



**ACT**  
Government

# ACT Event Fund 2026

Guidelines for Applicants





## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge 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 region.

First Nations Peoples who call Canberra home have held gatherings, ceremonies and events on these lands for tens of thousands of years. The ACT Government recognises the importance of these cultural traditions and their role in shaping the rich and diverse events landscape that we enjoy today.



## CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Accessibility .....	3
1.2	About Events ACT .....	3
1.3	About these funding guidelines .....	3
<b>2.</b>	<b>PRIMARY OBJECTIVE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>OUTCOMES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>FUNDING CATEGORIES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1	General eligibility.....	5
5.2	What will <u>not</u> be considered for funding .....	7
5.3	Application process .....	8
<b>6.</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1	Community Event Funding criteria .....	9
6.2	Event Development Funding criteria .....	9
<b>7.</b>	<b>ACCEPTING A GRANT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
7.1	Grant requirements and payment process .....	10
7.2	Conditions of funding .....	10
7.3	Goods and Services Tax (GST) .....	11
7.4	Publication .....	11
<b>8.</b>	<b>ACQUITTAL OF FUNDING .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
9.1	How to submit your application .....	11
9.2	Addendum.....	12
9.3	Confidentiality .....	12
9.4	Complaints .....	12
<b>10.</b>	<b>FURTHER INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>12</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events, and venues **accessible to as many people as possible**.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format**, such as large print or audio, please phone the Access Canberra Contact Centre on **13 22 81**.

If English is not your first language and you require **translating and interpreting services**, please phone **131 450**.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **National Relay Service**, please phone **131 677** and then ask for **133 427**.

## 1.2 About Events ACT

Events ACT is recognised as the lead agency for the development and delivery of events in Canberra.

More specifically, Events ACT is responsible for:

- Planning, marketing, and delivering a quality suite of [community and major events](#) for the city which provide strategic economic, community and social benefits.
- Providing leadership on event-related matters to the ACT Government and to the events sector, including new major event opportunities and event attraction.
- Contributing to the development of the ACT's events sector, including the management of funding opportunities and the provision of strategic planning support.

## 1.3 About these funding guidelines

These funding guidelines provide details for eligible event organisers wishing to apply for grant funding assistance under the *ACT Event Fund*.

The *ACT Event Fund* is an ACT Government grants program administered by Events ACT.

All terms and conditions contained in previous funding guidelines for the *ACT Event Fund* are superseded by this document.

# 2. PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Events bring life, colour, and vitality to the Canberra region. They build a strong sense of community pride and help to shape Canberra's identity. Events also have the capacity to generate tourist visitation, economic activity, and a range of legacy outcomes for the city.

The *ACT Event Fund* plays an active role in stimulating and fostering positive economic, social and community outcomes for the Canberra region through the events sector.

The *ACT Event Fund* assists eligible applicants to further develop, market and promote their events, while also supporting a diverse, high-quality calendar of events each year. **Funding is generally not provided to underwrite events, but to enhance new or existing event opportunities.**

### 3. OUTCOMES

The desired outcomes from support provided through the *ACT Event Fund* are as follows:

- To facilitate a **vibrant, innovative, and inclusive events culture** within the ACT.
- To help develop a **diverse, year-round events calendar**.
- To encourage the **development of tourism in the ACT** and **increase economic activity in the Canberra region**.
- To encourage and support the **involvement of the local community in events** (e.g. event organisers, event participants/attendees, artists/performers, sponsors/partners, community groups, volunteers, and local businesses/suppliers).
- To **facilitate community event activity** within Canberra's town centres and suburbs.
- To **utilise, activate and enliven** community assets, precincts, and spaces.
- To provide support to **viable events** that are of **high quality, well planned and well managed**.

While each of these objectives is important, every event will have its own unique characteristics and the relative focus on these objectives will vary.

### 4. FUNDING CATEGORIES

Support under the *ACT Event Fund* is made available through a competitive annual funding round that incorporates two (2) funding categories: **Community Event Funding** and **Event Development Funding**.

