and representative bodies
- Projects and programs must be delivered within AusNet's electricity distribution network**

What we fund

- **Projects that support communities** to prepare, respond to and recover from prolonged power outages and severe weather events.
- **Education and literacy programs** can focus on each or any of the areas of preparedness, response and recovery.

What we don't fund

- **Residential** energy upgrades
- **Insulation** or high-efficiency window glazing
- **Heating or cooling** systems
- **Feasibility** studies
- **Projects duplicating** existing programs or services
- **Ongoing maintenance**, fuel costs and subscriptions
- **Connections**
- **Ongoing** or recurring funding

Before you start....things to consider

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Resilience first..always..

Environmental and economic sustainability goals are important, but your primary objective is resilience

- *Ask : Does my project help the community safely operate during a prolonged outage?*



What makes a strong community project

Whole-of-community involvement

- Collaborate with locals, councils & key stakeholders and avoid competing applications from the same community
- Include letters of support



Tell us a story

Make it real. Make it local. Make it matter

- Your community stories and the positive impact of your work are powerful



How we prioritise funding

We consider all eligible applications, but priority is given to projects that:

- Support areas that experience frequent and/prolonged power outages
- Don't have nearby accessible facilities or services to support communities during prolonged outages



Timing

Do you have enough time to gather all the necessary information and submit by the closing date – we don't accept late applications

- Is your project 'shovel-ready' or still in development – if it's still in development it might be better to consider future rounds

Things to consider...

Creating a Community Resilience Hub?



Technical details are critical It's not just the system but also the processes

- Ensure the system you are applying for is **fit-for-purpose** for both your site and potential usage
- Have you considered **any necessary upgrading** of existing infrastructure?
- Use a **reputable, experienced**, and where possible, **local** supplier
- **Do not submit** without **quotes**, cost breakdowns, and equipment specs.
- Will your hub **operate as soon as there is an outage** – who will activate it?
- Do community members, council, emergency services and visitors **know where to go** and what facilities are available?
- Can **emergency services** or **council** **use your hub**?
- What measures are in place to ensure **vulnerable people** can **safely access** the hub?
- Have you accounted for **ongoing maintenance** and running costs?

We can't assess what we can't see.

Developing an education and literacy program?

What behaviour or action are you trying to create, influence or change?



- How will it **change** the way people **think, plan** and **respond**
- Why is it **necessary**
- What will be the **positive impact** on the community
- Has it **been done before** in your local community
- Does it **build** on **local knowledge** or work previously undertaken
- How will you **connect** with **hard-to-reach** people
- Have **accessibility** and **vulnerability** factors been considered
- Are you using the **right channels** to reach the **right audience**
- **Resilience** is still a key **objective**

What to include in your application

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A well-prepared application stands out

Read all the questions carefully and have the right information before you start

- Remember it's about having the **right** information **not the most** information.

Demonstrate the measurable impact you will have and clearly define resilience outcomes

- Use metrics and real examples.

About your organisation

- Must have a **valid ABN**
- All project location/s must be listed and **located** in **AusNet's distribution network**.
- Who will **manage & deliver** the project

About your project

- Detailed **description**
- Clear **objectives/** expected impacts
- Success **measures**
- Delivery **partners**
- Your delivery **timeline**
- Any financial or in-kind **partnerships**

Budget and funding

- List & explain **expected expenses**
- **Quotes mandatory**
- **Co-funding encouraged** - if other funding secured
- **Education & Literacy** grants - quotes not mandatory but clear cost explanations are

Supporting documents

- **Quotes/cost** breakdowns
- Project **delivery plans**
- Letters of **support**
- **Evidence** of community input

Communicating your grant

- How will you **share your success**
- **Maximising** media opportunities
- **Acknowledging** your grant
- Use supplied **AusNet logo**



What does an effective resilience solution look like?

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Craig Velt

Program Operations Manager

What does an effective resilience solution look like?

- **Capable of sustaining** continuous alternate power supply for extended periods during large-scale events.

- **Knowing your system** will system operate the important things when the power goes out – what is critical to run and what is optional.

- **If battery and solar solutions** are part of your resilience plan, it prioritises supply availability during mains outages.

- **Needs be robust** enough to support outages ranging from a few hours to several days.

- **Might include a generation** plug-in point to enable alternate supply or battery charging via a motor/generator. (This could be fixed or mobile generation)

- **Consider scalable options** – is the system capable of being expanded for future needs.

