



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Submission

For decision

PDMS Ref. Number: MS23-002210

Date of Clearance: 02/11/2023

To **Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs**

Subject **Social Cohesion Measures**

Timing: For consideration as soon as possible, as agreed with your Chief of Staff ^{s. 22(1)(a)(i)}
^{s. 22(1)(a)(ii)} in order to commence implementation of this package.

Recommendations

That you:

1. Agree to implementation arrangements for \$25 million to strengthen resilience and improve support to Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities (agreed by the Prime Minister and announced on 19 October 2023).
2. Note that the Prime Minister agreed to \$52.8 million in total for measures to address the social cohesion impacts of the Hamas attacks on Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza on 19 October 2023.
3. Note that the Department will utilise emergency clauses within the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines to deliver rapid deployment of the package.

agreed / not agreed

noted / please discuss

noted / please discuss

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Signature.....

Date **23/11**...../2023

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Minister's Comments

Please apply an appropriate check to the list of organisations in Attachment C, + provide advice in a further submission as to the suitability to receive direct funding.

Key Issues

1. On 19 October 2023, the Prime Minister agreed to \$52.8 million in proposals across government to address the social cohesion impacts of the Hamas attacks on Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza s. 22(1)(a)(ii) This included funding from 2023-24 of:
 - \$37.1 million over four years to be delivered by the Department of Home Affairs;

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

3. The submission seeks your agreement to implementation details for \$25 million to strengthen resilience and improve support to Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities agreed by the Prime Minister and announced on 19 October 2023.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Implementation strategy

4. The Department recommends the \$25 million package is distributed across three streams:
 - Part A: **headline projects** – targeted to identified organisations for specific programs that combat racism and Islamophobia:
 - fund the Australian Associate Press (AAP) independent newswire service to bolster services to a range of platforms in relation to the conflict and fund the SBS to establish a unit to counter misinformation of concern to communities;
 - funding the Australian Human Rights Council (AHRC) to amplify anti-racism messages, increasing the reach of social cohesion messages for the community; and
 - fund large scale youth-focused programs.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

5. The above staged approach will ensure immediate support for affected communities while also adapting to the evolving nature of the conflict and ensuring balanced and comprehensive consultation across the breadth of the community.
6. The table below shows the estimated value, number of grants and timing from the date funding is appropriated to the Department for each part of the package:

Part	Est. Funding	Est. # of Recipients	Est. Timing*
A: Headline	\$9 million	5 - 8	8-10 weeks

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

** Estimated timing has been calculated to commence once funding has been appropriated to the Department. Timing refers to the period required to enter into contracts. Funding is expected to be provided over two years from 2023-24.*

7. A detailed outline of the full approach, estimated costs, grants, and timeframes is provided at **Attachment B**.

Risks and mitigations related to emergency grant processes

8. The Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) provide special rules to support emergency grant processes. As per page 6, footnote 9:

"A one-off or ad hoc grant generally does not involve planned selection processes, but is instead designed to meet a specific need, often due to urgency or other circumstances"

9. The Department has received feedback from the Department of Social Services Community Grants Hub (the Hub), and independent probity advice from O'Connor Marsden and Associates (OCM) that the nature of the package falls within the definition of a one-off or ad hoc grant for the purposes of the CGRGs.
10. In line with the ad-hoc process, a series of Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGS) covering the three parts of the package will be developed by the Department and provided to you for approval.
 - The Hub and OCM will provide feedback on the GOGS before they are submitted to you to ensure that CGRG requirements are met.

- Ad-hoc GOGS are not required to be approved by the Department of Finance or the Finance Minister.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Engagement and next steps

11. If you agree to the proposed approach in this submission, the Department will commence consultation and engagement with the organisations listed in **Attachment C** and work on specific delivery requirements, timing and funding for the final lists of grant recipients, projects and funding amounts.

s. 22(1)(a)(i)

14. The Department will continue to develop implementation arrangements for all measures agreed by the Prime Minister and continue to discuss priorities with your Office.

Administrative costs

15. As part of seeking agreement to the \$52.8 million social cohesion package, the Minister for Home Affairs requested an exemption from the requirement to use Grants Hub for the delivery of the funding. While an exemption has been agreed by the Department of Finance

use of Grants Hub is considered the most efficient approach to delivering funding in a timely measures that meets probity requirements. The Grants Hub has advised that grant agreements would commence by February 2024.

16. The indicative financial implications of the proposals agreed by the Prime Minister include funding for Grant Hubs costs and additional staff associated with delivering grant programs to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities (\$25 million over two years from 2023-24) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

17. In relation to the \$25 million to strengthen resilience and improve support to Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities this includes indicative funding of \$0.5 million for Grants Hub over two years from 2023-24. Cost for the Grants Hub are yet to be finalised.

