ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Freedom of Information Disclosure Log Publication Coversheet

The following information is provided pursuant to section 28 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

Application Details	
Ref. No.	CMTEDDFOI 2026-241
Date of Application	25 August 2026
Date of Decision	19 October 2026
Processing time (in working days)	38
Fees	N/A
Decision on Access	No Information Found
Information Requested (summary)	Arts ACT funding,
Publication Details	
Original application	☑ Published ☐ N/A
Decision notice	☑ Published ☐ N/A
Documents and schedule	☑ Published ☐ N/A
Decision made by Ombudsman	N/A
Additional information identified by Ombudsman	N/A
Decision made by ACAT	N/A
Additional information identified by ACAT	N/A

From: smartforms@act.gov.au
To: CMTEDD FOI
Subject: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241 - Freedom of Information (FOI) request, FTGGNGFG [SEC=, DLM=Sensitive: Personal]
Date: Tuesday, 25 August 2026 11:24:24 AM
Attachments:

Freedom of Information (FOI) request

Form data summary

Applicant name	Anonymous request
Responsible directorate	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Topic	Arts and Culture
Reference code	FTGGNGFG

For issues or questions relating to SmartForms please contact the Payment Services Integration Team on *5 4607 or email smartforms.admin@act.gov.au.

Freedom of Information (FOI) request - Submission confirmation

Your submission has been successful. Please keep a copy of this receipt for your records.

Date and time

25 Aug 2026 11:22:01 AM

Reference code

FTGGNGFG

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)

GPO Box 158
Canberra City, ACT 2601

Phone: 6207 7754
CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au

Applicant information

- [x] I want to submit this request anonymously

Assistance

Do you need assistance with preparing your request?

- ( ) Yes
- (•) No

Do you need an interpreter?

- ( ) Yes
- (•) No

Contact details

For your anonymous request to be valid, please provide at least one method of contact. This information will help us confirm the details of your request and/or deliver information to you once your request is completed.

Phone number

Email address

Address line 1

Address line 2

Suburb

State

ACT

Postcode

Help us direct your request

The following information helps us send your request to the most appropriate team who will coordinate and respond to your request.

What do you know about the information you are requesting?*

- ○ I know the Directorate or agency
- ◉ I know the topic
- ○ I am not sure

What is the nature or topic of information you are after*

Arts and Culture

Start typing the name of the topic you are requesting information about. If your topic does not appear in the list, you can select "No match found".

Request for

To help us process your request:

- Include enough detail in your application so we can identify what government information you want.
- As an alternative to using fields within the form, you may choose to attach documents or audio recordings.
- You may wish to include a statement on how the release of this information is in the public interest.

Scope of your request

What information are you requesting access to?*

I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:
Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount.
ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026).
Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026).
Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026).
Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026).
There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.

Attach additional documents to support your application

Submit application

Timeframes

The Directorate responsible for your application must:

- inform you in writing within 10 working days that it has received your application
- communicate to you about any difficulties/ delays in processing your request
- provide you with a decision on access to the information within 30 working days or less

Requests may take longer than 30 days in situations where an extension has been granted.

If the Directorate must consult a third party, the deadline for providing a decision is extended by 15 working days. The Directorate will notify you if consultation is required.

Anonymous request

You're submitting an anonymous FOI request. The information you supply will be provided to:

- **Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate**
- **cmteddFOI@act.gov.au**

The FOI team may contact you to clarify details of your request. This will assist the team in reaching a decision on providing access to the information.

After submitting your request, you may wish to save a PDF copy of your form or email a PDF copy to your nominated email address.

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

[redacted]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – NOTICE OF DECISION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 25 August 2026.

Specifically, you have sought access to the following information:

> *I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:*
>
> *Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount.*
>
> *ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026).*
>
> *Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026).*
>
> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days.

Therefore, a decision is due by **7 October 2026.**

Decision on access

Under section 35(2) of the Act an access application may be decided in more than one way. Accordingly, I have decided as follows:

- Refuse to deal with part of your request under section 35(1)(d) of the Act; and
- Partially release documents for part of your request under section 35(1)(a) and section 35(1)(c) of the Act.

Searches of CMTEDD records have identified 13 documents in scope of your request that I am making a decision on.

I have decided to grant **full access** to nine documents.

I have decided to grant **partial access** to four documents.

Documents located include meeting agenda documents, Microsoft Teams messages, forms, emails and program guidelines.

The records identified as relevant to your application are listed in the schedule enclosed at **Attachment A**. This provides a description of each document that falls within the scope of your request and the access decision for each of those documents.

Refusing to deal with part of your request

I intend to refuse to deal with some of the information within scope of your request. A Notice of Intent is provided at **Appendix A,** which sets out the grounds of the proposed refusal, and provides you with ten working days to respond before I make a final decision on the remaining part of your request.

Release of documents

The information being released to you is provided at **Attachment B**.

Statement of Reasons

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act a statement of reasons outlining my decisions is below. In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- ACT Ombudsman Freedom of Information guidelines
- the information that falls within the scope of your request

As a decision maker, I am required to determine whether the information within scope is in the public interest to release. To make this decision, I am required to:

- assess whether the information would be contrary to public interest to disclose as per **Schedule 1** of the Act.
- perform the public interest test as set out in section 17 of the Act by balancing the factors favouring disclosure and factors favouring nondisclosure in **Schedule 2** of the Act.

Exemptions claimed

Schedule 1: Information taken to be contrary to the public interest

No Schedule 1 Factors were identified.

Public Interest Test

The Act has a presumption in favour of disclosure. As a decision maker I am required to decide where, on balance, public interest lies. As part of this process, I must consider factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure.

In *Hogan v Hinch* (2011) 243 CLR 506, [31] French CJ stated that when 'used in a statute, the term [public interest] derives its content from "the subject matter and the scope and purpose" of the enactment in which it appears'. Section 17(1) of the Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. These factors are found in subsection 17(2) and Schedule 2 of the Act.

Schedule 2: Factors to be considered when deciding the public interest

Taking into consideration the information within scope of your request, I have identified that the following public interest factors are relevant to determine if release of the information contained within these documents is within the 'public interest'.

Factors favouring disclosure (Section 2.1)

- *Section 2.1(a)(i) - promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(ii) - contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(iii) - inform the community of the government's operations, including policies, guidelines and codes of conduct followed by the government in its dealings with members of the community.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(viii) - reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.*

There is a clear public interest in people being able to discuss information concerning public money being provided to the Arts community as part of the transparency and accountability process of the ACT Government. I am satisfied that releasing information will provide background information and inform that community, which will contribute to informed debate about decision-making concerning public spending that is in the public interest.

I am satisfied that these factors favouring disclosure carry some weight. However, these factors are to be balanced against the factors favouring nondisclosure.

Factors favouring nondisclosure (Section 2.2)

- *Section 2.2(a)(ii) - prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the Human Rights Act 2004.*
- *Section 2.2(a)(xi) - prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

Having reviewed the information, I consider that the protection of an individual's right to privacy, is a significant factor. Release of information concerning individuals working within the ACT Public Service is generally not considered to prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy. However, where mobile phone numbers may be used for home and work purposes, this information is redacted, as it could or would reasonably be expected to prejudice an individual's right to privacy under the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

I have decided to redact some names and images of individuals, including ACT Government staff as well as peer review information that contains names of third party individuals.

I have also considered the impact of disclosing information which relates to business affairs. In the case of *Re Mangan and The Treasury* [2005] AATA 898 the term 'business affairs' was interpreted as meaning 'the totality of the money-making affairs of an organisation or undertaking as distinct from its private or internal affairs'. Schedule 2 section 2.2(a)(xi) allows for government information to be withheld from release if disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person. I have decided to redact some information involving third party businesses. In this respect I also rely on reasons set out in Notice of Intent to Refuse letter at **Appendix A,** where some of the information concerns confidential business information of third parties where the information is business-in confidence of third party businesses, where there has not been consultation under section 38 of the Act and therefore those businesses have not consented to the release of that information.

Having applied the test outlined in section 17 of the Act and deciding that release of some information contained in the documents is not in the public interest to release, I have chosen to redact this specific information in accordance with section 50(2). Noting the pro-disclosure intent of the Act, I am satisfied that redacting only the information that I believe is not in the public interest to release will ensure that the intent of the Act is met and will provide you with access to the majority of the information held by CMTEDD within the scope of your request that I am making a decision on, notwithstanding that there is an attached notice for intending to refuse to deal with part of your request.

Publicly Available information

Information on the funding amounts to successful applicants, is publicly available on the artsACT website:

https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding/current-funding-recipients/arts-organisation-investment-program

Information about the Arts funding, including information for applicants, list of funding recipients and peer assessment information is published online, and can also be accessed here, which includes the assessment information used to evaluate the applications:

https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable for this request because the number of pages released to you is below the charging threshold of 50.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log.

Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CMTEDD disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form *Applying for an Ombudsman Review* to ensure you provide all the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
http://www.acat.act.gov.au/

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact the CMTEDD FOI Team by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

EH

Emma Hotham

Information Officer
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

1 October 2026

Appendix A

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

To Whom It May Concern

Consultation Notice to Applicant – intent to refuse to deal

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 25 August 2026.

Specifically, you have sought access to the following information:

> *I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:*
>
> *Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount.*
>
> *ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026).*
>
> *Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026).*
>
> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days.

Therefore, a decision is due by **7 October 2026.**

Intention to Refuse

I intend to refuse to deal with part of your access application, **under section 43(1)(a) of the Act, as dealing with the application would require an unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources.**

The notice applies to the remaining information held by CMTEDD not already decided by the Notice of Decision letter.

Consultation Period

Section 46(1) of the Act requires me to provide you with the opportunity to amend your application before a decision to refuse to deal with your request can be made. The time allowed for you to amend your request under section 46(4)(a) is 10 working days from the date of this notice.

Statement of Reasons – Why I intend to refuse to deal with part of your request

In deciding to intend to refuse to deal with part of your access application, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- *Information Privacy Act 2014*
- the scope of your request
- information searches and information located
- internal consultation
- publicly available information
- ACT Ombudsman Freedom of Information Guidelines

In order for a decision-maker to apply the provision of section 44 - *Refusing to deal with application—unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources*, the decision-maker must consider that the application would:

- inhibit the ability of the respondent to exercise its function, refer section 44(1)(a) and
- the extent to which the public interest is advanced does not justify the use of the required resources, refer section 44(1)(b).

Unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources

Your request contains an extensive amount of third party consultation. Searches for information have located at least 40 third party organisations as well as 16 third party individuals, meaning at least 56 lots of third party consultation would be required under section 38 of the Act.

While there is a public interest in accountability for public spending, the time and resources in this respect do not justify the time taken to contact all these third parties, especially in circumstances where details on information, including funding recipients are published online; and artsACT notify unsuccessful organisations and offer feedback on their assessment outcomes directly to applicants. Feedback can also be requested by the successful recipients.

