arts UPPER HUNTER

2027

COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM (CASP)

& Micro Grants

NSW GOVERNMENT

Funding Guidelines



The Arts Upper Hunter Country Arts Support Program and Micro Grants 2027 is a Create NSW devolved funding program administered by Arts Upper Hunter on behalf of the NSW Government.
Photo: Singleton Quilters' project *Bringing Textile Landscapes with Rhythm to Singleton* was supported by AUH 2025 CASP. Taken by Kim Horn, courtesy of Singleton Quilters Inc.

Applications for Arts Upper Hunter Country Arts Support Program & Micro Grants

Open 9am on Monday 21 September 2026

Close 5pm on Wednesday 28 October 2026

For projects to be completed by 1 December 2027.

Info session and Q&A – highly recommended – 5pm Wed 7 October 2026 (online)

Overview

The Country Arts Support Program (CASP) is a long-running annual small grants program supporting community arts and cultural development across regional NSW. Micro Grants are also available and will be assessed at the same time.

- Community groups and Council entities can apply for up to $3000 (CASP).
- Individuals and businesses can apply for up to $1000 (Micro Grants).

Arts Upper Hunter's small grants program provides a brilliant opportunity to community groups, venues and artists to develop a program, event, exhibition, performance, training opportunity or experience in their area. CASP is not a recurrent fund. It is for short-term projects with creative outcomes. It is funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW and our four LGAs of Dungog, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter.

Click to apply, via the online form

CASP & Micro Grants objectives

To support community arts & cultural development through small grants that:

- Assist locally determined community arts and cultural activities.
- Increase opportunities for regional people to access a range of arts programs.
- Enable communities to explore and express their cultural identities.
- Bring social and economic benefits to the community.
- Lead to greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of regional community arts organisations.

Micro Grants may do any or all of the above, but they may also be used to:

- Assist an artist take the next steps in their career, or a business undertake a small improvement.
- Enhance skills, increase reach, try new things.



Lisa Kennedy speaking at the There Is Time book launch, supported by AUH Micro Grant

Eligibility: who can apply?

Applying for **$250-$3000:**

- A not-for-profit incorporated body, including a school P&C.
- A local government authority
- A collective or group with a nominated administering body (see FAQS below)

Applying for **$250-$1000 (Micro Grants):**

- Individuals with an ABN
- Businesses

All applicants must:

- have an ABN or have a nominated funds administrator with an ABN – but see FAQs
- have a current certificate of currency for Public Liability Insurance - but see FAQs
- be based in the Arts Upper Hunter region covering Dungog, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter council areas. Your projects must also be substantially based in this region.

Outside travel: However, applications for under $1000 may be used for travel or exhibition outside the Upper Hunter region, if there are appropriate benefits.

Who is NOT eligible to apply?

- Groups not based in the Arts Upper Hunter region
- Projects that are not substantially based in this region (but see Outside Travel above)
- Professional touring groups
- Groups/ensembles and unincorporated associations with no administering body/auspicor
- Regional Conservatoriums
- Organisations that have applied for or received funding from Arts Upper Hunter or Create NSW for the same activity
- State and federal government departments, including schools (except P&Cs or P&Fs)
- Organisations that have overdue reports or acquittals for funding programs administered by Arts Upper Hunter
- Applicants who have not discussed their project with Arts Upper Hunter.

How much you can apply for and what the money should be spent on …

Grants of $1000-$3000 should primarily be used to pay artists (including travel and accommodation if they are from outside the region). Some funding can be used for assistance, materials and promotion.

Micro Grants (under $1000) can be used for a wider set of costs – in the past we have funded exhibition materials, signage, equipment, training, travel and even software.

When should projects happen?

Projects should take place between 15 January and 1 December 2027. If a project *does* need to go over into 2028, for any good reason, this can be negotiated with Arts Upper Hunter. Payments will be made from mid January 2027 onwards. Projects must be invoiced by 30 April 2027 at the latest.

Eligible activities

Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

- Workshops
- Arts activities as part of community festivals or events
- Artist-in-residence programs
- Public art and design projects
- Purchase of equipment (for grants under $1000 only)
- Performances
- Arts and cultural directories
- Community seminars and forums
- Exhibitions
- Art production
- Other local arts initiatives

will not fund:

- Core administrative costs, office costs
- Purchase of equipment (for grants over $1000)
- Capital expenses
- Production costs of films, videos, books or other publications
- Competitions
- Fundraising events
- Prizes and adjudication fees
- Applicants who have already received Create NSW funding for the same activities
- General operating expenses or ongoing costs of long-term continuing projects
- Projects that have commenced or are completed
- Sporting activities
- Activities which could be considered part of the curriculum for schools or tertiary institutions.

