



Australian Government

Department of Communications and the Arts



Catalyst

Australian Arts and Culture Fund

Guidelines

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1 Introduction

The arts and culture lie at the heart of Australian life, reflecting society to itself, challenging us and encouraging creativity and innovation in the community. The Government recognises the intrinsic worth of the arts, but also their contribution and that of the creative industries to the economy in terms of employment and GDP.

The purpose of Catalyst—*Australian Arts and Culture Fund* (Catalyst) is to support Australian arts and culture by complementing existing mechanisms. The Commonwealth Government provides substantial support to the arts through programs delivered by:

- The Australia Council for the Arts—the Australian Government’s principal arts funding and advisory body supports excellence in the arts through grants and initiatives for individual artists, groups and small, medium and large arts organisations.
- Creative Partnerships Australia—the Government’s body for encouraging private sector support for the arts from business and the philanthropic sector, administering Australian Cultural Fund grants to individuals and organisations, sourced from philanthropic donations, together with matched funding programs.
- The Department of Communications and the Arts (the Department)—the Australian Government’s principal source of arts and culture advice, administers a range of programs promoting access to arts and cultural activities, supporting Indigenous arts and culture, Australian screen production and performing arts training, and protecting Australia’s movable cultural heritage.

Catalyst aims to fund innovative ideas from arts and cultural organisations that may find it difficult to access funding for such projects from other sources. This could include galleries, libraries, archives, museums, arts education and infrastructure projects.

The program aims to forge new creative partnerships and stimulate novel ways to build participation by Australians in our cultural life. It enables access to high quality arts experiences in regional communities and international activities that achieve cultural diplomacy objectives, and recognises the essential role of small to medium arts organisations.

Catalyst works in a complementary way to the Australia Council, Creative Partnerships Australia and other Department programs. The Department will administer Catalyst with assessment being undertaken by independent and internal assessors.

Catalyst meets the Government’s strategic priorities of creative sector innovation and recognising and encouraging private sector support for the arts.

2 Objectives

Catalyst will:

- deliver a diverse range of quality arts and cultural experiences that grow participation throughout Australia and internationally
- strengthen Australia’s reputation as a sophisticated and artistic nation with a confident, outward-focused arts sector
- increase partnerships with the private and philanthropic sector to increase project investment

- support collaborations to develop arts and cultural projects including in specific regions or priority areas
- give priority to projects involving small to medium organisations.

To achieve its objectives, Catalyst offers funding for arts and cultural projects and initiatives through three streams:

2.1 Partnerships and collaborations

Within the context of Catalyst's overarching objectives, the Partnerships and Collaborations stream will:

- encourage successful and innovative approaches to funding and delivering medium to long term projects
- support the fundraising and development activities of arts and cultural organisations
- support ambitious projects through funding that complements other avenues of support
- strengthen relationships and partnerships within the arts and cultural sector and between the sector and its external partners and supporters.

The Partnerships and Collaborations stream can include philanthropic and business supporters and partners, state/territory and local governments, and other arts and cultural organisations. Funding will be conditional on organisations leveraging funds from other sources.

Examples of activities that could be supported include contributing as a partner to:

- a foundation in development of a new fellowship program
- a fund-raising campaign for an innovative infrastructure project
- development of new Australian works in all artforms.

Partnerships do not necessarily need to be confirmed at the time of application. Successful applicants will have up to six months from execution of a Funding Agreement to demonstrate evidence of financial, cash or in-kind support from sources other than the Commonwealth before receiving payments. This recognises that a commitment of Commonwealth funding can assist in leveraging support from other sources.

2.2 Innovation and participation

Within the context of Catalyst's overarching objectives, the Innovation and Participation stream will:

- support organisations to widen access to, and deepen participation in the arts
- promote the role and value of arts and culture as important drivers to support diversity and inclusion
- improve access to and participation in the arts by people facing disadvantage and barriers to access
- strengthen regional arts
- support organisations to develop digital and other innovative solutions to widen access and participation in the arts.

