



**Australian Government**

**Department of Industry, Science and Resources**

**Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water**

## Grant Opportunity Guidelines

# Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program

<b>Opening date:</b>	7 April 2025
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	5.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on 17 June 2025 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
<b>Administering entity:</b>	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46 or <a href="mailto:CulturalFlows@industry.gov.au">CulturalFlows@industry.gov.au</a>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	10 February 2025
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Targeted non-competitive

# Contents

<b>1. Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program processes</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1. Introduction	5
<b>2. About the grant program</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Grant amount and grant period</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1. Grants available	6
3.2. Project period	6
<b>4. Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	6
4.2. Additional eligibility requirements	7
4.3. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?	7
<b>5. What the grant money can be used for</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1. Eligible grant activities	7
5.2. Eligible locations	8
5.3. Eligible expenditure	8
5.4. What the grant money cannot be used for	9
<b>6. The assessment criteria</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1. Assessment criterion 1	10
6.2. Assessment criterion 2	10
<b>7. How to apply</b>	<b>10</b>
7.1. Attachments to the application	11
7.2. Joint (consortia) applications	11
7.3. Timing of grant opportunity processes	12
7.4. Questions during the application process	12
<b>8. The grant selection process</b>	<b>12</b>
8.1. Assessment of grant applications	12
8.1.1. Assessment phase one – Eligibility assessment	12
8.1.2. Assessment phase two – Criteria assessment	13
8.1.3. Assessment phase three – Grants approval	13
<b>9. Notification of application outcomes</b>	<b>13</b>
9.1. Feedback on your application	14
<b>10. Successful grant applications</b>	<b>14</b>
10.1. The grant agreement	14
10.2. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards	14
10.2.1. Child safety requirements	14
10.3. How we pay the grant	15
10.4. Grant Payments and GST	15
<b>11. Announcement of grants</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>12. How we monitor your grant activity</b>	<b>16</b>

12.1.	Keeping us informed .....	16
12.2.	Reporting .....	16
	12.2.1. Progress reports.....	16
	12.2.2. Ad-hoc reports.....	17
	12.2.3. End of project report .....	17
12.3.	Audited financial acquittal report.....	17
12.4.	Grant agreement variations .....	17
12.5.	Compliance visits .....	17
12.6.	Record keeping.....	18
12.7.	Evaluation .....	18
12.8.	Acknowledgement.....	18
<b>13.</b>	<b>Probity.....</b>	<b>18</b>
13.1.	Enquiries and feedback .....	18
13.2.	Conflicts of interest .....	19
13.3.	Privacy .....	19
13.4.	Confidential information .....	20
13.5.	Freedom of information.....	21
<b>14.</b>	<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>22</b>

# 1. Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program processes

**The Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's (DCCEEW) Outcome 4. DCCEEW works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#).



**The grant opportunity opens**

We publish the grant guidelines on [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) and [GrantConnect](#).



**You complete and submit a grant application**

You complete the application form, addressing all the eligibility and assessment criteria in order for your application to be considered.



**We assess all grant applications**

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. The Committee assesses eligible applications against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money.



**We make grant recommendations**

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



**Grant decisions are made**

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.



**We notify you of the outcome**

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



**We enter into a grant agreement**

We will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



**Delivery of grant**

You complete the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



**Evaluation of the Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program**

DCCEEW will evaluate the specific grant activity and Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program as a whole. DCCEEW base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

## 1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program (the program).

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (we/the department/DISR) in partnership with DCCEEW.

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 14.

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an application.

## 2. About the grant program

The waters of the Murray-Darling Basin (the Basin) are a vital part of the connection to culture and country for over 50 First Nations communities. The impacts of colonisation have deeply affected access to water for these communities, First Nations people currently own less than 0.2 percent of surface water entitlements.

The program aims to help Basin First Nations get ready to own and manage water entitlements for the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social, and economic benefit of their Nation.

The program will provide funding directly to Basin First Nations to conduct cultural flows planning, develop sustainable business models and governance structures required to securely hold water. Funding will be provided over 3 financial years from 2025-26 to 2027-28.