I consider the resources required to identify, locate, and collate, in addition to the resources required to review, assess, third party consult relevant third parties (assuming that there would be information of concern to individuals if disclosed, refer s38 of the Act), review information that is publicly available and prepare the final decision notice to be unreasonable.

Diversion of resources not justified in the public interest

Much of the information you have requested is based on third party submissions to grant funding applications. You have requested some information that is unlikely to be disclosed including, confidential business information. I have decided to release blank application and peer assessment forms. Redacting information that is contrary to the public interest to release is likely to result in information that is contained on those application form templates.

Information within other documents held, such as excel spreadsheets contains information that is contrary to the public interest, and the identities of those parties is easily able to be worked out. Schedule 2 factors under the Act relevant include:

- *Section 2.2(a)(ii) - prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the Human Rights Act 2004.*
- *Section 2.2(a)(xi) - prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

In addition, some of the information you requested is already publicly available, since the assessment criteria, and information for third party applicants is published on the atrsACT website, including recipients and the amount of funding allocated to them. While this is also a ground for refusal under section 43(1)(d) and 45(a) of the Act, it further demonstrates that your access application has not been scoped in a way that does not create unnecessary burden on public resources since some of the information is already available to you.

Action Required by you

This notice sets out the grounds for my intention to refuse to deal with your application. I welcome any consultation with you regarding this Notice of Intent to Refuse, and the chance to address the concerns raised.

For CMTEDD to process your access application, you may wish to consider changing the scope of your request or withdrawing the remainder of your request.

While CMTEDD is supportive of anonymous freedom of information requests, if you were a funding applicant and or a person involved in the peer review process, or had funding refused, you can provide us with your details, as well as personal identification under section 30(3) of the ACT, including confirmation of your authority to act on behalf of an organisation, and we can provide you with information related to you and or your organisation. Please also refer to schedule 2, section 2.2(b) as this is a factor we can consider under section 17(3) of the Act. I note that identifying you and or your business can change some of the public interest test factors that are relevant to the information being sought.

Some suggestions for rescoping the remainder of your request, include that you could request internal correspondence and request attachments containing third party documents be 'outside scope' of the request.

You have addressed the public interest on the information as follows:

> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

I note that information is publicly available of the recipients of grant funding, as well as the assessment criteria.

In accordance with ACT FOI Ombudsman guidelines, we note that in applying the public interest test, it is not whether you are personally subjectively satisfied whether the material is in the public interest to release. The final point of your request appears to be asking for information that does not exist, as in funding is not earmarked for certain organisations and funding is allocated as set out in the grant categories and grant guidelines, which is published online and therefore available to you.

Businesses undertaking development activities in the ACT may expect that any sensitive business information they provide to the Government will be held in confidence. However, businesses that provide information to government do so with the knowledge that government held information may be subject to an access application made under Freedom of Information legislation. Those who do business with government must also recognise that governments have to balance the commercial interests of businesses with the principles of openness and transparency, and that the weight of the public interest in protecting business information will depend on a variety of factors, including how commercially sensitive the information is, its age, its current relevance and the extent to which it has entered the public domain. In this respect, the content of the grant application, and information evaluating information is not publicly known other than the successful applicants. The assessments are undertaken with a peer review process using third parties who are not part of the ACT government who take part in the process under the Territory Privacy Principles and information is kept confidential.

As stated on the artsACT website, applicants expect information to be kept confidential as applications, including unsuccessful ones, contain sensitive and or confidential business information. As stated on the website, https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding/information-for-applicants :

> ***Confidentiality, Privacy and Freedom of Information***
>
> *The information provided in funding submissions is used when processing and assessing applications. The ACT Government respects all personal and confidential information you provide and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any unauthorised access, loss or misuse of information provided in your application. Information provided by all applicants will be stored centrally and may be used by ACT Government officers to better understand community needs and improve service delivery. Details of successful applicants (limited to applicant name, funding amount and grant purpose) will be publicly announced, and artsACT may promote the activity of funded applicants.*

artsACT will only use or disclose personal information in accordance with relevant legislation, including the Information Privacy Act 2014. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 apply to documents in artsACT's possession. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without the permission of the applicant.

Other records held include the applications, an assessment of the funding applicants, some email correspondence that includes assessments on the applicants.

Third party information contained in the material is so inextricably mixed with other content that extensive redaction would be necessary to remove exempt or protected material prior to disclosure and accordingly does not justify the use of public resources, as identified above.

CMTEDD has limited information about a 25% increase in funding; some commentary about percentage increases relate to previous and current funding applications that includes business-in-confidence information of third parties and is contrary to the public interest to release.

If no response is received from you by 16 October 2026, I intend to refuse to deal with the remaining parts of your application under section **43(1)(a) of the Act,** of the Act.

What happens next?

Before I make a decision on your access application, you have an opportunity to provide me with an amended application or any additional information relevant to your application that would address my reasons outlined above for intending to refuse your application.

You can submit a response by **16 October 2026, which can also include a request to withdraw** the remainder of your request.

I have 30 working days to give you a decision about your access application however, the time taken to clarify the access application is in addition to the 30-working day period.

Further assistance

If you have any questions in relation to your access application, please contact the CMTEDD FOI team on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Emma Hotham

Information Officer

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

1 October 2025

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST SCHEDULE

WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	Reference No.
I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030: Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount. ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026). Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026). Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026). Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026). There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.	CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

Ref No	Page number	Description	Date	Status	Reason for Exemption	Online Release Status
1	1-18	ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program Guidelines 2025	-	Full		Yes
2	19-20	Arts Organisation Investment Program - Moderation Meeting 1 - Agenda	-	Full		Yes
3	21-22	Arts Organisation Investment Program Moderation Meeting 2 - Agenda	-	Full		Yes
4	23-24	Arts Organisation Investment Program Moderation Meeting 3 - Agenda	-	Full		Yes
5	25-31	2025 Arts Organisation Investment Program - Application Assessment Form - Blank Form	-	Full		Yes

6	32-36	Industry Peer Comment - 2025 Arts Organisation Investment Program – Blank form	-	Full		Yes
7	37	Moderation Meeting Strategy - Aligned to ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program (AOIP) - Meeting 1: Understanding the Ecosystem and Identifying the Fundable Cohort	-	Full		Yes
8	38	Moderation Meeting 2: Developing funding recommendations	-	Full		Yes
9	39	Microsoft teams messages	20/07/2026	Partial	Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(ii)	Yes
10	40	Email messages, subject: RE: AOIP Final Recommendations	26/05/2026	Partial	Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(ii) Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(xi)	Yes
11	41-42	Attachment B – Assessment methodology	-	Full		Yes
12	43	Microsoft teams message	26/05/2026	Partial	Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(ii)	Yes
13	44	Microsoft teams messages	10/02/2026	Partial	Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(ii) Sch 2, s 2.2 (a)(xi)	Yes
Total No of Docs						
13						



ACT
Arts Organisation Investment Program
Guidelines

2025

ACT Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Country of the Canberra region where we conduct our business. We pay our deepest respects to Ngunnawal Elders, past, present, and emerging. In honour of the invitation, Ngunna yerrabi yanggu, we will work and walk with lightness on the lands of the Ngunnawal in all we do.

The ACT Government is committed to learning from and walking alongside the Traditional Custodians who have looked across and looked after the lands and waterways since time began. We will listen closely and honour their stories, traditions and languages that have been – and continue to be – shared, enjoyed, and celebrated for millennia.

The ACT Government values the generosity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call Ngunnawal Country home and who are invited to share their diverse cultural and artistic expressions on these lands and with our community.

Front Cover: Bryan May working at the Canberra Glassworks. Photo by Pew Pew Studio for ArtsACT

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Funding Guidelines

These Guidelines are designed to be read alongside the ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program Framework.

The ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program (the Program) supports leading ACT arts organisations that engage with the local community to provide programs, services, expertise and infrastructure to support and develop the arts in the ACT. These organisations also provide ongoing sector development, professional pathways for artists and arts workers, and support a diversity of activity and access opportunities for all Canberrans.

Program Objectives

The objective of the Program is to provide multiyear funding to leading arts organisations for the delivery of activities that contribute to ACT Government priorities and collectively meet the three strategies highlighted in Canberra: Australia's Arts Capital, Statement of Ambition for the Arts 2021-2026 (Statement of Ambition) and the ten focus areas outlined in Canberra: Australia's Arts Capital – ACT Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-2026 (the Policy).

Program Funding Streams

The Program has three funding streams:

Arts Centre Investment provides multiyear funding of up to five years for ACT arts organisations that manage an ACT Government arts centre/s (ACT Government owned facility), aligned with a licence to occupy the centre. This funding supports the operational costs of managing and maintaining an ACT Government arts centre, as well as costs for delivering arts programs.

Arts Organisation Investment provides multiyear funding of up to four years for ACT arts organisations to support core operational and arts program activity costs.

Emerging Arts Organisation Investment provides two plus two years of funding of up to $50,000 per year for new entrant arts organisations to develop their programs and build sustainability. Any funding request above this amount requires clear and strong justification and must be exceptional.

Organisations receiving Program funding may be eligible for up to $30,000 in **Opportunity Investment** for one-off, **unexpected** and **time-sensitive opportunities** outside regular programming. These initiatives should be collaborative in nature and aim to develop the artform, expand into new markets, and/or provide professional development pathways for Canberra artists.

Eligibility

Applicants to the Program must:

- be a dedicated arts organisation registered in and based in the ACT;
- be a not-for-profit incorporated association or company limited by guarantee; and
- deliver an ongoing program of activity in the ACT each year.

Organisations whose primary activity is screen and/or digital games are not eligible for funding through the Program. See Screen Canberra for the production of screen activity or for project grant funding for screen content development refer to Arts Activities guidelines.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with artsACT prior to submitting an application. To arrange a meeting with the Arts Programs team please call artsACT on 6207 2384. artsACT will also run an information session for prospective applicants to the Program.

Non-eligible Items

Program funding cannot be used for building or minor works, for any activity in an education or training institution, any prizes or awards, or for any fundraising or charity.

Applicants may apply for funding through multiple ACT Government funding streams for the same program; however, only one funding source will be awarded for the program. Applicants cannot receive funding for the same program from more than one ACT Government funding source.

Application Process

Applications for **Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment** and **Emerging Arts Organisation Investment** must be made online using the application form on SmartyGrants. All requested information, including attachments, must be provided and the application submitted by the advised closing date.

Opportunity Investment funding of up to $30,000 is only available to organisations that currently receive Program funding. This funding is intended to support **unexpected, time-sensitive opportunities** that fall outside of an organisation's core programming or regular planning cycles.

Activities should be collaborative in nature and present organisations with the ability to:

- Develop the artform,
- Expand into new markets, and/or
- Provide professional development pathways for Canberra artists.

