

2026 – 2028 NAIDOC Grants Program

Aboriginal Affairs NSW

9 February 2026



Image: Mungindi NAIDOC Week 2025

Artwork assets used throughout this document are from *In the Footsteps of our Ancestors* © 2023 Amy Allerton - Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung and Gamilaroi artist.



Aboriginal
Affairs

Grant Program Details

| | |
|---|--|
| Year 1 Key Dates (2026) | Opening Period: 9 February 2026 – 22 March 2026 Project Delivery: 1 July 2026 – 31 October 2026 |
| Year 2 Key Dates (2027) | Opening Period: 9 February 2027 – 22 March 2027 Project Delivery: 1 July 2027 – 31 October 2027 |
| Year 3 Key Dates (2028) | Opening Period: 9 February 2028 – 22 March 2028 Project Delivery: 1 July 2028 – 31 October 2028 |
| Application outcome date | Late May |
| Evaluation timeframe (for successful applications) | September - December of each project delivery year |
| Decision-maker | Deputy Secretary, Aboriginal Affairs NSW |
| NSW Government Agency | Aboriginal Affairs NSW (Premiers Department) |
| Type of grant opportunity | Open, competitive |
| Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST) | \$500,000 per year is allocated to the NAIDOC Grants Program Applicants can apply for between \$1000 - \$5,000 |
| Enquiries | For enquiries, contact your nearest regional office (please see section 5.2) or the AANSW Community Investments Team on 1800 019 998 or email grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au |



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1 Overview

1.1 About the program

The National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee – **NAIDOC** - is celebrated nationally each year in the first full week of July (Sunday to Sunday). The committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and the acronym has since become the name of the week itself.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) supports NAIDOC events across NSW that celebrate and recognise the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through an open and competitive grant funding opportunity. AANSW invites eligible community-based organisations to submit applications to the NAIDOC Grants Program.

The theme for NAIDOC week 2026 is **Fifty Years of Deadly**. Please follow link to see more at <https://www.naidoc.org.au/about/naidoc-theme> .

1.2 Program objectives

The Program aims to support the holding of events and activities in NSW, in recognition of NAIDOC Week that:

- Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and achievements
 - Align with the theme of NAIDOC Week, Fifty Years of Deadly.
 - Promote a greater awareness and understanding of Aboriginal histories and/or cultures within the broader local or regional community.
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1.3 Grant value

Detail:

- A total of \$1,500,000 has been allocated to the AANSW 2026 - 2028 NAIDOC Grants Program over three years
- \$500,000 is allocated to each year of the Program
- Applicants can apply for between \$1,000 and \$5,000
- Applicants can apply for one grant per year

2 Selection criteria

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

Where possible, AANSW NAIDOC grants are distributed to Aboriginal community run and controlled organisations and groups.

Who can apply

To be eligible for an AANSW 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grant, 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 delivery of culturally safe projects in collaboration with Aboriginal organisations and/or communities

Applicants or their auspice organisations must also:

- Be a legal entity located in NSW, or bordering community, that delivers services to Aboriginal communities within NSW
- Propose a NAIDOC project to be delivered in NSW
- Have current public liability insurance of at least \$10 million per claim or be willing to purchase as part of the application to support the project
- Have no outstanding requirements relating to previous funding from AANSW

NSW Schools

- NSW Schools, including Public and Private schools or education organisations, are not eligible to apply for funding under the NAIDOC Grant Program.
- Events or activities may be held on NSW School grounds for the benefit of a school community where the applicant is a **not-for-profit Parents & Citizens** organisation in a partnership or auspice arrangement with a local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group or other local ACCO.

For more detailed information on eligible applicant definitions, please refer to Section 6.4 Definitions or the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).



Who can't 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

Eligible Projects

Funding is to be used for activities and events that are held in NSW and meet the objectives of the NAIDOC Grants Program.

The following are examples of NAIDOC Week activities and events that have previously received funding:

- Community festivals and fun days
- Public exhibitions
- Community gatherings
- Cultural workshops
- NAIDOC-themed sporting activities or competitions
- Women's, men's and Elders-only activities

2.2 Project Costs

Funding can be used for:

- purchase of materials and consumables such as art supplies or catering supplies (excluding alcohol) – for the project or event
- payment of workshop facilitators, artists and Elders
- hire fees for the purposes of the activity (E.G. equipment or venue hire)

Funding cannot be used for:

- retrospective funding for activities and events that have already been held
- activities that are the responsibility of government agencies
- activities that are exclusively for the benefit of the applicant organisation and its staff, such as cultural capability workshops or training
- activities and events held outside NSW
- capital purchases – any type of building, construction or capital works, including renovations to a building, housing-related costs or the purchase of land
- purchasing equipment such as office equipment, tents and IT equipment

