



Government of
South Australia

CreateSA

APRIL 2026 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Music Development Office

Project Support Grants



Photo credit
Will Johnstone

MUSIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
mdo.sa.gov.au

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The Program

Background

Funding assistance for the **Project Support Grants** program is provided by the South Australian Government through the **Music Development Office (MDO)**.

The MDO continues to work hard to reshape and simplify how we can support South Australian music in a way that acknowledges current challenges and complements other funding available nationally and throughout the state.

The **MDO Project Support Grants** provide funding for creative and business development. The program is designed to foster creative and industry development for early-mid career and established artists and music businesses, and to respond to the changing needs of industry.

Overall, the objective of the **MDO Project Support Grants** is to support the creation, presentation, production, and delivery of original music within the South Australian music sector.

The current round of the **MDO Project Support Grants** program calls for applications in April 2026 for activity that takes place between 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027.

Program funding streams

The **MDO Project Support Grants** offer two distinct streams of funding: Creative Development and Business Development. You may only choose ONE of these funding streams per round and submit ONE application to a stream.

Stream A: ARTISTS – Creative Development \$15,000

To support recording and performing artists, songwriters, producers, and artists' managers (on behalf of their artists) in the creation, presentation, production or delivery of original music composition or content.

If you are an artist, or manager applying on behalf of an artist, choose Stream A.

Stream B: MUSIC BUSINESSES – Business Development \$15,000

To support recording studios, promoters, record labels, booking agents, live music venues, artist managers, and other music entrepreneurs, businesses, or organisations with their efforts to facilitate the creation, presentation, production, or delivery of original music.

If you are a music business, choose Stream B.

Key dates

Wednesday 1 April 2026	Round opens
Wednesday 8 April 2026	Information session (online)
Wednesday, 29 April 2026	Closing date
1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027	Funding period

Definitions

Project activity refers to the project which forms the basis of the application.

Funding period refers to the date from which the Agreement is entered into until the funding period end date.

Funding period end date refers to 30 June 2027.

Eligible expenditure refers to expenditure defined as eligible as per these guidelines and must be costs incurred during the funding period.

Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants

This grant program supports **original music**.

Eligible applicants must be:

- a **professional South Australian musician**, writing and performing your own music
OR
- a **South Australian music business/organisation** who supports these artists in the creation, presentation, production, delivery, or development of **original music**
- you must have been **based in and operating in South Australia for at least the previous six months from the round opening date**
- you must have an active ABN and not be insolvent

If you are a previous MDO grant recipient and have an **overdue funding acquittal** with the South Australian Government, you are not eligible to receive new funding in this program until your acquittal is complete. Please contact the MDO if you have any questions on acquittals.

Eligible expenditure

Project activity funded through MDO Project Support Grants must take place within the funding period. MDO Project Support Grants cannot be used to reimburse expenses incurred outside the funding period.

Any genre of music is eligible in this program as long as the compositions are **original music**.

The following are **examples** of eligible expenditure, not an exhaustive list. Please contact the MDO with any questions.

Stream A: Creative Development (ARTISTS)

Creative Development project activity does not need to represent distinct 'categories', and can be combined into a **single project**, e.g., a plan to record and market a new product, tour activity that includes an extensive marketing plan, or a songwriting project that culminates in a recording.

Examples of eligible expenditure include:

- artist fees (including collaborations)
- producer/engineer fees
- studio hire
- equipment upgrades to enable a higher quality of content creation
- streaming performances
- live shows
- travel costs for touring, including regional, interstate or overseas (within the funding period)
- marketing costs (advertising, marketing material, online presence)
- service fees (e.g., publicists, tour manager)
- production of merchandise

Stream B: Business Development (BUSINESSES)

Business Development project activity should enable **music businesses** to develop projects that ensure future readiness, sustainability, and viability. Grants will also support professional development activity to help reshape or diversify businesses models, and projects that support the music industry ecosystem.

Examples of eligible expenditure include:

- equipment purchases or upgrades for essential staging equipment, or infrastructure support to improve live music delivery (e.g. noise attenuation)
- costs to support the development of new business models/activity, including license fees, legal advice, marketing expenses, casual and temporary contracts, and internships
- delivery of workshops or engagement in professional development activity that increases the quality of the creation, presentation or delivery of original South Australian music, including presenter service fees, travel costs (where relevant), venue hire, marketing, mentorship fees, and conference registration costs.
- activity that enables the music business to support the MDO's vision to grow a globally competitive, inclusive, and sustainable original music ecosystem. This could include costs associated with accommodating green business practices.

