



Australia's Disability Strategy - National Disability Conference Initiative 2024–25 Grant Opportunity

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Social Services (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Australia's Disability Strategy - National Disability Conference Initiative 2024–25 grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 22 April 2024 and closed on 20 May 2024.

The National Disability Conference Initiative (NDCI) is an ongoing, competitive annual grant round to provide grants to disability conference organisations. It is funded by the Commonwealth Government as a commitment under Australia's Disability Strategy, supporting the vision of the Strategy for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

The NDCI is part of the department's Disability and Carers Support component, under Outcome 3.1 Disability and Carers. This outcome supports people living with disability and their carers to more actively participate in community and economic life.

This grant opportunity provides grants to conference organisers to assist people with disability to participate in nationally focused, disability-related, conferences held in Australia. Grants may also support eligible conference organisers to provide accessibility measures that will maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at their conference.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- greater participation and inclusion of people with disability and their carers at nationally-focused, disability-related conferences held in Australia.
- greater awareness of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* launched on 3 December 2021.

The Australian Government announced a total of \$319,440 (GST exclusive) over 2024-25 for the NDCI grant round for conference starting held between 6 August 2024 and 30 June 2025.

Eligibility for the 2024-25 NDCI grant round was outlined in section 4 of the NDCI Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The department welcomed submissions from applicants between 22 April 2024 to 20 May 2024, with a maximum of \$10,000 (GST exclusive) available per conference. Noting, some successful organisations received less funding as per their application, as there was no minimum funding amount that must be applied for.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether applications met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The Hub undertook the preliminary assessment on all applications through an open competitive grant process. Applications which underwent preliminary assessment were provided to the department's selection advisory panel (panel) for deliberation.

The panel established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing and deliberating on applications the panel took into consideration several factors including the inclusion or exclusion of late applications, the volume of applications received, whether applicants demonstrated they could meet the identified requirements outlined in the guidelines.

Specifically, the panel recommended applicants that best:

- Aligned their activities with the objectives of the grant
- Represented value for money
- Remonstrated the experience and expertise to administer the grant funding.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Hub notified applicants of their outcome in writing.

The below information is intended to assist grant applicants in understanding what made a strong application which strongly met the assessment criteria.

Criterion 1

National disability focus

When addressing the criterion strong applicants:

- Demonstrated how their conference aligned with one or more of the outcome areas of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.
- Described the focus of the conference and what the expected outcomes were.
- Demonstrated how the conference had a national focus.
- Demonstrated how the conference had a disability focus.

Strong applications:

- Clearly named and outlined one or more outcome areas of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. Applicants linked these areas to specific aspects of their planned conference.
- Explained specifically what the focus of their conference was and how the expected outcomes would link to this focus.

- Described how their conference focused on national issues and how they would achieve outcomes for people with disability nationwide.
- Provided the agenda to be undertaken at the conference and described what disability aspects they were discussing with a specific reference to what they hoped to achieve.

Criterion 2

Maximising the inclusion and participation of people with disability

When addressing the criterion strong applicants:

- Demonstrated how the grant funding would be used to maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at the conference.
- If the NDCI funds were intended for accessibility measures that organisations would be expected to provide as part of their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, you would briefly demonstrate why such adjustments will cause major difficulties or excessive costs for your organisation (refer to section 5.1 Eligible grant activities).
- Where possible, outlined the potential number of people with disability and their expected role (for example, participant, presenter) and/or carers expected to directly benefit from the grant funding and how they would benefit.
- Outlined the expected percentage of delegates to the conference that will be people with disability.

Strong applications:

- Outlined specifically how grant funding was used with reference to initiatives or plans such as interpreters, online options and support workers that were put in place to support the inclusion and participation of people with disability at the conference.
- Where applicable applicants provided a brief response and/or evidence outlining why adjustments, that an organisation would be expected to provide as part of their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, would cause excessive or unreasonable costs for the applicant.
- Outlined a clear percentage of attendees that would be people with disabilities, they specifically named the different groups of attendees such as presenters and carers and how each of the different attendee groups would benefit from the conference.
- Provided an estimate or predicted percentage of delegates that would be people with disability.

Criterion 3

Organisation capacity and capability

When addressing the criterion strong applicants:

- Demonstrated their organisation's capacity and capability to administer the grant.
- Included examples of any previous grants, conferences, or similar projects their organisation had successfully undertaken.
- Demonstrated how the relevant experience, skills, and qualifications of members of their organisation would assist in delivering the project.
- Acknowledged their organisation understood the requirements of the DSI Act and the Code of Conduct and would abide by the Code – see section 10.5 of these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Strong applications:

- Outlined specific evidence of strong organisational capability and capacity to fulfil the grant objectives with reference to aspects such as years of operation, staffing and financial/accounting experience.
- Provided specific examples of previous activities undertaken by the organisation, what these activities were composed of what the outcomes were of these projects and how these activities set the organisation up to fulfil all grant deliverables.
- Named or listed members of staff or members of the organisation and outlined their relevant and specific experience, skills, and qualifications with reference to how these skills would assist in delivering the conference.
- Acknowledged their organisation understood the requirements of the DSI Act and the Code of Conduct and would abide by the Code – see section 10.5 of these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.