

# Homelessness Innovation Fund 2024 - 2025

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## Service Reform and Innovation Frequently Asked Questions 'FAQs'

October 2024



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## Acknowledgement of Country

Homes NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this document.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Homelessness Innovation Fund 2024 - 2025

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# Homes NSW Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## The NSW Homelessness Strategy

The NSW Homelessness Strategy will be released later in 2024. The Strategy will set out our vision to make NSW a place where homelessness is rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it.

The development and design of responses to homelessness will build on what we know works, and be guided by the following principles:

- Housing is a human right
- Informed by Aboriginal people and families, and people with lived experience of homelessness
- A focus on prevention
- A person-centred, strengths-based, culturally appropriate and trauma-informed system
- A joined-up service system
- Flexible, localised service design and delivery
- A Housing First philosophy – this means providing or maintaining access to safe, appropriate and stable housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, without preconditions and with wrap around support to address their needs and maintain their accommodation.

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## The Homelessness Innovation Fund Grant program

The Homelessness Innovation Fund (HIF) will initially target improving the outcomes and reducing demand of temporary accommodation, and proposals for service reform and innovation. From the 2024/25 NSW budget decision, Homes NSW received \$527.6 million in extra funding over four years for frontline homelessness services. Of this \$100 million has been allocated to establish the HIF.

\$30 million has been provisionally allocated for 2024-2025 for the HIF.

Under the HIF, organisations can apply for a one-off grant. The HIF is intended to have a wide entry gate, so some proposals may be funded by the HIF, or, through any other appropriately suited path available to Homes NSW (eg direct dealing).

Funding priorities for the HIF for 2025-2026 and beyond will be announced later in 2024-2025.

There are two Grant Programs for the HIF in 2024-2025:

- Reforming Temporary Accommodation
- Service Reform and Innovation.

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## FAQ topics and questions

These FAQs are designed to respond to the most asked questions regarding the HIF – Service Reform and Innovation Grant Program for 2024-2025.

This document has been developed to help potential applicants completing and submitting grant applications.

These FAQs should be read together with the HIF Service Reform and Innovation [Program Guidelines](#).

Questions and answers below are grouped in topics in the same order as they appear in the Guidelines:

- Overview of the grant
- What grant funds can be used for
- Eligibility and assessment criteria
- Completing the application
- A one stage application process
- Other requirements
- Assessment process
- After applications close.

For more detailed information about compliance with grants administration requirements please refer to the [NSW Grant Administration Guide](#).

For additional support about grant administration processes, contact the Grant Design and Support email [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au).

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## Overview of the Grant

### **Q: What are the aims and objectives of the Service Reform and Innovation Program?**

A: Solutions to addressing homelessness depend on partnerships and innovation between services, researchers, the homelessness and housing sectors, governments and the clients themselves.

Homes NSW is regularly approached by organisations with ideas to improve the homelessness service they deliver, or the system more generally.

Until now, there hasn't been a mechanism for these ideas to be considered in an open and transparent process. The Service Reform and Innovation Grant Program provides this mechanism.

The purpose of the Service Reform and Innovation Grant Program is to:

- support homelessness services to transform current accommodation and/or service responses to deliver more and/or better outcomes for clients.
- support homelessness services in action-research to test new service delivery approaches.
- increase the flexibility of assets and/or supports so they can adapt to changing need and demand for services and housing.

This grant program is deliberately open and flexible and provides an opportunity for services to be positioned for the future.

**Q: What kind of organisations are eligible to apply?**

A: The grant program is open to all accredited Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) and registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) both through National or Local Scheme.

Consideration will be given to organisations who agree to achieve SHS accreditation and housing providers who are in the process of registration.

Partnerships are welcome where the lead provider meets the criteria above.

Applications led by, or in partnership with Aboriginal-led providers will be highly regarded.

**Q: Our organisation has been delivering homelessness services, however we are not a funded SHS provider. Are we eligible to apply?**

A: Yes, but you will need to commit to becoming accredited. Preference will be given towards providers that are already accredited with a proven track record.

**Q: How do we become an accredited SHS?**

A: Please visit DCJs [accreditation](#) website for further information.

**Q: How do we become a registered housing provider?**

A: Please visit the [National Scheme](#) and [Local Scheme](#) websites for further information.

**Q: Can we apply for a grant for service delivery and if so, can that grant relate to service delivery over more than one year?**

A: Yes. However, as a general rule, only service delivery to June 2026 will be considered at this stage, as new SHS contracts will be in place from 1 July 2026. Exceptions may be considered on their merits. Ongoing funding for service delivery will be considered in the context of recommissioning and not part of the grant program process. Providers need to consider sustainability of service provision after 30 June 2026, or plans to transition out.

