

**Organisation name:**

Bugonia  
Heritage

**1.1 What would a partnership between CSOs and the government that achieves outcomes for Australians being supported by the community sector look like?**

small organisations like ours--- Bungonia Park Land Manager ---whose income apart from GRANTS applications is Return and Earn from X3 domestic households--- should be made exempt - or allowed to advocate for exemption--and BE accepted !! on the grounds of impossible barrier hardship to providing any infrastructure upgrades. The last State Government changes making the requirement to provide 50% of requested money up front for an eligible application criterion is absolutely prohibitive to improving the lot of rural and isolated communities .

We desperately need public toilets and a community functional outdoor parkland support venue for the community ; The Village has NO commercial centre ; no infrastructure like reticulated water, sewage etc and many locals are off grid in this area .We have poor Mobile cover/reception and internet either too expensive or not reliable . Creating Community connections require we have an outdoor sustainable low/no cost gathering place to encourage connections broken by COVID ; Bushfires: Drought: Mental Health issues and the usual community groupings. Our X4 groups in Bungonia are ALL not for profits; Volunteers are getting harder to support and attract. We do our absolute best BUT cannot provide the huge amounts of money now required for infrastructure improvements ,costs of all reports/planning compliance etc . Gone are the days of Volunteer constructions; none would pass now so everything has \$ costs attached; this leaves our communities increasingly further behind. If partnerships could provide financial support to overcome this most difficult barrier we could provide better for our communities.

**1.2 How can CSOs and government streamline the sharing of information, particularly through utilising technology to effectively engage, distribute, share, influence and inform in a timely and efficient manner?**

The Village has NO commercial centre ; and many locals are off grid in this area .We have poor Mobile cover/reception and internet either too expensive or not reliable .There are skills deficits in the area and unless you are some of the newly arrived in Bungonia District who are Tech Savvy ,cashed up and working from home , generally the wider population here is NOT connected . The worship of technology to solve problems of communication in our area is a false hope; Connection places and spaces ; word of mouth; the hard copy takeaway - we no longer have a local news bulletin for our district beign unable to provide the costs to print ; the costs for someone ( once the volunteers were too old, arthritic etc etc to collate /write /and deliver ,distribute to letter boxes for people who were here as weekenders , recluses, people who come out when a Bushfire is on the horizon but not before and do not have any technology at home. we do have emails with updates which go out ;by collection of personal emails over years.Even this is becoming more unreliable as a communication method.

Face book is littered with competing local groups some blocked and private others more public . Finding 'one size fits all', when most dont engage unless their dog is lost is not a great way to spread very much real information. There is little value in ABC SBS and free to air TV material , because most ---if on the TV service-- have to buy into a network film /stream provider because the Internet and the Mobile links are so bad here. They all go out in storms, bad weather ; often during heavy cloud cover and of course during the Bushfires when all the power is lost.

**1.3 How can government ensure the community sector, including service users, and those not able to access services, have an opportunity to contribute to program design without imposing significant burdens?**

not sure but small orgs like ourselves have a wealth of on ground knowledge, of experience and because several are long lived community people we have a perspective of change through time.

The Community was galvanised against a quarry wanting to put BDouble trucks through the Village every 8 mins for 60 years; a long eventually successful campaign.

Likewise galvanised again against a proposed Industrial waste incinerator for Jerrara Road ; again successfully defeated.

When Bushfires threaten - 7 klm from Village ; impacted all the surrounding districts up from the coast to the Shoalhaven River etc in the Black Summer; the community was engaged .came to RFS station ; etc.

When drought bit before COVID the community was supported by ██████████ who started to bring food waste from businesses to feed dying drought affected stock in this area through Farm Aid.; anything up to 40 trailers/smalltrucks, little utes,cars lined up for the help including date limited hampers of domestic food support through them as well.

there is a large need for people to understand the supports available for Aged care /disability even to those isolated ,so they dont need to go into nursing homes prematurely . Most people find the Aged Care /Centerlink/Disability paperwork complexities for to difficult to navigate PLUS they cannot use the Tech supports.

The Progress Hall could be used as a Community hub if it was regularly hired by providers ?? it would take a fair while and persistent private access provision, for people to understand that they could get help there. Mobile cover is not too bad at hall; only Telstra; usually far too expensive for most locals who need to go into Goulburn to get access to the cheap services.

