



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Office for the Arts

Frequently Asked Questions

Festivals Australia

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1. Funding

1.2 How often can I apply?

There is no limit to the number of applications you can make to Festivals Australia however only three projects, per organisation, per festival can be funded.

1.3 What are the opening and closing dates for applications?

Festivals Australia delivers two competitive funding rounds each year, usually in February and September. The specific opening and closing dates for applications are advertised on the Office for the Arts' (the Department's) website at www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/festivals-australia.

1.4 Is multi-year funding available?

No, funding under Festivals Australia is provided on an annual basis.

1.5 Can I apply outside of an advertised funding round?

No, applications must be received between the opening and closing dates for each of the two rounds per year.

1.6 Does the Department plan to keep delivering funding rounds during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. The Department will continue to open two funding rounds per annum with the usual timeframes continuing to apply.

1.7 What allowances are being made for the impacts COVID-19 might have on my proposed activity?

We understand that COVID-19 will continue to impact Festivals Australia projects. Given the changeable nature of restrictions across jurisdictions, the Department is keen to support proposed activities as much as reasonably possible, which is why the rounds will continue to be offered.

We will work with all grantees to accommodate impacts on their agreed activities and will provide as much flexibility as possible. The standard grant agreements that we use allow for projects to be varied where this is done in writing by both parties. There is no limit to the number of times the agreement can be varied.

2. Eligibility

2.2 Can individuals apply?

Yes, individuals can apply for funding if their application is auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

2.3 What is auspicing?

To 'auspice' means to provide support, sponsorship or guidance.

Auspicing is an arrangement where your organisation makes an agreement with another eligible organisation who takes legal and financial responsibility for the grant funding on your behalf.

All activities undertaken must have the support and approval of the auspice body.

You and your auspice body should be aware that the auspice body will need to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The auspice body will be responsible for meeting the obligations set out in the agreement as well as managing, reporting on and acquitting the funding.

If you are applying through an auspice, a confirmation of this is required in your application. This form is available online at: [Auspice Arrangement Confirmation form](#)

2.4 Will my previous record with the Department or other Australian Government agencies be taken into account during the assessment of my application?

Yes, your history as a funding recipient will be considered, particularly if you have outstanding acquittal reports. If you have a reasonable explanation for a delay in submitting a previous report, you may explain this in your application for the assessor's consideration.

2.5 What types of organisations or entities are eligible for funding?

To be eligible, organisations must be incorporated. This gives the organisation its own legal entity, set apart from the individuals who founded the organisation. Examples include companies, incorporated associations, statutory authorities, local government bodies and universities.

Unincorporated groups (three or more individuals who do not form a legally constituted organisation) with an arts or cultural heritage purpose are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

Applicants may be required to provide a certificate of incorporation or evidence of their current legal status.

2.6 What is a 'regional area'?

We use the Australian Statistical Geography Standard – Remoteness Areas (ASGS-RA) to determine whether a location is regional or remote. Major cities and metropolitan areas are Classification Code RA 1 under the ASGS-RA. Festivals Australia funding is targeted at activities benefitting communities in areas classified Code RA 2 or higher. You can check the Classification Code of your project location at the Department of Health's [Health Workforce Locator](#) and following the directions below:

- Tick the box with the latest date next to 'ASGS– Remoteness Areas'
- Enter your address into the 'Find address' box
- Hit the 'Search Location' box
- Your location code will appear at the bottom
- All locations with Codes from RA 2 to RA 5 are eligible under the program.

Festivals Australia will only fund arts projects that are delivered at festivals or significant one-off community celebrations in regional or remote locations. Organisations based in metropolitan locations may apply only where the project will be delivered in a regional or remote location at a festival or significant one-off community celebration. Projects delivered in metropolitan locations are not eligible for funding.

2.7 What is a 'festival'?

The Festivals Australia Guidelines define a 'festival' 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’.

The festival does not have to be an arts festival, but the project you are applying for must be an arts project.

2.8 What is a ‘significant community event’?

The Festivals Australia Guidelines define a ‘significant community celebration’ as:

‘a schedule of events that are open to the public and are focussed 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 one-off community celebration’.

A performance program (such as a musical or drama event), or the commissioning of a public art work that is not otherwise connected to an event such as an anniversary or opening is unlikely to be considered eligible for the Festivals Australia program.

