



ACT
Government

City of Design Project Fund Guidelines

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development Directorate

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Acknowledgement

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

About the Fund

The ACT Government is committed to strengthening its future bid for Canberra to become a UNESCO City of Design and to grow the reputation of Canberra, as a designed city, rich with talented artists and designers.

Becoming a City of Design will boost Canberra's creative economy through knowledge-sharing, supporting local talent and businesses and encouraging innovation across sectors. It will celebrate Canberra's unique design identity—including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design—while fostering community pride, participation, and cultural exchange with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of 350 cities.

In 2025-26 and 2026-27, a total of \$600,000 is available for projects by artists, designers, arts and cultural organisations and creative businesses:

- that demonstrate excellence in design and support Canberra's ambition to be a global city of design, and
- to enable participation in the 2026 Craft + Design Canberra Festival (the Festival).

Fund Aims

The aims of the Fund are to:

- position Canberra as a globally recognised hub for design excellence and innovation, showcasing its leadership in creative and sustainable urban development
- foster a vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rich design culture that reflects Canberra's unique design heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and contemporary identity
- highlight and elevate the work of Canberra's leading designers and artists, promoting their contributions locally, nationally, and internationally
- support activities that celebrate the diversity of Canberra's communities, ensuring inclusive, accessible, and meaningful engagement with design across all audiences

- strengthen Canberra’s international design profile and readiness for UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership, through strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange, and legacy-building initiatives.

About the Festival

[Craft + Design Canberra](#), a not-for-profit organisation and one of the longest-running visual arts membership organisations in Australia presents the Festival biennially. The Festival celebrates Canberra as both a creative capital and a global city of design, connecting the community with makers, designers and innovators through a dynamic program of exhibitions, talks, tours, symposiums, workshops, open studios, design markets, and events.

The 2026 theme of ‘Dissent’ is intended to advocate for creativity as a powerful tool for questioning, challenging and reshaping societal norms. The Festival encourages alternative perspectives to foster critical dialogue and collaboration.

Activities participating in the Festival must reflect the 2026 theme of ‘Dissent’.

By applying, all successful applicants seeking inclusion in the Festival are agreeing to have information of their project provided to Craft + Design Canberra. Decisions for inclusion in the Festival are a matter for Craft + Design Canberra.

Funding Streams

The Fund has two funding streams:

- Major Projects - \$5,000 up to \$50,000
- Smaller Projects – up to \$5,000.

Major Projects

This funding stream will prioritise the development and implementation of new, high quality or ambitious activities that demonstrate excellence in design and can be presented as part of the Festival program from 5 to 15 November 2026 for activations and all of November 2026 for exhibitions.

Activities presented outside of the Festival are also eligible if the activity strongly demonstrates against the aims of the Fund.

Requests for funding through this stream is for \$5,000 up to \$50,000.

Funding may be provided to successful applicants in two payments (for example, a payment for development in April 2026 on execution of the Deed of Grant and payment for implementation in August 2026 following a milestone report).

Approximately \$500,000 will be available for the Major Projects stream.

Smaller Projects

This funding stream is for smaller projects that contribute to the Festival program or can strongly demonstrate a contribution to Canberra as a global city of design. Total amount of funding that can be requested through this stream is up to \$5,000.

Approximately \$100,000 will be available for the Smaller Projects stream.

Key Dates

Key Dates for 2025 and 2026	
Major Projects	
Applications Open	8 October 2025
Applications Close	3 December 2025
Outcomes Notified	1 April 2026
Smaller Projects	
Applications Open	8 October 2025
Applications Close	1 April 2027 (or available budget is exhausted)
Outcomes Notified	Within 6 weeks of the application submission date
Craft + Design Canberra Festival	
Festival participant statistical data due	4 December 2026

Eligibility

The Fund is open to artists, designers, innovators, arts and cultural organisations and creative business based in Canberra.