This funding is designed to complement the core Program funding by supporting exceptional opportunities that align with the Program's assessment principles.

Arts organisations must first contact artsACT to discuss the opportunity before being invited to apply. If invited to apply, applicants must submit a detailed proposal and budget demonstrating how the opportunity meets the following criteria, in alignment with the core Program funding assessment:

- **Exceptional in nature** – The opportunity must be rare or high-impact, enabling the development of the artform, expansion into new markets, and/or professional development pathways for Canberra artists.
- **Unexpected and unplanned** – It must not be part of the organisation's usual activities or identified during regular program planning or budgeting.
- **Non-recurrent** – The activity must be one-off or time-limited, not part of an ongoing series, annual event, or sustained program.
- **Collaborative** – The opportunity should involve meaningful collaboration with artists, arts organisations, or businesses, demonstrating shared decision-making and creative development.

Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and within the available annual arts budget.

Assessment Process

Applications are assessed by artsACT staff in consultation with relevant industry peers, against the assessment criteria (set out below). The assessment will consider the information provided in the application and supporting documentation. In assessing applications, fact checking may be undertaken using published external information, including ABN registration, annual reports and websites.

Following assessment of individual applications, artsACT will make recommendations to the Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, who will make the final funding decisions.

In making recommendations to the Minister, artsACT may consider:

- the mix of artforms, arts organisations and activities (program/service overlaps or gaps);
- available budget;
- the strengths of the ACT arts sector; and
- areas of opportunity in the ACT arts sector.

The ACT Government reserves the right to not assess any arts organisation application at its discretion.

Funding Decision Timeline

The Program application and assessment process takes several months to complete. artsACT will acknowledge receipt of an application and advise applicants of the outcome once a decision has been made by the Minister. The Minister will publicly announce Program funding round outcomes after applicant arts organisations have been informed of the outcome.

Applications will open in July 2025 with outcomes anticipated to be announced in July 2026.

Assessment Criteria

Applications for **Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment** and **Emerging Arts Organisation Investment** will be considered against *the equally weighted assessment criteria* set out in the table:

Assessment Criteria
1. Alignment with Program objectives. The degree to which the organisation delivers against ACT Government priorities as outlined in the ACT Arts Organisation Investment Framework, Statement of Ambition and Arts Policy.
2. Governance and Capacity. The demonstrated strength of the organisation's governance, including its expertise and capacity to: > Deliver strategic leadership. > Manage funding. > Deliver activities within budget and resources. > Collaborate and partner.
3. Strategic Plan and Budget. Strength of the application in demonstrated planning to deliver quality outcomes and value in the context of the Program objectives.

Indicators

All successful organisations are expected to contribute to the following ACT Government priorities:

- Increasing collaboration with artists, and other arts organisations and businesses: it is expected that successful organisations will undertake at least one collaborative activity with another arts organisation and one collaborative activity with a business each year.
- Improving access to and participation in the arts and creating an environment that is inclusive to all.
- Contributing to new skills and pathways for artists and arts workers to contribute to their development, capacity and capability.
- Contributing to a culture of creativity and innovation to enable artistic practice to grow and flourish.
- Increasing own-source revenue and revenue from a range of other government, non-government and private sector sources.
- Increasing visibility of the arts in Canberra and growing audiences and new markets.

Other priority areas that could be addressed by organisations may include but are not limited to:

- Elevating and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural arts representation within programming, new works, organisational workforce and leadership.
- Addressing barriers and improving performance across key diversity areas (including disability, gender, LGBTQIA+, age and cultural diversity) in arts practice, programming, employment, life-long learning, skills development, engagement and participation.
- Creating and presenting innovative and original works.
- Increasing opportunities for ACT artists, arts workers and arts organisations to engage with audiences locally, nationally and internationally.
- Contributing to cultural tourism opportunities.

Successful organisations are expected to:

- Demonstrate organisational capacity, financial stability and experience.
- Demonstrate strategic, expert and robust governance.
- Demonstrate ability of managing government and other grant funding.
- Provide evidence of appropriate personnel available to deliver activities.
- Provide evidence of relevant support (e.g. from artists, community, or other organisations).

Successful organisations are expected to:

- Provide a strategic plan for the organisation, with appropriate and realistic levels of aspiration.
- Provide evidence of the sustainable and sound financial position of the organisation.
- Provide a realistic budget that presents a clear rationale for the request, including a separate breakdown of operational costs for each artistic program and using industry standard pay rates.
- Demonstrate quality of forecasted program of activities.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Arts organisations are encouraged to collaborate and partner with one another, other arts and community organisations, business groups and artists in delivering arts activities. Collaborations and partnerships provide an opportunity to encourage creative dialogues, reducing duplication of services and maximising the use of resources.

artsACT encourages organisations to consider the streamlining of programs, as well as sharing of administration and resources, through collaboration.

Collaboration and partnerships should be carefully planned for and clearly articulated in an arts organisation's program and budget. Collaboration and partnership arrangements will also need to be clearly articulated by arts organisations in their reports on grant funding.

Access, Inclusion and Diversity

The ACT Government provides funding to arts organisations to maximise community access to and engagement with the arts. Funding is contingent on organisations delivering high quality arts activities and outcomes, accessible to all Canberrans. It is expected that organisations ensure their activities are inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of artists and audiences. This includes addressing barriers to participation and promoting opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Arts organisations are encouraged to develop Disability Action and Inclusion Plans and to monitor their progress towards access and inclusion for people with disability access needs. Organisations should strive to make facilities and events as accessible, welcoming and inclusive as possible.

Access and inclusion should be appropriately costed and clearly identified in an arts organisation's application budget.

Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' cultural and artistic practices is a central focus across all focus areas of the Arts Policy. ACT arts organisations are encouraged to build stronger relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to support enhanced outcomes that reflect the uniqueness of Canberra's culture and identity.

The ACT Government is committed to driving diversity in leadership and decision making. Arts organisations supported through this Program are expected to have diversity both on their Board and in their programming that reflects their community, or provide a clear plan that outlines how this will be achieved over time. As a minimum, arts organisations should have a 50 per cent representation of female members on their boards, with appropriate skills and experience, or provide advice on how and when this will be achieved.

Capability and Capacity Building

Arts organisations are encouraged to identify capacity building opportunities relevant to their organisation, including training and mentoring opportunities. These should be identified in strategic plans and discussed in meetings with artsACT. Some examples may include financial management, cultural competency, diversity and inclusion, and governance. artsACT will coordinate opportunities for organisations to receive relevant training and mentoring, where possible.

Creativity and Innovation

Arts organisations are encouraged to foster a culture of creativity and innovation by creating environments or facilitating spaces that support artistic development, where appropriate.

Increase Own Source Revenue and Financial Sustainability

To enhance sustainability, arts organisations are encouraged to diversify their revenue streams by increasing own-source revenue and exploring funding opportunities from a variety of sources, including government, non-government and private sector entities. This diversification not only strengthens financial stability but also supports the development of innovative revenue models that can adapt to changing economic conditions.

Increase Visibility

Boosting the visibility of the arts in Canberra is key to fostering audience growth and reaching new markets. This involves strategically promoting arts events, exhibitions and performances to increase public engagement, expand existing audiences and attract new viewers. Through targeted marketing efforts, collaborations or community outreach, arts organisations can build a strong brand presence that resonates with diverse demographics and cultivates a vibrant arts culture in the ACT.



Diane Cross working on a sculpture at Canberra Potters. Photo by Pew Pew Studio for ArtsACT.

Arts Centres

ACT Government arts centres support artistic and creative capability and capacity by providing significant infrastructure, venues and programs for a range of arts activities and services across the ACT. Arts centres are a fundamental part of the ACT Government's vision for the arts in Canberra. Arts centres supported by the Arts Centre Investment stream are the ACT Government owned centres listed on artsACT's website.

Any arts organisation can apply to manage and occupy an ACT arts centre, but applicants must demonstrate strong skills and experience in centre management and program delivery. These organisations, in managing the centre on behalf of the ACT Government, are responsible for ensuring the centre is managed in an efficient, effective and safe manner, as well as being accessible and culturally safe.

Arts organisations applying to manage an arts centre are required to provide a comprehensive and strategic management plan for the centre with their application. The strategic management plan should include evidence of strong governance and facility management skills and experience. Clear strategic planning is expected to leverage revenue streams from the centre venues and facilities, while maintaining a balance of access for artists and the community.

Arts organisations managing an arts centre should have modern constitutions, such as a company limited by guarantee, where voting rights are limited to board members only.

Funding Request

Funding requests need to be realistic and aligned to the actual budget needs required to deliver activities that meet the Program objectives. Funding requests should prioritise the core operational costs needed to sustain these activities and make provision for appropriate payment of arts workers and artists. Please refer to the Remuneration Principles and Practices for Artists and Arts Workers.

Arts organisations are expected to operate within their capacity and resources, rather than delivering overly ambitious programs and outcomes that risk staff wellbeing or organisational viability. Funding requests and programs need to consider the size, scale and makeup of the ACT arts sector and community.

Requests for increased funding that exceed what is necessary to achieve the Program objectives, without strong justification and commensurate outcomes, are unlikely to be a priority within the context of limited funding and high demand.

Emerging Arts Organisation Investment funding is capped at $50,000 per annum. Any request above this amount requires clear and strong justification and must be exceptional.

Opportunity Investment funding is capped at $30,000 per activity, and requests above this amount will not be accepted. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the availability of the annual arts budget.

Deed of Grant

If an organisation is successful in its application for funding through the Program, the organisation will enter into a Deed of Grant with the ACT Government. The deed will include payment, reporting, acquittal and acknowledgement requirements. The deed may also include any specific conditions of funding that may be required by the circumstances of the organisation or from the assessment process.

The activities proposed in the application will form the basis of the organisation's subsequent reporting and evaluation requirements. The Deed of Grant will include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to Government priorities which will be negotiated with each organisation.

Access to Other Funding

Arts organisations are expected to seek additional income from a variety of sources. This could include both government and non-government, sponsorship and philanthropy, and self-generated income. Organisations are encouraged to apply for funding through other ACT Government programs and Australian Government funding, including from Creative Australia.

There may be other artsACT funding opportunities for organisations from time to time. Information about these opportunities will be advised as they arise.

Arts Activities Funding

Arts organisations funded through the Program are not eligible to apply for Arts Activities funding via artsACT. This is to ensure equitable access to funding for individual artists, arts groups and the community. It is a requirement that funded organisations have budgeted for all program and administrative costs for the funding period.

Arts Activities funding requests from individual artists cannot include the direct costs of a funded organisation's operational or program costs, including staffing, access to an organisation's programs, promotion or administration. Individual applications from artists can include these costs as in-kind support from the organisation, where appropriate. Similarly, funded organisations cannot provide cash support for applications to Arts Activities funding.

