

NSW Seniors Festival Grant Program 2027 Guidelines

July 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities and Justice acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this document.

NSW Seniors Festival Grant Program 2027 Guidelines

Published by Department of Communities and Justice

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Key Dates and information

Grant applications open	8 July 2026
Grant applications close	12 August 2026
Grant applications assessed	August/September 2026
Application outcomes advised	October 2026
Grant program results published	November 2026
Successful applicant's contracts issued	November/December 2026
Grant projects delivery dates	1 March – 14 March 2027
Final acquittal due	14 April 2027
Decision-maker	DCJ Delegated Decision Maker
NSW Government Agency	Department of Communities and Justice
Type of grant opportunity	Open Competitive
Grant value	Total grant funds: \$200,000 Category 1 - \$2,000 to \$5,000 Category 2 - \$5,001 to \$10,000
Enquiries	nswseniorsfestival@dcj.nsw.gov.au

NSW Seniors Festival Grant 2027 Guidelines

The NSW Seniors Festival Grant Program is administered by the NSW Seniors Festival Events team within the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

These guidelines should be read prior to applying for the grant, as they contain important information that will assist in completing the application form.

1. Overview

The NSW Seniors Festival Grant Program 2027 provides \$200,000 in funding for community events and activities during the two-week festival period in March, which enables older community members to remain active, healthy and engaged.

Every year the festival provides hundreds of free and discounted programs and activities, with the grant program aiming for the best use and a broad distribution of funds to maximise the benefit for seniors across NSW.

1.1 Objectives and outcomes

The grant program encourages seniors in NSW to enjoy new experiences, continue learning, stay active and connected to their communities through:

- supporting a broad range of local community organisations
- supporting programs and activities in rural and regional NSW
- fostering partnerships with community groups and services
- providing programs and activities for diverse communities in NSW
- supporting projects that empower older people to stay connected
- assisting organisations to increase capacity of current programs and activities.

Events should align with the objectives of the NSW Seniors Festival, that is to encourage seniors to enjoy new experiences, continue learning, stay active and to connect with their communities.

Applications can be for any size or number of activities to be held during the 2027 festival period.

The NSW Seniors Festival Grant program aims for the best use and a broad distribution of funds to extend the benefit for seniors across NSW.

1.2 Target audience

The NSW Seniors Festival, presented by the NSW Government, is an established state-wide festival for people aged over 60, over 50 for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander, and people with a life-long disability.

It is the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and in 2026 attracted about 50,000 people at approximately 50 events across metropolitan and regional areas.

The festival commenced in 1958 and in 2027 will mark its 69th year.

The festival aligns with the Department of Community and Justice's [Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021 – 2031](#), meeting the priorities of focus area two, “participating in inclusive communities” and focus area three “staying safe, active and healthy”.

By promoting social inclusion and connection and encourages older people to attend events and become involved in art, sport, music, entertainment, technology, travel, health, wellbeing and recreation.

1.3 Eligibility criteria

All grant applicants are required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applications must be for free or heavily discounted programs or activities for seniors in NSW.
- Projects must be located within NSW.
- Events to be held between 1-14 March 2027, during the NSW Seniors Festival.
- Projects must be open to people in NSW aged 60+, 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as people with a life-long disability.

Applicants must be one of the following:

- Not for profit companies limited by guarantee, registered with the ACNC and/or with DGR status.
- NSW associations or non-distributing co-operatives registered with NSW Fair Trading.
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils or Indigenous corporations registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.
- NSW local councils operating under the Local Government Act 1993.
- Not-for-profit entities incorporated under an Act of Parliament.

The following are mandatory eligibility criteria:

- All applicants must have appropriate public liability insurance valued at a minimum of \$10 million (see section 1.9).
- All applicants must address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions (see section 1.8)

The following will see an organisation deemed ineligible:

- Receiving or having received government assistance from another program for the proposed project.
- Applications will not be accepted from organisations that have outstanding acquittals with DCJ. Or who have not met project requirements, including acquittal and reporting, for funding received from DCJ in the previous two years.

Please note: Only one application will be considered for funding for each project.

