



THE COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM (CASP)

OVERVIEW

The Country Arts Support Program (CASP) is a small grants program that provides grants of up to **\$3,000** to support community-led arts and cultural projects that strengthen creative practice, increase participation in the arts and celebrate the unique identity of communities across the New England North West.

CASP supports projects that deliver meaningful cultural outcomes while creating opportunities for local artists, organisations and communities to connect, collaborate and build creative capacity.

CASP is a competitive grants program and does not provide ongoing operational funding.

CASP OBJECTIVES

- Assist locally determined community arts and cultural activities
- Increase opportunities for regionally based groups to access a diverse range of arts programs
- Enable communities to explore and express their cultural identities
- Bring social and economic benefits to the community through training, employment and promotional opportunities
- Lead to greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of regionally based community arts organisations

KEY DATES

Applicants should ensure they allow sufficient time to discuss their project with Arts North West before submitting an application.

- Open: 3 August 2026
- Close: Monday 14 September 2026
- Assessment: 16 September 2026
- Notify Recipients: 21 September 2026
- Signed agreement due: 21 Oct 2026
- Invoice due: 21 Oct 2026
- Project Start: 21 October 2026
- Project end: 21 October 2027
- Acquittal Due: 22 November 2027

Funding Available

Arts North West offers grants of **up to \$3,000** through the Country Arts Support Program.

CASP funding is designed to support the direct costs of delivering community arts projects and is primarily intended to support the engagement of professional artists.

Funding may contribute towards:

- professional artist fees
- artist travel and accommodation

- workshop facilitation
- project materials
- exhibition and performance costs
- venue hire
- community engagement activities
- marketing and promotion
- project delivery expenses.

Applicants are encouraged to develop realistic budgets and request only the funding required to successfully deliver their project.

Funding is competitive and applicants should not assume the maximum amount will be awarded.

ELIGIBILITY – WHO CAN APPLY?

- A not-for-profit incorporated body
- A local government authority
- Registered Business
- A collective with a nominated administering body (see FAQs below)
- Applicants are required to have a current certificate of currency for Broadform Liability or 'Public Liability' Insurance
- Applicants who have discussed their project with the relevant regional arts development organisation via phone 0493 316 463 or email rado@artsnw.com.au
- The eligible local government areas include:
 - Armidale Regional
 - Glen Innes Severn
 - Gunnedah Shire
 - Gwydir Shire
 - Liverpool Plains Shire
 - Moree Plains Shire
 - Narrabri Shire
 - Tamworth Regional
 - Tenterfield Shire
 - Uralla Shire
 - Walcha Council

WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- Individuals
- Groups and organisations based in Sydney and the Blue Mountains, or for projects based in those areas or outside of the Arts North West service area.
- Interstate organisations
- Groups/ensembles and unincorporated associations with no administering body
- Those who have an active or overdue funding agreement with Arts North West
- Organisations that have applied for or received funding for the same activity
- Previous recipients where the use of the grant did not, in the opinion of the CASP state assessment panel, conform to the spirit and intentions of these guidelines
- State and federal government departments, including schools (except P&Cs who are incorporated)
- Applicants who have not discussed their project with the relevant regional arts development organisation.

Eligible Projects

CASP supports projects that provide genuine opportunities for communities to participate in arts and cultural activity. Projects should demonstrate clear community benefit and involve artists, creative practitioners or cultural organisations wherever possible.

Examples include:

- workshops
- artist residencies
- exhibitions
- performances
- festivals
- public art
- creative community projects
- cultural events
- community arts development initiatives.

CASP WILL NOT FUND:

- Core administrative costs, office costs or the purchase of equipment
- Capital expenses
- Competitions
- Fundraising events
- Prizes and adjudication fees
- Applicants who have already received funding for the same activities
- General operating expenses or ongoing costs of long-term continuous projects
- Projects that have commenced or are completed
- Sporting activities
- Activities which could be considered part of the curriculum for schools or tertiary institutions
- Rent, prize money or gifts

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Artistic and cultural merit (Merit)
- Relevance, extent and depth of community engagement and participation (Impact)
- Evidence of adequate planning, budgeting and capacity to manage the project (Viability)

Priority is given to projects which address these criteria with consideration given to each region's arts and cultural resources and requirements

PROCESS

You must contact your relevant Regional Arts Development Organisation to discuss your application before it is submitted.

