



Australian Government

Department of Communications and the Arts



Frequently asked questions

Festivals Australia

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1. Funding

1.1 How often can I apply?

There is no limit to the number of applications you can make to Festivals Australia.

1.2 What are the opening and closing dates for applications?

Festivals Australia delivers two competitive funding rounds each year, usually February-March and September-October. The specific opening and closing dates for applications are advertised on the Department of Communications and the Arts (the Department) website at

<https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/festivals-australia>.

1.3 Should I apply for annual or multi-year funding?

Festivals Australia offers both annual and multi-year funding for projects. If you are seeking multi-year funding you will be required to provide a strongly argued business case demonstrating the need for and benefits of multi-year support and additional budget information.

1.4 Can I apply outside of an advertised funding round?

No. Applications must be received by the closing date for each of the two rounds per year.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Can individuals apply?

Individuals can apply for funding if their project is auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

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

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.

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

To be eligible, organisations must be registered under law or created by law. 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.

2.4 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 RA1 under the ASGS-RA. Festivals Australia funding is targeted at activities benefitting communities in areas classified RA2 or higher. You can check the classification of your project location by going to the Department of Health's [DoctorConnect](#) website and entering your street address or town name. Please note, the ASGS-RA codes are comparable to the Modified Monash Model which was previously used to determine eligibility by Festivals Australia.

Aspects of your project may be linked to major cities or metropolitan areas, but Festivals Australia will only fund arts projects that principally benefit regional or remote areas. This means that you need to show us that the primary beneficiaries of your project—such as artists, arts workers and audience—are located in regional and remote communities in Australia.

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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. 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.

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 or community celebration and your application may be found ineligible. Tell us how your project is one of many things happening at your festival or community event.

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

Yes, but you will need to submit separate applications for each project.

Please note that if you submit a single application for funding for multiple, discrete activities that are unrelated, except by virtue of the fact they are happening within the same overall event, your application may be deemed ineligible.

2.9 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.

2.10 Do you fund organisational administration costs?

Festivals Australia does not fund operating costs for the festival, or the costs of general marketing, catering, security, insurance and publication of festival programs. However, administrative costs associated with undertaking the particular project to be funded may be included as part of an application.

2.11 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?

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.

2.12 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.

2.13 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. However, most of the funding we provide is for amounts under \$100,000. If you would like more information about the kinds of projects we fund, we publish a list of [previously funded activities](#) on our website.

2.14 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:

- Artist fees, in-line with industry standards.

- Travel expenses—which can include domestic economy airfares unless an acceptable case is made for a different class of travel.
- Living away from home allowances—which can support basic rates unless a strong case can be made for a different allowance rate.
- Childcare expenses.
- Cameras and documenting equipment.

2.15 Do you fund the purchase of computer hardware?

Festivals Australia does not fund the purchase of computer hardware.

2.16 I currently receive funding from the Australia Council. Can I apply for funding under this program?

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

For example, your organisation is receiving \$15,000 from the Australia Council and your project consists of the following budget:

Example budget table

Year	Component/Budget Item	Amount
Year 1	Artist Fees	\$15,000
Year 1	Artist Travel	\$5,000
Year 1	Equipment Hire	\$2,000
Year 1	Venue Hire	\$5,000
Year 1	Materials	\$10,000
	Total	\$37,000

If the total Australia Council funding is allocated to Artist Fees, Festivals Australia funding can be allocated against any of the other four components. However, if Australia Council funding is contributing \$5,000 towards Artist Fees, \$5000 to Artist Travel and \$5000 to Venue Hire, Festivals Australia funding can only be sought for Equipment Hire or Materials.

2.17 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 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.

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

Benefits are the advantages obtained by the arts and cultural sector, participants and 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.

3.4 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	October	1 February

*This timeframe is indicative only.

3.5 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 above for an indication of the timing of Festivals Australia submission rounds.

The Department can provide feedback on unsuccessful applications in each round. If you would like to receive feedback on your application to the most recent round, please email festivals@arts.gov.au to make an appointment.

3.6 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 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.

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

Yes.

3.10 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.

3.11 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.

3.12 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.

3.13 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 so we can decide whether we need to consider a variation of our funding agreement with you.

4. Application assessment process

4.1 How do I submit an application?

You can submit your application online at <https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/festivals-australia>

4.2 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 see www.artsaccessaustralia.org or one of the arts and disability peak bodies.

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

If you are having technical issues with Smartygrants, please contact:

<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>
service@smartygrants.com.au
Phone: Australia 1800 590 577

The SmartyGrants support desk operates Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm AEST.

4.4 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.

4.5 Who are the Independent Assessors?

The Department maintains a Register of Independent Assessors comprising sector and community representatives, formed through Expressions of Interest from the public. Senior Arts Division staff will select assessors from the Register depending on the nature of applications received.

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

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; however, a complete list of Registered Independent Assessors is available on the Department's website.

4.7 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 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 their website no later than fourteen working days after the grant agreement for the grant takes effect (CGRG 5.3). Annual grants registers for the Department of Communications and the Arts are available at <https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/departments/funding-reporting>. Further information on web-based reporting requirements can be found at <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/>.

5. Privacy

5.1 How will my personal information be handled?

Personal information collected by the Department of Communications and 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).

6. Complaints mechanism

6.1 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 Department of Communications and the Arts via the Contact Form available at <https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/contact-us>.