

# Peer Assessor Handbook

## Contents

1.0 Introduction .....	3
2.0 Arts and Cultural Investment Framework.....	3
3.0 Terms of reference.....	4
4.0 Role of Arts Queensland .....	6
5.0 Assessment process .....	7
6.0 Obligations and legislative requirements .....	8
7.0 Code of conduct .....	9
8.0 Conflicts of interest.....	10
9.0 Responding to diversity .....	12
10.0 Fees and reimbursements .....	14
Contact details .....	16
Attachment A - Peer Assessor Agreement.....	17

## 1.0 Introduction

Arts Queensland (AQ) is committed to best practice assessment processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible. Peer assessors provide independent reviews, moderation and recommendations on applications to all of AQ's investment programs.

Peer assessment provides input from individuals with specialist knowledge relevant to specific art forms and arts and cultural contexts. It is critical to transparent funding decisions.

The Peer Assessor Handbook will be your guide through AQ's assessment processes and outlines your terms of reference, role, responsibilities and obligations as an independent peer assessor.

The consideration of funding applications and the provision of expert advice is a confidential process guided by the [Code-of-Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#). However, you must be aware that the applicants and others may have legal rights to access your documents and comments (see: Right to Information Act 2009 in *Legislative Requirements* section on page 7).

## 2.0 Arts and Cultural Investment Framework

The Queensland Government's approach to investing in arts and culture is outlined in AQ's [Arts and Cultural Investment Framework](#), available on the AQ website. The framework sets out why AQ invests in Queensland's arts and culture, the principles of investment, what we invest in, how those investments are made and how outcomes are reviewed, evaluated and shared.

Competitive funds are open to artists and organisations delivering arts and cultural outcomes for Queensland.

Funding approved for individuals, projects, programs and organisations is published online to ensure transparency, while funded applicants are required to provide an acquittal report on the outcomes of their work, expenditure and income. Case studies and other data is drawn from these reports and published online to inform better arts and cultural practice.

### Principles of investment

The following principles underpin the *Arts and Cultural Investment Framework*. Together, these principles aim to create a viable, resilient and innovative arts and cultural sector delivering great outcomes for all Queenslanders, and positioning Queensland arts, culture and artists on the national and global stages.

**Return driven** – we invest to deliver quality artistic, cultural, social and economic returns for Queensland.

**Managed risk** – we invest along the spectrum of arts and cultural activity, from high to low risk, from development to growth, from new ideas to evidenced demand.

**Customers first** – our investment is informed by what Queenslanders want and need.

**Diversity** – we invest to capitalise on Queensland's diversity, including diverse locales, scales and forms of arts practice, heritage, cultures, ethnicities, age groups and abilities.

**Local** – we invest in local arts and culture and support local decision-making.

**Transparency and accountability** – we ensure our behaviour is transparent and accountable, from assessing proposals to reporting on investment outcomes.

Peer assessors will be provided with the following materials for recommended reading in conjunction with this handbook:

- the relevant program guidelines and FAQs
- the *Arts and Cultural Investment Framework*.

### 3.0 Terms of reference

The role of peer assessors is to:

- Assess eligible applications within the timeframe designated by program managers and participate in moderations as required
- Provide unbiased expert advice and recommendations to AQ for approval of the Minister or delegate
- Participate in periodic meetings coordinated by AQ to provide feedback on the assessment process.

#### Expressions of Interest process

Peer assessors are appointed by AQ through an open Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

Industry experts with thorough knowledge of the Queensland arts and cultural sector are invited to submit an online EOI at anytime through AQ's website.

EOIs should meet the below eligibility criteria, including a current curriculum vitae, and address the evaluation criteria below.

#### Eligibility criteria

EOIs must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- evidence of a thorough understanding of Queensland's arts and cultural sector
- documentation evidencing art form experience and expertise (curriculum vitae)
- no outstanding AQ funding acquittals.

#### Evaluation criteria

EOIs will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- experience and expertise in at least one art form
- recognised leadership within the arts and cultural sector, including strong connections and networks
- capacity to take a strategic position across art forms.

#### Agreement

Appointed peer assessors will be required to sign the Peer Assessor Agreement electronically through AQ's online system (see example at Attachment A).

