



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts**

**Mobile Network Hardening Program:
Yarramalong Resilience Upgrade
Revised - Grant Opportunity Guidelines**

**Commonwealth policy
entity:**

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development, Communications and the Arts

Enquiries:

If you have any questions, please contact
MBSP@infrastructure.gov.au

Questions should be sent no later than 5 June 2024

Date guidelines released: 1 May 2024

Date applications close: 12 June 2024

Type of grant opportunity: One-off ad-hoc

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1. About the grant

- 1.1.1. During the 2022 Federal Election, the Australian Government committed up to \$140,000 (GST exclusive) to improve mobile network resilience in the community of Yarramalong, NSW against the impacts of power outages, including during or after natural disasters.
- 1.1.2. In November 2023, the department conducted an ad-hoc grant opportunity process to seek a solution to deliver this commitment. This process closed in December 2023 and, following the assessment and decision process, did not result in a successful outcome due to unexpected network dependencies at the Yarramalong site that were not apparent at the time the process opened.
- 1.1.3. The Guidelines have been updated to provide scope to allow consideration of additional work that may be required to achieve the intend outcome below for the community of Yarramalong.
- 1.1.4. The objective of the grant is to co-fund the deployment of a permanent, on-site generator at the Telstra mobile base station in Yarramalong, to permit it to operate for at least 24 hours in the event of a mains power outage that impacts the operation of the site (the **Resilience Upgrade**). This may include consideration of other necessary resilience upgrades to supporting infrastructure and systems required to achieve the intended outcome below.
- 1.1.5. The intended outcome of the grant is to ensure the continuity of Telstra mobile services to the community of Yarramalong for a minimum of 24 hours in the event of a mains power outage to support public safety communications and access to essential digital services.
- 1.1.6. This grant will be administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the **department**) on behalf of the Australian Government and forms part of the Mobile Network Hardening Program (**MNHP**) within the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (**STAND**) Package.¹ It contributes to the achievement of the department's Outcome 5.
- 1.1.7. The grant is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#)²

2. Grant amount and grant period

- 2.1.1. Up to \$140,000 (GST exclusive) is available in 2024-25 for the provision of a permanent generator at the Yarramalong mobile base station.

¹ See www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/improving-resilience-australias-telco-networks

² See www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf

- 2.1.2. Additional funding may be available to support other necessary work to achieve the intended outcome of this grant, subject to value with relevant money considerations and availability of funding.
- 2.1.3. The Grantee is encouraged to provide a financial (cash) co-contribution to the cost of the Resilience Upgrade. The Grantee is also encouraged (but not required) to seek financial and/or in-kind co-contributions from third-parties, for example state governments, local emergency service or community organisations. There is no limit to contributions from third-parties.
- 2.1.4. The Resilience Upgrade must be completed by no later than 30 June 2025, unless otherwise agreed by the department (see section 5.2.).
- 2.1.5. The Resilience Upgrade should remain operational and in-use at the Yarramalong base station by the grantee for at least 10 years following the date on which the department confirms with the grantee that it accepts the upgrade works have been completed (the **Operational Period**).

3. The grant selection process

- 3.1.1. This grant opportunity has been established as a one-off ad-hoc grant. The department considers that this is an appropriate type of selection process considering the nature of the election commitment is specifically dependent on the installation of an on-site permanent generator at the existing mobile base station site in Yarramalong and this may include consideration of other necessary resilience upgrades to supporting infrastructure and systems required to achieve the intended outcome (see 1.1.5.).
- 3.1.2. Telstra (the **Grantee**) has been identified as the appropriate recipient because the existing mobile base station site in Yarramalong is owned and operated by Telstra. Telstra is the only entity that is capable of undertaking the grant activity.

3.2. Eligible grant activities

- 3.2.1 To be eligible your grant activity **must**:
 - Construct, deploy and/or install the Resilience Upgrade (including any required power system upgrade) to the existing Telstra mobile base station site located at 1698 Yarramalong Road, Yarramalong NSW (ACMA Site ID: 10009053); and
 - Provide a minimum of 24 hours total back-up supply to this site, including the existing battery back-up of 12 hours installed at the site under Stage 1 of the Mobile Network Hardening Program.

3.2.2. You **may** also submit alternative proposals, provided you submit at least one proposal that is compliant with sections 2.1. and 3.2.1. of the Guidelines. Alternative proposals can be:

- supplemental options that are necessary resilience upgrades to supporting infrastructure and systems required to enable your eligible proposal (at 3.2.1.) to achieve the intended outcome; and / or
- alternative approaches to achieving the intended outcome of the Grant Opportunity set out at section 1.1.5.

3.2.3 Any alternative proposal will only be considered after the eligible proposal at 3.2.1 has been fully assessed. Any assessment of an alternative proposal will be subject to eligibility, assessment criteria and value with relevant money considerations as set out in these Guidelines, including if the proposal would exceed the available Grant Amount set out at section 2.1.1. The department reserves the right to recommend, or not recommend, an alternative proposal.

3.2.4 Costs that the grant can be used for are:

- Capital costs directly incurred by the Grantee for the purchase, installation and/or construction of the Resilience Upgrade and/or approved alternative proposal. This may include purchasing equipment and supplies, project management and payment of employees or contractors to carry out the approved works.

3.2.4. The Grantee will be responsible for any actual capital costs that exceed estimated costs or the grant amount (see sections 2.1.1. and 2.1.2.). All operating costs related to the Resilience Upgrade will be the responsibility of the Grantee.

