

Backing Indigenous Arts

Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund

2025-26 Round Guidelines

What is the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Program (IRADF)?

Queensland Government's Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) initiative aims to build sustainable and ethical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industries. This initiative aligns with the Maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives priority of [Queensland's Time to Shine](#): 10-year strategy for arts and culture 2025-2035.

Delivered through the BIA initiative, the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund (IRADF) is a partnership between the Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland, and 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils, including the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).

The BIA IRADF 2025-26 Round program provides funding to eligible organisations for arts and cultural activities that support:

- **Cultural Maintenance** - keeping culture strong through passing on of cultural knowledge and practice by recognised, respected Elders, leaders and peers.
- **Arts Development** – community and individuals' arts practice, participation and skills development.

Queensland Government Commitments

Arts Queensland is committed to realising the ambitions of the *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Framework*, the *Queensland Multicultural Policy*, the *Young Queenslanders Strategy* and the *National Arts and Disability Strategy*. In addition to engaging local communities, applicants are encouraged to explore how IRADF funded activities could engage the following target groups:

- older people (over 55-years-old)
- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Australian South Sea Islander peoples
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- young people
- people with disability
- LGBTIQ+

Who can apply?

The following Queensland Indigenous Councils are eligible to apply:

- Aurukun Shire Council
- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
- Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council
- HopeVale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mornington Shire Council
- Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Torres Strait Regional Authority
- Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

Eligible Queensland Indigenous Councils may authorise an associated Indigenous Art Centre (IAC) (recognised by Arts Queensland) to apply for IRADF funding on their behalf. Those applications should include a letter from the Council Chief Executive Officer, authorising the IAC to apply on their behalf.

Indigenous Art Centre applicants must demonstrate how the proposed IRADF activity is different to existing IAC funded projects.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for IRADF 2025-26 Round all applicants must:

- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN) that is in the name of the applicant.
- Have satisfied the reporting requirements of any previous Arts Queensland funding.
- Be one of the 16 listed eligible Councils (or an IAC authorised by a relevant Council listed above) to be considered for IRADF funding.

Applications will be deemed ineligible if:

- they are submitted after the closing date
- they are incomplete or do not contain all relevant support material
- the activities to be funded occur outside the IRADF funding period
- the application is seeking support for activities that are already funded by Arts Queensland
- the applicant has any outstanding Arts Queensland reporting.

How much can you apply for?

In 2025-26 each eligible applicant can apply for up to \$25,000 to support a program of activities.

Delivery can commence from 01 December 2025 and all activities must be complete by 01 November 2026.

Applicants may consider applying for funding above this amount where they can provide strong justification, including:

- Confirmed financial cash contribution from the applicant, or they have secured partners who are investing in their local IRADF program (other than Arts Queensland).
- Demonstrated capacity for exceptional delivery of IRADF objectives.

Applicants must not assume they will receive the amount of funding requested or enter into commitments based on that assumption before receiving formal notification of the outcome of their funding request. Nor should applicants assume that they will receive the same level of funding again in the future.

When are applications due?

- Applications will open on Monday 12 September 2025 and close on Friday 24 October 2025.
- Applications must be submitted online by 5 pm on the closing date.
- Retrospective funding requests will not be considered.
- Funded activities must not commence until signed Funding Agreements have been returned and accepted by Arts Queensland.

The IRADF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are included in the email notification sent to you and can be found on the [Arts Qld Website](#)

should be read in conjunction with these guidelines.

Assessment criteria

When preparing your application, you should address the following assessment criteria:

1. Quality

- Produces or contributes to high-quality arts and cultural activity for the local community.
- Proven capacity to effectively support and deliver arts and cultural activities.

2. Reach

- Provides access to, and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural activities for the community, practitioners and participants.
- Demonstrates that cultural knowledge and practice will be passed on in an appropriate way by respected Elders, leaders and peers.

3. Impact

- Demonstrates cultural, artistic, social or economic returns on investment

4. Viability

- Evidence of good planning for strong governance and management of IRADF at a local level

In addition to the applicant's ability to meet the assessment criteria, the following will also be considered:

- The diverse nature of Queensland communities.
- Broader Queensland and Indigenous council priorities pertaining to the importance of industry development and community within a region.

How to apply

IRADF applications are managed online through SmartyGrants. You can save and continue working on an application until the round closing date. Visit the following web link to access the IRADF application form:

<https://artsqueensland.smartygrants.com.au/IRADF2025-26>

Emailed or hand-delivered applications cannot be accepted.

For support with technical issues related to the online application, please contact Arts Queensland toll free on 1800 175 531.

Incomplete or late applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed. You will receive an email notifying you that your application has been received. If you have not received an acknowledgement within 10-days of submitting your application, please contact Arts Queensland toll free on 1800 175 531.

How is my application assessed?

IRADF applications are checked for eligibility by Arts Queensland staff. All eligible applications are assessed by members of the assessment panel of Queensland Government representatives who identify as Indigenous with understanding of the regional context relating to each applicant. The panel will assess your application against the assessment criteria and moderate with consideration of available funding, balance across IRADF objectives, geographic spread, and government priorities. The panel makes funding recommendations which are approved by the relevant delegate within the department.

Acquitting an approved application

To acquit the grant, you must complete an IRADF outcome report within the SmartyGrants platform within 30-business-days of completing the project or program.

Arts Queensland may request the return of grant funds if they are unspent at the time of acquittal, or due to breaches of the funding guidelines.

Important information for all applicants

Please refer to the document Important Information for Applicants included in the email notification sent to you and can also be found on the [Arts Qld Website](#)

- Information privacy and Right to Information.
- Process for feedback and review of decisions for unsuccessful applications.
- Agreements and contracts, acknowledgements, reporting and acquittal requirements for successful applications.

Translating and interpreting services

Applications may be submitted in any language. If you have difficulty understanding this information and would like to talk to a staff member in your first language:

- Telephone the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 during business hours.
- Contact Arts Queensland about speaking with an interpreter.

Contact us

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Arts Queensland general enquiries telephone toll free 1800 175 531, reception@arts.qld.gov.au