18. It also includes up to 5.3 ASL per annum over two years from 2023-24 for staff within the Department of Home Affairs to manage the significant number of grants and wide range of stakeholders involved. Based on existing arrangements, this is the minimum level of staffing for a grant program of this nature.

19. s. 42(1)

Background

20. On 19 October 2023, the Minister for Home Affairs wrote to the Prime Minister to seek agreement to fund a series of social cohesion measures including:
- \$25.0 million to support and strengthen resilience in Australian communities who have been affected by the conflict,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

21. On 19 October 2023, the Prime Minister agreed on 19 October 2023 to the proposals with funding to be agreed with the Department of Finance and implementation details to be settled with responsible Ministers.

22. Departmental engagement with affected communities and the most current sentiment reporting shows that:

Jewish Australian Communities:

- are appreciative of the Government's grant announcements, but some are concerned that funds will not be accessible to all Jewish Australian communities that need it.
- continue to be concerned for their safety, including instances of anti-Semitism.
- are looking to support new arrivals and those who are impacted by the conflict.

Palestinian and Muslim Australian Communities:

- are feeling extremely angry, hurt, and betrayed by the perceived one-sided Government messaging and lack of support for Palestinians in Gaza, and for Australian communities.
- continue to be traumatised by the conflict and are distressed about the welfare of those in Gaza.
- feel that statements from senior leaders are undoing previous progress on improving social cohesion.
- are urgently seeking more balanced statements from the Government.
- are fearful about increased Islamophobia and hate speech.
- reported that reception to the Government's grant announcement has been lukewarm, with some communities appreciative, but others feeling disappointed and disrespected.

Consultation – internal/external

23. Internal: Immigration Group – Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division, Onshore Regional Directors, Legal Group (Disputes and Corporate Law Division), National Security and Resilience Group – Counter Terrorism Coordination Centre, Strengthening Democracy Taskforce, Executive Group – International Division, Media and Communications Branch, Chief Operating Officer Group – Finance Division.
24. External: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Education, DITRDCA and eSafety Commission, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Department of Social Services, Oconnor Marsden and Associates, Australian Government Solicitor.

Consultation – A/g Secretary / A/g Dep Sec Immigration / ABF Commissioner

25. The A/g Secretary was consulted on the approach in this submission.
26. The A/g Deputy Secretary Immigration was not consulted on the approach in the submission.
27. The ABF Commissioner was not consulted on the approach in the submission.

Client service implications

28. Not applicable.

Risks and Sensitivities

29. The \$25 million grant round represents a significant investment which is being provided to existing or identified organisations within the short timeframe and with limited, broad consultation across affected communities.
30. This grant round has been designed to address the urgency and immediate requirements to support social cohesion, recognising the domestic impacts and emotional sentiment of both Israeli and Jewish, and Palestinian and Muslim community members. In a short timeframe, the Department has consulted with other government agencies, onshore Regional Directors, and your Office to identify the requirements of specific organisations proposed for funding.

Nonetheless, there may be perceptions that some communities or organisations have been excluded.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

32. The proposed implementation arrangements include the provision of \$3 million in Part A for direct Government funding to media organisations to counter misinformation of concern to communities related to the conflict could be perceived by parts of the community as detrimental to the independence of journalists and reporting (**Attachment B**).
33. To mitigate this perceived risk or criticism, the proposal would fund the Australian Associated Press (AAP) already relied upon by a range of media platforms and the journalism community to support content in relation to the Israel and Hamas conflict. Funding would also be provided to the SBS as a reputable organisation where producers already have existing relationships with communities impacted by the conflict. This approach will seek to offer counter narratives to those in the community seeking to leverage tensions or radicalise youth. Articles will also be published in a variety of relevant languages.
34. This funding for media organisations will be delivered through DITRDCA leveraging existing arrangements with the AAP and SBS. This approach has been developed in consultation with and supported by DITRDCA. s. 42(1)
- s. 42(1)
35. The provision of funding to media organisations could place an expectation for future government funding for similar services or other funding sources. To mitigate this risk, the funding for services would be one-off and linked to a time-limited requirement to support on the conflict and to amplify the voices of diverse and trusted media representatives to increase the flow of credible, non-divisive information on the conflict. Further detail is outlined in **Attachment B**.
36. Delivery of services and immediate impacts for the community are important to meet the intent behind this funding package. The responsibility and onus for service delivery under the approach would be on the grant recipients. The regular evaluation and reporting to Government against Grant Opportunity Guidelines would mitigate risks of non-delivery, extended timeframes or other performance issues. The expectation of deliverables and timing can be outlined in the relevant grant contract and the Department will work closely with grant recipients to support the use of the grant funding in the appropriate manner.