It is strongly recommended that the artist and/or organisation discuss the circumstances of their request with artsACT prior to any Arts Activities application that has significant crossover with the programs of a funded arts organisation.

Financial Position

Arts organisations are required to operate within their financial means, adopting sustainable business practices to ensure long-term financial health and viability. To demonstrate sound financial management, organisations must ensure appropriate financial expertise within the board and seek independent expert advice from a qualified accountant, where needed.

Organisations are also required to build and maintain reasonable cash reserves through end-of-year surpluses. Repeated unplanned deficits or low reserve levels reflect unsustainable business practices and will be an important factor in determining the continued eligibility of the organisation and the assessment of any future Program applications where the viability of an organisation is a key consideration.

Operations

Arts organisations will be assessed on the viability of their programming. Proposed programs and services must be sustainable and deliverable and supported within available resourcing. Any significant growth or expansion of programs must be identified and justified through realistic budgeting, detailed planning and demonstrated need in the ACT arts sector.

Attention should be given to core staff structure, hours and salaries that meet industry standards and that will attract and retain suitably qualified artists and arts workers, as well as appropriately support the programs or services of the organisation. Organisations need to include professional development for staff in their budgets.

All employers are required to observe the National Employment Standards under the Australian Government's Fair Work Act 2009 and to provide a Fair Work Information Statement for staff. The Fair Work Ombudsman site has information and resources for employers, including templates for engaging staff, keeping employee records and terminating employment.

Organisations must adhere to Work Health and Safety (WHS) practices under the ACT's WHS legislation, which requires organisations that employ any paid workers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the physical and mental health and safety of its workers, including volunteers.

Organisations are encouraged to seek independent legal and other relevant professional advice whenever developing or updating standard work contracts, policies and insurance.

The ACT's Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) scheme aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT. It requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people to have a background check to determine an applicant's suitability to be registered under the scheme. Organisations are required to comply with WWVP requirements. The easiest way to do this is by identifying roles within the organisation that may need WWVP registration and ensuring all employees or volunteers have valid registrations. For more information visit Access Canberra.

Governance and Conflict of Interest

Boards and staff at arts organisations are responsible for the strategic leadership, sustainability and diversity of these organisations.

Arts organisations are expected to meet best practice standards for board governance and board member conduct. Board members must have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, particularly their legal and fiduciary obligations to act in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation.

Collectively, the board should have an appropriate mix of business and professional skills including financial, legal, strategic, human resource, governance and artistic expertise to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Governance should reflect the skills and cultural diversity necessary to support the business of the organisation. As a minimum, arts organisations should have 50 per cent representation of female members on their boards or provide advice on how and when this will be achieved.

To minimise conflict of interest, it is a condition of the Deeds of Grant that no board member can be employed by the organisation, and no staff member of an organisation can be a member of its board, including in an ex officio capacity. There needs to be clear separation between the board and administration.

The ACT Government requires all arts organisations to have in place formal conflict of interest management policies and procedures. These need to include that any board or staff conflicts of interest are declared, discussed and a decision made on

how the conflict will be managed at board meetings. For example, board or staff members should not access the programs or services offered by the organisation. Sub-committees, including external representatives, can be used to assist with avoiding conflicts of interest. Artistic input can also be provided through an artistic sub-committee, rather than through board members.

Reporting Requirements

Arts organisations will be required to provide comprehensive and timely reporting on their funding through the Program. Reporting will be conducted through annual acquittals and revised program and budgets, yearly meetings with artsACT, and any other reporting as outlined in the Deed of Grant.

This reporting provides critical information on the outcomes an organisation has achieved against its KPIs, as well as insight into the future direction of the organisation in the context of a changing environment. Statistical data is also collected as part of these reporting requirements.

All reports for Program funding will be submitted via SmartyGrants, an online grants management system.

Financial reporting must provide a high-level overview of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and total reserves. It should also include a detailed breakdown of programs, clearly outlining how Program funding has been allocated.

Acknowledgement of Funding

As a requirement of the Deed of Grant, arts organisations must acknowledge ACT Government funding and support on all material (hardcopy and electronic) including letterheads, websites, newsletters, media releases, advertisements, programs, broadcast emails, invitations and any other promotional material. Acknowledgement must be proportionate to the level of ACT Government funding compared to other funding received by the organisation.

Acknowledgement of funding is also to be made by the organisation in formal speeches, such as at launches and openings, and in any media articles.

Acknowledgement must include the use of the ACT Government logo in conjunction with the words 'Supported by the ACT Government'. Further information about the requirements to acknowledge the ACT Government can be accessed at: Information for Successful Applicants - artsACT, including a link to the ACT Government logos webpage.



Beatrice Buckland-Willis working on a lino print at Megalo.
Photo by Pew Pew Studio for ArtsACT

Entry, On Notice and Exit

Entry

Any eligible ACT arts organisation can apply for Program funding when the round is open.

The funding period will depend on each category:

> **Arts Centre Investment** funding is available every five years, with the next funding period commencing from 1 January 2028. Any eligible arts organisation can apply to manage an arts centre and will need to demonstrate strong centre management in addition to programming skills and expertise.

> **Arts Organisation Investment** funding is available every four years, with the next funding period commencing from 1 January 2027.

> **Emerging Arts Organisation Investment** funding will initially be offered for two years, with a possible extension for a further two years, subject to the outcomes achieved. The next funding period commences from 1 January 2027. Emerging Arts Organisation Investment funding may be open every two years, subject to available funding and the outcomes of organisations that have received this funding.

Emerging Arts Organisations that are currently in receipt of Program funding (2023-2026), and are continuing to meet outcomes, are eligible to apply for Arts Organisation Investment funding commencing from 2027.

On Notice

An organisation funded through the Program may be placed 'on notice' during the funding period when the ACT Government considers it is not strongly meeting the criteria of the funding category or fulfilling the outcomes outlined in their application and Deed of Grant.

An on-notice period will normally be for six months to allow for any remedial action to occur. Longer notice periods may be agreed depending on the circumstances of the organisation.

Organisations placed on notice will be provided with direction from artsACT on the outcomes the ACT Government is seeking. Should the organisation not meet these outcomes within the notice period, funding to the organisation will cease at the end of the notice period.

Exit

Funding may be revoked during the term of a Deed of Grant where:

> an organisation breaches its Deed of Grant or Licence;

> an organisation does not substantially meet the outcomes and performance measures identified in their application;

> there has been a significant change in the activities/ circumstances of the organisation which has not been agreed by the ACT Government;

> the organisation operates illegally, ceases to operate, or enters into liquidation or receivership; or

> the ACT Government reduces or ceases to provide arts funding.

Where an organisation's funding is revoked, depending on the circumstances, six months' transitional funding may be offered, or funding may cease immediately.

Special Funding Condition

artsACT reserves the right to make any special condition of funding in the Deed of Grant, including those that address board independence, conflicts of interest and preferential treatment, and to address any artistic or operational matter.

Contact Us

artsACT staff are available to advise an arts organisation on how to apply, construct a budget and select support materials. To ensure probity and equity, artsACT is not able to read or comment on draft applications. Applicants are encouraged to meet with artsACT prior to lodging an application.

Please contact artsACT on (02) 6207 2384 if you would like to talk to a staff member. You can also email us at artsACT@act.gov.au. artsACT will also run an information session for prospective applicants.

artsACT is committed to supporting applicants living with disability. Information can be provided in alternative formats (large print, electronic or Braille) upon request. If you need extra assistance due to disability or any other factor that may disadvantage you in completing your application, please contact us.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through one of the following:

> National Relay Service (NRS) then ask for 1800 199 090.
> TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 199 090.
> Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 199 090.

For interpreting assistance in languages other than English, telephone the Translation and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.

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ACT
Arts Organisation Investment Program
Guidelines

2025

ACT Government

Produced by Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Arts Organisation Investment Program

Moderation Meeting 1 – Agenda

Purpose:
To develop a shared understanding of the ACT arts ecosystem and agree which organisations progress to funding consideration.

Note:
This meeting does **not** make funding decisions or set funding amounts.

1. Welcome and Meeting Purpose (5 mins)

2. Moderation Discussion and Fundable Cohort Determination (bulk of meeting)

3. Next Steps and Close (5 mins)

Acknowledgment of Country

I wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

I wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Purpose

This is the first of two moderation meetings for the Arts Organisation Investment Program.

The purpose of today's meeting is to develop a shared view of the ACT arts ecosystem and confirm which organisations progress to funding consideration.

We are not making funding decisions today and will not be discussing funding amounts or budget distribution. That will be the purpose of Meeting 2.

*Important to also note that progression to Meeting 2 does not guarantee funding; funding outcomes will depend on budget availability, portfolio balance and risk considerations.

To support a clear and consistent process, we'll work through applications in order of funding stream and primary artform, using the *Assessment and Moderation Outcomes* spreadsheet provided.

Preliminary outcomes were formed through consolidation of internal assessment commentary, peer feedback and relevant organisational history.

For moderation, this information has been considered through a risk lens to identify **Green, Amber or Red delivery risk**, where:

- **Green** reflects limited risk relevant to funding consideration
- **Amber** reflects moderate but manageable risk
- **Red** reflects higher or unmitigated risk

These risk ratings are not being reconsidered or changed today.

Today's discussion focuses on whether assessed risks are appropriately reflected in progression to funding consideration. Outcomes remain unchanged unless additional contextual information affects how those risks are reflected.

Risks that are assessed as not limiting progression may still be relevant in later stages of decision-making, including funding allocation, funding term, conditions in meeting 2 as well as and KPI discussions with the applicant when agreeing to the terms of the Deed of Grant.

All reasoning for moderated progression decisions will be clearly documented.

As we move through moderation, the print-out includes information such as artform, communities, region and a brief organisational description **for reference only**, to support context and awareness of the sector as a whole.

We will also have the *Moderation Assessment Summary* on screen to refer to as we go.

Arts Organisation Investment Program

Moderation Meeting 2 – Agenda

Purpose:
To agree on Art Centre funding recommendations.

Note:
This meeting is talking through Arts Centre funding amounts only, Arts Organisations will be discussed at the 3rd moderation meeting.

1. Welcome and Meeting Purpose (5 mins)

2. Final Agreement on Fundable Cohort Outcomes from meeting 1 (5min)

3. Moderation Discussion and Art Centre Funding Recommendations (bulk of meeting)

4. Next Steps and Close (5 mins)

Acknowledgment of Country

I wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

I wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Purpose

This is the second of two moderation meetings for the Arts Organisation Investment Program and focuses specifically on Art Centres.

Before commencing the funding recommendation discussion, we will briefly revisit the outcomes from Meeting 1 to seek final agreement on the organisations that will not be proceeding to this stage. This step is to confirm shared understanding and close off progression decisions prior to considering funding scenarios.