Groups or unincorporated organisations must nominate one person to take legal and financial responsibility for any funding or be auspiced by an incorporated organisation.

Arts organisations that are already receiving ACT Government Arts Organisation Investment funding are eligible to apply for a **new activity** that will be presented as part of the 2026 Craft + Design Canberra Festival.

Activities which are eligible under the Fund include:

- new works
- exhibitions
- development, making or installation of temporary public artworks, including murals or street art
- workshops
- symposiums, forums and talks
- tours
- publication launches
- performances
- pop-up spaces and urban interventions
- community engagement activities
- cultural events
- collaborations.

Costs that are eligible under the Fund include:

- artists fees
- materials
- venue hire
- equipment hire
- Administrative costs
- costs associated with inclusivity and accessibility
- costs associated with permits and approvals, if required
- costs associated with insurances related to the activity
- costs associated with marketing and promotion that is separate to the Festival program.

Ineligibility

The following are ineligible under the Fund:

- activities that have already taken place
- open studios and arts organisation open days
- markets
- activities associated with a course or study at an educational or training institution
- part of any assessment at an educational or training institution, including a degree, certificate or PhD course
- programs or activities for or by any government agency including the ACT Government

- awards, prizes or competitions, or fundraising for any cause or charity
- activities or programs undertaken by a school, involving school children during school hours and/or activities that are a part of the school curriculum, or a part of a before or after school-based care programs
- any building works, including minor repairs, maintenance, relocation or refurbishment activities
- purchase of any office furniture or office equipment
- purchase of computer hardware or software for general administration, promotional or communication purposes
- the development, making or installation of permanent public artwork including murals or street art
- costs associated with catering
- contingency costs.

Applying to the Fund

Applicants not based in Canberra

For applicants who do not reside in Canberra, an exception can be made if the activity meets the aims of the Fund. Priority will be given to activities that involve collaboration or active engagement with the ACT arts and design sector.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people do not need to reside in the ACT.

Protocols for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Applicants who are working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people need to comply with Creative Australia's [Protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in the arts](#).

Frequency

Applicants can only submit one application in the Major Projects funding round.

Applicants can receive funding in the Smaller Projects stream once and can apply a maximum of two times.

Work Health and Safety

Activities must adhere to Work Health and Safety (WHS) practices under the ACT's WHS legislation.

Working with Vulnerable People

The ACT's Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) scheme aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT. It requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people to have a background check to determine an applicant's suitability to be registered under the scheme. For more information visit [Access Canberra](#).

ABN registered

An ABN will be requested as part of your application (if you have one) which will be used to pay your funding if you are successful. If you do not have an ABN, you will need to provide a Statement by Supplier. The form is available from the Australian Taxation Office at: www.ato.gov.au/forms-and-instructions/statement-by-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn.

Unacquitted ACT Government Funding

You cannot apply for funding if you have an outstanding unacquitted grant from the ACT Government. You can apply if you have funding that is not yet due to be acquitted.

Assessment Criteria

An application must be assessed as eligible before it will be assessed against the below assessment criteria. Applicants will be informed if their application is assessed as ineligible for funding.

Each of the assessment criteria are weighted equally.

Criteria	Criteria description (what we are looking for)
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the application from an eligible applicant for an eligible activity?
Detailed activity description and demonstrated contribution to Canberra as a global city of design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear and concise activity description• The activity contributes to Canberra as a city of design• The activity highlights the work of the best Canberra designers and/or artists• The activity can be presented at the 2026 Craft + Design Canberra Festival

	and contributes to the Festival theme of 'Dissent'.
Demonstrated capability of the applicant to deliver a high-quality activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can the activity be successfully completed within budget and timeline?• Does the applicant and key personnel/creatives have the necessary experience?• Does the application include a plan to make sure that Work, Health and Safety requirements are met?• Does the application show a plan to seek any appropriate permits or approvals?
The activity demonstrates accessibility and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the activity demonstrate an inclusive and accessible approach in terms of audience engagement?• Does the activity celebrate the diversity of Canberra and its people?