37.

s. 42(1)

s. 42(1)

38. The information contained in this submission is classified and should not be publicly released without the authority of the Department of Home Affairs. In accordance with our long-standing practices, should you wish for unclassified media lines to be prepared in relation to this issue please contact the Home Affairs Media Coordination team – media@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Financial/legal/deregulation/media implications

Financial implications

39. The Prime Minister agreed indicative funding of \$52.8 million in proposals to address the social cohesion impacts of the Hamas attacks on Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza on 19 October 2023 with funding to be agreed with the Department of Finance. Of this, \$46.8 million has been publicly announced.
40. The Prime Minister requested funding for the proposals to be agreed with the Department of Finance and responsible Ministers and that you work with the Attorney-General and Minister for Finance to identify potential offsets from the proceeds of crime.
41. Consultation in relation to offsets with the Department of Finance have not yielded any potential savings from within existing resources or through the proceeds of crime from the Attorney-General's Department. Existing administered funds have been the subject of public announcements, are part of current negotiations or required to fund election commitments. There is no indication that Home Affairs is required to provide an offset for this funding.
42. The Department of Home Affairs is working with the Department of Finance to finalise funding arrangements for the proposals on the basis that these have been agreed by the Prime Minister.

Legal implications

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media implications

44. There is significant media interest in the Hamas-Israel conflict, including how its impacts are being felt and played out in the domestic setting and Government's response. Communities have reported that statements from public leaders have polarised public debate, exacerbated tensions, and decreased impacted communities' sense of belonging. Messaging on the interplay of both this and the AGD-led \$25 million package for Israeli and Jewish communities must be aligned to ensure all segments of affected communities are closely consulted and felt heard.

Attachments

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment B \$25m measure for Australian-Palestinian, Muslim and affected communities

Attachment C Potential project options and funding allocations

Authorising Officer

Cleared by:

Nathan Smyth
Deputy Secretary
National Security and Resilience

Date: 2 November 2023

Mob: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Officer (minimum SES Band 1): Erica Biddle, Assistant Secretary, Multicultural Affairs Branch, Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) / Mob: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Through Chief Finance Officer

CC A/g Secretary
 A/g Deputy Secretary Immigration
 DS Executive
 Group Manager Legal
 Chief Finance Officer
 FAS Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
 FAS Executive Coordination
 FAS International

 ABF Commissioner

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\$25 million measure to support Palestinian, Muslim, Islamic and other affected communities

Part A – Large Projects and National Support

Number of Grants: 5-8 Grants

Indicative Value: \$9M

Timeframe: 8-10 weeks

Details

Several large projects have been identified to support social cohesion with a specific focus on Palestinian, Muslim, Islamic and other affected communities. This involves targeted approaches to identified organisations who would be invited to provide proposals which deliver on the specific policy outcomes.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- Fact checking services and a dedicated SBS unit to counter misinformation
 - *Identified organisation(s):*
 - Australian Associated Press (AAP Factcheck)
 - Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)
 - *Outcome:* Increase the Australian media's ability to fact-check reporting on the Hamas-Israel conflict as it relates to social cohesion in Australia and, amplify the voices of diverse and trusted media representatives to increase the flow of credible, non-divisive information on the conflict. Support community resilience to misinformation by increasing access to independent and reliable reporting in response to false information being circulated and targeted toward communities, with articles published in relevant languages, resulting in the de-escalation of antisemitism, Islamophobia and othering of communities.

- *Policy rationale:* Community representatives are concerned that false, misleading, divisive and insensitive media coverage and polarising commentary from public leaders has increased violent and racist behaviour online and incidents of Islamophobia and antisemitism in the Australian community.
- *Components:*
 - Australian Associated Press (AAP Factcheck) – immediate one off \$1M grant to boost the newswires capacity and resources to provide Australian generated fact checking services in relation to the conflict. AAP currently undertakes a combination of client-based (e.g. Meta, TikTok) and their own investigations of false/misleading information of politically significant and broader public interest with funding from its general newsroom budget.
 - Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) – \$2m over a two year period commencing early 2024 to set up a dedicated ‘myth busting’ unit to tackle mis and disinformation in and across Australian communities. The unit will encompass approximately 4FTE and produce 10-15 articles a month in priority languages focussed on communities targeted with misinformation in relation to the Israel/Hamas conflict. Articles will be published in Hebrew, Arabic, English and other languages as required, using in house interpreting services.

