

# 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These Frequently Asked Questions are designed to help organisations and groups that wish to apply for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW NAIDOC Grants. Please read these in combination with the Program Guidelines and online application form in SmartyGrants.

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Aboriginal  
Affairs

## Program Overview

### What is the purpose of the Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) NAIDOC Grants Program?

The program aims to support the holding of Aboriginal-led events and activities in NSW by eligible community-based organisations and groups in recognition of NAIDOC Week.

### What are the program objectives?

The Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) NAIDOC Grants Program objectives are to:

1. Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and achievements
2. Support and align with the annual NAIDOC Week theme
3. Promote a greater awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and/or cultures within the broader local or regional community.

### What are the NAIDOC Grants application dates?

The 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program will open each year for the next three years, for applicants to apply at any time during the opening period.

Year	Opening Date	Closing Date
1. 2026	9 February 2026	22 March 2026
2. 2027	9 February 2027	22 March 2027
3. 2028	9 February 2028	22 March 2028

### When does my event or activity have to take place?

Your event or activity must be delivered within the timeframes listed below

Application submitted in year:	Must be delivered between:
1. 2026	1 July 2026 – 31 October 2026
2. 2027	1 July 2027 – 31 October 2027
3. 2028	1 July 2028 – 31 October 2028





## Eligibility

### Who can apply for funding?

You must deliver services to Aboriginal communities in NSW and be a not-for-profit organisation that is one of the following categories

- An Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)
- An unincorporated Aboriginal group that has entered into an agreement with an eligible organisation to auspice the funding
- A not-for-profit organisation incorporated under the relevant State or Federal legislation and able to demonstrate the delivery of culturally safe projects in collaboration with Aboriginal organisations and/or communities

### Are there any other eligibility requirements?

Yes, applicants and Auspices must also

1. Be a legal entity located in NSW, or in a bordering community, that delivers services to Aboriginal communities in NSW
2. Deliver the project in NSW
3. Have public liability insurance of at least \$10 million per claim or be willing to purchase to support the project
4. Have no outstanding reporting requirements relating to previous AANSW funding.

### Can I apply if I am a Parents and Citizens group?

- Yes, Incorporated P&Cs must partner with a local ACCO to receive funding for events held on school grounds

- Yes, Unincorporated P&Cs must have an auspice agreement with a local ACCO to receive funding for events to be held on school grounds

### Can I apply if I am a School in NSW?

No, NSW schools, including public and private schools or other education organisations, are not eligible to apply for funding under the NAIDOC Grant Program.

### What is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)?

For AANSW 2026-2028 NAIDOC grants, an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) working with Aboriginal communities in NSW delivers services that build the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people is

- Incorporated under relevant legislation
- Not-for-profit
- Controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Connected to the community or communities in which they deliver the services and
- Governed by a minimum of 51% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

Examples of some eligible ACCOs: LALCs, AECGs, Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Associations, Aboriginal Cooperatives.

### **What is an Unincorporated Aboriginal Group?**

Unincorporated Aboriginal groups such as community groups, cultural centres or youth centres, who are not a legal incorporated entity, must be led and operated by Aboriginal people to deliver programs and services for the benefit of their local community.

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### **What is an Auspice?**

An Auspice is a partner organisation that will receive and administer the funding on behalf of an Unincorporated Group.

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### **Can an Organisation be an Auspice for more than one application?**

No, an eligible organisation can be an Auspice partner for one unincorporated group only.

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### **I am a non-Aboriginal organisation working with Aboriginal community groups, can I apply for funding?**

Yes – if you are an organisation and able to demonstrate the delivery of culturally safe programs in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and you are incorporated as a not-for-profit entity through

- NSW Fair Trading or
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)

If your organisation works closely with a local Aboriginal community or group, we suggest reaching out to an eligible organisation who may be interested in a partnership with you.

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### **Can organisations make a joint or a partnership application?**

Yes. If you choose to apply in a partnership, one of the organisations will need to take the lead role in the project and apply for the grant. If the application is successful, the Funding Offer will be made to the applicant organisation.