What programs could deal with these?

### 2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

the only grant funding we are actually eligible for is CRIF; this year we have been finally successful in getting Council support despite it being Crown Land and having a Non-Council Crown Land Manager But we are an 1830 settlement historically Bypassed and neglected, who have been trying to upgrade community assets. The Minns' Government has also made a pre election promise of funds towards the Public toilet block. However;

We need the whole Bungonia Reserve Renewal Project as a whole to provide the best sustainability, bushfire resilience, community gathering and recreation/shade/recovery space; Aboriginal Yarning space and connection to this Ngunawal country; learning and experience area supporting the Biodiversity Hot spot in the Reserve; the Aboriginal Bushfood Garden learning, the walking trails and the heritage Conservation area.

the whole project is an integrated concept to kickstart the economic, social, community and Aboriginal Learning renewal in the District; The project is Disabled accessible throughout. It offers an Asset development in Bungonia, Gateway support for the access to the Bungonia National Park 8 km from the Village, recurrent infrastructure support for the Centenary and Subsequent re-enactments of the First Australian Grand Prix event [Goulburn, Windellema, Bungonia, Goulburn loop] through these isolated areas, which will provide economic returns to the major service and accommodation centres of Goulburn and Marulan.

A major support of one off large funding would ensure the sustainable future of this community.

NO Grant funding is ever available for running costs BUT is a vital volunteer substitute.; Park Land Managers will be too old to clean toilets; collect rubbish; deal with vandalism - we do it now but cant continue; these ---including some running costs [particularly until the solar array is set up] will be needed to support the operation of the precinct for the community and increasing traveller numbers,

### 2.2 What administrative and overhead costs are not being considered in current grant funding?

Project management; all the planning and report costs; the absolute burden on elderly Volunteers who could do with subsidised Architects etc. [ours has done a huge amount pro bono or we couldn't even get off the ground !]

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The secretary of NFPS History and Park do Not accept money for the secretarial costs; NFP s are not always able to pay and these orgs would disintegrate without this support. Individual donors support which is unsustainable if there is change in circumstances and/or personnel. Printing; paper; inks, internet service costs( TELSTRA is the Most expensive) phone calls, transport to town meetings.

Because in Bungonia there is no commercial centre, no shops or services here, there are also no public toilets so open house is the go!, Volunteer costs include often providing time, set up, morning, aft tea food etc for visiting officials/site visits for Planning etc etc as unless the hall is hired there are no facilities; there is no money for "Country Hospitality" anyway.

To categorise, list, keep diary books of expenses, ;provide receipts etc etc the whole bureaucratic nightmare would make it even less attractive to do. Grant writing is exceptionally hard and gruelling as it is. We are NOT a business, but Volunteers; we run/support huge amounts of in-kind support for our community organisations

The grant application, the reporting requirements, and often the acquittal process particularly on tiny orgs like ours [currently 5 members] is huge.

Inequitable sizes; huge eg Centennial Park CR and ourselves receive same expectations; stream all grant apps according to the SIZE/income; active support small isolated ones.

### 2.3 How are rising operational costs impacting the delivery of community services?

We had Quantity Surveyor costings for the whole project in 2022 \$462,000.00

Quantity Surveyor costings for Identical Project [after UNSUCCESSFUL } grant application was \$989,000.00 Impossible difference;

NFP's here all items over X 3 times original costs.

Rural Fuel is 20 c a litre MORE than in cities. Because everything is in Town - higher cost burden; we do car pool when we can and clump meetings/medicals etc and shopping into a limited number of days if possible but it is often NOT possible.

the Progress NFP Community Cafe has had to increase prices despite determined intent to keep it low cost for local families to act as a circuit breaker and social hub on first and third Sunday morning of the month. Vols were too burnt out to keep doing it every week.

All deliveries cost more out here ; \$340.00 for 1 hour tech support for computer in home included "Travel time " [Goulburn is 28 km from Bungonia !!!!]

70 delivery charge for loads agricultural; Services cheapest min is \$50 on delivery generally more ..

Couriers do not deliver ; Goulburn Post does not deliver; you have to go in and collect.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council Rates are going up by 300%.