The objectives of the program are to:

- support Basin First Nations to develop detailed cultural flows plans, quantifying the water needs and aspirations of Basin First Nations
- facilitate the development of water-reliant cultural economies in the Basin
- empower self-determination by Basin First Nations, to make decisions regarding water ownership and management.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- enhanced readiness and empowerment of Basin First Nations to own and manage water in a manner that fulfills their cultural flow and cultural economies requirements
- improved skills and governance capability among Basin First Nations, facilitating sustainable water ownership and management.

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

## 3. Grant amount and grant period

### 3.1. Grants available

For this grant opportunity, there is up to \$20 million available over 3 financial years from 2025-26 to 2027-28.

The maximum grant amount is \$300,000.

Grant amounts sought should reflect the scope of activity required to:

- revise/refresh existing cultural flow plans
- complete existing cultural flow plans
- start new cultural flow plans.

The grant amount will be up to 100 per cent of eligible expenditure.

You are responsible for any remaining eligible and ineligible project costs.

You can only submit one application for this grant opportunity.

### 3.2. Project period

You must complete your project within 2 years, and by 28 March 2028.

## 4. Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

### 4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN), unless you are not entitled to an ABN

and be one of the following:

- an entity, incorporated in Australia (this includes Indigenous land management organisations registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations)
- a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land council
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the [Corporations \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander\) Act 2006](#) (Cth)
- an incorporated not for profit association or cooperative
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
- a partnership

You must also be:

- a First Nations group or organisation recognised as a Basin Traditional Owner(s) or able to demonstrate a traditional connection to the relevant area for which you are applying

If you are a First Nations group without an ABN, you must have an arrangement with an organisation that is able and agrees to auspice funds on your behalf. The organisation must be a legal entity that is eligible to apply and must be the lead organisation on your application. Evidence of the arrangement is required.

Joint applications from Basin First Nations groups are acceptable, provided a lead organisation who is eligible to apply and can provide evidence of a formal arrangement with other parties to the application. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2.

## 4.2. Additional eligibility requirements

We can only accept applications:

- where you agree that you will deliver your project in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and industry standards (listed at section 10.6)
- where you provide the relevant mandatory attachments
- where Traditional Owner status can be verified using one of the methods below:
  - Native title determination ([Search National Native Title Register](#))
  - Registered Aboriginal Party ([Victoria's Registered Aboriginal Parties | aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au](#))
  - Land rights agreements
  - ORIC ([Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations](#))
  - *Office of the Registrar Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*
  - Relevant Local Aboriginal Land Councils
  - New South Wales Aboriginal Land Councils
  - Relevant Elders councils
  - Declaration of Connection to Country.

Mandatory documents that must be attached to your application are listed at section 7.1.

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

## 4.3. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an individual
- any organisation not included in section 4.1
- an unincorporated association
- a trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government body (including government business enterprises)
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#) on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an employer of 100 or more employees that has [not complied](#) with the Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012).

# 5. What the grant money can be used for

## 5.1. Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your project must deliver on the outcomes and objectives of the grant opportunity.

Eligible activities must directly relate to the project and must include at least one of the following:

- developing cultural flows plans that identify, clarify and quantify the water needs of Basin First Nations. Activities supporting the development, revision and/ or finalisation of a cultural flows plan could include:

- setting up and running a working group
- technical report writing
- monitoring and evaluation activities
- developing conceptual models that illustrate water dependant cultural values
- developing a cultural and ecological character description
- research and/or field works (surveys, monitoring, mapping, water models or gathering other forms of research data)
- data analysis
- completing business planning and/or enhancing governance structures and/or establishing as an entity that can secure ownership of water entitlements. This can include the purchase of a water access licence that is identified under or required for a cultural flows plan (note that this is not a water entitlement).
- activities to improve skills and governance capability among Basin First Nations, to manage water resources effectively.

We may also approve other activities. Any additional activities must be in line with the objectives and outcomes in section 2.

It is important to note that funding is not guaranteed and will be subject to the outcomes of the assessment process.

## 5.2. Eligible locations

Your project must be delivered in the Basin.

Your project must clearly identify the locality within the Basin to which it relates.

