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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
Office for the Arts

Visions of Australia—frequently asked questions

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Funding

How often can I apply?

There is no limit to the number of applications you can make to Visions of Australia either across rounds or within a single round.

When are the closing dates for applications?

Visions of Australia delivers two competitive funding rounds each year, usually opening in February and September. The closing dates for applications are advertised on the [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications website](#).

Should I apply for annual or multi-year funding?

Visions of Australia offers both annual and multi-year funding for projects. If you are seeking multi-year funding you will be required to provide a strongly argued business case demonstrating the need for and benefits of multi-year support, and additional budget information.

Multi-year funding applicants can choose to apply for funding to be delivered in single block at the start of the agreement provided there is demonstrated need for funding to be allocated as a single payment. Annual progress reports will be required for all multi-year projects.

Can I apply outside of an advertised funding round?

Applications will not be accepted outside of a funding round.

How far in advance can I apply?

You may apply in any round in advance of your activity however priority will be given to proposals for activities that commence prior to the funding period for the following round. For example, if your activity commences in August you should apply in the February round of that year. You may apply in October of the previous year but your proposal will be assessed as a lower priority should there be strong demand in that round. If you are unsuccessful in a round, you may reapply for the same activity in a future round.

COVID-19 Impact

Does the Department plan to keep delivering funding rounds during the pandemic?

The Department will continue to open two funding rounds per annum with the usual timeframes continuing to apply.

What allowances are being made for the impacts COVID-19 might have on my proposed activity?

We acknowledge that COVID-19 is continuing to impact touring activities. We wish to offer support where there are opportunities to progress activities under the program, particularly around the development of touring exhibitions, and also where local arrangements may lend themselves to touring activity. We recognise that restrictions vary across jurisdictions and they continue to evolve. The Department will work with all grantees to accommodate impacts on their agreed activities and will provide as much flexibility as possible. The standard funding agreements that we use allow for projects to be varied where this is done in writing by both parties. There is no limit to the number of times the agreement can be varied.

What if I can't get venue confirmations for my application?

Where venues may be reluctant/unable to provide commitment we ask that you seek, at minimum, an expression of interest that indicates to us that there is a willingness by the venue to accept the exhibition as local restrictions allow.

What if my exhibition simply can't tour due to health and border measures?

In consultation with you, we will vary the end date of your agreement and consider whether the order of the itinerary, or the specified venues, also need to be varied. We can also consider budget variations where costs may be impacted, such as a requirement for storage, and while we can't increase the total grant amount we can explore with you options to continue the activity in a revised form. If after varying an activity further variation is required, we are also happy to consider this.

Eligibility

Can individuals apply?

Individuals can apply for funding only where their project is auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria. This means that the auspicings organisation is taking on the legal and financial responsibility for the grant as the grant agreement will be made with the auspicings body if the application is successful. The Department may choose not to consider applications from organisations that do not strongly demonstrate their principal purpose as arts or cultural heritage as required by the eligibility criteria listed at 5.1 of the Program Guidelines.

Ideally, an auspicings organisation will have similar aims to those of the individual or group seeking funding (for example, preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of visual arts etc).

Will my previous record with the Department or other Australian Government agencies be taken into account during the assessment of my application?

Your history as a funding recipient may be considered, particularly your compliance with reporting and acquittal requirements. If you have a reasonable explanation for a delay in reporting you may explain this in your application for the assessor's consideration.

What types of organisations or entities are eligible for funding?

To be eligible, organisations must be registered under law or created by law. Examples include companies, incorporated associations and statutory authorities.

Individuals and unincorporated groups (three or more individuals who do not form a legally constituted organisation) with an arts or cultural heritage purpose are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

Applicants may be required to provide a certificate of incorporation or evidence of their current legal status.

Can university art/design faculties apply under the program?

Generally no, as their principle purpose is education, but partnerships between arts and cultural organisations and university faculties would be eligible where the organisation applies on behalf of the partnership. However, a university may apply on behalf of an art gallery that is part of the university entity, where the gallery is not separately incorporated.

Do you fund feature film, television or documentary?

While the program supports screen-based and multi-media art, it does not generally support activities associated with feature film, television or documentary. Funding for these activities can be sought from the Australian Government's primary agency for production of Australian screen activity, Screen Australia.

Do you fund organisational administration costs?

Visions of Australia does not fund core staff and administrative costs, or audit fees. However, administrative costs specifically associated with undertaking the particular project to be funded may be included as part of an application.

If an item in the proposed budget is deemed ineligible for funding, does that mean my entire project will be considered ineligible for funding?

If an item within the proposed project budget is deemed ineligible to receive funding or does not fully meet the selection criteria of value for money, this does not mean that your entire application is automatically considered ineligible. Assessors are able to recommend partial funding.

Are there any other items not listed in the guidelines that the program will consider funding?

Where a sufficient need is demonstrated in regard to the success of the project, consideration will be given to funding items such as:

- Artist fees, in line with industry standards
- Travel expenses—the Department will usually only fund domestic economy airfares unless an acceptable case is made for a higher class
- Living away from home allowances
- Marketing and advertising
- Photographic and documenting equipment
- Minor exhibition hardware e.g. display plinths.

Do you fund the purchase of assets?

Generally, assets are not supported by the program unless you can demonstrate they are a critical element of the exhibition material.

I currently receive funding from the Australia Council. Can I apply for funding under this program?

Yes, as long as the funding you receive from the Australia Council is not for the same component of the project as the one for which you are applying for funding through Visions of Australia.

I currently receive funding under another program from the Department. Can I also apply for funding under this program?

Yes, as long as the funding you receive is not for the same component of the project as the one for which you are applying for funding through Visions of Australia.

Assessment Criteria

How are the assessment criteria weighted?

