



Office of
Local Government

Local Government Apprentice, Trainee and Cadet Program Funding Guidelines Round 1

A fresh start for local government apprentices, trainees and cadets



September 2024

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Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure would like to acknowledge Traditional Custodians, who care for Country and maintain trade and other obligatory care relationships within areas managed by the Office of Local Government.

We extend that respect to the Local Aboriginal Land Councils, who maintain responsibilities towards Country, community and culture and we acknowledge the many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across NSW.

We also acknowledge through our work with local communities their lineage may also connect them to other Countries and their deep connection to this Country. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a relationship with the land we work upon to serve our communities and do this by respecting the continuous connections Aboriginal people have to land, sea and waterways that makes up New South Wales.

Aboriginal people share a unique bond with Country and we want to recognise that, by offering employment opportunities for community whereby they can use their knowledge as part of the world's oldest living culture shape prosperous and thriving communities.

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Message from the Minister



Councils have traditionally been an employer of choice for young people, whether they are seeking a trade, looking for a professional role as a cadet or learning to provide local services through a traineeship. We have made a commitment to increase these roles in councils by 15%, boosting council workforces and bringing service delivery back 'in-house'.

As a tangible commitment to the increase in apprentices, trainees and cadets, The NSW Government is investing \$252.2 million to employ an additional 1,300 places in the local government sector across the state.

Councils are experiencing declining workforce numbers with serious skill gaps and a large portion of experienced professionals who have worked in the sector for decades are also likely to retire within the next five years.

This investment will train up the next generation of skilled labour while keeping jobs within local councils, reversing the trend of councils outsourcing jobs. The funding will go towards hiring people in new roles created by councils above their current workforce numbers with the new roles to focus on in-demand trades including electricians, plumbers, engineers, civil construction workers, mechanics, planning cadets and many more.

This investment is great news for regional NSW, meaning young people can pursue careers within their own communities, which will revitalise local training networks and importantly, keep people in our regions.

Local government employs more than 50,000 people across the state's 128 councils, as well as its county councils and Joint organisations. Many trainees and apprentices who start their career at councils also go on to work in local industry. With a shortage of skilled labour acting as a significant handbrake on the development of new housing and infrastructure across NSW, this will play a key role in training up new apprentices and trainees that will build better communities.

Program overview

Grant type	Open competitive, merit-based grant for councils, county councils, Joint Organisations and local government entities.
Overarching principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity in councils and a stronger local government sector • Increase the local government workforce • Create positive social outcomes by generating local education and employment opportunities • Contribute to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap • Equitable funding assessment
Primary funding purpose	Provide funding to employ an additional 1,300 apprentices, trainees and cadets in the local government sector across the state, in line with the NSW Government's goal to increase the local government workforce by 15 per cent.
Funding period	Six years commencing January 2025
Funding rounds	4 rounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1 - January 2025 • Round 2 - July 2025 • Round 3 - January 2026 • Round 4 - January 2027
Application date	Applications to be submitted on Smarty Grants portal by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1 – 8 November 2024 • Round 2 – 31 March 2025 • Round 3 – 31 July 2025 • Round 4 – 31 July 2026
Notification of outcome	27 November 2024 (Round 1) Future rounds will be announced in due course.
Agency responsible and contact	Office of Local Government Program Delivery Team – Grants T: 4428 4100 E: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au

About the Program

1. Program purpose

As part of the NSW Government's commitment to increase the NSW local government workforce by 15 per cent, under this funding program (the Program), \$252.2 million is being invested over six years to provide direct support to local councils across the state in wage support for 1,300 new trainees, apprentices and cadets.

The Program funding addresses identified workforce shortages, skill gaps and will boost critical workforce numbers. The sector is impacted by a trend for outsourcing which has caused a severe depletion of in-house trade capabilities and the expected retirement of experienced professionals over the next five years will have significant ramifications.

The local government sector currently employs more than 50,000 people. As respected employers within their local communities, the local government sector is a key player in workforce development across regional, rural and remote communities, which allows community members to gain qualifications and have employment within their local area. Many trainees and apprentices who start their career at councils also go on to work in local industry.

The funding will be administered by the Office of Local Government (OLG) in accordance with these guidelines and the [NSW Grants Administration Guide 2024](#) (the NSW Grants Guide).