The unit would leverage the SBS’s extensive network of over 10M social media followers, community relationships and language services to identify mis and disinformation and counter information and stories in-language that have an impact. This is particularly important for multicultural communities who commonly use social media services which are popular in their home countries that lack official representation by trusted Australian news sources.
- *Consultation:* Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and the SBS have been consulted and support this approach and timings.

s. 22(1)(a)(iii)

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Attachment C - Potential project options and funding allocations

Table 1: Indicative funding split - \$25 million supporting communities grants

Funding stream		Number of Grants	Administered funding	Departmental Expenses
	Fact check	3	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 30,000

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Table 2: Organisations eligible for funding

Organisations	Funding Source
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	
ABC/SBS Fact Check	Part A
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	

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Australian Government

Department of Home Affairs

Submission

For decision

PDMS Ref. Number: MS23-002316

Date of Clearance: 07/12/2023

To Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Subject Social Cohesion Measures – \$25 million package – Implementation Submission One

Timing For consideration by 11 December 2023, as agreed with Advisor s. 22(1)(a)(ii), in order for implementation to progress.

Recommendations

That you:

1. in relation to the national projects (Part A) of the ~~\$25~~²³ million social cohesion package you:
 - a. approve the associated Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs) for the proposed projects (Attachment A);
 - i. noting that individual work plans will be used to agree program specifics with each grant recipient;
 - b. note that once approved, the Department of Home Affairs will engage the organisations listed in Paragraph 4 through an ad-hoc grants process;
 - c. agree to a Departmental official being the decision maker who exercises the powers to vary and administer the grant agreements once you have approved the grant recipients; and
 - d. sign the letter at Attachment B to seek approval from the Minister of Finance to open the Social Cohesion Measures program with a medium risk rating.

approved / not approved

see comments below

noted / please discuss

noted / please discuss

see comments below

agreed / not agreed

signed / not signed

with amended GOGs.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Signature.....

Date: 22/12/2023

Minister's Comments

Please remove youth programs funding from Part A, + the G.O.G. at Attachment A. Please discuss progressing this aspect of the submission early in the new year.

Key Issues

1. On 23 November 2023, you agreed to the implementation arrangements for the \$25 million package of social cohesion measures to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities affected by the Hamas-Israel conflict (MS23-002210 refers).
2. This submission seeks your agreement to engage the first tranche of grant recipients under this package, which includes funding for projects across each of the three streams. To ensure timely support to the community, the first tranche of recipients have been prioritised based on the risk and complexity of the administrative processes for the Program, responsiveness of the organisations and timing provided by the Department of Social Services Grants Hub. A further two implementation submissions will be provided to you for consideration as the remaining tranches are able to progress.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Part A: Nationally focused projects:

4. The Department has engaged with seven organisations on their interest and capacity to deliver national projects to support impacted communities and to fund large scale youth focussed projects. High level details (and associated bids) for these projects are as follows:

Organisation	Project
Australian Associated Press (AAP)	Deliver independent and accredited fact-checking services to social media platforms and media organisations to minimise the impact of misinformation on Australia's social cohesion.
Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)	Establish a new investigative journalism team to expand SBS's capacity to deliver fact-checked, balanced and impartial news and explainers.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

5. Should you agree to proceed with the recommended funding above, we also seek your agreement to the Ad-hoc Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGS) (Attachment A). These will then be used to formally invite applications for funding. The Department will then work with the individual grant recipients and negotiation more detailed work plans negotiations in consultation with the Commonwealth Community Grants Hub in the Department of Social Services (DSS).
 - Section 3 of the GOGS includes a table of the organisations invited to apply, as well as their proposed funding allocations.
6. The Minister for Finance must agree to the opening of grant opportunities that have an overall risk rating of either medium or high. This part of the funding measure has been assessed as having medium risk. A letter for your signature, seeking agreement from the Minister for Finance to open the round with a medium risk rating is at s. 22(1)(a)(ii).
7. The Department recommends that you agree to an official of the Department being a decision maker who exercises the powers to make, vary and administer the agreements once you have approved the GOGS. This will allow the Department to expedite the process to offer and execute agreements.
 - Should you wish to retain this power, the Department will provide you with an additional submission to seek your final approval of the funding before agreements are offered and executed.

