

Stronger Together

Local Council Major Festival Grant 2026-27 Guidelines





Contents

About the funding	2-4
Program aims	2
Available funding	2
Eligibility criteria	2
What applications must address	3
What will not be funded	3
Funding recognition	3
Accessibility	3
Project budget and use of funding	4
Assessment process	4
Release of funds	4
Reporting expectations	4
How to apply	5



About the funding

Program aims

The Multicultural NSW Stronger Together Grants Program aims to support multicultural festivals, events and projects across NSW. We invest in activities that foster community harmony and celebrate cultural diversity as a precious part of our identity and way of life.

The Stronger Together Local Councils Major Festival grant funding is available for major festivals run by local councils across NSW.

Available funding

Major Festival grant funding is available for one year. The funding will provide up to \$250,000 for one major festival per council that showcases our state's diversity. Multiple festivals or events per councils will not be supported.

In exceptional circumstances Multicultural NSW may consider applications from councils requesting increased funding, up to a maximum of \$500,000, giving consideration to factors such as reach, the duration of the festival, and value for money considerations.

Funding is available for Major Festivals delivered between 1 February 2027 to 29 February 2028.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a Stronger Together Local Council Major Festival Grant applicants must:

- be located within NSW
- have audience attendance of more than 10,000 people in a regional area or 30,000 in metropolitan areas
- demonstrate how they will measure outcomes of the Festival
- have acquitted all prior grants from Multicultural NSW
- where appropriate, partner with local multicultural organisations
- demonstrate that the Festival is cost effective and viable, with an accurate budget
- have all appropriate insurances, licences and permits
- submit an application online through the Multicultural NSW approved SmartyGrants portal before the closing date, with all aspects of the application form completed
- deliver the Festival between 1 February 2027 to 29 February 2028
- promote the NSW Government as per terms outlined in the grant agreement
- clearly show co-contributions towards the festival. Applicants must value-match the funding amount sought from Multicultural NSW. This includes a minimum of 25% cash contribution and details of other income sources such as sponsorships or other grant funding amounting to a minimum 75% of the grant
- commit to spending a minimum of 10% of the advertising budget for the Festival across multicultural media outlets to ensure the event is accessible by multicultural communities.

Applications must address how the Major Festival will:

- showcase and represent the diversity of the local community
- show evidence that the Festival will reach and engage with new audiences
- be inclusive and accessible
- be delivered in a compliant and safe way
- where appropriate, develop in-language festival communications and print materials.

The following criteria and considerations are applied in the assessment of the grant application:

- the application meets eligibility criteria and is not an excluded activity. Applications from ineligible organisations or excluded activities will not be considered.
- the application clearly and convincingly demonstrates how the Festival will support the grant criteria.
- eligible organisations can submit more than one application for different festivals or events. If successful, organisations will only receive one grant within the same funding round.
- the application form is complete and submitted on time. Applications that are not submitted online through the Multicultural NSW approved SmartyGrants portal before the closing date with all aspects of the application form completed (including all required supporting documentation, financial statements and insurances for example) will not be considered.
- the application demonstrates capacity to successfully deliver the Festival within the required time period and budget.
- the application clearly identifies resources that will be committed to ensure the Festival is a success. An event delivery plan and risk mitigation strategy must be included with the application.
- the application clearly demonstrates value for money and co-contribution, with a well-considered, proportionate, clearly itemised budget.
- the application is assessed in comparison to all other applications and in comparison, to similar applications in terms of locality, cultural focus, and type of activity or approach.
- any application that includes a festival with a ticket price should show evidence that the price is kept at a nominal charge for attendees.

What will not be funded

The following activities are excluded from receiving grant funding:

- party political activities
- an application that seeks support for supplementing, increasing or continuing ongoing service delivery or for funding the core business of the organisation's commercial or fundraising activities
- capital expenses, including but not limited to building works (including maintenance) and equipment purchases.

Grant funding will not be awarded to any local council that:

- does not demonstrate a commitment to multicultural principles
- has redress sanctions as described in the National Redress Scheme
- is subject to a winding up order or has an appointed administrator
- is bankrupt
- has no sound financial management and governance.

Funding recognition

Recognition of grant funding support must be displayed at the Festival.

Accessibility

The application must demonstrate consideration for accessibility. Festival attendees' needs will be unique. If an accessibility item is not required for your Festival, reasoning should be included in your application response.

