



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department
Emergency Management Australia

National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund

Program Guidelines 2009-10

Applications close: 5pm Friday 6 March 2009

Contents

Important Information.....	3
Foreword.....	4
Preface.....	5
Background.....	5
Guiding Principles of the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund.....	5
Eligibility.....	7
Roles and Responsibilities.....	9
Relationship with other Programs.....	12
Annex A	
Definitions.....	13

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE READ

Please read these Guidelines, the Guide for Applicants and the Application Form carefully before starting your application.

Confirm your eligibility. For the purposes of this Fund, eligible agencies are those that have a defined role in State or Territory Response or Recovery Plans, and/or member agencies of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum.

A list of definitions applying to the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund is detailed at Annex A.

Your completed application must be received electronically by your Parent Agency by **no later than 5 pm on Friday 6 March 2009**. For audit purposes, a hard copy of the completed application form, signed by the Local Unit Manager is also to be sent to your Parent Agency as soon as practicable. Applications for National Projects must be received by Emergency Management Australia no later than 6 March 2009. Applications are to be provided in electronic and hard copy format. Email address details are listed in the application form and in the Guide for Applicants.

Make sure your application is complete and please keep a copy for your records as no material will be returned to applicants.

Applications will not be accepted if they are received after the closing date.

Need more help?

More information on the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund can be obtained from your State Contact Officer or by contacting Community Engagement Branch at Emergency Management Australia on (02) 6256 4608.

Foreword

As a nation, Australia has a proud and long-held tradition of pulling together in times of adversity. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the emergency services sector where Australians from all walks of life make enormous personal sacrifices to work in frontline organisations in times of emergency.

Australia is also a nation prone to a range of natural, technological and human-caused emergencies. For example, the phenomenon of climate change has recently demonstrated the potential to increase the frequency and severity of drought, heatwave, severe storms, floods, tropical cyclones and indirectly, serious bushfires.

Since 2000, on average each year 24 people have lost their lives as a direct result of natural disasters, almost 600 have been injured and up to 390,000 affected in some way. The economic cost to communities of natural disasters has been in excess of \$3.6 billion annually. Many more people are also affected by human caused emergencies and disasters, with a further significant cost to the nation. More recently the threat to Australia from criminal acts including terrorism has become more apparent and must now also be considered.

Australia's pool of emergency management response and recovery volunteers numbering some 350,000 plays a vital role in assisting communities to manage the full range of emergencies and disasters.

Since its inception in 2004 **The National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund (NEVSF)** has been particularly successful in building and training this pool of volunteers to be ready to respond to the whole range of possible emergencies. The NEVSF provides practical support and recognition for our volunteers building and improving our national preparedness to manage emergencies.

I encourage eligible organisations to submit an application.



Robert McClelland
Attorney-General
November 2008

1. Preface

1.1 This document is a guide to the operation and administration of the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund (NEVSF). Throughout this document a reference to a 'State' or 'the States' should be read to include Australia's Territories.

1.2 These guidelines will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the currency of information. Applicants should ensure that they obtain the latest version of the Guidelines from the EMA website (<http://www.ema.gov.au/communityengagement>).

1.3 These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Guide for Applicants 2009-10 which further details application requirements.

2. Background

2.1 In 2004 the Australian Government implemented the "Working Together to Manage Emergencies" initiative, comprising the Local Grants Scheme (LGS) and the NEVSF, in recognition of the need to develop self-reliance at both the community and local government level in order to enhance community safety. Ongoing management of the commitment is undertaken through a partnership between the Australian Government, State Governments, communities, local government and emergency services sector representatives. While the initiative was originally funded for a four year period ending in 2007/08, Government has provided ongoing funding for the NEVSF element of the program to guarantee its future.

2.2 Increasing involvement and awareness of local communities in emergency management is a critical step in improving national preparedness for emergencies and disasters of all types.

2.3 The NEVSF provides funding to support volunteer organisations in the development of strategies to boost the recruitment, retention and training for volunteers in response and recovery agencies at the frontline of emergency management.

