



Information Guide

Expression of Interest (EOI) – Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 17: Digital Inclusion

EOI applications close: 11:00pm, Friday 15 May 2026



In partnership with



Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Department of Customer Service acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this information guide.

Information Guide

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Contents

Closing the Gap	3
Socio-Economic Outcome (SEO) 17	3
What is a Digital Inclusion Hub?	3
What services will a Digital Inclusion Hub provide?	4
Who should apply?	4
Who else can be involved?	4
Key considerations for applications.....	4
Who is eligible to apply?.....	5
Who is ineligible?	5
Grant amount and timeline	6
How to apply	6
Assessment and notification process	6
Conflict of interest.....	6
Further information and support	6
Disclaimer.....	7

Closing the Gap

In July 2020, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap came into effect. The National Agreement is the first agreement of its kind to be negotiated and agreed between all Australian Governments, Aboriginal Peak Organisations and other Aboriginal stakeholders. It is built around ambitious socio-economic outcomes (SEO) and new Priority Reforms designed to change the way governments work with Aboriginal people and communities to improve life outcomes.

For more information, visit the [Closing the Gap](#) website.

Socio-Economic Outcome (SEO) 17

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) is the NSW government lead agency, co-leading SEO 17 in partnership with NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisation (CAPO), BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation (BlaQ), that *'by 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion'*:

- Increasing levels of digital access, affordability, ability and media participation
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

DCS and BlaQ are delivering SEO 17 in 2 phases. Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 is in progress. Establishing Digital Inclusion Hubs sits under the delivery of Phase 2.

- Phase 1: Research and evaluation project to establish a NSW baseline and ongoing measurement of digital inclusion. This will be tested through community and stakeholder consultation
- Phase 2: Establishment of Digital Inclusion Hubs to create place-based digital community hubs and digital skills uplift programs in nominated regional, remote and metropolitan areas in NSW.

DCS and BlaQ engaged Nous Group to undertake Phase 1 research and evaluation. Nous, DCS and BlaQ held 22 yarning circles across 14 communities in NSW. 292 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people completed a survey about how they use digital and media.

In July 2025, DCS and BlaQ released the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Digital Inclusion in NSW: Baseline Evaluation \(the report\)](#) and the [NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Digital Inclusion Roadmap \(roadmap\)](#). The surveys and yarning circles informed the findings and recommendations in the report and roadmap.

The report and roadmap are the first study of their kind in NSW, and they establish a baseline measurement on digital inclusion across 4 targets: access, affordability, ability and media participation. The report found that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engage digitally despite ongoing barriers.

The findings from the report resulted in 22 recommendations and the creation of the roadmap. The roadmap includes 14 initiatives to address the recommendations, focusing on actions within the scope of DCS and BlaQ.

What is a Digital Inclusion Hub?

A Digital Inclusion Hub is a place-based digital community hub that delivers digital skills uplift programs in selected regional, remote and metropolitan communities in NSW.

What services will a Digital Inclusion Hub provide?

A Digital Inclusion Hub aims to close the digital divide by addressing one or more of the 4 targets under SEO 17: access, affordability, ability and media participation.

Services may include:

- Establishing place-based Digital Inclusion Hubs in selected metropolitan, regional and remote NSW locations, informed by the findings of Phase 1
- Delivering digital skills uplift programs tailored to local community needs
- Promoting digital education and awareness using culturally relevant content and delivery
- Empowering local digital mentors to lead and sustain community engagement.

Your grant application should outline what services, programs or initiatives you will deliver that will close the digital gap in your community based on the 4 targets above.

You may also propose initiatives outside the 4 targets if they support your community in closing the digital divide.

DCS and BlaQ have received funding from NSW Treasury to deliver Digital Inclusion Project for SEO 17 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap for the establishment of Digital Inclusion Hubs. DCS and BlaQ will partner with successful applicants.

Who should apply?

The DCS and BlaQ invite applications from:

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) located in NSW
- ACCOs that work closely with the community and understand local digital needs
- ACCOs that can deliver a Digital Inclusion Hub within the allocated timeframe with a dedicated digital mentor
- ACCOs that can collect data and complete the required reporting
- ACCOs who are interested in co-designing with DCS, BlaQ and consultancy (if required).

ACCOs that participated in the Phase 1 community consultations are highly encouraged to apply.

Who else can be involved?