## 5.3. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement.

Eligible expenditure items must be directly related to the project and include costs associated with the development, revision and/or finalisation of cultural flows plans, that identify, clarify and quantify water needs. These costs can be associated with an extension to works undertaken under previous Cultural flows planning. This could include items such as:

- salaries for staff working on the project, and on-costs (up to 30 per cent). For existing staff, this should be on a pro-rata basis relative to time spent on project activities
- contractor or consultant costs
- expert advice (including legal and financial advice)
- technology equipment purchase/hire
- purchase of software required to conduct activities relates to the completion of the project
- costs incurred to set up as a legal entity to be able to own water
- training and development activities that directly support the achievement of project outcomes
- reasonable domestic travel including meals, accommodation and transportation
- catering (excluding alcohol) required to conduct project activities such as meetings, workshops and gatherings. These must be commensurate with the size and location of the project



- project contingency costs up to a maximum of 10 percent of the eligible project costs (note that payments are based on actual costs incurred)
- administrative costs related to the project at no more than 15 percent of the grant funding requested.
- purchase of a water access licence as applicable to the Basin First Nations Country (this is not a water entitlement).

We may update the guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your project.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate (who is a manager within the department with responsibility for administering the program) makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you for required project audit activities.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

#### 5.4. What the grant money cannot be used for

Expenditure items that are not eligible are:

- purchase of water licence or allocation, water infrastructure or land
- administrative costs and overheads related to the ongoing operations of an organisation or an individual's commercial operation
- non-project related staff training and development costs
- costs incurred outside the agreed project period
- recurring or ongoing operational expenditure not directly related to your project
- international travel expenses.

We cannot fund your project if it receives funding from another Commonwealth government grant. You can apply for a grant for your project under more than one Commonwealth program, but if your application is successful, you must choose either the Cultural Flows Planning for Cultural Economies Program grant or the other Commonwealth grant.

## 6. The assessment criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application. The Committee will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. You should provide evidence to support your answers. The application form displays character limits for each response.

We will only award funding to applications that score at least 50 per cent against each assessment criterion and subject to the availability of grant funds.

### 6.1. Assessment criterion 1

#### **Alignment with the objectives and intended outcomes of the Program (50% weighting).**

You must demonstrate this by describing:

- a. how your project will conduct cultural flows planning and develop sustainable business models required to securely hold water
- b. how your project intends to enhance skills and governance capabilities among Basin First Nations to manage water resources effectively
- c. how your project is led by or partners with the relevant Traditional Owners.

### 6.2. Assessment criterion 2

#### **Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (50% weighting).**

You must demonstrate this by:

- a. detailing the resources and capacity you have to conduct the project activities. This could include:
  - describing how you will manage the project, including governance, budget and risk management
  - outlining any relevant experience that describes how you would manage the project
  - describing your preparedness to commence your project once funding is awarded.
- b. identifying your strategy to maintain the project outcomes beyond the term of grant funding.

You must attach a project plan to your application to support the assessment criteria. Refer to section 7.1 for project plan requirements.

## 7. How to apply

Before applying you should read and understand these guidelines, the sample [application form](#) and the sample [grant agreement](#) published on business.gov.au and GrantConnect.

Applicants should read all eligibility and assessment criteria closely and attach detailed evidence that supports the assessment criteria.

You will need to set up an account to access our online [portal](#).

To apply, you must:

- complete and submit the application through the online [portal](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments.

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#). If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting your application, we can contact you for clarification if we find an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports your eligibility/merit. The acceptance of any additional information provided after the submission of your application is at the discretion of the program delegate. Additional information should not materially change your application at the time it was submitted and therefore may be refused if deemed to be purely supplementary.

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records.

If you need further guidance around the application process, or if you have any issues with the portal, [contact us](#) at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) or by calling 13 28 46.

