MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
The Hon. (Don) Donald Thomas HARWIN, BEc(Hons) MLC

During the first two rounds of the Regional Cultural Fund, I travelled across regional NSW and spoke with the dedicated volunteers and staff at cultural organisations. The overwhelming sense of excitement about what the fund is doing for regional NSW was felt everywhere I went.

Following Round One of the Regional Cultural Fund in 2018, $5 million was set aside for a strategic approach to regional digitisation of cultural collections. From these funds to date, eleven individual pilot projects have been funded and are near completion. Create NSW has also partnered with our service organisation - Museums and Galleries of NSW - to produce a digitisation standards guide suitable for use by regional museums and galleries and produced a prototype website for showcasing NSW's wonderful collections. The Government has also explored state-wide digitisation strategies in partnership with key regional galleries and museums and consultants. This suite of planning work is complete.

With this, I am now delighted that $1.7 million in further funding is available to Local Councils to partner with small to medium museums in their regions to digitise some of the fabulous collections that are out there in the regions.

This 'hub and spoke' strategy will establish regional hubs that are equipped, trained and resourced to enable the digitisation of collections in the smaller museums, galleries and Aboriginal keeping places in their orbit. This will establish a platform for the systematic digitisation of our important regional collections – which are both world class and unique. Highlights of these collections will also be showcased on the Museums and Galleries NSW *Collections and Stories* website which will be further developed and launched as part of this funding.

The Regional Cultural Fund is an unprecedented investment in regional arts and culture – and I am proud to be a part of it.

The Hon. Don Harwin MLC
Member of the Legislative Council
Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Vice-President of the Executive Council, and Trustee of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund
Member of the Liberal Party

Background

The Regional Cultural Fund (RCF) has been established by the NSW Government to support the development of cultural infrastructure (including digitisation) in regional NSW that enables bold, exciting and diverse arts and cultural activities. The focus of Rounds One and Two of the Regional Cultural Fund was to support built infrastructure. A funding round has now been established to increase digitisation capabilities in regional NSW. Local Councils are invited to apply for funds to become an established best practice digitisation hub, and formally partner with smaller museums in their region.

The NSW Government recognises the social, cultural and economic value of the arts in regional NSW. A

thriving arts and cultural sector provides a focus for communities and offers opportunities for learning and self-development. Participation in the arts promotes personal and collective wellbeing, as well as contributing strongly to an innovative and robust local economy. Investment in arts and cultural facilities in regional NSW drives dynamic country towns and regional centres, with facilities and programs attracting visitors and giving regional artists more opportunities. Cultural infrastructure also plays a role in supporting regional economic development and improving the lives of people living in regional environments. It ensures regional communities across NSW remain attractive and vibrant places for people to live. All decisions will be made based on evidence demonstrating that projects have a positive economic and social impact for regional NSW.

Aims

The Regional Cultural Fund aims to strengthen regional arts, screen, culture and heritage, and revitalise local communities through strategic investment. This includes the strengthening of digital capabilities to support regional cultural infrastructure and collections to:

- provide a distinctive cultural experience — enabling access and preservation of unique arts, screen, culture and heritage offerings or meeting an identified need or gap

- enhance cultural vitality — improving or establishing cultural digital assets and generating additional jobs in the cultural sector or the broader economies of the region

- promote increased participation in creative and cultural activities — enabling access and increasing participation and diverse audiences for art and culture in regional communities, including for young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- ensure excellence — projects should consider best practice standards as a key component of the project development and procurement process.

Objectives of the Regional Cultural Fund (RCF)

- Regional NSW's cultural offering is improved and its rich diversity is supported and encouraged

- Bold and exciting new and upgraded cultural infrastructure is supported across NSW

- Projects representing value for money and strong ongoing viability are supported

- Regional communities have access to cultural experiences that result in recreational and educational benefits.

Objectives of the RCF Digitisation Round

- Maximise the reach of funds by embedding digitisation resources and expertise in regional arts and cultural organisations;
- Create or enhance partnership networks, enabling the sector to continue digitising collections into the future and fully leverage future opportunities;

- Complete the *Collections and Stories* website to enable centralised, high quality access to digitised museum objects dispersed throughout regional NSW so as to showcase regional collections. *A preview can be viewed at http://collections-and-stories.net.au/

Eligibility & requirements of a hub

Eligible applicants
Applications are invited from Local Government Authorities in regional NSW.