Electricity costs are spiralling also the cost of all status reports eg ;fire compliance ;pest management ;etc. Bungonia is freezing in winter, boiling in summer ; Hall heating /cooling costs are high as is also the running cost for the Electronic signage event advertising ;

Meetings are available on Zoom to assist ; resulted in fewer people able to attend if poor internet and /or cannot also afford fuel.

Cannot get builders other services to quote ; no one willing to lock in prices as the values decay too rapidly .THEREFORE GRANT APPLICATIONS ARE AT RISK because there is NO WAY POSSIBLE to get 3X quotes [ often, not even one is available ]

Mobile library no longer attends ; funding cuts.

#### **2.4 What have been your experiences with and reflections on the supplementation and change to indexation?**

N/A

#### **2.5 How can CSOs and the department work together to determine where funds are needed most to ensure equitable and responsive distribution of funds?**

Inequitable sizes; huge eg Centennial Park CR and ourselves receive same expectations; stream all grant applies according to the SIZE/income ; active support small isolated ones.

look at the districts;

learn the vulnerable area and groups; do one off MAJOR support to get them on their feet at last and give them a chance to be sustainable .

My guess you think Bungonia is 'so close to the Sydney /Canberra corridor there could be no disadvantage ;!!!

COME and VISIT us: do NOT stay behind a desk ; it does not let you know the realities.

2 hours from Sydney ; 180 mins from Canberra and 90 mins from the Coast; an ideal undeveloped asset; by-passed historically and still with those historical inequities despite the best efforts of the NFPs and Volunteers over their whole lives.

an asset able to value-add to all those communities including Goulburn 20 mins away and Marulan 15 mins away supporting a district experiencing a sudden population boost, continued climate impacts, and economic and technological disadvantage.

#### **2.6 How can government streamline reporting requirements, including across multiple grants, to reduce administrative burden on CSOs?**

we can only ever have one big and a very, very few small grants going at once -too hard to manage and acquit adequately .;

No Grant body allows non-acquitted grant applicants to apply again for grants from them

we have been advised to apply annually for Weed Management grants through Crown Reserve Improvement Fund

Plus we will be applying for Stage 1 toilet project funds with the funding assist we have procured so far. As GMC Council is supporting the project management, tendering etc ; we are immensely grateful and the project is therefore a possibility .

If we were starting another NSW Env fund grant and the paperwork was as before - there would be no chance that we could manage any other commitment at the same time. We are too stretched.

There must be a simpler more user friendly method of seeing what has been done and estimating successes and failures than 40 pages of detailed specialist executive level planning and financial management.

#### **3.1 What length grants are CSOs seeking to provide certainty and stability for ongoing service delivery?**

If it were possible to put in a grant application for a whole project and get a commitment to "Stay with it until completed" would be the absolute best so that there would be a defined support over time and the staging would feel like easy steps instead of "perhaps that is all we will ever get to achieve of this project".

in the current situation where finding anyone to build is almost unachievable as they do NOT want to work in Bungonia because we are isolated BUT in a big town they can go between several sites easily and save time

money and get economies of scale not available out here; also there are no fast food or other services -not even toilets or running water available in this village which is difficult ( or seems to be ) for their teams. longer funding agreements of=r easier extension times if Climate has impacted the time frames would be useful . longer grant agreements would be good if there was funding for eg running costs?

### **3.2 What timeframes should the government aim for, at a minimum, to provide final outcomes on grant variations/extensions before the current grant ceases?**

past experience for us was 6then 3 months interval . Due to factors beyond our control -A massive South East coast low which destroyed Soil Con projects in other areas --our project was held up for 8 months while they fixed the damages ; this meant we had to keep revising the GANT and getting permissions from NSW Env Trust until they said we were on our last one and the grant would be withdrawn if not completed within the times stated. It was a tense mad rush to get it done at last. Extenuating circumstances were provided or we would not have been eligible for the extension at all. the War Memorial repairs have taken a long time ; we have n=had nearly 2 years of constant rain here which has meant long delays ; Hard to say ; maybe groundworks/out door projects -given the climate variability- should automatically have more time than internal grant works under shelter?

