



ABORIGINAL  
**INVESTMENT**

# GRANT GUIDELINES

## Round 2 - Community Impact and Innovation Grants

**Program Opens 2 February 2026**

**Program Closes 30 April 2026**

**Aboriginal Investment NT Grant**

**Open Competitive Grant Round**

E: [grants@aboriginalinvestment.org.au](mailto:grants@aboriginalinvestment.org.au)

P: 1800 943 039

Published 23 January 2026



These Guidelines replace the previous Round 1 Grant Guidelines and the Common Grant Guidelines. For Round 2, this document is the only set of Guidelines that applies.

# Contents

---

<b>1. Overview of Program</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Purpose and objectives	4
1.2 Funding- What is the grant for?	5
1.3 Other Funding Sources	5
1.4 Key dates	5
1.5 What can the grant money be used for?	6
1.6 What can't the grant money be used for?	7
<b>2. Selection Criteria</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Who can apply?	8
2.3 Assessment Criteria	9
<b>3. Application Process</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 How to apply	10
3.2 Supporting Documents	11
<b>4. Assessment process</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 Further information requests	11
4.2 How does a competitive assessment work?	11
4.3 Assessment of grant applications	12
4.4 Notification of application outcome	13
<b>5. Successful grant applications</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1 Grant agreement	13
5.2 Grant payment	14
5.3 Variations	14
5.4 Reporting and acquittal requirements	14
5.5 Unspent funds	15
5.6 Publication of grants information	15
<b>6. Additional information and resources</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Conflict of Interest	15
6.2 Privacy of Information	16
6.3 Freedom on Information	16
6.4 Complaints	16



# 1. Overview of Program

## 1.1 Purpose and objectives

Aboriginal Investment NT's Community Impact and Innovation Grants provide grant funding for medium-scale Aboriginal community-led projects in the NT.

The **objective** of Community Impact and Innovation Grants is to support projects that achieve cultural, social and/or economic impact or innovation.

**Innovation** means trying a new way of doing things. This could include listening to the community to design solutions, using cultural knowledge and practices, or creating new ideas or technology-based solutions (but doesn't need to be).

**Impact** means the positive and lasting change your project creates for Aboriginal people and communities in the Northern Territory. This may include social, cultural or economic strengthening community wellbeing, supporting culture, increasing opportunities, or addressing a local need.

### Outcomes

Projects funded through this program are expected to deliver clear and meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

These outcomes may include:

- Improved community infrastructure as determined by community priorities and needs
- Strengthened Aboriginal economic, social and cultural systems
- Increased economic or employment opportunities
- Strengthened connected communities, where culture is maintained, centralised and valued

These outcomes help ensure the grant funding leads to long-lasting, positive change for Aboriginal people and communities across the NT and is aligned with Aboriginal Investment NT Strategic Implementation Plan.

## 1.2 Funding- What is the grant for?

You have a project ready that is going to benefit an Aboriginal community and that community members have helped to design and plan. You're looking for grant funding to make it happen. Eligible organisations can apply for project funding between \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 (GST exclusive) for projects lasting up to 3 years. Budgeted items should not include GST. We will pay GST on top of the total project funds awarded.

Each year, \$10 million is available through the Community Impact and Innovation Grants program. Grants are competitive, which means applications are assessed against specific criteria and compared with other applications. This ensures that funding delivers the greatest possible benefits to Aboriginal Territorians. There is one grant round per financial year.

## 1.3 Other Funding Sources

Aboriginal Investment NT encourages applicants to use this grant together with other confirmed funding from government or other organisations. This can help strengthen your project and increase its impact.

Using other funding is **not compulsory**. However, it is one of the assessment criteria, and your project will be assessed on whether it shows confirmed support or funding from other sources.

## 1.4 Key dates

Key dates for this round of Community Impact and Innovation Grants:

**Application open date:** 2 February 2026

**Application close date:** 30 April 2026

**Application outcome date:** 30 August 2026

**Expected project finish date:** 30 August 2029



## 1.5 What can the grant money be used for?

Grant funding can only be used for costs that are directly related to your project.

### Eligible Activities

You can use this grant for activities that:

- ✓ Strengthen Aboriginal culture, language, and heritage.
- ✓ Improve community social, emotional or cultural wellbeing.
- ✓ Create jobs, skills, or training opportunities.
- ✓ Solve problems or meet needs the community has identified.
- ✓ Support connection to Country and caring for the land.
- ✓ Run workshops, mentoring, or community events.
- ✓ Use creative or technology-based ideas to benefit the community.