Ineligible activity and expenses

- project activity which is already completed, or due to be completed, before the commencement of the funding period. Funding will not be provided retrospectively
- project activity without professional or commercial outcomes, e.g. hobbyist or amateur productions, fundraising events, competitions or project activity forming part of a course of study, including graduation activities
- project activity that does not focus on original music, e.g. DJs who do not play their own compositions, cover bands or cover versions of songs, tribute acts, the revision of traditional or cultural music.

Funding from the MDO Project Support Grants program cannot be applied to expenses that are **already covered** through other sources (e.g. grants, rebates, sponsorship). However, successful applicants can use funding to offset costs that **build on** activity that has been supported through other sources, as long as it is not applied to the same exact expenses.

Program criteria

Your project activity should contribute to achieving the objectives of the **MDO Project Support Grants** to support the creation, presentation, production and delivery of original music within the South Australian music sector.

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- **creative and/or professional merit**, quality, skills and relevant experience of applicants and project participants
- **efficacy of the project planning**, including budget and timeline, and effective use of resources with realistic outcomes
- **timeliness and significance** of the objectives of the project activity, as they address career development goals, and/or the current impact to business development
- **demonstrated outcomes** that will develop the professional career of the artists or the businesses involved
- ability to articulate **how the project activity addresses the objective of the grant program** to support the creation, presentation, production and/or delivery of original contemporary music within the South Australian music sector
- **value for money**, in terms of demonstrated need for the grant, and the project activity representing an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources that has a positive economic and cultural benefit.

Essential application materials

Applications to the MDO Project Support Grants program are submitted online through a webform, linked via the [MDO website](#).

The application contains a series of multiple-choice items, as well as open-ended questions and fields that request uploading PDF materials or the provision of supporting weblinks.

IMPORTANT:

For security reasons, the MDO will **not download** any files submitted via links to **Dropbox** or other online storage systems. This also prevents excessive demands on panel assessors' network resources. Any material submitted via links to online storage systems **will not be accessed or reviewed** as part of your application. You may provide links to private or password protected streaming pages (e.g. Soundcloud) to demonstrate unreleased IP.

The following are **mandatory** parts of the application.

Biography or business description

You must provide an artist biography or business description. There is also an opportunity to include links to web pages that contain this information (e.g. website, social media accounts).

Key achievements / career highlights / career goals

You will need to describe how this project activity aligns with your current needs as an artist/music business practitioner, addresses your future goals, and significantly contributes to your career or business development and that of the project participants. For example, what is your main professional goal at the moment, and how will this project assist in achieving it? Why is this project timely, and essential to the next steps in your career or business?

You also have the opportunity to provide a list of key achievements and highlights of your professional career to date, and a brief summary of your short-term and long-term career or business goals.

Business information

The application will ask a series of questions about your business activity as it relates to the original contemporary music ecosystem of South Australia.

Project details

You must provide a clear and concise description of the activity to be undertaken with the grant, concentrating on (for example):

- what you want to do
- why you want to do it
- how you are planning to do it
- who is involved
- when and where you intend to do it (including a timeline and/or itinerary)
- specific outcomes from the project activity (e.g. new IP, products, or activity).

Market reach

You must highlight **market demand** for your general artistic output or business activity. This can include a description of major milestones in audience development, industry support, sales and more. The webform will also ask for key statistics for social media presence (as relevant).

You should also describe who the target market/audience is for the **proposed project activity**, and the **marketing methods** you will use to connect with them.

Contribution to progressive music sector

In December 2015 Adelaide won the prestigious international designation as a UNESCO City of Music. Adelaide is one of over 65 music cities as part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. It is the only UNESCO City of Music in Australia.

The MDO is proud of this designation, and assessment will consider how the applicant's project activity and general business activity fit within the **broader South Australian music ecosystem**.

Where possible, you should describe how your project activity **contributes to a progressive South Australian music sector** through any of the following:

- collaboration and working with local artists/businesses
- innovation
- skills development and diversification of business models and revenue streams
- promotion or championing of the local industry
- inclusion and access for under-represented groups
- export activity

Budget

You must provide an **itemised budget** indicating top line (major) expenses and income. You are encouraged to upload **quotes and/or explanatory notes**, which can give context to budget figures, e.g. how an artist fee was calculated.

In your list of **income** sources, **include the funding amount you are applying for** in the MDO Project Support Grants program. This may be listed as '*projected* MDO grant income'.

In competitive funding rounds, there are usually a greater number of worthy applications than available funds can support. As such, some projects may be recommended for **partial funding**. If your project cannot proceed without full funding, you can choose to note this in your budget explanatory notes. If there are specific parts of your project that you would change or eliminate if you were recommended for partial funding, you may choose to note this.

Income

You may apply for up to the maximum amount of \$15,000 in either funding stream. However, you should only apply for an amount that is **necessary** to your project, and can be **justified** and itemised as actual project activity expenses.

