2026-27 RLQ Places and Spaces Grant Application Guidelines

Funding overview

Through the Places and Spaces Grant, local government authorities (LGAs) operating Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) services, will have the opportunity to apply for funds of between $10,000 - $50,000 to support refurbishment or relocation of library spaces and /or purchase of equipment and resources that support improved or increased services, programs or outreach.

RLQ services are a partnership between State Library and 29 LGAs with populations under 15,000 people. Through this partnership, State Library provides direct funding to support staffing, programs and operations of RLQ services and a library collection managed and circulated between RLQ services; and access to professional development, statewide programs, campaigns and research and supports services to ensure the continued development of a thriving library network.

Places and Spaces Grants are being offered for the first time, in recognition of the challenges faced by small councils and increased costs to deliver library facilities and services that meet the unique needs of rural communities.

This grant program will support rural councils to achieve our shared vision "that public libraries that are valued, thriving, place based cultural and social hubs responsive to the changing needs of Queenslanders providing access to lifelong learning and contributing to the liveability of local communities" (Public Libraries and IKC Roadmap 2024)

This program provides material support for the delivery of the Roadmap Places and Programs objective, "Libraries across Queensland are thriving, creative, relevant and inclusive spaces, and are embraced as local cultural and community hubs." Strategies for the delivery of this objective:

- Deliver experiences for people to explore ideas, become active citizens and connect and contribute to their local communities

- Create opportunities for respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and people

- Empower Queensland children and families, providing rich experiences that enable exploration, imagination, and build understanding of the world around them

- Design programs including outreach that reflect community demographics and areas of need, to support lifelong wellbeing, learning and creativity

- Invest in sustainable development, maintenance and operation of diverse, welcoming, accessible and trusted library spaces and facilities

Projects are expected to be delivered between 1 July 2026 -30 June 2027.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist councils in developing applications for funding. Please read these guidelines carefully before completing the application form.

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Eligibility

To be eligible to apply applicants must:

- be a Queensland local government or town authority delivering an RLQ service that has a current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Library Board of Queensland
- be compliant with all aspects of the SLA including completion of annual reporting and acquittal of any other project grants provided by State Library
- For refurbishment or relocation projects councils must:
  - own or have long-term lease arrangements in place for the building undergoing refurbishment
  - ensure any upgrades are made in line with building laws, standards and codes as outlined by Queensland Government

Eligible expenses

Places and Spaces funding can support improvements to physical spaces, public access equipment and resources within RLQ service or that increased reach through mobile, outreach or pop-up library services and programs.

- Refurbishment or relocation of RLQ spaces to improve access and user experience including:
  - Hard furnishings (e.g. desks, tables, chairs, shelving, storage and furniture)
  - Soft furnishings (e.g. rugs, cushions, lounge chairs, bean bags, ottomans)
  - Window coverings (e.g. curtains or blinds)
  - Floor coverings (e.g. carpet, tiles or linoleum)
  - Interior or exterior signage
  - Door counters
  - Painting and paint supplies
  - Airconditioning
  - Internet connectivity and Wi-Fi

- Public access equipment and resources that support increased library services or program delivery such as:
  - Computers or loanable devices
  - Printers, photocopiers, scanners
  - Television, digital screens, gaming devices
  - Makerspace equipment (e.g.: 3d printers, sewing machines, laser cutters)
  - Library of things (e.g.: Tool Library, Musical Equipment Library, Kitchen Library)
  - Creating a dedicated space within your library (e.g.: children's space, youth space, small business hub)

- Equipment and resources that support increased outreach of library services or programs including:
  - Contribution towards purchase of dedicated mobile library vehicle
  - Fit out of council owned vehicle as a mobile library vehicle
  - Purchase of trailer
  - Pull up banners
  - Pop up gazebo
  - Outdoor cushions
  - Trestle tables
  - Foldable chairs
  - Display stands

- o Foldable carts/trolleys
- o Storage containers
- o Self-serve kiosks
- o Pop-up library spaces

Ineligible expenses

RLQ Places and Spaces funding can NOT be used for any of the following:

- Retrospective funding or costs incurred prior to a grant being provided
- Ongoing costs associated with delivery of services, programs or maintenance of equipment and resources
- Purchase of equipment, resources, vehicles that will not be solely for the use of library services and programs
- Refurbishment of facilities that are not owned or long-term leased by council
- Administrative costs
- Purchase, supply, installation or maintenance of:
  - o Solar panels
  - o Electronic alarm systems
  - o Passive security devices (including screens, bars, locks etc.)
  - o Staff PCs, back of house spaces