### **Term of appointment and revocation**

Peers are invited to register their EOI at any time and, if approved, will be contracted for a term of up to three years. An assessor may resign at any time during the contracted period, by signed notice to the Deputy Director-General.

### **Peer register**

A register of currently contracted peer assessors is published on the AQ website:

<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/aq-funding/peer-assessment>

### **Compliance**

Peer assessors providing assessment services must abide by the *Peer Assessor Handbook*, [Code-of-Conduct for the Queensland Public Service \(Code\)](#) and the Letter of Confirmation and Agreement executed online through AQ's online system (see example at Attachment A).

### **Induction arrangements**

AQ will provide a comprehensive briefing for all peer assessors. Areas to be covered during the induction include:

- respective roles and functions of peer assessors, AQ and the Minister for the Arts
- governance framework and relevant administrative arrangements
- *Code of Conduct* and ethics obligations
- remuneration, fees and allowances, and
- overview of the scope of AQ's functions.

### **AQ's online system**

Peers must access AQ's [online system](#) to undertake their duties. Peers can log in to the system using their email address and password to:

- Express interest in being appointed as a peer assessor
- Agree to the Peer Assessor Agreement
- Access applications, including support materials, allocated to them for assessment
- Enter assessment scores and comments for applications.

### **Performance monitoring**

Peer assessor performance will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Director-General so that learnings from its establishment, protocols and operations can be monitored and updated.

### **Quorum**

No business shall be conducted at a meeting of peer assessors unless there is a quorum present. A quorum shall meet the minimum requirements of the fund.

### **Amendment**

These protocols may be amended from time to time by AQ.

## 4.0 Role of Arts Queensland

The role of AQ in the assessment process is focused on eligibility checks, support and advice for applicants and assessors and administration processes, including moderating assessor deliberations, contracting successful applications and reporting.

### **Moderation**

In the instance of inconsistent assessment recommendations, AQ will determine if assessments require moderation and will convene assessors to facilitate a moderation discussion in order to reach consensus. Moderation discussion is recorded by AQ to report the assessment and moderation recommendations to the Minister for the Arts, or delegate, for consideration and approval.

### **Reporting**

AQ will report to the Deputy Director-General following the completion of the assessment process. The report will include the following:

- a list of applications to be considered including details of the amount requested
- a list of the applications recommended for funding included relevant moderation comments for each
- a list of the applications not recommended for funding including a statement of reasons for each decision
- statistical information about the applications received in that round
- any other information relevant to peer assessor recommendations.

### **Risk management systems**

AQ will incorporate appropriate systems of internal control and risk management for the peer assessors in their provision of assessment services. The Deputy Director-General will be kept informed of any known major risks to the operation of the Peer Assessment Program and be provided with advice regarding mitigation of any such risks that may arise.

### **Assessment panels**

AQ establishes assessment panels and assigns assessors to applications based on a number of key considerations. This may include: art form, expertise requirements, specialty areas, cultural considerations, regional representation, diversity and gender balance. Once registered as a peer assessor, it is not guaranteed you will be selected to undertake assessment.

## 5.0 Assessment process



## 6.0 Obligations and legislative requirements

### Right to Information and Judicial Review Acts

Funding decisions are subject to the *Judicial Review Act 1991* and written communications including assessment reports are subject to the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. Your comments and conclusions should therefore be professional and supported by clear and objective references to the evidence and/or other material on which your findings were based.

### Conflict of Interest

Your comments should be objective and without personal or professional bias. If you feel there is potential for real or perceived bias in relation to a particular application, you should advise AQ and you will not be able to participate in that particular assessment. Further information on Conflict of Interest can be found on page 10 of this handbook.

### Deadlines

Peer assessors are required to complete and submit their assessment reports online by the due date advised by the AQ Program Manager.

### *Judicial Review Act 1991*

The Minister's decision regarding the assessment of applications is subject to the *Judicial Review Act 1991*.

This means that applicants can request, in writing, within 28 days of receiving notification of the decision, a written statement in relation to the decision of the Minister.

Applicants may also apply to the Supreme Court for a review of the decision made on their application.