**Q: Are partnerships welcome and how do they work?**

A: Yes partnerships and collaborations are welcome. Partnerships are where two or more organisations have made an informal agreement to work together, to meet the grant program objectives. The lead organisation must be an CHP or an SHS provider. All organisations included in the partnership must meet the eligibility criteria.

**Q: What are the funding amounts we can apply for?**

A: Funding is limited and the intention is to achieve a statewide impact, rather than be absorbed through a limited number of larger grants. Therefore, there is no specific limit on the value of the grant providers can apply for.

Funding through the HIF will need to be spent within 12 months, therefore the applicant must have capacity and capability to deliver this project within the timeframe of the executed Grant Funding Agreement will need to be considered.

Homes NSW may vary the distribution of funds depending on the number of funding applications submitted.

Homes NSW may also offer successful applicants a package lower than the amount requested.

**Q: Can grant funding can continue for more than 12 months?**

A: Funding through the HIF will need to be spent within 12 months, therefore applicants must have capacity and capability to deliver this project within the timeframe of the executed Grant Funding Agreement.

**Q: Does the program include funding categories?**

A: No

**Q: Why is HIF opening before the homelessness strategy in place?**

A: Homes NSW is working as quickly as possible to have the NSW Homelessness Strategy in place by the end of this year. However, we need to leverage the additional funding in the 2024/25 NSW Budget now to address the current crisis and give services an opportunity to innovate. The key elements of the new Strategy have been in place since last year, that NSW is committed to the experience of homelessness being rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it.

**Q: The Service Reform and Innovation round doesn't outline specific reform priorities, instead it leaves it open. Why is that?**

A: We have a reform agenda with the Reforming Temporary Accommodation round. We hear from services regularly about their ideas to innovate the service they deliver or do something different to deliver more or better outcomes for the clients they support. This is a unique opportunity for services to bring forward those ideas for consideration within this grant program.

**Q: Is there an opportunity for Homes NSW to negotiate with applicants?**

A: In limited cases there may be, depending on the application and requirements of the approved grant program guidelines.

**Q: I wasn't able to attend the HIF information session held on the 11 September 2024. Is there a recording?**

A: Yes, the recording of the information session is located on DCJs HIF webpages at [Reforming Temporary Accommodation](#) and [Service Reform and Innovation](#).

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## What grant funds can be used for

**Q: What can we use the grant funds for?**

A: Funds can only be used for expenses/activities directly associated to the grant. This includes service delivery and accommodation, including capital builds. Your application must clearly outline your proposed expenditure in relation to the funding amounts identified above and included in the budget you submit with your application.

**Q: What are we not allowed to spend grant funding on?**

A: Organisations must not use the money provided for the project, nor any interest earned on the money, for any other purpose beyond what is specified in the approved project description. Items or activities that sit outside the eligibility criteria will not be funded.

Items or activities that funding cannot be used for including, for example:

- Any activity of a commercial nature that is for profit.
- Existing debt or budget deficits.
- Permanent salaries/wages (costs for temporary wages for your program or activity can be included).
- Costs associated with obtaining accreditation or registration.
- Business as usual costs or general operating expenses.
- Programs or activities that encourage gambling such as bingo, or the consumption of alcohol.
- Programs and activities coordinated by NSW Government Departments and Statutory Authorities.
- The same project twice. For example, two different organisations cannot apply for funds for the same program or activity. This includes refuge or other accommodation, or services already funded within SHS contracts.

**Q: Can we receive funding if we've already received an insurance payment, government grant or government funding?**

A: No, not for the same program or proposal.

**Q: Can we apply to reconfigure properties that are owned by Homes NSW (e.g., the refuge attached to my service package)?**

A: Yes, with consideration that to be eligible you must show an increase in supply or services, and funding will not be provided for activities already funded in your current contract.

**Q: Can I apply to use properties available for meanwhile use under this grant program?**

A: Yes. Homes NSW will consider the cost effectiveness of grant funding associated to properties that will only be available for short periods.

**Q: Can we apply for a project that has already started?**

A: Grant funds are not available for projects already in progress at the beginning of the application process.

