



SOUTHLAND
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Rohe Pōtāe o Murihiku



Media release

12 October 2026

Funding round opens to help communities prepare for future emergencies

As Southland approaches the first anniversary of the October 2025 severe weather event, communities are being encouraged to take practical steps to strengthen their preparedness for future emergencies through a new community resilience project funding round. The funding round marks the next phase of the Southland Mayoral Relief Fund, shifting its focus from immediate recovery support to longer-term community preparedness and resilience.

The funding comes from money remaining in the Southland Mayoral Relief Fund following the October 2025 severe weather event. The fund has now closed to further individual and business hardship applications, marking the transition from immediate relief to longer-term community strengthening.

Southland District Mayor Rob Scott, chair of the Mayoral Relief Forum, said the anniversary provided an opportunity for communities to reflect on what they had learned and invest in future preparedness.

"The severe weather event affected communities right across Southland and showed just how important it is to be prepared," Mayor Scott said.

"As we approach the first anniversary, it's a timely reminder that emergencies can happen at any time. This funding gives communities the chance to turn lessons learned into practical projects that will help people prepare for, respond to and recover from future events."

"Local communities know where their strengths and vulnerabilities are. We want to support practical, achievable projects that will help people look after one another when an emergency happens."

Applications for this new round of funding will be open from **Monday 12 October until Friday 6 November 2026**.

Grants will typically range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending on the scope, scale and community benefit of each project. Funding is limited and applications will be assessed on merit against the approved criteria.

Applications are open to community groups, iwi organisations and not-for-profit organisations operating within the Invercargill City, Southland District or Gore District council areas.

Projects must provide a clear community benefit and contribute to preparedness, response or recovery needs arising from the October 2025 severe weather event. Applicants will also need to show that their proposal is a defined, one-off project and represents value for money.

Projects could include:

- community first aid training
- psychosocial support programmes
- food security initiatives
- community communication systems
- generator connections for community hubs
- water storage for community hubs
- other community resources or infrastructure that improve emergency preparedness and response capability.

Mayor Scott said the fund was focused on initiatives with a shared and lasting community benefit.

“This funding is for defined, one-off projects that help communities support one another during and after an emergency,” he said.

“We are looking for good ideas that are realistic, offer value for money and can make a practical difference when communities face disruption.”

The fund will not support retrospective projects, ongoing operating costs, activities resulting in private gain or projects already fully funded from another source. It is not available for private business-continuity costs or routine organisational expenses.

Applications will be assessed against criteria including resilience outcomes, community benefit, feasibility, inclusiveness, accessibility and value for money. Emergency Management Southland will provide advice during the assessment process. Final funding decisions will be made by the Southland, Gore and Invercargill mayors.

Successful recipients will need to provide a final report outlining the project’s outcomes and how the funding was spent.

Information about how to apply is available from the Southland District Council website - <https://www.southlanddc.govt.nz/council/funding-and-grants/funding-and-grants-2/southland-mayoral-relief-fund/>

For all enquiries, contact Southland District Council on 0800 732 732 or email funding@southlanddc.govt.nz.

ENDS