

# Working in partnership

March 2024

## Guiding how we work together - the National Water Grid Fund and Investment Framework

The National Water Grid Fund (the Fund) is a multi-billion dollar fund that supports water infrastructure for productive and community use. It aims to improve water security while being economically, environmentally, socially and culturally responsible.

Investment through the Fund is guided by 3 Strategic Objectives:

1. Provide safe and reliable water for regional and remote communities
2. Generate public benefit through responsible investment in water infrastructure for productive use
3. Build resilient water infrastructure that is environmentally sustainable and culturally responsive.

To be considered for funding by the Australian Government projects must meet the eligibility criteria set out in our Investment Framework. Projects must:

- Be new capital investment in infrastructure that increases the security, quality and/or availability of water for regional and remote communities, and/or productive use.
- Have demonstrable public benefit with a national interest element and demonstrated engagement with affected stakeholders (including First Nations peoples).
- Be dependent on a Commonwealth contribution and brought forward with strong support by a state or territory government.

If all the boxes are ticked, the Australian Government will consider providing funding to support scientific

investigations, business case development or construction activities. State or territory support and partner funding is expected.

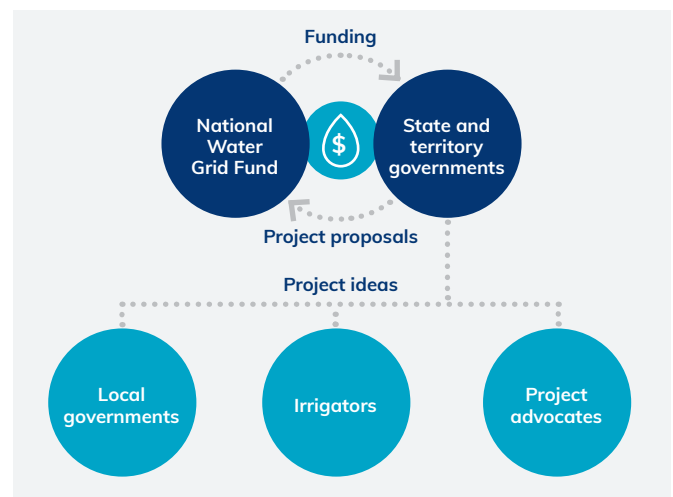
## What can project advocates do?

It's often the case that local governments or private proponents, like a water service provider, identify the opportunity or need for new or additional water infrastructure. These kinds of entities have firsthand experience and knowledge of the impacts that constrained water supply and inadequate water infrastructure has on communities. To progress a project to submission under the Fund, advocates should complete:

- a feasibility study, and/or
- a formal options assessment that identifies priority solution/s.

As state and territory governments must submit all project proposals, it is critical that project advocates engage closely with the relevant state or territory department to build support for a project. Project advocates can also commit funding to a project to meet partner funding requirements.

Figure 1: Project funding cycle



## A partnership approach

State and territory governments remain responsible for regulating, planning, managing and allocating water resources. This includes the operation and maintenance of water infrastructure. The Investment Framework was developed in close collaboration with state and territory governments. The Investment Framework recognises that strong support from a state or territory government is vital through the whole project lifecycle. Once funded, states and territories are the project proponents and responsible for the project's delivery, including all reporting obligations.

Science projects can come about differently, with some projects delivered by the National Water Grid working directly with a science institution. Science projects tend to be more specialised and require a closer level of collaboration with subject matter experts, so developing a science funding proposal can be a slightly different process. If you have any questions please email us at [NWGA.Science@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:NWGA.Science@dcceew.gov.au).

## First Nations water infrastructure

The \$150 million commitment toward safe and reliable water for First Nations communities will deliver on progress towards Closing the Gap outcomes.

Like other projects, proposals for accessing this targeted funding must be brought forward by state and territory governments and are considered on merit against the criteria in the Investment Framework.

As part of project development, we require engagement with First Nations communities so that local views, aspirations, and priorities for community are known. For further information, you can contact [NWGA.FirstNations@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:NWGA.FirstNations@dcceew.gov.au).

### Case study: Mitiamo and District Reticulated Water Supply Project – Federal and state governments and state water providers working in partnership.

The Australian and Victorian governments and Goulburn-Murray Water jointly provided \$29 million toward the Mitiamo and District Reticulated Water Supply Project.

The project, completed in May 2021, constructed a new pressurised pipeline to integrate water across the district, a new pump station, and a storage dam with an 85ML capacity.

The project has improved community resilience and liveability and increased land productivity and terrestrial biodiversity in the region. The project also delivered 1000ML in water savings in line with Victoria's obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

This project demonstrates how the Australian and state and territory governments, and third parties, work together to deliver critical water infrastructure projects under the National Water Grid Fund that support water security for remote and regional Australia.



Sprinkler installed as part of the Mitiamo and District, Reticulated Water Supply Project.  
Credit: Victorian Government Reticulated Water Supply Project



For further information on the National Water Grid, the Investment Framework or Fund, or any of our projects, please visit [www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au](http://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au) or contact [NWGA@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:NWGA@dcceew.gov.au).

If you would like to discuss a project idea please contact [NWGA.ProjectProposals@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:NWGA.ProjectProposals@dcceew.gov.au).