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### **Who is not eligible to apply?**

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- An individual
  - Federal or State Government departments, agencies and bodies, this includes NSW Public schools and hospitals
  - Private schools and education institutions
  - NSW local councils
  - For-profit organisations including Aboriginal businesses and sole traders
  - Unincorporated Aboriginal organisations or groups without an eligible auspicing organisation
  - Organisations that have outstanding obligations relating to previous funding received from Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) in the previous two years.
  - An organisation with redress sanctions in place, as described in the National Redress Scheme
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### **Will I have to supply any evidence to confirm my eligibility?**

Yes. You must confirm that you meet the eligibility requirements for NAIDOC Grants. This is to ensure that our funding, where possible, is delivered to Aboriginal community run and controlled organisations.

The following documents are examples of what can be provided to support your application:

- ORIC registration number
- Constitution or rule book indicating governance structure
- ORIC Certificate of registration

LALCs, AMS and AECGs are not required to provide the above information as AANSW is able to easily confirm their ACCO status.

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## Funding

### How much can I apply for?

Applicants can apply for a minimum of \$1,000 up to a maximum of \$5,000

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### Can I receive more than one grant per year?

No. Applicants can only receive one grant per year under the NAIDOC Grants program

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### Will all applications receive funding?

No. This is a competitive process with limited available funds.

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### Will I receive the total amount of funding I requested?

Not necessarily, partial funding may be offered when part of the budget, event or activity is ineligible for funding under the NAIDOC Program Guidelines.

If partial funding is offered, you will need to decide whether the activity remains viable or needs to be modified due to the reduced funding.

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### What can I use the funding for?

NAIDOC grant funding can be used for

- The purchase of art or catering supplies
  - Payment of artists, Elders or workshop facilitators
  - Hire fees for venues or equipment for the purpose of the event or activity
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### Is funding available for sporting events?

NAIDOC themed sporting activities or competitions may be funded if aligned with the purpose and objectives of the NAIDOC Grants Program but entry fees and sponsorships to participate in non-NAIDOC themed sporting competitions are **not** eligible for funding under the NAIDOC Grants Program.

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### What will not be funded?

NAIDOC grant funding cannot be used for

- Events or activities outside of NSW
- Activities or events that are for the exclusive benefit of the applicant organisation
- Business operating costs including staff wages, rent and utilities
- Gift cards, vouchers, or alcohol

For the full list of ineligible costs, please see the NAIDOC Grants Program Guidelines on our website.

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### Can I buy NAIDOC branded merchandise for my activity or event?

You can buy NAIDOC branded items such as shirts or hats that are part of a uniform that performers, organisers or volunteers will wear for the event or activity. However, these must **not** be co-branded with your organisation's logo or the event logo.

**The total cost of the NAIDOC-themed merchandise can't be more than 50% of the total grant funds.**

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### **Should I include GST in my budget?**

No. Your budget does not need to include GST.

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### **Is GST included with payment of NAIDOC grants?**

Yes. If your organisation is registered for GST, you will be paid GST in addition to the approved grant amount.

If you are not registered for GST, it will not be paid with your grant.

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### **I have received a NAIDOC grant before, will I be funded again automatically?**

No, there is no guarantee of funding based on a previous year's successful NAIDOC grant application.

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### **Can I re-apply for funding if I am unsuccessful?**

No, applicants can submit one application per calendar year to the NAIDOC Grants Program.

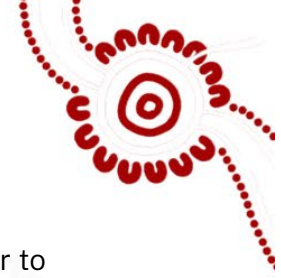
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### **If my application is successful, will I receive the total amount I requested?**

Not necessarily. Partial funding may be offered if some of the activities or budget line items are ineligible for funding under the NAIDOC Program Guidelines. If partial funding is offered, you will need to assess whether the activity is viable or needs to be modified because of the reduced funding.

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## How to apply

### How do I apply for a NAIDOC Grant?

Visit, [nsw.gov.au/2026-naidoc-grants](https://nsw.gov.au/2026-naidoc-grants). Applications are submitted through SmartyGrants, our online grants system.

If you haven't used this system before, you will need to follow the instructions to register before submitting your application.

If you have previously used SmartyGrants you do not need to re-register.

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### What is SmartyGrants?

SmartyGrants is an online grants application system.

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### Can I apply outside of SmartyGrants?

No. All applications must be submitted online for AANSW grant programs.

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### How can I apply online if I don't have access to the internet?

If you have trouble accessing the internet, please contact your closest AANSW Regional Office and staff will be happy to assist in getting you online.

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### Can I review the application questions in advance?