2. Program objectives

By using the Program to fund the wages for new apprentices, trainees and cadets, the NSW Government seeks to:

- Increase the local government workforce through the employment of apprentices, trainees and cadets (recruits) over the next six years.
- Build capacity in councils and a stronger local government sector.

- Create positive social outcomes by generating local education, training and employment opportunities particularly targeting youth.

3. Program and funding duration

This Program is running over six years, delivering \$252.2 million to employ an additional 1,300 apprentices, trainees and cadets in the local government sector. The Program funding will be completed by FY 2029/30.

Funding is for the nominal term of the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship as prescribed in the Agreement.

4. What is being funded

The Program will fund:

- 100 per cent of the applicable award wage for a new apprentice, trainee or cadet.
- 15 per cent of on-costs. (Note the on-cost rate will not be increased as any additional allocation will reduce the number of positions that can be funded.)
- Up to 1,300 new positions over six years from January 2025, comprising of approximately 700 apprenticeships and 600 traineeships and cadets.
- In the first round funding will commence with 350 apprenticeships and 300 traineeship/cadetships opportunities.

For clarity, a new position includes the filling of a current vacant position and the transition of an existing casual role to an apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship.

5. How the funding is being allocated and managed

Eligible organisations are the funding recipients.

The funding is assigned to the individual recruit, not the position.

Funding can be transferred with the recruit if they move to the employment of another

eligible organisation. It cannot be transferred to another recruit.

6. Consideration of the needs of the organisation and community

The NSW Government recognises that not every organisation has the same needs or skill shortages, and the Program and Guidelines are designed so that each organisation can determine its own workforce priorities (in line with the Guidelines).

It is an open competitive, merit-based grant and an eligible organisation can apply in each round, regardless of previous allocations.

In case of over-subscription, it is important that organisations prioritise the roles they apply for.

Equally, the Government is focused on ensuring all eligible organisations can get access to funding for additional staff. Council, particularly in the first round, should have confidence to commence employment processes for up to at least two positions should they apply.

The program aims to equally support equal numbers of new apprentices to trainees/cadets. Eligible organisations should consider this balance when nominating their preferences.

It is recognised that rural and remote organisations have additional challenges in recruiting and retaining apprentices, trainees and cadets including access to training providers and smaller populations.

Eligible organisations may seek other Government funding opportunities for the training component or additional on-cost support, although, this is distinct and separate from the funding under this Program and not reflected in these Guidelines. See Appendix C for further information.

7. Aboriginal inclusion

In February 2024, the NSW Government with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and Local Government NSW made commitments to the Closing the Gap agreement, supporting Priority Reforms enabled by specific socio-economic outcome targets in New South Wales. As such, priority reform 5 focuses on employment, business growth and economic prosperity for Aboriginal peoples.

Representation parity for Aboriginal peoples is a focus of this program. Through nationally accredited pathways training that is intended to contribute to career development and progression and as a result lead to increased career outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

A criteria has been developed to guide organisations on the Employment of Aboriginal peoples in NSW under the Program (Appendix G).

8. Diversity and inclusion

Diversity in the workforce reflects the breadth of difference that exists within the community. Inclusion enables genuine participation and contribution, which results in employees feeling safe to bring their whole selves to work.

Organisations are encouraged to consider how they can achieve diversity and inclusion in their workforce, including pathways for employment of Aboriginal peoples, support for female apprentices and by providing an accessible workplace. Recruitment assistance is available through various programs. Links to further information can be found at Appendix A.

Eligibility

9. Eligible local government organisations

Local government organisations eligible for funding are defined to be either:

- a council,
- a county council,
- a joint organisation.

Identification of need

Each organisation is responsible for identifying their apprentice, trainee and cadet needs. It is expected that councils will have identified these in their Workforce Management Strategy within their Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements (IP&R). (See section 10 for further information).

Recruitment

In building capacity and a stronger sector, organisations are responsible for the recruitment of apprentices, trainees and cadets.

Recruits must be employed by the organisation. Councils may use Group Training Organisations (GTO) to assist in their recruitment of new staff, but if they do so, the council must meet the costs of the GTO and not use funds from the Program.

Apprentices and trainees can be new, or those who have completed 50% or less of the nominal duration of their apprenticeship or traineeship and are not currently employed by the organisation as an apprentice or trainee. It is not the intention of this funding to take from the existing workforce. (See section 15 regarding transfers between eligible organisations.)

