2026-27 Multi-Agency Rescue Exercise Program Guidelines

Premier's Department

July 2026

Contents

Introduction 1
1 2026-27 Multi-Agency Rescue Exercise Program 2
1.1 Program overview 2
1.2 Purpose and objectives 2
1.3 Program timelines 3
1.4 Financial support 3
Application Process 4
2 Process 5
2.1 Eligibility 5
2.2 How to apply 6
2.3 Assessment criteria 8
Appendix A: Application form 10
Appendix B: Example invoice 12
Appendix C: State Rescue Board of NSW strategic priorities 13
Appendix D: Rescue Training Advisory Committee membership 14

1

Introduction

1 2026-27 Multi-Agency Rescue Exercise Program

1.1 Program overview

The 2026-27 Multi-Agency Rescue Exercise Program has been established by the Premier's Department to support multi-agency rescue capability development activities at a local and regional level in support of State Rescue Board of NSW (SRB) priorities (Appendix C).

The SRB is responsible for ensuring the maintenance of efficient and effective rescue services throughout the State. It achieves this through assisting in the conduct of rescue exercises and monitoring the training standards for rescue.

Regional and Local Rescue Committees have functions to support continuous improvement and capability uplift for rescue at a regional and local level.

The program will provide funding for eligible activities that increase rescue capability at a local and regional level. State level activities are not being considered through this program however may be supported through other arrangements or ad hoc agreements.

Applicants can apply for contributions of up to $15,000. The Program is administered by the Premier's Department as a non-competitive application process within the 2026/2027 Financial Year. The program targets Regional Rescue Committees (RRC), Local Rescue Committees (LRC) and member agencies of the SRB.

1.2 Purpose and objectives

Purpose of guidelines

The Program has been designed to align with the NSW Grants Administration Guide (GAG) as good practice. The purpose of these Guidelines is to outline the Program objectives, timeframes and eligibility for the Program.

Program Objectives

The 2026-27 Program aims to support continuous improvement activities that develop, improve, and sustain rescue capability focused on agency interoperability and multi-agency rescue service delivery. The SRB has endorsed the following multi-agency rescue exercise priorities for FY2026-27:

- *Complex road crash rescue:* Including incidents involving electric vehicles, heavy vehicles and hazardous materials, with a focus on responder safety, patient extrication and multi-agency coordination.
- *Mass casualty and complex transport incidents:* Including incidents in built environments or large public venues requiring integrated rescue, medical and command arrangements.
- *Flood and swift water rescue:* Including coordination, communications, vessel operations and challenging conditions such as nighttime or protracted responses.
- *Coastal and water-based search and rescue:* Including concurrent incidents across multiple locations and sustained multi-agency coordination.
- *Specialist and technical rescue capability:* Including vertical rescue interfaces, confined space, heavy rescue, oversize/over-mass incidents, and cave or remote area rescue.
- *Trainer and capability development activities:* Including multi-agency "train-the-trainer" or moderation activities to support consistent implementation of endorsed manuals and skills sheets.
- *Interoperability, command and coordination:* Including communications systems, business continuity, and coordination of multiple agencies operating simultaneously across geographical areas.

1.3 Program timelines

Date	Milestone
From 1 July 2026	Expressions of Interest (EOI) open
14 May 2027*	Expressions of Interest close
31 May 2027**	Invoices due
July 2026 – 31 May 2027	Exercises held
30 June 2027	Evaluation report, case study and other exercise collateral due

* If the allocated funding is exhausted, the Premier's Department reserves the right to close the program early. EOIs submitted after 14 May 2027 may potentially be considered, if agreed in advance with the Premier's Department.

Premier's Department reserves the right to **decline the reimbursement of costs for any invoices received after Monday 31 May 2027.

1.4 Financial support

The Program has funding allocated from the Premier's Department for eligible activities in the 2026-27 financial year. This is not ongoing funding and may not be provided in future financial years.

