

First Nations Commissioning Fund - Guidelines

The First Nations Commissioning Fund (the Fund) is a key program of the Queensland Government's [Grow 2022-2026](#), the second action plan for [Creative Together 2020-2030](#), and is focused on investing in opportunities that share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' stories and cultural knowledge, and elevate awareness of Queensland's exceptional First Nations arts and cultural products and experiences.

Fund objectives

- Support the development and presentation of new work and cultural programs by individual First Nations artists and arts workers, and First Nations collectives and organisations.
- Strengthen skills development and provide new employment opportunities for First Nations artists and arts workers.
- Grow a pipeline of high-quality First Nations arts, cultural products, and experiences.

What the funding can be used for

This fund is for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only**. The Fund supports applications from individuals and organisations for First Nations-led arts and cultural projects and programs at different stages of development, from consultation, planning, and creative development to production, presentation, and distribution.

Applicants have the option to apply for additional funding towards a First Nations industry placement as part of the project, and/or the commissioning of new live or recorded music as part of the project.

Funding available

Up to \$70,000 – For single-year projects and programs up to 12 months.

Up to \$150,000 – For two-year projects and programs that need a larger and/or longer scale of development, of up to 24 months in duration, and include presentation and/or distribution.

PLUS up to \$10,000 towards commissioning new live or recorded music by Queensland-based First Nations composers, musicians or librettists as part of your project.

PLUS up to **\$60,000** towards one First Nations full-time industry placement for 12-months (or a pro rata equivalent for part-time) with a focus on arts management and/or arts production.

The placement must be:

- a new position
- built into the planned activity, and you must provide evidence of your intention for continued employment of the person or role
- supported by a holistic skills development program and a supervisor with appropriate experience
- paid at least minimum award wage and covered under employer's Workcover and superannuation.

Multi-year funded applicants approved for this extra funding will have the option to apply for an additional \$30,000 (or a pro rata equivalent) in Year 2 to continue employment of the placement if they can demonstrate the successful delivery of Year 1 and provide evidence of how they will transition to the continued employment of the person or role beyond the second year of the project.

Eligibility

Please refer to the Arts Queensland [General Funding Guidelines](#) for general eligibility criteria and definitions.

In addition, the Fund requires that applicants must:

- be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are artists or arts workers, or First Nations organisations or collectives based in Queensland. For The Fund, a First Nations organisation is at least 50% owned and led by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have formal authority to make decisions in the operations and governance of the organisation
- **not** apply for 100% of the total project costs
- **not** receive Arts Queensland funding of more than \$1.5 million per annum.

Applicants may only receive one First Nations Commissioning Fund grant per calendar year, based on the Round closing date. However, they can also receive a further grant for a different project through the Queensland Arts Showcase Program within the same calendar year.

Eligible and ineligible costs

In addition to the items listed in the [General Funding Guidelines](#):

- you **can** apply for:
 - costs towards artistic collaboration with a nationally or internationally significant artist or company for an outcome in Queensland.
- you **cannot** apply for:
 - agents' fees or management fees for participating artists
 - equipment purchases or digital upgrades over \$3,000 (excluding GST)
 - rent and utilities
 - expenses associated with core staff involved in funded activities, including fees or wages, travel, accommodation and living-away-from-home allowances.

If applying for funding for an Industry Placement:

- the applicant must have a proven track record in the provision of a safe workplace with skills development and on-the-job training capacity
- the applicant must not have been successful in receiving Industry Placement funding before
- the placement must be a person permanently based in Queensland
- the placement cannot be already engaged in a different role in the project/program or employed in an ongoing and/or consecutive way by the applicant outside of the funded project.

Assessment criteria

The Fund Assessment Panel, comprised of 100% First Nations representation, will assess applications against the following criteria, which align with the [General Funding Guidelines](#) criteria:

High quality

- Creative idea or concept is innovative and will deliver high-quality First Nations arts and cultural work.
- Professionals involved are highly skilled and well-regarded.
- Includes collaborators and partners who will help create great cultural outcomes.

Strong impact

- Creates new employment opportunities and skills development for First Nations artists and arts workers in Queensland.
- Builds new audiences and markets and reputation for First Nations arts and cultures.

- Responds to community needs and helps deliver government priorities, including the principles of the [Cultural Engagement Framework](#).

Sustainable value

- Demonstrates value for money, sound governance, and ethical business practices, including paying amounts not less than industry award rates, recommended or agreed minimum rates, and adhering to cultural protocols.
- Proposed activity has a strong delivery plan, including understanding potential risks and their management.
- Will contribute to the sustainability and growth of Queensland's First Nations arts and cultural sector.

Submitting your application

You can submit your application, along with project timeframe, budget, and support materials, including letters of support, artist biographies/CVs, examples of prior work and appropriate cultural permissions, through [SmartyGrants](#)

You must submit your application by the Fund closing dates and times listed below.

	Open	Close	Notification	Activity Start Date
Round 4	29 January 2024	2pm 11 March 2024	Late May 2024	From 17 June 2024
Round 5	1 July 2024	2pm 12 August 2024	Mid-October 2024	From 11 November 2024
Round 6	3 February 2025	2pm 17 March 2025	Late May 2025	From 23 June 2025

For support with technical issues related to the online application, please contact an Arts Queensland Grants Officer by telephone (07) 3034 4016 or toll-free 1800 175 531 or email investment@arts.qld.gov.au

Note: Arts Queensland reserves the right to modify the Fund Guidelines at any time. Applicants will be notified of changes.