Steps to Apprentice and Trainee recruitment

Organisations can find all available apprenticeship and traineeships at the [Apprenticeship and Traineeship search](#)

Organisations will need to identify subsidised training providers available at the [Smart and Skilled Provider List](#). These are registered training organisation that deliver approved Smart and Skilled government subsidised training for the 2024-2025 period.

An [Apprentice Connect Australia Provider](#) should be contacted once the apprentice/trainee start date is known to help with registration and the training Agreement. For an apprenticeship or traineeship to be legal in NSW, the employer and apprentice/trainee must sign a Training Agreement and have it approved.

Support, advice and information, especially for less experienced councils to consider when employing an apprentice or trainee can be found at [Training Services NSW - Registering an apprentice](#)

Cadetship

A cadetship is for a student who is enrolled in or studying a qualification at university in their penultimate or final year.

There is no legislative framework for cadetships. Organisations will need to prepare a training plan to complement the university degree and role in the organisation. It is recommended that organisations base the plan on the apprenticeship or traineeship model.

Reporting

Reporting will be required to confirm completed training and supervision. This reporting will trigger pre-determined payments. An end of program funding acquittal will also be required for each recruit. See section 17 for further information.

Unfunded costs

The NSW Government is funding 100 per cent of the award wage and 15 per cent of oncosts. Organisations must meet any other costs and are encouraged to consider other funding opportunities, some of which are outlined in section 7.

Supervision

Supervision and mentoring must be provided by a suitably experienced and qualified staff member, meeting any requirements under the applicable Award. It is expected that organisations will have supervisors available for the duration of the term of funding.

Making an application

10. Application criteria

The following criteria will be considered in assessing applications. Responses are expected to be brief; the application form will provide greater detail and examples to assist with responses.

Meeting funding objectives

Addressing workforce challenges

How the positions applied for address the challenges outlined in section 2:

- Addressing the shortage of skilled workers
- Managing the succession of retiring workforce
- reducing the reliance on outsourcing.

Career pathway

- The program funding responds to identified needs within the local government sector, in particular building capacity and it is anticipated that there will be the possibility of an ongoing career for recruits within the sector.

Qualification and training

- The proposed qualification must be appropriate for the intended occupation.
- Note: if funded, organisations will need to provide a copy of the Training Plan for each employed recruit.

Demonstrated need

Workforce Management

Applications should outline the need for the new positions applied for and explain how they link to the organisation's workforce planning and reflect the purpose and objectives of the Program, such as planning for an ageing workforce, opportunities to create additional new positions for local young people, learning

and development, and recruitment strategies to fill skills gaps.

Applications from councils should provide evidence of these additional needs above their existing workforce and budget in their Workforce Management Strategy (WMS). If it is not in council's existing IP&R documents, it must be included in the next iteration and once adopted by council, provided in the next funding reporting phase. Further information on the WMS can be found in the IP&R Guidelines and Handbook on the [OLG IP&R webpage](#).

Capacity

Recruitment

Organisations are responsible for recruiting apprentices, trainees and cadets and recruits must be employed by the organisation. Note that Councils can use their own resources to get assistance to recruit, but the expectation is that councils develop their own capabilities in this area.

Supervisor

Workplace supervisors play a vital role in coaching, ongoing engagement and ensuring workplace safety. Organisations must confirm in their application that they have supervisors for the roles applied for and that these supervisors have appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skills to support recruits. Further information for apprentices and trainees can be found at [NSW Government Education and Training Apprentices and Trainees](#).

Premises

Organisations must confirm the premises, and equipment/methods are appropriate to the work and training.

Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes

Organisations should briefly explain how their recruitment processes address the following.

- Closing the Gap, employment for Aboriginal peoples

- Equality for women
- Increasing cultural diversity in the workforce
- Ensuring an inclusive workplace that is accessible to everyone
- Social and economic benefits to the community.

criteria, the responses to which will be used to assess eligibility and alignment with Program objectives.

Information and resources to support organisations to include these can be found at Appendix A.

11. Application process

To ensure all councils have the capacity to apply, it is intended to keep the application process as simple as possible, while meeting the NSW Grants Administration Guide requirements.

Applications will be made through SmartyGrants:

<https://olg.smartygrants.com.au/NSWOLG-Apprentice-Trainee-Cadets-Round1>.