Funding amount

Applicants can apply for funding up to $15,000 for a local or regional level exercise. State level exercises are not in scope for this program.

The following limits are in place as a guideline for exercise types when submitting an application:

- Applications for discussion-based exercises - no more than $2,000 (ex GST)
- Applications for functional exercise or training activity - no more than $10,000 (ex GST)
- Applications for field-based exercises - no more than $15,000 (ex GST)

Applications for exercises for amounts higher than the above guidelines will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Submitting an application for the maximum amount does not guarantee full funding and applications will be assessed for value for money as part of the assessment criteria. If the proposed budget exceeds the suggested limits, applicants are encouraged to identify and include co-contributions from other sources to cover the additional costs.

Co-Contributions

Co-contribution is encouraged. In their applications, applicants should identify funding and other in-kind support they are proposing to allocate to the activity and identify if an applicant has obtained contributions from another source (e.g. other government grant programs, private sponsorship etc.).

Notification of unspent approved funds

Successful applicants can seek reimbursement for eligible expenses up to the total amount of approved funding (section 2.2). Where applicants anticipate that they will not expend the full approved amount, the Premier's Department is to be notified as soon as possible, to allow for the amount to be re-allocated.

2

Application Process

2 Process

2.1 Eligibility

All Local Rescue Committees, Regional Rescue Committees and member agencies of the State Rescue Board are eligible to submit an application and access funding. All applications submitted under the Program will need to include an exercise proposal that meets the Program's Assessment Criteria (see section 2.3).

Applications from an agency will not be considered unless supported by:

- their agency's member on the Rescue Training Advisory Committee (see Appendix D), or,
- the relevant committee chairperson.

Note that LRCs can submit applications for local activities directly without the support of their RRC. The assessment panel may seek additional advice from the relevant RRC regarding prioritisation of applications if required.

Eligible activities

Financial support can be used for multi-agency exercises or training activities that meet the outcomes of the Program. To be an eligible activity the proposal must include:

- That the primary focus of the activity is about rescue capabilities conducted under the State Rescue Policy, and related activities; and
- Is one of the following:
    - a multi-agency discussion exercise
    - a multi-agency functional exercise
    - a multi-agency field exercise
    - a multi-agency training activity

Applicants that propose new and innovative exercises which are not part of 'business as usual' activities will be given preference.

Eligible activity costs

Costs for reimbursement are to be aligned to the objective of the Program including:

- Equipment and facility hire[1]
- Facilitators
- Evaluators
- Prop purchase/hire and transportation costs
- Development and design costs for resources
- Participation costs for local government and non-government organisation (NGO) staff and volunteers

LRCs, RRCs and Member agencies of the SRB are to seek to achieve value for money in the administration and delivery of the exercise. They are to apply all relevant home agency internal controls and approvals for the expenditure of the funding, and ensure Government requirements and policies, such as the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework are adhered to.

[1] Note that venues for discussion and functional exercises should be identified from participating agencies or supporting organisations. In kind support of this nature can be considered as a co-contribution.

Ineligible activity costs

Ineligible activity costs include:

- Wages
- Travel costs for government agency participants
- Venue hire that could be provided in kind (meeting rooms etc.)
- Recovery of already budgeted agency costs

Eligible locations

Activities must be in NSW but can have cross border involvement and considerations.

2.2 How to apply

An application is to be submitted to exercises@premiersdepartment.nsw.gov.au. An eligible applicant may submit multiple applications however equitable distribution of funding will be a consideration when assessing proposals.

The Premier's Department may request further clarifying information from eligible applicants or other parties to support its assessment at its discretion. The Premier's Department will not provide any support to applicants beyond answering questions and providing clarification related to the program and application process.

What needs to be included in an application?

