

Transport Access Regional Partnerships 2025 to 2026 NSW Guidelines

June 2025



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Author/s:	Erin Hartwig – Grants Officer
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Appendices

A – Eligible NSW Local Government Areas

Abbreviations

Local Government Area	LGA
Transport for NSW	TfNSW

1. About the Program

The Transport Access Regional Partnerships (TARP) Grants Program has small scale funding available to support initiatives to improve services and outcomes for sections of the community that need improved transport.

Program objectives and outcomes

This program aims to improve social outcomes for transport disadvantaged sections of the community by providing better access and more transport options.

The funding is for shorter term projects, ongoing funding is not guaranteed.

- The development of potential transport services where there are no other options and clear need is evident
- The provision of subsidy programs for targeted to specific transport disadvantaged groups
- The building of community capacity to manage transport challenges
- The provision of essential information.

Program funding

Projects within the Transport Access Regional Partnerships is funded by the NSW Treasury's Grants and Subsidies.

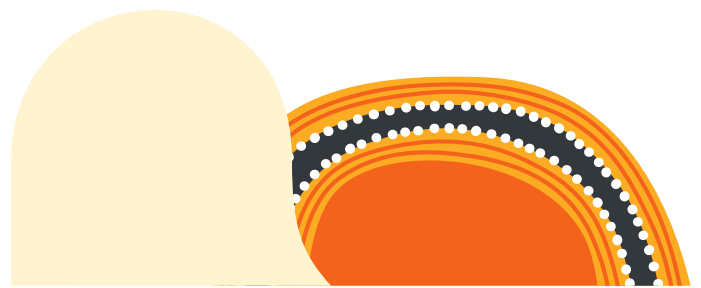
The budget is equally split into four parts of North, South, West and Strategic Projects. Strategic Project funds are reserved for projects that cross multiple regions.

In the event that there is an under-subscription in any of the NSW Regions or Strategic Projects allocations, TfNSW reserves the right to reallocate surplus funding to applications approved in other eligible NSW Regions from the month of December.

Who can apply for funding?

Organisations eligible to receive funding under the program may include non-profit community-based organisations, incorporated organisations, local councils, Aboriginal Land Councils and statutory agencies that hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN). Other individuals or groups are free to propose projects either directly to Transport for NSW (TfNSW), via the Programs Manager at tarpgrants@transport.nsw.gov.au, or to an eligible organisation in their region.

Developing partnerships with other organisations is strongly encouraged, including with State agencies, local councils, transport operators, community organisations and other stakeholders.



Conditions of Eligibility

Organisations are required to hold public liability insurance with a minimum cover of \$5 million and provide evidence in the form of a Certificate of Currency if required, unless otherwise approved by TfNSW.

Funding recipients must agree to indemnify and release Transport for NSW against all liability, damage, loss, cost or expense arising from any claim, demand, action, suit or proceeding for damages, debt, restitution, equitable compensation, account, injunctive relief, specific performance or any other remedy arising out of activities associated directly or indirectly with the grants program.

Individuals involved in transport activities associated with the grants program must hold the appropriate driver licence and have lawful access to a registered vehicle with the appropriate level of insurance for the transport activities being undertaken.

Funding recipients must comply with all obligations under State and Commonwealth law, and in particular, the road transport law and work health and safety laws of NSW.

The TARP Grants Program corresponds with the areas of NSW aligned with RRBSC regions and a limited number of OMBSC regions, as shown at Figure 1. The table at **Appendix A** provides the full list of eligible LGAs.

