



Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2024-2025 Cultural Grants Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Applications open and closing dates.

Open: 10am, 18 November 2024

Close: 4pm, 21 March 2025

Project Delivery Timelines – between 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

Apply at <https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/>



Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently Asked Questions are designed to help organisations and groups that wish to apply for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2024-2025 Cultural Grants. Please read in combination with the [Program Guidelines](#) and online application form in SmartyGrants.

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Program Overview

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

The program aims to support Aboriginal community organisations across NSW to celebrate Aboriginal culture and hold cultural events and activities.

What are the program objectives?

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

- Support Aboriginal communities to strengthen, protect, and maintain traditional and contemporary expressions of Aboriginal culture
- Support key contemporary Aboriginal cultural events and activities
- Contribute to Aboriginal community wellbeing and healing, using Aboriginal culture and community connection
- Facilitate sharing of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and skills between generations.

What are the opening and closing dates to apply for funding?

2025 AANSW Cultural Grants Program is a rolling grant program where applicants can apply at any time during the open period.

- Applications open 10:00am 18th November 2024
- Applications close 4:00pm 21 March 2025
-

What is the project delivery timeframe?

The projects must be delivered between 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

What is the assessment criteria for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) Cultural Grants Program?

Applications will be assessed by the Grant Assessment Panel in the order they are received based on the following criteria:

Project Quality

The project aligns with the program aims and objectives.

Project Impact

Explanation of what the funding will do, how it will be spent, who the project will benefit and how it will be achieved.

Organisations capacity to deliver the project

The ability of the organisation to deliver the project objectives based on experience, resources and community supports.

Value for money

It is clear how budget items contribute to the project outcomes. The budget is reasonable and realistic.

How to address the assessment criteria for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) Cultural Grants Program?

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required
<p>Project Quality</p> <p>Description</p> <p>The project aligns with the program aims and objectives.</p>	<p>You must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the project meets the program aims and objectives The project celebrates Aboriginal culture and/or includes key traditional or contemporary cultural events or activities The project activities clearly demonstrate that the project addresses specific program objectives
<p>Project impact</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Clear description of the project objective, how it will be delivered, how the project will benefit the community, and will make tangible contribution to the cultural health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in local areas within NSW, along with a list of project activities.</p>	<p>You must demonstrate this by submitting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A detailed project plan A detailed description of project activities Evidence of support from the local Aboriginal community i.e. local community groups, or elders. Any Letter of support (LoS) must be current and clearly supporting the organisation and project. The purpose of the LoS is to confirm that the applicant is recognised in the local community and is able to hold the event/project, An implementation plan with explanation of what the funding will do and how it will be spent, An explanation of the level of need with information about who will be involved, who the project will benefit, and how this will be achieved.
<p>Organisation's capacity to deliver the project</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>The ability of the organisation to deliver the project objectives based on experience and resources, community</p>	<p>You must show your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience managing previous projects, and the outcomes achieved

<p>supports such as partnerships with other organisations and participation in other community projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail the resources to deliver the project and/or the relevant training and experience of key staff involved in the project • Capacity to assess risk and create mitigation plans. For example, if there are any potential risks associated with funding and mitigation plans to manage the risks.
<p>Value for money</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>How the implementation of the project/event/activity will achieve high quality outcomes for Aboriginal communities in a cost-effective way</p>	<p>You must show this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly demonstrating how budget items contribute to the project outcomes. • Building a budget that is reasonable and realistic • Including any quotes to support the budget line items • Submitting a detailed budget aligned with the project activities and plan. • An implementation plan with explanation of what the funding will do and how it will be spent

Is Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) 2024-2025 Cultural Grants Program a non-competitive grant program?

Yes – This is a non-competitive grant program, where applications are assessed against the criteria, not competitively against other applications.

Applications will be assessed by the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) in the order they are received each month until the allocated funds are expended fully under the grant program or until the program closing date.

What is the grant acquittal process?

It is a condition of funding that all recipients must complete a Project Completion and Acquittal Report online in SmartyGrants within 1 month of the completion of the event or activity. AANSW will send all recipients an email reminder before this report is due.

AANSW requires recipients to provide evidence of project activity, such as photographs, videos, flyers, communications or social media posts, demonstrating the project event or activities.

AANSW may ask the recipient to provide a statement of income and expenditure along with proof of purchase, such as receipts, paid invoices, a bank statement or profit and loss statement for the project funds.