Part B: Small grants to support local community needs:

8. 14 organisations were identified to have existing grants under the Fostering Integrations Grants (FIGS) and Local Multicultural Programs (LMP) programs which could be expanded or extended to support the outcomes of this measure. These organisations were contacted by the Department to confirm their interest to be offered a funding variation.
 - a. Of those, 13 organisations provided a positive response to the request, as well as details how additional funds would be utilised.
 - b. One organisation declined the invitation to be offered a funding variation.
9. The Department recommends that you agree to 13 funding variations as outlined in Attachment C. If you agree, the Department will engage with the Community Grants Hub to manage the offer and execution in accordance with their standard processes.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Agreement for the Department to administer grants

15. Under Section 32B of the Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997, both you (as the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs), and the Secretary of the Department (who is the Accountable Authority) have power to make, vary and administer an arrangement or grant. The Secretary has delegated their powers to make, vary and administer arrangements and grants to officials in the Department. These powers are held simultaneously.
16. The Department recommends that you agree to an official of the Department being a decision maker who exercises the powers to vary and administer the agreements once you have approved the grant recipients. This will allow the Department to expedite the process for making day-to-day decisions about the grants once they are in place. This may include extending the grant periods, or allowing for unspent grant funding to be rolled over into a new financial year.
17. This recommendation is in line with practices in place for previous multicultural and settlement grants programs.

18. Below are the types of actions that can be taken under each power:

- The power to 'make' includes deciding which organisations should be awarded a grant, what amount of grant funding they should receive and what conditions or terms might apply to the grant agreement offered to the organisation;
- The power to 'vary' includes deciding requests from organisations to change the types of activities, length of time or changes to items in a budget that an organisation might deliver under a grant agreement;
- The power to 'administer' includes deciding when an organisation has reached a milestone in its project and can receive the next instalment or payment under a grant.

Background

19. On 23 November 2023, you agreed that the implementation arrangements for the \$25 million package of measures to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities affected by the Hamas-Israel conflict would be split into three parts:

- Part A: **nationally focussed programs**– targeted to identified organisations to deliver specific programs

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Ad-hoc selection process

20. The Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) provide special rules to support emergency grant processes. As per page 6, footnote 9:

"A one-off or ad hoc grant generally does not involve planned selection processes, but is instead designed to meet a specific need, often due to urgency or other circumstances"

21. The Department of Social Services Community Grants Hub (the Hub) has advised, and independent probity adviser O'Connor Marsden and Associates (OCM) has confirmed, that the nature of this package falls within the definition of a one-off or ad hoc grant for the purposes of the CGRGs.
22. Given the nature of the funding request (emergency), including the timeframes, the Department proposes to undertake an ad hoc grants process to implement the total grant funding of \$25,000,000 (GST Exclusive) for FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.
23. As described in the CGRGs, ad hoc grants generally do not involve planned selection processes, are not available to a range of grantees or on an ongoing basis, and are a result of a specific Ministerial decision/directive.
24. The GOGs have been written in accordance with CGRG, Department of Finance requirements and best practice advice from the Hub and OCM.

Consultation – internal/external

- 25. Internal: Israel- Hamas Social Cohesion Taskforce, Onshore Regional Directors, Legal Group, Media and Communications Branch and the Chief Finance Officer.
- 26. External: Department of Social Services, Department of Finance, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, the Australian Government Solicitor and O'Connor Marsden and Associates Pty Ltd.

Consultation – Secretary / A/g Deputy Secretary / ABF Commissioner

- 27. The Secretary was not consulted on this submission. However, the Secretary was consulted on the Department's approach to the package of Social Cohesion Measures (MS23-002210) which has been reflected in this submission.
- 28. The A/g Deputy Secretary Immigration was not consulted on this submission.
- 29. The ABF Commissioner was not consulted on this submission.

Client service implications

- 30. N/A

Risks and Sensitivities

- 31. The \$25 million grant round represents a significant investment in existing or identified organisations. These grant measures are informed by extensive consultation with affected communities, and are tailored to address identified social cohesion impacts related to the conflict.
- 32. The Department has consulted with other Government agencies, onshore Regional Directors, and your Office to identify the requirements of specific organisations proposed for funding
- 33. To ensure equity and broader opportunities for organisations that have not yet been identified to apply for funding, Part B includes recommendations from other agencies for additional suitable programs; in addition Part C includes engagement with multicultural peak bodies to extend invitations for small grassroots grants to organisations not already listed.
- 34. The Department has consulted with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts as Australia's policy lead on matters relating to media and national broadcaster policy, and they identified SBS and AAP as organisations that could mitigate the harms of misinformation on communities and social cohesion.
- 35. The Department maintains strong relationships with FECCA, including through funding to represent the views of migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse Australians to Government, and we will need to manage this relationship once the decision, if agreed, to provide funding to SPG in partnership with MYAN becomes known.
- 36. In relation to the funding of AAP, SBS and AHRC there are a number of risks that the Department will mitigate.