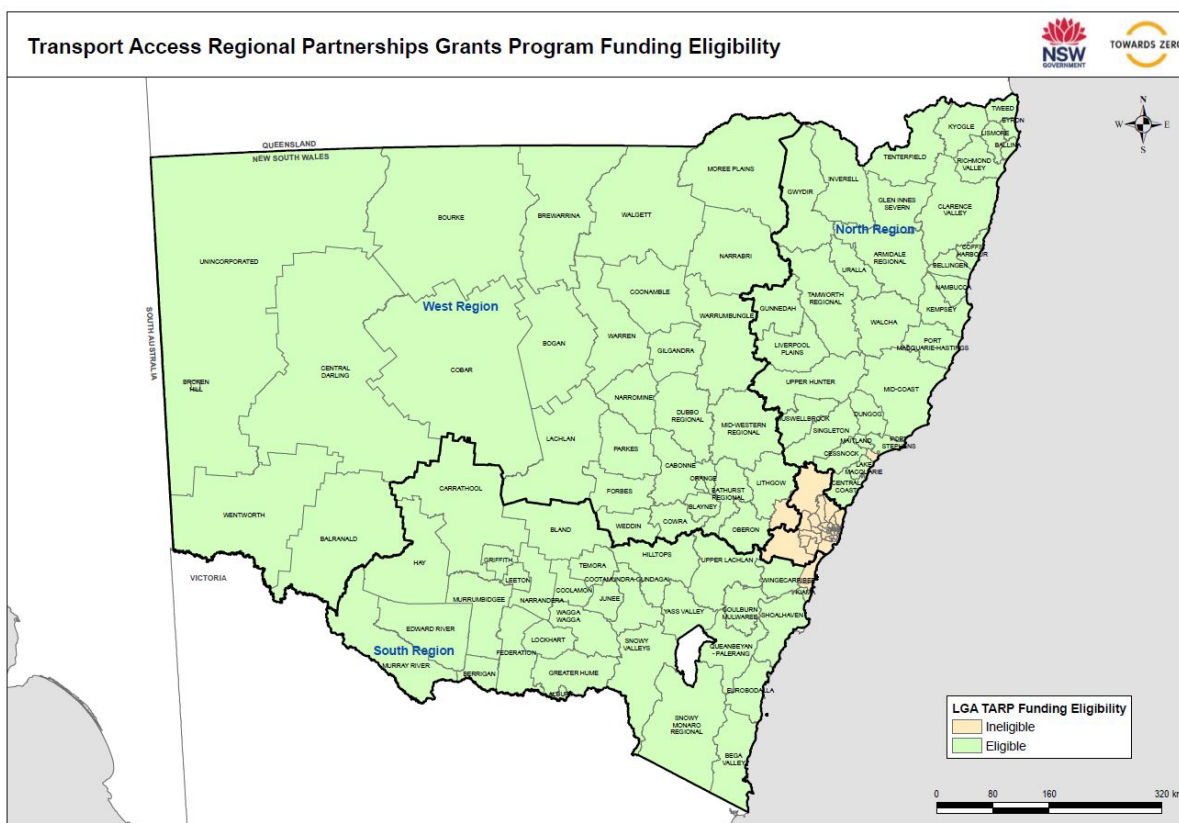


Figure 1. Eligible Areas for Transport Access Regional Partnerships

1.1. Program Criteria

TfNSW allocates funding based on the following criteria:

- Evidence based information in the application that defines a problem and supports the project
- Perceived ability to deliver the stated outcomes
- Equitable distribution of funding across regional areas
- Other relative projects in an area and remaining budget.

Applicants are encouraged to not overstate the case and provide evidence-based proposals. Projects that can demonstrate strong community support and those that use existing transport resources to provide high value for money solutions are preferred.

Funding is approved primarily to increase the level and range of transport provision to the target group. This is usually achieved by increasing the use of existing transport resources within the community.

1.2. Program Target Groups

Funding is available for projects that focus on transport disadvantaged groups within the community. Transport disadvantage is defined as:

People who are transport disadvantaged have less choice about when, where and how they travel relative to others. The effects of transport disadvantage can span generations.

We know that the chance for children born in poverty to become economically successful as adults is likely to be greater for those living in communities with good transport options that provide better access to education and extra-curricular activities. People may experience transport disadvantage if affected by one or more of the following:

- They live in an area with few or no public transport services
- They travel long distances to buy goods or access services and employment
- Services are not available at the times they need to travel or do the destinations they need to reach
- They have difficulty using available transport services due to age, disability, behaviour or cultural background
- They have limited access to private vehicle and/or face barriers to obtaining and maintaining a driver/rider licence
- They have difficulty paying the cost of their travel.