**Q: What is subcontracting?**

A: If applicable, a response to this question could be based on the following: In simple terms, for the purposes of these grants “subcontracting” refers to an arrangement between your organisation and one or more other organisations/individuals (referred to as “subcontractors”) to assist your organisation to provide services funded through your grant. In some cases all the service delivery may be undertaken by the subcontractor. A subcontracting arrangement requires the eligible organisation to enter into an agreement with the subcontractor to conduct the work, but the applicant (lead) organisation will retain the contractual obligations to DCJ under the Grant Funding Agreement for delivery and accountability. For this reason, it's important you carry out the necessary due diligence before entering into such an agreement and applying for a grant on one or more subcontractors' behalf'. It's important you understand that, when you subcontract any part of the services, you become the prime contractor, as holder of the contract with us. The subcontracting arrangement for this one-off grant is different to your subcontracting requirements under an SHS/Human Services Agreement (HSA) funded contract.

For further information, please refer to the DCJ [subcontracting](#) policy.

**Q: Is subcontracting the same as auspicings?**

A: Yes, Please note the term “subcontracting” is used for the purposes of this grant program.

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## Eligibility and assessment criteria

**Q: What are the eligibility criteria?**

A: All applicants are required to meet the following eligibility criteria.

The grant program is open to all accredited Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) and registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) both through National or Local Scheme.

Consideration will be given to organisations who agree to achieve SHS accreditation and housing providers who are in the process of registration.

Collaborations between organisations are welcome, where the lead provider meets the criteria above.

Applications led by, or in partnership with Aboriginal-led providers will be highly regarded.

Note: for the purposes of this grant program, organisations deemed to be ‘incorporated not-for-profit community organisations’ include:

- incorporated organisations that are registered and approved as not-for-profit bodies by NSW Fair Trading
- not-for profit companies limited by guarantee, registered in NSW (must have ACNC registration and/or DGR status)
- associations (registered under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 with NSW Fair Trading)
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- religious organisations operating in NSW
- NSW non-government organisations established under an Act of Parliament.

Note, the following are mandatory eligibility criteria:

- all applicants must have appropriate insurance of \$10 million
- all applicants must address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions
- all applicants must adhere to NSW Government public health orders and advice in regard to COVID-19. Up-to-date information is available on the NSW Government COVID-19 website
- applications will not be accepted from organisations with outstanding acquittals with DCJ.

**Q: What are the assessment criteria?**

A: Eligible organisations must meet the following assessment criteria to be considered for funding:

- Value for money of the grant applied for, noting that Homes NSW is seeking to have a statewide impact.
- How the project will provide accommodation for more clients within existing support resources. This includes crisis and medium-term accommodation.
- How the project will support people out of crisis accommodation and into more stable and appropriate accommodation.



- How the project will reach more clients and/or deliver better outcomes for clients.
- How the project will improve the coordination of service delivery.
- How the model responds to particular cohorts, or regional factors.
- Evidence that the applicant has the capacity and capability to execute the proposal and within the proposed timeframes.
- How the model reshapes service delivery or contributes to system transformation.

**Q: Can we get feedback on our proposal before we submit our application?**

A: We are unable to provide feedback on individual proposals, prior to application submission. Applications need to be lodged via SmartyGrants where they will be assessed through a one stage, fair and robust assessment process.

## Completing the application

**Q: Do I have to use SmartyGrants to apply?**

A: Yes, applications for this program will only be accepted that are submitted via the SmartyGrants platform.

**Q: Can I review the application form before starting my application?**

A: Yes, when you log on to SmartyGrants and view the application you can also choose to download as a PDF to review whenever you like. You can also preview the form online. Please note that PDF copies of application forms do not show which questions are conditional, so you may see questions that do or do not apply to your organisation.

**Q: Can I provide letters of support or references to support my application?**

A: No, only your application form and any documents requested and submitted through the application form on SmartyGrants will be considered.

**Q: Is there support available to help with our application?**

A: There is a suite of resource materials available, located under 'Resources' on DCJs HIF webpages at [Reforming Temporary Accommodation](#) and [Service Reform and Innovation](#).

The DCJ Grants team can assist organisations with any queries regarding the application process. Organisations can contact Grant Design and Support at [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au). Please quote your Application ID in all correspondence. If you are not familiar with the SmartyGrants management system, please refer to the SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants or their general help page. You can also contact SmartyGrants directly if you are having technical difficulties with the application form or your SmartyGrants account/password, for contact details visit their help page. For program enquiries, please contact the SHS mailbox at [shsprogram@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shsprogram@homes.nsw.gov.au).

**Q: Can we submit more than one application?**

A: Yes, there is no limit on the number of proposals submitted.