Maximising media opportunities

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Nicci de Ryk

Communications and Media
Manager

Maximising media opportunities

Pitching your story to media? Here's what you need to consider

It's not what you know, it's who you know

- We can assist with media contacts

Vision

- What image/vision will work best to accompany your story

Spokesperson

- Who the spokesperson will be, who can speak broadly to the detail and challenges

Personalise the story

- Consider the human stories, use case studies etc

Cover off the following

- **Who** has received the funding
- **What** is the announcement (e.g. how much funding and what it will go towards)
- **Where** will the project/initiative be located
- **When** will it be operational/project finished (e.g. batteries, solar in place etc)
- **Why** is it needed?
- **How** will it benefit the local community



Your final checklist

Double-check the basics

- Have you filled out every required field?
- Are your contact details correct?
 - Email address – add us to your address book so you receive important updates
 - Phone number.

Have you included your supporting documents

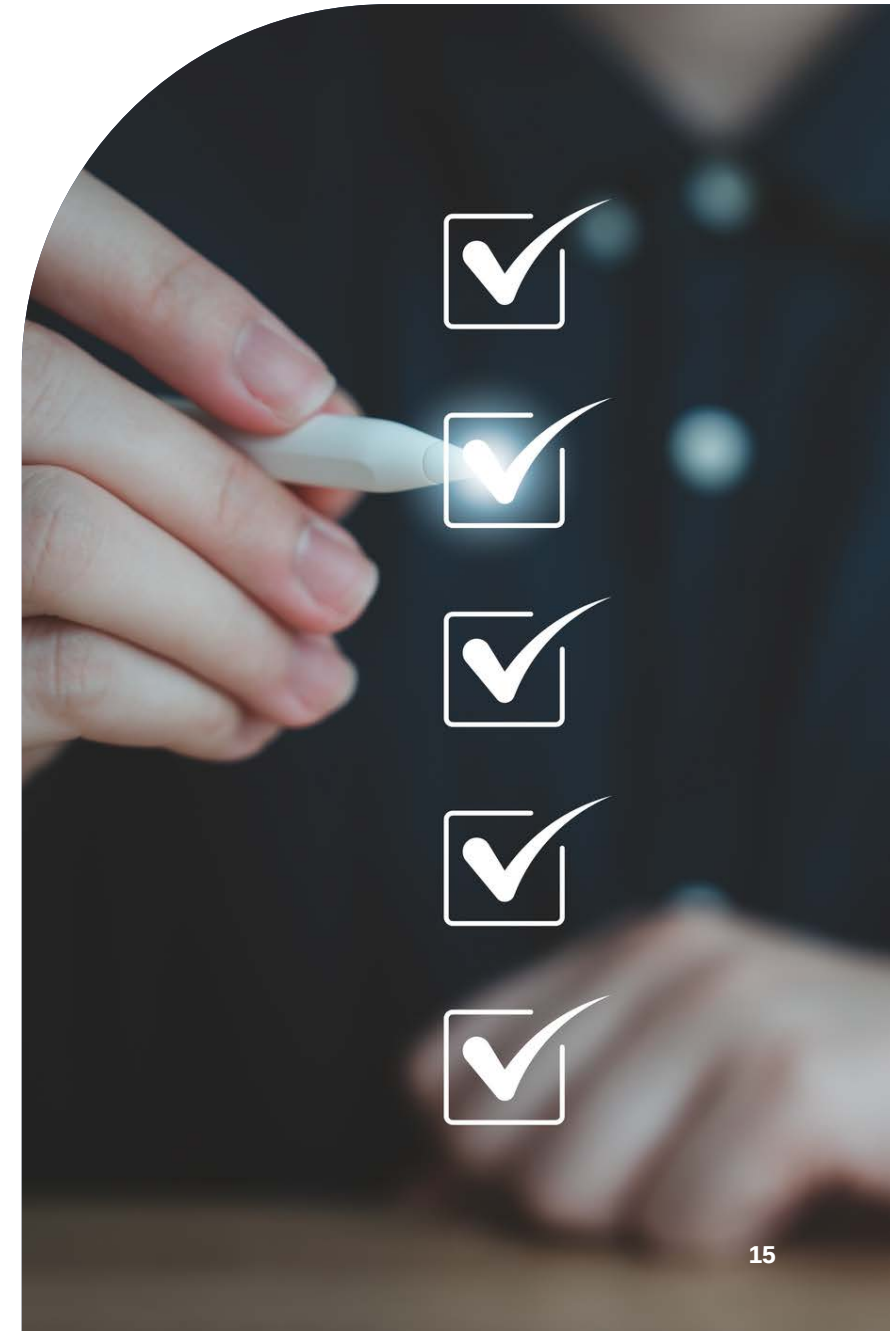
- All required quotes or cost breakdowns and delivery plans?
- Letters of support, partnership confirmation or permission to install from premise owner?
- Make sure attachments are labelled clearly and easy to open.

Assume we know nothing

- Avoid jargon and acronyms — explain clearly and simply.
- We don't know your organisation's history and community context.
- Explain your project's value and impact. *Think: "If someone outside your sector or community read this, would they understand?"*

Read your application as if you are a funder

- Is your project compelling?
- Clearly justified the need?
- Included your communications plan?
- Does the budget make sense?
- Have you explained how success will be measured?