All applications need to include:

- a completed application form endorsed by the agency Rescue Training Advisory Committee member or Committee chairperson (Appendix A)
- a clear scope of the details of the activity
- an outline of the planned objectives clearly identifying how this aligns with the assessment criteria
- a proposed budget based on quotes or cost estimates, reasonable assumptions, or previous recent experience with similar projects
- details of co-contributions and other in-kind support.

Decision making

The final decision maker for the allocation of funding and resolution of disputes is the Executive Director, Emergency Management, Premier's Department. There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve funding.

The Premier's Department will utilise a Panel to support the assessment of applications consisting of:

- Chairperson of the Rescue Training Advisory Committee
- Chairperson of the Policy Advisory Committee
- Director, Capability Development, Premier's Department
- Manager, Metropolitan Operations, Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit, NSW Police Force

When submitted, applications will be screened for eligibility and an initial assessment undertaken by the R-TAC Secretariat prior to being provided to panel members for review. The Panel will make recommendations in writing to the Executive Director, Emergency Management based on the assessment of applications against the eligibility and assessment criteria.

Resources and reports

An evaluation report and a case study are to be developed as part of the exercise and submitted to the Premier's Department upon completion. These will be submitted to the Rescue Training Advisory Committee to inform an annual review of exercises and may be included in whole-of-government lessons management processes.

Any collateral or resources developed in support of the funded activities must be provided to the Premier's Department to be made available for SRB agencies to access and use in the future.

If professional services are engaged to develop exercise or training material, grantees must ensure that copyright does not remain with the provider and the resulting collateral is able to be shared with all SRB agencies.

Payment

Payment for the approved exercise funding is conditional on the provision of all documentation in accordance with the timeline outlined in the table in 1.3.

The contact officer identified through the application process is responsible for seeking reimbursement from the Premier's Department. They are to track and collate the expenses from the exercise that are covered by the approved funding.

Seeking reimbursement

A single tax invoice, on agency letterhead, for the actual expenses incurred (excluding GST) must be submitted by the nominated contact officer via e-mail to: exercises@premiersdepartment.nsw.gov.au

The invoice total must not exceed the approved funding amount.

The **invoice** must include the Purchase Requisition (PO) number provided to the agency from the Premier's Department.

Please note that invoices which include GST will not be processed and will need to be corrected and resubmitted. A contact number for Accounts Payable must also be included on the invoice.

Where a rescue committee is the applicant, a supporting agency must be nominated for the purpose of invoicing. In relation to exercises run on behalf of local or regional rescue committees, this will usually be NSW Police, but another agency may be nominated.

Refer to the Example Invoice (Appendix B) for guidance on how to structure the invoice.

Terms and Conditions

By accepting the Rescue Exercise Grant, the grantee agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. Use of funds: Grant funds are to be used only for the purposes outlined in the approved application.
2. Reporting and notifications:
    a. An evaluation report and case study must be submitted to the Premier's Department by 31 July 2027.
    b. Notice of any underspend of approved funds must be submitted to the Premier's Department as soon as known, but no later than 9 May 2027.
3. Any collateral or resources from the exercises (photos, videos, case studies, etc) must be provided to the Premier's Department to be included in a cache of resources for agencies to access and use to support future exercises.
4. Records relating to any activities and expenditure of the grant will be maintained, and access to the records will be made available upon request by the Premier's Department.

Evaluation

The Premier's Department will carry out an evaluation of the Program. This may include carrying out surveys with Local Rescue Committees, Regional Rescue Committees and member agencies of the SRB.