AAP

37. The Department could be criticised for impinging on the editorial independence of AAP. The Department could be perceived as censoring public debate and discussion or political opinions.
38. To mitigate this risk, the Grant Opportunity Guidelines highlight AAPs editorial independence, emphasising that the department will not, and cannot seek to influence editorial decisions. AAP needs to maintain their high credibility and editorial standards to retain its Poynter Institute's International Fact Checking Network (IFCN) accreditation and also to ensure it remains Australia's primary third-party fact checker to social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook and Instagram.
39. AAP has formulated a Code of Practice for journalists bringing together various industry codes and our own policies, and all journalists are expected to read it and abide by it in the course of their duties at AAP.
40. AAP is at the forefront of delivering impartial, independent and accurate news to Australia's leading media outlets. It is one of only a handful of news agencies worldwide not fully-funded or influenced by its government.
41. AAP must recruit highly specialised fact-checkers quickly to be able to deliver the project.

SBS

42. Home Affairs could be criticised as impinging on the editorial independence of SBS, which is a Commonwealth Corporate Entity and a statutory authority under the Special Broadcasting Service Act (SBS Act 1991) (The 'Act'). The Act, particularly, provides the SBS with editorial independence from government.
43. To mitigate this risk, the delivery of the grant aligns with the legislative requirements of the SBS, and editorial policies. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines highlight SBS's editorial independence, emphasising that the department will not, and cannot seek to influence editorial decisions.
44. The SBS's primary purpose is set out in its charter, contained in section 6 of the Act, and requires the SBS to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society.
45. Under the Act, the SBS must ensure 'that the gathering and presentation by the SBS of news and information is accurate and is balanced over time. Furthermore, the Act requires the broadcaster 'to be aware of, and responsive to, community needs and opinions on matters relevant to the Charter.'
46. Reporting by the SBS is governed by editorial policies that outline how the SBS meets the requirements set out in the Act to provide news and information that is accurate and impartial.
47. A potential risk is for SBS to be perceived as targeting the Middle Eastern-speaking communities, including Arabic and Hebrew, over the English-speaking community because of the multi-lingual media service the SBS provides. The Department has mitigated this risk by receiving assurance from SBS that explainers will be across English and multilingual platforms.

48. Also the Department approached SBS because SBS has existing relationships with a range of communities impacted by the conflict. This approach will seek to offer counter narratives to those in the community seeking to leverage tensions or radicalise youth. This aligns with SBS's primary purpose, as set out in its charter, contained in section 6 of the Act, and requires the SBS to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Constitutional and Legislative Risk advice

54.

55.

s. 42(1)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Financial/systems/legal/deregulation/media implications

Financial implications

59. The Prime Minister requested funding for the proposals to be agreed with the Department of Finance and responsible Ministers and that you work with the Attorney-General and Minister for Finance to identify potential offsets from the Proceeds of Crime Act Scheme (POCA). On 16 October 2023, s. 34(3), the Treasurer and Minister for Finance advised the Prime Minister that s. 34(3)

60. The Department of Finance have agreed all costs without offsets or use of PoCA funding for the \$25 million and \$6 million social cohesion grant package and have provided costing agreement.

Legal implications

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media implications

62. There is significant media interest in the Hamas-Israel conflict, its impact on Australia's social cohesion and Government's international and domestic response. Communities have reported that statements from public leaders and perceived bias in media reporting have polarised public debate, exacerbated tensions, and decreased impacted communities' sense of belonging.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

64. Messaging on the intent of both this and the AGD-led \$25 million package for Israeli and Jewish communities must be aligned to ensure all segments of affected communities are closely consulted and feel heard. The Department's Media and Communication Branch will work with your media team on a Communication Plan and supporting media products (talking points, media releases) to support further media announcements for this package. Any subsequent media engagement and media announcements will closely consider community concerns and appropriately protect the Department's national security, social cohesion and multicultural reputation, along with the reputations of other relevant agencies and the organisations receiving the grant funding though engagement with them on public messaging.

Attachments

Attachment A Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment C List of organisations to vary existing grant agreements

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Authorising Officer

Cleared by:

Angus Kirkwood
First Assistant Secretary
Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division

Date: 07/12/2023

Mob: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Officer Erica Biddle, Assistant Secretary, Multicultural Affairs Branch, Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Through Chief Finance Officer and Group Manager Legal

CC Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Cyber Security
Minister for Communications
Secretary
DS Immigration
DS Executive
Group Manager Legal
Chief Finance Officer
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Social Cohesion Measures Grant Large Projects and National Support Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	[dd month yyyy]
Closing date and time:	9:00 pm AEDT on [dd month yyyy]
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Home Affairs
Administering entity:	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5:00 pm AEDT on [dd month yyyy]
Date guidelines released:	[dd month yyyy]
Type of grant opportunity:	One off ad hoc

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1. About the grant

On 19 October 2023, the Government announced initiatives across government to address the social cohesion impacts on Australian communities affected by the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict. [The announcement](#) included a \$25 million commitment to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim, and other communities who have been affected by the conflict.

