

Media release



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Essential support for communities and charities

Applications are now open for community halls across regional and rural NSW to apply for funding under Essential Energy's 2017-18 Community Support Program to help ease their maintenance costs.

General Manager Customer and Stakeholder Engagement, Roger Marshall, said the program had helped provide financial assistance to about 250 not-for-profit, non-commercial halls in local towns.

"Our Community Support Program aims to give something back to the local halls that make up the social fabric of regional, rural and remote NSW and provide a valuable venue for the provision of localised services for their neighbourhoods," Roger said.

In 2016, Essential Energy and its employees donated almost \$200,000 to local communities and selected charities through the Community Support and Essential Giving programs.

Beneficiaries included community halls and recognised charities such as Can Assist, the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Lifeline, Variety Australia, Australian Red Cross Blood Service, and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

"Our Essential Giving Program supports organisations dedicated to medical research, search and rescue operations, and improving access to health services," Roger said. "This program was established as a partnership between the business and its employees so that every employee dollar donated to the program through regular pre-tax, payroll deductions is matched by Essential Energy, thereby delivering twice the benefit."

Essential Energy employees were also recently recognised in the Australian Red Cross Blood Service's NSW State Awards for the Highest Number of Lives Saved in the Corporate Category. Together, they made 937 donations in NSW in 2016 alone and saved an estimated 2,739 lives. Since the team first registered in 2010, it has provided more than 4,000 donations and saved an estimated 12,000 lives.

"These programs are part of our ongoing commitment to partnering with the local communities where we live and work as we operate and maintain one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks," Roger said.

"Delivering best value to our customers has to be balanced with providing direct, local support to the communities we service across regional, rural and remote NSW. Essential Energy's community support is designed so everyone can participate and as many communities as possible can benefit. The real drivers behind this are all the Essential Energy employees who donate their dollars and personal time to ensure we give as generously as possible."

Applications for Essential Energy's 2017-18 Community Support Program opened on Tuesday, 1 August 2017 and close at 5pm on Friday, 15 September 2017.

For eligibility criteria and to apply, visit essentialenergy.com.au/communitysupport. Successful applicants will be notified in October 2017.

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Essential Energy is the operator of one of Australia's largest electricity networks spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales' land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.