Examples of proposals that could be supported under the stream include:

- innovative proposals to improve access and participation in regional and remote areas (including through use of new technology)
- arts training and education projects

- cultural festivals.

The Innovation and Participation stream will assist arts and cultural organisations to respond to new opportunities, challenges and issues.

2.3 International and cultural diplomacy

Within the context of Catalyst's overarching objectives, the International and Cultural Diplomacy stream will:

- increase the profile and reputation of Australia through international presentation of our arts and culture, and
- strengthen cultural partnerships and international creative exchanges.

The International and Cultural Diplomacy stream will support arts and cultural organisations to expand audiences for Australian artistic work and creative products.

Activities that will be supported include, but are not limited to:

- international tours
- development activities that assist in planning for future tours
- exhibitions, partnerships and exchanges
- activities that build international relationships such as participation in and visits to key international festivals and markets.

Note: Applications are welcome for outbound international activities in any country and region of the world, and inbound collaborative activities with international partners. From time to time, priority countries or overseas regions will be announced on the Department's website. International arts and cultural engagement and two-way artistic exchanges with these countries is particularly encouraged.

3. Funding

The government will provide up to \$12 million each financial year for Catalyst. The level of funding provided for each stream will be flexible to reflect demand and portfolio priorities.

Funding will be available through annual or multi-year Funding Agreements up to a maximum of four years, subject to availability of funds.

Ordinarily, individual projects will not receive more than \$500,000 in one year. Applicants should keep in mind that Catalyst seeks to support a diverse range of quality projects in each of the Catalyst streams. To remain competitive, all applications for funding should include realistic budgets and achievable timeframes, and an explanation of the expected impact and public benefit of the project.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Who Catalyst will fund

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- be an Australian incorporated organisation or entity
- have as their principal purpose the arts and/or cultural heritage

- have an active Australian Business Number (ABN). Organisations incorporated under Norfolk Island law are eligible for funding
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), if required by the Australian Taxation Office
- not have any outstanding reports, acquittals or serious breaches relating to any Commonwealth funding.

Unincorporated groups with primarily an arts or cultural heritage purpose are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the above criteria.

Individual business units and entities of local government authorities and state governments with an arts or cultural heritage purpose (such as art galleries, museums or performing arts centres) are eligible to submit applications. Commonwealth, State and Territory departments of state are not eligible.

4.2 What Catalyst will fund

Catalyst will fund high quality projects irrespective of scale in all art forms, including screen-based art work and cross art form projects, including but not limited to:

- performances
- exhibitions
- tours
- development and/or creation of new work
- festivals
- investment in foundation fellowship programs (Partnerships and Collaborations stream only)
- capacity building
- infrastructure projects (Partnerships and Collaborations stream only)
- artistic cultural exchanges.

4.3 What Catalyst will not fund

- Individuals.
- Competitions.
- Awards.
- Business start-up costs.
- Private tuition, training or study.
- Work used for academic assessment.
- Eisteddfods.
- Film and television production.
- Operational funding for organisations (note this differs from administrative costs associated with undertaking funded projects).
- Interactive games.
- Built or natural heritage projects.
- Components of projects that are also funded by other programs administered by the Department, the Australia Council or Creative Partnerships Australia.
- Costs associated with a project that have already been incurred.

Eligible projects need to align clearly with the objectives of the funding stream applied for. If you are uncertain if your organisation or the project you are considering may be eligible please contact the Department prior to submitting your application. Contact details appear at the end of these guidelines.

5. Assessment criteria

Applications for funding will be assessed against the following four assessment criteria as relevant to the project and funding stream, noting that not every point will be relevant to every project.

