

Music Development Office

Project Support Grants

October 2026

Program Guidelines

Music
Development
Office



Government
of South Australia



CreateSA

Program overview

Funding assistance for the Project Support Grants program is provided by the South Australian Government through the Music Development Office (MDO), a specialist unit within CreateSA.

The MDO continually reviews and refines its programs to ensure support remains relevant to the needs of South Australia's music sector and complements funding available locally, nationally and internationally.

The Project Support Grants program supports artists and music businesses to create, produce, present and promote original music, strengthen professional practice, build sustainable careers and businesses, and respond to opportunities within an evolving music industry.

The program contributes to the objectives of *A Sound Future*, the MDO's two year strategy to support South Australia's music industry to create, perform and thrive while growing audiences and strengthening the state's contemporary music ecosystem.

Funding is made available to:

- support South Australia-based emerging, early to mid-career and established artists to create, present and promote high-quality original music, and access live performance and professional development opportunities locally, nationally and internationally
- support the development and sustainability of South Australia-based music businesses that contribute to the creation, production, presentation and career development of original artists
- support activities that grow, engage and diversify audiences for original music, creating greater opportunities for South Australian artists, venues, presenters and music businesses
- strengthen the South Australian contemporary music sector and build on its national and international reputation as a UNESCO City of Music.

Program funding streams

From October 2026, the MDO Project Support Grants program offers distinct streams of funding to support creative and business development.

Applicants may submit ONE application per round and must select the funding stream that best aligns with their proposed activity:

- recording
- touring
- marketing
- festivals and events
- live music venues
- professional development
- industry pathways

Further details on the streams are provided below in the Eligibility Criteria section.

Key dates

Tuesday 6 October 2026	Round opens
Wednesday 13 October 2026	Online information session
Wednesday 4 November 2026	Round close
1 January – 31 December 2027	Funding period

Definitions

Project activity refers to the project forming 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 31 December 2027

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

Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants must be:

- an emerging, early to-mid career or established South Australian musician, writing and performing their own music
OR
- a South Australian music business or organisation who supports artists in the creation, presentation, production, delivery, or development of original music
- Australian citizens or have permanent resident status
- based in and operating in South Australia for at least the previous six months from the round opening date
- have an active ABN and not be insolvent.

Applicants must have met all reporting and acquittal requirements for previous South Australian Government funding before receiving new funding through this program.

Eligible activity and expenditure

This grant program supports **original music**.

Any genre of music is eligible in this program as long as the compositions are original music. This includes original classical, jazz, folk and DJs who are performing their own original work.

Managers or labels who are writing an application **on behalf of** their artists should list the **artist trading name as the “applicant”**, provide the artist ABN, and list themselves as a **secondary contact**.

Streams

Applications in all streams draw from the same funding pool and are assessed on the strength of the individual application against the program criteria.

Streams may vary by:

- the maximum amount of funding within that type of activity
- the types of eligible expenses
- in some cases, there may be a need for additional Support Material (noted below).

Applicants should read each stream’s details below carefully to ensure an application aligns with the respective funding limit and eligible expenses.

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

Recording – up to \$10,000

This stream supports recording and performing artists, songwriters and producers in the creation of original music and content. Funding is available for projects that produce a high-quality master audio and/or video recording of original South Australian music. Projects must demonstrate exceptional potential and be particularly timely in supporting the artist's career development.

Applicants must provide links to demo material for at least 25% of the music proposed for recording through a private SoundCloud page or similar platform.

Eligible expenses include studio hire, producer and engineer fees, session musician fees, mixing, mastering, physical production costs of up to 1,000 units, and graphic design directly related to the release, such as cover artwork. Applicants seeking support for marketing, promotional activity or event related expenses should apply through the Marketing stream.

Touring – up to \$15,000

This stream supports scheduled performances by South Australian artists in regional South Australia, interstate and international markets that build audiences and/or professional networks. For the purposes of this program, a tour is defined as three or more confirmed performances in recognised music and/or house concert venues. Applicants must provide written evidence of at least three confirmed performances at the time of application. These performances must be confirmed and supported by documentation from the venue owner, booking agent, festival promoter or other booking representative. An updated touring itinerary may be submitted via email before funding decisions are made, following discussion with the MDO.

Eligible expenses include travel, accommodation, visas, freight, equipment hire, advertising, and professional fees for services provided by publicists, tour managers, contract musicians and technicians. The production of merchandise and replication of physical units are not eligible expenses.

Applicants seeking support for international touring must demonstrate that they hold the appropriate visa status. Applicants planning to showcase at international industry events should seek advice to determine whether the Export Contribution Fund is better suited to support that activity.

Marketing – up to \$5,000

This stream supports marketing activities that build audiences and increase the profile of South Australian music and activities of the local sector. Funding is available to artists for the promotion of new releases, tours, concerts, launches and performances, including recorded material that is upcoming or has been released within the previous six months.

