

Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund

Grant Guidelines



Ref: F0003233419

Guidelines for applicants

What is the Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund?

The Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund is established to promote the interests of water consumers. The Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund (CARF) was established under the *Water Industry Act 2012 (the Act)* to support research or advocacy that promotes the interests of consumers with a disability, low-income consumers, or consumers who are located within a regional area of South Australia.

Funding under the CARF is made available from licence fees paid by water industry entities under section 87(3) of the Act. The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) administers the CARF on behalf of the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water.

Grant program

The purpose of the CARF Grant Program is to fund entities to undertake research or advocacy projects to achieve outcomes that promote the objectives of the Act.

The CARF Grant Program provides support for: research or advocacy projects that meet the following requirements for the CARF outlined in section 87(5) of the Act:

- (a) support research or advocacy to promote the interests of water consumers with a disability, low-income consumers, or consumers within a regional area of the State; or
- (b) support projects that advance or assist the interests of consumers from an advocacy perspective.

How much funding is available?

Approximately \$100,000 is available for eligible projects in 2025-26.

What type of projects are eligible for funding?

Projects must be delivered in the State of South Australia.

Applicants must be a legal entity and must complete the application in the name of the legal entity that will be party to the grant agreement, if successful.

Eligible projects include research and/or advocacy projects that promote the interests of **water consumers** with any or all of the following:

- a disability
- low-income consumers
- consumers within a regional area of the State

Other projects will be considered including development of tools, information packages and other resources that promote the interests of and assist the above consumer groups.

The following priorities have been identified for funding for the 2025-26 CARF Grant Program funding round (but applications broader than these priorities will be considered on their merit):

- Equity of water cost, quality and supply in remote communities;
- Community education and capacity building about water use and management in remote communities and financially vulnerable communities;
- Consumer protections for priority end users (people living in remote Aboriginal communities and homelands; consumers located in rural and regional areas of the state; consumers living with disability; consumers on low incomes).

Funding from another source

If you have received previous funding for the same project, you will need to make it clear how this funding will build on previous funding. Similarly, if you have received funding from another source for this project, you will need to make it clear how the funding will enhance the project by using both amounts of funding, including separating what will be funded under this program and what is funded by another funding body.

You cannot apply for funding to do the same works from two funding sources but you can use this funding to build on another smaller project. Please make sure you make it clear what each funding source is actually paying for.

There is no requirement for funding contributions to be matched by the applicant, nor is a minimum contribution required from the applicant.

Who can apply for funding?

To be eligible to apply for funding, you must be a legal entity capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement and able to meet the terms of that agreement including managing a project in line with the grant agreement, providing reporting on the outcomes of the project, managing and reporting on the expenditure of the project and financial acquittal of funds.

How long do I have to undertake the project?

Funding will be for one-off projects of up to 2 years in duration.

Projects must be completed within the agreed timeframes as agreed and detailed in the grant agreement

When to apply for funding?

Applications can be submitted following a call for applications published on www.env.sa.gov.au (www.environment.sa.gov.au/get-involved/grants-and-funding/consumer-advocacy-research-fund).

Applications open at 9am, Monday 17 March 2025 and close on 5pm, Friday 9 May 2025.

No late applications will be accepted.

How to apply for funding?

Applications must be submitted using the Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund application form. The application form should be returned to the Department for Environment and Water by email to DEW.CARF@sa.gov.au in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe PDF (.pdf) format by the closing date. A notification will be issued upon receipt of your application.

No late applications will be accepted.

What happens after I apply?

All applications for CARF funding will be checked for eligibility and then assessed by an assessment panel who will score projects against the following criteria:

- The extent the project advances the interests and/or improve outcomes for water consumers with a disability, low income or from a regional area within the State.
- The distribution of costs and benefits across specific areas and groups of people, or benefits to a specific group of people with significant issues to address.
- Value for money in the expenditure of funds.
- How well the project meets and addresses the priority projects. For projects which do not align with the identified priority areas, how well does the project propose to address the issue, and the impact on targeted consumers?
- Clearly identifies how success will be measured.
- Clear and concise application with appropriate supporting documentation.

During the assessment process DEW may seek further information or clarification from the applicant to clarify details of the application.

DEW will formally notify all applicants of its decision in respect of their application. If the application is declined, the applicant can contact the Principal Policy Officer – Water Industry Act to discuss the reasons the application was not successful. If the application is successful, DEW will prepare a grant agreement and forward to the applicant for signing. Successful applicants will be expected to enter into a grant agreement with DEW within 90 days of the offer of funding being made.

When are funds paid?

Funds are provided to approved applicants in accordance with an agreed schedule of payments and will be linked to project outputs and deliverables.

Unspent funds

Upon provision of a final report and final financial acquittal, any funds that are not spent in accordance with the application and agreement must be returned to DEW in accordance with the grant agreement.

Further Information

For more information contact:

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