Application Process

Councils must complete the application template via Smarty Grants by 16 April 2026 that includes information on:

- Names and positions of key staff who will be responsible for the delivery of the project for council
- Information about the RLQ location and building
- Demonstrated need for and expected impact of improvements or equipment
- List of works proposed / equipment and resources to be purchased
- Budget including council co-contribution and other government funding (if relevant) and outline breakdown of how the funding will be used
- Timeline for the project (within the period 1 July 2026 -30 June 2027)
- Expected benefits / outcomes resulting from the project

Supporting Material

Councils may also include the following as attachments to strengthen their applications:

- Letters of support
- Email acknowledging co-contribution from council or funding partner (if applicable)
- Photos of current space and plans for refurbishment
- Quotes or estimates of costs

Assessment of applications

Applications, including the information and support material provided by Council, will be assessed based on the below selection criteria and weighted according to relative merit.

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Key Selection Criteria	
Eligibility	Has the applicant met all eligibility requirements?
Alignment with the Roadmap	Has the applicant demonstrated how the project aligns with a Places and Programs Strategies outlined in the Public Libraries and IKCs Roadmap
Evidence of local need or priority	Has the applicant outlined: • Benefits and outcomes of the project • Council and community support for the project • Co-contribution of funding by Council or other partners (if applicable)
Capability and capacity	Has the applicant provided: • A realistic budget relating to the scope of works outlined in the project • Realistic timeframe for the project including key dates and milestones • Experience of staff, contractors, suppliers responsible for the project

Assessment of applications will be conducted by a Panel made up of representatives that may include but are not limited to - State Library of Queensland, Local Government Association of Queensland, Queensland Government (Department Local Government and Planning, Arts Queensland), Queensland Public Libraries Association.

Recommendations made by the Assessment Panel will be provided to the State Librarian and CEO for endorsement. State Library then is required to seek approval to release grant funding from the Director-General Department of Education in line with the approved Methodology.

Notification
All applicants will be notified in June 2026 the outcome of their application. State Library will make publicly available the results of this grant round on websites and in media.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided feedback on their application, upon request.
A review of the funding decision can be sought by contacting pl@slq.qld.gov.au

Payments
Successful applicants will be provided with a Grant Agreement which will detail the obligations of both parties, the agreed timelines for delivery, reporting and acquittal processes. Payments may be made in instalments, subject to meeting project milestones, across the 2025-26 and 2026-27 year.

Funding provided under this grant program is not recurrent funding and success in this grant process does not provide any ongoing funding for the applicant.

Unspent funding
Councils must identify any unspent funding at the completion of their project and either return the unspent funds or formally request approval to retain unspent funds for an approved purpose (if underspend totals more than 10% or $1000 whichever amount is lowest).

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Reporting requirements

Successful applicants will be required to provide reporting on templates supplied including:

- A midpoint project report including an update on work completed, expenditure of grant funds which may trigger a milestone payment;
- An acquittal report on a template provided no later than 28 days after the completion date of the project.

Overdue reporting

If your council does not provide reporting on your grant funded project by the required dates, this may be considered as non-compliance by State Library.

Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with any terms of the Grant Agreement (or any other State Library administered funding or grant) may impact a council's eligibility to:

- receive additional annual funding subsidies
- apply for competitive grants or programs including those funded by State Library as well as through funding received from external bodies managed by State Library
- be considered for future competitive grants
- access professional development opportunities and travel bursaries

Funding acknowledgement

Councils must acknowledge the Queensland Government's financial assistance to the project in the manner described on the Funding Acknowledgement webpage.

If the Applicant holds a local event in conjunction with the project (e.g., Opening, announcement, celebration) it is a requirement that council extend an invitation to at a minimum:

- Queensland Minister for Education and the Arts
- State Librarian and CEO, State Library of Queensland.

Council ownership

Council must agree to take responsibility for the ownership, insurance, management and maintenance of any fittings, fixtures, furniture, equipment, vehicles etc purchased with the grant as part of the approved project.

Further information

It is recommended that applicants contact State Library prior to applying to discuss ideas and seek feedback about the eligibility of the proposed project. Please contact: pl@slq.qld.gov.au or your State Library Partnership Officer.