Consideration for the following items should be demonstrated in the Festival planning and budget:

- accessible communications—how are materials accessible in language where appropriate, are materials accessible for vision and/or hearing-impaired persons?
- Interpreters—have interpreters been considered, including AUSLAN interpreters, for this event?
- accessible festival sites and facilities—has the applicant considered the following where appropriate for the Festival site:
 - access ramps and correct width cable trays for wheelchairs and prams
 - adult change and disabled bathroom facilities.

Project budget and use of funding

A detailed budget is required to be submitted with the grant application.

Catering

No more than 20% of the budget can be used for catering.

Administration

No more than 25% of the budget can be used for council administrative costs related to the grant funded project delivery. Administration costs do not include event delivery staffing such as security, casual event crew or supplier costs.

Insurances

No portion of the grant funding can be used towards insurance costs, including, but not limited to, Public Liability Insurance, Workers Compensation Insurance and Volunteers Insurance.

Capital expenditure or purchases

No portion of the grant funding can be used towards capital expenditure or purchase costs, including, but not limited to, building costs or maintenance and equipment purchase.

Cash prizes or gifts

No portion of the grant funding can be used towards cash prizes or gifts, including gift vouchers.

Independent audit fees

No portion of the grant funding can be used towards financial independent audit fees.

Multicultural media advertising

A minimum of 10% of the advertising budget for the Festival must be used to advertise across multicultural media outlets.

Assessment process

Grants are awarded on merit following a competitive assessment process.

All applications for grants are initially reviewed by Multicultural NSW Grants Officers to ensure mandatory compliance with eligibility criteria and required documentation. Compliant applications are then considered by an Assessment Panel convened by Multicultural NSW.

All applications must submit a clear and complete project budget outlining project expenditure. The Project Budget and Use of Funding items should be considered and outlined in your budget. The Assessment Panel will make recommendations for grant funding to the Delegated Approver who will approve successful applications.

Both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants will be notified in writing.

Release of funds

Funding will not be released until all requested documentation has been provided to Multicultural NSW.

Funding agreements

Successful applications must be delivered on time and on budget. No extensions to the completion deadline will be provided. Terms and Conditions will apply to the grant funding agreement.

Applicants will be required to:

- review the Terms and Conditions and declare in their application that they have read and understood them
- acknowledge that an agreement based on the Terms and Conditions will apply to the grant
- if awarded a grant, agree to comply with the Terms and Conditions in acquitting the grant.

Reporting expectations

The NSW Government requires consistent and accurate reporting of funding expenditure to ensure accountability. The provision of progress and completion reports are a condition of funding.

Successful applicants will need to provide data against a range of program measures. At the end of the grant project completion date, successful applicants will be required to provide a letter of acquittal, signed by the CEO and Chair (or equivalent suitable position holders), stating that funds have been expended for the purposes intended, detailing expenditure and any surplus funds.

Acquittal for this grant requires an independent audit of the grant financial statements and information. Grant funding cannot be used for the independent audit.

The applying organisation should consider this cost in their budgeting and other funding sources required to complete the mandatory reporting.

A completion report will also be required providing data against a range of program measures. Evidence of attendance must be provided as part of the acquittal report.

All reporting must reference the original application ID number. Acquittal reporting will be due within two (2) months of your project completion date.

How to apply

Applications open
Monday 7 September 2026

Applications close
Friday 2 October 2026 at 4.00pm

The closing date and time is a strict deadline. No extensions to the deadline will be permitted.

Multicultural NSW uses the online program SmartyGrants for all grant submissions, accessible through the Grants page on the Multicultural NSW website at <https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/stronger-together-major-festival-local-council-grants/>

Through the Multicultural NSW portal, applicants are required to log in via SmartyGrants to access the online application form.

If the applicant organisation has previously used SmartyGrants to apply for a grant, they will already be registered and can use existing usernames and log in details, and do not need to set up a new registration/account.

All required attachments **MUST** be uploaded through the online application form in SmartyGrants. Do not upload documents that have not been requested.

The online application form includes an application checklist to ensure all the required information is provided. All required fields marked with an * (asterisk) must be completed.

Multicultural NSW will not accept applications unless they are submitted online through the SmartyGrants portal. Incomplete and/or non-compliant applications will not be eligible. Any queries about the process during or after the application period must be submitted in writing to grantsinfo@multicultural.nsw.gov.au

Available funding pool

Multicultural NSW always receives more funding requests than the amount of funding available. Successful applications will be of a high standard based on the criteria and considerations outlined above.

The limited funding pool and competitive assessment process mean that even strong, well-prepared applications cannot always be supported.

Multicultural NSW only provides general feedback to unsuccessful applicants.





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