3. Guiding Principles of the NEVSF

3.1 In the event of an emergency or disaster, whether natural, technological or human-caused in origin, Australia's emergency services volunteers will play a significant role in assisting the community to respond to and recover from such events.

3.2 The NEVSF is administered by Community Engagement Branch within Emergency Management Australia (EMA), a Division within the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department.

- 3.3 The following general principles apply to the NEVSF.
- 3.3.1 Successful management of the Program requires achieving a cooperative partnership involving all levels of government and coordination between stakeholders.
 - 3.3.2 To maximise the opportunity for volunteer agencies to benefit from funding, a notional cap of \$50,000 (GST exclusive) has been applied to each individual project. This aims to ensure that a range of worthwhile initiatives receive funding. However, the cap should not preclude applicants from seeking funding for higher value or larger scale projects where the benefit to the volunteer agency and the community it supports warrants higher expenditure. Proposed initiatives that exceed the cap may be supported where the project is deemed to be cost effective with measurable high value returns to the volunteer organisation and the community.
 - 3.3.3 The proposed project must not conflict with existing emergency management programs supporting volunteer agencies at local, State or Australian Government levels.
 - 3.3.4 Decisions regarding funding provided through the Program will be primarily based on:
 - the ability of the proposal to address recruitment issues,
 - the ability of the proposal to address retention issues,
 - the scope of the proposal to provide appropriate additional skills training for volunteers,
 - enhancing capital equipment and infrastructure demonstrably focussed at better supporting the recruitment, retention and training of volunteers, and
 - the ability of the project to complete by 30 June 2010.
 - 3.3.5 Applications for funding must be processed through parent agencies to ensure that they support overall service objectives and, in the case of infrastructure or equipment applications, do not impose ongoing maintenance burdens on the agency. State Selection Committees will assess all projects to ensure they accord with state priorities and objectives, which may require some adjustment of agency priorities.
 - 3.3.6 Applications will be considered to supplement funds received from other sources as long as the project does not conflict with other programs as provided in 3.3.3 above.
 - 3.3.7 There is a range of other existing targeted programs at Australian Government, State and local levels designed to assist in specific aspects of emergency management. The NEVSF is not intended to duplicate the opportunity for funding available through these programs.

4. Eligibility

Eligible agencies

4.1 Funding under the NEVSF is available to agencies that have a defined role in State Response and Recovery Plans and/or member agencies of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF). Accordingly, eligibility may vary between States and Territories. Agencies seeking funding under the NEVSF should confirm their eligibility with their State Contact Officer prior to developing their applications.

4.2 It is acceptable for a parent agency, or a local government body that has responsibility for an emergency volunteer group, to submit an application on behalf of that group. If successful, funds will be provided directly to the group concerned or alternatively a parent agency or local government body may act as a sponsor for a particular group and manage the funds. See Part 6, Guide for Applicants and Section 3 of the Application Form.

Eligible projects

4.3 The NEVSF will support projects developed to boost the recruitment, retention and training strategies of volunteer organisations at the frontline of emergency management and, within guidelines established by State emergency management authorities, fund some capital equipment. Equipment proposed for acquisition should have specific applicability to the recruitment, retention or training of volunteers.

Operational equipment will not be considered unless it can be demonstrated to have a training use. However, applications to construct a dedicated training room, purchase audio-visual training aids, develop and print training materials would be considered eligible for funding.

4.4 Details of eligible projects approved for funding in Financial Year 2008/09 are available on the Emergency Management Australia website www.ema.gov.au/communityengagement. Applicants are invited to review that list to gain an indication of the range of eligible projects in different jurisdictions. By way of example, the following project types were funded in 2008/09:

- public education programs
- volunteer recruitment campaigns
- establishment and upgrade of training facilities
- volunteer training.

