ARTS ORGANISATIONS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Funding for 2026

Government of South Australia

Introduction

The Arts Organisations Program (AOP) provides funding to a diverse portfolio of small-to-medium organisations that contribute to a sustainable and thriving arts and cultural sector in South Australia.

AOP funding enables arts organisations to:

- deliver arts experiences for South Australians as audiences through performances, exhibitions, and publications
- commission and develop new work, in collaboration with artists and other organisations
- create jobs, employment and income for artists, creatives, other arts workers (e.g. technical, administrative) and allied areas
- offer career pathways and development opportunities for artists
- offer access to the arts and participation opportunities for South Australians, including targeted communities
- build national and international profile
- leverage income from other sources, e.g. earned revenue (including touring and export), development and philanthropic income, other government (e.g. Federal) funding.

Purpose and Goals of the AOP

Purpose

To support a thriving ecology for arts and culture, which empowers South Australia's makers and creators, and enables arts and culture to enrich the lives of all South Australians.

Goals

The program contributes to an ecology that:

- enriches the lives of South Australians with arts and cultural experiences
- empowers our makers, creators, and presenters
- champions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture
- amplifies the signature strengths that define the character of the arts in the state.

Organisations deliver the purpose and goals of the AOP through one or more of the following key focus areas:

- artistic development (creating and presenting artistic outcomes of the highest calibre with vision and imagination)
- sector development (industry-wide initiatives, arts advocacy and supporting artists' careers)
- access to the arts for the broader South Australian community (opportunities for audiences, community engagement and participation)
- national and international leadership and profile.

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Program Structure

AOP funding is designed to support organisations at different stages of their development by offering three funding categories.

Program Support (Up to $50 000 per annum)

The Program Support category is designed to provide the capacity for smaller project funded organisations to realise their artistic ambitions. Organisations funded through this category are expected to deliver projects and programs that meet the purpose and goals of the AOP.

Organisations in receipt of Program Support for at least two years (commencing in 2023) will be eligible to apply for Annual Funding, subject to available funds and a peer assessment process.

Receipt of Program Support does not guarantee future Annual Funding.

No new applicants will be invited in 2025 to apply for Program Support in 2026. The next expression of interest process for invitation to apply remains subject to available funds.

Program Support recipients will be eligible to apply for all Arts and Culture Grants Program categories in 2026.

Annual Funding (Up to $100 000)

This category supports established small arts organisations that make up the South Australian arts ecology.

Applications will be accepted from organisations already in receipt of AOP Annual Funding and organisations who have received Program Support for at least two years.

Annual Funding recipients will be eligible to apply for grants in the following Arts and Culture Grants Program categories in 2026:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grants
- Richard Llewellyn Deaf and Disability Grants
- Market Development
- Projects – Independent Artists and Groups (**NB:** Annual Funding recipients eligible to receive **one grant per annum** in this category)
- Projects – Community
- Projects – Public Art and Design
- Projects – Touring Support
- Major Projects – Major Commission
- Major Projects – Public Art and Design Major Commission
- Major Projects – Collaboration
- Special programs and initiatives.

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Multi-Year Funding ($70 000 to $400 000 per annum)

Not open for 2026.

Eligibility

All applicants for Program Support and Annual Funding must be a South Australian-based legal entity, with a primary or strategic focus on the delivery of high-quality arts products and services. This may include Incorporated Associations, Australian Public Companies, Australian Private Companies and Aboriginal Corporations.

Program Support

- Applicants will have received Program Support funding in 2025.

Annual Funding

- Applicants will have received Annual Funding in 2025 or Program Support in 2024 and 2025.

Who is not eligible:

- Individuals
- Statutory Authorities
- Non-legal entities
- Organisations funded through the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (NPAPF)
- Local government entities
- Universities
- Non-arts and cultural organisations
- Organisations with a primary focus on screen, commercial streaming or television content development, gaming, film making or presentation
- Organisations with a primary commercial focus such as a commercial gallery, promoter, publisher or commercial venue
- Organisations whose primary purpose is the presentation of work by young people under the age of 26.

Information for Applicants

- When applying for funding, applicants must ensure that the amount requested is realistic and substantiated in the application, in relation to the scale of the organisation's operations, artistic program, and previous levels of funding.

- Meeting the AOP purpose and goals, and past performance against the assessment criteria, will not entitle an organisation to funding beyond the current period. Each application will be assessed on its merits against the criteria in a competitive round with other applicants.

- Previously funded organisations that are not recommended for funding may be eligible for transition support, subject to available funds and conditions to be negotiated with CreateSA.

- All funded organisations will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with CreateSA for the period of funding.

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Assessment Criteria

When assessing applications, peers will consider the extent to which the organisation's past performance and proposed program, or business approach demonstrate (where relevant):

Visionary leadership

May include:

- Vision and imagination of the artistic rationale and program, and artistic outcomes of the highest calibre

- Quality, relevance, and innovation of previous and proposed program and/or service provision

- Track record, creative achievement and skill of leadership team and artists

- Development of the art form or area of practice

- Strategies for positioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists at the centre of South Australia's arts and cultural landscape

- Contribution to South Australia's reputation for arts leadership at a national and international level.