2.9 The Guidelines say that projects must be a ‘single discrete activity’. What does a ‘single, discrete activity’ mean?

Festivals Australia will only provide funding for a specific project (‘single discrete activity’) occurring within the festival or significant community celebration, not the overall festival or celebration.



Diagram 1: A single discrete activity within a broader event

Some examples of ‘single, discrete activities’ that might be the subject of an application include:

- Costs related to the appearance of a particular artist or group at a festival, such as artist fees and domestic travel;
- A workshop or series of workshops targeted at a specific group of participants that includes costs such as venue hire, materials and presenter fees;
- A specific work of public art that forms one part of a broader schedule of activities for a community celebration including costs such as materials and artist fees;
- Equipment hire for a concert or performance that is one component of a broader festival or significant community celebration.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list. For more information please see Attachment A to the Festivals Australia Guidelines.

Helpful hint:

If in your application your 'festival description' and your 'project description' are the same, it will be unclear to the assessors how your project differs from the broader festival/community celebration and your application may be found ineligible. Make sure you tell us how your project is one of a range of activities happening at your festival/community celebration.

Applications seeking funding for projects that could reasonably be considered a range of activities, some of which do not provide arts outcomes, will be deemed ineligible.

If you would like more information about the kinds of projects we fund, we publish a list of [previously funded activities](#) on our website.

2.10 Can I apply for funding for more than one project at my festival or significant community event?

Yes, Festivals Australia can fund up to three discrete projects, per organisation, per festival. Please note you need to lodge a separate application for each project.

2.11 Do you fund feature film, television or documentary?

While the program can support screen-based and multi-media art, it does not generally support projects associated with feature film, television or documentary. Funding for these projects can be sought from the Australian Government's primary agency for production of Australian screen activity, Screen Australia.

2.12 Do you fund organisational administration costs?

No, Festivals Australia does not fund operating costs for the festival, or the costs of general marketing, catering, security, insurance, hiring of amenities, infrastructure and contingency costs, and publication of festival programs. However, administrative costs associated with undertaking the particular discrete project to be funded may be included as part of an application.

2.13 If an item in the proposed project budget is deemed ineligible for funding, does that mean my entire project will be considered ineligible for funding?

No, if an item within the proposed project budget is deemed ineligible to receive funding, this does not mean that your entire application is automatically considered ineligible. Assessors are able to recommend partial funding.

2.14 If my application is successful, will I be granted the full amount I requested?

Partial or full funding can be offered to successful applicants. Assessment of applications will consider value for money, which may include the need for funding support, the quality and viability of the project plan and timeline, remuneration arrangements for personnel involved and the viability and adequacy of the proposed budget.

2.15 Is there a limit to how much I can apply for?

There is no minimum or maximum amount you can apply for under the Festivals Australia Program. In 2021-22 the Australian Government has increased the funding amount for the program and will provide approximately \$2.7 million.

2.16 Are there any other items not listed in the guidelines that the program will consider funding?

Where a sufficient need is demonstrated in regard to the success of the project, consideration will be given to funding items such as:

- Living away from home allowances – which can support basic rates unless a strong case can be made for a different allowance rate.
- Cameras and documenting equipment.

2.17 Do you fund the purchase of computer hardware?

No, Festivals Australia does not fund the purchase of computer hardware.

2.18 I currently receive funding from another source, such as the Australia Council. Can I apply for funding under this program?

Yes, but you must ensure that the funding sought through Festivals Australia is for a different component of the project.

For example, if your project consists of the following budget and receives a \$20,000 contribution from the Australia Council:

Total Income		Total Expenditure		
Festivals Australia funding request	\$40,000	Expenditure of Festivals Australia funding		
		Performers a, b, and c	Wages/Fees	\$40,000

Income from other sources	Amount	Expenditure on other activities			Amount
Australia Council	\$20,000	Filmmaker	Wages/Fees		\$10,000
Ticket Sales	\$5,000	Performers d and e	Wages/Fees		\$10,000
Local business in-kind support	\$15,000	Flights to venue	Travel		\$10,000
		Main stage hire	Venue hire		\$5,000
		Paint and supplies	Materials		\$5,000
Total	\$80,000	Total			\$80,000

Diagram 2: Example of budget, the same expenditure amount cannot be paid for twice

If the Australia Council funding is allocated to wages/fees for the filmmaker and performers d and e, Festivals Australia funding can be allocated against any of the other eligible components, such as the other performers a, b, and c as seen in the example above.