If AANSW is not satisfied with the information provided, we may ask for additional information to demonstrate that the grant funds have been spent in accordance with the terms of the funding.

If the acquittal is not satisfactorily completed within the required timeframe, you will not be eligible to apply for AANSW Grants for the next two years.

What happens if there are any unspent funds?

If the recipient has unspent funds remaining after completion of the project, these must be returned to Aboriginal Affairs NSW, premier's Department within 1 month of completion of the funded events/activities.

For any small amounts (less than \$100), it is on the discretion of the relevant Regional Manager (RA) to waive off those funds.

Why does the application ask for project location information?

Project location information helps Aboriginal Affairs NSW understand what activities and events are being held across New South Wales as part of the assessment process.

Location information will help us map and promote events as well as report to community and Government on activities.

What documents do I need to attach with my applications?

Below are the documents that you need to attach with your application:

Mandatory documents

The below documents are required before you submit your application:

- Public liability insurance (or a budget that includes the purchase of public liability insurance) with a minimum \$10 million per claim

Recommended documents

- Letters of support from the local Aboriginal community demonstrating community support to the project
- Evidence of costs of goods and services for the budget items (excluding cultural components/services) such as:
 - Receipts
 - quotes
 - screenshots of options online
- Evidence of the applicant organisations ACCO status such as:
 - Certificate of ORIC registration

- Constitution or rule book indicating governance structure

Funding

What types of activities can be funded?

Funding can be used for projects that meet the objectives of the Cultural Grants Program. The following are examples of the types of activities that may be considered for funding, where they are aligned with the program objectives. Your project does not need to be limited by these examples.

- Women's or Men's Gathering on Country
- Culture and wellbeing camp for Aboriginal youth
- Create and digitise Aboriginal history of the local community
- State-wide regional music and cultural festival
- A series of online and/or face-to-face workshops

Funding can be used for:

- Consumables – such as catering, equipment items and materials for activities (excluding alcohol) – for the purposes of the project or event
- Hiring equipment to be used for the period of the project or event
- Engaging contractors such as facilitators, trainers and teachers
- Eligible costs associated with holding key state-wide and/or regional Aboriginal sporting and cultural events
- Purchasing minor equipment for event activities up to the value of \$5000 (please refer to the FAQ for guidance on minor equipment)
- Administering the project, with up to 10 percent of the requested AANSW funding amount being able to be used for this task or as auspice fees where there is an auspicings arrangement
- Eligible sole trader/business applicants may include up to 10 percent of the requested AANSW funding amount to cover remuneration costs. Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for more information.
- Purchasing merchandise such hats, t-shirts, trophies, medals etc up to 10% of the requested AANSW funding amount.

Funding cannot be used for:

- Costs for sports teams or cultural groups to attend competitions or events
- Capital costs – any type of building, construction, major equipment, or capital works including renovations to a building, housing related costs or the purchase of land
- Purchase of vehicles
- Wages and salaries and on-costs for ongoing staff
- Wages, salaries and remuneration for sole traders or consultants
- Sitting fees, travel allowance or costs associated with membership of boards/councils

- Activities that may create an ongoing dependency on cultural grant funding, such as funding that is required over multiple years
- Costs that are not directly associated with the delivery of the project
- Activities related to NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout, NAIDOC week events which has a separate funding program
- International travel costs (proposals for domestic travel costs need to demonstrate the benefits of travel to the project, organisation, and community)
- Operational and business as usual costs.
- any gift vouchers or petrol vouchers etc.

Ticketed Events:

Projected income from the sale of tickets to events must be spent on the same event. The information on income generated from the sale of tickets and expend on the budget items must be included in the program budget table in the application form.

Sporting Events:

Eligible costs associated with holding key state-wide and/or regional Aboriginal sporting and cultural events must align with at least one of the objectives of the Cultural Grants program and contribute to Aboriginal community wellbeing and healing. Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) will assess if the event/project is meeting with the minimum assessment criteria or not.

Grant funding **cannot** be used to cover the costs for sports teams or cultural groups to attend competitions or events (E.G. entry fees to a sporting event, transport costs, accommodation or sponsorship etc.)

Annual/Recurring Events:

Applications for annual or recurring events must meet all assessment criteria, there is no guarantee of funding based on a previous year's successful grant application.