2.3 Assessment criteria

All applications that meet the Eligibility Criteria will then be assessed by the Panel against the Assessment Criteria outlined below:

Assessment criteria	Description	Assessment (Fully Met/Partially Met/Not met)
1. Proposal relevance and feasibility	The proposal is consistent with the objectives of the program (there is a clear and detailed description of the activity that is aligned with the program objectives, there is a clear and realistic plan to deliver the rescue exercise).	
2. Consideration of interoperability of rescue agencies	The proposal supports an improvement to rescue interoperability (i.e. agencies working collaboratively under existing command structures, includes non-rescue agencies in supporting roles etc.)	
3. Consideration of improvement to multi-agency rescue service delivery	The proposal includes reasonable consideration of muti-agency service delivery (e.g. composite crewing or surge support).	
4. Identification of long-term project benefits	The proposal identifies benefits beyond the exercise period (proposal indicates that training resources, exercises or collateral will be developed that can be re-used or shared with other regions or agencies).	
5. Budget and value for money	The proposed budget demonstrates value for money (budget is appropriately support by quotes/s, cost estimates, reasonable assumptions or previous experience with similar projects and/or the project includes co-contribution of financial or in-kind support).	

NSW GOVERNMENT

Appendix A: Application form

2026/2027 Multi-Agency Rescue Exercise Program Application

This application and any supporting documentation is to be submitted to Exercises@premiersdepartment.nsw.gov.au

1. Title of Proposal	
2. Lead Agency/Committee	

3. Contact Officer Details *Please nominate a contact person to liaise on behalf of the LRC/RRC/Agency on all correspondence and invoicing matters*		
Name:		
Agency/Organisation:		
Position:		
Phone Number/s:	Work:	Mobile:
Email Address:		
Vendor ABN:		
Vendor Account Name:		
Vendor BSB:		
Vendor Account Number:		

4. Proposal Overview

5. Proposal Aim

6. Program Objective/Outcomes

7. Alignment with the Assessment Criteria

Proposal Details			
Level:	☐ Regional	☐ Local	
Exercise style (where applicable):	☐ Discussion	☐ Functional	☐ Field
Agencies involved: *List all participating agencies*			
Location:			
Venue:			
Dates:			
Duration:			

8. Proposal Support	
Agency/Committee Name:	
R-TAC Member/Chair Name:	
R-TAC Member/Chair Signature:	
Date:	

9. Co-contributions		
Agency/Organisation	Description	Estimated Value

10. Budget estimate		
Item	Description	Cost
	Funding requested total (ex. GST)	

Will you be engaging external professional services to deliver your proposal?* *If yes, care should be taken to ensure copyright does not remain with the provider and the resulting collateral is able to be shared with all SEMC agencies.	☐ Yes	☐ No

Appendix B: Example invoice

OFFICIAL

INVOICE

INVOICE #

AGENCY NAME
LRC/RRC NAME
Invoice to be on agency letter head

Date:

The below details should be the agency acting on behalf of the LRC/RRC

ABN:
AGENCY NAME:
PHYSICAL ADDRESS:
EMAIL ADRESS:

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF THE LRC/RRC CONTACT OFFICER
NAME:
POSTION:
LRC/RRC NAME:

COMMENTS OR SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
The fund will be reimbursed to the relevant LRC/RRC (Insert full name)

DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Exercise Facilitator		$1500
Exercise Catering		$300
	TOTAL EX GST	$1800
	GST AMOUNT	$0.00
	TOTAL DUE	$1800

Account details (Details of the agency acting on behalf of the LRC/RRC)
Bank account name:
BSB:
Account number:
Accounts Payable contact number:

EXAMPLE ONLY

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Appendix C: State Rescue Board of NSW strategic priorities

Efficient and effective rescue services throughout NSW

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Capability

- Robust and consistent accreditation of rescue units informed by local risk assessment
- Compliance with rescue standards and policies prioritising safety of rescue operators and community
- Ongoing performance monitoring and evaluation

Coordination

- Avoiding duplication and robust planning to ensure the right resources are available at the right time in the right locations
- Effective communication flows between the Board and local and regional rescue committees and agencies

Advocacy

- Ensuring the SRB is a trusted source of advice to Government.
- Being clear on our purpose and role in ensuring an effective rescue system
- Leveraging our combined expertise to advocate on behalf of the rescue system, rescue workers and volunteers