4.5 However, applicants are reminded that the selection process is competitive and all applications will be assessed and prioritised in relation to other applications received within that jurisdiction. Therefore it cannot be guaranteed that a particular project will be successful in attracting funding even though a similar project was funded in a previous year.

4.6 It is acceptable for the proposal to be a clearly identified element of some other ongoing project; however, the intended outputs of that element of the project funded through the NEVSF must be specifically measurable.

4.7 If the implementation of the proposed project is dependent on co-funding from another source, the applicant must include a letter providing a guarantee of funding from that source in the application.

4.8 Joint applications from agencies seeking funding to support work on areas of common concern across several units or agencies are also eligible for funding under the NEVSF. While the notional cap for funding of joint projects will remain at \$50,000 (GST exclusive), as outlined in 3.3.2 above, State Selection Committees have the discretion to consider joint submissions in excess of the cap where warranted by the potential net community benefit arising from the application.

4.9 Intending applicants should note that funding is only available for the financial year in which it is awarded. Applicants should critically assess their ability to complete the work before 30 June 2010. If it is not considered possible or likely that work will be complete by 30 June 2010, the application should not be pursued as no extensions will be possible and unspent funds will be recovered.

Ineligible Projects

4.10 As noted in paragraph 3.3.7 the NEVSF is not intended to duplicate opportunities for funding projects covered by other existing Australian Government programs. Applications pending under other Australian Government Programs will not be considered for funding under the NEVSF in the current financial year. Similarly, projects eligible for funding through State and local government programs (for example, vehicle replacement programs) will not be eligible for funding.

4.11 An application seeking funds to reimburse for work already committed or completed will not be considered. Projects which seek to undertake work over more than one financial year will not be considered.

4.12 The NEVSF is intended to fund initiatives that improve recruitment, retention and training for volunteers. The provision of operational equipment to support the work of volunteer emergency response agencies is the responsibility of the parent agency. This ensures interoperability, compatibility and standardisation of equipment in use. As such, applications for purchase of equipment such as vehicles, boats, communication systems, GPS devices, sheds, items of uniform, personal protective equipment and similar equipment only purchases are generally considered ineligible and will not usually be considered.

National Projects

4.13 National Projects are those which have direct application or utility across the nation, rather than an agency or State focus. While applications can target any aspect of recruitment, retention or training for volunteers, the Australian Government Attorney-General, in consultation with key stakeholders, may determine a particular priority area for funding each year. For example, it may be determined that volunteer emergency management agencies are suffering a loss of members due to changing demographics in rural areas, and applications may be invited on studies which propose actions to address that decline.

4.14 Emergency management professional bodies and associations are eligible to put forward applications for funding of projects of national significance as are relevant peak organisations. Eligible volunteer agencies intending to submit an application for a national project should inform the State Contact Officer and consult with the relevant industry professional body, (eg the Australasian Fire Authorities Council) to coordinate with any similar applications from other States.

Note: Eligible agencies could actually be the relevant industry professional body and therefore not have a State affiliation.

4.15 Once completed, National Project applications should be sent to Community Engagement Branch, EMA by the closing date of 6 March 2009.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Enhancement of whole-of-government partnerships

5.1 Significant international and domestic events of the past few years have reinforced the importance of having appropriate continuity planning for all aspects of business and across all levels of government. Prevention of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters, whether natural, human-caused or technological in origin, can most effectively be managed through the creation and maintenance of a strong partnership between the three levels of government and relevant agencies.

5.2 The provision of NEVSF funds should be seen as part of a comprehensive and integrated national emergency management strategy that builds on existing long established relationships.

5.3 Within this context the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders to the NEVSF are set out below.

5.4 Applicants

- 5.4.1 read Program Guidelines and ensure eligibility of application,
- 5.4.2 read and comply with the NEVSF Guide to Applicants 2009-10,
- 5.4.3 seek confirmation of eligibility from the relevant State Contact Officer,
- 5.4.4 critically review the proposed project to ensure that work can be fully completed prior to 30 June 2010, noting that funds might not be available until September 2009,
- 5.4.5 complete the application form
- 5.4.6 ensure all relevant signatures are obtained before posting
- 5.4.7 submit the application form to your Parent Agency by the closing date,
- 5.4.8 if successful, enter into a contractual arrangement with the Australian Government (the Commonwealth) through Emergency Management Australia, a Division in the Attorney-General's Department.