## 7.1. Attachments to the application

You must provide the following documents with your application:

- evidence of Traditional Owner status
- a project plan to support your claims against assessment criterion 2, including:
  - a summary of your project including key objectives and outcomes
  - a background of your organisation and your key management staff
  - scope of the project and overview of project activities, including milestones
  - project timeline
  - a breakdown of roles and responsibilities
  - a communication plan outlining how you will disseminate information about the project.
- a detailed project budget
- a risk management plan identifying risks, impacts and planned mitigation strategies
- for joint applications, a letter of support from each of the project partners (refer to section 7.2)
- trust deed (where applicable)
- if you are applying as an incorporated association or not for profit organisation and you do not have an active state or territory incorporated association registration or ACNC registration at the time of application, Constitutional documents and/or Articles of Association that demonstrate the character of the organisation
- if you are applying as a partnership, a copy of your partnership agreement.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. Individual file sizes cannot be greater than 2MB, while the total of all attachments cannot exceed 20MB. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

## 7.2. Joint (consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join, and together as a group, to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support should include:

- details of the project partner
- an overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group

- the roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement.

### 7.3. Timing of grant opportunity processes

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence your project around October 2025.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	8 weeks
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	6 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	Notification of successful application
Project completion date	Within 2 years of agreed project start date, and by 28 March 2028
End date of grant commitment	September 2028

### 7.4. Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

## 8. The grant selection process

### 8.1. Assessment of grant applications

The assessment process will consist of three phases.

#### 8.1.1. Assessment phase one – Eligibility assessment

DISR will first review your application against the eligibility criteria.

If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criteria. Only eligible applications will proceed to the second assessment stage.

We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- whether it provides value with relevant money.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to the:

- overall objective/s of the grant opportunity
- evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives
- relative value of the grant sought.

We also consider:

- any national interest, financial, legal/regulatory, governance or other issue or risk that we identify during any due diligence process that we conduct in respect of the applicant. This includes its directors, officers, senior managers, key personnel, its related bodies corporate (as defined in the Corporations Act) or its application that could bring the Australian Government into disrepute if it were to fund the applicant. Such issues and risks include where we consider that funding the application under this grant opportunity is likely to directly conflict with Australian Government policy. Where possible<sup>3</sup>, we will provide you with an opportunity to comment on any material risks identified during this due diligence process prior to our determining the extent (if any) to which those issues or risks affect our assessment of the application and, if so, whether they are sufficient to warrant the exclusion of your application from the assessment process.

### 8.1.2. Assessment phase two – Criteria assessment

DISR refer your application to a committee of experts. The committee will be made up of staff members of DCCEEW and an independent committee member. The committee may also seek additional advice from independent technical experts or advisors to inform the assessment process.

The committee will assess your application against the assessment criteria before recommending to the decision maker which projects to fund. The committee, and any expert or advisor, will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

### 8.1.3. Assessment phase three – Grants approval

The decision maker decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the committee and the availability of grant funds.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the grant approval
- the grant funding to be awarded
- any conditions attached to the offer of grant funding.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The decision maker will not approve funding if there are insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

## 9. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

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<sup>3</sup> Subject to national security and other considerations.

## 9.1. Feedback on your application

If you are unsuccessful, we will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

# 10. Successful grant applications

## 10.1. The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample [grant agreement](#) is available on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) and GrantConnect.

We will manage the grant agreement through the online portal. This includes issuing and executing the grant agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have accepted the agreement. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur in relation to the project prior to the execution of a grant agreement and cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

If you enter an agreement under the program, you cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth, state or territory granting programs.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

We will use a standard grant agreement.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. We will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Program Delegate.

## 10.2. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government sanctions in undertaking your project. You must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that you meet these requirements. We will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

### 10.2.1. Child safety requirements

You must comply with all relevant legislation relating to the employment or engagement of anyone working on the project that may interact with children, including all necessary working with children checks.

You must implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)<sup>4</sup> endorsed by the Commonwealth.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

You will need to complete a risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children and the level of risk of harm or abuse and put appropriate strategies in place to manage those risks. You must update this risk assessment at least annually.

You will also need to establish a training and compliance regime to ensure personnel are aware of, and comply with, the risk assessment requirements, relevant legislation including mandatory reporting requirements and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

You will be required to provide an annual statement of compliance with these requirements in relation to working with children.

### 10.3. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contribution provided by you or a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project.

### 10.4. Grant Payments and GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities<sup>5</sup>.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on tax.

## 11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of execution.

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#). Section 5.4. We may also publish this information on business.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location

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<sup>5</sup> See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at ato.gov.au

- your organisation's industry sector.