*\* Any infrastructure bought with the grant becomes the property of the grantee organisation. The organisation is responsible for looking after it, including paying for ongoing maintenance.*

### Eligible Items

You can also use the grant to buy things your project needs, including:

- ✓ Equipment or tools needed for the project
- ✓ Materials and resources for project activities
- ✓ Event and activity costs
- ✓ Minor infrastructure\* or building work needed for the project.
- ✓ Learning or training resources linked to the project
- ✓ Technology or software needed to deliver the project
- ✓ Project staffing- salary on-costs (super, workers comp, leave loading) can be included
- ✓ Artist Fees
- ✓ Vehicles- only when clear link with project outcomes
- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ Essential professional service (accountant, legal or linguist)
- ✓ Travel (airfares, accommodation, fuel) - only if essential and project specific and within Australia
- ✓ Insurances (project related items or activities only)
- ✓ Administration -up to 10% must be directly related to delivering the project  
Examples include: project-specific admin support, project reporting costs, printing project materials, bookkeeping for the project, or small office supplies used only for the project
- ✓ Contingency - up to 5% of the total grant amount

## 1.6 What can't the grant money be used for?

### Ineligible Activities

- ✗ Projects that only benefit an individual.
- ✗ Infrastructure if you do not have an existing legal right or permission to install the infrastructure or access the land on which the infrastructure will be built.
- ✗ Funerals and ceremony. These activities are funded by the Land Councils.
- ✗ Costs for preparing the grant application or costs incurred before an application is approved.
- ✗ Expense items for which Commonwealth, state, territory, or local government bodies are currently funding. However, if the project relates to innovation, increasing impact or leveraging additional government funding, then the project may be co-funded via an Aboriginal Investment NT grant.

### Ineligible Items

- ✗ Vehicles that do not demonstrate a strong link to achieving project outcomes.
- ✗ Operational costs - day-to-day running costs of the organisation (these are things like: staff wages, rent, utilities, general office expenses, insurance, and ongoing organisational running costs).
- ✗ International travel and accommodation.
- ✗ Payment of fines or loans, purchase of gifts or personal debts, financial investment.
- ✗ Ongoing staffing or administration costs
- ✗ Expenses that have been or will be grant funded by another source



## 2. Selection Criteria

### 2.1 Who can apply?

#### Eligible applicants must be:

- ✓ Incorporated under relevant legislation.
- ✓ Not-for-profit.
- ✓ Traditional Owner organisation or Aboriginal community-controlled organisation
- ✓ Based in the NT, unless you are a cross-border Australian entity with operations and cultural links to the NT (by exception only).
- ✓ Operated for the benefit of Aboriginal people.
- ✓ Connected to the NT community, or communities, whose members will benefit from the grant funding.
- ✓ Governed by a majority NT Aboriginal governing body, where at least 51% of the governing body is made up of NT Aboriginal people (exceptions may apply).
- ✓ Delivering the project within the NT borders.
- ✓ Able to show permission to use the land if the project involves building, developing, or using land for community activities.

#### In-eligible applicants:

- ✗ Applicants with a previous debt, underspend or outstanding acquittal for any Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) or Aboriginal Investment NT grant (this does not apply to NT Land Councils acting as an auspice).
- ✗ Based outside the NT, unless you are a cross-border Australian entity with operations and cultural links to the NT (by exception only).
- ✗ Applicants who are currently bankrupt (not yet discharged).
- ✗ Applicants not compliant with their incorporating legislation or other applicable laws and regulations
- ✗ Applicants who are found to have deliberately provided false information in a grant application to Aboriginal Investment NT.
- ✗ Commonwealth, Territory and local government bodies or agencies (unless the project is being auspiced by an NT Land Council).
- ✗ Joint applications.

## 2.3 Assessment Criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion. Applicants must meet a minimum standard for each criterion. A score of zero for any criterion means the project is not eligible for funding, even if it scores well on other criteria.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. Providing evidence to support your answers will strengthen your application.

### 1. Project impact or innovation

#### Weighting 25%

- The extent to which the project activities clearly show how they will create impact and/or introduce something new.
- The extent to which the project shows clear social, cultural, and/or economic benefits for Aboriginal community members

### 2. Community led

#### Weighting 25%

- Aboriginal community members helped plan and design the project.
- There is clear evidence the project is needed by the Aboriginal community.
- The project aligns with community plans, strategies, or priorities.
- Aboriginal community members will be employed and involved in delivering the project.