However, if Australia Council funding contributed \$10,000 for the filmmaker, \$5,000 for travel, and \$5,000 for venue hire, Festivals Australia can be sought for the remaining amount of wages/fees, travel, and materials – where no other funding allocation has exhausted that category amount.

2.19 I currently receive Australian Government funding under another program. Can I apply for funding under this program?

Yes, as long as the funding you receive is for a different component of the project as the one for which you are applying for funding through Festivals Australia. See example above.

3. Assessment Criteria

3.1 How are the assessment criteria weighted?

Each assessment criterion is weighted equally.

3.2 If I applied in an earlier round but my application was unsuccessful, can I apply again for the same project in a later round?

Yes, you may apply again for the same project in a later round, provided the project does not start before the funding will be available. Please see the timetable at section 7 for an indication of the timing of Festivals Australia submission rounds.

The Department can provide feedback on unsuccessful applications in each round. Feedback can be provided, if requested, within one month of being advised of the outcome. To request feedback please email festivals@arts.gov.au

3.3 What happens if there are changes to my application/project during the Department's assessment process or during the project period? For example, the name/title of my project changes or my committed/budgeted co-contributions fall through.

You will need to advise the Department as soon as possible so that your application is assessed appropriately, or if you have been successful, so that we can decide whether we need to consider a variation of our grant agreement with you.

3.4 How do I make my application competitive?

Before submitting your application, you should check that it:

- clearly addresses the program objectives, outcomes and assessment criteria (refer to the Festivals Australia Guidelines)
- uses plain language and answers questions concisely
- does not assume assessors know anything about your organisation or project
- provides relevant background information and supporting documentation.

4. Project Information

4.1 What does 'scale of the project' mean?

'Scale of the project' refers to the size and extent of the project within the festival, including how many participants and regional and remote venues involved.

4.2 How do I describe what the 'benefits' of my project are?

Benefits are the advantages obtained by the arts and cultural sector, participants, audiences and community as a consequence of the project. Some examples of benefits include:

- Professional development opportunities for local artists
- Employment opportunities for local artists or arts workers
- An opportunity for local audiences to experience an art activity
- Economic benefits to local businesses from visitors
- An opportunity for the local community to socialise and celebrate together.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

5. Accessibility

5.1 How can I ensure my project is accessible to people with disability?

Applicants should plan to ensure their project is accessible, including to people with disability such as physical conditions, vision impairment, d/Deaf or hard of hearing, mental health conditions, intellectual disability, or neurodivergence.

Arts Access Australia have developed relevant resources that can help you consider this, including:

- [Inclusive Employment](#) – for inclusive project teams
- [Project Accessibility Template](#) – to consider the accessibility of your event
- [Accessible Marketing](#) – to ensure your marketing materials are accessible

5.2 How can I make my project COVID-safe?

Organisations should prepare and develop a COVID-safe plan, including risk assessments, hygiene controls and physical distancing, to operate in a COVID-safe way to protect staff and project participants.

The National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Body has released a planning tool to assist businesses develop COVID-safe plans, which is available at www.pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businessesreopen-and-be-covidsafe.

Safe Work Australia also has a range of guidance and protocols for office environments, workplaces, and training, available at www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

6. Support and Partnerships

6.2 Do I need to have confirmed venues or partners in order to apply?

No, but written evidence of confirmed venues or partners is highly desirable.

6.2 What do you mean by financial and project partners, and co-contribution?

Financial and project partners provide or help with obtaining financial support for the project. This may include providing in-kind support.

Co-contribution refers to cash or in-kind support. Assessment of applications will consider the level of support you can demonstrate you have already secured as well as the support you can realistically expect to receive.

7. Project Planning and Value for Money

7.2 Does my project have to start by a specific date? For example, can I apply for a project a year or more ahead?

The Department welcomes forward planning and applications can be received up to 24 months ahead of festival commencement.

Festivals Australia cannot fund projects that have commenced before the funding is approved. You may wish to refer to the following guide to determine whether your project will meet the timeline requirements:

Submission opening and closing schedule*

Submission round opens	Submission round closes	For projects Commencing from
February	March	1 July
September	September	1 February

*This timeframe is indicative only.