- gifts, including gift cards, vouchers and merchandise for distribution as gifts, handouts or compensation for services
- activities or events that allow alcohol or gambling
- private events such as those open only to members of a specific organisation
- sitting fees, travel allowances or costs associated with the membership of boards/councils
- operating and administrative costs such as rent, utilities or wages
- costs that are not directly associated with the activity or event

NAIDOC branded merchandise

NAIDOC grants funding can only be used to purchase NAIDOC branded merchandise where it is

- NAIDOC themed, and
- to be worn by performers, volunteers or organisers of a NAIDOC event or activity , or
- created as part of an art activity (for example, an artist working with a group of children to develop a local NAIDOC-themed artwork that is printed on bags for community members)

and

- The total cost of merchandise does not exceed more than 50% of the total funding request
- The merchandise is purchased from an Aboriginal business

Merchandise can not be purchased for:

- gifts or items to hand out to people attending an event, such as NAIDOC branded bags or shirts
- items branded with an organisation's name or logo including items that are also NAIDOC branded (E.G NAIDOC branded shirt or hat with organisation's name and logo)

Merchandise must be purchased from recognised Aboriginal businesses. Please visit Supply Nation at <https://supplynation.org.au> for a list of Aboriginal Businesses if you're unable to source your items through local Aboriginal owned and operated suppliers.

2.3 Assessment criteria

The 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program is an open competitive grants program. All eligible applications will be assessed on their comparative merits against the following criteria.

| Criteria | What we are looking for | Weighting |
|--|---|-----------|
| Alignment with NAIDOC theme | The activity or event aligns with the NAIDOC theme, '50 Years of Deadly' | 25% |
| Alignment with the purpose of NAIDOC week | The event or activity celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and achievements | 25% |
| Organisation's capacity to deliver the event or activity | Application demonstrates relevant experience and capacity to complete the project and manage grant funding and reporting. | 25% |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|-----|
| Value for money | The budget is realistic and includes a detailed breakdown of items with a clear link between the budget items and planned expenditure to support the event or project activities | 25% |
|-----------------|--|-----|

3 Application Process

3.1 How to apply

Applications must be submitted via the Aboriginal Affairs NSW online NAIDOC Grants application portal at <https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/2026NAIDOC> no later than **5:00pm 22 March 2026**.

Late submissions will not be accepted or considered under any circumstances. Any complaints about the application process can be made by email to grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

3.2 Supporting documents

Before you submit your application, please review the below required documents.

Mandatory documents

- Certificate of currency for public liability insurance of minimum \$10 million – must be valid at time of application (noting, it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure currency at the time of the NAIDOC event or activity).
- Evidence of ACCO status may include certificate of ORIC registration, ICN registration number, or Rule Book or Constitution
- A bank statement header which must include the name of the Bank, the applicant organisation Name, BSB and Account number (please do not include financial transactions or any details of the amount of money in the account, this is private information)
- Auspice Agreement, signed and dated by both parties (for unincorporated Aboriginal groups or unincorporated P&Cs with an eligible auspice partner)
- Partnership Agreement, signed and dated by both parties (for incorporated P&Cs)
- Evidence of budget item costs, may include quotes or screenshots of current pricing from websites

Recommended documents

- Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documents including evidence of successfully delivering other projects, detailed project plan, itemised budget etc
- Non-Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations – with a strong track record of delivering culturally appropriate projects in collaboration with local Aboriginal communities – should provide recent letters of support, specific to the event or activities, from Aboriginal organisations, respected members of the local community, Elders or Aboriginal staff to demonstrate Aboriginal community support

3.3 Support for applicants

Applicants can contact the AANSW Community Investments team for information via email or phone grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au or 1800 019 998 or contact AANSW Regional offices on the phone numbers below.

| 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 9228 3465 |
| Illawarra Southern - Batemans Bay | 02 9228 5575 |
| Murdi Paaki - Broken Hill & Bourke | 02 9372 8675 |
| New England North-West - Tamworth | 02 8575 1172 |

Please note, while AANSW staff will be pleased to answer questions about the application process, they cannot comment on the content of the application.

Program Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found online via the [AANSW website](#) and via the Smarty Grants platform - [AANSW Smarty Grants](#)



Image: Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Advancement Group Inc NAIDOC 2025

4 Assessment process

Demand for the open and competitive NAIDOC Grants Program is always high.

All eligible applications will be assessed and scored against set criteria, those with the highest scores are more likely to be funded.

| Type | Assessment | Assessor |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Eligibility Check | Confirmation of applicant eligibility | Community Investments, Aboriginal Affairs NSW |
| Application Assessment | Assessment of individual applications, scored against the assessment criteria | Regional Staff, Aboriginal Affairs NSW |
| Grant Assessment Panel | Assessment of all applications against the assessment criteria and final recommendation to the decision maker | Regional Managers (or delegates), Aboriginal Affairs NSW |
| Decision Maker | Final decision on application outcome, based on panel recommendations | Deputy Secretary, Aboriginal Affairs NSW |

Independent probity advisors will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness, and accountability that might arise throughout grant administration processes.

