



**Tasmanian
Community
Fund**

Strategic Plan Consultation

What we heard, and how we're responding.

Consultation Report:
Tasmanian Community Fund Strategic Plan 2026–2030
and future funding approach

August 2026



COMMUNITY



GRANT-MAKING



GOVERNANCE

Consultation on the TCF Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and future funding approach

- The Tasmanian Community Fund consulted with community organisations, grant recipients, sector representatives, local government, government stakeholders and community members on its draft Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and proposed future funding approach.
- We wanted to understand whether the proposed direction reflected the needs of Tasmanian communities, whether the new funding pathways made sense, and what needed to be clarified or strengthened before the plans were finalised.
- This report summarises the main themes raised and explains how the feedback is influencing our plans and future work.
- Not every suggestion requires a change to the Strategic Plan itself. Some feedback is being addressed through the Funding Framework, Grant Management Framework, individual funding guidelines and the way the new approach will be implemented.

Consultation included:

- a public consultation page and online feedback form;
- promotion through the TCF newsletter on 30 June 2026 and a dedicated consultation newsletter on 17 July 2026;
- targeted advertising through Meta and LinkedIn, which generated 597 visits to the consultation webpage and almost 40,000 impressions. Meta advertising reached 10,200 accounts;
- 30 completed survey responses;
- written submissions from Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania and the Community Led Practice Network;
- a consultation session with community-sector chief executives in Launceston;
- consultation with the Tasmanian Council of Social Service and the Local Government Association of Tasmania;
- a briefing and consultation with the Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Roger Jaensch MP;
- consultation with the Department of Premier and Cabinet Community Services team; and
- informal discussions with grant recipients and other stakeholders through TCF's regular work.

Survey respondents included community organisations, current and former grant recipients, unsuccessful applicants, individual community members, peak and sector bodies, local government, and business representatives. Responses were received from across Tasmania, including statewide, southern, northern, north-western and island perspectives.

Overall message

Feedback was broadly supportive of the proposed direction. Of the 30 survey respondents:

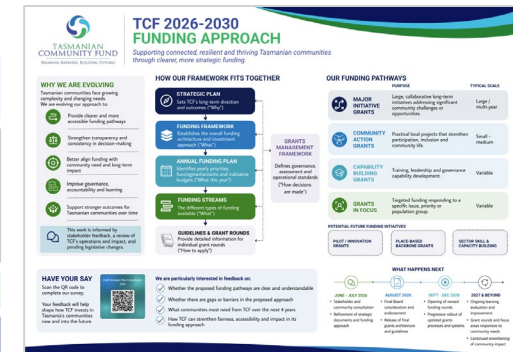
- 25 said the draft Strategic Plan reflected the needs of Tasmanian communities either fully or mostly;
- 26 considered the Plan strongly or mostly aligned with the purposes of the Tasmanian Community Fund Act 2005; and
- 25 said the proposed funding pathways were clear or mostly clear, with a further three saying they were partly clear.

People particularly welcomed:

- clearer funding pathways with grants of different sizes and durations;
- simpler and more proportionate processes;
- greater transparency and consistency;
- stronger recognition of community knowledge and community-led approaches;
- longer-term funding for complex challenges; and
- greater support for capability, collaboration and shared learning.

The strongest message was not that TCF should substantially change its proposed direction. It was that TCF must clearly explain how the new approach will work and ensure its implementation matches the intent of the Plan. Later feedback reinforced the importance of accessible communication, timely and proportionate processes, practical support for applicants and recognition of the organisations and relationships that enable community action.

The direction was broadly supported. The strongest request was for clarity about how it will work in practice.



What we heard and how are we responding

1. Make the funding pathways clear and easy to navigate



What we heard

People supported having different funding pathways but wanted clearer information about:

- which pathway is appropriate for different projects, including where collaboration, coordination and backbone functions fit;
- available funding, project duration and eligibility requirements;
- the differences between pathways and the assessment criteria that apply;
- examples of projects that may or may not be supported;
- when funding opportunities will open and how Grants in Focus priorities will be selected; and
- opportunities to discuss project fit before applying and receive useful feedback where an application is unsuccessful.

Stakeholders also emphasised that clear and realistic decision timeframes are part of an accessible and fair process.

How we are responding

TCF intends to provide clear, plain-English information for each funding opportunity, including its purpose, eligibility, funding range, duration, assessment criteria, evidence requirements, decision timeframe and reporting expectations.

