

**Housing NSW
Housing Communities Program
2009 - 2011**

***EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
GUIDELINES***

July 2008

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1. OVERVIEW

The Housing Communities Program (HCP) is a Housing NSW initiative aiming to enhance social cohesion and community wellbeing within key NSW locations affected by significant social, economic, environmental and/or housing change.

The Program began in 1993 as the Housing Communities Assistance Program or HCAP. The current program ends on 30 June 2008. Current contracts have been extended until 31 December 2008 to allow Housing NSW to prepare for an Expression of Interest process.

In this new 2009 – 2011 funding cycle, Housing NSW has fine tuned the program by:

- Changing the program name from Housing Communities Assistance Program (HCAP) to Housing Communities Program (HCP).
- Introducing service specifications for each project location prepared by Housing Services Divisions, to capture measurable activity that supports both broad program outcomes (social cohesion and community wellbeing) and local project outcomes.
- Including new EOI selection criterion encouraging HCP providers to work in partnership with Housing NSW to achieve program sustainability.

During 2009 - 2011 Housing NSW will provide grant funding to eligible non-government organisations or local councils to undertake a set of core activities in the following ten HCP locations:

HOUSING SERVICE DIVISION	HCP LOCATION
Greater Western Sydney	Cranebrook / Kingswood Park
	Minto
	Mt Druitt
	Rosemeadow / Ambarvale
Northern NSW	Casino
Southern & Western NSW	Dubbo
	Wagga Wagga
	Southern Suburbs of Wollongong
Central Sydney	Redfern / Waterloo
	Riverwood

Six of the above locations (Casino, Cranebrook / Kingswood Park, Redfern / Waterloo, Riverwood, Rosemeadow / Ambarvale, and southern suburbs of Wollongong) will be the subject of a new Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

Four of the above locations (Dubbo, Minto, Mt Druitt and Wagga Wagga) will continue under existing service contract arrangements to consolidate and make the most of specific locational factors and opportunities, including alignment with other HNSW initiatives and strategies. Current providers in these locations will however be expected to evolve their service planning and comply with the new Program Guidelines.

All HCP providers will be expected to comply with the provisions outlined in the HCP Program Guidelines (see separate document).

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The broad program objective is to build and improve social cohesion and community wellbeing in the selected project locations. Housing NSW will provide 2.5 years of funding to non-government organisations or local councils to employ project workers to achieve the objectives of the program through effective service planning and the delivery of appropriate tenant participation and community development strategies in these selected locations.

Contemporary studies have found a link between participation and wellbeing for both individuals and communities through building social cohesion. Studies refer to social cohesion as the 'quality and strength of people's relationships and bonds with others, including family, friends and the wider community' and fostering 'trust, reciprocity and shared identity' as crucial elements in achieving social cohesion.

3. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist potential applicants prepare an expression of interest (Eoi) to become the Housing Communities Program (HCP) provider from 1 January 2009 until 30 June 2011 in one of the following locations:

- Casino (part-time project)
- Cranebrook / Kingswood Park
- Redfern / Waterloo
- Riverwood
- Rosemeadow / Ambarvale
- Southern suburbs of Wollongong

These Eoi Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the HCP Program Guidelines available online at www.housing.nsw.gov.au

4 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS

The Expression of Interest process will require all applicants to:

- a) Demonstrate that they are an eligible organisation (see 4.1);
- b) Meet all of the selection criteria (see 4.2);
- c) Prepare a Service Plan that reflects the Service Specifications for the specific location (see 4.3 and Attachment 3);
- d) Submit a completed Application prior to close of business **Friday 22 August 2008**. (See Section 4.3 for more details).

4.1 Eligible Organisations

The following organisations are eligible to submit an expression of interest to receive HCP funding:

- a) An incorporated non-government organisation;
- b) Not-for-profit organisation; or
- c) A local council.

4.2 Selection Criteria

All expressions of interests for HCP funding will be assessed against the following selection criteria. Eligible organisations will need to demonstrate they meet each of the criteria by completing section 3 of the Application Form (Attachment 2).

- a) Demonstrated experience of working with **social housing communities** to engage in **tenant participation and/or community development** initiatives at a local level to bring about social cohesion and improvements in community wellbeing;
- b) Understanding of **current social housing and community issues and needs** within the nominated HCP location and a proven capacity to **engage with a diverse range of groups and individuals**, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, those of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with special needs, as well as young people and elderly tenants.
- c) Demonstrated experience in building and sustaining **relationships and linkages** with other organisations and groups within the nominated HCP location such as representatives of community groups, government agencies and business;
- d) Effective and **well designed HCP service plan** that reflects the HCP location service specifications defined by the relevant Housing Services Division (see Attachment C);
- e) Capacity to deliver measurable **outcomes against all of the HCP core activities** consistent with the Program's aims and operating principles (see HCP Program Guidelines);
- f) Demonstrate your **governance and management systems** including capacity to manage the HCP:
 - Financial and performance accountabilities
 - Appropriate insurance coverage;
 - Capacity to supervise the HCP worker (*Please: Specify how this criteria will be met on a day-to-day basis and who will be responsible*);
 - Appropriate accommodation for where the HCP worker will be based in the nominated location.
- g) Commitment and capacity to **work in partnership** with Housing NSW by contributing match funding and/or in-kind support and/or by **attracting external resources and support** to enable HCP initiatives to be sustainable over time.