Capacity to Deliver
To be successful, projects must demonstrate the following capacity to deliver:

- The application must demonstrate tenure of a secure physical space in which to carry out digitisation;
- Digitisation projects must commence within three months, and be completed and acquitted by 30 June 2022;
- Where possible projects should support local procurement, job creation and skills development;
- The application must show evidence of the need to improve the digitisation of cultural collections in the applicant's region. This may be in the form of community consultation or collections data to show how the project will improve arts, screen, cultural or heritage outcomes for communities;
- The application must identify a collection digitisation strategy. This may include how the primary applicant and project partners intend to work together, what will be prioritised for digitisation and approximately how many items / collections will be digitised within project period and in future, where the digitisation will take place etc;
- The application must demonstrate the partnership/s that would enable the digitisation of small to medium museum and gallery collections (including collections held by Aboriginal Keeping Places, Aboriginal Cultural Centres or other First Nations community groups or families) in the region; evidenced by MoUs or letters of agreement which set out a mutual understanding of how small to medium museums and galleries will be supported;
- The application must demonstrate willingness to enter into written agreements with collaborating organisations;
- The application must identify paid staff for training in the digitisation process. RCF funding does not support the payment of existing staff, so if your budget includes staff-time this must be for the digitisation project outlined in your application and not for existing work;
- The application must acknowledge the requirement for staff identified to carry out digitisation to attend digitisation training courses provided in person or via online learning to the required digitisation standards outlined in M&GNSW's *Crystal Clear: standards and guidelines for regional digitisation*;
- The application must acknowledge the requirement for digitisation to be carried out in accordance with M&GNSW's *Crystal Clear: standards and guidelines for regional digitisation* to ensure consistency;
- The application must demonstrate an arrangement for storing digital assets (Local Council hosting or other and evidence of) and acknowledgement that digital assets must be stored to the required M&G NSW standard in perpetuity;

- The application must demonstrate digitisation equipment and resources will be based in NSW and the output will be the digitisation of NSW regional museum and gallery, Keeping Place or other First Nations community-based collections;
- The application must demonstrate an ability to provide ongoing resources to support digitisation of collections into the future. For example, permanent staff with digitisation training have collections digitisation included in role descriptions and KPIs or evidence of a continuing loan system for digitisation equipment;
- The application must demonstrate a co-contribution from non–Regional Cultural Fund sources. This may be cash or in-kind support;
- The application must acknowledge the requirement to provide images and associated data to M&G NSW for the *Collections and Stories* website at no cost or copyright infringement. In the case of including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural material and stories on the *Collections and Stories* website this would be negotiated with the hub, relevant First Nations representatives and M&G NSW;
- The application must demonstrate the understanding that the project and archive may contain objects, historical records and ephemera that is highly sensitive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that these sensitivities must be handled in an appropriate manner in partnership with the relevant communities;
- The application must demonstrate the understanding that, overall, archives are not neutral and collections historically have been built to benefit and tell the stories of European/British/colonial history, and the history of the dominant group;
- The application must acknowledge the M&G NSW metadata standards for digital assets to ensure consistency in searchability across regional collections.

Ineligible projects

The Regional Cultural Fund will not support:

- Projects that are not in eligible locations;
- Ongoing operational expenditure beyond the approved project scope, such as rent, utility bills or the leasing of equipment;
- Operational funding to support the touring of existing collections and exhibitions, or cultural engagement;
- Artistic or other programming including festivals, prizes and events;
- Marketing, advertising or product promotion;
- Projects with exclusively or mostly private benefits;
- Costs that are normally the responsibility of business, state or territory agencies or local council;
- Projects that would proceed without NSW Government financial assistance;
- Projects that require ongoing funding from the NSW Government or Australian Government that has not been budgeted.

There are no limits to how many applications can be lodged by one organisation. Where more than one application is made for projects located close to each other applicants must demonstrate the merit and viability of each or consider how they may partner together to provide a shared service to regional spokes.

