

FESTIVALS AUSTRALIA COMMUNIQUE ROUND 30

The Festivals Australia Committee held its 17th meeting in Canberra on 12 & 13 April 2010 to consider applications submitted under round 30. Round 30 was another competitive funding round attracting 97 applications seeking approximately \$1.5 million in funding. The Committee was very pleased to see a number of new applicants seeking funding for the first time under the program and were particularly pleased that many of these were from remote and very remote communities, aligning with the program's key goal of providing access to arts activities for all Australians.

With funding available for allocation to round 30 being approximately \$464,000 the Committee recommended 32 applications for funding. Minister Garrett approved these applications on 17 May 2010.

The 32 projects recommended cover a diverse range of art-forms such as circus performances, interactive multi-media installations, parades, dance and music, Indigenous art and theatrical performances. These arts driven activities will involve communities in building the quality and diversity of the arts and culture elements of their festivals.

The Committee was encouraged to see an increased number of applications from the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory and also projects with strong indigenous contribution. The Committee continue to encourage small and remote communities in other states, particularly Western Australia to apply for support.

While the committee found most applications to be good quality it was apparent that some applications were under developed. To ensure that valuable arts projects have the best opportunity to be funded it is important that applications are fully completed, clear and accurate.

The Committee also notes that applicants should be aware that the Department has undertaken to refresh the Festivals Australia application form and information to assist applicants to provide clear information to the Committee. It is hoped that this work will be finalised for the next round of Festivals Australia Funding in July 2010.

The Committee strongly encourages applicants to make sure festival and project budgets are accurate and realistic; and pay particular attention in addressing the selection criteria when developing applications. There were a number of applications which had significant errors in their budgets such as inaccurate totals and in future there will be an excel spreadsheet provided to assist applicants with this.

The Committee would remind applicants that demonstrating a sense of sustainability about the festival and a building up of the community is an important element of their proposals. Demonstrating that the projects are aligned to the communities needs and that the local community has or will be engaged in the project is also important.

There were a number of applications from Festivals in metropolitan centres. The committee would remind applicants that the Festivals Australia program is primarily about supporting regional and remote community festivals and festivals in major cities will only be considered where they can demonstrate a strong regional focus or are targeting a sector of the community experiencing special needs. The applicants from metropolitan community festivals that were successful this round had worked to provide strong evidence that their festival met these conditions.

There were also some applications that were seeking support for projects at ineligible festivals or for projects that were more of an arts infrastructure activity and were not arts projects within a festival program. The Committee strongly advises all applicants to speak with the Festivals Australia team, who are always available to assist, before they submit an application, to ensure that they have properly understood the program guidelines.

Similarly applicants can speak to the Festivals Australia team if they need clarification of how to complete the application forms correctly. The Festivals Australia funding rounds are highly competitive with lots of terrific projects seeking funding. The Committee cannot recommend funding beyond the available budget and therefore not all good projects are able to be funded.

Overall the Committee was pleased with the response to round 30 and congratulates applicants on presenting a good selection of projects. On behalf of the Committee I congratulate those applicants who have been successful.

Simon Bogle

Chair

Festivals Australia Committee