4.3 Location Service Specifications

As documented in the HCP Program Guidelines, to assist organisations to develop appropriate and tailored HCP Service Plans, Housing Services Divisional officers have prepared location-specific service specifications against each of the core HCP activity areas. These are included at Attachment 3 of these Guidelines.

Note: All applicants are encouraged to carefully review the relevant specifications before drafting their Service Plans.

4.4 Application Requirements

All organisations wishing to submit expressions of interest are required to submit to Housing NSW a completed HCP EoI Application Form (see Attachment 2) that requires the following to be completed:

- 1) Heading indicating which **HCP location** the applicant is applying for.

- 2) A short **description of the organisation**, including its governance arrangements.
- 3) Statement addressing each of the **Selection Criteria** (using the template provided).
- 4) A draft **Service Plan** (using the template provided) that documents how the organisation proposes to deliver practical outcomes under each of the core activity areas consistent with the Housing Services Divisions' Specifications for the nominated location.
- 5) An **itemised budget**, detailing all HCP related expenditure such as:
 - Salaries and on-costs
 - Administration costs
 - Project Activity costs, including itemisation, where known, of:
 - Printing and stationary
 - Purchase of resource materials
 - Venue hire
 - Transport costs
 - Consultation costs and other items.
- 6) A recent **Financial Statement** (preferably audited) that demonstrates the organisation's viability.
- 7) Two **letters of support** testifying to the capacity and strength of the applicant in becoming the HCP provider in the nominated location.

Excluding items 6 and 7, expressions of interest should not exceed 25 pages in length.
*Note: All Expressions of Interest must be received by **COB FRIDAY 22 AUGUST 2008**.*

5. DECISION MAKING AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

All expressions of interest received by the due date will be assessed via the following steps:

- 1) Housing NSW officers in the Community and Tenant Participation Unit (CTPU) will conduct a preliminary assessment of all applications to:
 - a) Vet that the applicant is an eligible organisation;
 - b) Ensure that all application requirements have been submitted;
 - c) Prepare a list of eligible applicants per HCP location.
- 2) An HCP **Eol selection panel** will be formed comprising of:
 - At least two Housing Services Divisional representatives;
 - A CTPU representative;
 - An independent expert selected for their knowledge and understanding of social housing and community issues in NSW.
- 3) Panel members will **independently assess** all eligible Eol applications received per location and score each against the selection criteria using a merit selection process.

Panel members will be asked to declare any known conflicts of interest in respect to making a recommendation in each location. In the circumstance where an interest is declared, and is considered by the other panel members to potentially jeopardise, or be seen to potentially jeopardise, the independence of the process, the individual will exempt themselves from the assessment process for that location.
- 4) **Panel members will then convene**, discuss and compare their individual assessments on a location-by-location basis. Assuming there is unanimous agreement a recommendation will be made (see Step 5).

Should the panel not be unanimous on the recommended applicant, interviews may be held with those remaining applicants on the short-list.

All organisations to be interviewed will be informed in writing of the nature and focus of the interviews well in advance.

- 5) Short listed applicants will be reviewed by Housing Services Divisions (HSD) for final comment and/or feedback.
- 6) Once a single **recommendation** has been made by the Selection Panel on each HCP location, these will be submitted to the Director-General for approval and Ministerial announcement.

It is expected that all applicants, successful and unsuccessful, will be informed in writing by the end of September 2008.

6. SUBMISSION DETAILS

All Eoi Applications need to be submitted using the Application Form provided at Attachment 2. Applications are asked to carefully read the Application Checklist at Attachment 1 before submitting their Applications.

- Applicants should submit the signed original application, **plus three photocopies** of the full application.
- Excluding attachments, no single application form should exceed 25 pages in length.
- All applications should be received by Housing NSW by **COB FRIDAY 22 AUGUST 2008**. Late applications will not be accepted.
- All applications should be addressed to:
HOUSING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM EOI
Housing NSW
Community & Tenant Participation Unit
Locked Bag 4001
Ashfield BC 1800

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

A public information session will be held for interested applicants. The information session will provide potential applicants with an overview of program content and Eoi process. Specific information related to service specifications will not be addressed at the information session. Applicants wishing further information on specific HCP locations and service specifications should contact the HCP Contact Officer listed on the relevant Service Specification (see Attachment 3).

The details of the information session are as follows:

DATE: Thursday 31 July 08
TIME: 10.00 – 12.30
VENUE: Housing NSW
223-239 Liverpool Rd, Ashfield
Level 2- BREAKOUT – Area 1

If you would like to register for the information session or make an inquiry regarding the HCP or the EOI process please contact:

Yana Bilic
Community and Tenant Participation Unit
Housing NSW
Tel: 8753 8743
Email: yana.bilic@housing.nsw.gov.au

Applicants wishing to obtain a copy of the HCP Program Guidelines, should visit www.housing.nsw.gov.au and follow the links.