Your list of income sources should identify whether the contribution is **cash** or **in-kind** (the value of goods or services provided without a fee). Your budget explanatory notes can indicate how you calculated the in-kind value.

You are **encouraged to contribute** to the project activity budget. This investment may include in-kind income, other funding, partnerships or sponsorship that you have sourced, and cash contributions.

If the source of income is from another grant application or sponsor, you should note whether these funds are **pending / projected or confirmed**. For unconfirmed funds, indicate the timing of notification and a contingency statement for significant unconfirmed funds (i.e. how will your project activity proceed if you are unsuccessful in your application for other significant funding).

Expenses

In your list of total expenses, **please clearly identify** those items **for which MDO Project Support Grant funding** is sought as part of the project activity.

You should provide **quotes** for major expenses, particularly those items for which you are seeking MDO Project Support Grant funding. These can be sourced from the supplier, or screenshots of forecast expenses (e.g. travel costs).

Expenses should be itemised according to project activity. Expenses that are not specifically related to the project activity or are **ongoing** as an essential part of your business activity (e.g. rent, utilities) **should not be included**.

For project activity that has already commenced, expenses that have **already been incurred prior** to the funding period, or are for activity that occurred prior to the funding period, **cannot be reimbursed** by grant funding. However, you may include them in your itemised budget list to indicate the total cost of the project activity.

The South Australian Government supports fair remuneration for artists/musicians employed or engaged to perform. Where possible, we would encourage any business engaging or employing musicians to consider rates benchmarked by arts and entertainment industry organisations, such as the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). For more information pertaining to appropriate rates of pay for musicians please contact the [MEAA](#) or industry peak body [Music SA](#).

Other support material

You may provide material in support of your project activity, such as links to existing content (e.g. Spotify, Soundcloud, YouTube) or letters of endorsement from the industry.

Do not link to online files/folders in Dropbox, or any site that requires files to be **downloaded** from the internet. For security and resourcing purposes, such material will **not be downloaded or reviewed**.

Letters from industry should be **relevant to your project activity** and speak to its goals and desired outcomes. If your project activity involves significantly renowned participants, you are encouraged to provide letters from them to **confirm their involvement** in the project activity.

Due to the expected high volume of applications, you should consider only showcasing your **best work**, and/or providing the strongest of support letters. **Excessive material** may not be reviewed.

Application process

Before submitting your application

Read these Guidelines thoroughly, and consider how your project meets the:

- eligibility requirements
- program objectives and criteria
- budget parameters and eligible expenses criteria (maximum grant amount)
- timeframe (start and end date of the funding period).

Become familiar with the **essential materials** you will need to submit with your application, as outlined above. Applications that do not include these materials may be ineligible for assessment.

FAQs are available on the [MDO website](#).

If desired, discuss your project with the MDO Senior Program Manager or other MDO staff member to determine applicant and project eligibility. If this is your **first grant application to the MDO**, you are encouraged to attend any available info session and/or contact MDO staff **after reading the Program Guidelines** with any questions specific to your project.

Please **plan ahead**. **Late applications will not be accepted**, as the online grants portal is automatically time stamped for auditing purposes.

How to submit your application

Applications for the **MDO Project Support Grants** program must be submitted online through the MDO web form, available through the SmartyGrants portal. A link is available from the [MDO website](#) while the round is open.

You will receive an **automatic email reply** when your grant has been successfully received. If you do not receive this autoreply, check your junk/**spam folder** or contact MDO staff for assistance: mdo@sa.gov.au.

Applications automatically close **11:59pm sharp** on the round closing date. **Late applications cannot be accepted** by the online automated system. Due to varying internet speeds and the expected high volume of applications, it is recommended you submit your application **well in advance** of the automated cut-off time.

Technical or other staff support for applications closes at **5:00pm** on the round closing date.

Assessment process

It is important to note that while the MDO manages this funding program, it **does not determine the final outcomes**.

Applications will be assessed by a **panel of industry representatives**, who rigorously assess applications against program criteria. The panel prepares funding recommendations for approval by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Please note, in competitive funding rounds, there is usually a greater number of worthy applications than the available funds can support.

Administration, notification and feedback

Processing of the grant round can be expected to take a **minimum of 6 – 8 weeks** from the closing date, and notification will occur as soon as possible after assessment and approval.

All applicants will be **notified by email** regarding their result. If you have not received an email about the status of your application (after the initial confirmation of submission), then the round is **still being processed**.

The MDO will **not be able to provide a specific notification date**, as grant approval is reliant on a number of non-MDO personnel throughout the process.

Due to the high volume of applications expected in a round, **feedback is not available** for unsuccessful applicants, unless there was a significant issue with the submitted materials (e.g. missing mandatory information, failure to meet eligibility requirements).