### 3. Value for money

#### Weighting 20%

- The project budget is reasonable and uses funds efficiently to deliver the project
- Other funding or in-kind support has been confirmed to help deliver the project
- The project demonstrates a plan to maintain its benefits and impact beyond the grant period.

### 4. Capability and capacity

#### Weighting 15%

- The project team has the skills and experience to manage, deliver, and report on the project.
- The organisation has strong governance and decision-making processes.
- The project plan includes realistic goals, timelines, and ways to manage risks.
- The organisation shows sound financial management and health.

### 5. Equity

#### Weighting 15%

- Projects that contribute to a fair distribution of funding across the Northern Territory, ensuring a good geographic spread and reaching communities that may have fewer resources or less access to funding and support.



## 3. Application Process

### 3.1 How to apply

#### Step 1 CONTACT US



Our Engagement team is available to talk you through the application process. They can explain the grants process, eligibility and assessment criteria. Contact our Community Engagement Officers on (08) 7906 1741. Please note, talking with Aboriginal Investment NT does not guarantee your application will be approved or funded.

#### Step 2 READ THE GUIDELINES



Read the Grant Guidelines carefully before you start your application. The guidelines explain who can apply, what can be funded, and what you need to include.

Use this time to gather all your supporting documents (listed below), such as quotes, budgets, letters of support, or any other information required for your application.

#### Step 3 FILL APPLICATION ON SMARTYGRANTS



To start an application you will find the link on our [website](#). All applications must be submitted online through SmartyGrants. Work through each section of the form and answer all questions as clearly as you can. Upload all required attachments and supporting documents before you submit your application.

SmartyGrants lets you save your progress and return at any time, so you don't need to finish it in one sitting. If you have any trouble with the form or with uploading documents, please contact the Grants Team on 1800 943 039. We do not accept applications submitted after the round has closed.

#### Step 4 SUBMITTED



You will receive an email from SmartyGrants confirming your application was submitted with a reference number and a copy of your application.

When contacting the Grants Team, use your application number for easy reference.

## 3.2 Supporting Documents

Supporting documents help to show that your project is eligible and ready to be delivered. These documents provide evidence to support the information in your application. If essential documents are missing or incomplete, it may be found ineligible. Suitable file formats to upload include (PDF, DOCX, JPG) up to 5MB.

### Essential supporting documents:

- **Quotes** - should clearly show what you are purchasing and the cost (excluding GST). Where quotes are not possible for some items or due to remoteness, we will apply flexibility
- **Letters of support** - letters should explain why the project is important and how it benefits the Aboriginal community
- **Confirmation of Aboriginality Certificate's** for Directors (if not an ORIC)
- **Financial Statements** - must cover the last 2 years
- **Land Use Agreements** - required where the project involves land access, use, or development.
- **Resumes for key project staff** - should show relevant skills and experience to deliver the project.
- **Evidence of community involvement** in project planning. For example: meeting minutes, social media posts, community surveys, or consultation notes.

### Optional

- **Strategic and/or organisational plans** - helps show how the project aligns with your business or community goals.
- **Project plans** can include key activities, timeframes, and milestones.
- **Photos of the project site** - helps show the current state of the site or location.
- **Site plans** - can help explain how the project will be delivered on the site.

## 4. Assessment process

---

### 4.1 Further information requests

Further information will only be requested if required documents (listed above) are missing, making it difficult to assess your application fairly. Applicants will have 5 working days to provide the information. Unfortunately, no extensions can be given. If it's not received within this time, your application will be assessed without it. Applicants cannot update answers, change project plans, or budget items after an application is submitted.

Providing extra information does not guarantee that your application will be approved.

### 4.2 How does a competitive assessment work?

This grant is an open competitive round, which means anyone who is eligible can apply. All applications are assessed fairly against the program's criteria. We use this process because there is high demand and limited funding. Not all projects can be funded, so applications are scored and compared.

Some aspects, like supporting communities with fewer resources or delivering strong impact, are part of the assessment criteria and affect the weighting of your score.

All funding decisions are final.



## 4.3 Assessment of grant applications

### Step 1 ELIGIBILITY CHECK



The Aboriginal Investment NT Grants Team will check if your organisation meets the eligibility criteria.