1.4 Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. The application demonstrates how it meets the objectives and outcomes of the program.
2. The project activities are engaging and accessible, wherever possible, to the target audience.
3. The proposal should represent value for money, offering a cost-effective approach, with efficient use of resources.
4. The applicant has organisational capacity and capability to deliver the project.
5. A demonstrated plan to collaborate and engage with relevant stakeholders.

1.5 Prioritisation

Priority for funding under the grant program will be given to the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
- Rural and regional service providers and local councils.

1.6 Funding categories

The total allocated funding for the NSW Seniors Festival Grant 2027 Program is \$200,000.

There are two categories of funding available in 2027:

- Category 1 - \$2,000 to \$5,000 open to all eligible applicants for NSW local community programs and activities.
- Category 2 - \$5,001 to \$10,000 restricted to NSW Local Councils operating under the Local Government Act 1993, to hold large scale community and regional programs and activities.

Funds can only be used for expenses directly associated with the grant. Your application must clearly outline your proposed expenditure within the budget included in the application form.

1.7 Grant funds exclusions

Grant funds, including any interest earned, must not be used for the following:

- any activity of a commercial nature that is for-profit.
- existing debt or budget deficits.
- capital works, including building work.
- permanent salaries/wages (costs for temporary tutors/instructors for your program or activity can be included).
- permanent equipment purchases, for example tables and computers.
- business as usual costs or general operating expenses, e.g. morning teas or regular activities.
- prizes, competition or awards (e.g. cash giveaways, lucky door prizes, raffle prizes).
- programs or activities that encourage gambling such as bingo, or the consumption of alcohol.
- programs and activities coordinated by NSW Government departments and statutory authorities.
- the same project twice. For example, two different organisations cannot apply for funds for the same program or activity.

1.8 National Redress Scheme

The NSW Government will not award a Grant Funding Arrangement to a non-government organisation with Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that non-government organisation:

- has declined to join the Scheme, or
- after being notified of the requirement to join the Scheme, has failed to do so within 6 months.

[Visit the website](#) for further information about the [National Redress Scheme](#) sanctions.

1.9 Insurance

Grant recipients must have a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

Applicants will be asked to provide a Certificate of Currency for this insurance in the application form. Additionally, applicants should maintain adequate insurance appropriate to the activities/services funded under this grant, to cover any liability that might arise.

If your organisation is not covered by the appropriate insurance, you will need to approach another organisation (such as your local council or an incorporated not-for-profit) to sponsor your application so that your project will be covered under their insurance.

2. Application Process

Before you start your application please read these

Guidelines. Applications close on **12 August 2026 at 4:00 pm**.

- Late submissions will not be accepted.
- Applications for this grant are submitted and managed using the *SmartyGrants* portal.
- Applications will be assessed based on the eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in this guide.
- If you are using a Sponsoring Body you will need to have details of their authorised signatories and banking account, to complete the application form.
- Evidence that is required to be submitted with the application includes your Public Liability insurance Certificate of Currency and a copy of your bank account statement showing BSB and Account number.
- When your application is successfully submitted you will receive an automated email from SmartyGrants that includes an application ID number. Please keep this reference number and use it in any communications regarding the grant.
- All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.
- Only one application for funding will be accepted per organisation per project.
- Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The NSW Seniors Festival Grant 2027 Program is competitive.

NB. Please ensure that your contact details in SmartyGrants are kept up to date.

2.1 Summary of assessment process

- Applications are reviewed by the eligibility team for eligibility and compliance with grant guidelines and eligible criteria.
- Eligible applications are then assessed by 2 independent assessors, randomly selected from the assessment team.
- The assessment team's report is reviewed by an assessment panel, and recommendations are made to the Decision-Maker.
- A delegated DCJ officer is the final decision-maker, as per the NSW Grants Administration Guide.
- Applicants are then formally notified of the outcome of their application.

2.2 Banking details

It is your responsibility to provide the correct bank account details for funds transfer, should your application be successful Funds transferred to an incorrect bank account may not be recoverable.

3 Successful Grant Applications

3.1 Grant Funding Agreement

Successful applicants are required to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

The Grant Funding Agreement must be signed by the two authorised persons nominated in your application.