It contributes to the achievement of Program 2.5 - Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Program within Outcome 2 of the Department of Home Affairs' [Portfolio Budget Statement](#).

The purpose and objective of the grant opportunity are to:

- combat Islamophobia and support victims
- develop communications to combat Islamophobia and racism
- mitigate the harms of mis and disinformation and narratives that impact communities
- support fact checked, balanced and impartial media
- support youth programs provided by established organisations who have a working relationship with the relevant community
- strengthen Australia's confidence in the information environment which undermines social cohesion.

This grant will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs.

The grant is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017](#) (CGRGs).

2. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$25 million (GST exclusive) for the Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Program to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities who have been affected by the Hamas-Israel conflict.

For this grant opportunity, a total funding amount of up to \$9.0 million GST exclusive is available over two years, from FY 2023-24 to 2024-25. Appendix A in this document lists the invited organisations and the total amounts available. Funding will be disbursed in 2023-24 and 2024-25, depending on the specific grant's nature. Funding must only be used for the purpose for which it will be provided.

You must complete your grant by 30 June 2025.

3. The grant selection process

This grant opportunity has been established as a one-off ad hoc grant with a Letter of Invitation with Acceptance submission required. As part of the \$25 million measure, \$9 million will be utilised to support applications from organisations who have experience in delivering services and projects that meet the purpose and objectives of the program outlined in section 1. These organisations have been identified as having specialist expertise in delivering the outcomes outlined in section 1. These measures are informed by community concerns.

The funding will:

- support a range of safety, mental health, cohesion and education objectives; and
- be targeted to address immediate needs as well as the longer-term social cohesion impacts being felt across communities in Australia.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

- Editorially-independent specialist fact checking services to counter misinformation.
 - Identified organisation(s)
 - Australian Associated Press (AAP) FactCheck
 - Components:
 - To provide internationally accredited human fact-checking services for social media platforms and media organisations.

- Run a social media campaign that encourages community members to employ fact-checking techniques.
- Ensure greater quantity of best practice fact checked content in languages other than English on social media platforms and across the Australian media.
- Expected outcome:
 - Counter misinformation on digital and social media platforms that adversely impacts Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities and to strengthen social cohesion.
- Editorially-independent investigative journalism and explainers in languages other than English.
 - Identified organisation(s)
 - Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)
 - Components:
 - Establish a dedicated, editorially independent unit resourced to provide expert analysis by recruiting highly skilled and dedicated specialist investigative journalists and producers to deliver fact-checked, balanced and impartial news and explainers on issues circulating in communities.
 - To produce explainers and articles on a monthly basis in English and priority languages, focused on and informed by the concerns of communities and SBS's independent editorial analysis.
 - As one of Australia's most trusted news sources to multilingual, multicultural, and general population audiences, increase the circulation and reach of independent, culturally-relevant content and services to dispel information circling within and around communities, with a particular focus on material which negatively impacts social cohesion.
 - Expected outcome:
 - Build community resilience to misinformation by increasing access to independent, trusted and reliable reporting in a way that builds understanding between communities and social cohesion.
 - Support understanding between multicultural and multilingual communities with articles published in relevant languages.

s. 22(1)(a)(i)

The Department of Home Affairs considers that this is an appropriate type of selection process considering the nature of the grant.

3.1 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to receive a grant, you must be one of the invited organisations listed in the table below and have received an invitation to apply for this grant opportunity.

You are not eligible to apply if you are an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the:

- [National Redress Scheme's website](#) on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'

Invited Organisation/s	ABN	Total Funding (GST exclusive)
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)		
Australian Associated Press (AAP)	94 641 582 121	\$1,000,000
Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)	91 314 398 574	\$2,000,000
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)		

No further organisations will be invited to apply.

3.2 What qualifications, skills or checks are required?

If you are successful, all personnel working on the grant activity must maintain the following registration/checks:

- Working with Vulnerable People registration
- Working with Children check
- [National Police check.](#)

3.3 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your grant must directly relate to the purpose and objectives of the grant opportunity as detailed in section 1.

The funding can be used to pay for:

- expenses directly associated with delivering the services and support outlined in sections 1 and 3, including:
 - delivering services to increase access to mental health and community-led services, such as peace-building work that improves overall social cohesion and emotional and social safety;
 - delivering services to combat misinformation, amplify anti-racism campaigns and bolster fact checking services; and

- delivering services to increase a sense of belonging and combat further isolation for youth from Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other affected communities including capacity building and leadership.

