



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Ministry for the Arts

DRAFT

GUIDELINES

**THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR
EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS**

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INTRODUCTION

The National Program for Excellence in the Arts (the Program) is administered by the Ministry for the Arts and will provide a responsive, national approach to supporting participation in and access to Australia's high quality, diverse and vital arts and cultural sector.

The Program meets the strategic priorities of supporting participation in, and access to, the arts and encouraging greater private sector support for the arts.

While valuing the many secondary benefits which flow from arts activities, the Program seeks to celebrate the intrinsic capacity of the arts to engage, inspire and make meaning for all Australians.

OBJECTIVES

The Program will:

- Deliver a wide range of quality arts and cultural experiences that grow arts audiences, throughout Australia and internationally
- strengthen Australia's reputation as a sophisticated and artistic nation with a confident, outward-focused arts sector
- encourage greater private sector support and partnership funding for the arts
- support collaborations to develop arts and culture initiatives including in specific regions or priority areas.

To achieve these objectives, the Program will offer funding for arts and cultural projects and initiatives through three streams:

1. Endowment Incentives

The endowment incentives stream will support organisations to realise medium to long term projects through financial partnerships and collaborations. Funding will be conditional on organisations leveraging funds from other sources to realise projects. Organisations will need to demonstrate evidence of financial, cash or in-kind support from sources other than the Australian Government. This stream will be open to a wide range of projects. Examples of the kind of activity which could be supported are: co-investment through a Foundation or arts organisation to deliver a new initiative such as a fellowship program; a contribution to an infrastructure project that has other partners; and partnering in the development of new Australian works.

2. International and Cultural Diplomacy

The International and Cultural Diplomacy stream will support arts and cultural organisations to expand audiences for Australian artistic and creative works through international tours, exhibitions, partnerships and exchanges. It will also support Australian arts organisations to bring internationally significant art and artists to Australia, thus giving Australian audiences greater opportunities to experience the world's finest performances and exhibitions.

3. Strategic Initiatives

The Strategic Initiatives stream will assist arts and cultural organisations to respond to new opportunities, challenges and issues. It will be flexible and responsive to enable organisations to maximise the potential outcomes of new opportunities. It will also support organisations to deliver outcomes against planned and developing priorities. It will support projects enabling regional and remote audiences, to have new opportunities for access to a wide range of art forms. It is from this stream that the Australian Government will directly fund appropriate major initiatives.

FUNDING

The Australian Government will provide approximately \$20 million each financial year for the Program. The level of funding provided for each stream will be demand driven allowing the Program to be most responsive to the needs of the sector.

Funding will be available through annual or multiyear funding agreements up to a maximum of four years, subject to availability of funds.

There is no limit to the amount of funding that may be sought, however, applicants should keep in mind that the program seeks to support projects that deliver national outcomes and deliver a diverse range of quality projects in each of the program streams. To remain competitive, all applications for funding should include realistic budgets and represent value for money.

Applicants may only apply once for each project in any financial year. Applicants may apply multiple times (for different projects) but can only be awarded funding once per year from each funding stream.

The final amount of any funding and length of funding term will be assessed by the Ministry for the Arts and independent assessors, subject to Program budgetary limits. Recommendations will then be made to the Minister for the Arts.

ELIGIBILITY

Minimum Eligibility

Who the Program will fund

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- be an Australian organisation or entity
- have as its principal purpose the arts – this includes: the performing and visual arts, cross-artform and digital arts, arts training and collecting institutions whether at a national, regional or community level; (usually defined in the organisation’s Constitution or Articles of Association, and reflected in the Annual Report and Business Plans)
- have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), if required by the Australian Tax Office

- not have any outstanding reports, acquittals or serious breaches relating to any Australian Government funding

What the Program will fund

The Program will fund high quality projects in all art forms, including screen-based art work and cross art form projects, including but not limited to:

- Performances
- Exhibitions
- Tours
- Development and/or creation of new work
- Festivals
- Investment in Foundation or fellowship programs (Endowment stream only)
- Infrastructure projects (Endowment stream only)

What the Program will not fund

- Business start-up costs
- Private tuition, training or study
- Work used for academic assessment
- Projects by individuals
- Competitions and eisteddfods
- Awards and prizes
- Film and television production
- Interactive games
- Built or natural heritage projects
- Projects or components of projects that are also funded by other programs administered by the Ministry for the Arts

Ordinarily the Program will not provide operational funding for organisations. However, funding may be used for administrative costs associated with particular funded projects.