5.1 Criterion 1. Quality and innovation

- Experience and/or calibre of the applicant organisation in the relevant fields.
- Skills, experience and expertise/calibre of the key personnel including participating artists.
- Scale of the project and capacity of organisation to deliver.
- Level of innovation.
- Benefits to project participants including artistic and professional development.
- Benefits to audiences and the Australian community.

5.2 Criterion 2. Access

- How the project widens audiences' (Australian or International) access to: different art forms and mediums; styles of art; innovation; or experimentation.
- The geographic reach of the activity.
- Likely attendance and participation.
- Participation by people in regional and remote areas.
- The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The involvement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Accessibility for persons with disability including participation of artists with disability.

5.3 Criterion 3. Support and partnerships

- Community support and engagement.
- Financial and project partners.
- Level of confirmed or anticipated cash and/or in-kind contribution.
- Creative partners.
- Level of collaboration.
- Likely ongoing benefits of partnerships.
- This criterion will be of particular importance for assessing funding for the Partnerships and Collaborations stream.

5.4 Criterion 4. Value for money

- The need for funding support.
- The quality and viability of the project plan and timeline.
- That the budget is realistic and reasonable.
- Whether the project represents efficient, effective, economic and ethical use of funds.
- Remuneration arrangements for personnel involved.
- Governance arrangements within the organisation (capacity to administer the funding successfully).
- The applicant's funding history.
- Expected impact and public benefit of the project.

6. Application and assessment process

6.1 What you will need to do

You will be required to submit an application online at arts.gov.au. The application form is designed to assist you to demonstrate how your proposal meets the objectives of Catalyst and addresses the assessment criteria.

As part of the application you will also be required to provide a project work plan and detailed budget.

Additional supporting information may be provided such as:

- written evidence of support from other sources
- a letter of confirmation from key staff
- CVs of key artistic talent
- demonstration of audience demand such as venue confirmations
- an invitation to perform or exhibit
- non-written (music, art etc) or written examples of work to be included in the project.

Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project with the Department prior to submitting applications.

Applicants seeking multi-year project funding will be required to provide a strongly argued case demonstrating the need for and benefits of multi-year support and additional budget information.

Applications must be clear and succinct.

Assessors will only consider up to 10 pages of additional information so include only information directly relevant to your application.

Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible.

6.2 What we will do

Assessments will be carried out on an ongoing basis, usually in the order in which applications are received, with funding assessment recommendations ordinarily made on a quarterly basis, in the last week of October, January, April and July each year. It is recommended that applications are submitted no later than six weeks before assessment recommendations are made. Any updates to this indicative timing will be published at arts.gov.au.

- Where an opportunity has arisen unexpectedly, applicants may request a fast-tracked assessment, with an explanation of why the opportunity could not have been planned for within the normal funding cycles of Catalyst.

Applications will be considered in the context of the objectives of Catalyst and against the four equally weighted assessment criteria of quality and innovation, access, support and partnerships, and value for money. Applications will be assessed by at least three assessors including a combination of independent and Department assessors. Recommendations for funding will then be made, informed by consideration of factors including balance across art forms and types of activity, geographic and community diversity, and particular sector needs. Consideration of applications under the International and Cultural Diplomacy stream may involve officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Council.

Where the level of information provided is not sufficient for the assessors to make a recommendation, assessors may, but are not obliged to, seek more information from the applicant. It is therefore recommended that you address the criteria thoroughly in your application. If you are unsure of how to address a particular criterion, Department staff are available to provide factual information about the application process to applicants.

Department staff or delegate will make the final decision regarding any funding awarded.

Applicants will usually be advised of the assessment outcome within ten weeks of the assessment recommendation date each quarter. Applicants will be advised of the assessment outcome in writing.

As required by the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines, successful applicants will be listed in the Department's grants register. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback in writing.

7. Managing the project

7.1 The funding agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a standard Commonwealth Funding Agreement before commencement of the project. The Funding Agreement will set out the nature of the relationship between the Commonwealth and the funding recipient, as well as reporting requirements such as progress and acquittal reports, including financial reporting.