3.3. Ineligible grant activities

3.3.1. The following are ineligible activities and/or costs:

- operational and/or maintenance costs incurred as a result of the Resilience Upgrade funded through this grant opportunity;
- any work, not directly related to the installation of the Resilience Upgrade, that is a requirement of or under any federal, state or local government laws, such as the establishment, maintenance, certification or registration of asset protection zones, fire trails or access roads, or hazard reduction works, for example mandatory work required to comply with changes to planning requirements;
- Business as Usual (**BAU**) operational and maintenance or remedial work. This includes maintenance of existing clearings or control of vegetation around a site, and general repair or maintenance work to structures; or
- any cost for which the Grantee is already receiving funding from the Commonwealth, or which is to be covered by its own contributions or other third-party contributions, under a Commonwealth funding agreement.

3.4. Grant assessment

3.4.1. The Grantee is required to provide, in a format of its choice, a document setting out:

- The latitude and longitude (GDA94) of the Resilience Upgrade;
- A description of the Resilience Upgrade and any power system upgrade required for the operation of the Resilience Upgrade;
- The current and proposed Design Reserve (in hours) of the site;
- The increased back-up power capacity (in hours) provided by the Resilience Upgrade;
- The total cost (GST exclusive) of the Resilience Upgrade;
- The cost to the Commonwealth (GST exclusive) of the Resilience Upgrade;
- The cost to the Grantee (GST exclusive) of the Resilience Upgrade;
- The cost to any third-parties (GST exclusive) of the Resilience Upgrade; and
- A budget and project timeline for the delivery of the Resilience Upgrade.

3.4.2. The department reserves the right to use information previously supplied by the Grantee as part of its applications for funding under Stages 1 of the MNHP and Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) to assess the Resilience Upgrade. The Grantee should inform the department of any material updates to this information as part of its proposal under this grant opportunity.

Note, Yarramalong site was funded under Round 1 of MBSP and its battery backup system was upgraded to at least 12 hours under Stage 1 of MNHP.

3.4.3. The proposal will be assessed by officers within the department.

3.4.4. The proposal is required to provide sufficient information to allow the following assessment criteria to be evaluated:

Criterion 1: Will this proposal achieve a Resilience Upgrade to provide continuity in the event of a mains power outage for a minimum of 24 hours total back-up supply, including the existing battery back-up of 12 hours?

Criterion 2: Will the proposal provide a Resilience Upgrade to the Yarramalong base station?

Criterion 3: Is the total cost of the proposed Resilience Upgrade to the Commonwealth within the total value of the grant opportunity?

3.4.5. In addition to the above criteria, the assessment of the proposal will consider the following items to assess whether the proposal represents value with relevant money:

- the Grantee's total contribution and any other third-party contributions to the total cost of the proposed Resilience Upgrade;
- that the proposed Resilience Upgrade can be delivered on time and to budget (as identified in supporting documents);

- that the proposed Resilience Upgrade has been appropriately costed (the level and detail of the costing should be commensurate with the value of the project);
- that the level of risk associated with the proposal and its implementation is manageable and/or acceptable;
- that required approvals are in place, applied for, or otherwise expected to be received in the necessary timeframe to complete the proposed Resilience Upgrade.

4. Who will approve the grant?

- 4.1.1. The Minister for Communications (the **Decision Maker**) will make the final decision to approve a grant.
- 4.1.2. The Decision Maker's decision is final in all matters, including:
- the approval of the grant;
 - the grant amount to be awarded; and
 - the terms and conditions of the grant.

5. Notification of the grant

- 5.1.1. We will advise you of the outcome in writing, following a decision by the Decision Maker. We will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.
- 5.2. The grant agreement/Payment of the grant
- 5.2.1. The department will issue the Grantee with a draft variation to its MNHP Stage 2 funding agreement (the **Funding Agreement**) to give effect to the Decision Maker's decision.
- 5.2.2. The Grantee may request amendments to the terms of the draft variation. Where the department does not consider a requested amendment acceptable, it will negotiate with the Grantee.
- 5.2.3. The variation must be executed before the department can make any payments to the Grantee. If the Grantee chooses to start the grant activity before the variation is executed, it does so at its own risk.
- 5.2.4. The department intends for the grant activity to commence as soon as possible following the Decision Maker's decision and will seek to promptly negotiate and arrange to execute the variation.
- 5.2.5. The Funding Agreement, as varied to include the additional grant funding provided through this grant opportunity, will state the:
- maximum additional grant amount to be paid for the Resilience Upgrade;

- any additional financial contributions the Grantee and/or third-parties propose to make for the Resilience Upgrade;
- details of the Resilience Upgrade, including the location, type of solution, proposed design reserve, intended use, estimated cost and proposed rollout schedule; and
- payment milestones and timeframes for the additional grant funding.

5.2.6. The department will make payments according to the payment milestones and timeframes set out in the Funding Agreement as varied.

5.2.7. Payments will be GST inclusive, as set out in the variation.

5.3. Grant acquittal and reporting

5.3.1. The variation to the Funding Agreement will include provisions requiring that the Grantee submit reports in line with the timeframes and requirements in the Funding Agreement as varied.

6. Announcement of the grant

6.1.1. Your grant will be listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website, no later than 21 days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

7. Grant evaluation

7.1.1. The department may evaluate this grant to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved and may use information from the proposal, the Grantee's MNHP Stage 1 application and reports for this purpose.