Eligible projects need to align clearly with the objectives of the funding stream applied for. While applicants may indicate a preference for consideration within a particular stream, assessors reserve the right to recommend the activity be funded from the funding stream they consider best suits the project.

If you are uncertain if your organisation or the project you are considering may be eligible please contact the Ministry for the Arts prior to submitting your application. Contact details appear at the end of these guidelines.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

When preparing your application you should clearly emphasise how you will meet the objectives of the stream you wish to be considered under. This will be a focus of assessment.

Applications for funding will be assessed against four criteria: quality, access, support and partnerships and value for money:

Quality

Assessors may consider:

- Experience and reputation of the applicant organisation in the relevant field
- Skills, expertise and reputation of the key personnel including participating artists
- Nature of the project
- Benefits to project participants including artistic and professional development
- Relevance and likely appeal to audiences and communities

Access

Assessors may consider:

- Audience appeal and demand
- How the project widens audiences' (Australian or International) access to art forms and mediums, styles, innovation or experimentation
- The geographic reach of the activity including participation by people in regional and remote areas
- The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- The involvement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Accessibility for persons with disability including participation of artists with disability
- Benefits to the artists involved of the exposure to wider audiences
- Benefits to the artists involved of the opportunity for wider artistic expression

Support and Partnerships

Assessors may consider:

- Community support and engagement
- Financial and project partners
- Level of co-contribution cash and/or in-kind
- Creative partners
- Level of co-creation, collaboration
- Likely ongoing benefits of partnerships
- Encouragement of philanthropy and corporate support.

These criteria will be of particular importance for assessing funding for the endowment incentives stream.

Value for Money

Assessors may consider:

- The need for funding support
- The quality and viability of the project plan and timeline
- The viability and adequacy of the proposed budget
- Remuneration arrangements for personnel involved
- Governance arrangements within the organisation
- The applicant's funding history
- The overall public benefit of investing in the project

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The allocation of funding through the Program is decided on an open and competitive basis.

What you will need to do

You will be required to submit an application online at XXXX. The application form is designed to assist you to demonstrate how your proposal meets the objectives of the Program and to address the assessment criteria.

As part of the application you will also be required to provide a project work plan and detailed budget.

Additional supporting information may be provided such as:

- Written evidence of support from other sources
- A letter of confirmation from key staff
- CVs of key artistic talent
- Written confirmation of audience demand such as venue confirmations
- An invitation to perform or exhibit

Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Applicants seeking multiyear funding will be required to provide a strongly argued case demonstrating the need for and benefits of multiyear support and additional budget information.

Applications must be clear and succinct.

Assessors will only consider up to 10 pages of additional information so include only information directly relevant to your application.

Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible.

What we will do

Assessments will be carried out on an ongoing basis, in order of receipt, with recommendations usually made to the Minister for the Arts on a quarterly basis, in the last week of October, January, April and July each year. While there is no closing date, it is recommended that applications are submitted no later than the last week of the month before recommendations are made, as no guarantee of inclusion can be made and assessment time may vary depending on the number of applications received.

Where an opportunity has arisen unexpectedly, applicants may request a quick response from the program. Any request would need to explain why the opportunity could not have been planned for within the normal funding cycles of the program.

Applications will be assessed and ranked by at least three assessors including a combination of Ministry for the Arts and independent assessors. For applications under the International and cultural diplomacy stream, this may include officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and / or the International Arts and Cultural Diplomacy Panel. Assessors will consider quality, access, support and partnerships and value for money. The Ministry for the Arts may moderate assessments to ensure each assessment has properly considered the funding program objectives, Government policy objectives, and issues of overall funding balance. These processes inform the recommendations made to the Minister for the Arts. As part of the assessment process, measures will be in place to ensure that not only are the best projects supported, but that there is also an appropriate mix across art forms and types of activity, between regional, urban and international projects and across a range of communities.

The Ministry for the Arts will maintain a Register of Independent Assessors comprising sector and community representatives. The Ministry will advertise for expressions of interest and may also identify suitable persons to be invited to become assessors. Assessors will determine whether your application meets the criteria to a high, medium or low degree.