To apply to the 2026 CASP funding round you need to complete and submit an application form. Though the application link hosted on the Arts North West website

All applications must be submitted by **5.00pm** Monday 14 September 2026. Applications will not be accepted after that time.

The application will ask you to provide information about:

- your organisation
- your project
- why the project is needed

- who will benefit
- your experience delivering similar projects
- your budget
- why CASP funding is required
- supporting documentation.

Providing clear, concise responses supported by evidence will assist the assessment panel when considering your application.

Once your application is received and has been deemed eligible, it will be assessed, rated and prioritised by the CASP Regional Assessment Panel in your region. This may include prioritising applicants through the funding priorities of Create NSW including living and/or working in regional NSW, Aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, people with disabilities and young people. Prioritisation of recommended applicants ensures equity across the state and the best outcomes for NSW Government investment.

NSW ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK: CREATE IN NSW

Create NSW has a ten-year policy framework for the arts, cultural and screen sectors 'Creative Communities': <https://www.nsw.gov.au/arts-and-culture/engage-nsw-arts-and-culture/resource-hub/creative-communities>

This framework guides arts funding, future investment, and the development of strategic initiatives to achieve the Government's vision for the arts, including increased cultural participation.

The Arts and Cultural Funding Program (ACFP) is a key mechanism for Create NSW in achieving these targets.

ACFP PRIORITY AREAS

Growing the quality and quantity of activities in Priority Areas is a key focus of the ACFP.

Programs and projects that support high quality activity, engagement and participation with these Priority Areas are of particular importance:

The Country Arts Support Program supports the following ACFP priority areas:

- People living and/or working in regional NSW
- Aboriginal people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds
- People with disability
- Young people

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documents form an important part of your application and help demonstrate that your project has been appropriately planned and consulted.

Depending on your project, you may need to provide:

- current Public Liability Insurance
- quotes supporting purchases or contracted services
- letters of support
- financial statements (where applicable)
- Working With Children Check details (where applicable)
- First Nations consultation or support documentation. (where applicable)

First Nations Projects

Arts North West is committed to supporting projects that respectfully engage with First Nations artists, communities and cultural knowledge.

Where a project includes First Nations artists, cultural knowledge, storytelling, language, cultural practices or activities delivered with or for Aboriginal communities, applicants must provide evidence of appropriate consultation and support.

A minimum of one of the following is required:

- an Aboriginal Community Support Letter; or
- a First Nations Artist Confirmation Letter.

Working with Children

Projects involving children or young people must comply with NSW child-safe requirements.

Where applicable, applicants must provide valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) details for personnel delivering activities.

Before You Submit

Before submitting your application, check that you have:

- discussed your project with Arts North West
- completed all application questions
- attached Public Liability Insurance
- included quotes to support budget items
- attached First Nations support documentation (where applicable)
- provided WWCC details (where required)
- attached relevant letters of support
- reviewed your application carefully before submission.

Governance

Successful applicants are responsible for delivering their project in accordance with the approved application, Funding Agreement and all applicable legislation. Applicants should ensure they understand the following requirements before submitting an application.

Conflict of Interest

Applicants must declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest that may influence, or be perceived to influence, their application or the delivery of their project.

Arts North West Board members, staff, contractors and assessment panel members involved in the assessment process are also required to declare conflicts of interest and will not participate in the assessment or decision-making process where a conflict exists.

Child Safe Standards

Projects involving children or young people under 18 years of age must comply with the NSW Child Safe Standards and all relevant child protection legislation.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all artists, facilitators, staff and volunteers hold a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) where required by law.

Arts North West may request evidence of compliance prior to releasing grant funds or during project delivery.

First Nations Cultural Protocols

Arts North West is committed to supporting culturally safe and respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Projects that include First Nations artists, cultural knowledge, language, storytelling, cultural practices or activities delivered with or for Aboriginal communities must demonstrate appropriate consultation and cultural authority.

