
Aboriginal Affairs NSW

Cultural Grants Program

2023–2024 Program Guidelines

August 2023



Grant program details/timeline

Round open and closing dates	Round 1: 28 August 2023 to 9 October 2023 Round 2: 15 January 2024 to 26 February 2024
Program delivery timeframe (for successful applicants)	Round 1 projects: 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 Round 2 projects: 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Application outcome date	Round 1: December 2023 onwards Round 2: May 2024 onwards
Decision-maker	The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
NSW Government agency	Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW)
Type of grant opportunity	Open, non-competitive
Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST)	Minimum grant amount: \$500 Maximum grant amount: \$20,000 Total funding pool: \$1 million

Enquiries

For any enquiries, contact your nearest regional office (please see section 6.2) or the Community Investments Team on 1800 019 998 or at grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Contents

1. Overview of grant program	5	5. Successful grant applications	16
1.1 Timing	5	5.1 Grant agreement	16
1.2 Purpose and objectives	6	5.2 Grant payment	16
1.3 Grant value	6	5.3 Unspent funds	16
		5.4 Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements	16
2. Selection criteria	8	6. Additional information and resources	18
2.1 Eligibility criteria	8	6.1 Feedback sessions	18
2.2 Eligible and ineligible project costs	9	6.2 Access to information	18
2.3 Assessment criteria	10	6.3 Ethical conduct	19
3. Application process	12		
3.1 How to apply	12		
3.2 Supporting documents	12		
4. Assessment process	14		
4.1 Assessment of grant applications	14		
4.2 Notification of application outcome	14		
4.3 Publication of grants information	14		

Message from the Minister



I'm delighted to launch the 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program, designed to support Aboriginal communities to strengthen, protect and maintain traditional and contemporary expressions of Aboriginal culture.

The Cultural Grants Program is a great opportunity to bring together Community to share knowledge, celebrate, promote wellbeing and create space for healing.

Every year, Aboriginal community organisations design projects and hold events that foster a sense of connection to Country, belonging, pride and a strong sense of identity. In the past, these have included cultural workshops, ceremonies, camps and achievement awards. The ideas that have been brought to life by successful grant recipients are as varied and vibrant as the communities they represent.

This year, Aboriginal Affairs NSW has allocated \$1 million for grants from \$500 to \$20,000. I encourage all eligible organisations to bring their best ideas to bear and create something wonderful and memorable for Community. I look forward to seeing the outcomes!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DARRIS', with a stylized flourish above the letters.

The Hon David Harris MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty

1

Overview of grant program

1. Overview of grant program

The Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) Cultural Grants Program aims to support Aboriginal community organisations and groups across NSW to celebrate Aboriginal culture and hold key cultural events and activities.

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

AANSW has allocated \$1 million in funding for the AANSW 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program as follows:

- **Allocation for Round 1** (to deliver projects between 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024): **\$500,000**
- **Allocation for Round 2** (to deliver projects between 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025): **\$500,000**

1.1 Timing

The AANSW 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program opens twice a year. Applicants can apply at any time during the opening period via Smarty Grants (<https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au>).

Opening period

Round 1

Applications open	28 August 2023
Applications close	11 am, 9 October 2023
Project must start on or after	1 January 2024
Projects must be completed on or before	31 December 2024

Round 2

Applications open	15 January 2024
Applications close	11 am, 26 February 2024
Project must start on or after	1 July 2024
Projects must be completed on or before	30 June 2025

2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program Guidelines

An organisation can only receive one grant from the 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program. An organisation may additionally act as an auspice for a maximum of one project in each round.

Please read all the details in the Program Guidelines before applying under the 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program.

The project must be completed by the dates detailed in the table above. Where an application does not confirm that a project will be completed by this date, AANSW reserves the right to set the application aside for further consideration.

The 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program is a non-competitive program where applications will be assessed in the order they are received. Applications that cannot be considered in Round 1 due to the funding allocation being exhausted will be given the option to opt in to having their application assessed in Round 2. Applicants can re-apply in Round 2 if they wish to.

