Catalyst

Australian Arts and Culture Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2015
What is Catalyst?

The Government announced a new arts Program Catalyst - Australian Arts and Culture Fund (Catalyst) on 20 November 2015, as a result of consultations and feedback on the draft guidelines for the proposed National Program of Excellence (which Catalyst will be in the place of).

Catalyst will be administered by the Ministry for the Arts and will work in a complementary way with the Australia Council, Creative Partnerships Australia and other programs.

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—the Australian Government’s principal arts funding 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 Ministry for the Arts—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 Ministry for the Arts programs. The Ministry for the Arts 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.
Application and Assessment Process

How do I submit an application?
You must submit your application online at arts.gov.au.

Who can I go to if I am an artist with disability and need more assistance with my application?
Ministry for the Arts 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 [www.artsaccessaustralia.org](http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org) or one of the arts and disability peak bodies.

Who can I go to if I need assistance with my online application?
If you require information about Catalyst contact the Ministry for the Arts at email catalyst@arts.gov.au

If you are having technical issues with Smartygrants, please contact:


service@smartygrants.com.au

Phone: Australia +61 3 9320 6888

The Smartygrants support desk operates 9:00am - 5:00pm AEST, Mon - Fri.

Who will assess my application?
Applications will be assessed by at least three assessors including a combination of Independent and Ministry for the Arts assessors.

Assessment of applications under the International and Cultural Diplomacy stream may involve officer from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Council.

Will every application be considered by an Independent Assessor?
Yes.

Who are the Independent Assessors?
The Ministry for the Arts will maintain a Register of Independent Assessors comprising industry and community representatives formed through Expressions of Interest from the public. Senior Ministry staff will select assessors from the Register to align with the nature of applications received.

Do I get to know which Independent Assessor(s) assessed my application?
No. Independent Assessors’ private contact details are kept confidential and held securely by the Ministry for the Arts.
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 ten weeks of the recommendation date. Applicants will be advised of the assessment outcome in writing and unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback.

What are the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) and how are they relevant?
The CGRGs are the overarching Government grants policy framework for better practice grants administration. The CGRGs set out a range of rules and requirements that apply to Ministers and government officials 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 the legislation, meaning that they 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 Government grants legislation, all Commonwealth entities must publish information on individual grants on their website no later than fourteen working days after the grant agreement takes effect (CGRG 5.3). The Department’s annual grants registers are available at https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/department/funding-reporting. Further information can be found at http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/

Eligibility
Can individuals apply?
Catalyst does not fund individuals directly. Unincorporated groups (three or more individuals who do not form a legally constituted organisation) with primarily an arts or cultural heritage purpose are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the general eligibility criteria. Organisations can apply for funding that supports individual artists such as through a fellowship program.

What types of organisations or entities are eligible?
To be eligible, organisations must be registered under law or created by law. Examples include companies, incorporated associations, statutory authorities and local government bodies.

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.

Individual business units and entities of local government authorities with an arts or cultural heritage purpose (such as art galleries or performing arts centres) are eligible to submit an application.
What types of art forms are covered?
Catalyst covers all art forms except film and television productions and interactive games. While Catalyst can support screen-based and multi-media art, it does not generally support activities associated with feature film or television production. Funding for these activities can be sought from Screen Australia, the Government’s primary agency for Australian screen activity.

Do you fund organisational administration costs?
Yes, but only administration costs associated with undertaking funded projects. Catalyst does not provide operational funding for organisations. It is important to demonstrate how funding your administration costs will contribute to successfully delivering your project. Projects that include a high percentage of administration costs are likely to represent less value for money to assessors.

Will my previous record with the Ministry for the Arts or other Australian Government agencies be taken into account during the assessment of my application?
Yes, your organisation’s history as a funding recipient may be considered, particularly your compliance with reporting and acquittal requirements. For instance, if you have outstanding reports, you may be ineligible to apply for further funding. If you have a reasonable reason for a delay in reporting you may explain this in your application.

Are collecting institutions eligible?
Yes.

How do I know if my organisation’s principal purpose is arts and / or cultural heritage?
An organisation's principal purpose is usually defined in its Constitution or Articles of Association. It will also be reflected in the organisation’s annual report and business plans. We may ask you to provide these documents to demonstrate eligibility against this criterion.

Do you fund tours?
Yes. Tours may include intrastate, interstate and international tours and any combination of these.

Do you fund infrastructure?
Yes. Applicants should have regard to the limited funds available through Catalyst. Examples of eligible costs include fit-out costs, equipment upgrades, and new building assets. Ordinarily, individual projects will not receive more than $500,000 in one year.
Are there any other items not listed in the guidelines that Catalyst 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 – economy domestic and international airfares only and accommodation costs
- Living away from home allowances
- Marketing and advertising
- Freight
- Photographic and documenting equipment
- Conferences and visits by international arts sector experts where sufficient need is demonstrated in regard to the success of the project. You must comply with all relevant government and industry regulations.

I currently receive funding from the Australia Council and/or Creative Partnerships Australia. Can I apply for funding under Catalyst?
Yes, as long as the funding you receive from the Australia Council and/or Creative Partnerships Australia is not for the same component of the project as the one for which you seek funding through Catalyst.