Applicants may provide evidence of consultation where applicable, such as:

- an Aboriginal Community Support Letter
- a First Nations Artist Confirmation Letter
- endorsement from the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council or recognised cultural authority.

Failure to demonstrate appropriate cultural consultation may affect the eligibility or assessment of the application.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Applicants must ensure they hold the necessary permissions, licences and approvals to use any copyrighted material, images, music, text or other intellectual property associated with the project.

Ownership of intellectual property remains with the creator unless otherwise agreed.

By accepting funding, applicants grant Arts North West permission to use project images, project information and evaluation material for reporting, promotional and advocacy purposes, with appropriate acknowledgement of the artist or organisation.

Privacy

Arts North West collects personal information solely for the purpose of administering the Annual Micro Grants Program.

Information may be used for:

- assessing applications
- administering funding agreements
- reporting to funding bodies
- program evaluation
- auditing requirements
- promoting funded projects where appropriate.

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and applicable privacy legislation.

Insurance

Applicants are responsible for obtaining and maintaining any insurance required to deliver their project.

Depending on the nature of the activity, this may include:

- Public Liability Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance

- Volunteer Insurance
- Workers Compensation Insurance.

Arts North West accepts no responsibility for any loss, damage or liability arising from funded activities.

Work Health and Safety (WHS)

Applicants are responsible for ensuring their project complies with all relevant Work Health and Safety legislation.

Where required, applicants must:

- identify and manage project risks
- obtain necessary permits and approvals
- provide a safe environment for participants, audiences, artists and volunteers
- comply with venue and event safety requirements.

Projects delivered in public spaces must comply with the relevant local authority requirements.

Financial Management

Successful applicants are responsible for managing grant funds responsibly and in accordance with the approved budget.

Grant funds:

- must only be spent on the approved project
- cannot be used for purposes outside the approved application without prior written approval
- must be supported by appropriate financial records, invoices and receipts.

Applicants are encouraged to maintain accurate financial records throughout the life of the project.

Project Variations

Projects should be delivered as approved.

If circumstances require significant changes to the project, including changes to:

- project scope
- budget
- timeline
- key personnel
- location

the applicant must seek written approval from Arts North West before implementing the change.

Approval is not automatic and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring and Audit

Arts North West reserves the right to monitor funded projects to ensure compliance with the

Funding Agreement.

Applicants may be requested to provide:

- financial records
- receipts and invoices
- project documentation
- photographs
- evaluation information
- evidence of project delivery.

Arts North West also reserves the right to audit funded projects for a period of up to seven (7) years following project completion, in accordance with organisational governance and funding obligations.

Funding Acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge the support of Arts North West in all promotional material, media releases, websites, social media, printed publications and public communications associated with the funded project.

Where applicable, applicants must also acknowledge funding partners and use the approved acknowledgement wording and logos supplied by Arts North West.

Copies of promotional material may be requested as part of the acquittal process.

Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Arts North West before grant funds are released.

The Funding Agreement outlines:

- payment conditions
- reporting requirements
- project milestones
- acknowledgement requirements
- acquittal obligations
- funding conditions.

Failure to comply with the Funding Agreement may result in grant payments being withheld, repayment of funds, or ineligibility for future Arts North West funding programs.

Arts North West's Rights

Arts North West reserves the right to:

- request further information from applicants;
- verify any information provided in an application;
- seek advice from independent experts where required;

- offer full or partial funding;
- impose additional conditions on successful applications;
- withdraw or amend a funding offer where eligibility requirements or funding conditions are not met;
- suspend or cancel the funding round if circumstances require.

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

By submitting an application, applicants acknowledge that they have read and understood these Guidelines and agree to comply with all program requirements and funding conditions if successful.

14. Contact Us

Discussion with an Arts North West staff member is a mandatory eligibility requirement for all CASP applicants. Applicants must contact Arts North West prior to submitting their application to discuss their proposed project and confirm its eligibility. Applicants are encouraged to contact Arts North West well before the closing date, as assistance may not be available immediately prior to applications closing.

