

Venue Upgrade Grants 2024/2025

Program 2



Grants are available for dedicated live music venues to support venue upgrades that enhance audience and visitor experience. Funding will support the purchase of equipment and a range of infrastructure development works.

Key Information

- **Status:** Opening soon
- **Grant amount:** Up to \$250,000 (ex GST) per grant application
- **Application opens:** 13 January 2025
- **Application closes:** 14 April 2025 3:00 pm

Program objective

Grants are available for dedicated live music venues to support venue upgrades that enhance audience and visitor experience. Funding will support the purchase of equipment and a range of infrastructure development works.

This funding aims to:

- Build capability of dedicated live music venues to deliver world class audience and visitor experiences
- Increase the number of fit-for-purpose live music venues in NSW
- Increase sector knowledge and expertise in best practice sound management and sustainable live music programming
- Reduce sound impact on neighbours, leading to less complaints and increased business viability
- Increase diversity of live music offerings

This grant is funded and administered by Sound NSW.

Eligibility

Who can apply

Dedicated live music venues:

- based in NSW
- that are licensed or unlicensed
- where live music is the primary function of the business
- programming live music that is predominantly new and original
- where live music is programmed for 3 nights a week at a minimum
- identified as essential to the live music ecosystem (touring or local)
- where original live music programming is prominent in the business marketing
- where a room or space is dedicated to live music and is a significant part (eg. more than 50%) of the venue and contains appropriate infrastructure to support regular performances, for example, a separate auditorium, lighting, a sound desk, etc
- has formal arrangements in place establishing payments for artist performances

Applicants must satisfy ONE of the following criteria:

- be an incorporated entity or trust (including a trust with a corporate or individual trustee) and hold an Australian Business Number (ABN), Australian Company Number (ACN), or
- be registered with NSW Fair Trading under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 or the Co-operatives National Law (NSW) set out in the appendix to the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012

Applicants must also:

- hold a lease or occupancy agreement with at least 2 years from the application close date remaining of the current term (where the premises aren't owned by the operator).
- hold a OneMusic licence
- provide relevant venue assessment reports (for infrastructure funding)

Types of projects funded under this grant

Available grants up the value of \$250,000 (ex GST) will support the purchase of equipment and a range of infrastructure development works.

Equipment:

- purchase of production equipment (sound, lighting and staging)
- purchase of video screen (audio visual) technology.

Infrastructure works:

- soundproofing
- ventilation

- accessibility
- energy efficiency improvements.

When the project can start and end

The project start date must be after 14/03/2025 and the project end date must be before 30/06/2026.

Who can't apply

Ineligible applicants include

- any business or organisation located outside NSW
- venues with member-only access i.e. venues not usually accessible by the general public (e.g. venues primarily hosting private invite-only functions)
- venues with more than 10 gaming machines
- venues operated by Government (Federal, State or Local), or Education providers. Crown leased properties are eligible where operated by an otherwise eligible entity.
- venues with Producer / Wholesale, Limited, Pop-up or Packaged Liquor Licences
- religious institutions
- venues that are vessels (boats on water) or mobile venues of no fixed address
- venues unable to provide a co-contribution at least 30% of the overall project budget

Any request to have the co-contribution waived, will be at the absolute discretion of the Department. An applicant who is seeking to have the co-contribution waived is required to clearly document the reasons why the waiver is being sought.

Special consideration may be given to venues who do not meet the eligibility criteria if they can demonstrate significant contribution to the contemporary live music ecosystem. Please contact Sound NSW to discuss.

Any waiver of the eligibility requirements for applicants will be undertaken in accordance with the Grants Administration Guide and will be informed by whether the eligibility criteria would:

- lead to perverse or unfair outcomes;
- be contrary to policy intent;
- damage the reputation and integrity of the grant program

Any decision to waive eligibility criteria will be made by the decision maker at their absolute discretion.

What co-contributions are required

Applicants must co-contribute at least 30% of the of the overall project budget (this can include cash and in-kind contributions). In kind contributions can include any donated goods, services or volunteer work to support a project.

What your application needs to include

Prepare your application with this checklist

Applicants must submit the following as part of their application. These materials will all form part of the assessment.

- an outline of your experience in delivering contemporary music programming
- evidence of delivering contemporary music programming
- evidence of the venues impact on the contemporary live music ecosystem
- an outline of how the venue contributes to increasing diversity of live music offering to improve audience experiences
- an outline of how the grant will support improvements that enable the venue to be fit-for purpose
- an outline of how the grant will enhance expertise and establish best practice business operations.
- detailed project plan with proposed scope of work based on venue assessment reports
- relevant venue assessment reports (for infrastructure funding)
- a budget detailing income and expenditure, 30% co-contribution (cash and/or in-kind contributions). In kind contributions can include any donated goods, services or volunteer work to support a project
- a contingency fund of at least 10% and not included within the co-contribution
- copies of 2 quotes for each labour or purchase expense
- confirmation of the appropriate planning pathway for any works proposed (exempt, complying, DA).

Additional Considerations

Sound NSW is committed to a diverse contemporary music sector in NSW and encourages applications from venues owned and operated by, or that cater for, First Nations people, people who identify as women and non-binary, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and venues located in Western Sydney and regional and remote communities.

