2026-2027 Cultural Grants Round

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

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NSW GOVERNMENT

Aboriginal Affairs

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:

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

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

The 2026-2027 Cultural Grants Program will open 30 November 2026 for 54 calendar days, applicants can apply at any time during the opening period.

Year	Opening Date	Closing Date
2026-2027	30 November 2026	22 January 2027

What is the project delivery timeframe?

This means that projects must be delivered in the timeframes detailed below:

Application submitted in year:	Must be delivered between:
2026- 2027	12 April 2027 – 31 December 2027

Eligibility

Who can apply for funding?

To be eligible for funding applicants must be one of the following:

1. An Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, per Guideline definitions, OR
2. A not-for-profit Aboriginal Organisation
3. An unincorporated Aboriginal Community Group with an eligible Auspice (ACCO)
4. An Aboriginal Sole Trader or Business whose primary business activity relates to cultural expression or revitalisation and has been actively operating for a minimum period of 12 months.

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. Propose a project to be delivered in NSW
3. Have public liability insurance of at least $10million per claim
4. Have no outstanding reporting requirements relating to previous AANSW funding.

Can I apply if I am a sole trader?

Yes, if your primary business relates to cultural expression or revitalisation and you have been operating for at least 12 months. ABN information must support identification of your business entity and your project is not-for-profit making in nature.

What is considered an Aboriginal Organisation?

For the purpose of this grant, an Aboriginal Organisation is considered to be a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated under Commonwealth, state or territory legislation, that has at least 51% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership and/or directorship and is operated for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

What is considered an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation?

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
- Owned, 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.

What is an Unincorporated Group?

Aboriginal community groups that are led by Aboriginal people, who are not a legal incorporated entity.

What is an Auspice?

An Auspice is a partnering organisation that will receive and administer the funding on behalf of an Unincorporated Group. An Auspice must be an ACCO.

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

Yes, an Auspice may act as an Auspice for up to two projects each year.

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

No. Our Cultural Grants Program is targeted at Aboriginal Organisations only.

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

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. This organisation will be assessed on applicant eligibility, and if successful the Funding Agreement will be with this organisation.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Non-Aboriginal Organisations or groups are not eligible to apply for funding.

For a full list of ineligible applicants, please see the Program Guidelines.

Will I have to supply any evidence to confirm my eligibility?

Yes. Applicants need to provide documentation to confirm that you meet the eligibility requirements for Cultural Grants. This is to ensure that our funding is delivered to Aboriginal 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
- Certificate of registration from of the following:
  - ORIC
  - NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (NSWICC)

LALCs, AECGs, and AMSs are not required to provide the above information.



Funding

How much can I apply for?

Applicants can apply for between $1,000 up to $20,000

Can an applicant receive more than one grant per year?

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

What types of activities can be funded?

Funding is to be used for activities that meet the objectives of the Cultural grants program.

What are some examples of projects that have been funded previously?

Some examples of previous funding projects are:

- Women's or Men's gatherings on Country
- Culture and wellbeing camps and programs
- Create and digitize Aboriginal history of the local community
- Community Days and events
- Art, music and cultural activities

Can we sell tickets to events and activities?

If you choose to sell tickets for your event or activity, the income made must be spent on the event.

Your budget should include details of any items for the event that will be paid for using expected ticket income.

Is funding available for sporting events?

Funding may support cultural components of key statewide or regional Aboriginal sporting and cultural events. This may include cultural performances, workshops, ceremonies, and other activities that celebrate or strengthen Aboriginal culture.

The project must align with at least one Cultural Grants objective. Sporting activities must support, rather than be the primary focus of, the project.

Funding cannot be used for teams or groups to attend or participate in sporting competitions, including entry fees, sponsorships, travel or accommodation.

What about wages for staff?

Costs for staff wages, including salaries, superannuation, leave and taxes that would be incurred **regardless** of whether the project proceeds, are not eligible for funding as these are business as usual costs that are not directly related to the delivery of the funded project or event.

Funding can be used to pay sole traders, Elders, facilitators, artists, and knowledge-holders where their role is directly related to delivering the project, activity or event.

Can grant funding be used for business-as-usual or operating costs?

No. Funding cannot be used for ongoing wages, existing positions, regular operating costs or other expenses that would be incurred regardless of whether the funded project proceeds. Costs must be directly related to delivering the approved project or event.

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

Yes. Funding may cover remuneration or contractor costs for work directly related to delivering the funded project or event. It cannot be used for ongoing wages, existing positions, business-as-usual costs, or other costs that would be incurred regardless of whether the project proceeds.
Evidence of costs must be provided within the application.

Should I include GST in my budget?

No. your budget does not need to include GST.

Is GST with grant funding?

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

If you're not registered for GST, it will not be payable with your grant.

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 minor equipment are:

- Office equipment – laptops, desktops and printers
- Camping equipment – tents, barbeques and trailers
- Gardening equipment – lawn 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.

We have been approved for funding before; will we be approved again?

Applications must meet all assessment criteria; there is no guarantee of funding based on a previous rounds successful grant application.

Will all applicants receive funding?

No, successful applications will be those that meet all four assessment criteria.

Approval of funding is subject to the availability of funds. If the full program allocation is exhausted, some applicants may miss out.

