

NEW GRANTS MODEL

The Australia Council invests in artistic excellence and promotes freedom of artistic expression through peer assessed grants programs for individuals, groups and organisations.

The Council delivered the final funding rounds through the previous grant model during 2014-15. This model had served the sector well in the past and contributed to the vibrant and culturally ambitious arts sector in Australia. Following the 2012 Australia Council Review and sustained sector consultation, it was identified that the Council's grants program needed to be more responsive to the evolving ways in which art is being made and presented.

The Council undertook a two year reform process to create a simpler and more streamlined new grants model, which maintained a commitment to excellence and increased accessibility to more of the arts sector. The new grants model was announced in August 2014 and opened in January 2015. The new model is more transparent and efficient, condensing over 140 grant categories to five, simplifying criteria, moving to four standard annual closing dates, and enabling one application to include multiple stages of the creative process.

The new grants model reflects changing artistic practices and supports a wider range of activities that deliver benefits to the arts sector and audiences nationally and internationally. This model enables a broader and more diverse range of artists and organisations to apply for funding towards the creation and presentation of excellent work.

While maintaining a commitment to traditional art forms, the grants program is now more accessible to emerging areas of practice and cross-art form work. For the first time, applicants are able to select the art form panel they will be assessed by, including a new dedicated panel of multi-art form peers. The new grants program is supported by a much larger and more diverse pool of expert peers, which includes 650 artists, arts workers and industry experts. In 2014-15 the Council had 483 positions available on peer panels, which utilised the expertise of 345 individuals from all areas of practice, across every state and territory.

The depth and diversity of the projects reflect the breadth of Australian society, and demonstrate new ways of engaging audiences across Australia and abroad.

In 2014-15, the first funding round of the new grants model closed in March 2015, receiving a strong response with more than 1,700 applications, or 2,200 including the Six-Year Funding for Organisations program.

The sector took up the challenge to be ambitious through its artistic practice and innovative collaborations, proposing projects of scale and sophistication. The depth and diversity of the projects reflect the breadth of Australian society, and demonstrate new ways of engaging audiences across Australia and abroad.

In the first grant round \$9.1 million was invested in Australian arts, supporting 273 projects, including 20% from first time applicants. One in three artists work globally and this was reflected in the 38% of grant recipients whose main location of activity is overseas. The projects supported were bold and innovative, demonstrating the depth and artistic vibrancy of Australia's arts sector. The new grants model was intended to be more flexible and accessible, supporting greater breadth of activity. The outcomes of the first round demonstrate the success of the program, supporting projects which include creation of new work, audience engagement, market development, artistic collaborations, career development, increasing access and participation in the arts, and raising the profile of Australian art internationally.



Dance Info, Finland, Australian Finland programme.
Image credit: Uupi Tirronen

KEY FACTS FROM THE FIRST ROUND OF THE NEW GRANTS MODEL:



\$9.1 MILLION

was invested overall in individuals, groups and small to medium organisations undertaking 273 projects



\$3.1 MILLION

was invested in project or development grants for individuals

OVER 20%

of the expert peers were from regional or remote locations, 15% identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 20% from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds



38%

of the projects are internationally focussed



20%

of the successful grants were from first time applicants to the Council

The funded projects from independent artists and small to medium arts organisations will represent Australia in 34 countries



Applicants are now able to select a dedicated panel of multi-art form peers

OVER \$300,000

was invested in dedicated funding for artists with disability



\$1.4 MILLION

was invested in project or development grants for groups



20%

of the projects identify access and participation or audience engagement as their main focus



\$4.6 MILLION

was invested in project funding for arts organisations



20%

of the projects are being delivered by individuals, groups and organisations based in regional Australia