There are four funding rounds. In recognition of the limited timeframe to make a submission for January 2025 intake, there are two rounds in 2025.

Round	Submission closing date
1 – January 2025	8 November 2024
2 – July 2025	31 March 2025
3 – January 2026	31 July 2025
4 – January 2027	31 July 2026

Applications will need to include the proposed training courses and the preferred location.

The deadline for applications must be met to enable training providers to plan for expected intake in courses.

Organisations will receive a confirmation of receipt email when their application has been submitted successfully.

Multiple positions can be applied for on one application. The application will ask a series of questions based on the application

Assessment, allocation and funding

12. Assessment and allocation

As administrator of the Program, OLG will work within the annual budget funding available across the duration of the Program and factor this into the competitive assessment process when determining the allocation of funding.

Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with NSW Grants Administration Guide.

Initial assessment

All applications will be assessed by OLG to confirm eligibility. As part of the initial assessment TAFE and Training Services NSW will be consulted to ensure the availability of training.

Applicants may be requested to clarify or provide additional information to assist in the assessment process to determine eligibility.

Assessment Team and Approvals

The Assessment Team comprises of an independent Chair, and representatives from three key organisations with expertise in the funding objectives as follows:

- Chair – Independent with deep knowledge and understanding of the local government sector
- Office of Local Government
- Training Services NSW
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Aboriginal Strategy, Policy and Engagement

Appointments to the Panel, including staff appointments, will be confirmed with an independent probity advisor. Advice on the appropriateness and inclusiveness of the Panel members nominated may be referred by the independent probity officer to OLG Deputy Secretary.

The Assessment Team will assess eligible applications against the criteria and pre-established weightings and make its recommendations to the program funding approver.

OLG Deputy Secretary is the final decision maker (including the approval of funding). The Deputy Secretary will ensure compliance with the Grants Administration Guide and these Guidelines (as approved by the Minister for Local Government and any variations by the Minister), in determining allocations.

Assessment criteria and weightings

The assessment will consider the organisation's response to the key objectives and criteria listed in section 10 and the Assessment Team will establish weightings against these:

- Meeting funding objectives
- Demonstrated need
- Capacity
- Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes.

Broader factors that may be considered

The Assessment Team may need to consider limits on particular trades or in certain geographic locations to meet training providers and training networks availability.

Where the program is over-subscribed, if required, the Assessment Team may consider

- previous funding under this program and councils' commitments to the program
- enhancing the skilled career opportunities for people in rural, remote and regional areas
- ongoing employment
- apprenticeships, traineeships, and cadetships not previously offered by the organisation

- the 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey¹
- occupations that are identified on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List 2
- the application of a relative disadvantage assessment based on the methodology used for Federal Assistance Grants.

Notification of outcome

OLG will notify successful applicants of their provisional approval within four weeks of the closing date to enable these organisations to proceed/finalise recruitment for the new roles. Once provisional approval is granted, final approval is guaranteed on notification of successful recruitment.

Organisations will then need to provide OLG with final information, including a copy of the signed Training Agreement, and for cadetships a copy of the Training Plan, for final approval and allocation of initial funds.

Unfilled apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships

In circumstances where an organisation is approved for funding but is unable to fill the position, the approval will be rolled over to the subsequent round, except for Round 4 applications.

Where an approval is not taken up within two rounds, the organisation will be asked to review its application for that role for viability, to allow the funding to go to another role or organisation if it is unlikely to be filled.

As the final round, there are no adjustments for Round 4 applications.

13. Funding Agreement

¹ [2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey](#)

Funding agreements between an organisation and OLG as the grant fund manager are legally enforceable. They will include:

- agreed terms and conditions with regard to the use of the funds and the periodic payments to councils to meet employment and on-costs
- clear information on required outcomes
- appropriate accountability for funds, including reporting and acquittal requirements
- data that will be used to evaluate the funding of the individual funding and the program
- the organisation's commitment to provide appropriate supervision to support the recruit's successful completion of the training and the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship
- the organisation's acknowledgement of the financial support by the NSW Government.

14. Funding and payments

Funding

The funding amount will be determined on application approval and included in the Agreement. It will be adjusted in accordance with changes to the applicable award rates of pay as approved by the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales.