7.3 What information do I need to include in a work plan?

Your project work plan should set out the key deliverables, their expected outcomes, and relevant dates across each stage of your project. This may include Planning, Marketing, Delivery, Closing, and Review. Ensure you allocate sufficient time to establish and conclude your project to fulfil administrative requirements.

7.4 Do I need to be able to demonstrate confirmation (or in-principle commitment) of co-contributions from other sources when I submit my application? Will an estimate of anticipated co-contributions as part of a clear, realistic fundraising plan suffice?

Written evidence of support from other sources is highly desirable. Even if an anticipated co-contribution is in-principle only, or contingent on funding being received from other sources, a letter or statement from your co-contributor will help the assessors understand how likely it is you will receive this contribution.

7.5 Will co-contributions from state, territory and/or local governments meet the requirement to leverage funds from other sources?

Yes.

7.6 My organisation is an individual business unit of a local/state government. Will co-contributions from that local/state government meet the requirement to leverage funds from other sources?

Yes.

7.7 I have applied for funding from a state/territory/local government and/or a philanthropic foundation but have not yet heard whether my application was successful. Can the funding I have applied for count as a co-contribution for the purposes of my application?

Yes. Your application to Festivals Australia will ask you to indicate the status of confirmation for that support. You will need to clearly show which aspects of your project this funding will apply to.

7.8 Can the support I leverage from other sources be entirely in-kind, or does some leveraged support need to be monetary?

The support can be financial, cash or in-kind support from other sources.

8. Application Assessment Process

8.2 How do I submit an application?

You can submit your application online at <https://arts.smartygrants.com.au/>.

8.3 Who can I go to if I am an artist with disability and need more assistance with my application?

Department staff can discuss your project with you and answer any specific questions you have in relation to the assessment criteria and how to complete and submit your application. If you need information on accessibility for your project, see www.artsaccessaustralia.org or one of the arts and disability peak bodies.

8.4 Who can I go to if I need technical assistance with my online application?

If you are having technical issues with SmartyGrants, visit <http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

or contact the SmartyGrants support desk on:

- service@smartygrants.com.au
- Phone: Australia 03 9320 6888 (Mon – Fri, 9:00am - 5:00pm AEST)

8.5 Who will assess my application?

Applications will be assessed and ranked by at least three assessors including a combination of Departmental and Independent Assessors. Assessors will consider quality, access, support and partnerships, and value for money.

8.6 Who are the Independent Assessors?

Independent Assessors comprise sector and community representatives, formed through expressions of interest from the public. Senior Arts Division staff will select assessors.

8.7 Do I get to know which Independent Assessor(s) assessed my application?

No, Independent Assessors' private contact details are kept confidential and held securely by the Department. The Department does not publish or provide the names of individual Independent Assessors selected for each funding round.

8.8 How long will it take for me to be notified of the decision on my application?

Applicants will usually be advised of the assessment outcome approximately three months after the round has closed. Please be aware this is an indicative time frame only. Applicants will be advised of the assessment outcome in writing.

8.9 What are the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) and how are they relevant?

The CGRGs provide the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework for better practice grants administration. The document sets out a range of rules and requirements that apply to government officials and Ministers involved in grant making. The rules are designed to ensure transparency and probity in the spending of public money. In 2013 the CGRG's were formally

included in legislation, meaning that they are not just a guide to better practice; adhering to them is now a legislative requirement.

8.10 What is the grants register and why are my details published?

Under Commonwealth grants legislation, all Commonwealth entities must publish information on individual grants on GrantConnect no later than twenty-one calendar days after the grant agreement for the grant takes effect (CGRG 5.3). Grants awarded from 1 January 2018 can be found at: <https://www.grants.gov.au/?event=public.reports.GA.published.form>. Grants awarded prior to 31 December 2017 are available at <https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/departments/funding-reporting>. Further information on grant reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants>.

9. Privacy

9.2 How will my personal information be handled?

Personal information collected by the Office for the Arts is protected by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). We use this information to carry out our functions properly and efficiently, including contacting you in relation to your funding, consulting with the Australia Council and providing this information to Members of Parliament as required. The Department only uses personal information for the purposes for which it was given to the Department and for directly related purposes (unless otherwise required by or authorised under law).

10. Complaints Mechanism

10.2 What can I do if I am unhappy about how my application has been handled?

Complaints regarding any aspect of the application process should be directed to the Office for the Arts via the Contact Form available at <https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/contact-us>.