We also intend to provide:

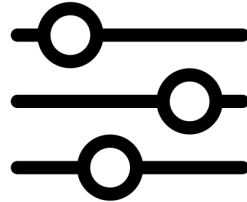
- a simple comparison of the funding pathways;
- examples of suitable and unsuitable proposals;
- opportunities to discuss eligibility and project fit before applying;
- proportionate feedback for unsuccessful applicants where practicable.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework and annual Funding Plan
- individual funding guidelines
- website information and frequently asked questions
- applicant information sessions and communications

What we heard and how are we responding

2. Keep applications and reporting proportionate



What we heard

Community organisations said that applications, reporting, acquittals and audits can require significant time and resources, particularly for smaller and volunteer-led organisations.

People wanted requirements to reflect the size, complexity and risk of a grant. They also supported more learning-oriented relationships for complex and longer-term work, with accountability focused on outcomes, responsible use of funds and material issues rather than unnecessary transactional detail.

How we are responding

TCF intends to develop a proportionate approach in which application, assessment, contracting, reporting and acquittal requirements increase according to the size, complexity and risk of the grant.

Reporting will focus on progress, outcomes, learning, material changes and appropriate financial assurance. For larger, innovative or place-based investments, TCF will also explore more relational grant-management approaches, including regular learning conversations and practical processes for adapting delivery where circumstances change.

Where this will show up

- Grant Management Framework
- Grant guidelines and reporting requirements
- Revised operational processes and forms

What we heard and how are we responding

3. Make the funding accessible to grassroots and volunteer-led groups



What we heard

People were concerned that smaller organisations, volunteer-led groups and informal community initiatives may be disadvantaged by:

- eligibility and incorporation requirements;
- complex processes and unfamiliar grant language;
- limited digital, grant-writing and evaluation capability;
- insufficient time or notice to develop projects and partnerships; and
- assessment processes that may favour professionally prepared applications.

People also highlighted the importance of local clubs, sporting organisations, community groups and volunteers to connection and wellbeing, particularly in smaller communities.

Stakeholders said fairness should be tested in practice by monitoring who applies, who is successful and where participation gaps remain.

How we are responding

TCF intends to:

- provide simpler, proportionate processes for smaller funding opportunities, including suitable short-form and auspicing arrangements;
- give clear forward notice of funding rounds and opportunities to discuss project eligibility and fit;
- use plain-English guidance and assess community legitimacy, need and potential impact—not just the sophistication of the application;
- provide practical capability, project-development or readiness support where organisations may otherwise struggle to participate; and
- monitor application and success patterns to identify whether particular regions, organisation types or communities remain underrepresented.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Grant eligibility and assessment guidance
- Applicant support and communications
- Capability-building funding and activities
- Monitoring and evaluation of funding accessibility

What we heard and how are we responding

4. Recognise the full and realistic cost of delivering projects



What we heard

Stakeholders raised concerns about mandatory cash contributions, difficulty securing co-funding, limits on overheads and the unpaid work involved in applying for and managing grants.

Smaller organisations can effectively be forced to subsidise delivery when legitimate costs such as administration, community engagement, coordination, partnership development, evaluation and learning are not recognised.

How we are responding

TCF intends to review its approach to cash contributions and indirect project costs.

Any contribution requirements and exemptions will be published clearly and will take account of the applicant's capacity, the project type, funding reasonably available and the expected community benefit.

Applicants will be able to identify the reasonable full cost of delivering a project, including legitimate administration, coordination, engagement, partnership, evaluation and learning costs.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Grant guidelines
- Budget and assessment guidance

What we heard and how are we responding

5. Be clear about what sustainability means



What we heard

People supported funding that creates lasting benefit but cautioned that sustainability should not mean every activity must continue indefinitely or replace TCF funding from another source.

Sustainability may instead include durable outcomes, stronger relationships, improved community or organisational capability, retained knowledge and leadership, enduring assets, changed ways of working or broader system change.

How we are responding

TCF proposes to define sustainability in terms of the durability of benefits, outcomes, capability, relationships, knowledge, assets and positive change.

Applicants will not be expected to claim that every funded activity can continue indefinitely without further resources. For place-based and backbone initiatives, sustainability planning will instead consider how relationships, knowledge, leadership and momentum can be retained after dedicated funding ends.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Grant guidelines
- Assessment guidance
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning arrangements

What we heard and how are we responding

6. Recognise infrastructure and community spaces



What we heard

Community infrastructure and gathering places were raised through both the survey and stakeholder discussions. Inadequate or unsuitable spaces can limit community programs, social connection, sport, volunteering and the sustainability of local organisations.