### **3.3 What funding flexibility do CSOs require to enable service delivery and innovation?**

Access to a 'Contingency fund" for the times when the costs have suddenly increased;  
Access to some agency with real TEETH to ensure Builder authentication, insurances, viability, ID etc checks and registration so we know we are with a reliable one ;  
Our due diligence may not be enough as we learnt with our previous experience discovering unregistered builders wanting projects; hiding their credential gaps; wanting a nod and a wink in exchange for cheaper price. Even registered builders providing inadequate /illegal build and depending on small orgs to be unable to take them to court/require/force them to knockdown and re-build the illegal structures to comply with DA drawings.  
Access to Community development mentoring to envision better more sustainable ways of building the community and imagining useful projects.

### **3.4 What flexibility is required by CSOs in acquittal processes to support and encourage sector innovation?**

some smaller grants now seem to 'sample' the funded projects and not require acquittal except by specific request .This may work for smaller amounts of funding , I doubt it its defensible for larger amounts. perhaps allowing for several styles of presentation? of results?  
Perhaps if personnel could visit sites ? make an assessment ?  
There would be more connection with granting bodies and we would be people not just numbers at the end of a formal template application. They might then be able to actively support/advocate for the next stage /tranche of infrastructure because they knew the realities of the small applicants.  
For big orgs they have "back of office" teams of people with tech and other skills ; paid report writers and paid grant applicants and acquittals officers .

### **3.5 How can government improve the variation process, with consideration that CSOs must demonstrate alignment with the grant agreement and provide evidence of value for money outcomes?**

I found the the NSW Environment fund was well administered ; the reporting and acquittal was very extensive ,detailed and very onerous However the grant providers did provide a large amount of help to us as we struggled through requirement to complete nearly 40 pages of financial , policy ; planning outcomes projections etc - full items that would grace the Snowy 11 hydro project I'm sure ,but difficult for an elderly volunteer with a local project.  
We did require a variation decision ; either we gave the money back or got a variation. the biggest problem was that it required coordinating the successful construction tenderers and design team , Soil Conservation Services Plus the NSW Environment Fund to all agree on what was engineeringly possible with the revised cost assessments ;their combined slowness eventually resulted in my sending a letter to all parties stating that each government department was holding up the work of the other department and could they get a move on because the funding grant date was going to expire with nothing done; then I had to apply for a time extension as well .; Glacially slow is my comment although it was all achieved eventually ; but entirely nerve wracking.  
acquittal requirements( another pile of financial papers and outcomes etc to complete around 25/30 of them this time also receiving help from grant coordinators etc again ]. came with a requirement for 5 years of onsite vegetation records; GPS logged photo records ; planting and rehabilitation records stream activity and outcomes ; as it all coincided with the major drought then flooding life was exciting.  
At the time of this grant we had 3 members and one was dying ; without the grant officers help the project money would have been abandoned and the money returned. That

personal patience and knowledgeable assistance to this small org, isolated and non-techie made all the difference in the world .

#### 4.1 How can the government ensure opportunities are available for new and emerging organisations to access funding?

I look at funding web sites.

They could be made more available and 'curated'?? perhaps through local Councils.

Advance warning of opening dates is especially valuable given the usually extremely small window for completing an application ;especially with the increasingly convoluted and detailed requirements of attached documentation and vanishingly small access to quotes.

There must be a way of allowing Councils--- a special arrangement ? a MOU? some legal way ?? --that they can actually use their resource base to PARTNER with such as our tiny Crown Reserve in mutual interest for the Benefit of a small rural community which is a Village Settlement in their LGA. and where ALL the available "public land area" is actually Crown Land ; this has created constant difficulties for us in finding funding; in Planning permissions; in regulatory requirements ; in compliance;

It would be great if Councils were funded ?? supported ?? directed ?? to partner with smaller orgs like us, as part of Local Government interactions and allow equitable access and support for the Grant funding /provision of infrastructure etc .and a highway through the intricacies of the Planning and other Council processes.

This would be a new approach.

#### 4.2 What programs, supports and information are already available for smaller CSOs to help build capacity of the organisation? Are these working?

Crown Lands provides webinars on skills development ;

I have done the 26 of them last year ;

The amount and the time is a big ask for a volunteer .

they are available to be used at will ; however few volunteers have taken this up in my group .

