

Community Choices Campaign Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General program information

Why does Essential Energy run this program?

At Essential Energy we are about more than poles and wires, - we're also about empowering local communities including local groups. Our Community Choices program gives back to our real local heroes and provides our customers with the opportunity to vote on causes that matter to them.

What is the funding available for?

The intention of the funding is to support a wide range of community-based groups and projects that increase social inclusion, assist communities in need and enhance community engagement within the Essential Energy network area.

Funding categories

What is the total funding?

There is a total of \$250,000 in funding which will be shared across 20 zones in the Essential Energy network area.

Zone funding:

Each zone will receive a portion of the total funding pool, being \$12,500, to be allocated to the first three Eligible Participants for each zone ranked in order of valid votes received from highest to lowest.

- First funding allocation: \$5,000;
- Second funding allocation: \$3,500;
- Third funding allocation: \$2,750; and
- Small Communities funding x 1: \$1,250

Groups who nominate for the Small Communities category can only receive one funding allocation. For example, if the group nominated for the Small Communities category but secures the top number of votes in their zone, following successful validation they will receive the First funding allocation of \$5,000 only, and the Small Communities funding will be distributed to the next eligible winner according to votes received.

How can a group nominate for the Small Communities category?

During the nomination process the individual completing the nomination can elect for the group to be included in the Small Communities category. They can do so by answering the question in relation to whether the group resides in an area with a population of less than 10,000 people.

Can I be eligible to nominate for the zone funding and the Small Communities category funding?

Yes – however you will only receive one allocation of funding. All groups must be allocated to one of the 20 zones in the Essential Energy network area. If the nominator answers yes to include the group in the Small Communities category, they may be eligible to receive the Small Communities funding, if they are not a successful recipient of the first five funding allocations in the general zone funding category.

What about Community Halls?

Community halls will be in the running to win a greater share of our increased prize pool with the removal of the separate community halls category.

What are the key dates for nominations and voting in the Community Choices program?

- Nominations open: 9am, Wednesday 31 May 2023
- Nominations close: 5pm, Monday 26 June 2023
- Voting opens: Midday, Monday 3 July 2023

- Voting closes: 5pm, Monday 17 July 2023



Nominations

Which groups are eligible to nominate?

Groups are eligible for the program if they

- are located in Essential Energy's network area and provide support to communities within our network area
- are a charity, not-for-profit/non-profit organisation, Non-Governmental Organisation or community group/event

Groups are not eligible for the Program if they:

- are the sole responsibility of Local, State or Federal Government, however events or community projects run by committees on behalf of councils are welcome to nominate
- are funded year on year by state or federal government
- For the avoidance of doubt, groups linked to religious or political groups but involved in philanthropic causes eg. Church soup kitchen are permitted to enter as long as any funds secured are used solely for philanthropic are Involved in any type of unlawful activity
- are Involved in gambling, betting or gaming
- only support or benefit an individual or employee
- provide personal bank account details

Groups are not eligible for the program if, in the sole opinion of the Promoter, they:

- do not reflect Essential Energy's values
- pose a reputational risk to the Promoter
- feature alcohol as being intrinsic to the running of their activities
- are controversial or divisive
- present a safety risk to the community
- denigrate, exclude or offend minority community groups
- create environmental hazards
- do not reflect community standards.

How will the nominations be assessed?

Nominations are assessed as eligible if they meet the criteria set out by Essential Energy and if they comply with our program Terms and Conditions. Following the close of nominations, all nominations will be validated to confirm they meet our criteria and program Terms and Conditions. During the validation phase, Essential Energy may be required to contact groups to obtain additional information to support validations. Eligible participants and listed on the Essential Energy website for public voting. Access to the voting page is available at essentialenergy.com.au/choices

Who can submit a nomination?

A group representative can submit a nomination. Customers within the Essential Energy network can also submit a nomination on a group's behalf.

How long does the nomination take to complete?

The online nomination form should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Before starting a nomination, make sure you have the following details:

- The group's details including the group's street address (must be located in the Essential Energy network area) and details of the main contact including phone number and email



- Information about what the group does and how it is involved in the local community
- A relevant photo to demonstrate the group's activities in the community (including relevant permissions to share the photo).