Stakeholders also described infrastructure more broadly, including the trusted organisations, networks and coordinating structures that enable participation, collaboration and local action.

How we are responding

TCF intends to clearly explain:

- whether physical infrastructure is eligible and through which pathways;
- the costs that may or may not be supported;
- requirements relating to ownership, tenure, access and future maintenance; and
- how community benefit and long-term use will be assessed.

Social, organisational and coordinating infrastructure will be considered through the most appropriate capability, collaboration, major initiative or backbone pathway rather than treated as a physical infrastructure cost.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Relevant funding guidelines
- Assessment criteria

What we heard and how are we responding

7. Reflect regional, rural and island realities



What we heard

People highlighted the different circumstances experienced in regional, rural and island communities, including:

- smaller populations and different scales of impact;
- limited organisational, workforce and volunteer capacity;
- higher travel and delivery costs;
- fewer facilities and professional supports;
- digital and communication barriers;
- greater reliance on trusted local networks; and
- differing levels of readiness for sustained place-based investment.

How we are responding

- TCF will test funding opportunities for regional accessibility and avoid applying metropolitan assumptions to smaller communities.
- Funding design and assessment will recognise different scales of benefit, higher delivery costs, local leadership, workforce and partnership constraints, and the circumstances and readiness of individual communities.
- Readiness will not be treated as a simple pass-or-fail threshold. Where appropriate, TCF will consider preparatory capability, relationship-building or planning support. We will also monitor regional patterns in applications and funding decisions and continue engaging directly across Tasmania.

Where this will show up

- Funding guidelines and assessment guidance
- Regional engagement and communications
- Annual funding and implementation planning.

What we heard and how are we responding

8. Support capability, collaboration and shared learning



What we heard

Stakeholders supported TCF doing more than providing transactional grant funding.

They identified opportunities to:

- strengthen governance, leadership and project capability;
- support early research, planning, co-design and feasibility work;
- improve organisations' ability to define and measure outcomes;
- connect organisations working on similar issues;
- support collaboration, coordination and backbone functions;
- provide mentoring, coaching, peer learning and communities of practice; and
- collect and share learning across TCF's funded portfolio.

People emphasised that capability building should be practical and connected to real work, and should avoid duplicating support already available elsewhere.

How we are responding

TCF proposes to further develop its capability-building, innovation and backbone funding approaches.

We will aim to clarify:

- what forms of practical capability, planning and project-development support may be available;
- how collaboration, coordination, intermediary and network functions may be supported;
- how mentoring, coaching and peer learning may be incorporated;
- how duplication with existing providers will be avoided; and
- how learning from funded work will inform future funding and be shared with communities, government, philanthropy and other partners.

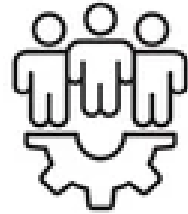
Communities of practice may be piloted where organisations share a common issue, place or delivery challenge.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Capability-building, Innovation Grant and Backbone Grant design
- Partnerships and portfolio-learning activities
- Grant guidelines

What we heard and how are we responding

9. Continue participatory and community-led funding approaches



What we heard

There was support for Grants in Focus and other approaches that enable beneficiaries and community members to help shape funding priorities and responses.

People wanted more information about:

- how focus areas will be selected;
- who will participate;
- how community knowledge and evidence will be used;
- the role of community members in decisions; and
- how conflicts, accessibility and safeguarding will be managed.

Stakeholders also highlighted the value of early co-design and practical support for communities developing new ideas.

How we are responding

TCF will continue to develop and trial the Grants in Focus model.

Clear arrangements will be established for selecting focus areas, community participation, the use of evidence, decision-making authority, conflicts of interest, remuneration, accessibility and safeguarding.

Participation will aim to include people with direct community and delivery experience, not only established organisations or recognised leaders. TCF will also consider what early-stage co-design or project-development support may be needed.

Where this will show up

- Funding Framework
- Grants in Focus program design and guidelines
- Grant Management Framework

What we heard and how are we responding

10. Strengthen transparency, rigour and accountability



What we heard

Stakeholders welcomed improvements in transparency, assessment rigour, consistency, governance and accountability.