AANSW staff may request clarification or further information from applicants at any time during the assessment process.

The Deputy Secretary is the final decision-maker considering the recommendation of the Grant Assessment Panel.

Partial funding may be offered where an application includes ineligible activities or budget items.

4.1 Application outcome and notification

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email, via Smarty Grant.

If an applicant wishes to seek feedback about an unsuccessful application they should contact Community Investments by email at grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

*There is no appeal process under the 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program

4.2 Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration Guide (Guide) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information. In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined. All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

5 Successful grant applications

5.1 Funding conditions

Successful applicants will be required to

- Accept the offer of funding and enter into an agreement with AANSW
 - Confirm the details of a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) provided by AANSW for payment
 - Deliver activities or events in NSW within the dates specified in the Acceptance of offer
 - Notify AANSW of any proposed changes to the funded activity or event before they occur
 - Retain all invoices and receipts for the project event or activities
 - Complete a Final Report detailing project activities, expenditure and impact
 - Publicly acknowledge funding received from AANSW in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/living-in-nsw/aboriginal-outcomes/grants-and-funding/acknowledging-aboriginal-affairs>)
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5.2 Grant payment

Some applicants may be approved and offered partial funding.

All NAIDOC grant payment will be made after the applicant has submitted the Acceptance of Offer form with all required to details via Smarty Grants.

5.3 Variations

Any changes to the agreed project scope, location, budget or timeframe must be requested and approved by AANSW before the changes to project are implemented.

Project variations may be accepted where the requested change aligns with the 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program Guidelines and the original intent of the approved project.

5.4 Unspent funds

Any unspent funds at the end of the project must be returned to AANSW, within one month of completion of the funded event or activity, via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

5.5 Reporting Requirements

Recipients must submit a Final Report and Acquittal in Smarty Grants within one month of the project end date, unless otherwise agreed by Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

If the Final Report is not submitted on time with the required information, this may affect the recipients eligibility for future funding opportunities for AANSW grant funding.

6 Additional information

6.1 Complaint Handling

Any complaints can be sent in writing to grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

6.2 Access to your information

Documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

6.3 Ethical Conduct

Conflict of Interest management

The following procedures are in place to manage any conflicts of interest between AANSW and applicants:

- Conflict of Interest declarations must be completed by all persons involved in performing functions related to the assessment process.
- Regional project officers who assist an applicant with their application will not be involved in assessment for the 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program

Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property (ACIP)

Aboriginal Affairs NSW has developed an Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property (ACIP) Protocol that aims to build awareness and respect for Aboriginal culture. The Protocol sets a standard for how Aboriginal Affairs NSW engages with Aboriginal people and communities regarding their cultural and intellectual property and what we expect from the organisations we fund.

Any Aboriginal Cultural or Intellectual Property submitted in a grant application to Aboriginal Affairs NSW remains the property of the relevant community organisation or Aboriginal person. Aboriginal Affairs NSW will not distribute or communicate any ACIP contained in SmartyGrants and agrees to respect the cultural protocols of Aboriginal people which it may apply to.

6.4 Definitions

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
- Owned 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 body of a minimum 51% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders

Unless you are an AECG, AMS or LALC you are asked to provide evidence with the application to support the ACCO status of the organisation. Where this information isn't provided, the eligibility check conducted by AANSW staff will be based on the available information and deemed as final.

Unincorporated Aboriginal Groups

Unincorporated Aboriginal Groups, such as community groups, cultural centres or youth centres, must be led and operated by Aboriginal people to deliver programs and services for the benefit of their local community. If an unincorporated Aboriginal group wishes to apply to the 2026-2028 NAIDOC Grants Program, they must partner with an eligible organisation to receive and administer the funding.

Eligible Non-Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations

Are organisations or companies able to demonstrate delivery of culturally safe programs in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and must be incorporated as a not-for-profit entity through

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

Non-Aboriginal not-for-profits should provide statements or letters of support from Aboriginal organisations, respected community members or Elders demonstrating community support for the proposed project.

Eligible Auspice Organisations

An auspice organisation must be one of the following categories:

- an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)
- An eligible not-for-profit company incorporated in Australia under the relevant State or Federal legislation

An eligible organisation may act as an Auspice for one applicant organisation in addition to their own separate application.

Parents & Citizens (P&C) Associations and Groups

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

Please see Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for more information.

6.5 Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. None of those involved in the preparation of this publication are responsible for the outcome of applications that are based on the information contained in these guidelines.