Funding is also available to South Australian music businesses to undertake activities that increase the profile of South Australian music, and/or to promote their services, activities and initiatives that support the broader contemporary music sector.

Eligible expenses include marketing, advertising, services of a publicist and other promotional activities, including the production of merchandise. Where funding is sought for merchandise production, applicants must provide a minimum 50% financial contribution towards those costs. Replication of physical units should be sought through the Recording stream where it forms part of a release project.

Festivals and Events – up to \$15,000

This stream supports festivals and events that provide live performance opportunities for South Australian artists and contribute to audience development for contemporary music in South Australia.

Funding is available to promoters and music businesses that present live performance activity and seek to grow local audiences and create performance opportunities for South Australian acts.

Funding may be used for expenses directly related to delivering the activity, including equipment hire, advertising and marketing, artist performance fees, and professional fees for services provided by technicians. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of confirmed artist bookings for the proposed festival or event program wherever possible.

Where activity is primarily focused on the ongoing presentation of live music within a venue's own premises, applicants should apply through the Live Music Venues stream.

Live Music Venues – up to \$15,000

This stream supports the presentation of live original music in dedicated brick-and-mortar venues where live music forms a significant proportion of programming. Funding is available to help strengthen the sustainability and business capacity of live music venues with a capacity of up to 700 people that can demonstrate a meaningful contribution to South Australia's original live music ecosystem.

Funding may be used for costs associated with the delivery and development of live music activity, including artist fees, booking agent fees, marketing, fees for creative and technical personnel such as sound and lighting engineers, equipment purchases or upgrades for essential staging equipment, and infrastructure improvements that enhance live music delivery or accessibility, such as noise attenuation measures.

Applicants seeking funding for building modifications or structural accessibility improvements must provide evidence of the building owner's consent to undertake the proposed works and demonstrate that proposed accessibility measures are informed by appropriate professional advice.

Professional or Business Development – up to \$5,000

This stream supports artists and music industry workers to undertake activities that build their skills, knowledge and professional practice. Funding is available for opportunities that support the applicant's own professional development, including collaborative intellectual property development, mentoring, business skills development, residencies, attachments, collaborative songwriting projects, business ventures and attendance at masterclasses. Activities should demonstrate a clear benefit to the applicant's artistic, professional or business development.

Eligible expenses may include travel, accommodation, registration fees, daily allowances and mentor fees. Funding may also be sought for purchases that would be considered capital expenses, such as sound or studio equipment, where the applicant can demonstrate a direct benefit to the growth, development or increased professionalism of their business beyond business-as-usual activities. Requests for this type of expense must be matched by a minimum 50% financial contribution from the applicant.

Support for attendance at national industry conferences is available through the National Contribution Fund. Artists and industry workers seeking support for international conference attendance should seek advice to determine whether the Export Contribution Fund is better suited to support that activity.

Industry Pathways – up to \$10,000

This stream supports South Australia-based music businesses to deliver professional development activities that build capability, skills and career pathways for artists and industry, with a particular focus on emerging and grassroots participants.

Funding is available for projects that provide structured learning and development opportunities, including residencies, mentorships, attachments, collaborative songwriting projects, business development initiatives, masterclasses and workshops that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the contemporary music sector.

Eligible expenses include venue hire, mentor and presenter fees, catering for participants during the funded activity, inbound travel expenses for guest presenters travelling from outside South Australia or from regional South Australia, and travel and accommodation costs associated with delivering activities in regional or remote South Australia by metropolitan or outer metropolitan-based businesses.

Ineligible activity and expenses

- projects without professional outcomes, such as amateur productions, fundraising, competitions, awards and prizes
- costs related to tertiary education, academic research or publication of research, or any project relating to a course of higher education
- any costs associated with the start up of a business
- 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 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
- expenditure that is already funded through other sources including grants, rebates or sponsorship. Funding can offset costs that **build on** separately funded projects, provided the funding is not applied to the same expenses
- 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. live music activity that does not feature original music is not eligible, including cover bands, tribute acts, DJs who do not perform original material, performances consisting primarily of established repertoire or genre standards, and open mic events that do not predominantly feature original music.

Applicants that are current MDO strategic delivery partners, or that have received, or are due to receive, funding through any of the following programs, are not eligible to apply for funding through the Project Support Grants program.

- Contemporary Music Organisations Fund
- Live Music Events Fund
- Venues Activation Program Round 1

Applicants who have received, or are due to receive, funding through the following programs are not eligible to apply for funding for the same activity or project:

- Milestone Micro-Grants (Quick Response)
- National Contribution Fund
- Export Contribution Fund
- Robert Stigwood Fellowship

Applicants with an active project funded through a previous Project Support Grants round may apply for funding for new activity that builds on the previously funded project, provided the requested funding is not used for the same expenses.