Late submissions will not be considered or accepted unless AANSW determines, at its sole discretion, that it is in the interests of the fairness of the program to accept the late submission. A late submission must have already been commenced by the applicant prior to the round closing date and time, and a request for late submission must be received by AANSW no later than one hour after the round closing date and time.

1.2 Purpose and objectives

Program objectives

The AANSW Cultural Grants Program objectives are to:

- 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, through the use of Aboriginal culture and community connection
- facilitate sharing of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and skills between generations.

Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on the [Aboriginal Affairs NSW website](#) for more information regarding program objectives.

1.3 Grant value

AANSW has allocated \$1 million for the Cultural Grants Program funding in 2023–2024.

- Allocation for Round 1 (to deliver projects between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024): \$500,000
- Allocation for Round 2 (to deliver projects between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025): \$500,000
- Any Round 1 allocation not expended in Round 1 may be made available in Round 2, at the sole discretion of AANSW.
- Applicants can apply for grants from \$500 to \$20,000.
- An organisation can only receive one grant from the 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program.

2

Selection criteria

2. Selection criteria

2.1 Eligibility criteria

Eligible entities

To be eligible you must be:

- an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-controlled, not-for-profit organisation 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 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 projects must not be profit-making in nature); OR
- an unincorporated Aboriginal community group with a not-for-profit auspice organisation of 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 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.

Applicants must also:

- be able to enter into a funding agreement with AANSW 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 project budget.

Unincorporated groups

If an unincorporated Aboriginal group wishes to apply under the 2023–2024 Cultural Grant Program, they will need to partner with a not-for-profit organisation to receive and administer the funding. An organisation may only act as an auspice for one grant project in each round.

You are **not** eligible to apply if you are:

- an individual
- a non-Aboriginal group or organisation (except for eligible auspice organisations auspicing an unincorporated Aboriginal community group)
- 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 AANSW in the previous 2 years
- organisations with redress sanctions as described in the National Redress Scheme.

2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program Guidelines

Eligible project/event locations

Projects must take place within NSW, and applicants must deliver a service to Aboriginal communities within NSW.

2.2 Eligible and ineligible project costs

Funding must 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:

- women's or men's gathering on Country
- a culture and wellbeing camp for Aboriginal youth
- creation of a digital installation showing Aboriginal history of the b
- a statewide regional music and cultural festival
- a series of online and/or face-to-face workshops.

Note: Where events are ticketed, any income generated from ticket sales must be included and expended within the program budget.

Funding **can** be used for:

- purchase of 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 statewide and/or regional Aboriginal sporting and cultural events
- purchasing minor equipment for event activities up to the value of \$5,000 (please refer to the FAQs for guidance on minor equipment)
- administering the project, with up to 10% of the requested AANSW funding amount able to be used for this task or as auspice fees where there is an auspicing arrangement.

Eligible sole trader/business applicants may include up to 10% of the requested AANSW funding amount to cover remuneration costs. Refer to the **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs) for more information.

Funding **cannot** be used for:

- costs for individual sporting 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, salaries and on-costs for ongoing staff
- sitting fees, travel allowances 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, which has a separate funding program
- activities related to 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
- merchandise such as backpacks, gift vouchers etc.

AANSW and the Aboriginal Languages Trust administer a range of other grant programs throughout the year, and applicants may be referred to apply to another program if it is considered a more suitable source of funding.

2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program Guidelines

2.3 Assessment criteria

The 2023–2024 AANSW Cultural Grants Program is non-competitive program where applications are assessed individually against the assessment criteria without reference to the comparative merits of other applications. Only applications that are deemed to meet all assessment criteria will be recommended for funding.

Applications will be assessed by the Grant Assessment Panel in the order they are received.