The Digital Inclusion Hub will take an Aboriginal-led approach with the successful ACCO leading the project with support from DCS and BlaQ. Successful applicants may partner with other government or non-government agencies or service providers in supporting the hub.

Key considerations for applications

Use the following points as a guide when responding to the application:

- The need for a Digital Inclusion Hub in your community
- How your proposal will help close the digital divide
- What services, programs or initiatives you will deliver, including those aligned to the four targets.
- How you will support and upskill digital skills in your community
- How you will employ a digital mentor (if required)

- How you will provide advice on data and device bundling programs
- How will you measure success and how you will evaluate outcomes
- How you will capture both qualitative and quantitative data
- Your service’s cultural capability and experience delivering services to your community.
- Key risks and how you will manage them
- Your approach to co-designing the initiative with DCS and BlaQ
- Value for money and sustainability beyond the funding period including a brief budget and delivery timeline.
- Meet the diverse accessibility and inclusion needs for your community such as LGBTQSB+ people, people with disability, seniors and other groups with diverse needs.
- How your proposal is informed by Aboriginal people who have diverse backgrounds, knowledge, and lived experiences within your community.

Each application must include at least one reference in support of the submission. References may come from a community member, a government agency, or a non-government organisation, and can be provided in either written or verbal form.

Who is eligible to apply?

ACCOs located in New South Wales (NSW) are eligible to apply.

The definition of an ACCO is set out in Clause 44 of the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)

Clause 44 states:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control is an act of self-determination. Under this Agreement, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation delivers services, including land and resource management, that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:

- a. Incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit
- b. Controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- c. Connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services
- d. Governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.

Note: A Digital Inclusion Hub is targeted specifically to ACCOs located in NSW and will be delivered over 18 months and may be evaluated after 12 months.

Who is ineligible?

An organisation is not eligible to apply if it:

- Does not meet the definition of an ACCO outlined in Clause 44 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Is located outside of NSW
- Has a real or perceived conflict of interest that cannot be resolved
- Does not have the organisational capacity and/or governance to deliver a Digital Inclusion Hub within the required timeframe
- Is not connected to the community where services will be delivered.

Grant amount and timeline

Funding of up to \$250,000 (GST inclusive) will be provided for up to 18 months.

How to apply

- All applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants. No applications will be accepted via any other platform
 - You will receive a confirmation email from SmartyGrants once your application is submitted
 - If you do not receive a confirmation email, your application has NOT been received. Please re-submit application or email DCS Closing the Gap at closingthegap@customerservice.nsw.gov.au
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Assessment and notification process

- All applications will be assessed by a panel and will be assessed against a set of criteria
- DCS or BlaQ may ask follow up questions or request further information and documentation
- Ensure all questions are fully answered
- All applicants will be notified of their outcome by email. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback
- DCS will need to enter into an agreement with successful applicants
- Successful applicants must agree to the proposed terms and conditions
- Funding will be provided in staged payments as per the agreement.

Please be aware that it may take a couple of weeks for the assessment process to be finalised.

Indicative timeline below:

Timeline	Dates
EOI applications close	11:00pm – Friday 15 May 2026
Applicants notified	June 2026

Conflict of interest

Applicants are required to disclose any conflicts of interest to the DCS. This may relate to parties both past and present. This can be addressed in the application response by filling in the conflict-of-interest form and attaching it to your submission. For further advice and clarification, contact the DCS Closing the Gap team closingthegap@customerservice.nsw.gov.au

Further information and support

BlaQ can provide First Nation LGBTQSB+ training to support safe, affirming and culturally appropriate practices, models, and service delivery. For more information and support, please email DCS Closing the Gap team closingthegap@customerservice.nsw.gov.au

Disclaimer

The principal is not committed contractually in any way to those applicants whose applications are accepted. The issuing of this targeted grant application does not commit or otherwise oblige the principal to proceed with any part or steps of the process.

Whilst the information contained in this targeted grant application has been formulated with all due care, the principal does not warrant or represent that the information is free from errors or omissions. The information is made available on the understanding that the principal and its respective employees and agents, shall have no liability (including liability by reason of negligence) for any loss, damage, cost, or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information and whether caused by reason of any error, omission or misrepresentation in the information or otherwise.

Furthermore, the Principal takes no responsibility for the accuracy, currency, reliability, and correctness of any information included in this targeted grant applications.



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