- **Community Event Funding:** up to \$10,000 to support the delivery and enhancement of events that can encourage local engagement and participation.
  - Applicants may request up to **50% of their total cash expenditure budget**.
- **Event Development Funding:** up to \$30,000 to support the delivery and enhancement of events that can demonstrate strong potential to develop and grow, including capacity to generate community participation, tourist visitation and economic activity.
  - Applicants will not be able to apply for more than **30% of the event's total cash expense budget**.

Events applying for funding under either of these categories must be staged in the 2026 calendar year. Applications will only be considered for single-year funding.

A limited **Out-of-Round** funding allocation will be available for consideration of event opportunities that arise outside the defined main funding round timeframes. Applications received out-of-round will need to demonstrate clear alignment with the objectives of the *ACT Event Fund*, along with a rationale for why the application could not be submitted during the prescribed main funding round period.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 General eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply to the *ACT Event Fund* for 2026:

	FOR COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDING <u>AND</u> EVENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING
ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS	<p><b>Marketing and Promotion:</b> includes initiatives associated with raising the profile/awareness of the event and driving attendance.</p> <p><b>Community Participation and Audience Development:</b> includes initiatives that enhance community participation levels. <i>Can include audience research, community forums and targeted campaigns.</i></p> <p><b>Program Development:</b> encompasses support for further development of an event program or adding a new component to an existing program.</p> <p><b>Strategic Planning:</b> can include engagement of short-term specialised personnel (up to 6 months) to further develop and/or market the event.</p> <p><b>Hire of temporary infrastructure:</b> such as equipment that improves access, overall visitor experience or the safety of the event. <i>Please contact Events ACT for clarification if required.</i></p>
EVENT LOCATION	<p>The <i>ACT Event Fund</i> supports event activity that provides benefit to the ACT. Where events are staged outside of the ACT the funding application needs to <b>demonstrate a clear benefit to the Canberra region</b> through the relevant assessment criteria.</p> <p>The <b>Community Event Funding</b> category includes provisions for supporting event activity in suburbs and town centres within the ACT (with a greater focus on events staged outside of the Canberra city centre and the National Triangle).</p>
RESIDENCE OF APPLICANT	<p>The <i>ACT Event Fund</i> supports event activity for the benefit of the ACT community. Where applicants do not reside in the ACT, their application will need to <b>clearly demonstrate a benefit to the ACT</b> through the relevant assessment criteria.</p> <p>Applicants will need to clearly demonstrate (where applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engagement of local artists and performers.</li> <li>▪ Engagement and tangible benefits to local events suppliers and businesses within Canberra.</li> <li>▪ How profits from the event will enhance future event offerings in Canberra.</li> <li>▪ Connections with local volunteers and community groups.</li> <li>▪ The need for government funding and how it will enhance the event offering and grow future sustainability.</li> </ul>
EVENT SCOPE	<p>The applicant must be able to demonstrate the anticipated size and scope of the event in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total event audience, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participant/Organisers/Volunteer numbers – to include performers/competitors/contractors.</li> <li>○ Spectator numbers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## General eligibility (continued)

	FOR COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDING AND EVENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING
ADMINISTERED FUNDING	<p>You must include an ABN (Australian Business Number) on the application form.</p> <p>Grants can be managed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Recognised organisations</b>, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporated associations</li> <li>○ Registered businesses</li> <li>○ Companies limited by guarantee</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Groups or unincorporated organisations</b>, by either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nominating someone to take legal and financial responsibility, or</li> <li>○ Partnering with an incorporated organisation to manage the grant on their behalf (auspice)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Sole traders</b>, who are legally responsible for all parts of their business or event, including any debts or losses.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ be financially solvent.</li> <li>▪ have at least \$20 million public liability insurance or be able to secure an appropriate level of cover before entering into a Funding Agreement.</li> </ul>
EVENT HISTORY	The applicant <b>must be able to provide supporting data</b> on the proposed event impacts and (where applicable) their experience delivering similar events.
EVENT DATE/ TIMING AND LOCATION	<p>The event <b>must occur between 1 January 2026 and 31 December 2026</b>.</p> <p>If the event date and location have not yet been confirmed, please provide tentative details in your application.</p> <p><b>Please note that successful applicants will be required to submit confirmed date and venue information before an agreement can be executed. These details must be provided no later than 1 March 2026.</b></p>
TIMING OF APPLICATION	Funding will <b>not</b> be granted retrospectively.
NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	<b>Applicants are only able to submit one (1) application</b> in total across both categories to the funding round. Similar event activities can be bundled under the one application. Applicants cannot submit an application to the Out-of-Round category following an unsuccessful application to the main round. <i>Please contact Events ACT for clarification if required.</i>
FUNDING REQUEST AND BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	<p><b>Community Event Funding</b> will not be able to apply for more than <b>50%</b> of the event's total cash expense budget.</p> <p><b>Event Development Funding</b> applicants will not be able to apply for more than <b>30%</b> of the event's total cash expense budget.</p> <p><b>Fallback funding position</b> – Applicants to both categories are asked to provide a fallback funding position. If an application cannot be fully funded, the panel will refer to the fallback funding position provided. It is important to identify a dollar amount. Please identify any change in funding use or project scope should your funding be reduced to the fallback option. If no fallback position is viable, please specify.</p> <p>Funding will not be provided to support deficit budgets.</p> <p><b>Funding requests are to be exclusive of GST. (See clause 7.3).</b></p>