Funding agreements and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a **funding agreement** with the MDO for the period of funding, and will be expected to provide an artistic, statistical, and financial acquittal within one month of the completion of the funding period. Overdue acquittals, or unapproved expenditure of the funding, will affect eligibility for future funding.

Successful applicants will be advised of the process of returning of funding agreements, payment of invoices and submission of acquittals, when notified of the grant outcome.

If a grantee encounters unexpected or potential changes to the approved activity in the funding agreement, they should **contact the MDO before proceeding with any changes**. Certain changes may require a formal Variation Proposal.

Important policies and protocols

Protocols for working with children in art

If the activity involves employing any person under 18 years, with or without financial compensation, or the exhibition or distribution of depiction of any persons aged under 18 years, then:

- you must comply with the South Australian Government's *Protocols for working with children in art* and any relevant laws that apply in South Australia – this may include obtaining parental consents, statements from other artists and classifications, copies of which you must provide to the Department on request; and
- you must also certify compliance with this clause in your Acquittal Report.

Child safe policies

Organisations providing cultural, entertainment or party services wholly or partly for children must provide a child safe environment.

As part of its obligation to establish and maintain a child safe environment, an organisation must:

- have in place child safe policies and procedures. These can be found on the [Department of Human Services website](#).
- ensure child-related employment screening is undertaken for positions prescribed in the
- *Children's Protection Act, 1993*. You can find screening check forms at sa.gov.au.
- lodge a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the [Department of Human Services](#).

Respectful behaviours

The safety and wellbeing of everyone working in, and engaging with, the South Australian arts and cultural sector is of paramount importance. The MDO is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of victimisation, bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment. It is a condition of all MDO funding and grants that recipients must consider the MDO's recommendation to adopt and implement a respectful behaviours policy and procedure. Further information about respectful behaviours, and resources to assist you to develop a policy and procedure for your organisation or project, are available via the following link: [General Guidelines | CreateSA](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols

The MDO endeavours to work with artists and organisations to ensure respect and acknowledgement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples and cultures at every stage of a project's development. You can find out more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols in the [General Guidelines | CreateSA](#).

Green practices

The MDO encourages artists and organisations to consider how their project supports a greener future for the music industry. Resources to help incorporate green practices are available from [Green Music Australia](#).

Information privacy

The MDO collects personal information as reasonably necessary for the purposes and functions of:

- administering our grants and funding program
- keeping you informed about relevant upcoming events, grants funding initiatives and outcomes, our services, special events or client feedback surveys, as well as our activities in general
- improving our websites and other services.

The MDO complies with the South Australian Government's Information Privacy Principles Instruction (*Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC012*) when dealing with all personal information. The information you provide in your application may be used by the MDO for:

- providing to peer assessors for processing and assessing your application
- verifying other funding income for your project – the MDO may provide information to other agencies nominated in your application
- processing, paying, and administering your grant
- reviewing and evaluating our funding programs, strategies, plans and services – we may contact you for this purpose
- training, systems testing and process improvement, including compiling statistics and reports
- communications by the Minister for Arts regarding the application.

The information you submit to us in your application is treated as confidential if it is identified by you as confidential (except for details that may be included as “published details”). Any information contained in, or relating to, an application, including information identified by an applicant as confidential information for the purposes of applying for funding under the program, may be disclosed by the Department:

- to employees, advisers or third parties in order to manage the program (including but not limited to, for the purposes of evaluating and assessing the application)
- within the Government of South Australia where this serves the legitimate interest of the Department
- in response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia
- where information is authorised or required by law to be disclosed
- where the information is already in the public domain.

If an application is successful, details of successful applicants may be publicly disclosed in official Government of South Australia media releases and websites. Published details may include but are not limited to:

- the name and business name of the successful applicant
- details of the event
- the amount of grant funding (and relevant stream).

In addition, the Grant Agreement and associated documents for your event may be audited, which will mean disclosure of such documents, including your personal information, to auditors for audit purposes only.

Additional information

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms as required.

If any information in an application or report (including acquittal) is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not used pursuant to the terms of funding, the grant will be repayable on demand.

For more information

Please note, due to the high volume of applications expected in a competitive round, MDO staff will be **unable to read drafts of applications** or take **multiple meetings** with the same applicant.

You are encouraged to ask questions well in advance of the closing date and should expect that in the week prior to the closing date, staff will be working to service a high volume of enquiries.

You may RSVP for **an online information session** on the Project Support Grants program. For full details, visit [the MDO website](#) for a link to the Eventbrite listing. This link will expire after the round closing date.

For questions about the grant program terms and conditions, eligibility, criteria, assessment process, contact:

Music Development Office
Create SA
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

mdo@sa.gov.au | 08 8429 3555