Yes, you can review a PDF copy of the application form on the AANSW website or you can download a copy of the application form from SmartyGrants.

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### Do I need to complete the application in one session?

No, you can complete your application overtime. Remember to save your application regularly.

When your application is ready, remember to hit the **Submit** button to ensure your application can be considered for funding.

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### Can I submit more than one application for NAIDOC?

No – organisations may submit one application per year for NAIDOC funding.

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### What happens if I don't apply in time and SmartyGrants is closed?

Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. AANSW encourages you to get your application in before the closing date of 22 March 2026.

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### What happens after my application is submitted?

You will receive a confirmation email to let you know we have received your application form.

Your application will be assessed for eligibility and, if considered eligible, will then move to the next stage of assessment against the program criteria.

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### When will I find out if the application is successful?

You will receive an email at the end of May 2026, please let us know if your contact details change so that we can get in touch with you.

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### Who do I contact for any other questions or support?

Please contact our Community Investments team via email [grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au) or call your local AANSW Regional office staff. Please visit [our website](#) to see a map of our regions to find your local office.

Region/Office	Phone Number
Binaal Billa - Dubbo	02 9228 3425
Greater Northern - Coffs Harbour	02 9566 8318
Greater Sydney – Mascot	02 8229 2389
Hunter Central Coast – Newcastle	02 9273 3968
Illawarra Southern – Batemans Bay	02 9228 5575
Murdi Paaki – Broken Hill & Bourke	02 9372 8675
New England North-West – Tamworth	02 8575 1172



## Assessment

### How will my application be assessed?

This is a competitive program. That means that your application will be assessed against the other applications we receive.

We'll assess and rank applications based on how well they meet the criteria.

Applications are assessed based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with NAIDOC theme
- Alignment with the purpose of NAIDOC Week
- Organisation's capacity to deliver the project
- Value for Money

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### How do I best address the assessment criteria for the NAIDOC Grants Program?

- Make sure you read the NAIDOC Grants Program Guidelines closely, this will help you understand what we are looking for
- Review the application questions and answer each question in detail
- Be clear about how your project will meet the objectives of the NAIDOC Grants Program
- Provide a list of activities that show how the project will be delivered
- Show how local Aboriginal community members and groups will be involved in the project, tell us if there is an ongoing relationship and what projects you have worked on together
- Demonstrate what the positive impacts will be and how these will be achieved by your project

- Make sure your budget is realistic, and the items listed link back to the activities that are being delivered
- Provide the required and suggested supporting documents to uplift your application

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### Do I need to provide supporting documents for assessment?

Yes, please review the NAIDOC Grant Program Guidelines, this will list what documents are required, including what is mandatory and what we recommend.





## What Next

### **If my application is successful, what happens next?**

If your application is successful, we will contact you with an offer of funding and a Recipient Created Tax Invoice. You will need to accept the offer and confirm the invoice details are correct before we can process the grant payment.

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### **When will the grant be paid?**

When we receive your signed Acceptance of Offer and invoice confirmation we will progress for payment within 5 business days.

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### **Are there any reporting requirements?**

Yes, all grant recipients are required to complete a Final Report and acquittal within 30 days of project completion.

In this report you will be asked to provide details on the outcomes of your project and a statement of acquittal to show AANSW how the funds were spent. You can include photographs, media coverage, videos, and social media links.

Providing financial evidence such as invoices and receipts is optional under the AANSW NAIDOC Grant Program. We recommend you keep copies for your records in case AANSW asks for evidence of expenditure at a future date.

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### **What if I want to make changes to my approved project?**

Please contact us immediately if you need to change dates, budget items, locations or activities. You may need to submit a

formal variation request, so speak to your local AANSW office or Community Investments team before implementing any changes.

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### **What if we can't submit our report on time?**

If you can't get your report in on time, please contact us and we will work on resolving the issue together.

If your reporting is overdue, and you do not contact us, your organisation may be at risk of being deemed ineligible for future funding from AANSW.

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### **What happens if I don't spend the total grant amount?**

You must note any unspent funds in your Final Report as you may need to return the funding to AANSW. If you are unsure, please contact the Community Investments team or your local AANSW office.

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### **Sharing and Good News Stories**

We love to share the great work that happens in Community. As part of your report, please let us know if you're happy for us to share photos or videos and/or if you're happy for our Communications team to reach out to you to chat further about the success of your project.