- If we cannot check your eligibility from the documents you provide, we may ask for more information.
- Once we have all the documents we need, we will decide if your organisation is eligible.
- If your organisation is eligible, we will then start assessing your application.

### Step 2 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION



We will assess your application against the criteria listed above.

- Each criterion has a different weighting to help us identify the projects that best meet the grant's objectives.

### Step 3 ASSESSMENT OUTCOME REVIEW



The assessment outcome will be reviewed by the Grants Manager and/or Chief Operating Officer.

A final score will be confirmed for each project. All eligible projects will then be prepared for presentation to the Aboriginal Investment NT board.

### Step 4 FINAL APPROVAL



Assessment outcomes and recommendations are provided to the delegate, the Aboriginal Investment NT Board.

After reviewing the assessment, the board may decide to:

- Approve your application in principle, subject to negotiating a grant agreement.
- Approve your application in principle with changes or conditions, subject to negotiating a grant agreement.
- Not approve your application.

The Board's decision is final, including any conditions or the amount of funding approved.

## 4.4 Notification of application outcome

You will be told the outcome within four months after the submission closes. We will send the result to the email address of the contact person you listed in your application.

If your application is not successful, we can explain why.

## 5. Successful grant applications

---

### 5.1 Grant agreement

If your application is successful, you will enter into a grant agreement with Aboriginal Investment NT. Funding is not guaranteed until both parties (Aboriginal Investment NT and the grantee) have signed the agreement.

If you choose to start your grant project before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk (including incurring financial and other costs should an agreement not be reached).

If there are unreasonable delays in finalising a grant agreement, Aboriginal Investment NT may withdraw or amend its grant offer to you.

### Key Terms & Conditions

The Terms and Conditions of the Grant agreement are standard and not negotiable. Below are some of the key terms and conditions that the grant agreement will include:

#### 1. Insurance

You must have and maintain appropriate insurance for your project, including public liability, workers' compensation, or other types required for your activities.

#### 2. Reporting

You must provide progress reports on your project, including project updates and a final report. Reports should show how you are meeting the deliverables and outcomes in your grant agreement.

#### 3. Asset Ownership

Any assets, equipment, or infrastructure purchased with the grant become the property of your organisation. You are responsible for maintaining them.

#### 4. Risk and Compliance

You are responsible for managing risks associated with your project. This includes ensuring your project is safe, legal, and follows relevant laws and guidelines.

#### 5. Licences and Permits

You must obtain and maintain any licences, permits, or approvals needed for your project.

#### 6. Use of Funding

Grant funding must only be used for the approved project activities and budget. Any changes require approval from Aboriginal Investment NT.

#### 7. Acknowledgment

You may be required to acknowledge Aboriginal Investment NT's support in project materials, events, or publicity.



## 5.2 Grant payment

When signing the Final Grant Agreement, recipients are asked to attach an invoice for Payment 1. The invoice must be addressed to Aboriginal Investment NT.

After the Funding Agreement is co-signed by Aboriginal Investment NT, the invoice will be paid. It can take up to 2 weeks to reach the recipient's bank account.

For projects only 1 year long, the full amount will be paid upfront. For projects over multiple years, payments are made each year, after the Progress Report has been submitted and approved by Aboriginal Investment NT.

## 5.3 Variations

Aboriginal Investment NT will work with you to achieve your grant's intended outcomes.

You should let us know if anything changes such as:

- **Unexpected events** affecting delivery
- **Staff changes:** Key project staff leaving or being unavailable.
- **Supply chain issues:** Delays or difficulties in receiving goods or services needed for the project.
- **Changes in project partners or collaborators:** When planned costs change or you need to adjust your budget items.
- **Financial issues:** Budget shortfalls or delays in funding that affect project progress.
- **Changes in community or stakeholder needs:** Shifts in the needs or priorities of the community or stakeholders involved in the project.
- **Health and safety concerns:** Issues that affect the ability to carry out work safely, such as health risks or workplace safety violations.

If you want to make changes, contact the Grants Team to see if a variation is possible. Changes must stay within the approved project scope and eligibility.