<b>PREVIOUS ACT EVENT FUND RECIPIENTS</b>	<p>Projects that have previously received funding through Events ACT are eligible to apply again. However, <b>repeat applicants will need to clearly demonstrate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why the ACT Government should continue to fund this event. What are the benefits to the event and the city? What is being done to help the event become self-sustaining?</li> <li>▪ What will the funding be supporting? Are new initiatives planned that are tied to the grant funding request?</li> <li>▪ How is this funding contributing to innovation and growth of the event?</li> </ul>
---	---

## 5.2 What will not be considered for funding

Funds may not be used for the following:

	<b>FOR COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDING <u>AND</u> EVENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING</b>
<b>INELIGIBLE EVENT TYPES</b>	<p>The following events are NOT eligible (contact Events ACT to clarify if required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business events (i.e. that is: trade shows, symposiums, expos, seminars, conferences, and industry meetings).</li> <li>▪ Education events and fetes (including events organised by tertiary institutions, primary or secondary schools, or kindergartens).</li> <li>▪ Industry competitions and awards nights.</li> <li>▪ Events primarily designed for charity or fundraising purposes that cannot demonstrate strong event sector benefits.</li> <li>▪ Local Championship events.</li> <li>▪ Reunions/Anniversaries/Centenaries.</li> <li>▪ Christmas or New Year's Eve events.</li> <li>▪ National Day Celebrations including Australia Day.</li> <li>▪ Fireworks displays.</li> <li>▪ Open Gardens and Open Days.</li> <li>▪ Events designed to promote religious or political causes.</li> <li>▪ Events run solely for individual gain.</li> <li>▪ Activities that form part of the regular activities of the applicant (for example, concerts in entertainment centres, regular horse race meetings, computer shows, exhibitions in a gallery and standard theatre productions).</li> <li>▪ Sporting, cultural, arts, education, special interest, markets, or other gatherings that take place on a regular basis such as monthly or weekly (for example – craft markets, farmers market and running groups).</li> <li>▪ Minor activities, such as product launches, that attract media interest only.</li> <li>▪ Any event already funded by Events ACT.</li> <li>▪ Events already funded by ACT Government agencies for the same elements.</li> <li>▪ Activities for/by Government departments or agencies.</li> <li>▪ Events that have failed to suitably acquit a previous ACT Government grant.</li> </ul>
<b>INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insurance or legal costs.</li> <li>▪ Capital or equipment costs, including office equipment.</li> <li>▪ Prize money, medals, trophies and awards.</li> <li>▪ Catering costs where provision of food is not considered integral to the event.</li> <li>▪ Sanctioning fees.</li> <li>▪ Full-time employment costs.</li> <li>▪ Administration expenses/sundries.</li> </ul>



### 5.3 Application process

Funding applications, including all support material, must be made through the online grants portal (SmartyGrants) and not emailed. There will be a separate application form for each category within SmartyGrants. **For applicants seeking Event Development Funding, a greater level of detail and support material is expected as part of a funding application.**

Applicants wishing to clarify any aspect of the application process are encouraged to contact Events ACT to arrange a pre-submission meeting (either online or face-to-face).