Can I apply for funding for a project that will require funding for multiple years?

No. Projects that require funding over multiple years are not eligible under the Cultural Grants program.

Will all applicants receive funding?

No, successful applications will be only those that meet the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. The approval is subject to the availability of funds. Thus, applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible during the opening period.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW has allocated \$800,000 for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW Cultural Grants Program in 2024- 2025.

Applications will be assessed in order of date of submission in SmartyGrants.

Is there a limit on the amount of funding that can be applied for?

Applicants can apply for grants from \$500 to \$20,000.

What will happen with an application if the funds are fully expended before its assessment?

All applications will be assessed by the Grant Assessment Panel in the order they are received in SmartyGrants until the allocated funds are fully expended.

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

Yes. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply for funding during the designated application period, provided that funds remain available, and the organisation/applicant has not been deemed ineligible.

Will a successful application receive the full amount of funding requested?

Not necessarily. Partial funding may be offered to applicants so there is a wider and more equitable distribution of funds across communities. Partial funding may also be offered if part of an applicant's activities is ineligible for funding; for example, if it duplicates an existing funded project.

If partial funding is offered, applicants will need to assess whether the activity is viable or needs to be modified due to the reduced funding. Alternatively, the balance of funds could be obtained from other sources.

What is considered minor equipment for the purpose of this program?

Minor equipment is anything that will become an asset to the organisation. Some examples of equipment are:

- Office equipment – laptops, desktops and printers
- Camping equipment – tents, barbeques and trailers
- Gardening equipment – mowers, whipper snippers and ride-on mowers

If you are purchasing minor equipment, your application should identify who has control of the asset after the life of the project.

Can funding be used to cover remuneration costs for sole traders?

Sole trader applicants can include up to 10 percent of the requested AANSW funding amount to cover remuneration costs.

What are remuneration costs?

Remuneration costs refer to the total expenses incurred by an organisation in compensating its employees. This includes salaries, wages, superannuation, leave and taxes.

Should I include GST in my budget?

No, your budget in the application form should not include GST. Include the costs of all budget items without the GST that would be payable.

If your application is successful and your organisations or the auspice organisations registered for GST, you will be paid GST in addition to the approved grant funding. If your organisation is not registered for GST, you will only be paid the grant amount.

It is the recipient organisation's responsibility to comply with any taxation liability that may arise in the delivery of the project. For more information, visit the [Australian Tax Office website](#).

Eligibility

Who can apply?

To be eligible you must be:

- A not-for-profit, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), working with Aboriginal communities in NSW, and one of the following organisation types
 - an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (Cth)
 - a company incorporated in Australia under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
 - a Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)
 - an Incorporated Association (incorporated under state legislation, and commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc' in their legal name)
 - an Incorporated Cooperative (incorporated under state legislation, and commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name)
 - an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust; OR

- An Aboriginal sole trader or business whose primary business activity relates to cultural expression or revitalisation (noting project applied under Cultural Grants Program must not be profit making in nature); OR
- An unincorporated Aboriginal community group with an eligible not-for-profit auspice organisation. Applicants or their auspice organisation must also:
 - Be an eligible legal entity located in NSW, and able to enter into a funding Deed with Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW), Premier's Department and have an Australian bank account;
 - Have public liability insurance of at least \$10 million per claim or be willing to purchase it and include the cost of insurance as part of the asked project budget within their application.

Unincorporated Groups

Unincorporated Aboriginal Groups must be Aboriginal community groups – that is, they must be led by Aboriginal people.

If an unincorporated Aboriginal group wishes to apply under the 2024-2025 Cultural Grant Program, they will need to partner with a not-for-profit organisation to receive and administer the funding. An eligible auspice organisation may only act as an Auspice for two applicant organisations in addition to their own application

Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO)

For the purpose of this grant an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation 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 majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.

Who cannot apply?

- An individual (unless you are an Aboriginal sole trader whose primary business activity relates to cultural expression or revitalisation)
- Non-Aboriginal groups or organisations (except for eligible auspice organisations auspicing an unincorporated Aboriginal community group)
- Incorporated not-for-profit organisations not controlled or operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Federal and State Government agencies and bodies, including NSW public schools and hospitals
- Unincorporated organisations or groups without an eligible auspicing organisation



- Organisations that have not met project requirements, including acquitting and reporting for any grant funding received from Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) in the previous two years.
- Organisations with redress sanctions as described in the National Redress Scheme.