Closing date

5pm Wednesday 28 October 2026.

Assessment criteria

$1000-$3000 applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Artistic and cultural **merit** (Merit)
- Relevance, extent and depth of **community engagement** and participation (Impact)
- Evidence of **consultation** with and support from the community (Impact)
- Evidence of adequate planning, budgeting and **capacity to manage** the project (Viability)

Applications for under $1000 may be assessed against the **above criteria if appropriate**, but also may include:

- Opportunity or need for the applicant to move to the next step in their career or to to improve reach and skills.
- Another appropriate need for a creative business.

Other considerations include: the Upper Hunter region's arts and cultural needs and resources, accessibility and inclusion, and the geographic spread of the final recipients. We are also careful not to fund repeat successful applications for similar projects from the same group year after year.



Workshop led by Michelle Earl at Scone Neighbourhood Resources Centre, funded by CASP. Photo Lee Watts.

Process

Contact Arts Upper Hunter.

You *must* contact the Executive Director of Arts Upper Hunter to discuss your application before it is submitted. Ring John O'Brien directly on 0409 382 509 or email and book a phone call via rado@artsupperhunter.com.au.

Use the CASP & Micro Grants application form.

To apply, you will need to complete and submit an application form through Jotform. Make sure you save your application form regularly and allow plenty of time to review it before submission.

Click to apply, via the online form

Join us for a CASP-grant-writing session.

We are offering **an on-line session** to go through the whys and wherefores of the CASP & Micro Grants process, including tips and tricks on filling in the Jotform form. You will be able to ask all your questions at this time too.
CASP/Micro Grants Grant-writing session: online 5pm Wednesday 7 October 2026.
Sessions are subject to change. Check the Arts Upper Hunter website for details and links.

Gather your supporting materials.

You will need to upload supporting materials through the form. Support materials include Letters of Support, insurance certificate, current financial report, and visual, audio or written material that speaks to your project's goals and strengths. **You will need at least one Letter Of Support. Try to get this early!** See the Checklist below.

Get your wording right.

Be clear about what the grant is for, what the project is aiming to do, why you're undertaking this project and how you will make it happen. Don't forget to tell us why you think this genuinely is an exciting project for your community. What is the need? And we recommend you have someone else in your group proofread and check over your application before pressing the "Submit" button.

Consider key groups and special needs.

Please do some solid thinking about who you *could* reach or engage with. How accessible are your events, promotions, information and membership to people with a disability? Is there a way of adding something extra that might appeal to young people? Is there a way of reaching people living remotely eg by Zoom; or is there a way of documenting what you're up to (on video say) so that others can share the experience later? Have you considered the needs of the visually impaired?

Arts Upper Hunter has its own Equity Action Plan, a 3-year plan for increasing accessibility and inclusion for all people. How your project addresses this area will be taken into account by the assessment panel.

Get your application in on time!

All applications must be submitted via the Arts Upper Hunter Country Arts Support Program (CASP) and Micro Grants 2027 Application in Jotform by 5pm Wednesday 28 October 2026. Applications will not be accepted after that time – try not to be submitting at 4.55pm on the last day, it just might go wrong. Here is the link: https://form.jotform.com/John_rado/AUHgrants2027form

How we assess your project.

Once your application is received and has been deemed eligible, it will be assessed, rated and prioritised by Arts Upper Hunter's Assessment Panel. The panel will make final recommendations based on the assessment criteria, artform, and taking into account the needs of the region, the range of projects funded, the broad demographics, distribution, priority groups, and scale.

Note that applicants do not need to be an arts-based organisation – in the past we have funded services, sporting, disabilities and other groups. It's the project that needs to have creative or cultural outcomes.

How we tell you.

A decision should be made by late November 2026. Once a decision has been made, successful candidates will be contacted, contracts offered, and a public announcement made. Unsuccessful candidates will also be contacted. We are happy to provide feedback to both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Checklist - things to get ready for your application.