This group includes people who are unable to access health, work, training, educational* or recreational facilities due to:

- Limited or no access to a car or regular public transport services (e.g. people in isolated towns, people without a licence, etc.)
- Lack of mobility

- Socio-economic circumstances e.g. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) customers

Funds will be directed to areas where projects are responding to clearly identified community needs and to organisations who demonstrate that the greatest community benefit will result.

**not available for school travel or late-night activities associated specifically with licensed venues*

2. Eligible and Ineligible Projects

Funded projects need to promote a coordinated approach to providing effective transport solutions by aiming to make better use of existing transport resources.

Ongoing funding is not guaranteed through this program.

If services are intended to extend into the future, a clear identification of future funding source and a realistic transitional plan is required for your project to be considered.

NDIS specific projects are ineligible through this program and must be referred back to their NDIS provider. Note, NDIS participants can be included on wider community initiatives.

Funding is available for short-term projects and need to address at least one the following five categories as they relate to transport services:

- Information
- Capacity building (transport related)
- Subsidies (person centred)
- Bus services (where no other service option exists)
- Project On-costs (this can only be applied for with one of the other categories)

2.1. Information

Information is a basic requirement for transport and is demonstrated by the following project types:

- Access and Mobility Information Days (largely for seniors but also includes other transport disadvantaged groups)
- Regional or local transport Guides (comprehensive, and multi-modal)
- Promotional materials for transport products, e.g., Regional Excursion Daily (RED) ticket
- Mapping of rural transport services (GIS coding, etc.)
- Specialised transport information products such as the Transport Development Kit – Connecting Communities booklet for rural and remote communities
- Mapping of access processes for clients of different service types –outlining who they should go to for travel assistance.
- Support of appropriate research relevant to the local area.

2.2. Capacity Building

Capacity building includes the capacity of the individual or the community to directly meet their transport needs. Examples of capacity building may include;

- Spare Capacity Booking System: An electronic calendar that enables the coordination of spare capacity in vehicles travelling along corridors
- Carpooling
- Bus brokerage systems
- Bus driver licensing (LR, MR and HR) or mentoring for required hours
- Travel training, both individual and group activities
- Whole of government work in disadvantaged communities where TfNSW is a key player and contributes a small proportion towards transport to allow an integrated approach to problem solving.
- Online booking system software and/or app.

This category does not include the capacity of an individual to access transport but needs to deliver broader community benefit by delivering greater participation in life in some way. For example, a taxi travel voucher will help build the individual capacity but does not build the capacity to meet the general transport need.

2.3. Subsidies

The person-centered subsidy is used for accessing supporting funds to engage existing transport services to solve the transport disadvantage problem. Examples include:

- Taxi vouchers provide for a flexible and fast response and are usually available 24 hours
- Bus vouchers are used where there is an existing bus service that meets the need of the client
- Community transport vouchers (where offered by the organisation)
- Bus charters for one off, special events or for a specific limited target group should be included in this category. e.g. a group of people need to attend a one-off event and there is no public transport available and they are also financially disadvantaged.
- A percentage of the cost will be subsidised up to 100%. Customer contributions are always encouraged. e.g. customer contributes 20%, subsidy will be for 80%
- Interstate travel will be considered on a case-by-case scenario with a detailed discussion with Program Manager and Team. No travel outside of Australia is eligible.

2.4. Bus Services

This category is dedicated to those places where the whole service is needed for a particular geographical configuration/link and there is no other service available.

Projects belong in this category if:

- The need is recurring (could be once or twice per week, or once a month)
- They provide a geographical link available for the general public
- It will be a proving ground for a regular service beyond the life of this project.
Examples include:
 - A remote daily bus service in excess of 40kms that provides essential access to remote places with extreme disadvantage indicators
 - Feeder services to corridor transport opportunities
 - Flexible service such as a bus for people to access shift work in industrial areas, TAFEs or universities often situated on the edge of towns.