Address the eligibility criteria

Each applicant, as part of an application response, must confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria.

Applicants that do not address the eligibility criteria in full may be excluded from the application process at the department's discretion.

Address the assessment criteria

Applications (including written responses and supporting documentation) will be assessed against the following criteria.

Criteria 1 - Impact to the contemporary live music ecosystem

Evidence of new and original contemporary music programming, the established relationships with artist and music businesses and how this is increasing diversity of live music to improve audience experiences.

Tell us in detail about:

- your experience in delivering contemporary music programming (include examples)
- demonstrate frequency of live music programming
- - program live music at least 3 nights per week
 - a consistent schedule that fosters local and touring music ecosystems is essential, aligning with high-activity live music venues
 - feature predominantly original, contemporary music, supporting local or emerging artists and showcasing Australian talent
- the key people involved in delivering live music programming
- demonstrated diversity of live music programming through community engagement
- support letters from relevant artists and music businesses

Criteria 2 - Benefit to the live music venue

Evidence that this grant will enable improvements for the venue to be fit-for purpose, enhance expertise and establish best practice business operations.

Tell us in detail about:

- existing infrastructure of dedicated live music space (e.g., stage, sound equipment, lighting).
- what improvements you are seeking funding for and how this will ensure the venue is fit-for-purpose for live music programming
- your commitment to accessibility, sustainable operations, and sound management practices ie. energy efficiency and soundproofing measures to minimize neighbourhood impact, balancing venue activities with community interests.
- how the activity will compliment this funding to enhance expertise and establish best practice business operations
- support letter from premises (building) owner for proposed grant where premises not owned by the applicant

Criteria 3 - Viability of the venue upgrades

Demonstrate your capacity to deliver the venue upgrades and contribute financially.

Provide the following documentation:

- detailed project plan with proposed scope of work based on venue assessment reports
- relevant venue assessment reports (for infrastructure funding)

- a budget detailing income and expenditure, 30% co-contribution (cash and/or in-kind contributions). In kind contributions can include any donated goods, services or volunteer work to support a project
- a contingency fund of at least 10% and not included within the co-contribution
- copies of 2 quotes for each labour or purchase expense
- confirmation of the appropriate planning pathway for any works proposed (exempt, complying, DA).

SmartyGrants

Sound NSW uses the secure online grants system, SmartyGrants, to manage all its grant programs. All Venue Upgrade Grants applications must be submitted via the online portal. You will receive an email confirmation of your application from SmartyGrants when your application has been accepted.

After the application is submitted

Successful applications will be decided by: Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy

Eligibility

Your application will be checked by Sound NSW for eligibility against the published Eligibility Criteria. If eligible, your application will proceed to the next assessment stage. If ineligible, you will be advised via email within 14 business days and your application will not proceed to assessment.

Sound NSW reserves the right to provide Applicants with an opportunity to provide clarification or additional information regarding the Eligibility Criteria provided the principles of probity are not breached.

Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

Assessment

If your application is eligible, the application will be evaluated by an assessment panel including representatives from Sound NSW and Create Infrastructure as well as a representative with relevant experience from the industry assessor pool.

Assessments will be undertaken against the assessment criteria, adhering to the principals of value for money in accordance with the NSW Government Grants Administration Guide (March 2024)

Successful applications will be approved by the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy based on recommendations from the assessment panel.

Application Outcome

It is intended that applicants will be notified of the decision within 4 weeks of the date of assessment.

Sound NSW will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, where requested.

Successful grant applications

If your application is successful, you will be sent a funding agreement (contract), generally within one month of notification. This outlines the conditions of funding, how you will be paid and your grant reporting requirements.

Contracts will not be issued, and payments will not be made, until all Sound NSW and Create NSW outstanding acquittals have been submitted.

Sound NSW staff will review required reporting outlined below and may contact you for additional information as part of this process.

Payment will be dependent on when the signed Funding Agreement has been returned to Sound NSW, as well as any special conditions, variations or outstanding acquittals being satisfactorily completed.

Acknowledgement of Sound NSW

As a recipient of Government funding, you will be expected to acknowledge the support from Sound NSW in all publications, promotional and advertising materials and public announcements.

Payment and Reporting

Successful applicants will receive funding in two milestone payments:

- Milestone One – 70% of approved funds on approval of project plan and budget and execution of funding deed.
- Milestone Two – Remaining 30% of approved funds on acquittal of the project.

Program evaluation

The Program will be evaluated to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved.

We may collect and use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the Program impacted your venue and to evaluate how effective the project was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to three years after you receive the final grant payment associated with the grant round for more information to assist with this evaluation. Sound NSW and the NSW Audit Office reserves the right to undertake an audit of Program funding and support within seven years.

Anticipated assessment outcome date is within four weeks of the date of assessment.

Anticipated date for funding deed execution with successful applicants is within one month of notification.

Support and contact

Sound NSW staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of these guidelines, including the types of activity eligible for funding and support with the online application process.

Sound NSW staff cannot help directly with your application. To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff cannot edit or correct any applications or provide advice on the content or choices required against the Assessment Criteria.

Contact Details

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Image: Venues Upgrade Grant, 2024/2025, Program 2, Lansdowne Hotel Exterior, May 2024, Image provided by Chris Frape