- All supporting material must be *relevant* to your project and submitted with your application.
- Please consider access for People with Disability in your events *and* in your information - accessibility is a priority for Arts Upper Hunter.
- You must provide at least one Letter of Support from partner organisations, intending participants, and anyone else with a stake in the project going ahead (for example a youth service if there's a youth focus). The assessment panel *does read them* too! They help us to understand a project, its goals, its supporters, and its relevance to your community.
- Does your project involve creative content or intended outcomes relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists, communities or activities? If so, we suggest that you provide at least one Letter of Support from relevant Aboriginal or

Torres Strait Islander artists and/or communities. Even if no Letter of Support is provided, we will need evidence that consultation has begun. We encourage you to discuss this aspect with staff of Arts Upper Hunter.

If you are an Aboriginal person, business or organisation, we still encourage you to consult with others (eg your clientele, your members, your Local Aboriginal Land Council). Please follow this link to view Create NSW's Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Protocols: Aboriginal Arts and Culture Protocols - Create NSW.

- Applications should have a current certificate of currency for Broadform Liability or 'Public Liability' Insurance (PLI) and an ABN – however, if for some reason you don't want to get them until you know you're successful, please see FAQs below.
- All applications for amounts larger than $1000 (with the exception of local government) are required to provide a current financial report for your organisation or administering body with your application. This would usually take the form of the most recent Profit & Loss report and Balance Sheet.
- It's crucial that visual, audio or written material you supply speaks to the project and helps us understand what you're seeking the funding for, in participation, brilliance or outcomes.
- If your project involves working with children and young people, successful candidates will not receive money unless relevant participants supply a current Working With Children Check Number – this is particularly for the artist being engaged or anyone who will be working closely with kids. We will also require Date Of Birth and Name in order to verify the WWCC.



Workshop in Merriwa led by Suszanne Lang, funded by CASP grant. Photo Kaylene Holmes

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

*** Can I wait to find out if my application is successful before getting Broadform/Public Liability Insurance? What about an ABN?*

Yes, however successful applicants MUST supply both a current Public Liability policy certificate and an ABN at the time of signing the contract. Please discuss the issue with the Executive Director if you're concerned.

*** Would it help if I apply for less than the full amount?*

Not necessarily. We certainly review the budget - but it really is best to apply for the amount you think you need to run the project, in combination with other cash and in-kind support. We do reserve the right to offer you less (or, in rare circumstances, more) if we think it appropriate.

*** We are a small museum/gallery in a Council-owned building - what sort of entity are we?*

Please discuss this with the Executive Director of Arts Upper Hunter before you go too far with your application. Where the museum is managed by volunteer staff in an incorporated association, that incorporated association will usually be the applicant, provided they have public liability insurance and can provide financial records. Where a museum or gallery is managed by paid Council staff, the applicant will usually be the Council, and the gallery or museum will be included in the Project Information of the form. (Councils don't have to upload financial statements into the grants form as their financials are on public record.)

*** We have received grant money for running workshops in the past and want to apply again, for different workshops. Is this allowed?*

Yes, but please note, Arts Upper Hunter are mindful of repeat successful applicants. While you clearly have good grant-writing skills, and are creating projects that meet our criteria, we do encourage successful groups to undertake more significant grant applications with other bodies, which will free up our funds for less experienced applicants. A pattern of successful applications for "sort of the same thing" will not prohibit eligibility but may reduce your chances of success this time round.

*** What is an administering body or Nominated Funds Administrator?*

If your collective or group is not incorporated, you can still apply for a grant if you have an administering body - in the application form they're called a Nominated Funds Administrator. This is a legally constituted organisation that will take legal and financial responsibility for a grant if awarded. (This process is also known as "auspicing".)

A signed letter from the administering body will be required with the application. If a grant is awarded, the administering body must also sign the Conditions for Payment of Grant form and is responsible for reporting on the grant within three months of the project's completion. All correspondence and monies will be directed to the administering

body. It is recommended that grant applicants enter into a written agreement with their nominated administering body highlighting respective rights and responsibilities.
Being auspiced is usually not a big burden for either the auspicor or auspicee. We are happy to provide advice.

*** How much money will be used for Micro Grants, and how much for the higher amounts?*
This will be decided through the assessment process and will depend on the quality of projects in each category.

*** Are there any other requirements I should look out for?*
All successful applicants are required to subscribe to our e-newsletter ArtSparks on the Arts Upper Hunter website - there's always lots of news about upcoming grants and prizes and other opportunities. You will also have to supply a report at the end of your project.



Sue with her work at Quiltfest, after a workshop at Singleton Quilters, supported by an AUH CASP grant.