Assessing your application

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Kellie Nichols

Manager, Planning and
Engagement

Assessing your application

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We will be:



rigorous, fair, and transparent when assessing your application to ensure careful consideration and weighting against the criteria, alignment between project goals and ERCF objectives and community need.

We ensure:



funding recommendations are made for projects that have **clearly articulated** how they best meet the needs of their communities and have the greatest potential for impact and success.

Criteria is weighted and scored to ensure assessment is **objective, merit-based** and **consistent**. An independent external **Advisory Panel** reviews the **funding recommendations** before final approval.

We look for the following

- **How** your project will build or strengthen community energy resilience.
- **Who** your beneficiaries are.
- **What** the impact is and how success will be measured.
- **Whether** your project will be locally-led and delivered.
- **Completion** date and key milestones.
- **Evidence** of your project's financial viability including amount of funding sought, breakdown of costs and any other funding or project partners.
- **If** your project could be replicated or scaled in either local community or more broadly.

Our assessment criteria

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Project information

Clearly explained:

- project
- purpose
- objectives
- need
- impact
- success measures.



Evidence of community need and benefit

- **Supporting evidence, data or research findings** indicating need and benefit and how project will meet those needs.
- Demonstrated **reach** and **impact**.
- **Adequate evidence of need** for the proposed project.
- Evidence of **community support**.



Capacity to deliver

- Project is **well planned** and **achievable** within the **timeframe**.
- **Resources** and **expertise** to deliver project (internally or by engaging specialists).
- **Identified delivery partners** with relevant expertise and experience.
- **Comprehensive** and **achievable budget** (and quotes where requested).
- Identified and included all **technical requirements** and **specifications**.

Case studies

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Brett Millsom
Bid Manager

Case studies

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Woods Point Community Energy Resilience

Grant/amount: ~\$78k. Major Grant

- One of **Victoria's most remote communities**, experiencing frequent outages, vulnerable to isolation particularly during an emergency event
- Grant funded a **generator** for the **RSL Hall** and a **solar and battery system** for the **Museum**.
- **Council** contributed **in-kind support** including dedicated staff member to work with community on the project
- Hall **generator** can **power lights, fridge** and **water pump** and **Museum's solar/batteries** provide a secondary space for **emergencies**.



Montrose Township Group - Ready & Resilient: Engaging Videos for Effective Emergency Response

Grant/amount: ~\$24k. Education and Literacy Grant

- Hired **professional videographers**, supported by **volunteer locals** to create **entertaining short videos** on preparedness, response and recovery.
- Highly **practical** and **accessible information**, and a key part of the community's 'resource kit'.
- Using '**local legends**' as **talent** helped the community connect deeply with the content.
- **Relevant useful content for all situations** and seasons and easily adapted by other communities



Tecoma Uniting Church – Food is Free program

Grant/amount: ~\$47k. Energy Resilience Grant

- The program provides significant levels of food support to community members in acute and chronic need, 24/7.
- In an area that experiences frequent outages, grant funding has enabled the installation of a **solar and battery system** to provide continuous power all year round and allows the church to be a point of community refuge during prolonged outages and severe weather events.



Why these applications were successful



Demonstrated deep engagement with local community



Fit-for-purpose systems - Energy Resilience and Major Grants



Detailed plans with identified risks, feasibility and capacity to deliver



Included quotes and detailed breakdown of expenses and costs



Used local suppliers with relevant and recent experience



Told a story about their community and the impact project will have

Q&A with our specialist panel



Craig Velt
Program Operations
Manager



Paul Hoffman
Community Energy
Partner



Kellie Nicols
Manager, Statutory
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Brett Millsom
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Adviser



Tex Lindner
Major Customer and
Community
Engagement Lead
(Central)



Jackie Johnston
Strategy Specialist
(WRL)

Key dates | next steps

July

Friday 25 – R3* closes

August

Monday 25 - R2 Major Grants
(stage one) opens

September

w/c Monday 29 - R3* applicants
notified

October

Monday 27 – R4* opens

November

Friday 14 - R2 Major Grants (stage
one) closes

December

Friday 19 - Round 4* closes

w/c Monday 22 - R2 Major Grants
(stage one) applicants notified

**Energy Resilience and Education and Literacy grants*

All applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application

If your application is successful, we ask you to:

- Sign a **Funding Agreement**
- Send us an **invoice**. Reminder - all grants are ***inclusive* of GST** and we only pay funds into a bank account – no BPAY
- **Publicise** your successful grant

If your application is unsuccessful:

- We will **notify you in writing**, with any feedback our assessors have provided.

Please note: We are **unable to fund all applications**. We encourage you to have a conversation with us if you would like to reapply in future rounds.

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Thank you

Contact us

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