

The Australia Council is announcing details of its investment opportunities for individuals and organisations

Although the arts and cultural industries, along with all Australians and communities around the world, have experienced incomparable disruption from the impacts of COVID-19, we have never lost sight of the enormous public value of the arts for all Australians.

It is important that we resume our programs and strive to enable creativity to continue to connect us in recovery and in the future; it will be essential for Australia's recovery. Our creative sector will be indispensable in helping to rebuild communities and our economy to assist navigating Australia's path out of the crisis. We are working at speed to re-open as many suspended programs as possible to contribute to this recovery and roll out new responsive initiatives.

In response to COVID-19 the Australia Council suspended its regular funding opportunities to deliver the Resilience Fund. The Cherish Fund was also launched to address the immediate disruption experienced by the First Nations arts and cultural sector.

The following opportunities will be available for individuals and organisations:

- Arts Projects for Individuals & Groups
- Arts Projects for Organisations
- Australia Council Fellowships & Awards
- National Arts & Disability Awards

Applications for these opportunities will open on Friday 10 July and close on Tuesday 1 September. Program guidelines and criteria will be available on Council's website.

Projects that have been previously eligible via the Career Development for Individuals & Groups category will now be eligible for support under the Arts Projects for Individuals & Groups category.

The following opportunities will be available for First Nations individuals, groups and organisations:

- Cherish II

Applications for this opportunity will open Monday 3 August and close on Tuesday 6 October. Program guidelines and criteria will be available on Council's website.

- Dreaming Award for an emerging artist
- Red Ochre Awards for outstanding lifetime achievement
- Workplace Giving Emerging First Nations Career Development Award

Applications for this opportunity will open Tuesday 1 September and close on Tuesday 1 December. Program guidelines and criteria will be available on Council's website.

The following touring and mobility opportunities will be offered:

- Playing Australia
- Contemporary Music Touring Program

Applications for these opportunities will open no later than 15 August and close in October. Program guidelines and criteria will be available on Council's website.

The following opportunity for literary translation will be offered:

- Literature Structural Investment Fund – Translation Fund

Applications for this opportunity will open on 10 July and close on Tuesday 24 November. Program guidelines and criteria will be available on Council's website.

Due to current restrictions on international travel, the Rights & Travel Funds of this strategic initiative for literature have been suspended but may be re-opened if and as restrictions ease.

The following strategic international opportunities will not be immediately available:

- International Arts Strategy Outcomes Fund
- International Residencies Program
- Support to attend international markets and platforms

Artists and organisations seeking funding for international engagement are encouraged to apply to the Grants Program through the project categories in September 2020 and subsequent rounds in 2021.

Further information and dates for strategic international funding opportunities will be announced in late 2020 alongside a new suite of Sector Recovery initiatives.

We acknowledge that forward planning is essential but difficult under current circumstances. All guidelines and criteria for the above opportunities are currently being reviewed to take into account the widespread impact of COVID-19.

We will provide further detail on all other opportunities, including eligibility and opening dates for applications, once finalised.

Resilience Fund update

While the 2020 Resilience Fund has now closed, due to extremely high numbers of applications the assessment and notification will continue into the coming months. See [Resilience fund](#) on our website for revised notification timelines.

Continued flexible approach to existing contracts

For individuals and organisations with current Australia Council projects and contracts in train, we will continue to adopt a flexible approach in light of COVID-19. This includes:

- Removing requirements on negotiated KPIs
 - Bringing forward payments
 - Delaying or simplifying reporting requirements
 - Varying the purposes and outcomes of funding
 - Extending timelines for projects
- Allowing organisations to use funding provided for a deliverable to be re-purposed to pay essential bills such as wages, rent or utilities.

You are encouraged to speak with your contract manager about options that can provide flexible support during these difficult times. If you're not sure who that is, please email enquiries@australiacouncil.gov.au and we will direct you to the right person.

\$250M Jobmaker plan to restart the creative economy

The Australia Council has welcomed the [announcement](#) of an industry-specific support package for the cultural and creative industries.

The four components of the package include:

- Seed Investment: \$75 million in competitive grants of between \$75,000 and \$2 million for production and event businesses to put on new festivals, concerts, tours and events as social distancing restrictions ease
- Show Starter Loans: \$90 million in Commonwealth-guaranteed concessional bank loans to fund new productions and events
- Kick-starting Local Screen Production: \$50 million in grants dedicated to a temporary interruption fund, set to be administered by Screen Australia and designed to help local film and television producers secure finance and restart filming and production
- Supporting Sustainability of Sector-Significant Organisations: \$35 million will be spent on direct grants to Commonwealth-funded arts and culture organisations facing threats to their viability because of the pandemic disruption.