Peer assessors must be scrupulous in recording their written advice and the reasons for their assessment. Comments, notations and statements must refer to the assessment criteria of the fund and should be supported by clear and objective references to the evidence and/or other material on which findings are based, as well as the reasons for conclusions.

The forms on which peer assessors record their assessments are designed to ensure that proper decision-making processes are observed and that the requirements of the Act are met.

### *Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009*

All documents held by AQ, including written advice, are subject to the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

The *Right to Information Act 2009* gives people the right to access documents held by the Minister for the Arts, State Government Departments, Local Councils and most semi-government agencies and statutory bodies.

The *Information Privacy Act 2009* gives individuals the right to access documents held by those agencies and which contain the individual's personal information.

Personal information is “information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion”.

Documents include files, computerised information, audio-visual material and other means of storing information, no matter how old or recent.

Peer assessors must ensure that notations or statements on assessment documents are objective, professional, appropriate and unbiased.

### **Public Records Act 2002**

Under the *Public Records Act 2002*, AQ is responsible for ensuring the safe custody and preservation of its public records.

While documents provided to peer assessors during the assessment process are for the use of assessment, they remain the property of the Queensland Government.

All documents should be returned to AQ on completion of the advice.

## **7.0 Code of conduct**

Peer assessors are bound by the [Code-of-Conduct for the Queensland Public Service \(Code\)](#) For the purposes of the Code, employees (other than judicial officials) are defined as:

- any Queensland public service agency employee whether permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual, and
- any volunteer, student, contractor, consultant or anyone who works in any other capacity for a Queensland public service agency.

The Code contains the ethics principles and associated values prescribed by the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (PSEA). It also contains standards of conduct for each ethics principle.

The ethics principles are:

- Integrity and impartiality
- Promoting the public good
- Commitment to the system of government
- Accountability and transparency.

### **Peer assessors should note in particular the requirements to:**

- ensure any advice provided is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial
- ensure decision making is ethical
- disclose a personal interest that could, now or in the future, be seen as influencing the performance of duties, in accordance with agency policies and procedures

- actively participate in developing and implementing resolution strategies for any conflict of interest, and
- ensure that any conflict of interest is resolved in the public interest
- maintain the confidentiality of information that is not publicly available
- be aware that personal comments about a public issue may compromise our capacity to perform the duties of our role in an independent, unbiased manner
- treat co-workers, clients and members of the public with courtesy and respect, be appropriate in relationships with them, and recognise that others have the right to hold differing views
- deliver services fairly, courteously, effectively, and ensure efficient and economical use of resources
- apply due care in work, and provide accurate and impartial advice to all clients whether members of the public, public service agencies, or any level of government
- treat all people equitably and consistently, and demonstrate the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice when making decisions
- manage gifts, benefits or hospitality in accordance with agency policies.

## 8.0 Conflicts of interest

Peer assessors who have an actual, perceived or potential direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered shall, as soon as the relevant facts have come to their knowledge, disclose verbally and in writing the nature of the interest to the relevant program manager.

The peer assessor must immediately withdraw from providing advice on any application in the round if they have an actual conflict of interest and return the application and all relevant documentation to AQ.

In instances where there is a perceived or potential conflict of interest, or the conflict is deemed minor, the relevant Program Manager will determine on a case-by-case basis if the peer assessor concerned should withdraw from discussion and/or decision-making in relation to the round. All such disclosures are recorded by AQ.

Peer assessors cannot take part in the assessment of an application if they are an applicant or a major beneficiary of an application.

Peer assessors must not solicit or accept any benefit, advantage or promise of future advantage whether for themselves, their immediate family or any business concern or trust with which they are associated, unless specifically authorised to do so by the Deputy Director-General, AQ.

Peer assessors must not enter into any communication with an applicant regarding his/her application.

All materials provided to assessors in the normal duties of their work, including emailed documents, must be deleted at the conclusion of any assessment process.

Additional conflict of interest information is available in the [Code-of-Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#).

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the Conflict of Interest policy please contact AQ (contact details listed on page 16).

## 9.0 Responding to diversity

Applications may sometimes involve and/or benefit diverse people and communities. When considering these applications, it may be helpful to consider the following issues.