Assessment will be based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required
<p>Criterion 1: Project quality</p> <p>Description of criterion:</p> <p>The project aligns with the program aim and objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the project meets the program aims and objectives Project celebrates Aboriginal culture and/or includes key traditional or contemporary cultural events or activities Project activities clearly demonstrate that the project addresses specific program objectives
<p>Criterion 2: Project detail</p> <p>Description of criterion:</p> <p>Clear description of the project objective, how it will be delivered, evidence to demonstrate need and community involvement, along with a list of project activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed project plan Detailed description of project activities Implementation plan with explanation of what the funding will do and how it will be spent Rationale for level of need, and information on who will be involved

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required
<p>Criterion 3: Project impact</p> <p>Description of criterion:</p> <p>Detail on how the project will benefit the community and make a tangible contribution to the cultural health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in a local area within NSW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters of support from the local Aboriginal community, i.e. from a group of Elders, community groups or potential participants. Letters must be current and specific to the project Evidence of who the project will benefit and how this will be achieved
<p>Criterion 4: Organisation’s capacity to deliver the project</p> <p>Description of criterion:</p> <p>The ability of the organisation to deliver the project objectives based on its experience and resources, community supports such as partnerships with other organisations and participation in other community projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience managing previous projects, and outcomes achieved Demonstrated resources to deliver the project, or relevant training and experience of key staff involved in the project
<p>Criterion 5: Value for money</p> <p>Description of criterion:</p> <p>How the implementation of the project/event/activity will achieve high-quality outcomes for Aboriginal communities in a cost-effective way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity on how budget items contribute to the project outcomes The budget must be reasonable and realistic Quotes to support the budget line items/ detailed budget aligned with the project activities and plan

3

Application process

3. Application process

3.1 How to apply

Applications must be submitted online at the AANSW online grants platform (<https://aboriginalaffairs.smartygrants.com.au/>). Applicants are advised to visit the AANSW website to access **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**.

Applicants are encouraged to contact their nearest AANSW Regional Office to discuss their project.

An organisation can only receive one grant from the 2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program. An organisation may additionally act as an auspice for a maximum of one project in each round.

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a feedback session if requested and may reapply for funding under the program in the next opening period.

Video response to application questions

Applicants can choose to submit a video response to application questions on project objectives and outcomes. AANSW regional staff are available to support applicants with recording and preparing a file for upload if required.

3.2 Supporting documents

Essential documents

The below documents are required before you submit your application:

- letters of support from the local Aboriginal community (e.g. from local Aboriginal Elders/groups, community groups or potential participants). Letters must be current and specific to the project. A letter of support provided by an alliance/consortium should clearly demonstrate support of the membership base of the alliance/consortium
- certificate of currency for public liability insurance (or a budget that includes the purchase of public liability insurance)
- evidence of the value of goods and services (except the cultural components/ services) for budget items such as hiring of venue, accommodation, catering, and hiring and/or purchase of equipment.

Recommended documents:

Applicants are encouraged to provide other documentation and evidence that supports their application (e.g. evidence of successfully delivering other projects, detailed project plan).

4

Assessment process

4. Assessment process

4.1 Assessment of grant applications

The 2023–2024 AANSW Cultural Grants Program is a non-competitive program where applications are assessed individually against the assessment criteria without reference to the comparative merits of other applications. Only applications that are deemed to meet all assessment criteria will be recommended for funding.

All applications will be screened for eligibility. Eligible applications will then be assessed against the assessment criteria by a panel of AANSW staff.

All assessment recommendations will be provided in writing to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty (the Minister).

The Minister is the final decision-maker considering the recommendations of the assessment panel.

Some applicants may be offered partial funding where budget includes ineligible items.

Applicants who are determined unsuccessful may reapply for funding in the next opening period.

4.2 Notification of application outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application through the AANSW online grant portal, SmartyGrants.

Feedback on applications

If an applicant wishes to seek feedback on an unsuccessful application, the applicant organisation should contact the Community Investments team at grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

4.3 Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration 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), 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. Successful grant applications

Successful applicants will be notified through the online grants portal, Smarty Grants, and will be invited to enter into a Funding Agreement with AANSW. An 'Acceptance of offer' form will be opened in the online grant portal, Smarty Grants.

Successful applications, including recipient name, funding amount and project location, are required to be published on the NSW Governments Grant and Funding Finder at nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding. Successful applicants may also be included in AANSW publications and website materials.