The purpose of today's meeting is to consider funding recommendations for Art Centres under two budget scenarios:

1. Current funding budget
2. A 25% increase to the current funding budget

For each budget scenario, we will consider:

- Standardised funding recommendations, and
- Tailored funding recommendations, where adjustments respond to organisational context, risk and strategic considerations.

Today's discussion will focus on how funding recommendations shift across these scenarios and approaches, and the implications for portfolio balance, risk management and program objectives.

This meeting builds on the outcomes of Meeting 1. Only organisations that progressed to this stage are being discussed. Progression to Meeting 2 does not guarantee funding; final outcomes remain subject to overall budget availability, portfolio balance and risk considerations.

Process and context

We will work through Art Centre applications using the Assessment and Moderation Outcomes spreadsheet.

Arts Organisation Investment Program

Moderation Meeting 3 – Agenda

Purpose
To agree on funding recommendations for Arts Organisations and Emerging Arts Organisations, ensuring decisions are proportionate, defensible, and aligned with assessment outcomes, organisational viability, and overall portfolio impact.

Note
This session is focused on **Arts Organisations and Emerging Arts Organisations funding amounts only**.

1. Welcome and Meeting Purpose (5 mins)
- Outline moderation approach (tiering, alignment to assessment outcomes, financial and governance considerations)
- Reinforce the **minimum viable funding** and **portfolio trade-off** lens
- Confirm decision focus for this session

2. Moderation Discussion: Funding Recommendations (Majority of time)
- Step through Tier 1 to Tier 3
- Test:
    - Alignment with assessment outcomes, financial position, and governance history
    - Whether proposed funding represents a **minimum viable level** to support delivery
    - Whether the organisation can realistically achieve outcomes at that level
    - Where funding is insufficient, consider **whether it is proportionate to proceed** or whether funding should be **reallocated to strengthen overall portfolio impact**
- Make adjustments to ensure consistency, proportionality, and defensibility across the portfolio

3. Review for Consistency (incl. item from Moderation Meeting 2) (5 mins)
- Revisit the organisation discussed in Moderation Meeting 2
- Check alignment and consistency of both rationale and funding levels across the portfolio

4. Next Steps and Close (5 mins)
- Confirm any outstanding actions
- Outline process toward final recommendations

Acknowledgment of Country

I wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

I wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Purpose

Thanks everyone. Before we get into the detail, I'll quickly outline how we're approaching today's moderation.

We've grouped organisations into three tiers, based on their overall alignment with the assessment outcomes, alongside financial performance and governance history.

- **Tier 1** reflects strong alignment across those areas.
- **Tier 2** includes organisations with generally good alignment, or where they serve a distinct and important purpose.
- **Tier 3** captures those with more limited alignment or where we've noted more significant concerns.

We've also put forward proposed funding amounts for each organisation. These are intended to be the **minimum viable level of support** to sustain the activity proposed in their applications.

As we move through each tier, there are two key lenses for our discussion. First, whether the proposed level of funding is sufficient to enable the organisation to deliver what's been assessed as valuable. Where it isn't, we need to consider whether it's proportionate to proceed at that level—or whether that funding could be more effectively allocated elsewhere in the portfolio to better support impact and viability.

Second, we need to consider the **overall budget envelope for the Arts Organisation Investment Program**—what we can fund in total—and ensure our recommendations are balanced within that constraint. This means making deliberate trade-offs to arrive at a portfolio that is sustainable, aligned to outcomes, and defensible.

We'll step through this tier by tier, from Tier 1 to Tier 3, and test whether we're comfortable with the positioning, the rationale, and the proposed funding levels—making adjustments where needed to ensure our decisions are proportionate, defensible, and aligned with the overall portfolio.

At the end, we'll also revisit the Arts Centre discussed in Moderation Meeting 2 to ensure consistency in both the moderation approach and the funding levels.

2025 Arts Organisation Investment Program - Application Assessment Form

Form Preview

Assessor Declaration

* indicates a required field

Note to Assessors

In this form you are asked to assess applications for Art Centre investment funding against the criteria set out in the Arts Organisation Investment Program Funding Guidelines 2025.

Your assessment must be based on the information provided in the application and supporting documentation. Where appropriate you may fact check information provided against published external information including ABN registration, organisation annual reports and websites.

In addition to assessment by ACT Government officers, an industry peer will be asked to provide comment on the organisation's place in the arts landscape and their program of activities.

Conflict of Interest

All assessors must declare if they have, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest.

If an assessor has a conflict or interest or could have a perceived conflict of interest, do not proceed to assess this assessment.

Conflict of Interest *

- ○ I DO NOT have a conflict of interest
- ○ I DO have a conflict of interest

Confidentiality

As an assessor for ACT Arts Organisation Investment funding, you are given access to information that could be confidential, private and/or sensitive. You must agree to the statement below in order to proceed with this assessment.

I understand my responsibility to treat information provided in the application appropriately.

Confidentiality *

- ○ I agree
- ○ I do not agree

Organisation Details and Funding Request

* indicates a required field

Applicant Organisation

Application Number

This field is read only.

2025 Arts Organisation Investment Program - Application Assessment Form

Form Preview

Applicant Name

Funding Stream

○ Arts Centre ○ Arts Organisation ○ Emerging Arts Organisation

Art Centre Management

Arts organisations applying to manage and occupy an ACT arts centre must be able to demonstrate strong skills and experience in centre management and program delivery.

Which art centre or centres is the applicant seeking to manage? *

☐ Ainslie Arts Centre
☐ Belconnen Art Centre
☐ Canberra Glassworks
☐ Gorman Art Centre
☐ Manuka Art Centre
☐ Strathnairn Art Centre
☐ The Street Theatre
☐ Tuggeranong Art Centre
☐ Watson Art Centre

At least 1 choice must be selected.

Has the organisation previously managed this Arts Centre?

○ Yes ○ No

Please briefly comment on the applicant's demonstrated ability to manage an Arts Centre.

Comment can reflect historic and proposed Arts Centre management

Funding Request

Annual funding request

$

Must be a dollar amount.

Please note any non-eligible expenditure items

The funding guidelines state that funding cannot be used for building, minor works, for any activity in an education or training institution, any prizes or awards or for fundraising or charity. Please note any items of concern in the application and any other aspects of this application that may warrant discussion with the applicant.

Has the organisation indicated that they are able to deliver a scaled back program of activity for a reduced funding amount?

○ Yes

○ No

Please briefly comment on the impact of reduced funding demonstrated by the organisation.

Application Assessment

* indicates a required field

Instructions for Assessors

In this form, please consider the application against the criteria and indicators, giving scores based on the following rating scale.

Scores:

- **5 - Outstanding:** The application demonstrates a very high level of performance, with clear strengths, strong evidence, and no material weaknesses.
- **4 - Strong:** The application meets the criterion to a strong standard, with good evidence and only minor gaps or weaknesses.
- **3 - Adequate:** The application satisfies the criterion at a basic, acceptable level, with credible evidence but some limitations in depth, detail, or ambition.
- **2 - Limited:** The application shows some relevant elements, but important gaps, weaknesses, or risks mean the criterion is not adequately met.
- **1 - Not demonstrated:** The application provides very limited or poor evidence against the criterion, with major weaknesses or risks.

CRITERION ONE - ACT Government Priorities

Please score in regard to how well the organisation has demonstrated alignment with the following criterion one indicators:

Increasing collaboration with artists, arts organisations and other businesses: it is expected that successful organisations will undertake at least one collaborative activity with another arts organisation and one collaborative activity with a business each year. *

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Improving access to and participation in the arts and creating an environment that is inclusive to all. *

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Contributing to new skills and pathways for artists and art workers to contribute to their development, capacity and capability. *

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Contributing to a culture of creativity and innovation to enable artistic practice to grow and flourish. *

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Increasing own-source revenue and revenue from a range of other government, non-government and private sector sources. *
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Increasing visibility of the arts in Canberra and growing audiences and new markets. *
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Please comment on how well the applicant has addressed the ACT Government Priorities. *

In your comments, please include specific examples that illustrate areas of strength as well as any gaps or areas for development against the assessment criteria. Aim to provide balanced feedback that acknowledges what the organisation is doing well and offers constructive suggestions to support moderation and informed decision-making.

CRITERION ONE - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY - Alignment with Arts Organisation Investment Program Objectives

Criterion One - Required Priorities Total Score

This number/amount is calculated.

Other ACT Government Priorities

Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' cultural and artistic practices, by building stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and increasing representation within programming, new works, organisational workforce and leadership.
○ Yes ○ No

Addressing barriers and improving performance across key diversity areas (including disability, gender, LGBTIQ+, age and cultural diversity) in arts practice, programming, employment, life-long learning, skills development, engagement and participation.
○ Yes ○ No

Creating and presenting innovative and original works.
○ Yes ○ No

Increasing opportunities for ACT artists, arts workers and arts organisations to engage locally, nationally and internationally.
○ Yes ○ No

Contributing to cultural tourism opportunities.
○ Yes ○ No

Other priorities that the organisation contributes to.

○ Yes ○ No

Please comment on how the applicant has addressed the above priorities. *

In your comments, please include specific examples that illustrate areas of strength as well as any gaps or areas for development against the assessment criteria. Aim to provide balanced feedback that acknowledges what the organisation is doing well and offers constructive suggestions to support moderation and informed decision-making.

Criterion Two: Governance and Capacity.

Please score in regard to how well the organisation has demonstrated alignment with the following criterion two indicators:

Demonstrates organisational capacity, financial stability and experience.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Demonstrates strategic, expert and robust governance.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Demonstrates ability of managing government and other grant funding.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Provides evidence of appropriate personnel available to deliver activities.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Provides evidence of relevant support (e.g. from artists, community, or other organisations).
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

CRITERION TWO - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY - Governance and Capacity

Total Criterion Two Score

This number/amount is calculated.

Please comment on the organisation's demonstrated governance and capacity. *

In your comments, please include specific examples that illustrate areas of strength as well as any gaps or areas for development against the assessment criteria. Aim to provide balanced feedback that acknowledges what the organisation is doing well and offers constructive suggestions to support moderation and informed decision-making. Include reference to associated supporting documentation that demonstrates ability to manage grant funding and evidence of relevant community support.

Criterion Three - Strategic Plan and Budget

Please score in regard to how well the organisation has demonstrated alignment with the following criterion three indicators:

Provides a strategic plan for the organisation, with appropriate levels of aspiration.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Provides evidence of the sustainable and sound financial position of the organisation.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Provides a realistic budget that presents a clear rationale for the request, including a separate breakdown of operational costs for each artistic program and using industry standard pay rates.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Demonstrates quality of forecasted program of activities.
○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

CRITERION THREE - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY - Strategic Plan and Budget

Criterion Three Total Score

This number/amount is calculated.