**Q. Should we include GST in our application?**

A: Your funding request should exclude any GST that you will be charged by contractors or suppliers as part of the cost/delivery. If your application is successful and your organisation's ABN is

registered for GST, you will be paid GST on top of the approved grant amount. If your organisation ABN is not registered for GST or you do not have an ABN, you will only be paid the approved grant amount.

**Q: Who needs to sign off on our application?**

A: The Application's Declaration section must have the name and details of the organisation's authorised signatory. If your application is successful, the Grant Funding Agreement requires digital signing by two authorised signatories via DocuSign or Adobe Acrobat Sign. More information on DCJ authorised signatories is available on the DCJ website. Please note, you must provide the contact details (email address, phone number, name and position) of the relevant authorised signatories, or their delegates, in your application form. Please contact [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au) immediately if these details change.

**Q: Why would we want to provide the details of a third (optional) person in our application form to view the Grant Funding Agreement?**

A: DCJ administers Grant Funding Agreements to successful organisations via DocuSign or Adobe Acrobat Sign, which only allows those who receive an individualised link to access the document for viewing. Therefore, all of those who wish to either sign or view the Grant Funding Agreement must provide their contact details. You may wish to include any relevant legal or administrative staff to review a copy of the Grant Funding Agreement before it is signed.

**Q: Can value-in-kind be considered as funding contributed by a not-for-profit organisation?**

A: Yes. Donated materials and contributions by paid staff and volunteers of the organisation are allowed as part of the not-for-profit organisation's contribution to the cost of a project.

**Q: What if my application is incomplete, incorrectly filled or if I miss the closing date?**

A: Applications that are incomplete, incorrectly filled out or submitted late will not be accepted. Please refer to grant program guidelines for the closing dates.

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## A one stage application process

In grant programs where only the one application form is used, the following process applies:

- You can log in to SmartyGrants on the link provided.
- You are not required to complete your application in one sitting and can save and return at a later date to complete and submit.
- Once your application has been submitted you will receive an automated response from SmartyGrants. If you have not received this email, your application has not been successfully submitted, or the confirmation email has ended up in your junk mailbox.
- You can also log in to the online system and click 'My Submissions' to view all submitted and unsubmitted applications. Submitted applications are identified by a green tick. Carefully check your application prior to submitting. If you realise that you have made an error once you have submitted your application please contact [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au) for assistance before the closing date.

Applications that are late or incorrectly filled out or incomplete will not be accepted'.

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## Other requirements

### Q: What insurance is my organisation required to maintain?

A: Your organisation:

- is required to provide a valid Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover of \$10 million in your organisation's name, which you will upload as part of your application.
- must retain any other insurance required under Commonwealth and NSW law for the performance of its activities funded by this grant, if successful.
- is responsible for ensuring it has appropriate and current insurance coverage in place to cover any liability of the grant recipient that might arise in connection with the performance of its obligations under its Grant Funding Agreement, which includes activities carried out by any other individual or organisation that you may subcontract.

### Q: What is the NSW National Redress Scheme?

A: The National Redress Scheme is part of the Commonwealth Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Scheme:

- Acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions.
- Holds institutions accountable for this abuse; and
- Helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

The Scheme started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The NSW Government will not award a grant to a non-government organisation with Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that non-government organisation:

- Has declined to join the Scheme, or
- At the expiry of six months after the time it is notified to join the Scheme, has failed to do so.

For further information please visit the NSW National Redress Scheme Sanctions Policy webpage.

### Q: Where can I find out my responsibilities in relation to COVID-19?

A: Please refer to the up-to-date information on current public health orders and advice on the NSW Government's COVID-19 webpage. Due to the changing impacts of COVID-19 across NSW, it is the successful applicant's responsibility to keep track of current NSW Government public health orders and advice and adhere to them.

### Q: Do I need to provide banking details?

A: Yes. It is your responsibility to provide the correct banking details in your application form. Funds transferred to an incorrect bank account may not be recoverable. This applies even if you have provided your banking details to DCJ in the past or are currently receiving other payments from DCJ.

### Q: Why should I keep my contact details up to date?

A: Your application, Funding Agreement and acquittal for the grants will be managed using the SmartyGrants online grants administration system and DocuSign. We will contact you and your organisation's authorised signatories using the details provided in your application on SmartyGrants.

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to keep DCJ up to date with any change in contact information, including the contact details of authorised signatories. DCJ is not responsible for any

consequences should your grant offer be withdrawn due to out-of-date contact details in SmartyGrants. Please email [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au) to update contact details.