Funding of wages is for the nominal term of the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship, unless completed early or in the event of the employment Agreement being terminated before completion.

Funding allocation is predicated on the successful completion of each element of

² [Australian Apprenticeships Priority List](#)

the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship. This allows for the maximum number of new roles to be created within the funding budget. See section 16 for information on changes in circumstances.

Award wage

Funding is capped at the award wage applicable to the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship at the time of approval, adjusted in accordance with changes to the award rates of pay as approved by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Payments

The first payment will be an advance of six months wages, made when the recruit's training Agreement is approved. Payments will then be made in arrears quarterly, on confirmation by the organisation in SmartyGrants of the continuation of the training for that quarter. The payment schedule is based on the four academic terms of TAFE NSW and universities.

15. Change of circumstances

Organisations are not prevented from reapplying under future rounds of funding in any of the following circumstances.

Funding is linked to the individual new recruit, not the position.

Transfer

If two eligible organisations agree to transfer a recruit from one to the other, the funding can be transferred to the new organisation if that organisation meets the funding criteria and is approved by OLG. Both organisations must contact OLG regarding approval and Agreement arrangements.

Suspension

Organisations can suspend the program for a period of time. OLG must be notified of this in the next reporting period of the suspension occurring. Payments will continue to be made to the organisation in

accordance with the Agreement, for organisation to hold in trust for the recruit's return.

Organisations must continue to report the suspension status in SmartyGrants during the suspension period and return to regular reporting once it recommences. If the recruit does not return, the organisation must return the grant funding held in trust to OLG for reallocation within 30 days.

Extension to achieve satisfactory completion

Funding is for the nominal amount for the duration of Program listed in the Agreement. Circumstances that require additional wages beyond the duration, such as repeating a term of training, will be the responsibility of the organisation.

Discontinuation

Should the recruit discontinue their training, fail to complete the program or does not complete all the units of competency as identified on their training plan the funding will cease. Organisations will be reimbursed for wages up until up to the point where council is no longer required to pay the individual a wage.

Monitoring and reporting

16. Monitoring and Reporting requirements

Reporting to OLG will be undertaken via SmartyGrants and will involve administrative reporting throughout the term. Any changes to the funded circumstances must be reported at least two (2) weeks prior to the next payment.

End of quarter

Quarterly reporting will commence from the end of Term 2 Year 1 (as the initial 6 months will be paid in advance).

Organisations will need to provide the following:

- confirmation the recruit has undertaken the required training for that term
- confirmation of the continued employment of the recruit as per the Agreement
- confirmation that the supervisory role was undertaken as required under the Training Plan.

End of year

In addition to end of quarter reporting the organisation will need to:

- confirm end of year completion of training (Statement of attainment or similar)
- written confirmation from the relevant Director or General Manager that the assigned supervisor met their obligations throughout the year
- advise who is responsible for supervision in the upcoming year
- the organisations FTE workforce at 30 June 2024 and the cumulative number of recruits employed under the Program each year up to 30 June 2030.

Reporting to the community

To report back to their communities, councils should report within their Delivery Program progress reporting, and other organisations should report within their annual reporting, information on:

- the amount of funding received under the program
- the number apprentices, trainees and cadets employed in that year and their roles

Acquittal

Each organisation must acquit all funding received via a feedback form on SmartyGrants. A summary statement of expenditure for the entirety of the program funding, evidence of completion and data and feedback to assess the success of the program will be required.

Auditing

OLG will undertake periodic auditing of the Program and the use of funds by councils to ensure appropriate probity principles have been met.

Appendix

A. Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes resources

Programs to help recruit new apprentices or trainees, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, support for Aboriginal staff and business, and opportunities employing people with disabilities - www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees/employers

Closing the Gap - www.closingthegap.gov.au

NSW Women's strategy - www.nsw.gov.au/women-nsw/nsw-womens-strategy

Women in trades - www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au/Employers/Women-in-male-dominated-trades

B. Apprenticeships and traineeships available and training providers

Registering an apprentice - Support, advice and information, especially for less experienced councils to consider when employing an apprentice or trainee.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees/employers>

Training Services NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship search:

www.online.training.nsw.gov.au/vtu/vto/vtoEnquiry.do?command=goToVTOSearch#nat

Skills NSW provides access to course and training information:

www.skills.education.nsw.gov.au

School Based Apprenticeships Traineeships: <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/vet/school-based-apprenticeships-and-traineeships>

C. Other Government funding

Organisations are encouraged to identify Government training subsidies, particularly for critical occupational skills shortages such as the Strong Start Cadetship for planners.