Can organisations make a joint application or a partnership application?

Yes. If you are applying as part of a partnership arrangement, one of the organisations in the partnership will need to take the lead role in the project and apply for the grant. If the project is successful, the Funding Agreement will be with the applicant organisation.

If your Aboriginal organisation or group is unincorporated but wishes to apply for a grant, your organisation will need to enter an auspicing agreement with an eligible organisation.

Our organisation or group is not incorporated, is there any way we can apply for funding?

Unincorporated groups must be Aboriginal community groups, that is, they must be led by Aboriginal people. If an unincorporated Aboriginal group wishes to apply for the Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) Cultural Grant, they will need to partner with an eligible auspice to receive and administer the funding.

Unincorporated Aboriginal groups that are unable to partner with an eligible auspice organisation should contact their nearest AANSW regional office to discuss the application.

Does an auspice have to be an ACCO?

No. Non-Aboriginal Organisations can auspice an unincorporated Aboriginal group.

Can an eligible Organisation auspice multiple ACCO's?

Yes. An organisation can act as an auspice for a maximum of two projects.

I am an Aboriginal sole trader/small business, can I apply?

Yes. Aboriginal sole traders and businesses are eligible to apply for funding where your primary business activity relates to cultural expression or revitalisation.

Projects applied for under the AANSW Cultural Grants Program must not be profit-making in nature.

Are there any insurance requirements?

Yes. The applicant organisation must be covered by public liability insurance of up to \$10 million. The insurance cover must be valid for the entire duration of the project.

Alternatively, the cost of public liability insurance for the purposes of the project can be included in the project budget as part of the administration costs.

Applications process

What is the applications process?

Applicants are encouraged to contact their nearest Aboriginal Affairs NSW regional office to discuss their project.

To apply for funding, you will need to complete and submit the application form through our secure online grants system [SmartyGrants](https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/) at <https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/>

Fill out the fields in the form, remembering to press save regularly, and hit submit when all fields have been completed.

Applicants can also choose to submit a video response to application questions on project objectives and outcomes. For more information on this option, please see 'Can I answer questions with a video or audio recording?'

What is SmartyGrants?

[SmartyGrants](#) is a user-friendly web-based grant management system. It allows AANSW to oversee the whole AANSW Cultural Grants Program online including the applications, grant management and communications.

Why is the application process online?

Applying online means we will be able to reduce the program's reliance on paper, reducing the need for applicants to print documents. It utilises available technology and makes the application process simpler and quicker.

How do I apply online?

You will need to register in the [SmartyGrants](#) system. Click on the links and follow the instructions on the page.

The registration process is simple and straightforward. Once registered, you will be able to start your application. If you have previously registered on [SmartyGrants](#), you do not have to

re-register.

What type of device and internet browser do I need to apply online?

To complete an application form, you will need access to the internet on a PC or Mac desktop or laptop computer, or a tablet or smartphone (although some tablet and phone devices may not display or interact correctly or clearly as the site is not optimised for smartphones).

There is no need to install software. To access [SmartyGrants](#), you only need an internet browser and an internet connection.

[SmartyGrants](#) is compatible with the latest versions of the following browsers (while SmartyGrants does try to ensure backwards compatibility with older versions, there may be some limitations):

- Google Chrome
- Safari
- Firefox
- Opera
- Internet Explorer / Microsoft Edge.

I don't have reliable access to the internet, how can I apply online?

Applications can be completed at any time before the closing date. Applications can be completed across multiple sessions.

You can access the application form and system using any computer that has an internet connection.

In case of any difficulty with the internet connection or SmartyGrants, please contact your nearest regional office, and staff will be happy to assist you with the technical requirements.

Is my application and information secure? Is it safe to apply online?

Yes, it is safe to apply online. Your application and information are submitted to a secure database which is only able to be accessed by authorised program staff and assessors.

Your information does not go 'offshore,' it is securely held in a data warehouse in Sydney and is backed up regularly.

Can I download a copy of the application form in advance?

Yes, Once you register in SmartyGrants you will be able to download a copy of the application form.

Do I need to complete my application in one session?

No, you can complete your application in multiple sessions. Remember to save your application regularly. However, for your application to be considered you will need to be sure to submit it. When your application is ready to lodge click on the **Submit** button.