The use of a booking system in some projects will be required under this subsidy. This will be due to the specific data collection required for reporting requirements. Speak with the Program Manager regarding this.

2.5. Project On-Costs

This category is for the on-costs directly associated with the project. Up to 10% of the total value of the grant can be applied for to assist with the on-costs organisations experience to run or manage the project.

Examples Include:

- Project management costs
- Administration costs
- Overheads costs associated with the project
- This category can only be applied for with another category.

2.6. Ineligible funding items

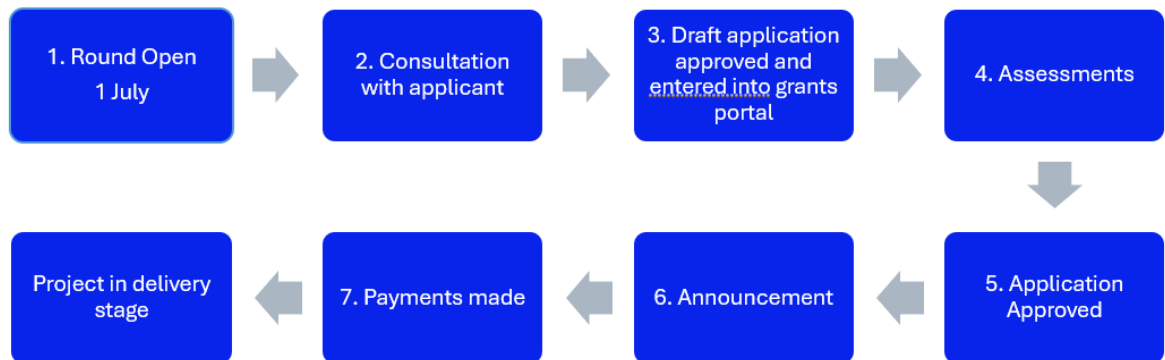
- Purchase of Assets
- Capital expenditure on buildings
- For school travel, excursions, activities and routine trips
- Projects associated specifically with licensed venues
- NDIS specific projects
- NSW Driver Licencing
- Duplicating an existing bus service
- Projects without a long a clear identification of future funding source or transitional plan
- Research or academic studies
- Staffing costs not directly related to service provision
- Grant Administration commissions
- Projects that are primarily for the benefit of residents of other states or territories

Key dates

Table 3: Key dates

Applications open	1 July annually
Applications close	30 May or when fully subscribed annually
Successful projects announced	As approved
Project Completion Reports and supporting evidence due	As per each project requirements
Program close	30 June or when fully subscribed annually

3.The Application and Assessment Process



3.1.1. How to apply for funding

- TfNSW will advise when a funding round opens for the submission of a standard application. Such rounds will be opened every year.
- An electronic application process has been established to streamline the project approval process allowing community access to funds to support innovative project initiatives. It has been established to provide a paperless and semi-automated process to help get the best outcomes possible under the program.
- Applications are to be submitted through the online grants managements system – SmartyGrants - <https://www.smartygrants.com.au/>
- Data collected as part of this initiative will help establish better baselines and benchmarks for program activities.
- The results will be aggregated to demonstrate the program’s overall achievements and outcomes. It will also guide and inform what types of projects deliver the best community outcomes so that future funding provides the best value for money under TfNSW objectives.
- The online application form aims to minimise the project appraisal and approval time by ensuring that applicants address all selection criteria in a consistent format.
- Applicants are encouraged to consult with the local community groups and stakeholders to identify needs in their area.

Preparing an application

3.1.2. Submission of applications

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the program manager to discuss their idea and eligibility at tarpgrants@transport.nsw.gov.au. If eligible, you will be put in contact with a team member in your region to assist with your application.

Applications are to be submitted through the SmartyGrants portal.

Applications are to be submitted on-line through the official TARP funding agreement application. A link will be provided to the applicant to submit their application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure information entered in the form is accurate.