Examples of variations include changes to:

- key dates or milestones
- budget items
- intended outcomes

**You will need to complete a variation form on SmartyGrants. Aboriginal Investment NT must approve the variation before you make any changes to your project.**

## 5.4 Reporting and acquittal requirements

Grantees are required to submit project reports to show how your project is progressing. Project report Templates are provided through Smartygrants. We have two types of reports:

### Progress Report

The progress report will ask you:

- how the Grant money has been spent
- how the Project is going, including photos, written updates and any other evidence showing progress towards the Deliverables and Grant Outcomes
- any issues or challenges that are affecting the Project delivery.

## Final Acquittal Report

At the end of the Project, the Grantee must submit a Final Acquittal Report in SmartyGrants. The report must include:

- a full acquittal showing how all Grant funds were spent against the Project Budget
- a copy of the Grantee's Asset Register
- a service and maintenance plan explaining how the Grantee will look after the Assets and keep them in good condition
- a description of progress in meeting the Deliverables in the funding agreement
- a description of progress in achieving the Grant Outcomes and Measures in the funding agreement
- a Final Occupation Certificate (if required for the project type), confirming the Project is complete and meets all local approval requirements

The reporting timeframes will be outlined in the funding agreement. If reports are not submitted, it will affect your ability to access funds in the future or your future eligibility for a grant.

Aboriginal Investment NT staff may also schedule a site visit during or after the project to check on its progress and ensure you're meeting the terms of the grant agreement. More information on project reporting is available [here](#).

## 5.5 Unspent funds

On review of the final acquittal, any unspent funds must be returned to Aboriginal Investment NT. The grant will not be acquitted and closed until unspent funds are returned.

## 5.6 Publication of grants information

After your grant agreement is executed, it will be listed on the Aboriginal Investment NT website within 21 calendar days. Aboriginal Investment NT may also promote your grant on our website and other forms of media. We will request your media consent as part of your grant agreement.

# 6. Additional information and resources

---

## 6.1 Conflict of Interest

Aboriginal Investment NT Board and Committee members, staff and others acting on our behalf have an obligation to declare and manage conflicts of interest, whether actual, perceived or potential. This includes when assessing or deciding on a grant application. This includes conflicts of interest relating to:

- Professional, political, commercial or personal relationships with someone who could influence the application selection process.
- Relationships with, or interests in, an organisation or individual which will likely interfere or restrict carrying out the proposed projects fairly and independently.
- Relationships with, or interests in, an organisation or individual that may receive a personal gain as a result of an organisation or individual receiving an Aboriginal Investment NT grant.
- Any other relevant set of circumstances that may create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.



As part of your application, you must declare any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest of yourself or key people in your organisation (CEOs, founders, shareholders or partners). You will need to disclose any situations where your business, or key staff, have interests or connections with suppliers, Aboriginal Investment NT, or its staff that could affect the fairness of the assessment or the use of grant funds.

An application is considered incomplete and ineligible if the conflict of interest declaration is not complete.

You must also keep Aboriginal Investment NT updated, if you later identify any conflict of interest.

**NOTE:** Having a conflict of interest won't affect your application result, it helps us manage it properly.

## 6.2 Privacy of Information

### Collection and use of personal information

Aboriginal Investment NT is responsible for making grants and investments and providing financial assistance and other supports to promote the self-management, economic self-sufficiency and social and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal people living in the Northern Territory. We take your privacy seriously and will handle your personal information in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).

Our [Privacy Collection Notice](#) explains how we manage personal information that you may have included in a grant application for Aboriginal Investment NT's grants programs. Aboriginal Investment NT may receive documents and information from organisations that include personal information, confidential information, or commercially-sensitive information (Organisation Information). Personal information we collect will be handled in the manner described in this [Privacy Collection Notice](#).

An application is considered incomplete and ineligible if the privacy declaration consent form is not complete.

## 6.3 Freedom on Information

All documents in the possession of Aboriginal Investment NT, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by Aboriginal Investment NT. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates. All freedom of information requests must be referred in writing, via [info@aboriginalinvestment.org.au](mailto:info@aboriginalinvestment.org.au).

## 6.4 Complaints

If you would like to make a complaint about a grant process please email [complaints@aboriginalinvestment.org.au](mailto:complaints@aboriginalinvestment.org.au).

If you do not agree with the way Aboriginal Investment NT has handled your complaint, you may wish to contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with Aboriginal Investment NT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)





# ABORIGINAL **INVESTMENT**

---

If you have any questions, please call us on 1800 943 039  
[aboriginalinvestment.org.au](http://aboriginalinvestment.org.au)