Ensure you have read and understood the program [Terms and Conditions](#) before submitting a nomination.

Can I submit more than one nomination?

One nomination per group, per zone can be submitted. In order to be eligible, the group will either need to be based in the zone or the funds they receive are to be spent in the zone in which the nomination is being submitted.

Will the group I nominated know I nominated them?

Yes, if you are not a group representative and submit a nomination on their behalf, the group will be notified that they have been nominated.

Can I submit a paper-based nomination?

This is an online program. Nominations for the program must be submitted at essentialenergy.com.au/choices. Paper-based nominations will not be accepted. Check out our How to Nominate document at essentialenergy.com.au/choices, or alternatively you can contact Essential Energy at communities@essentialenergy.com.au if you are having issues submitting a nomination.

What are the dates for the exact nomination period?

The nomination period will open 9am 31 May 2023 and close at 5pm Monday 26 June 2023.

What is the process from nomination to voting?

- Nominations are submitted by eligible groups and/or customers on behalf of these groups.
- These nominations will be reviewed and validated to ensure they meet the program criteria, with eligible nominations proceeding to the voting stage.
- Voting will be open to the general public.
- Following the voting period, winners will be determined based on the top votes in each zone and validation against eligibility criteria and terms and conditions.
- Winners will be announced, notified and receive the relevant funding amount in line with the program details.

Nominations and voting will take place on the Essential Energy website at essentialenergy.com.au/choices

How do I know if my nomination was submitted successfully?

Once you have submitted your form you should see a pop-up confirmation.

Voting

Will I be notified if my nomination was successful and therefore eligible for voting?

Yes, if your nomination meets the eligibility criteria and passes the validation checks it will proceed to the voting stage. Once nominations have been reviewed, all groups will be emailed to advise the eligibility outcome results.

Where can I vote?

Public voting will take place on the Essential Energy website at essentialenergy.com.au/choices.

How will people know that the voting period is open?

Nominated groups are encouraged to promote the program within their networks to get their supporters to vote for them. Essential Energy will share electronic promotional materials with nominated groups to assist with this process. Essential Energy will also publicly advertise (through press ads, Facebook and other online methods) that the voting period has opened.

What dates are the voting period?

Voting will open from midday Monday 3 July 2023 and close at 5pm on Monday 17 July 2023. Voting will take place on the same page as the nominations, which is on the Essential Energy website essentialenergy.com.au/choices.



Can I vote multiple times?

Yes - voting is 1 vote per tile, per IP address, per 1 hour.

Can I vote for different organisations?

Yes

How do I vote for a group in the Small Communities category?

You cannot vote for the Small Communities category separately. As long as the Group was nominated in the Small Communities category, votes submitted through the voting process (across the 20 zones) will also count towards the Small Communities category.

How can I view which group has the most votes?

Groups will be displayed in voting order, from the highest number of votes to the lowest number, on the voting page at essentialenergy.com.au/choices. You can use the filter feature to see the leader board for your zone.

Community Choices Champions

How are winners, Community Choices Champions, decided?

Winners are decided by the number of votes received during the voting period. Groups with the most votes will then be subject to a final validation check against program [Terms and Conditions](#). Funding will be awarded provided the group meets the final validations check.

How will winners be selected if an equal number of votes is given to two groups?

If there is an equal vote between two groups in the voting stage, Essential Energy reserves the right to select a winner at their discretion.

When will payment be made to the winning groups?

Successful groups will be notified once voting has closed, and groups have been validated. Winning groups will be notified on the 26 July 2023 and groups can expect to receive funding in early August 2023.

What is the validation period?

After the voting has closed, there will be a validation period where group information is checked against validity criteria. During this period, groups may need to provide additional information relating to their eligibility. Groups may be contacted by Essential Energy to provide additional supporting information.

If successful, what is the best way to let Essential Energy know about how my group is using the funds?

If your group is a successful fund recipient, you will be asked to share your group's story including details (copy and photographs) of how the funding has been spent. Essential Energy will contact you for this information. You can also email communities@essentialenergy.com.au if you would like to share the information, as we would love to hear from you as things happen.

Who do I contact if I am having trouble?

You can contact Essential Energy at communities@essentialenergy.com.au if you are having issues.