We encourage you to **apply as soon as possible** during the opening period.

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

If the Cultural Grants funding is exhausted, all remaining applicants will be notified in writing and encouraged to apply again in the 2027-2028 Cultural Grants round.

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

No. If you are unsuccessful, you can ask for feedback and apply to the 2027-2028 Cultural Grants Program when that is opened to applicants.

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

Not necessarily. Partial funding may 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, you will need to assess whether the activity is viable or needs to be modified due to the reduced funding.



Image credit: Marley Morgan (Wiradjuri, Ualaroi and Gamilaraay)

How to apply

How do I apply for a Cultural Grant?

Applications are submitted through Smarty Grants, 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 Smarty Grants you do not need to re-register.

What is Smarty Grants?

Smarty Grants is a user-friendly web-based grant system. It allows AANSW to oversee the whole Cultural Grants program online, including applications, management and communications

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Can I apply outside of Smarty Grants?

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

How can I apply online if I don't have reliable access to the internet or computer?

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

Can I review the application questions in advance?

Yes, you can review a PDF copy of the application form from our website.

You can also download a copy of the application form from Smarty Grants.

Do I need to complete the application in one session?

No, you can complete your application over time. 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.

Can I answer questions with a video or audio recording?

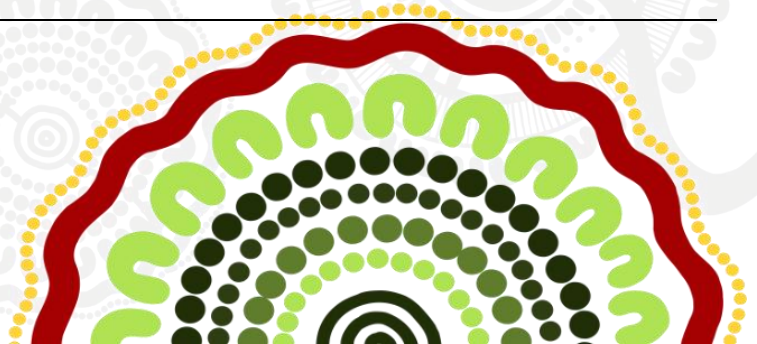
Yes. Questions relating to your project objectives and outcomes can be responded to using a video or audio recording.

You will still need to complete other required questions about your eligibility and budget directly in the application form.

What are some tips to record my answers on video or audio?

- You can use a mobile phone, webcam or other devices.
- Professional editing is not required or expected.
- Make sure the video or audio is clear and easy to hear
- Review the required questions and make sure you answer all of them
- Preview your video/audio before uploading to be sure you're happy with it

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What happens after my application is submitted?

Once your application is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email.

You will be able to review your application; however, you won't be able to amend it once submitted.

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

How will I find out the outcome?

AANSW will email you with the outcome of your application.

Please ensure you let us know if your contact details change so that we send this information to the correct contact.

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

If you need support in completing your application, please contact one of our Regional offices or reach out to email grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

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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 or any of our Regional office staff.

Region/Office	Phone Number
Binaal Billa - Dubbo	0448 316 126
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	02 9372 8675
New England North-West – Tamworth	02 8575 1172

Assessment

How will my application be assessed?

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

Applications will be reviewed by the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) in the order they are received, until the allocated funds are expended fully under the grant round.

Applications are assessed based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with Cultural Grant Program Objectives
- Community Impact
- Organisations capacity to deliver the project
- Value for Money

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

- Make sure you review the Program Guidelines in detail; this will help you understand what we are looking for
- Review the application questions, and ensure to answer each question in detail
- Be clear about how your project will meet the objectives of the Cultural 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
- Demonstrate what the positive impacts will be and how these will be achieved by your project
- Tell us about how your organisation or group will be able to deliver the project. You can include examples of other projects or grant funding used previously.
- 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 Program Guidelines, this will list what documents are required, including what is mandatory and what we recommend.



Image Credit: Luke Currie-Richardson (Kuku Yalanji, Djabugay, Munaldjali, Butchulla, Meriam)

What Next

If our application is successful, what happens next?

If your application is successful, we will contact you to sign your Funding Agreement which is then required to be sent back to us via Smarty Grants.

When will the grant be paid?

To pay your grant, we need to ensure your Funding Agreement is fully executed (signed by everyone), and that we have a valid tax invoice for payment.

Once both are received, we will arrange to process your grant payment.

What are the reporting requirements?

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, a statement of acquittal and receipts/invoices to support grant expenditure.

There is also an option to provide a Story of Change as part of your report, if there is something further you would like to share with us.

What if there are changes to my approved project?

If there are changes such as, dates, budget or activities, please contact us as soon as possible. We are happy to support changes that continue to fit the Program Guidelines and your original project approval; however, these need to be submitted via a Variation form as soon as possible for consideration.

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

We understand that things happen that might be out of your control. If this is the case, please contact us. Wherever possible we will provide support regarding your reporting.

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

What happens if there is unspent funds?

If there are unspent funds remaining, you must report this at the time of your Final Report. Unspent funds will be required to be returned to AANSW.

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 your happy for us to share photos or videos or if you're happy for our Comms team to reach out to you to chat further about the success of your project.