5.5. Parent Agency

- 5.5.1 assist in the identification of projects within their agencies,
- 5.5.2 invite applications from sub-units,
- 5.5.3 assist sub-units in the development of proposals,
- 5.5.4 notify sub-units if they wish to manage the project on the sub-unit's behalf,
- 5.5.5 communicate with the State Selection Committee to obtain information on the Program timeline,
- 5.5.6 prioritise all applications received, and
- 5.5.7 forward Priority List and all applications, both electronic and hard-copy (signed by the CEO or equivalent) to the relevant State Contact Officer in priority order by Friday 20 March 2009.

5.6 States

- 5.6.1 communicate relevant information to stakeholders and volunteer organisations within their jurisdiction,
- 5.6.2 assist volunteer organisations in developing their applications,
- 5.6.3 acknowledge receipt of applications and provide copy of receipt to EMA,
- 5.6.4 forward applications to EMA by Friday 3 April 2009 – email and hard copy,
- 5.6.5 form and chair a State Selection Committee comprising appropriate representation, including EMA,
- 5.6.6 manage State Selection Committees to assess and prioritise individual applications and ensure they are eligible and complement existing State programs, and
- 5.6.7 provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants where sought.

5.7 State Selection Committees

- 5.7.1 communicate with Parent Agencies to provide information on Program timelines,
- 5.7.2 assess all grant applications received by the due date in accordance with eligibility criteria and jurisdictional priorities, policy, legislation and programs,
- 5.7.3 determine State Priority list of eligible proposals and electronically forward to EMA,
- 5.7.4 advise applicants of any amendment to the grant amount they have requested as soon as practicable following the State Selection Committee meeting, and
- 5.7.5 advise Parent Agencies of meeting outcomes including explanation of any changes to project priority listing.

Note: State Selection Committees have the authority to deem projects ineligible where they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

5.8 Funding of projects under the NEVSF is essentially based on identified risk and priority of need. In the assessment and prioritisation of applications, State Selection Committees should also consider such issues as:

- 5.8.1 the project's applicability and relevance to identified parent agency priorities,
 - 5.8.2 the project's scope and potential to enhance the community's own capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters,
 - 5.8.3 where practicable an equitable spread of funding between applicant agencies,
 - 5.8.4 a balance between rural and urban based applications,
 - 5.8.5 consideration of the needs of less well funded emergency management agencies and those that are not well funded under other programs, and
 - 5.8.6 a preference that funding is given to resourcing new initiatives.
- 5.9 Other considerations might include:
- 5.9.1 applications demonstrating significant benefits to enhancing community safety and which have been unsuccessful in attracting funding through other programs may still be eligible for consideration under the NEVSF,
 - 5.9.2 applications should be assessed to ascertain if they would be more appropriately funded by other existing Australian Government and State programs, and
 - 5.9.3 State Selection Committees may wish to seek additional information from applicants in order to complete their assessments.
- 5.10 **Australian Government - Emergency Management Australia**
- 5.10.1 administer the NEVSF,
 - 5.10.2 communicate relevant information and, on request, provide direct assistance to volunteer organisations,
 - 5.10.3 manage a national communication strategy to promote the program with stakeholders,
 - 5.10.4 assess and prioritise, on advice from all jurisdictions, national project applications,
 - 5.10.5 participate in State Selection Committees to assist in assessment and prioritisation of individual applications,
 - 5.10.6 develop a national prioritised composite list of recommended projects for consideration by the Attorney-General,
 - 5.10.7 provide formal notification to all applicants regarding the Attorney-General's decision,
 - 5.10.8 administer the financial aspects of the program,

- 5.10.9 receive progress and final reports from grant recipients,
- 5.10.10 report on the performance of the fund over the preceding financial year as required, and
- 5.10.11 receive advice from grant recipients in relation to issues affecting the ability of projects to be completed on time or on budget.