Please comment on the strength of the organisation's strategic plan and budget. *

In your comments, please include specific examples that illustrate areas of strength as well as any gaps or areas for development against the assessment criteria. Aim to provide balanced feedback that acknowledges what the organisation is doing well and offers constructive suggestions to support moderation and informed decision-making.

ALL CRITERIA EQUAL WEIGHTED SCORE

= average across criteria (after scaling for equal weighting)

Recommendation

* indicates a required field

Is this organisation recommended for Art Organisation Investment Funding. *
○ Yes
○ No

Which art centre or centres is the applicant recommended to manage?

- ☐ Ainslie Art Centre
- ☐ Belconnen Art Centre
- ☐ Canberra Glassworks
- ☐ Gorman Art Centre
- ☐ Manuka Art Centre
- ☐ Strathnairn Arts Centre
- ☐ The Street Theatre
- ☐ Tuggeranong Art Centre
- ☐ Watson Art Centre

Comments in support of the recommendation.

Please note any points for discussion at moderation meeting.

This could include any adjustments to activities or funding.

Assessor certification

Name

First Name Last Name

Date

Must be a date.

Industry Peer Comment - 2025 Arts Organisation Investment Program

Form Preview

Peer Comment Form

* indicates a required field

Arts Organisation Investment Program

Thank you for agreeing to provide peer comments on applications in the 2025 ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program Funding Round.

The ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program supports leading ACT arts organisations that engage with the local community to provide programs, services, expertise and cultural infrastructure to support and develop the arts in the ACT.

These organisations also provide ongoing sector development, professional pathways for artists and arts workers, and support a diversity of activity and access opportunities for all Canberrans.

The Program funds the delivery of activities that contribute to ACT Government priorities and collectively meet the three strategies highlighted in *Canberra: Australia's Arts Capital, Statement of Ambition for the Arts 2021-2026* (Statement of Ambition) and the ten focus areas outlined in *Canberra: Australia's Arts Capital – ACT Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-2026* (the Policy).

Please also refer to the assessment considerations outlined in the Peer Information Pack

Hint: remember to save often (at least every 5-10 minutes).

Applicant

Application Number

This field is read only.
The identification number or code for this submission.

Applicant Organisation Name

I have filled out a Conflict of Interest declaration form

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

I have filled out a Confidentiality Declaration

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Position in the ACT arts landscape

Consider the following:

- Does the organisation have strong sector connections and collaborations?
- How visible or influential is the organisation within the ACT arts ecosystem?
- Is the organisation filling a gap or complementing existing offerings?
- Does the organisation make a unique contribution to the sector?

Please comment on the position of the applicant organisation within the ACT arts landscape. *

Consider the organisation's strategic plan. artsACT has agreed that for application purposes, the strategic plan does not need to cover the entire funding period.

Quality of program and capacity to implement

- How well conceived is the proposed program, and how strong and relevant is its artistic vision?
- Are the program objectives, activities, and delivery approach clear and feasible?
- Is there evidence of innovation, inclusive practice, or responsiveness to community or sector needs?
- How credibly do the proposed activities align with the organisation’s track record, skills, and reputation?
- Are there any material risks or concerns, such as unclear delivery, duplication of existing services, or elements that appear unrealistic or over-ambitious?

Please comment on the overall quality, relevance, feasibility, and anticipated impact of the proposed program. *

Consider the organisation's artistic program or program of activities. The first year may be more detailed than the other future years.

Budget Comment

Consider the following:

- Is the scale of the budget realistic in relation to the size and capacity of the organisation?
- Does the budget adequately support the proposed activities and intended outcomes?
- Are there any aspects of the budget that stand out as particularly strong, unclear, or concerning?

Please consider the suitability of the budget to meet proposed outcomes.

Any other comments

Assessor Certification

Name

Date

Must be a date.

2025 Arts Organisation Investment - Eligibility Check

Form Preview

Eligibility check

Arts Support Officer

The applicant organisation is a dedicated arts organisation registered in and based in the ACT.

○ Yes ○ No

Hint: Check ABN Lookup / ASIC website to confirm place of registration.

The applicant organisation is a not-for-profit incorporated association or company limited by guarantee.

○ Yes ○ No

Hint: Check ABN Lookup / ASIC website to confirm type of organisation.

The applicant organisation will adjust their governance model to either a not-for-profit incorporated association or company limited by guarantee if funded.

○ Yes ○ No

Comment

The applicant organisation delivers an ongoing program of activity in the ACT each year.

○ Yes ○ No

Is the application eligible?

○ Yes ○ No / requires delegate consideration

The organisation must meet all three of the requirements above.

Comments

Record brief comments, if required.

Name

Name of artsACT officer conducting eligibility check.

Date

Must be a date.

Delegate

The application is eligible for assessment ○ Yes ○ No

Comments

Delegate First Name Last Name

Position

Date

Must be a date.

Moderation Meeting Strategy – Aligned to ACT Arts Organisation Investment Program (AOIP)

Purpose

The moderation meetings are designed to confirm relative positioning across the cohort and develop funding recommendations that are transparent, consistent, and defensible. Moderation integrates quantitative assessment results with qualitative evidence and contextual information, while maintaining alignment with the published program criteria and available funding envelope.

Meeting 1: Understanding the Ecosystem and Identifying the Fundable Cohort

Goal

To develop a shared understanding of the ACT arts ecosystem and identify which applicants demonstrate sufficient capability, alignment and delivery confidence to proceed to funding consideration.

Information Considered

Meeting 1 integrates the following as **contextual evidence**, not decision triggers:

- Organisational role within the ACT arts ecosystem
- Assessment results (scores and qualitative comments)
- Peer / industry commentary aligned to AOIP criteria
- Funding history and acquittals (for delivery confidence only)
- High-level sustainability or viability indicators
- Policy and equity considerations reflected in AOIP objectives

Moderation Approach

Moderation focuses on **comparative, criteria-informed judgement** across the cohort:

- Understanding how organisations contribute collectively to the ecosystem
- Identifying different roles and functions (e.g. infrastructure, access, artist development, presentation)
- Grouping organisations where helpful by role, scale or activity (for context only)
- Synthesising evidence into a shared view of relative strength and delivery confidence

Fundable Cohort Determination

At the conclusion of Meeting 1, organisations are categorised as:

- Recommended for funding consideration
- Recommended for funding consideration with conditions or further scrutiny
- Not recommended for funding consideration

This determination defines the scope of Meeting 2.

Moderation Meeting 2: Developing funding recommendations

Goal

To finalise funding recommendations for select organisations that are proportionate, sector informed and portfolio-aligned.

Information Considered

Meeting 2 considers:

- Current funding levels
- Requested funding and percentage change
- Minimum viable funding thresholds (where identified)
- Program scale, outputs and impact
- Cost pressures and sustainability considerations
- Delivery capacity and risk
- Relative funding levels across organisations with comparable roles
- Total available budget and portfolio balance

Principles Guiding Funding Decisions

Funding recommendations are guided by the following principles:

- **Portfolio balance**: decisions consider collective impact, not just individual merit
- **Relative alignment**: comparable organisations should be funded at broadly comparable levels over time
- **Strategic targeting of increases**: prioritising sustainability, artist employment, access and sector development
- **Viability focus**: avoiding funding below functional delivery thresholds
- **Proportionate risk management**: using conditions or staged funding where appropriate

Conditions and Risk Management

Where needed, recommendations may include:

- funding conditions
- staged or partial funding
- risk mitigation requirements

These are applied proportionately and clearly documented to support transparency and tenability.

Sch 2.2(a)(ii) Teresa Comacchio 20/07/2026, 12:04 PM

This morning, the Minister approved our recommendations for the Arts Organisation Investment Program (AOIP), which of course includes the 25% uplift in funding. Letters will go out in the coming hours. We are ready to go with the letters to the unsuccessful applicants, which will be sent around 4pm.

We have a comms strategy and key messaging ready to go.



From: "Comacchio, Teresa" <Teresa.Comacchio@act.gov.au>
Sent: 26/05/2026 6:32 PM
To: "Kite, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Kite@act.gov.au>
Cc: "Gordon, Libby" <Libby.Gordon@act.gov.au>; "Bailey, Toni" <Toni.Bailey@act.gov.au>; "Skountzos, Kiki" <Kiki.Skountzos@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: AOIP Final Recommendations

OFFICIAL

Thanks, Bec. I'm comfortable with that allocation. Thank you for such a rigorous process.

Crack on with that monster brief!

Teresa Comacchio
A/g Executive Branch Manager, artsACT

From: Kite, Rebecca <Rebecca.Kite@act.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 26 May 2026 5:41 PM
To: Comacchio, Teresa <Teresa.Comacchio@act.gov.au>
Cc: Gordon, Libby <Libby.Gordon@act.gov.au>; Bailey, Toni <Toni.Bailey@act.gov.au>; Skountzos, Kiki <Kiki.Skountzos@act.gov.au>
Subject: AOIP Final Recommendations

OFFICIAL

Hi Teresa, I've reviewed the proposed final funding recommendations with Sch 2.2(a)(ii) There was general agreement on all outcomes, with the exception of the proposed increase for Sch 2.2(a)(xi) .

Following discussion, including useful insight from Sch 2.2(a)(xi), Sch 2.2(a)(ii) , the view was that while an uplift would bring Sch 2.2(a)(xi) into alignment with comparable youth arts organisations Sch 2.2(a)(xi)), the application itself did not provide sufficient justification for a 150% increase.

On that basis, it is proposed that a revised allocation of $250,000 would be more proportionate (a 55% increase). This would still provide meaningful uplift while remaining defensible against the strength of the application and broader portfolio considerations.

As a result, approximately $100,000 became available for reallocation. It was collectively suggested that Sch 2.2(a)(xi)
support the continuation and expansion of their strong inclusion-focused programs, as well as enhance utilisation of their theatre through increased programming and community access.

See updated spreadsheet here

If you're comfortable with this outcome, I can begin drafting the brief and supporting documents, including the funding recommendation spreadsheet. When you have a moment, it would be helpful to have confirmation of the final annual figures for all forward years to support this.

Thanks
Bec

Assessment Methodology

1. Assessment

Applications were assessed through a structured, criteria-based process by artsACT staff, with input from industry experts (Attachment C) providing peer comments.

Applications were assessed against published eligibility and assessment criteria, drawing on application materials and supporting documentation. The eligibility and assessment criteria are in the program guidelines at Attachment A.

In parallel, independent qualitative input was provided through industry peer commentary. Peer input was advisory only and not criteria-scored, providing qualitative insights into:

- the organisation's position within the ACT arts landscape
- the quality, relevance and coherence of the proposed program
- organisational capacity to implement proposed activities
- budget suitability and alignment to proposed outcomes

Assessment was further informed by artsACT's analysis of organisational financial health and governance performance, including review of acquittal reports from the current funded period.

These inputs—internal assessment, peer commentary and financial/governance review—were considered collectively to inform a balanced, evidence-based assessment.