Applications must be lodged online within the specified time frame. Applicants will be sent a confirmation email from the SmartyGrants system confirming receipt of their application.

**Late applications will not be considered, and an application will not be assessed if it does not comply with the eligibility requirements outlined in 5.1 and 5.2.**

## 6. ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed against the following **weighted evaluation criteria**:

### 6.1 Community Event Funding criteria

<b>SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT – WEIGHTING 70%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Opportunities for local community involvement and participation in the event (e.g. event organisers, event participants/attendees, artists/performers, sponsors/partners, community groups, volunteers).</li><li>▪ Capacity of the event to enhance city/community vibrancy, community pride and social cohesion.</li><li>▪ Ability to support the diversity and spread of events in Canberra’s annual calendar.</li><li>▪ Ability to enable local businesses to benefit and leverage off the event.</li><li>▪ The anticipated number of local attendees.</li></ul>
<b>EVENT MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY – WEIGHTING 30%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Key personnel delivering the event, including demonstrated event management skills/experience.</li><li>▪ Evidence of strategies to identify and mitigate risks that could affect event success (includes consideration of safety/business/reputational/financial/environmental risks where applicable).</li><li>▪ Demonstrated capability to identify and reach target audiences via marketing and promotion.</li><li>▪ Clear understanding of how grant funding will enhance the event.</li></ul>

### 6.2 Event Development Funding criteria

<b>SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT – WEIGHTING 25%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Opportunities for local community involvement and participation in the event (e.g. event organisers, event participants/attendees, artists/performers, sponsors/partners, community groups, volunteers).</li><li>▪ Capacity of the event to enhance city/community vibrancy, community pride and social cohesion.</li><li>▪ The anticipated number of local attendees.</li></ul>
<b>ECONOMIC BENEFIT – WEIGHTING 35%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ability to enable local businesses to benefit and leverage off the event.</li><li>▪ Ability to support the diversity and spread of events in Canberra’s annual calendar.</li><li>▪ Ability to generate tourism activity and enhance visitor perceptions of Canberra.</li><li>▪ The anticipated number of interstate and/or international visitors.</li><li>▪ Ability to substantiate event attendance and visitor figures.</li></ul>
<b>MARKETING IMPACT – WEIGHTING 20%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Demonstrated capacity to generate event awareness and attendance with clear marketing and media strategies that include (at a minimum):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Identified target audiences (i.e. local and/or interstate and international).</li><li>○ Identified marketing objectives, tactics, and channels.</li><li>○ An appropriate marketing budget to reach target audiences.</li><li>○ Plans to monitor and evaluate marketing success.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>EVENT MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY – WEIGHTING 20%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Key personnel delivering the event, including demonstrated event management skills/experience.</li><li>▪ Evidence of strategies to identify and mitigate risks that could affect event success (includes consideration of safety/business/reputational/financial/environmental risks where applicable).</li><li>▪ Demonstrated capacity to enhance the event’s ongoing viability and growth (e.g. increasing event attendance, size or quality).</li><li>▪ Financial viability of the event (i.e. a suitable budget and plans to secure own-source revenue).</li><li>▪ Clear understanding of how grant funding will enhance the event.</li></ul>

Funding provided through the *ACT Event Fund* is limited, and as such, all applications will be assessed on relative merit. It is not possible to approve all requests for assistance, therefore **grant funding support should not be deemed automatic or anticipated**.

An independent panel consisting of representatives from relevant Government and (where appropriate) external stakeholders will assess the applications. The assessment panel will also be provided with a summary of any relevant additional information, including an applicant's acquittal history where applicable.

The assessment panel can seek minor clarification on the funding request from an applicant if required (via Events ACT staff), before final funding recommendations are endorsed by the panel.

The assessment panel will submit a set of funding recommendations to Events ACT. Events ACT will then prepare a brief seeking final approval from the Minister for Tourism and Trade, on a suite of successful funding recipients.