I currently receive funding from the Ministry for the Arts. Can I receive funding through Catalyst?
Yes, as long as the funding you receive from the Ministry is not for the same component of the project as the one for which you seek funding through Catalyst.

Is it possible to have a faster turn around?
Yes. In certain circumstances you can seek a fast tracked assessment. The reason could be an unforeseen or unexpected opportunity that requires a priority response.

Does the fast tracked assessment option apply to all three streams?
Yes.

Assessment Criteria
How are the assessment criteria weighted?
Each of the four assessment criteria is weighted equally.

What does “scale of the project” mean?
Scale of the project refers to the size and extent of the project, including how many participants are involved and the range of locations involved. Assessors will consider the scale and scope of the project in the context of your organisation’s experience and capacity.
How do I describe what the “benefits” of my project are?
Benefits are the positive outcomes for the arts and cultural sector, participants and audiences, and community as a consequence of the project.

Does my project have to start by a specific date? For example, can I apply for a project a year or more ahead?
The Ministry welcomes forward planning and applications can be made up to 24 months ahead of project commencement.

Do I need to have confirmed partners in order to apply?
No. If your application under the Partnerships and Collaborations stream is successful, the Funding Agreement will require you to obtain confirmation of financial, cash or in-kind support from sources other than the Australian Government within six months.

What do you mean by financial partners, project partners and 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.
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.

*Partnerships and Collaborations Stream*

Do I need to have secured or budgeted for cash and in-kind support above a minimum percentage of the figure being sought through Catalyst, or of the total project budget?
While Catalyst does not require a minimum percentage of cash and/or in-kind support from partners, applications that demonstrate a strong strategy and capability for leveraging cash or in-kind support will generally be more competitive in this stream.

Will 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 with an arts or cultural heritage purpose. Will contributions from that local/state government meet the requirement to leverage funds from other sources?
Yes.
I have applied for funding from a state/territory/local government and/or a philanthropic foundation but have not yet heard back on whether my application was successful. Can the funding I have applied for count as a contribution for the purposes of my Catalyst application to the Partnerships and Collaborations stream?

Yes. The application will ask you to indicate the level of confirmation for that support.

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

You will need to advise the Ministry immediately and we will reconsider your Funding Agreement with you.

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

Yes. Support can be financial, cash and / or in-kind support from sources other than the Australian Government.

**International and Cultural Diplomacy Stream**

What guidance can you give us regarding priority countries or regions?

The Ministry for the Arts works closely with the Australia Council and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ensure that support for international arts and cultural activities is consistent and integrated across government.

Applications are welcome for outbound international activities in any country and region of the world, and inbound collaborative activities and exchanges with international partners. Strong applications will include an indication of the level of support the project or activity has within the target country, including from the target community or audience.

Australia’s arts and cultural interests extend across the globe. For example, Australia has recently signed memorandums of understanding on arts and culture with India and Singapore, renewed its commitment to the memorandum of understanding with China and has released the report of Australia-Germany Advisory Group which proposes enhanced cultural links between Australia and Germany.

Applications may take a multi-year approach (up to four years), recognising that establishing and nurturing specific activities and relationships with international partners can take time.
Funding

If my application is successful, will I get the full amount of funding I’ve asked for? Wherever possible, Catalyst will seek to fully fund the project as requested. However, there may be circumstances such as if the project is clearly scalable where partial funding may be offered. Ordinarily, individual projects will not receive more than $500,000 in one year.

Can I apply for multi-year funding if I have never applied to the Ministry for the Arts before?
Yes. Provided you meet the eligibility requirements, you can submit an application. You will need to provide evidence of your experience in managing similar projects. You will also need to provide a strong business case for multiyear funding and provide additional budget information.

How often may I apply?
Applicants may apply for funding for multiple different projects. There is no limit to the number of applications you can make.

Can I receive funding for a project that has already commenced?
You cannot receive funding for any part of a project for which costs have already been incurred.

Managing the Project

I have been offered funding – what happens now?
Successful applicants will be required to enter into a standard Commonwealth Funding Agreement before commencement of the project.

Do I need to set up a stand-alone bank account or other investment fund to manage these funds?
Normally you will be required to establish a separate bank account only if you are awarded funding of $100,000 or more.

Do all funds received through Catalyst and from contributions need to be expended within the term of grant agreements, or can I budget to use these funds (and/or the returns from investment of these funds) beyond the end of the grant agreement?
You must expend Catalyst funding in accordance with the Funding Agreement and within the funding term. In the event of an unavoidable delay, you should contact the Ministry to seek a variation to the Funding Agreement.
Privacy

How will my personal information be handled?
Personal information collected by the Ministry for the Arts 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 and providing this information to Members of Parliament as required. The Ministry may refer applications, or any part of them, to Commonwealth or state/territory government departments or agencies for assessment, reporting, advice or comment. The Ministry only uses personal information for the purposes for which it was given to the Ministry and for directly related purposes (unless otherwise required by, or authorised under, law).

Complaints Mechanism

What can I do if I am unhappy about how my application has been handled?
Complaints in the first instance should be discussed with Ministry for the Arts staff. If you believe a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, you may wish to register your complaint with the Department of Communications and the Arts via the online contact form available at https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/contact-us