Can I answer questions with a video or audio recording?

Yes. You can choose to respond to questions about your project objective and outcomes by uploading a short video or audio recording of yourself or other members of your organisation reading the questions and answers aloud.

You can upload a single file or a separate file for each question.

You will still need to complete **mandatory questions** about your eligibility and organisation in the application form.

Do I need professional equipment to record my answers?

Responses can be filmed or recorded on a mobile phone, webcam, or portable video device. Professional editing or production is NOT required or expected.

AANSW staff are available to support you with recording and preparing a file for upload if required. Please contact your nearest regional office for assistance.

Can someone else submit the application on the behalf of the applicant organisation?

No. Applicant organisation must have to submit their own application in Smarty Grants. Any application submitted by a third party or any consultant will be deemed as ineligible.

How do I record my answers on video or audio?

When planning to record your video or audio response think about:

- location and background
- equipment – mobile phone or computer camera
- style – are you answering the questions or is someone interviewing you?
- the quality – is it visually clear and easy to hear?
- practicing getting more comfortable and become more natural in front of the camera or microphone
- watching the video or listening to the recording and make notes on where you can improve or make more appropriate responses
- **Make sure you answer all the questions**

Can I review what I have written online?

Yes, before submitting your application you can review what you have written. You will not be able to change any part of the application once submitted, so please ensure you review it before you submit.

Will I receive a confirmation email that my application has been received?

Yes, when you submit your application in SmartyGrants you will be sent a confirmation email confirming that your application has been received by AANSW.

The confirmation email will be sent to your nominated email address so please keep AANSW updated if your contact details change. This confirmation email will contain your application's unique ID or reference number, as well as a copy of your application. Please keep this in a safe place as part of your records, as you may need to refer to it later. If you have any questions regarding your application, you will need to quote your application's unique ID number.

Will I get a copy of my application once I have submitted it online?

Yes, it will be attached to the confirmation email you receive. It will be sent to your nominated email address. Please keep it in a safe place as part of your records, as you may need to refer to it later. You can also access a copy of your application through the **'My Submissions'** area once you have logged into the online system.

How do I get help if I am having trouble completing my application?

A Step-by-Step Guide is available to help you complete the application form. You can also get help by contacting the AANSW regional offices listed at the end of this document.

Why do I need to provide my bank account as part of my application?

Bank account details are required at the application stage to reduce delays with payments.

You will need to complete a funding agreement and provide an invoice if your application is successful. AANSW will provide you with an invoice template showing the information required for us to process your payment and the funds will then be paid to your nominated bank account.

What questions will I be asked in the applications? Can I print them out first?

A copy of the application form can also be downloaded once you have registered on the online system.

A copy of the application form can also be 'previewed' before you register or log into the [SmartyGrants](#) system.

What about our Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property (ACIP)?

Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) 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 AANSW 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 AANSW remains the property of the relevant community organisation or Aboriginal person. AANSW will not distribute or communicate any ACIP contained in SmartyGrants and agrees to respect the cultural protocols of Aboriginal people to whom it may apply.

More information on ACIP, including the Protocol is available on the [AANSW website](#).

What happens after my application has been submitted?

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

How will I find out the outcome?

AANSW will advise all applicants by email. This email will be sent to the applicant contact email addresses as provided in the grant application within 10 weeks from submission date.

Please let AANSW know if your contact details change throughout the grants process so we can update our records.

Can I submit more than one application for funding?

No. An organisation can only apply/receive one grant from the 2024-2025 Cultural Grants Program. Any additional submitted applications will be marked as ineligible.

An eligible organisation may additionally act as an auspice for a maximum of two projects.

Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply for funding during the designated application period, provided that funds remain available, and the organisation/applicant has not been deemed ineligible.

More information

Who do I contact for further information?

AANSW will advise all applicants by email. This email will be sent to the applicant contact email addresses as provided in the grant application.

Please let AANSW know if your contact details change throughout the grants process so we can update our records.

Region/Office	Phone number
Illawarra Southern Batemans Bay	02 9228 5575
New England North-west Tamworth	02 8575 1172
Greater Northern Coffs Harbour	02 9566 8318
Murdi Paaki Broken Hill	02 9228 3345
Binaal Billa Dubbo	02 6588 7013
Hunter Central Coast Newcastle	02 9228 3402
Greater Sydney Sydney	02 8229 2389