## 7. ACCEPTING A GRANT

### 7.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants will be required to enter a Deed of Grant with the ACT Government setting out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided, including acquittal requirements within the agreed timeframe.

**Please note that successful applicants will be required to submit confirmed date and venue information before an agreement can be executed. These details must be provided no later than 1 March 2026.**

Successful applicants will receive a notification from Events ACT with a Deed of Grant attached and instructions for the payment process.

Payments can take up to 30 days to process following execution of the Deed of Grant and on receipt of an invoice and a copy of the applicant's current Public Liability Insurance coverage.

Grants will be paid in one instalment following the execution of the Deed of Grant (unless otherwise stipulated in the Deed of Grant).

### 7.2 Conditions of funding

The declaration on the online application form certifies that all information provided in the application is true and correct. Action may be taken for repayment of any grant made where information contained in the application is subsequently found to be false or the grant is not used for the approved purpose.

All funding recipients are accountable for funds received from Events ACT and must adhere to all conditions and guidelines of the *ACT Event Fund*.

**Support under the ACT Event Fund is not implied or guaranteed.** Funding will remain subject to a competitive, merit-based assessment process each year.

Funding recipients must provide the opportunity for the ACT Government to have its funding suitably recognised. This could include, but not be limited to, logo recognition on event advertising and marketing material, signage or public announcements at the event, acknowledgment in media releases and/or involvement as part of media opportunities.

Successful applicants will need to seek written approval from Events ACT to make any variation to the funded activity detailed in the application form and subsequently agreed to through a Deed of Grant.

## 7.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

### Funding requests must exclude GST.

If an organisation is registered for GST with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and has an ABN, GST is payable on funding received under this program.

If your application is successful:

- **If you're registered for GST:** Events ACT will add 10% to your funding amount after receiving a valid Tax Invoice.
- **If you're not registered for GST:** You'll receive the funding amount as is, with no GST added.

We recommend you speak with your tax agent or the ATO about any tax implications.

## 7.4 Publication

All successful applicants, their event activity and the funded amount may be published on the Events ACT website.

## 8. ACQUITTAL OF FUNDING

Applicants will be asked to submit an acquittal report three (3) months after the completion of the event.

This at a minimum should include:

- Key event outcomes and lessons learnt.
- An event attendance breakdown.
- A copy of the final event budget, including spending against the grant amount.
- Where relevant, links to examples of supporting marketing material.

## 9. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

### 9.1 How to submit your application

All applications must be submitted via the online application form at:

<https://events.canberra.com.au/event-organisers/funding-and-grants/act-event-fund>

### Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

You will need to create a login to begin your application, and you may begin anywhere in the application form. Please ensure you save as you go.

SmartyGrants provides an online help guide for applicants. This guide will explain the essential steps you need to take to complete and submit your application form. The help guide is accessible at:

<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

All applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified by email to the address that is registered with SmartyGrants.



## 9.2 Addendum

Any additional information provided by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate as part of this grants program will be posted online at:

<https://events.canberra.com.au/event-organisers/funding-and-grants/act-event-fund>

## 9.3 Confidentiality

All material submitted to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is provided in confidence. However, the ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the *ACT Event Fund* and the applicant.

Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission. However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the ACT Government's possession.

## 9.4 Complaints

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process and/or an unsuccessful application for a grant.

You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. This information supports us to improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process as well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

- be treated respectfully, fairly and in confidence.
- have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible.
- be informed of progress.
- be told of the outcome.

## 10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Events ACT reserves the right to amend or alter these guidelines from time to time at its absolute discretion.

Events ACT is under no obligation to accept applications which are deemed incomplete or ineligible and/or received after the application deadline.

**Please note that there is no actual or implied guarantee of funding and/or levels of funding for any application, group, or organisation.**

For more information on these funding guidelines, eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, please contact the Senior Events Officer at Events ACT on:

Phone: (02) 6205 4324

Email: [eventfund@act.gov.au](mailto:eventfund@act.gov.au)

If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the Business Services Team for assistance:

Phone: (02) 6207 1080

Email: [EconomicDevelopmentBusinessServices@act.gov.au](mailto:EconomicDevelopmentBusinessServices@act.gov.au)



**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate  
Events ACT – July 2025