There are Crown Land information days with particular focus; members will travel ( car pool) to these because there is a networking element and they are time limited non-tech dependant ;

we have several people still in the work force and information days are not accessible for them

#### 4.3 How could larger CSOs support smaller CSOs? What are the barriers to providing this support?

supports

mentoring;

experience volunteering into the local NFPs ;

Providing big orgs with "Team Building opportunities " local embedding experiences to really understand the local situations- perhaps under the NFP's guided supports.

eg history needs large amounts of hard copy material digitised and catalogued and made available on websites and to local library ; we cant do it ; need equipment skills ;personnel; time ;costs covered ; big project for support from an org that would like to do this with /for us .this material will remain inaccessible ; lost perhaps ; Bungonia is the first government Town established on the first road south [ the Argyle road] out of the Sydney basin in the colonial era.That's why these records matter.

barriers

tech inadequacies ;

perceived distance;

if personnel came to support ; billeting is possible in Community ; rentals are not.

#### 5.1 What is your experience with and reflections on place-based funding approaches?

where you expect large numbers of support in the demographic you are not accounting for the type of rural population that is not readily engaged.

the idea "build it and they will come" "provide it and it will be used" are possibly more useful approaches but they require a leap of faith in the Communities to be served.

We see funding going to those who already have commercial and other resources impossible for us to imagine .It seems to be "to those that have more is given - to those who have not -"forget it you cant even qualify ".

the support for the small and disadvantaged is probably less "economic" in the short term BUT in the end a whole community is lifted slowly by provision of relevant useful ,community building infrastructure which will continue to support its members and visitors into the future. Such forward thinking projects create a scaffolding for future creativity ,economic and community building options .

If the local groups are directly supported to be involved then you will get better results. As NFPs they are only interested in the betterment of their community .

## 5.2 What innovative approaches could be implemented to ensure the grant funding reaches trusted community organisations with strong local links?

meet the communities and talk with them .  
look at their footprint in the work they have already done.  
VISIT ;STAY a while.  
discover their reputations with the Local Councils etc.

## 5.3 Which areas do you consider have duplicative funding or gaps you think need to be addressed, and what is the evidence?

N/A

## 5.4 Where there is a community-led change initiative, could shared accountability to community and funders (government) strengthen service delivery?

YES and I suggest this .

I put this further up as well in the questions.

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It would be great if Councils were funded ?? supported ?? directed ?? to partner with smaller orgs like us, as part of Local Government interactions and allow equitable access and support for the Grant funding /provision of infrastructure etc .and a highway through the intricacies of the Planning and other Council processes.

This would be a new approach.

Crown Lands and Local Government are SURELY in the same job - trying to look after the local environment and its people . Integrating the effort to help each other must surely be more effective.

The BLER funding ,administered to the local areas by the GMC ,has been very valuable and kick started many valuable improvements/upgrades for the Progress Association hall and that has spilled out in to Community available asset improvements.

## 6.1 If any, what are the problems or challenges you think have been overlooked?

streamlining the Planning process; the timelines are incredibly long and funding and or allowed DA start times are compromised because of delays from Planning for construction certificates , approvals etc.

I think there is no government person/agency that looks at the issues faced by isolated small communities that we could turn to , that was a pipeline of supports ; that advocated for the small , and the NFPS trying to keep vulnerable communities together .

We have had an influx of new residents some living here some weekenders ; some work from home ; some commute ; How to develop community connections for these people into the existing fabric of the "Locals" is a puzzle needing some help.

reliable cheap/ affordable mobile phone provision /Internet access technical skills deficits in communities such as ours.

in bushfire time, accidents, disasters those with mobile phones on the cheap plans only available in towns have No contact with emergency services. Rural Telstra is NOT affordable for most .

most are off grid ;therefore many are firmly, independently non-engaged .

## 6.2 What other solutions or changes could also be considered?

adding large tax benefits or other incentives to philanthropists willing to support small communities and their NFPS like ours .

A program to marry up willing interested Philanthropists and small communities like ours so they will 'take us under their wing' .become partnered with us .learn from and with us as we would with them .

"Town and Country" connectors as a focus to willing city based groups .It could help with Volunteer base supports; providing a 'Yeast ' to ideas , and perhaps some energy to the flagging locals.

### **6.3 What does success look like?**

Working together to find equitable viable solutions.

Inequalities given a fix that sets community on to a sustainable path.