Payment and reporting terms will be discussed and agreed on during the appraisal stage with the provider and TfNSW assessor. All projects over \$9,000 may incur milestone payments for project and a final 10% milestone to be paid on final acquittal reporting submitted and all requirements met.

3.1.3. Project timeframe

The duration of funded projects for service provision can range from a day event, a few months, or up to 2 years. Projects for longer than 2 years are generally not encouraged, though discussions should take place with the team if a longer timeframe is required.

In some cases, funding will be for the provision of a product such as transport guides or promotional material. In these cases, the project will be completed when the product is produced, and the applicant has completed any evaluations required by TfNSW.

How applications will be assessed

3.1.4. Assessment of applications

- Submitted applications are received by the Grants Officer and checked for availability of budget, and eligibility of guidelines
- An assessment is then done by the relevant Community Partnering Precinct Team who will review all applications based on the principles and priorities outlined in these Guidelines. If these are met, a brief is prepared for submission.
- For *Closing the Gap* category projects targeting Aboriginal communities, the Senior Aboriginal Engagement Specialist is required to be consulted to ensure the project is consistent with the Closing the Gap principles, NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs directions and not duplicating other TfNSW funded projects.
- An assessment is then conducted by Senior Manager Community & Place Partner of that relevant Precinct to ensure that customer values, collaboration and integrity are met. The areas assessed are workable solutions, safety, risk and governance, and value for money.

Approval of application

Once assessments are completed, a recommendation is made to the relevant Director Regional Community Partner for that Region and is approved or declined.

Conflicts of Interest

TfNSW staff must comply with the following policies to manage conflicts of interests relating to grants to support probity and transparency:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government Sector Employees
- Transport Code of Conduct
- Transport Conflicts of Interest Policy

Policies on conflict-of-interest management are consistent with policies relating to gifts and benefits and reinforce the importance of declaration.

Fraud and Corruption

TfNSW has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption and all staff are expected to call out behaviour which may be corrupt or unethical.

TfNSW commits to fraud and corruption prevention by:

- Proactively identifying and managing corruption risks and applying appropriate controls
- Honoring and embedding the Transport Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government Sector Employees by promoting staff awareness of fraud and corruption and its triggers
- Fostering a culture of ethical safety by supporting and protecting people who report misconduct and praising those who identify ethical safety risks and issues.

4. Notification of application outcomes

- Following the TfNSW's decision, TfNSW will contact all applicants to inform them of the outcome of their application in writing.
- This process should take approximately 4 weeks after an application is submitted.
- Successful applications will also include operational and acquittal reporting requirements, including the request for a tax invoice.

4.1. Payments to councils

Grant payments will be staged and will vary according to the scope and complexity of the project. The payment schedule will be agreed to within the application process, but a percentage of the grant may be withheld as a final payment until a satisfactory acquittal report is received.

- Upon receipt of a tax invoice, funds will be deposited into the applicant's account by electronic funds transfer (EFT). All vendors generally have 30-day payment terms. This should be discussed during the application process.

All invoices need to be on organisation/applicant letterhead, listing ABN, bank details and reference to GST. The GST status of an applicant organisation or the verification of the correct ABN will be checked at www.abr.business.gov.au. GST is not payable between Government entities, i.e. – between TfNSW and local councils.

5. Program Requirements

5.1. Acquittal Reporting

Successful applicants are required to provide acquittal reporting for all funded projects. The acquittals required to complete will be based on the information provided in your application.

Interim acquittals will be required for many projects to ensure they remain on track and meeting the objectives. This interim acquittal provides opportunities to seek assistance from the Community Partnering team to help ensure a successful outcome.

It is essential that realistic assessments are made about what the project may achieve. Applicants are required to keep accurate records of activities conducted under the project to enable evidence-based reporting.

If you have been able to achieve savings on the completion of the project, you are required to advise TfNSW to enable discussions of extensions or variation of the project or return of funds to the pool and allocation to other projects.

A final acquittal will be required one month after completion of the project outlining lessons learned, value for money and other reporting criteria that may be specific to the project.

