

Boating Infrastructure for Maintenance Program

This document provides an overview of the common reasons applications to the NSW Boating Infrastructure Maintenance Grants Program (BIM) were unsuccessful and offers guidance on how future applications can be strengthened.

The BIM Program provides grant funding to local councils and other eligible organisations ('delivery partners') for the maintenance of public boating infrastructure and facilities across NSW. The program aims to enhance safe, accessible, and enjoyable boating experiences while supporting broader economic and social benefits for local communities and visitors.

The BIM Program operates as a sub-program of the \$44 million Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Scheme, administered by Transport for NSW (Transport). Funding is delivered across two rounds: Round 1 in 2025–2026 and Round 2 in 2026–2027.

This guidance is intended to help applicants strengthen their submissions if they wish to apply for Round 2 funding in 2026.

Significant competition for funding

This was a highly competitive grant program with demand far exceeding the available funding. In total 70 applications sought over \$3.7 million for the \$2 million available.

Ineligible applications

For this grant program, all applications were assessed in accordance with mandatory criteria set out in the [BIM Program Guidelines](#). Applications were not considered further if they did not meet the mandatory criteria.

Some examples of reasons that applications did not meet the eligibility criteria were:

- Applications did not meet the minimum funding co-contribution of 25%
- Applications exceeded funding limits: \$50,000 per asset or \$100,000 across multiple assets
- The asset was not accessible to the general boating public
- Applications involved works that were already completed
- Applicants did not own or have control of the assets or did not have proof of consent from asset owner
- Applicant did not have an ABN or ACN

Eligible applications

Where the mandatory criteria were met, applications were assessed against the weighted criteria (see table 1), which provided a basis for comparing the relative benefits and costs between different projects applying for funding.

Table 1: Weight assessment criteria

	Description	Weighting (%)
1	Direct benefits to boaters including powered and non-powered vessel users	40
2	Delivery confidence including the proposed methodology to complete the project by 31 December 2026	30
3	Cost and affordability (including value for money)	30
	Total	100

The maximum score that could be provided to each Weighted Assessment Criteria was 10.

The highly competitive nature of the program meant that, in many cases, otherwise suitable applications could not be supported within the available funding.

Areas where unsuccessful applications could have been strengthened

Many unsuccessful BIM Program applications could be improved by more clearly demonstrating benefit to the general boating public. Applicants needed to demonstrate the asset is genuinely public and that the proposed work qualified as maintenance, rather than upgrades or retrospective projects that had already commenced or been completed. Applications that scored well clearly demonstrated how their project will improve boating safety, access, and enjoyment, and provided evidence of use by a wide range of users, including recreational and commercial boaters, fishers, clubs and non-powered boaters. Some applicants, however, did not include key information to substantiate their claims, which in turn affected their overall scores. The purpose of this grant program was to fund repairs and maintenance and large funding requests for major upgrades were outside the scope of the program and as such could not be considered.

Confidence in delivery and value for money are also critical. Stronger applications included realistic timelines, approvals, technical documentation, and evidence of who will carry out the work. Budgets should be supported by quotes or estimates, stay within funding caps, and meet the minimum 25% cash co-contribution requirement. Clear maintenance plans / schedules, clear photos, condition reports, engineering assessments, and tenure documentation strengthened applications and demonstrated that the project is feasible. Focusing on these areas will help applicants prepare stronger submissions and increase their chances of success in future BIM grant rounds.

Weighted Assessment Criteria Feedback

Criterion 1 – Direct benefits to boaters

This criterion required applicants to show clear evidence of how their project would deliver direct benefits to the boating public, including both powered and non-powered users.

Table 2: Direct benefits to boaters – higher scoring applications

Higher scoring applications	Response demonstrated
Clearly demonstrated the connection between project and direct benefits to boaters	- How the proposed works would directly improve boating safety, access, usability and amenity. - Described benefits across a wide range of users, including recreational boaters, fishers, paddle craft and commercial boaters.
Clearly described how the existing condition of infrastructure were impacting boaters	Clearly described what would happen if works were not funded, including restricted access, risk of closure, increased safety issues.
Clearly detailed the use and demand for project	- Provided usage evidence (vessel counts, season patterns, parking capacity) - Community consultation (letters of support and surveys) confirmed genuine and broad user demand.

