



**Australian Government**

**Department of Communications and the Arts**



# Guidelines

## Festivals Australia

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## Funding guidelines

### Introduction

Festivals Australia is administered by the Department of Communications and the Arts and enables artists and organisations to shape Australia's cultural landscape, increase cultural diversity, and inspire, educate and entertain audiences across Australia.

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

Festivals Australia seeks to celebrate the intrinsic capacity of the arts to engage, inspire and make meaning for all Australians, while supporting the celebration of place and promoting a sense of community identity.

### Objectives

Festivals Australia will:

- provide access to a diverse range of high quality, innovative arts projects that grow audiences at festivals across regional Australia
- support partnerships and collaboration across the arts sector
- encourage community participation in arts projects at regional and remote festivals.

To achieve these objectives, Festivals Australia will offer funding to support individual art projects that will allow community members living in regional or remote Australia to participate in or appreciate an arts driven experience at:

- A festival – which is defined by Festivals Australia as a program of events that is open to the public and provides an opportunity to gather and celebrate. A festival is presented regularly, for example annually, biennially or triennially.
- A significant one-off community celebration – which is defined by Festivals Australia as a schedule of events that are open to the public and are focused on an anniversary or launch of great significance to the community. For example, a town or area's centenary celebrations, a significant anniversary of a major local event or the opening of a major new community resource could be the basis for an eligible significant one-off community celebration.

### Funding

The Australian Government provides approximately \$1.2 million each financial year for the Festivals Australia program. Festivals Australia delivers two funding rounds usually closing in September and March each year. The closing dates for applications are advertised on the Department of Communications and the Arts website at [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au).

Funding is available through annual or multiyear funding agreements subject to available funds. 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.

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 regional outcomes and deliver a diverse range of quality projects. To remain competitive, all applications for funding must include realistic budgets and represent value for money.

The final amount of any funding and length of funding term awarded is determined by the Minister for the Arts, after assessment by Independent Assessors and the Department, subject to Festivals Australia budgetary limits.

## Eligibility

### Minimum Eligibility

#### Who Festivals Australia will fund

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- be an Australian incorporated organisation<sup>1</sup>
- 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 Commonwealth funding.

Unincorporated groups are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the above criteria.

#### What Festivals Australia will fund

Festivals Australia will fund high quality arts or cultural heritage projects in a regional area that participants and audiences can engage with, through activities like a parade, performance, workshops, installation or exhibition. Projects must be a single discrete activity, not a range of unrelated activities across the festival program. Festivals Australia will not fund the overall festival, only a discrete project within the festival. The arts or cultural heritage focus of the project could include but is not limited to:

- circus
- dance
- film
- literature
- music
- multimedia
- cross art form
- theatre
- puppetry
- visual arts and crafts.

#### What Festivals Australia will not fund

- a project at a festival or one-off community celebration in a major city or metropolitan location<sup>2</sup>
- an eisteddfod
- costs of the overall festival (Festivals Australia only funds discrete projects within the festival)
- projects that will commence before the funding is approved
- components of projects that are funded by other programs.

Eligible projects need to align clearly with the objectives of the Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants from the Australian external territories, such as Norfolk Island, are eligible to apply.

<sup>2</sup> As defined by the Modified Monash Model. Under the Modified Monash Model, Festivals Australia funding cannot principally benefit a location classified as MMM Classification 1. This model is currently available at [www.doctorconnect.gov.au](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au).

If you are uncertain that your organisation or project are eligible please contact the Department prior to submitting your application.

#### What you can spend grant funds on

Festivals Australia grant funds may be used toward the cost of producing the project including:

- artist fees
- travel costs (only within Australia)
- materials
- venue hire
- equipment hire
- temporary appointment of a project coordinator where a very strong business case demonstrates that it is essential to the delivery of the project.

Purchase of production equipment may only be considered where it is more cost effective than hire.

#### What you can't spend grant funds on

Festivals Australia grant funds may not be used for:

- festival or business start-up costs
- general marketing
- catering
- security
- insurance costs
- operating costs for the festival
- publication of festival programs
- infrastructure costs including building or fitting out permanent structures.