There are four assessment criteria and each criterion is weighted equally.

What does "scale of the tour" mean?

Scale of the tour refers to the size and extent of the tour, including how many participants are involved and how many regional and remote venues the tour will visit.

How do I describe what the "benefits" of my tour are?

Benefits are the advantages obtained by the arts and cultural sector, tour participants and audiences and community as a consequence of the tour.

Does my project have to start by a specific date? For example, can I apply for a project a year or more ahead?

The Department welcomes forward planning and tour development applications can be received up to 24 months ahead of tour commencement. For touring applications, the only requirement is that your tour does not commence before the advertised commencement date i.e. 1 January for October rounds or 1 July for March rounds.

Priority will be given to proposals for activities that commence prior to the funding period for the following round. For example, if your activity commences in August you should apply in the February round of that year. If you are unsuccessful in a round, you may reapply for the same activity in a future round.

Do I need to have confirmed venues or partners in order to apply?

No, but the stronger the level of confirmation of venues and partners the stronger your application will be. For a touring application a venue confirmation form must be completed for each proposed venue.

Do I need to have at least three venues confirmed outside my state or territory?

Yes, in order to be eligible for touring funding you will need to have confirmation from at least three venues from outside your state or territory with consecutive exhibition dates.

What do you mean by financial and project partners, and co-contribution?

Financial and project partners provide, or help with obtaining, financial support for the project. This may include providing in-kind support.

Creative partners contribute to the organisation or execution of the project.

Co-contribution refers to cash or in-kind support. Assessment of applications will consider the level of support you can demonstrate you already have secured as well as the support you can realistically expect to receive.

Do I need to be able to demonstrate confirmation (or in-principle commitment) of co-contributions from other sources when I submit my application? Will an estimate of anticipated co-contributions as part of a clear, realistic fundraising plan suffice?

Written evidence of support from others is highly desirable. As the budget will need to balance, commitments should be as accurate as possible.

Will co-contributions from state, territory and/or local governments meet the requirement to leverage funds from other sources?

Yes.

My organisation is an individual business unit of a local/state government. Will co-contributions from that local/state government meet the requirement to leverage funds from other source?

Yes.

I have applied for funding from a state/territory/local government and/or philanthropic foundation but have not yet heard back on whether my application was successful. Can the funding I have applied for count as co-contribution for the purposes of my application?

Yes. Your application to Visions of Australia will ask you to indicate the status of confirmation for that support. Financial partnerships are an important consideration under the assessment criteria and therefore you should include all other funding, even if not confirmed at the time of applying.

Can the support I leverage from other sources be entirely in-kind, or does some leveraged support need to be monetary?

The support can be cash or in-kind support from other sources.

What happens if my committed/budgeted co-contributions fall through during the activity period?

You will need to advise the Department as soon as possible and we will reconsider your funding agreement with you.

I have applied or intend to apply for funding from another program for this project, should I include this in my application?

You will need to include the details of the grant program you have applied to, or intend to apply to, for the project. Please provide the name of the grant program/s. If successful for funding under another program you must advise the Department as soon as possible.

Application and Assessment Process

How do I submit an application?

You can submit your application online through the SmartyGrants system available on the [Department's website](#).

Can we set up a single user and password in SmartyGrants for use by staff in our organisation?

No. For ongoing security reasons each staff member who will be using the [SmartyGrants](#) portal should set up a unique user identification and password. Passwords and user names must not be shared.

Who can I go to if I am an artist with disability and need more assistance with my application?

Departmental staff can discuss your project with you and answer any specific questions you have in relation to the assessment criteria and how to complete and submit your application. If you need information on accessibility see [Arts Access Australia](#) or one of the arts and disability peak bodies.

Who will assess my application?

Applications will be assessed and ranked by at least three assessors (generally five) including a combination of Departmental staff and independent assessors. Assessors will consider quality, access, support and partnerships and value for money as stated in the program guidelines.

Who are the Independent Assessors?

The Department selects Independent Assessors from sector and community representatives formed through Expressions of Interests from arts and culture professionals. Senior Departmental staff will select assessors depending on the nature of applications received.

Do I get to know which Independent Assessor(s) assessed my application?

Independent Assessors' private contact details are kept confidential and held securely by the Department. The Department does not publish or provide the names of individual Independent Assessors selected for each funding round.

How long will it take for me to be notified of the decision on my application?

Applicants will usually be advised of the assessment outcome within three months of the closing date of each round. Applicants will be advised of the assessment outcome in writing.

What are the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) and how are they relevant?

The CGRGs provide the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework for better practice grants administration. The document sets out a range of rules and requirements that apply to government officials and ministers involved in grant making. The rules are designed to ensure transparency and probity in the spending of public money. In 2013 the CGRG's were formally included in legislation, meaning that they are not just a guide to better practice; adhering to them is now a legislative requirement.

What is the grants register and why are my details published?

Under Commonwealth grants legislation, all Commonwealth entities must publish information on individual grants on the Commonwealth Government's whole-of-government grant information system [GrantConnect](#) no later than 21 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (CGRG 5.3.). Further information on web-based reporting requirements can be found at the [Department of Finance](#) website.

Privacy

How will my personal information be handled?

Personal information collected by the Department is protected by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). We use this information to carry out our functions properly and efficiently, including contacting you in relation to your funding, consulting with the Australia Council and the provision of this information to Members of Parliament as required. 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).

Complaints Mechanism

What if I am unhappy about how the Department has handled my application?

All complaints about the grant process must be lodged in writing. The Department has a complaints procedure. If you have a complaint, please lodge it by using the online 'Contact us' form available on the [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications website](#), or via email or mail:

By mail: Director, Planning, Reporting and Audit Section
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