Strategic partnerships and collaboration

May include:

- Collaboration and commissioning between artists and organisations, and/or with communities and government

- Networks, collaborations, and partnerships which optimise resources and amplify strengths and increase opportunities

- Agile and collaborative responses to external challenges.

Embracing diversity

May include:

- Opportunities for a wide range of South Australians, in metropolitan, regional and remote settings, to participate in arts experiences as audiences or artists

- Strategies for increasing access, social inclusion and diversity

- Pathways for participation and engagement with South Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

- Inclusion and encouragement of new voices and approaches across all demographics

- Deeper engagement with, and involvement of, targeted communities and/or audiences and the delivery of artistic benefits.

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Courageous experimentation

May include:

- Commitment to experimentation, risk taking and bravery, together with strategies to manage risk and ensure ongoing organisation stability

- Incorporation of new ways of working and entrepreneurial thinking into operations

- Harnessing digital transformation and future technologies.

Sound business performance

Must include:

- Strong financial performance and sound financial position, including clear strategies to ensure future viability

- Realistic budget, and funding request, which is appropriate to the scale and impact of operations and proposed artistic program

- Diversification of income, resources and support (eg fundraising, sponsorships, partnerships, grants and other funding) secured from sources other than CreateSA at a level commensurate with the operations of the organisation

- Employment impact and/or strategies to create jobs and employment opportunities for South Australian artists and arts workers.

May include:

- Development of local, national and/or international markets, and new ways to engage with those markets, to achieve economic benefits.

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Application Requirements

Program Support	
Organisation Overview	A brief description of your organisation including your main areas of focus and how you fit within the South Australian Arts ecology.
Vision	Outline your organisation's vision for 2026 and how AOP funding will help you achieve this and enable your organisation to build capacity. Detail how you are working towards longer term sustainability – you may wish to include current strategic planning documentation, if readily available.
Alignment	A brief outline of how your organisation aligns with the AOP purpose and goals, the assessment criteria and *A Place to Create*.
Artistic Program	A description of your program for 2026 including project outlines and details of key creative personnel. Indicate projects which do not have confirmed funding.
Achievements	A year-to-date list of key achievements for 2025 - organisations that are up to date with their Monthly Activity Reports are not required to provide this information separately.
Finance	A profit and loss statement as at 30 June 2025 and a detailed budget for 2026.
Organisation Structure	Details of Board members and key artistic staff.

Annual Funding	
Organisation Overview	A brief description of your organisation including your main areas of focus and how you fit within the South Australian Arts ecology.
Vision	Outline your organisation's vision for 2026 and how AOP funding will help you achieve this and enable your organisation to build capacity. Detail how you are working towards longer term sustainability – you may wish to include current strategic planning documentation, if readily available.
Alignment	A brief outline of how your organisation aligns with the AOP purpose and goals, the assessment criteria and *A Place to Create*.
Artistic Program	A description of your program for 2026 including project outlines and details of key creative personnel. Indicate projects which do not have confirmed funding.
Benchmark	Nominate one national and one international organisation as aspirational benchmarks of artistic quality and business practice.
Achievements	A year-to-date list of key achievements for 2025 - organisations that are up to date with their Monthly Activity Reports are not required to provide this information separately.
Finance	A profit and loss statement as at 30 June 2025 and a detailed budget for 2026.
Organisation Structure	Details of Board members and key artistic staff

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Key Program Dates

4 August 2025	Applications open
12 September 2025	Applications close
24 November 2025	Outcomes advised
1 January 2026	2026 funding term commences

How to Apply

Eligible applicants can email CreateSAGrants@sa.gov.au to arrange a meeting to discuss their application.

Eligible applicants will be sent a link to SmartyGrants to enable submission of their application.

Eligible applicants will be unable to apply if the organisation has an overdue acquittal.

Late applications will not be accepted.

After You Apply

Acknowledgement	You will receive an automated notification from SmartyGrants.
Assessment	Applicants will be assessed on the written application. Peer Assessors may also consider: • attendance at, and appraisals of, events, performances, and exhibitions • invited, external peer reviews • industry reviews, videos and recordings, referee reports and other support material • previous AOP acquittal materials. A summary of funding outcomes will be available on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet website following notification of applicants.
Notification	Applicants will be notified of funding outcomes by email by 24 November 2025. Funding will be paid from 1 January 2026 in instalments as per the grant agreement.
Grant Agreement	All recommended organisations will be required to enter a grant agreement with CreateSA for the funding period.

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Revised Program and Budget	A revised program and budget are required if the recommended amount is 75% or less than the amount requested.
	If required, a Revised Program and Budget must be uploaded to SmartyGrants by the end of December 2025.
Reporting	All reports must be submitted in SmartyGrants.
	Monthly activity updates are due on the first of each month.
	Final acquittals are due within four months of the end of the funding period and will include:
	• artistic report
	• statistical report
	• financial statements (Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet).

Contact:

CreateSA

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E CreateSAGrants@sa.gov.au

W https://www.create.sa.gov.au/funding-and-grants/arts-and-culture-grants-program/arts-organisations-program-2023-2026

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