## Assessment criteria

Applications for funding are assessed against the following assessment criteria:

### Quality

- experience/calibre of the applicant organisation in the relevant field
- skills, expertise/calibre of the key personnel including participating artists
- scale of the project
- benefits to the arts and cultural sector
- benefits to project participants
- benefits to audiences and the Australian community.

### Access

- location of the festival or celebration
- audience appeal /demand
- how the project widens audiences' access to art forms and mediums, styles, innovation or experimentation
- likely attendance/participation
- accessibility for persons with disability including participation of artists with disability
- the involvement and / or participation of Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- the involvement and / or participation of people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 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

- community support and engagement
- financial and project partners
- level of co-contribution (cash and/or in-kind).

### Value for Money

- 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 (capacity to administer the funding)
- the applicant's funding history/compliance
- the overall public benefit of investing in the project.

## Application and assessment process

The allocation of funding through Festivals Australia is decided on an open and competitive basis.

### What you will need to do

You will be required to submit an application online at [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au). The application form is designed to assist you to demonstrate how your proposal meets the program's objectives and to address the assessment criteria.

As part of the application you will be required to complete a project work plan and detailed budget. Applicants seeking multiyear funding will be required to provide a strongly argued business case demonstrating the need for, and benefits of, multiyear support and additional budget information. Applications must be clear and succinct and support material kept to a minimum.

You will also need to provide:

- Artist confirmation forms for each of the participating artists which must be compiled and submitted in the one PDF document. Please name and submit your file with the title 'Artist Confirmation Forms'.
- For artists in remote communities, a video (up to two minutes long) can be submitted in place of an artist confirmation form. Video files must be provided as URL links.
- Evidence of community support for the project. Letters of support from community members must be combined and submitted as one PDF document. Please name and submit your file with the title 'Community Support'.
- For community representation in remote areas, a video (up to five minutes long) can be submitted in place of a letter of support. Video files must be provided as URL links.

The following optional support material may be provided:

- A community consultation plan. A single document can be submitted as one PDF document.
- Previous and/or proposed festival program (if applicable). A single document can be submitted as a PDF document or URL link.

No other optional support material will be accepted.

Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible.

Applications must be submitted by the closing date for each of the two rounds per year.

### What we will do

Applications are assessed and ranked by a minimum of three Assessors comprising a combination of Departmental and Independent Assessors. Assessors will consider quality, access, support and partnerships and value for money. Applications are considered in the context of the program objectives and against the four equally weighted assessment criteria.

The Department may moderate assessments to ensure each assessment has properly considered the funding program objectives, Commonwealth policy objectives, and issues of overall funding balance. These processes inform the recommendations presented to the Minister for decision. 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 Department maintains a Register of Independent Assessors comprising sector and community representatives formed through Expressions of Interest from the public. The Department selects Assessors from the Register based on the nature of applications received in each round.

Assessors will determine whether your application meets the criteria to a high, medium or low degree. The final decision about any funding awarded is determined by the Minister for the Arts, after considering the assessment of the Assessors.

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, the staff of the Department are available to provide factual information about the application process to applicants.

Applicants will usually be advised of the outcome of their application in writing within three months of the closing date of each round.

Successful applicants will be listed in the Department's grants register, unless the Minister has obtained an exemption in accordance with the Commonwealth Grants 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 Commonwealth 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 Department. All funds 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 the Department 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 Department 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 Department's 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 Commonwealth 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 Department, 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 Department for inclusion in government publications and on government websites.

### 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 usually required within 60 business days of the conclusion of the activity.

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

Funding recipients may also be required to provide information about their activity to inform the Commonwealth's evaluation of Festivals Australia.

### Legislative authority

The legislative authority for Festivals Australia 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. Where the Department establishes that a conflict of interest exists, the Department may decide not to consider the application.

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

Assessors are also required to declare conflicts of interest.



## Privacy

Personal information collected by the Department is protected by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). The Department collects personal information to carry out its functions properly and efficiently. The Department only uses personal information for the purposes for which it was given 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 Department 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](http://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 Department regards complaints as a way of both assessing and improving our performance. Where possible the Department will endeavour 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

Department of Communications and the Arts:

Telephone: 1800 590 577  
Email: [festivals@arts.gov.au](mailto:festivals@arts.gov.au)  
Internet: [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au)  
Address: 38 Sydney Ave, Forrest, ACT 2603