You must not begin any activities that are to be paid for by this funding before your Funding Agreement has been signed by both your organisation and the Department. All funds provided by the Department must be spent in accordance with the approved budget prior to the end of the funding period identified in the Funding Agreement. If you experience any delays or are unable to spend your funds in accordance with your Funding Agreement for any reason, you must notify us as early as possible to request a variation.

The Funding Agreement will confirm your agreement to comply with all relevant statutes, regulations, by-laws and requirements of any Commonwealth, state, territory or local authority, for example in regard to working with vulnerable persons and obtaining all required permits prior to an activity commencing.

7.2 Payments

All funding will be subject to the terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement, including conditions relating to the deposit of funds, auditing and unspent funds.

Payments will be made against the agreed schedule, set out in the Funding Agreement, following execution of the Funding Agreement and on the provision of details of a bank account into which funds are to be paid. Payments against the schedule are subject to the Department's acceptance of performance and financial reports, also set out in the Funding Agreement, and the demonstrated need for approved funds to continue the activity.

7.3 Reporting requirements

Reporting on Commonwealth funded activities ensures that funding is used for its intended purpose and that funds can be fully accounted. Funding recipients will be required to provide reports to the Department, as specified in the Funding Agreement, including progress of the activity against the agreed objectives and milestones and the approved budget. Reporting requirements will be relative to the scale of the project.

Recipients may also be required to provide information to the Department for inclusion in government publications and on government websites including the Department's website.

7.4 Acquittal and evaluation

At the end of the funding period, funding recipients will be required to acquit all funding. This may include statutory declarations, independently audited financial statements or other financial information, as outlined in the Funding Agreement and its attached schedules. The acquittal is normally required within 60 business days of the conclusion of the activity.

Funding recipients will be provided with templates where required to assist with acquitting their funding.

Funding recipients may also be required to provide information about their activity and report on outcomes to inform the Government's evaluation of Catalyst.

8. Legislative authority

The legislative authority for Catalyst derives from Schedule 1AB of the Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997 as amended.

9. Conflict of interest

Applicants must indicate any potential perceived or actual conflict of interest arising from proposed projects and state that, where the Department establishes that a perceived or actual conflict of interest exists, the Department may decide not to consider the application.

If there is the possibility of a perceived conflict of interest, applicants should include a statement addressing this and demonstrate why a conflict of interest would not result from the funding of the project, or how the conflict will be managed.

Department assessors are also required as part of their duties to declare conflicts of interest.

10. Privacy

Personal information collected by the Department is protected by the *Privacy Act 1988* (C'th). The Department collects personal information to carry out its functions properly and efficiently. The Department only uses personal information for the purposes for which it was given to the Department and for directly related purposes (unless otherwise required by, or authorised under, law). The Department may refer applications, or any part of them (including personal information contained in an application), to Commonwealth or state/territory government departments or agencies for assessment, reporting, advice or comment in connection with the delivery of Catalyst. Contact details of successful organisations will be made available to the Department.

11. Taxation

Funding payments will be exclusive of GST unless otherwise indicated. Payments to states, territories and local governments do not attract GST. The Department does not provide advice on whether or how organisations pay GST. If required, applicants are advised to seek advice from a qualified professional or the [Australian Taxation Office](#). The applicant should be advised that the Department will report details of all payments to the Australian Taxation Office.

12. Complaints mechanism

The Department regards complaints as a way of both assessing and improving its performance. The Department will endeavour, where possible, to ensure that complaints are resolved promptly, fairly, confidentially and satisfactorily and that processes are improved as a result. Complaints regarding any aspect of the application process should be directed to the contact address below.

13. Contact details

Department of Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
Canberra ACT 2601 Telephone:

freecall 1800 590 577

Email: catalyst@arts.gov.au

Internet: arts.gov.au