5.2. Variations

Any funding granted under this program must be spent according to the details set out in your application. Any variation of the project is valid only when approved in writing by TfNSW. TfNSW reserves the right to recall any funding that is not spent under the payment terms and conditions or not in accordance with an application.

Applicants proposing to vary an approved project must do so in writing and seek formal approval from the relevant TfNSW team or tarpgrants@transport.nsw.gov.au.

Variations may include a change of purpose, service delivery details, dates, locations or target groups.

If the project is not considered viable in the current form or there is a lack of governance to fulfil the project outcomes, a return of funding may be requested.

5.3. Verification of reports received

TfNSW reserves the right to audit any projects have been delivered as reported. Misrepresentation of the projects completed may result in the applicant repaying any grant funds received and/or exclusion from subsequent funding rounds.

5.4. Failure to submit acquittal reports

Organisations failing to submit the acquittal reports will not be eligible for future funding and may be required to repay any grant funds received.

6. Further information

Questions about the Transport Access Regional Partnerships Grant Program, including eligibility and the application process, can be emailed to tarpggrants@transport.nsw.gov.au

Complaints handling

Transport for NSW is committed to responding appropriately to customer complaints and feedback.

Written complaints can be sent to the Program Manager email tarpggrants@transport.nsw.gov.au and verbal feedback provided in person or over the phone will be recorded in a feedback register to ensure they are addressed.

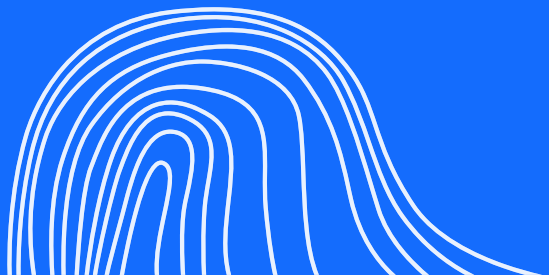
Complaints will be responded to within 21 days of receipt. Where this is not possible, due to the nature of the enquiry, Transport for NSW will:

- inform the stakeholder of the time needed to provide a final response
- provide a name and telephone number to call for further queries.

Any personal information shared through the complaints process will only be used to investigate and respond to that feedback in accordance with the Transport for NSW Privacy Policy. For more information visit our privacy page: [Transport privacy | Transport for NSW](#)

Appendix A – Eligible Local Government Areas

North	South	West
Hunter & Central Coast:	South East Coast Precinct:	East Precinct:
Central Coast	Bega Valley	Bathurst
Cessnock	Eurobodalla	Lithgow
Dungog	Kiama	Mid-Western
Lake Macquarie	Shoalhaven	Oberon
Maitland	South East Tablelands Precinct:	Blayney
Mid-Coast	Goulburn Mulwaree	Central West Precinct:
Port Stephens	Hilltops	Cabonne
New England Precinct:	Queanbeyan-Palerang	Cowra
Armidale	Snowy Monaro	Coonamble
Glen Innes Severn	Upper Lachlan	Dubbo
Gunnedah	Wingecarribee	Forbes
Gwydir	Yass Valley	Gilgandra
Inverell	Riverina Murray Precinct:	Lachlan
Liverpool Plains	Albury	Narromine
Muswellbrook	Berrigan	Orange
Singleton	Bland	Parkes
Tamworth	Carrathool	Warren
Upper Hunter	Coolamon	Warrumbungle
Uralla	Cootamundra-Gundagai	Weddin
Walcha	Edward River	Far West Precinct:
North Coast Precinct:	Federation	Balranald
Ballina	Greater Hume	Bogan
Bellingen	Griffith	Brewarrina
Byron	Hay	Bourke
Clarence Valley	Junee	Broken Hill
Coffs Harbour	Leeton	Central Darling
Kempsey	Lockhart	Cobar
Kyogle	Murray River	Moree Plains
Lismore	Murrumbidgee	Narrabri
Nambucca	Narrandera	Unincorporated
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Snowy Valleys	Walgett
Richmond Valley	Temora	Wentworth
Tenterfield	Wagga Wagga	
Tweed		



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