The application, Grant Funding Agreement and acquittal for the grant will be managed using the SmartyGrants management system and Adobe Acrobat Sign.

Once we receive the signed Grant Funding Agreement DCJ will countersign the agreement and return it by email. Payments will then be processed and paid into your nominated bank account.

NB. The grant offer may be withdrawn if the funding agreement is not signed within 14 days of receipt.

3.2 Authorised signatories

- Agreements can only be signed by authorised officers of your organisation. This may be a member of the executive/committee as deemed under the Articles of Association or Constitution for a not-for-profit organisation, or the General Manager or delegated officer if you are a council.
- Authorised signatories' details (name, email address, phone number and position) are included in the application form. To enable the Adobe Acrobat Sign function to work correctly the email addresses must be unique to the individual signatory.
- It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure nominated authorised signatories will be available to sign the funding agreement within the required timeframe.

3.3 Variations

Any variations to the Grant Funding Agreement, including scope, location or time frames outlined in the application form and Grant Program Guidelines must be formally requested and approved in writing. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

- To discuss a variation contact NSW Seniors Festival team nswseniorsfestival@dcj.nsw.gov.au or DCJ Grant Design and Support GrantDesignandSupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

3.4 Promoting your event

The NSW Seniors Festival Events team is responsible for administering the grant program for DCJ and will supply successful applicants with a short guide on how to promote their event to encourage attendance.

This guide includes information and digital assets to assist with:

- How to get your event listed on websites and newsletters/newspapers in your area
- Social media promotion
- Taking photographs at your event
- Poster templates
- Other practical information

3.5 Performance, monitoring and reporting

Grant recipients will be required to complete a Final Report, including a financial acquittal, in the SmartyGrants portal, on the project outcomes at the conclusion of the project.

- All projects must be completed by Sunday, 14 March 2027.
- The Final Report is due no later than 14 April 2027. DCJ will notify you when the final acquittal form is available in the SmartyGrants portal.
- It is a requirement that all financial records related to grant expenditure and acquittal be retained by the committee of the organisation for seven years. If the committee changes, these documents must be forwarded to the new incoming committee.
- Please note that any photographs or videos containing images of participants and/or staff submitted in the Final Report must be accompanied by a signed [DCJ still and moving images consent form](#).

3.6 Unspent project funds

If a grant recipient's project is completed and there are unspent project funds of more than \$250, these funds must be returned to the Department of Communities and Justice unless otherwise specified in the grant funding agreement.

Alternatively, the recipient may request a project extension to deliver the approved project.

3.7 Publication of grant information

The NSW Grants Administration Guide requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded, no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the guide and Appendix A to the guide at the link below).

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/grants-administration-guide>

This information is also open access under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (see section 4.3), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

4. Additional Information

4.1 Feedback and Appeals

If your application is not successful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Funding is limited and not all applications are successful. Due to the high volume of applications, we are unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

4.2 Access to information

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, known as the GIPA Act, establishes a proactive, more open approach to gaining access to government information in NSW. The objects of the GIPA Act are to maintain and advance a system of responsible and representative democratic Government that is open, accountable, fair and effective. Documents submitted as part of your application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act.

Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information, and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

The NSW Legislative Council in NSW Parliament also has the power to order that government papers be provided under Standing Order 52.

4.3 Complaint handling

Any complaints should be sent in writing to nswseniorsfestival@dcj.nsw.gov.au

4.4 Ethical conduct

Conflict of interest management

Conflicts of interest between DCJ and applicants are managed in accordance with the DCJ Code of Ethical Conduct. Declarations of any conflict of interest are made and recorded by all persons involved in performing functions related to the grant assessment process.

DCJ staff who assist an applicant with an application will not be involved in assessment for that application.

Confidentiality

Information relating to the successful applications, including the name of the applicant, description of the funded project and the funding amount, will be included in:

- Public media releases.
- An announcement on the DCJ website.
- The NSW Grants finder website.
- DCJ social media.

4.5 Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. The authors, publishers and any person involved in the preparation of this publication take no responsibility for loss occurring to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of information contained herein.

Department of Communities and Justice

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www.seniorsfestival.nsw.gov.au