3.4 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on eligible grant activities.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

Not all expenditure on your grant activity may be eligible for grant funding. The decision maker makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure.

3.5 Ineligible grant activities

The following are ineligible activities:

- activities that do not directly relate to the purpose and objectives of the grant opportunity as detailed in section 1
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- activities which you have already received funding from a Commonwealth or state/territory grant agreement.

The grant cannot be used for the following costs:

- purchase of land
- major capital expenditure
- overseas travel or activities
- major construction/capital works
- staff salaries and on-costs not directly attributed to the delivery of your grant activity.

3.6 How to apply

The organisations listed at section 3.1 are invited to accept and submit a Letter of Invitation using the individualised Letter of Invitation with Acceptance form that was emailed to you.

If you have not received the Letter of Invitation with Acceptance email, please contact 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au before the application closing date.

Once you have completed the Letter of Invitation with Acceptance, you must email it to support@communitygrants.gov.au

Please include **2023-2320 – Large Projects and National Support** in the subject line of your email response. Please keep a copy of your Letter of Invitation with Acceptance.

You must make sure that your Letter of Invitation with Acceptance is complete and accurate and submitted in accordance with these guidelines.

4. Who will approve the grant?

The First Assistant Secretary of the Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Branch, will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of the grant
- grant amount to be awarded
- terms and conditions of the grant.

5. Notification of the grant

We will advise you of the outcome, following a decision by the decision maker. We will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

5.1 The grant agreement/payment of the grant

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will use the Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement for this grant opportunity. Each agreement has standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Specific grant requirements will be outlined in the grant details.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. You must not start your grant activity prior to the Activity Start Date. If you choose to start your grant activity before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the agreement.

We may manage the grant agreement through our [Grant Recipient Portal](#). Accepting the agreement through the Grant Recipient Portal is the equivalent of signing a grant agreement. After you have accepted it, we will execute the agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have entered into the grant agreement. We will notify you when this happens and a copy of the executed agreement will be available through the portal. The agreement will not become binding until it is executed.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make 2 equal payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement.

Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement

We will use a Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement.

You will have 5 business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The grant agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any changes to make sure they do not affect the grant as approved by the decision maker.

5.2 Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for organisations to adopt child safe practices including appropriate screening of staff, mandatory reporting and adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Australian Government committed to a new Commonwealth-wide framework to protect children and young people it is responsible for – the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF).

The Australian Government has put in place ways to apply certain child safety requirements of the CCSF to grant recipients. A child safety clause will be included in a grant agreement where the Commonwealth considers the grant is for:

- services directly to children
- activities that involve contact with children that is a usual part of, and more than incidental to, the grant activity
- activities that involve possible contact with children that is irregular or unplanned.

The successful applicant will be required to comply with all child safety obligations included in the grant agreement prior to execution of the grant agreement. Irrespective of the child safety obligations in the grant agreement, you must always comply with state and territory legislative requirements for working with children and mandatory reporting.

5.3 Multicultural Access and Equity

The Australian government's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy obliges Australian government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services - including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners – are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds. For example, service delivery partners may require cultural competency skills. In addition, services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency. Based on an assessment of the client target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications.

5.4 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- completion of the grant activity and achievement of outcomes
- expenditure of the grant.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, ask for more information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

You may be asked to provide community sentiment to the Department or a peak body on developments in the community as you are delivering your grant activity.

Final report

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit a final report.

The final report must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted by the due date and in the format provided in the grant agreement.

5.5 Grant acquittal

Financial declaration

We will ask you to provide a financial declaration. A financial declaration is a certification from the grant recipient stating that funds were spent for the purpose provided as outlined in the grant agreement and in-which the grant recipient is required to declare unspent funds. The financial declaration must be certified by the Board, the Chief Executive Officer or an officer, with authority to do so verifying that the funding has been spent in accordance with the grant agreement.

Underspent funding must be returned to the Department of Home Affairs.

5.6 Grant payments and GST

GST will be paid for this grant. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

If a government related entity is deemed successful, GST will not apply.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

6. Announcement of the grant

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.

6.1 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement

6.2 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a grant activity funded under the Social Cohesion Measures Grant, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This project is funded by the Australian Government's Social Cohesion Measures Grant to support the Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities affected by the Hams - Israel conflict. The grants support an integrated and cohesive multicultural Australia.'

7. Grant evaluation

The Department of Home Affairs will evaluate this grant to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. The department may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

8. Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and give out information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Department of Home Affairs would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.