Application requirements

Your application should address the assessment criteria and include the following:

- support images – 1-2 high resolution images suitable for publication (format JPG/PNG, 1-2MB)
- biography (150 words for each artist/designer involved in activity)
- curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum) for individual applicants
- website and social media URL's
- budget and timeline
- plans for any permits/approvals and Work, Health and Safety requirements (as required).

Assessment Process

Major Projects

Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria by artsACT staff in consultation with Craft + Design Canberra, and industry peers where appropriate. Assessment will consider the information provided in the application and any supporting documentation.

Following assessment of the applications, artsACT will make recommendations to the Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, who will make the final funding decisions.

Applications must be submitted to the ACT Government via SmartyGrants, artsACT's assessment and funding portal.

Smaller Projects

Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria by artsACT staff. Assessment will consider the information provided in the application and any supporting documentation.

Applications must be submitted to the ACT Government via SmartyGrants, artsACT's assessment and funding portal.

Reporting Requirements

Deed of Grant

If successful, the applicant will be offered a Deed of Grant with the ACT Government. The deed will include payment, reporting, acquittal and acknowledgement requirements. The deed may also include any specific conditions of funding or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the Fund's objectives and government priorities that may be required. The activity proposed in the application will form the basis of the subsequent reporting and evaluation requirements.

Acquittals

An acquittal will be required to be submitted one month after the conclusion of the activity.

Statistical Data

If successful and part of the Festival program, applicants will be required to submit statistical data relating to their activity to Craft + Design Canberra by **4 December 2026** so that this information can be included in the Festival Report. More information regarding this requirement will be included in the Deed of Grant.

Variation of Activity

Any changes to the activity and/or budget need to be approved by artsACT.

Acknowledgement of Funding

As a requirement of the Deed of Grant, successful applicants must acknowledge ACT Government funding and support on all material (hardcopy and electronic) including letterheads, websites, newsletters, media releases, advertisements, programs, broadcast emails, invitations and any other promotional material. Acknowledgement must be proportionate to the level of ACT Government funding compared to other funding received.

Acknowledgement of funding is also to be made in formal speeches, such as at launches and openings, and in any media articles.

Acknowledgement must include the use of the ACT Government logo in conjunction with the words 'Supported by the ACT Government'. Further information about the requirements to acknowledge the ACT Government can be accessed at: [Information for Successful Applicants](#), including a link to the ACT Government logos webpage.

Confidentiality

All material submitted as part of an application is provided in confidence. Applications will be read by artsACT staff, and Craft + Design Canberra and industry peers (where relevant). Staff and panel members must keep all material confidential.

artsACT will only use or disclose personal information in accordance with relevant legislation, including the [Information Privacy Act 2014](#). The provisions of the [Freedom of Information Act 2016](#) apply to documents in artsACT's possession. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without the permission of the applicant.

The names of successful applicants, the title of their projects, and the funding amount will be published on the artsACT website. The ACT Government may also promote the successful applicants through the media including the Government's social media accounts for the benefit of the ACT Arts Fund and the applicant.

Contact Us

artsACT staff are available to advise applicants on how to apply, construct a budget and select support materials. To ensure probity and equity, artsACT cannot read or comment on draft applications.

Please contact artsACT on (02) 6207 2384 if you would like to talk to a staff member. You can also email us at artsACT@act.gov.au. artsACT will also run an information session for prospective applicants.

artsACT is committed to supporting applicants living with disability. Information can be provided in alternative formats (large print, electronic or Braille) upon request. If you need extra assistance due to disability or any other factor that may disadvantage you in completing your application, please contact us.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through one of the following:

- > [National Relay Service \(NRS\)](#) then ask for 1800 199 090.
- > TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 199 090.
- > Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 199 090.

For interpreting assistance in languages other than English, telephone the Translation and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.



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