2. Moderation and Portfolio Consideration

Following individual assessments, artsACT undertook a structured portfolio-wide moderation process to develop funding recommendations.

This comprised three stages:

Stage 1: Eligibility for Funding Recommendation

Consideration of which organisations should be recommended for funding, based on overall application merit, alignment to ACT Government priorities, and evidence from internal assessment, peer commentary, and financial and governance review.

Stage 2: Determination of Initial Funding Levels

Agreement on appropriate funding levels for recommended organisations, taking into account:

- the strengths of the ACT arts sector and areas of opportunity
- the strength of the application and demonstrated performance
- organisational capacity and delivery capability
- the balance and mix of artforms, organisations and services across the portfolio, including identification of duplication or gaps, and
- alignment to the available budget.

Stage 2 was also informed by quantitative analysis of performance and financial data from currently funded organisations, including:

- outputs, attendance, artist support and collaborations, normalised per $100,000 investment
- workforce benchmarking (including average salary per FTE) to assess cost structures, and
- analysis of expenditure breakdowns, including the proportion of funding allocated to operational costs (including wages and salaries) relative to program delivery, to assess value for money, efficiency and sustainability of operating models

These indicators were considered alongside qualitative assessment of artistic value and sector contribution, recognising differences in operating models across artforms and organisation types.Funding levels were determined at this stage, prior to calibration against the scaling framework (see Stage 3 below).

3. Stage 3: Scaling and Final Calibration

Following confirmation of the available budget, a scaling framework was applied to validate and calibrate funding recommendations, ensuring proportionate and consistent outcomes across organisations of different sizes.

Indicators such as FTE, expenditure, outputs and audience reach were used to benchmark relative capacity and confirm alignment between recommended funding levels and organisational scale.

Classifications were indicative and applied flexibly, recognising that organisations do not align uniformly to all thresholds.

The scales applied were:

- **Large Arts Centres:** FTE > 5; Expenditure > $1.5m; Attendees > 40,000
- **Medium Arts Centres:** FTE < 5; Expenditure < $1.5m; Attendees < 40,000
- **Large Arts Organisations:** FTE > 5; Expenditure > $1m; Outputs > 1,000; Attendees > 30,000
- **Medium Arts Organisations:** FTE 2–8; Expenditure $500K–$1m; Outputs 500–1,000; Attendees 10,000–30,000
- **Small Arts Organisations:** FTE < 2; Expenditure < $400K; Outputs < 500; Attendees < 10,000

Indicative funding parameters were used as a guide only and not as caps or prescribed limits:

- Large Arts Centres: > $750,000
- Medium Arts Centres: ≤ $750,000
- Large Arts Organisations: > $450,000
- Medium Arts Organisations: $150,000 – $450,000
- Small Arts Organisations: ≤ $150,000

These parameters supported consistency checks across the portfolio, while allowing informed and proportionate judgement based on organisational performance, capacity and strategic value.

This step did not determine funding levels, but provided final calibration where required, supporting minor adjustments to ensure recommendations remained proportionate, internally consistent, and aligned with organisational scale and the overall funding envelope.

3. Outcome

This methodology integrates qualitative assessment, quantitative analysis and portfolio calibration to support funding recommendations that are strategically aligned, evidence-based and proportionate within the available budget.

The process ensured consistency of approach while allowing informed and proportionate judgement based on organisational context and performance.

artsACT - group chat ★

artsACT

43

Meet

Messages | People (16) | Content | Meetings | +Apps

Sch 2.2(a)(ii) Cris Clucas 26/05/2026, 9:01 AM Edited

Nice article on region.com.au website about the arts funding boost: Government gets creative to fund 25 per cent boost to arts funding in budget | Region Canberra Photo of Minister Pettersson at Strathnairn with Sch 2.2(a)(ii) and board member Sch 2.2(a)(ii)

Hannah Carrigy 10/02/2026, 9:36 AM

Goodmorning Teresa 🙂 Some context as to why the decision was made for arts centre stream to be open at the same time as arts organisations were: 44

a. Outcomes advised by July 2026 provides applicants with approximately eighteen months' notice before current Deeds of Grant expire (31 December 2027 for Arts Centres). This also ensures that funding outcomes are known well in advance, particularly for Arts Centres who would require 12 months or more to put in place transitional arrangements should there be a change in management. It also allows for any Budget outcomes to be incorporated into final decisions.

b. allows for the assessment of all three streams to consider the whole arts sector, and consider the diversity of organisations, artforms and activities, any overlaps or gaps, the strengths of the ACT arts sector, emerging opportunities, the role of Arts Centres and alignment with community. (essentially, by including arts centre in this assessment round, allows artsACT to make informed decisions on the sector as a whole).

Hannah Carrigy 10/02/2026, 9:40 AM

as I mentioned, during the biannual meetings, there were a handful of organisations that have the 25% increase to program on their minds (this was prior to the applications submitted). So, it would not be surprising if applicants have increased their current funding arrangement by 25%.

Hannah Carrigy 10/02/2026, 9:57 AM

I've done a quick sweep of the currently funded arts centres reapplying Sch 2.2(a)(xi) have specifically referenced the 25% increase

Sch 2.2(a)(xi)

^thats just focusing on arts centres, havent checked arts orgs. Anyway, happy to assist as needed 🙂

You 10/02/2026, 11:41 AM

This is brilliant. Thank you.

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

[redacted]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – NOTICE OF DECISION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 25 August 2026.

Specifically, you have sought access to the following information:

> *am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:*
>
> *Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount.*
>
> *ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026).*
>
> *Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026).*
>
> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes and Consultation

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days. 10 working days was added to the response time for you to provide a response to the consultation notice, being the Notice of Intent to Therefore, a decision is due by **21 October 2026.**

On 1 October 2026, a Freedom of Information Coordinator sent you an email, which contained a Notice of Decision Letter, partially releasing information to you, as well as a Notice of Intent to Refuse to deal with part of your request under section 43(1)(a) of the Act, as dealing with the remaining part of your request was an unreasonable diversion of resources.

You were requested to provide a reply by 16 October 2026,

I note that we have not received a response from you to date, and you have not replied to confirm whether you agreed to withdraw the remaining part of your request.

A copy of these documents are at **Attachment 1.**

Decision on access

I have decided to refuse to deal with your access application in full under section 43(1)(a) of the Act, because:

- Dealing with the remaining part of your access application is an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- In making this decision I have into account information set out in **Attachment 1** which includes **Appendix A**, being the consultation notice, and includes providing you with reasons.

As identified in **Appendix A**, searches for information have located at least 40 third party organisations as well as 16 third party individuals, meaning at least 56 lots of third party consultation would be required under section 38 of the Act.

Under section 44(1)(a) the resources required to identify, locate, collate and examine any information held by CMTEDD, including the resources required in obtaining the views of relevant third parties under section 38, would substantially inhibit the ability of CMTEDD to exercise its functions. Under section 44(1)(b) the extent to which the public interest would be advanced in not very much in light of a decision being made on the release of some information, as well as providing you with details on how to access information of grant funding and information published on successful grant recipients.

As you have not provided any response, I have not been able to consider any other factors, that I am permitted to consider, under the public interest test set out in section 17 of the Act and you have not rescoped the remainder of your request. I also note that you have not withdrawn the remainder of your request.

Due to the volume of consultation with third parties that would be required to process the remaining portion of your request, which also contains confidential and personal information of those third parties, I have decided that the use of public resources is not justified to process the remaining information held by CMTEDD. I note that the objects of the ACT have been met in-so-far as information has already been partially released to you, and some information is already publicly available.

Therefore, under section 35(1)(d) of the Act I refuse to deal with the remaining part of your access application, not already dealt with in my Notice of Decision Letter of 1 October 2026, where information was partially released to you.

Charges

Pursuant to *Freedom of Information (Fees) Determination 2018* processing charges are not applicable for this part of the request as no documents are being released to you.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log.

Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CMTEDD disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form *Applying for an Ombudsman Review* to ensure you provide all of the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

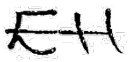
Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740

http://www.acat.act.gov.au/

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact the FOI team by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Emma Hotham
Information Officer
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

19 October 2026

Attachment 1

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

[redacted]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – NOTICE OF DECISION

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Specifically, you have sought access to the following information:

> *I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:*
>
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>
> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days.

Therefore, a decision is due by **7 October 2026.**

Decision on access

Under section 35(2) of the Act an access application may be decided in more than one way. Accordingly, I have decided as follows:

- Refuse to deal with part of your request under section 35(1)(d) of the Act; and
- Partially release documents for part of your request under section 35(1)(a) and section 35(1)(c) of the Act.

Searches of CMTEDD records have identified 13 documents in scope of your request that I am making a decision on.

I have decided to grant **full access** to nine documents.

I have decided to grant **partial access** to four documents.

Documents located include meeting agenda documents, Microsoft Teams messages, forms, emails and program guidelines.

The records identified as relevant to your application are listed in the schedule enclosed at **Attachment A**. This provides a description of each document that falls within the scope of your request and the access decision for each of those documents.

Refusing to deal with part of your request

I intend to refuse to deal with some of the information within scope of your request. A Notice of Intent is provided at **Appendix A,** which sets out the grounds of the proposed refusal, and provides you with ten working days to respond before I make a final decision on the remaining part of your request.

Release of documents

The information being released to you is provided at **Attachment B**.

Statement of Reasons

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act a statement of reasons outlining my decisions is below. In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- ACT Ombudsman Freedom of Information guidelines
- the information that falls within the scope of your request

As a decision maker, I am required to determine whether the information within scope is in the public interest to release. To make this decision, I am required to:

- assess whether the information would be contrary to public interest to disclose as per **Schedule 1** of the Act.
- perform the public interest test as set out in section 17 of the Act by balancing the factors favouring disclosure and factors favouring nondisclosure in **Schedule 2** of the Act.

Exemptions claimed

Schedule 1: Information taken to be contrary to the public interest

No Schedule 1 Factors were identified.

Public Interest Test

The Act has a presumption in favour of disclosure. As a decision maker I am required to decide where, on balance, public interest lies. As part of this process, I must consider factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure.

In *Hogan v Hinch* (2011) 243 CLR 506, [31] French CJ stated that when 'used in a statute, the term [public interest] derives its content from "the subject matter and the scope and purpose" of the enactment in which it appears'. Section 17(1) of the Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. These factors are found in subsection 17(2) and Schedule 2 of the Act.

Schedule 2: Factors to be considered when deciding the public interest

Taking into consideration the information within scope of your request, I have identified that the following public interest factors are relevant to determine if release of the information contained within these documents is within the 'public interest'.