### **Applications involving Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples should consider:**

- endorsement of the relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community;
- representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures;
- knowledge of the appropriate cultural protocols;
- skills of individual artists/cultural workers/consultants;
- development of sustainable skills within the community; and
- development of audiences for, and participation in, the cultural activity.

### **Applications involving culturally and linguistically diverse peoples should consider:**

- knowledge of cultural issues;
- support/endorsement of culturally diverse communities/groups involved;
- contribution to a multicultural Queensland, the cultural development of diverse communities and/or their participation in Queensland's cultural life;
- development of audiences for and participation in the cultural activity;
- advancement of the skills of and/or promotion of Queensland's culturally diverse artistic talents;
- appropriate presentation of cultural diversity in a new or innovative way; and
- promotion of cross-cultural acceptance and respect, without stereotyping.

### **Applications involving young people, defined as children (aged 0-11) and youth (aged 12 - 25), should consider:**

- young people as professional artists and arts and cultural workers leading the project;
- opportunity in the project for the professional development of young artists and artswomen;
- the applicant's experience in creating cultural product for, by and with young people; and
- the project is sensitive to the interest and context of the target audience.

### **Applications involving young people as participants in projects guided by professional artists should consider:**

- the applicant's experience in professional arts practice and in working with young people;
- the project encourages young people's creativity;
- young people will be able to develop skills throughout the project; and
- demonstration of support from and consultation with young people in the development and planning of the project.

### **Applications involving people with disabilities should consider:**

- direct benefits for people experiencing disabilities;
- employment and/or professional development opportunities for artists/arts and cultural workers experiencing disabilities;

- development of audiences for and participation in the cultural activity;
- knowledge of the issues relevant to people with disabilities and the project; and
- consultation was undertaken in developing the project.

## 10.0 Fees and reimbursements

Reimbursement type	Amount	Description
<b>Application assessment</b>	\$30 per application	This rate has been determined based on the nature of the peer assessor role and specific designated tasks to be undertaken including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing and moderating applications</li> <li>Making funding recommendations to the Deputy Director-General.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting</b>	\$141 for meetings $\leq$ 4hrs \$281 for meetings $\geq$ 4hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment panels will normally meet once per round to moderate applications. The Program Manager will confirm the length of the meeting.</li> <li>Arts Queensland may schedule one or two meetings a year to allow discussion of programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Travel</b>	To be approved by AQ prior to arrangements	<p>All travel arrangements will be based on current Queensland Government directives. This is an award-free arrangement subject to annual review.</p> <p>All necessary and reasonable expenses incurred while travelling on approved business and attending meetings of peer assessors may be paid to members in accordance with the following arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economy class air travel is used</li> <li>Motor vehicle allowances and travelling expenses in accordance with Ministerial directives on Motor Vehicle Allowances and Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses current at the time of the claim.</li> </ul>
<b>Reimbursements</b>	To be approved by AQ prior to arrangements	<p>All requests for reimbursement of business related expenditure (e.g. parking, postage etc.) must be made by the person incurring the expenditure, with a signed certification (Statutory Declaration) to the effect that the claim is correct, being the amount of the articles or services. Expenditure must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reasonable and be supported by evidence (receipts) sufficient to demonstrate such reasonableness when subjected to scrutiny;</li> <li>for official Departmental purposes;</li> <li>supported by documentation that is available for scrutiny by internal audit, the Auditor-General, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, or any other external body with a legal right to inspect such records;</li> <li>appropriately authorised by the Director Investment, AQ.</li> </ul>

### All peer assessors need to:

- submit a taxation compliant invoice including bank details to AQ staff so that payment can be made through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)
- Peer assessors with ABNs:** submit a taxation compliant invoice including the ABN and indicating GST registration, or
- Peer assessors without ABNs:** submit a completed *Statement by a Supplier* form which can be found at: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Forms/Statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-ABN/>

It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure they are eligible to claim remuneration.

### Public sector employees:

Assessors who are employees of federal or state government, employees of semi-government organisations, either federal or state, including statutory authorities and employees of state government owned corporations and colleges are not eligible to claim remuneration. Local government employees and employees of local government owned corporations and colleges are eligible to claim remuneration if their appointment as a peer assessor is not connected to their employment and assessments are undertaken out of work hours.