5.11 Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF)

Membership of the AEMVF includes Emergency Service Peak Bodies, Ambulance Services, Fire Services, State Emergency Services, Land and Marine Rescue, First Aid, Surf Lifesaving and Emergency Support Agencies. Accordingly, the AEMVF has a role in the administration of the NEVSF, including to:

- 5.11.1 assist in the ongoing development and promotion of the NEVSF, and
- 5.11.2 provide assistance and advice to volunteer organisations to complete an application for funds.

5.12 Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC)

- 5.12.1 assist in the development and promotion of the NEVSF.

6. Relationship with other Programs

- 6.1 The NEVSF complements existing State and Australian Government programs.
- 6.2 An indication of the full range and scope of grants available through Australian Government agencies can be obtained from the Grants Commission website: <http://www.grantslink.gov.au>

7. Contacts

7.1 Enquiries regarding any aspect of the operation of the fund should be referred to the relevant State Contact Officer or to EMA. Details are listed in the Guide for Applicants and the Application Form.

Emergency Management Australia
November 2008

Annexes:

- A. Definitions

Definitions

1. The following definitions apply to the NEVSF:

Emergency Management

2. A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment. The organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Risk Management

3. Risk Management is the systematic application of management policies, procedures, systems and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk. In this context, effective risk management consists of a series of well defined steps which, when taken in sequence, support better decision making by contributing a greater insight into risks and their potential impacts. Risk management methodology as detailed in Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360: 2004 should be the basis for communities to determine risks that require priority attention.

Emergency Risk

4. The concept of risk has two elements:
 - 3.1 the likelihood of something happening, and
 - 3.2 its consequences.

Emergency risk (i.e. the risk related to the impact of an emergency) is a function of the interaction of hazards, from natural, technological and human causes, and the elements at risk: people, their structures and the environment.

Emergency Risk Management

5. A systematic process that produces a range of measures which contribute to the well-being of communities and the environment. The philosophy and methods of emergency risk management are a blend of traditional emergency management and risk management.

Final Report Package

6. A final report comprising the following documents will be required on completion of the project:
 - 6.1 project summary
 - 6.2 project funding reconciliation expenditure report
 - 6.3 financial statements covering the period of the grant (including copies of relevant receipts)
 - 6.4 intellectual property report
 - 6.5 NEVSF Program Evaluation proforma.

7. Relevant proformas are contained in the Final Report Package which will be issued to grant recipients as part of the funding agreement process and which will also be posted on EMA's website

Parent Agency

8. The peak State sector representative body, for example, SA Country Fire Service, Victoria State Emergency Service etc.

State Selection Committee

9. Within each State, a State Selection Committee will be formed to assess and rank applications. The composition of the selection committees may vary between jurisdictions to take account of different existing committees and groups that will be utilised for the selection process. Core membership of the State Selection Committee will be:

- a representative of the State's Emergency Management Organisation (Chair),
- relevant volunteer agency representatives
- a representative of Emergency Management Australia.

10. The Attorney-General may appoint, or approve requests from jurisdictions to appoint, additional members to State Selection Committees, as required, to meet specific requirements and provide an appropriate level of expertise to consider applications. A number of considerations that should be applied by the selection committee in assessing applications are detailed in Roles and Responsibilities.

Sub-Unit

11. For the purposes of the administration of the NEVSF, a sub-unit is defined as a lower level element of a parent volunteer agency, for example, Wallaroo Brigade within the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Volunteer (Emergency Worker)

12. A volunteer worker who engages in emergency management activity at the request (whether directly or indirectly) or with the express or implied consent of the chief executive (however designated), or a person acting with the authority of the chief executive, of an agency to which either the State emergency response or recovery plans apply.