## 12. How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details
- joint/consortia partners and related arrangements (if applicable).

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You may notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

### 12.2. Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

#### 12.2.1. Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project activities
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant project activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any project or milestone reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.



### 12.2.2. Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

### 12.2.3. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report.

End of project reports must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money
- be submitted by the report due date.

## 12.3. Audited financial acquittal report

We may ask you to provide an independent audit report. An audit report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The audit report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure. The report template is available on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) and GrantConnect.

## 12.4. Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement, including:

- changing project milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the project but not beyond 28 March 2028
- changing project activities.

The program does not allow for an increase of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the project grant agreement end date. You can submit a variation request via our online portal.

If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of the department
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

## 12.5. Compliance visits

We may visit you during the project period, or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. For large or complex projects, we may visit you after you finish your project. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

## 12.6. Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

## 12.7. Evaluation

DCCEEW will evaluate the grant opportunity to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. DCCEEW may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. DCCEEW may also interview you or ask you for more information to help them understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

DCCEEW may contact you up to two years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

## 12.8. Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

If you erect signage in relation to the project, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the grant.

## 13. Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by DISR. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

### 13.1. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

General Manager  
External and Design Branch  
Business Grants Hub  
Department of Industry, Science and Resources  
GPO Box 2013  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

### 13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

As part of your application, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform us in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our [conflict of interest policy](#)<sup>6</sup> on the department's website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

### 13.3. Privacy

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per below, or
- personal information as per below.

We may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy>

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, the committee, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our [Privacy Policy](#)<sup>7</sup> on the department's website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

### 13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

We may disclose confidential information:

- to the committee and our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

### 13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

## 14. Glossary

Term	Definition
administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
application form	The document issued by the Program Delegate that applicants use to apply for funding under the program.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals
auspice funds	An arrangement where a legal entity that is eligible to apply agrees to take financial responsibility of the grant on your group's behalf.
<a href="#"><u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)</u></a>	Establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
Cultural economies	Economic activity that is underpinned by culture and particularly in the context of this program, access to water.
Cultural flows	Water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by the Indigenous Nations of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations (Echuca Declaration, 2007).
Cultural flows planning	The process of identifying, clarifying and quantifying the water needs of First Nations peoples. These plans can be used to advocate for and deliver outcomes that First Nations peoples want, which may include securing water ownership and embedding their Nations' water needs in broader water planning and management regimes.
date of effect	Can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date.
Department	The Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

Term	Definition
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant. For this grant opportunity the decision maker is the Senior Executive Service Band 2 (SESB2) of the Water Policy Division, Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water.
Committee	The body established by DCCEEW to consider and assess eligible applications and make recommendations to the decision maker for funding under the program.
eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in 5.1.
eligible application	An application or proposal for grant funding under the program that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
eligibility criteria	Refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.3.
First Nations	May be an individual, Partnership or Trust that identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, an organisation that is more than 50 percent First Nations owned, a Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC), a Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) or an Elders Group who are recognised as traditionally associated with the Nation concerned and having the authority to speak for the Nation.
formal arrangement	This is an arrangement between you and your project partners. It may be in the form of an exchange of letters or emails, or more formal such as a Memorandum of Understanding. Each arrangement should outline the resources contributed by the project partner, the length of the arrangement and any other detail you think is relevant to the project.

Term	Definition
grant	<p>For the purposes of the CGRPs, a ‘grant’ is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>8</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>9</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government’s policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ol>
grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	A legally binding contract that sets out the relationship between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A ‘program’ carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single DCCEEW Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a>	The Australian Government’s whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	The individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to the department to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.

<sup>8</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>9</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.



Term	Definition
personal information	<p>Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is:</p> <p>Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and</li> <li>b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.</li> </ol>
Program Delegate	A Manager within the Business Grants Hub in DISR with responsibility for administering the program.
program funding or program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.
project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
Traditional Owners	<p>A local descent group of Aboriginals who: (a) have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land; and (b) are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land.</p> <p>(Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth))</p>
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the quality of the project proposal and activities;</li> <li>▪ fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;</li> <li>▪ that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and</li> <li>▪ the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>