WE WILL DELIVER ON THESE PRIORITIES BY…

- Ensuring our policies and standards are informed by regular risk assessments
- Making more informed decisions backed by relevant and timely data
- Ensuring the Board and Rescue Committees have the systems and support they need to be effective
- Measuring our performance and improving our accountability

ACTIONS

Capability

- Develop risk management policy and supporting architecture
- Periodic review of the State Rescue Policy, including considering the need for new policies, based on the latest risk assessments
- Improve our reporting processes to enable better performance monitoring and better decision making

Coordination

- Undertake a stocktake of information that should be made available to the SRB
- Develop and implement a solution for SRB members to have shared access to relevant information and the SRB's corporate records
- Review the supporting resources and capabilities needed to enable the SRB to effectively perform its role

Advocacy

- Training and induction package for Board members on the Board's role and purpose
- Develop a consistent, succinct explanation of the SRB's role and purpose
- Consider volunteer recruitment and retention issues in the development of rescue policy advice.
- Providing timely and effective advice to the Minister on rescue matters.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Increased confidence in SRB decision making based on documented evidence and risk assessment
- Policies that support a better understanding of coordination and surge arrangements for large scale rescue operations
- Government, particularly responsible Ministers, have an improved understanding of the role of the Board and how the Board supports them.
- Implementation of improvements and reform related to rescue in response to recommendations identified through the Government's response to the 2022 Independent Flood Inquiry and other rescue service delivery reviews
- A state rescue policy framework that enables continuous improvement
- Greater monitoring and reporting of capability and policy development demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement.
- SRB is more active in advocating for improved rescue capability, encouraging member agencies to use the Board to support more collective and targeted investment
- SRB has an increased sense of identity, authority and accountability and members work together to ensure delivery of the Board's statutory functions
- The principle of closest available and appropriate unit being tasked to an incident is embedded within policy and local dispatch arrangements
- Multi-agency sharing of rescue resources provides effective rescue service delivery anywhere in New South Wales.
- Training is at a standard that ensures rescue operators can provide services safely and with the best outcomes.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE

- Delivery of a rescue risk management policy and framework
- Documentation of regularly updated risk and capability data that informs SRB decisions
- Reporting to and engagement with the Minister on the SRB's activities
- The State Rescue Policy is reflective of contemporary training and equipment standards
- Service delivery gaps are identified and addressed appropriately
- Agencies have greater evidence and support from the Board when seeking to mitigate identified capability gaps
- Clearly documented monitoring of progress against the Government's response to recommendations of the 2022 Independent Flood Inquiry, other accepted recommendations and decisions of the Board

Appendix D: Rescue Training Advisory Committee membership

Agency	Representative
Chairperson	Chief Superintendent Sonya Oyston (NSW SES) sonya.oyston@ses.nsw.gov.au
NSW State Emergency Service	Chief Superintendent Paul McQueen ESM paul.mcqueen@one.ses.nsw.gov.au
Premier's Department	Danielle Meggos (Deputy Chairperson) danielle.meggos@premiersdepartment.nsw.gov.au
Fire and Rescue NSW	Chief Superintendent Paul Johnstone AFSM Paul.Johnstone@fire.nsw.gov.au
Marine Rescue NSW	Deputy Commissioner Dan Duemmer dan.duemmer@marinerescuensw.com.au
NSW Ambulance	Assistant Commissioner Cameron Edgar Cameron.Edgar@health.nsw.gov.au
NSW Police Force (RBDU)	Chief Inspector Marcus Backway (Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit) back1mar@police.nsw.gov.au
NSW Police Force (MAC)	TBC (Marine Area Command)
NSW Rural Fire Service	Chief Superintendent Brett Hagan Brett.Hagan@rfs.nsw.gov.au
Surf Life Saving NSW	Gary McKinnon, Emergency Management Manager GMckinnon@surflifesaving.com.au