5.1 Grant agreement

Funding arrangements and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to:

- enter into a Funding Agreement with AANSW within 3 weeks of the offer being made
- start and complete funded activities and events by the dates specified in the Funding Agreement
- notify AANSW of any proposed changes to your funded activity and complete a project variation request
- acknowledge the support of AANSW in accordance with the [Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines](#)
- report on outcomes from the activity and acquit the grant within one (1) month of project completion. Evidence to support this can be uploaded in SmartyGrants and must include evidence of expenditure, as well as photos, media coverage and links to video clips where relevant. If the acquittal is not completed within the required timeframe, you will not be eligible to apply for AANSW grants for the next 2 years.

5.2 Grant payment

Some applicants may be approved and offered partial funding where budget includes ineligible items, and as recommended by the grant assessment panel.

All payments will be made after executing the Funding Agreement, and on provision of a valid tax invoice, and all other required information.

5.3 Unspent funds

The recipient must retain all invoices and receipts for the project in accordance with the acceptance of offer and/or Funding Agreement.

All unspent funds must be returned to AANSW within one (1) month of completion of the funded event/activity.

Unspent funds can be returned either via electronic funds transfer (EFT) or cheque. Contact your regional office or the Community Investments team for more information.

5.4 Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

The recipient will provide AANSW with a 'Completion Report and Certificate of Acquittal' by submitting an Acquittal form in SmartyGrants within one (1) month of the project unless otherwise agreed to by AANSW.

The Reporting and Acquittal form will be reviewed and evaluated by AANSW. AANSW may ask for any invoices and receipts for the project, if they feel it is needed.

AANSW will email the recipient instructions for how to access the Completion and Acquittal Report on SmartyGrants at least one month before the project completion date.

All acquittals will be reviewed by AANSW in line with the original Funding Agreement. Where required, AANSW reserves the right to ask for additional information to support the Acquittal report.

If a recipient does not satisfactorily acquit their project, this may affect their eligibility for future AANSW grant funding.

6

Additional information
and resources

6. Additional information and resources

6.1 Feedback sessions

If an applicant wishes to seek feedback on an unsuccessful application, the applicant organisation should contact the Community Investment team at grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

6.2 Access to information

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (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.

Note that 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.

Applicant support and contacts

For any questions regarding the AANSW Cultural Grants Program, please contact your nearest AANSW regional office on the following phone numbers, or email the Community Investments team at grants@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Region/office	Phone number
Illawarra Southern Batemans Bay	02 8575 1013
New England North-West Tamworth	02 8575 1172
Greater Northern Coffs Harbour	02 9566 8318
Murdi Paaki Broken Hill	02 9228 4877
Binaal Billa Dubbo	02 8575 1518 02 8575 1073
Hunter Central Coast Newcastle	02 8575 1680
Greater Sydney Sydney	1800 019 998

Please note that while AANSW regional staff will be pleased to answer questions about the application process, they cannot provide advice or comments on the content of your application.

6.3 Ethical conduct

Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property

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 and Torres Strait Islander people and communities regarding their cultural and intellectual property and what it expects from the organisations it funds.

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 the [Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol](#) (ACIP), including the protocol, is available on the AANSW website.

Conflict of interest management

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

- Conflict of Interest declarations are to be signed by all persons involved in performing functions related to the assessment process.
- Regional project officers who assist an applicant with an application will not be involved in assessment for that program.

Disclosure of information

Information relating to successful applications will be included in:

- public media releases
- an announcement on the AANSW website
- NSW Grants Finder website
- AANSW social media.

This information may include the name of the applicant and their business, a description of the funded project and the funding amount.

Applicants should be aware that information provided to AANSW may be made publicly available under the GIPA Act. Information may also be made publicly available as a result of an order for papers made by the NSW Legislative Council under Standing Order 52.

Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. The authors, publisher and any person involved in the preparation of this publication take no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of information contained herein.

2023–2024 Cultural Grants Program Guidelines

Copyright

© State of New South Wales, through Aboriginal Affairs NSW,
Premier's Department 2023.

You may copy, distribute, download and otherwise freely deal with this information provided you attribute Aboriginal Affairs NSW as the owner. However, you must obtain permission from the Aboriginal Affairs NSW, if you wish to: 1) modify, 2) charge others for access, 3) include in advertising or a product for sale, or 4) profit from the information.