How to apply

Applications for collections digitisation projects need to provide:
• Completed electronic application form in Smartygrants;
• Completed, approved and uploaded Project Plan template;
• Upload supporting documents as required in the application form.

Co-contribution

Applicants should note that co-contribution in cash and/or in kind is mandatory and higher levels of co-contribution will be viewed favourably in the assessment process. Evidence is required in application.

Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a panel of professional and independent experts.

There are four assessment criteria aligned to the objectives as shown below:
1. Case for change
2. Capacity to deliver
3. Value for money
4. Engagement, community partnership and reach

Each criterion is equally weighted in the scoring process. Competitive applications will demonstrate competency across all criteria.

Assessment criteria	Note all criteria will be considered in the context of the aims and objectives of this Digitisation Round
Criteria 1: Case for change	• an immediate and continuing need for the proposed project deliverables (the case for change) • the scope, scale and requirements of the project have been properly identified and are realistic, clear and unambiguous • the proposed project aligns with the fund's priorities and objectives • that alternative ways to meet the need have been considered • social and educational impacts of the project considered as contributing to the fund's objectives (including cultural sensitivities and risks, as well as potential positive outcomes)
Criteria 2: Capacity to deliver	• ability to meet the requirements of a hub as set out above • roles, responsibilities and accountabilities have been allocated to project team members • the proposed project schedule and milestones are achievable, and description of any contingency allowances • major risks have been identified and assessed, and any actions to avoid or mitigate these risks have been considered. • capability and capacity to establish and manage the proposed project governance structure.
Criteria 3: Value for money	• all costs throughout the life of the project have been identified, quantified (where possible), validated and included in the analysis • assumptions underlying the analysis are clearly articulated • the ongoing feasibility of the project has been considered and shown to be viable • all opportunities for co-funding have been maximised

Criteria 4: Engagement, community partnership and reach	• community support for the project
	• stakeholder views have been considered in developing the project
	• key stakeholders have been identified, and their opinions reviewed and documented
	• a strategy for managing stakeholder expectations and communications with stakeholders has been developed
	• recreational and educational benefits for the community
	• a plan for managing cultural protocols and sensitivities (in the case of First Nations archival and cultural material alongside partners/stakeholders)

Key dates

Round opens at 12pm (midday) on Monday 14 December 2020 and applications close at 12pm (midday), Friday 29 January 2020.

If you are successful

Organisations must not begin to make financial commitments for successful projects until the Funding Agreement has been finalised by the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and any relevant parties.

The information provided in your application will be used to create:

- a Funding Agreement and reporting schedule based on key project milestones
- any special conditions
- text for publicity
- evaluation.

The funds must be spent on items and eligible project costs directly relating to the project, as specified in the application and the Funding Agreement. Where successful applications have identified other sources of funding and are unable to secure these funds within a six-month period, any Regional Cultural Fund funding will be required to be returned.

Funds that are unspent at the end of the project, or which were not used in accordance with the funding agreement, must be returned. Requests for variations or changes to the project may be considered in limited circumstances. Changes or variations may be rejected or accepted subject to certain conditions. Information on successful applications will be published.

Model funding agreements

The model funding agreement gives you a general idea of the nature of the contractual arrangement you will be required to enter if successful. This can be found at: nsw.gov.au/regionalculturalfund.

Key steps

1. Read these Guidelines.
2. Download and familiarise yourself with the Project Plan template from our website.
3. View the model Funding Agreement on our website to get a general idea of the nature of the contractual arrangement you will be required to enter if successful.
4. Contact us to discuss your project.
5. Register as a Smartygrants user.
6. Complete page one of the Smartygrants Application Form to ensure your project is eligible.
7. Seek the relevant internal approvals and evidence of support for the project (including Hub/Spoke evidence, prepare the application and upload documentation and support materials.
8. Submit your application through Smartygrants no later than 12pm (midday) on Friday 29 January 2021.

Applicants must note that while the applications are received by the Department in confidence, the application (including this Application Form, Project Plan and support materials may be subject to Freedom of Information (Public Access) requests.
In submitting an application, the applicant must present true and accurate information.

Getting support

Regional Cultural Fund web page: www.nsw.gov.au/regionalculturalfund
The Regional Cultural Fund team can be contacted at: regional@create.nsw.gov.au or on (02) 8289 6575.