For further information on this package visit <https://www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update>.

National Cabinet update

Following the meeting of the National Cabinet on Friday 26 June, it was noted that the National Cabinet has asked the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) to develop a roadmap for re-opening arts and entertainment venues, in particular to enable planning for productions to commence. This roadmap will build on the AHPPC Statement on the safe return of crowds to stadiums, arenas and large theatres.

In this fast-changing environment, the Australia Council has been working to remain responsive to the ever-shifting needs and parameters in play. We continue to work with health advisors, our federal government colleagues and our state and territory counterparts to forge a unified conversation for around recommencing public cultural activities.

We hope [Re-ignite](#) continues to be a useful resource to support confident compliance with the Australian Government's current 3-Step Framework for a COVIDSafe Australia.

Sector consultation update

The newly formed Sector Development team, along with the whole of Australia Council, is focused on working with the sector to develop tools, strategies, advocacy capabilities and approaches for the issues, challenges and opportunities ahead of us. This work encompasses sector recovery along with capacity building, mobility and exchange, and responding to and leading current trends.

As previously indicated, the Australia Council will undertake significant national sector consultation in the coming months. Through direct dialogue with the sector, the consultation process will inform the Council's recovery initiatives, investments and priority sector development activities.

We have been working on a comprehensive consultation framework and will work collaboratively with a specialist team to deliver this important undertaking. We aim to have a Lead Consultant in place and a discussion paper available by the end of July, with more detail about the structure of the consultation and opportunities to engage to follow.

We acknowledge there have been many requests to complete surveys and provide data and COVID-19 impact narratives, and this takes time and energy. We hope that the outcomes from this consultation process will be useful and effective - both for Council and the sector in the short and long term.

Thank you to those who have reached out directly to us requesting involvement in the consultation process.

First Nations support

Each Friday we have hosted the First Nations Roundtable series for arts and creative independents, and organisations to discuss the current situation that affects us all in relation to COVID-19.

The final First Nations' Roundtable will be hosted this Friday 3 July at 2.00pm. The theme this week is 'And over to you...', where we are inviting those regular attendees over the past 15 weeks, to be the guests and have a yarn with them.

You can watch past roundtables and register for Friday's session [here](#).

Online resources

We have developed a series of online resources to support the sector during this time:

- [Creative Connections](#) is an online webinar series for the cultural and arts sectors that offers practical, accessible and useful content delivered by industry experts on key topics and emerging themes. The series is focused around the theme of adaptation and sessions explore digital adaptation, leadership adaptation and arts practice adaptation.
- [Think Inside the Square](#) is an online webinar conversation that has been developed for the [Arts and creative industry: digital support Facebook group](#). Every week, industry experts, artists and digital adaptors will join the panel to discuss solutions and ideas that inform the industry. This series has been designed to answer the needs of the group and as the circumstances change day by day, so do the most important topics.
- [First Nations' Roundtables](#) are, as noted further above, a weekly series for arts and creative independents, and organisations, to discuss the current situation that affects us all in relation to COVID-19.
- [Audience Outlook Monitor](#) webinar series explores different topics within the Audience Outlook Monitor and digs deeper into the results with industry experts. Fact sheets on each topic will be released weekly to inform the discussion.

Browse the full program and register for any or all of the sessions that respond to your needs and interests.

All of these resources are delivered live via our online platforms and recordings are published after each session.

Research and analysis

We have brought together the results of surveys and commentaries to build a picture of the impacts of COVID-19 to form a national sector-wide summary on our website.

Of particular note we are working with Patternmakers and WolfBrown to understand changes in behaviours and sentiments of arts-goers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This [tracking study](#) is designed to support important decision-making and forward planning across the sector in the coming months. Results from the first phase of the study are

available along with the key insights outlined in a snapshot report and data provided through the [Audience Outlook Monitor dashboard](#).

If you are currently running a survey or considering it, please get in touch at researchenquiries@australiacouncil.gov.au.

Other resources on our website

We continue to add to [our website](#) to provide up to date information around COVID-19 and the arts sector.