Table 3: Direct benefits to boaters – lower scoring applications

Lower scoring applications	Generally did not do two or more of the following
Lower scoring applications did not as clearly demonstrate how the specific maintenance works would directly benefit boaters.	- Clearly demonstrated the direct benefits the project would bring to boaters - Explain the consequences of inaction - Quantify use and demand of boating facility/infrastructure - Provide community and stakeholder support

Criterion 2 – Delivery confidence

This criterion assessed the applicant's capacity and capability to deliver the proposed project, including the methodology and timeline to complete the works by 31 December 2026.

Table 4: Delivery confidence – higher scoring applications

Higher scoring applications	Response demonstrated
Clearly outlined their capability and track record to deliver projects	- Strong evidence of having delivered similar projects citing specific examples - Evidence of annual capital delivery programs - Continuation of established maintenance programs that demonstrated reliability, efficiency and low delivery risk.
Clearly outlined the skills and experience of those responsible for delivering the project.	- Dedicated project management teams - Engaged experience marine contractors, engineers and consultants

Higher scoring applications	Response demonstrated
Clearly outlined how the activity would be completed in both a timely and cost-effective manner	- Structured project planning and clear milestones - Realistic timelines - Several applications already had planning or procurement in progress, demonstrating readiness to deliver once funding confirmed - Comprehensive risk management strategy - Permits and compliance requirements were identified and in some cases applicants already had obtained correct approvals
Routine or low complexity works	Projects described as routine maintenance (e.g. pressure cleaning) clearly justified their low-risk and achievable delivery

Table 5: Delivery confidence – lower scoring applications

Lower scoring applications	Generally did not do two or more of the following
Lower scoring applications did not as clearly demonstrate how the project would be delivered in both a timely and cost-effective manner	- Include a realistic, milestone-based delivery plan and key dependencies. - Demonstrate proven capability, governance structure and procurement approach. - Identify potential delivery risks (weather, tides, material delays) and mitigation strategies. - Include a reasonable contingency and clearly define how any adjustments to scope or schedule will be managed. - Provide confirmation of required permits / approvals to carry out work. - Provide names, experience, or quotes from qualified marine contractors or engineers.

Criterion 3 – Cost and affordability

This criterion assessed the project's value for money and justification of the funding amount, including consideration of the applicant's financial co-contribution.

Table 6: Cost and affordability – higher scoring applications

Higher scoring applications	Response demonstrated
Well substantiated costing	- Detailed, line-item budgets supported by multiple contractor quotes, engineering costs estimates or historical contract data. - Inclusion of key cost components e.g. materials, labour, project management, contingency. - Exceeded the minimum 25% co-contribution. - Use of in-kind resources clearly identified and valued. - Clear identification of funding sources.
Good value for money demonstrated through lifecycle rationale	- Projects justified costs by showing preventative maintenance or staged delivery. - Works extended asset life or improved safety for high-use facilities.

Higher scoring applications	Response demonstrated
Documentation clarity	Budgets were easy to reconcile – total project costs matched quoted amounts and co-contribution figures.

Table 7: Cost and affordability – lower scoring applications

Lower scoring applications	Generally did not do two or more of the following
Lower scoring applications did not as clearly demonstrate value for money.	- Provide detailed cost-benefit analysis and multiple quotes for key works. - Clear and well-reasoned link between project costs and anticipated benefits to boaters. - Reconcile all amounts across the application (total project costs, grant request, and co-contribution). - Clearly identify cash and in-kind contributions separately. - Exceed the 25% minimum co-contribution that strengthened higher scoring applications. - Exclude unrelated or new-capacity items to maintain compliance with the grant guidelines.