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## Assessment process

### **Q: What is the assessment process?**

A: The assessment process for a one stage application:

1. DCJ eligibility team conducts a review to ensure eligibility the eligibility criteria listed above and general compliance with guidelines.
  2. DCJ assessment team will assess each eligible application against the assessment criteria listed above and make recommendations for the final decision maker.
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## After applications are submitted

### **Q: What happens when you receive my application and when will I know if my application was successful?**

A: Assessment processes will be completed as per the following schedule:

- Submitted applications received by 30 October 2024 will be comparatively assessed and announced in November 2024.
- Submitted applications received by 14 February 2025 will be comparatively assessed and announced in March 2025.
- Submitted applications received by 30 April 2025 will be comparatively assessed and announced in May 2025.

Applicants must ensure their contact details on SmartyGrants remain up to date.

### **Q: There are three assessments being undertaken in the 2024-2025 grant process. Does this mean that approximately \$15 million will be spread out and released over these three assessment periods?**

A: No. Depending on the volume of successful applications received, there is a chance that there will be limited funds available after the first assessment round.

### **Q: If I'm successful, does this mean that I will receive the funding amount requested?**

A: The Assessment Panel may recommend a lesser amount of funding for an application. The Assessment Panel may also recommend specific funding condition(s), where appropriate. Funding conditions may include, but not limited to, engaging a third-party to manage the project delivery.

### **Q: If I'm successful, what happens then?**

A: You will be notified via email within two weeks and a Grants Funding Agreement will be sent via DocuSign or Adobe Acrobat Sign to the authorised signatories, and any additional reviewers, as provided in your application form. Successful applicants are required to return the signed Funding Agreement within seven days of receipt.

Grant Funding Agreements can only be signed by authorised officers of your organisation. This may be a member of the executive/committee as deemed under the Articles of Association or Constitution if you are a not-for-profit organisation. Please refer to the following for further details on authorised signatories and delegation. Please note, you must provide the contact details (email

address, phone number, name, and position) of the relevant authorised signatories, or their delegates, in your application form. Please contact [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au) immediately if these details change. It is your responsibility to ensure staff availability to complete and sign documents, to carefully read the terms and conditions of the Grant Funding Agreement, and to sign the Grant Funding Agreement using the correct authorised signatories. Once we receive your signed Funding Agreement via DocuSign or Adobe Acrobat Sign, your Grant Funding Agreement will be countersigned and sent to you by email. Your organisation, project and funding amount will be published on the NSW Grant Funding Finder within 45 days of the execution of the Grant Funding Agreement.

**Q: If I'm not successful, can I resubmit my CHIF or other related proposal?**

A: Yes, where a submission was not successful and the grant program is still open then organisations are welcome to submit a new application in response to the Service Reform and Innovation grant program guidelines.

**Q: Is there a chance after submitting my application, it may be deferred?**

A: Yes, there may be scenarios where applications may be deferred. Should this occur, the relevant applicant(s) will be notified.

**Q: What happens if situations change, and we wish to change the details of our program after we receive funding?**

A: Any variations to the approved purposes outlined in your original application form on SmartyGrants must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place, as your application form will form part of your legally binding Grant Funding Agreement with DCJ. Failure to do so may result in you being required to return the grant monies in full. To discuss a variation, please contact the Grants team by email [grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au).

**Q: Will the information in my application be kept confidential?**

A: Information received in applications and in respect of applications is treated as confidential, and all assessors will sign a confidentiality agreement before reviewing your application. However, documents in the possession of the government are subject to the provisions of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. If you are successful, the NSW Government may share or publicise information on your program. An agreement that this may occur will form part of your Grants Funding Agreement].

Where a proposal seems more suited to an alternate funding method, Homes NSW will contact the provider for permission prior to sharing within Homes NSW outside of the assessment process.

**Q: What reporting will be required?**

A: Based on the project scope, successful applicants will be required to submit reporting within the 12-month timeframe.

**Q: What are the acquittals requirements?**

A: Successful applicants will be required to submit a financial acquittal 30 days from the end of the project. The acquittal will include an expenditure breakdown on what is included in your approved project plan.

An officeholder in your organisation will be required to certify that the grant funds have been expended as per your financial acquittal.

**Q: Why was my application not successful?**

A: If your application is not successful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Unsuccessful applicants may seek feedback by emailing the SHS mailbox at: [shsprogram@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shsprogram@homes.nsw.gov.au)

## Homes NSW

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