Please note: Arts North West staff can provide advice on eligibility, application requirements and the funding process; however, staff cannot write applications or guarantee the success of any application.

Contact Details

Arts North West

Email: rado@artsnw.com.au or office@artsnw.com.au

Phone (02) 6732 4988 or Executive Director Lauren Mackley: 0493 316 463

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants include:

- Incorporated not-for-profit organisations
- Local government authorities
- Aboriginal organisations
- Incorporated community groups
- Arts organisations
- Unincorporated groups with an eligible administering body.

Applicants must also meet all eligibility requirements outlined in these guidelines.

Can an individual artist apply?

No.

Individual artists are not eligible to apply directly for CASP funding.

However, individual artists may be engaged and paid as part of a project delivered by an eligible organisation or administering body.

Can an unincorporated group apply?

Yes.

If your group is not incorporated, you may apply through an eligible administering body.

The administering body accepts legal and financial responsibility for the grant and must agree to manage the funding on behalf of the project.

What is an administering body?

If your group is not incorporated, you can still apply for a grant if you have an administering body. An administering body is a legally constituted organisation that will take legal and financial responsibility for a grant if awarded. A signed letter from the administering body will be required. If a grant is awarded, the administering body must also sign the Conditions for Payment of Grant form and is responsible for reporting on the grant within three months of the project's completion. All correspondence and monies will be directed to the administering body.

It is recommended that grant applicants enter into a written agreement with their nominated administering body highlighting respective rights and responsibilities.

Can schools apply?

Schools are generally not eligible to apply.

However, an incorporated Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) or another eligible incorporated organisation may apply on behalf of a school-based community arts project.

Projects must extend beyond normal curriculum activities.

Can councils apply?

Yes.

Local government authorities are eligible to apply where the project aligns with the objectives of CASP.

Can I purchase equipment?

Generally, no.

CASP is intended to support project delivery rather than the purchase of equipment or capital assets.

Can artist fees be included?

Yes.

Professional artist fees are strongly encouraged and are one of the primary purposes of CASP funding.

Applicants should budget fairly for artists in accordance with industry standards wherever possible.

Do I have to speak with Arts North West before applying?

Yes.

All applicants must discuss their proposed project with an Arts North West staff member before submitting an application.

This is a mandatory eligibility requirement.

The discussion helps confirm eligibility, identify any supporting documentation required and ensure your project aligns with the objectives of CASP.

Why do I need Public Liability Insurance?

Public Liability Insurance protects your organisation and participants in the event that someone suffers injury or property damage during your project.

A current Certificate of Currency is required for all applicants.

What if my organisation has an outstanding acquittal?

Organisations with outstanding acquittals or overdue reporting obligations with Arts North West are not eligible to apply until these obligations have been met.

How are applications assessed?

Applications are assessed competitively by a Regional Assessment Panel against three assessment criteria:

- Artistic and Cultural Merit
- Community Impact
- Project Viability

The panel also considers how well the project aligns with the objectives of CASP.

Does meeting the eligibility criteria guarantee funding?

No.

CASP is a competitive grants program.

Meeting the eligibility requirements means your application can be assessed, but funding is not guaranteed.

Can I receive partial funding?

Yes.

Arts North West may recommend funding an amount less than that requested where appropriate.

Applicants should ensure their budget identifies essential project costs.

Can I change my project after funding has been approved?

Minor changes may be approved.

Significant changes to the project scope, budget, timeline or location must receive written approval from Arts North West before they occur.

What happens if my project is delayed?

If unforeseen circumstances affect your project, contact Arts North West as soon as possible.

Extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis but are not guaranteed.

What do I need to submit at the end of the project?

Successful applicants must submit an acquittal that includes:

- a final project report
- evidence of project outcomes
- photographs or promotional material
- financial reporting
- receipts or invoices if requested.

What happens if I don't submit my acquittal?

Failure to submit an acquittal may result in:

- repayment of grant funds;
- ineligibility for future Arts North West or Create NSW funding; and
- additional reporting requirements.