Organisations can apply for funding under the Program for recruits who have been successful in a personal application for training funding under another NSW or Federal Government program (see Training Services NSW for information).

Apprentices or new entrant trainees who have to travel more than 120kms (round trip) to attend day or block release training, may be able to apply for financial assistance from the Vocational Training Assistance Scheme (VTAS).

D. What are apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships are regulated by government and established under a Training Agreement. Training Services NSW regulates apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW. It also provides support and services to apprentices/trainees and employers.

Apprenticeships and traineeships combine on-job practical training with an employer, and formal training with a training provider.

People learn new skills while working, leading to a nationally recognised qualification for work in a specific job role and industry.

Apprenticeships last around 3 to 4 years and traineeships around 1-3 years. They can be part-time, full-time, or school-based.

Find further information at www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees

Cadetship

Similar to an apprentice or trainee, a cadet will work with an employer in a relevant field while completing their studies. The

main difference is that cadetships are for those studying at university level.

Cadets must be in their penultimate or final year of study to be eligible for a cadetship.

There is no legislative framework for cadetships. Organisations will need to prepare their own Training Plan.

E. Questions and complaints

Contact the Grant Administration team at grants@olg.nsw.gov.au

F. Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

Provide any relevant contact details or other sources of information for individuals seeking information from the relevant agency about the GIPA Act and/or Standing Order 52.

G. Criteria – Employment of Aboriginal peoples in NSW

The purpose of this criteria is to guide organisations to deliver on the rollout of the Local Government apprentice, trainee and cadet funding program.

1. Objectives

- **Empowerment:** Foster self-determination and empowerment for Aboriginal peoples.
- **Skill Development:** Provide comprehensive vocational training and essential skills development.
- **Cultural Integration:** Respect and incorporate Aboriginal cultural practices and values.
- **Economic participation:** Enabling and creating careers opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.
- **Representation parity:** At each location, achieve at least population parity of participants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

2. Essential Criteria

- **Aboriginal Identity:** Must identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and provide relevant documentation as per;
- Be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- Be accepted as such by the community in which you live or have lived
- **Age Requirement:** From 16 years old.
- **Educational Background:** Minimum educational requirements (e.g., completion of Year 10).

3. Recruitment phases

- **Attraction approach:** Engage with local Aboriginal entities and businesses to promote this program, including the career based opportunities beyond this program. Promote within local schools, education institutions and other stakeholders as relevant.

- **Information sessions:** Hold specific information sessions to inform of this program, including detailed information on the expectations, on-the-job and class room learning, support during the program and career based opportunities beyond the program.

4. Program Structure

- **Duration:** Typically 1-4 years, depending on the qualification.
- **Training Components:** Combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction.
- **Mentorship:** Access to dedicated mentors and peer support networks. Including cultural support.

5. Cultural Competency

- **Cultural Training:** Enable Aboriginal cultural education training for all NSW local councils, county councils, Joint Organisations and council-controlled entities staff and participants.
- **Cultural Leave:** Allow for special leave and participation in cultural or community events.

6. Support Services

- **Holistic Support:** Offer support services including literacy and numeracy training, cultural based mentoring, health and wellbeing support, and career counselling.
- **Financial assistance:** Aboriginal apprentices and trainees have access to Abstudy and Away from Home training funding through Centrelink to support additional learning or connection.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** As available for all participants, support and managed by the relevant NSW local councils, county councils, Joint Organisations and council-controlled entities.

- **Training support:** Aboriginal participants will receive mandatory referral to Barranggirra - Skilling for Employment Initiative mentorship to ensure successful employment outcomes.

7. Community Involvement

- **Partnerships:** Apply a place-based approach to collaborate with local Aboriginal entities and businesses to promote careers and economic participation opportunities.

8. Evaluation and Accountability

- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments to monitor progress and outcomes.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.
- **Transparency:** Maintain clear communication and accountability to the Aboriginal community.

9. Outcomes

- **Employment:** Aim for high employment rates post-apprenticeship.
- **Skill Proficiency:** Ensure apprentices achieve proficiency in their chosen trade.