Where the level of information provided is not sufficient for the assessors to make a recommendation they may, but are not obliged to, seek more information from the applicant. It is therefore recommended that you thoroughly address the criteria in your application. If you are unsure of how to address a particular criterion, Ministry for the Arts staff are available to provide factual information about the application process to applicants.

Applicants will usually be advised of the assessment outcome within six weeks of the recommendation date each quarter. Applicants will be advised of the assessment outcome in writing.

Successful applicants will be listed in the Department's grants register, unless the Minister has obtained an exemption in accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines, paragraph 5.7. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback in writing.

MANAGING THE PROJECT

The Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a standard Commonwealth Funding Agreement before commencement of the project. The Funding Agreement will set out the nature of the relationship between the Australian Government and the funding recipient, as well as reporting requirements such as progress and acquittal reports, including financial reporting.

You must not begin any activities that are to be paid for by this funding before your Funding Agreement has been signed by both your organisation and the Ministry for the Arts. All funds provided by the Ministry for the Arts must be spent in accordance with the approved budget prior to the end of the funding period identified in the funding agreement. If you experience any delays or are unable to spend your funds in accordance with your Funding Agreement for any reason, you must notify us as early as possible to request a variation.

The Funding Agreement will confirm your agreement to comply with all relevant statutes, regulations, by laws and requirements of any Commonwealth, State, Territory or local authority, for example in regard to working with vulnerable persons and obtaining all required permits prior to an activity commencing.

Payments

All funding will be subject to the terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement, including conditions relating to the deposit of funds, auditing and unspent funds.

Payments will be made against the agreed schedule, set out in the Funding Agreement, following Execution of the Funding Agreement by the Ministry for the Arts and on the provision of details of a bank account into which funds are to be paid. Payments against the schedule are subject to the Ministry for the Arts' acceptance of performance and financial reports, also set out in the Funding Agreement, and the demonstrated need for approved funds to continue the activity.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting on Australian Government funded activities ensures that funding is used for the intended purpose and that funds can be fully accounted. Funding recipients will be required to provide reports to the Ministry for the Arts, as specified in the Funding Agreement, including progress of the activity against both the agreed objectives and the approved budget. Reporting requirements will be proportional to the scale of the project.

Recipients may also be required to provide information to the Ministry for the Arts for inclusion in government publications and on government websites including the Ministry for the Arts' website.

Acquittal and evaluation

At the end of the funding period, funding recipients will be required to acquit all funding. This may include statutory declarations, independently audited financial statements or other financial information, as outlined in the funding agreement and attached schedules. The acquittal is normally required within 60 business days of the conclusion of the activity.

Funding recipients will be provided with templates where required to assist with acquitting their funding.

Funding recipients may also be required to provide information about their activity to inform the Government's evaluation of the Program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The legislative authority for the Program derives from Schedule 1AB of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* as amended.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants must indicate any potential perceived or actual conflict of interest arising from proposed projects and state that, where the Ministry for the Arts establishes that a conflict of interest exists, the Ministry may decide not to consider the application.

If there is the possibility of a perceived conflict of interest, applicants should include a statement addressing this and demonstrate why a conflict of interest would not result from the funding of the project, or how the conflict will be managed.

Ministry for the Arts assessors are also required as part of their duties to declare conflicts of interest.

PRIVACY

Personal information collected by the Ministry for the Arts is protected by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). The Ministry collects personal information to carry out its functions properly and efficiently. The Ministry only uses personal information for the purposes for which it was given to the Ministry and for directly related purposes (unless otherwise required by, or authorised under, law). Contact details of successful organisations will be made available to the Minister for the Arts and other Members of Parliament.

TAXATION

Funding payments will be exclusive of GST unless otherwise indicated. Payments to states, territories and local government do not attract GST. The Ministry does not provide advice on whether or how organisations pay GST. If required, applicants are advised to seek advice from a qualified professional or the Australian Taxation Office www.ato.gov.au. The applicant should be advised that the Department will report details of all payments to the Australian Tax Office.

COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

The Ministry for the Arts regards complaints as a way of both assessing and improving our performance. The Ministry will endeavour, where possible, to ensure that complaints are resolved promptly, fairly, confidentially and satisfactorily and that our processes are improved as a result. Complaints regarding any aspect of the application process should be directed to the contact address below.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please send your feedback to the Ministry for the Arts at:

nationalexcellenceprogram@arts.gov.au

Comments close at 5pm AEST 31 July 2015