It is the peer assessor's responsibility to ensure AQ is invoiced for the work carried out. Peer assessors are encouraged to submit their invoices as soon as the work is performed and no later than May of that financial year.

**Please note:** AQ cannot give specialist advice about taxation or legal issues. Further information about tax issues is available from the [ATO's website](#) at or personal tax enquiries line 13 28 61.

## Contact details

### Arts Queensland – Brisbane

**Street address:** Level 16, 111 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

**Postal Address:** GPO Box 1436 Brisbane QLD 4001

**Telephone:** (07) 3034 4016

**Toll free:** 1800 175 531

### Arts Queensland – Cairns

**Street address:** Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns (CoCA),

96 Abbott Street, Cairns, QLD 4870

**Telephone:** (07) 4088 1010

**Email:** [investment@arts.qld.gov.au](mailto:investment@arts.qld.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.arts.qld.gov.au](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au)

## Attachment A – Peer Assessor Agreement

### Letter of Confirmation

It gives me great pleasure to advise you that your expression of interest to join Arts Queensland's (AQ) pool of peer assessors was successful.

AQ is committed to growing a vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural sector and recognises the important role peer assessors play in sharing specialist knowledge and ensuring equitable, transparent funding decisions are made.

To finalise your appointment, the following steps must be reviewed and completed:

- A. **Peer Assessor Agreement:** Please review, complete and submit this form. Once you submit this form, a legally binding Agreement will be formed. A copy of the Agreement will be emailed to you for your records.
- B. [Peer Assessor Handbook](#) outlines the terms of engagement including responsibilities, obligations, remuneration and entitlements that apply to peer assessors.
- C. [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#) sets out the conduct which peer assessors must abide by.

I can confirm that your three-year term as a Peer Assessor will commence on the date you submit this Agreement.

To support your role as an Arts Queensland peer assessor, you are encouraged to review the [resources](#) available on the AQ website.

If you have any questions in regards to your term, responsibilities or any information in the attachments enclosed, please feel free to contact the Peer Assessor Program Manager via telephone 07 3034 4016 or email [investment@arts.qld.gov.au](mailto:investment@arts.qld.gov.au).

On behalf of the agency, I thank you in advance for your contribution and hope you find the role to be a rewarding one.

Yours sincerely

Director Name  
Director Position  
**Investment**  
**Arts Queensland**  
Date

## Assessor Certification

I, the undersigned, declare that:

- I acknowledge that the terms of my engagement as an Arts Queensland (AQ) Peer Assessor requires that I adhere to the requirements outlined in the: *Peer Assessor Handbook* (Attachment 2) and *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* (Attachment 3) and which I have read and understood;
- I agree to abide by the *Peer Assessor Handbook* and *Code of Conduct* at all times in the performance of the tasks associated with my role as a Peer Assessor;
- I agree to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in accordance with the *Peer Assessor Handbook* and *Code of Conduct*;
- I acknowledge that AQ funding applicants and others may have legal rights to access documents and written comments prepared by me in carrying out my duties as a Peer Assessor under the *Right to Information Act 2009*;
- I consent to the publication of my name as part of the Peer Assessors Register published on the AQ website and disclosure of my personal information within AQ for administrative purposes;
- I agree to comply with Parts 1 and 3 of Chapter 2 of the Information Privacy Act 2009 as if I am Arts Queensland if I collect or have access to personal information, as defined in the Information Privacy Act 2009, in my role as peer assessor;
- I acknowledge this appointment is valid for three years from the date of this agreement.
- Please select one of the following:
  - I am eligible for remuneration for my services as a Peer Assessor as outlined in the *Peer Assessor Handbook* under 10.0 Fees and reimbursements.
  - I am not eligible for remuneration for my services as a Peer Assessor as outlined in the *Peer Assessor Handbook* under 10.0 Fees and reimbursements.
- I agree to the terms of the above Agreement. By selecting Yes and entering your name you are signing this Peer Assessor Agreement electronically and you agree to be legally bound by this Agreement.
  - Yes

Assessors Name: .....

Date: ..... / ..... / .....

'SUBMIT'