Factors favouring disclosure (Section 2.1)

- *Section 2.1(a)(i) - promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(ii) - contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(iii) - inform the community of the government's operations, including policies, guidelines and codes of conduct followed by the government in its dealings with members of the community.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(viii) - reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.*

There is a clear public interest in people being able to discuss information concerning public money being provided to the Arts community as part of the transparency and accountability process of the ACT Government. I am satisfied that releasing information will provide background information and inform that community, which will contribute to informed debate about decision-making concerning public spending that is in the public interest.

I am satisfied that these factors favouring disclosure carry some weight. However, these factors are to be balanced against the factors favouring nondisclosure.

Factors favouring nondisclosure (Section 2.2)

- *Section 2.2(a)(ii) - prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the Human Rights Act 2004.*
- *Section 2.2(a)(xi) - prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

Having reviewed the information, I consider that the protection of an individual's right to privacy, is a significant factor. Release of information concerning individuals working within the ACT Public Service is generally not considered to prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy. However, where mobile phone numbers may be used for home and work purposes, this information is redacted, as it could or would reasonably be expected to prejudice an individual's right to privacy under the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

I have decided to redact some names and images of individuals, including ACT Government staff as well as peer review information that contains names of third party individuals.

I have also considered the impact of disclosing information which relates to business affairs. In the case of *Re Mangan and The Treasury* [2005] AATA 898 the term 'business affairs' was interpreted as meaning 'the totality of the money-making affairs of an organisation or undertaking as distinct from its private or internal affairs'. Schedule 2 section 2.2(a)(xi) allows for government information to be withheld from release if disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person. I have decided to redact some information involving third party businesses. In this respect I also rely on reasons set out in Notice of Intent to Refuse letter at **Appendix A,** where some of the information concerns confidential business information of third parties where the information is business-in confidence of third party businesses, where there has not been consultation under section 38 of the Act and therefore those businesses have not consented to the release of that information.

Having applied the test outlined in section 17 of the Act and deciding that release of some information contained in the documents is not in the public interest to release, I have chosen to redact this specific information in accordance with section 50(2). Noting the pro-disclosure intent of the Act, I am satisfied that redacting only the information that I believe is not in the public interest to release will ensure that the intent of the Act is met and will provide you with access to the majority of the information held by CMTEDD within the scope of your request that I am making a decision on, notwithstanding that there is an attached notice for intending to refuse to deal with part of your request.

Publicly Available information

Information on the funding amounts to successful applicants, is publicly available on the artsACT website:

https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding/current-funding-recipients/arts-organisation-investment-program

Information about the Arts funding, including information for applicants, list of funding recipients and peer assessment information is published online, and can also be accessed here, which includes the assessment information used to evaluate the applications:

https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable for this request because the number of pages released to you is below the charging threshold of 50.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log.

Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CMTEDD disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form *Applying for an Ombudsman Review* to ensure you provide all the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
http://www.acat.act.gov.au/

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact the CMTEDD FOI Team by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

EH

Emma Hotham

Information Officer
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

1 October 2026

Appendix A

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

[redacted]

Consultation Notice to Applicant – intent to refuse to deal

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 25 August 2026.

Specifically, you have sought access to the following information:

> *I am requesting the following in relation to the ArtsACT Arts Centre Investment, Arts Organisation Investment Funding, and the Emerging Arts Organisation Investment Funding round for 2027-2030:*
>
> *Application grading materials for all applicants (successful and unsuccessful), noting that if applicants are de-identified, that it remains clear whether their application was successful and for what amount.*
>
> *ArtsACT communications and documentation relating to funding allocation and funding recommendation (from 2026).*
>
> *Communications between ArtsACT relating to the funding pool increase of 25% for these programs, especially including any requests for this increase and any qualifications for the increase (from 2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant receive any specified amount (from the period 2025-2026).*
>
> *Any internal ArtsACT communications recommending that any applicant not receive funding (from the period 2026-2026).*
>
> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days.

Therefore, a decision is due by **7 October 2026.**

Intention to Refuse

I intend to refuse to deal with part of your access application, **under section 43(1)(a) of the Act, as dealing with the application would require an unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources.**

The notice applies to the remaining information held by CMTEDD not already decided by the Notice of Decision letter.

Consultation Period

Section 46(1) of the Act requires me to provide you with the opportunity to amend your application before a decision to refuse to deal with your request can be made. The time allowed for you to amend your request under section 46(4)(a) is 10 working days from the date of this notice.

Statement of Reasons – Why I intend to refuse to deal with part of your request

In deciding to intend to refuse to deal with part of your access application, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- *Information Privacy Act 2014*
- the scope of your request
- information searches and information located
- internal consultation
- publicly available information
- ACT Ombudsman Freedom of Information Guidelines

In order for a decision-maker to apply the provision of section 44 - *Refusing to deal with application—unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources*, the decision-maker must consider that the application would:

- inhibit the ability of the respondent to exercise its function, refer section 44(1)(a) and
- the extent to which the public interest is advanced does not justify the use of the required resources, refer section 44(1)(b).

Unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources

Your request contains an extensive amount of third party consultation. Searches for information have located at least 40 third party organisations as well as 16 third party individuals, meaning at least 56 lots of third party consultation would be required under section 38 of the Act.

While there is a public interest in accountability for public spending, the time and resources in this respect do not justify the time taken to contact all these third parties, especially in circumstances where details on information, including funding recipients are published online; and artsACT notify unsuccessful organisations and offer feedback on their assessment outcomes directly to applicants. Feedback can also be requested by the successful recipients.

I consider the resources required to identify, locate, and collate, in addition to the resources required to review, assess, third party consult relevant third parties (assuming that there would be information of concern to individuals if disclosed, refer s38 of the Act), review information that is publicly available and prepare the final decision notice to be unreasonable.

Diversion of resources not justified in the public interest

Much of the information you have requested is based on third party submissions to grant funding applications. You have requested some information that is unlikely to be disclosed including, confidential business information. I have decided to release blank application and peer assessment forms. Redacting information that is contrary to the public interest to release is likely to result in information that is contained on those application form templates.

Information within other documents held, such as excel spreadsheets contains information that is contrary to the public interest, and the identities of those parties is easily able to be worked out. Schedule 2 factors under the Act relevant include:

- *Section 2.2(a)(ii) - prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the Human Rights Act 2004.*
- *Section 2.2(a)(xi) - prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

In addition, some of the information you requested is already publicly available, since the assessment criteria, and information for third party applicants is published on the atrsACT website, including recipients and the amount of funding allocated to them. While this is also a ground for refusal under section 43(1)(d) and 45(a) of the Act, it further demonstrates that your access application has not been scoped in a way that does not create unnecessary burden on public resources since some of the information is already available to you.

Action Required by you

This notice sets out the grounds for my intention to refuse to deal with your application. I welcome any consultation with you regarding this Notice of Intent to Refuse, and the chance to address the concerns raised.

For CMTEDD to process your access application, you may wish to consider changing the scope of your request or withdrawing the remainder of your request.

While CMTEDD is supportive of anonymous freedom of information requests, if you were a funding applicant and or a person involved in the peer review process, or had funding refused, you can provide us with your details, as well as personal identification under section 30(3) of the ACT, including confirmation of your authority to act on behalf of an organisation, and we can provide you with information related to you and or your organisation. Please also refer to schedule 2, section 2.2(b) as this is a factor we can consider under section 17(3) of the Act. I note that identifying you and or your business can change some of the public interest test factors that are relevant to the information being sought.

Some suggestions for rescoping the remainder of your request, include that you could request internal correspondence and request attachments containing third party documents be 'outside scope' of the request.

You have addressed the public interest on the information as follows:

> *There is growing concern within the ACT Arts Community that that funds are earmarked for certain organisations regardless of the grant assessment process. Releasing this information allows for this process to be transparent and accountable, and ensures that the process is operating in good faith.*

I note that information is publicly available of the recipients of grant funding, as well as the assessment criteria.

In accordance with ACT FOI Ombudsman guidelines, we note that in applying the public interest test, it is not whether you are personally subjectively satisfied whether the material is in the public interest to release. The final point of your request appears to be asking for information that does not exist, as in funding is not earmarked for certain organisations and funding is allocated as set out in the grant categories and grant guidelines, which is published online and therefore available to you.

Businesses undertaking development activities in the ACT may expect that any sensitive business information they provide to the Government will be held in confidence. However, businesses that provide information to government do so with the knowledge that government held information may be subject to an access application made under Freedom of Information legislation. Those who do business with government must also recognise that governments have to balance the commercial interests of businesses with the principles of openness and transparency, and that the weight of the public interest in protecting business information will depend on a variety of factors, including how commercially sensitive the information is, its age, its current relevance and the extent to which it has entered the public domain. In this respect, the content of the grant application, and information evaluating information is not publicly known other than the successful applicants. The assessments are undertaken with a peer review process using third parties who are not part of the ACT government who take part in the process under the Territory Privacy Principles and information is kept confidential.

As stated on the artsACT website, applicants expect information to be kept confidential as applications, including unsuccessful ones, contain sensitive and or confidential business information. As stated on the website, https://www.arts.act.gov.au/funding/information-for-applicants :

> ***Confidentiality, Privacy and Freedom of Information***
>
> *The information provided in funding submissions is used when processing and assessing applications. The ACT Government respects all personal and confidential information you provide and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any unauthorised access, loss or misuse of information provided in your application. Information provided by all applicants will be stored centrally and may be used by ACT Government officers to better understand community needs and improve service delivery. Details of successful applicants (limited to applicant name, funding amount and grant purpose) will be publicly announced, and artsACT may promote the activity of funded applicants.*

artsACT will only use or disclose personal information in accordance with relevant legislation, including the Information Privacy Act 2014. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 apply to documents in artsACT's possession. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without the permission of the applicant.

Other records held include the applications, an assessment of the funding applicants, some email correspondence that includes assessments on the applicants.

Third party information contained in the material is so inextricably mixed with other content that extensive redaction would be necessary to remove exempt or protected material prior to disclosure and accordingly does not justify the use of public resources, as identified above.

CMTEDD has limited information about a 25% increase in funding; some commentary about percentage increases relate to previous and current funding applications that includes business-in-confidence information of third parties and is contrary to the public interest to release.

If no response is received from you by 16 October 2026, I intend to refuse to deal with the remaining parts of your application under section **43(1)(a) of the Act,** of the Act.

What happens next?

Before I make a decision on your access application, you have an opportunity to provide me with an amended application or any additional information relevant to your application that would address my reasons outlined above for intending to refuse your application.

You can submit a response by **16 October 2026, which can also include a request to withdraw** the remainder of your request.

I have 30 working days to give you a decision about your access application however, the time taken to clarify the access application is in addition to the 30-working day period.

Further assistance

If you have any questions in relation to your access application, please contact the CMTEDD FOI team on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Emma Hotham

Information Officer

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

1 October 2025

Appendix A

ACT Government
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2026-241

[redacted]

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Yours sincerely



Emma Hotham

Information Officer

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

1 October 2025