They also wanted:

- clearer information about how and why funding decisions are made;
- useful feedback where applications are unsuccessful;
- confidence that flexibility will not reduce consistency or fairness;
- clarity about the respective roles of the TCF Board, TCF staff and DPAC; and
- assurance that TCF funding is additional and does not replace the core responsibilities of government.

How we are responding

TCF intends to:

- publish clear assessment criteria, expectations and decision timeframes;
- strengthen assessment, decision-making and documentation processes;
- provide proportionate feedback to unsuccessful applicants where practicable;
- maintain the Board's independent authority over grantmaking and clearly explain the roles of TCF and DPAC;
- monitor application and funding patterns for possible access or equity gaps; and
- improve awareness of other funding programs so that TCF fills gaps, tests new approaches, extends reach or creates additional community benefit.

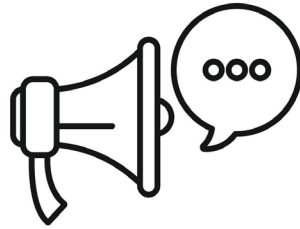
TCF will distinguish between funding the core responsibilities of government - which is outside its role - and supporting eligible community organisations to work with government and other partners on shared community challenges.

Where this will show up

- Strategic Plan
- Funding Framework
- Grants Management Framework
- Assessment guidance and governance processes
- Engagement with DPAC and other funders

What we heard and how are we responding

11. Actively explain the new approach



What we heard

Stakeholders noted that communities often retain outdated information about previous TCF grant programs and requirements.

People wanted the new arrangements to be actively and clearly communicated rather than relying on organisations to discover that the approach has changed.

How we are responding

TCF will develop a coordinated launch and communications program, with the website serving as the primary source of current and accessible information.

This will include:

- a plain-English overview and comparison of the funding pathways;
- clear eligibility, funding range and project-duration information;
- examples, frequently asked questions and practical applicant guidance;
- a forward calendar and advance notice of funding opportunities;
- information about decision timeframes, feedback and applicant support;
- webinars, information sessions and engagement through sector and regional networks; and
- user testing to ensure key information is understandable and accessible.

Where this will show up

- Communications and engagement planning
- Improved website content and functionality
- Funding launch activities and communications

How the consultation is changing plans

The consultation broadly validated the structure and direction of the draft Strategic Plan. It did not indicate a need for major changes to the Plan's purpose, vision, values or three strategic goals.

In response to the feedback, TCF will consider limited refinements to:

- make the public value TCF seeks to create clearer;
- reinforce the Board's independence and clarify the relationship with DPAC;
- recognise regional, rural and island circumstances;
- clarify the meaning of sustainability;
- strengthen accessible and plain-English communication; and
- recognise the organisations, relationships and capabilities that enable community-led action.

Most feedback will influence the detailed design and implementation of the funding approach rather than adding further detail to the Strategic Plan. This includes pathway guidance, website and communications improvements, proportionate processes, applicant support, decision timeframes, feedback, equity monitoring, practical capability support, relational grant management and the design of innovation and backbone funding.

What we are not proposing to change

Some respondents identified particular communities, issues, project types and funding approaches that should receive greater attention.

TCF does not propose to add a fixed list of population groups, issue areas or specific funding methodologies to the Strategic Plan. The Plan is intended to provide enduring direction. Particular priorities and approaches can instead be considered through annual funding plans, the Funding Framework, Grants in Focus processes and detailed program design.

Similarly, feedback about peak bodies, intermediary organisations, networks or local infrastructure will not create a guaranteed funding entitlement for any class of organisation. Funding will continue to depend on community benefit, strategic alignment and the requirements of the relevant pathway.



What happens next

TCF will:

- finalise the Strategic Plan, Funding Framework and Grant Management Framework;
- develop detailed, proportionate guidelines and processes for each funding pathway;
- improve the website and communications so that funding information is clear, accessible and easy to navigate;
- develop applicant support, feedback and monitoring arrangements that strengthen accessibility and fairness;
- further design the capability-building, innovation, Grants in Focus and potential backbone approaches, drawing on relevant community and sector expertise; and
- continue listening, monitoring and learning as the new arrangements are implemented.

TCF will publish the final Strategic Plan, Funding Framework and a clear explanation of how consultation feedback influenced the final approach.

*Thank you for helping shape
TCF's future direction.*

The TCF Board sincerely thanks everyone who completed the survey, attended a meeting, contributed through stakeholder discussions or provided feedback through written submissions, conversations and correspondence.