Program criteria

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
- **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

When making funding recommendations the Assessment Panel may consider how the project activity aligns with the priorities of the 2026-2028 music development strategy A Sound Future. Applicants are encouraged to review the strategy's delivery plan [\[hotlink\]](#) and speak to any alignment within their description of the project activity.

In December 2015 Adelaide won the prestigious international designation as a UNESCO City of Music. Adelaide is the only UNESCO City of Music in Australia. The MDO is proud of this designation, and the Assessment Panel may also consider how the applicant's project activity and general business activity fit within the broader South Australian music ecosystem.

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.

To ensure support material can be accessed consistently and securely by assessors, applicants should provide links to streaming platforms rather than file-sharing or online storage services such as Dropbox. Materials provided through online storage services may not be reviewed as part of the assessment process. Applicants may provide links to private or password-protected streaming pages (for example, SoundCloud) to demonstrate unreleased material.

In competitive funding rounds, there are usually a greater number of worthy applications than available funds can support. Applications must include the following information and supporting materials.

Biography or business description

Applicants 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

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

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

Business information

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

Project details

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

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

Market reach

Applicants must highlight market demand for 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).

Applicants should also describe who the target market/audience is for the proposed project activity, and the marketing methods that will be used to connect with them.

Budget

Applicants must provide an itemised budget indicating major expenses and income. Applicants 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 the list of income sources, applicants should include the requested funding amount from the MDO Project Support Grants program. This may be listed as 'projected MDO grant income'.

Demand for funding often exceeds the funds available, and the assessment panel may therefore consider recommending partial funding for some projects. If a project is not viable without the full amount requested, applicants are encouraged to note this in the budget explanatory notes.

Applicants may also wish to identify any elements of the project that would need to be scaled back, amended or removed if partial funding were offered.

Income

Applicants may apply for up to the maximum amount of in the respective funding stream. However, applicants should only apply for an amount that is necessary to deliver the project, and that can be justified and itemised as actual project activity expenses.

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

Applicants are **encouraged to contribute** to the project activity budget. This investment may include in-kind income, other funding, partnerships or sponsorships, and cash contributions. Note that some funding stream expenses require matched funding of up to 50% from the applicant.

If the source of income is from another grant application or sponsor, applicants 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 the project activity proceed if the application is unsuccessful in securing the additional funds).

Expenses

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

Applicants should provide quotes for major expenses, particularly those items to be supported by 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 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, applicants may include them in an 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, the MDO encourages 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

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

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

Recording and touring applications should refer to the information on streams above which outlined mandatory support material, e.g. demos, booking confirmations.

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

Application process

Before submitting an application read these Guidelines thoroughly, and consider how a 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** that will need to be submitted, as outlined above. Applications that do not include these materials may be ineligible for assessment.

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

If desired, applicants may discuss a project with the MDO to determine applicant and project eligibility. If this is an applicant's **first submission to the MDO**, they are encouraged to attend any available info session and/or contact MDO staff **after reading the Program Guidelines** with any questions specific to the project.

How to submit an 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.

Applicants will receive an **automatic email reply** when a submission has been successfully received. If applicants have not received this autoreply, they should check the junk/**spam folder** or contact MDO staff for assistance: mdo@sa.gov.au.

Applications automatically close at **11:59pm** on the round closing date. It is recommended that applicants submit their form **well in advance** of the automated cut-off time. Please **plan ahead** and avoid submitting too close to the deadline. Applications must be submitted before the closing time, as the online system automatically closes at the deadline and cannot accept late submissions.

Technical or other MDO 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 an email has not been received about the status of an application (after the initial confirmation of submission), then the round is still being processed.

Applicants will be notified as soon as possible once assessment and approval processes are complete. As timeframes are influenced by a number of approvals and processes outside the MDO's direct control, a specific notification date cannot be provided.

Due to the high volume of applications, detailed feedback may not always be available. Where significant eligibility or compliance issues are identified, applicants will generally be advised.

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 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:

- applicants 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 must be provided to the Department on request; and
- applicants must also certify compliance with this clause in the Acquittal Report.

Child safe policies

Organisations or businesses 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 or business 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*. 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 development of a policy and procedure for an 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, businesses 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. Find out more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols in the [General Guidelines | CreateSA](#).

Green practices

The MDO encourages artists, businesses 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 the sector 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 provided in an application may be used by the MDO for:

- providing to peer assessors for processing and assessing an application
- verifying other funding income for a project – the MDO may provide information to other agencies nominated in an application
- processing, paying, and administering a grant
- reviewing and evaluating our funding programs, strategies, plans and services – we may contact applicants 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 submitted to us in an application is treated as confidential if it is identified by an applicant 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 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 an application may be audited, which will mean disclosure of such documents, including 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

Due to the high volume of enquiries associated with competitive funding rounds, MDO staff are unable to provide detailed review of draft applications. Applicants are encouraged to contact the MDO with specific questions about eligibility, program requirements, or the application process.

Applicants 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. 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 the Music Development Office at mdo@sa.gov.au | 08 8429 3555.