

Diverse Australia Program and National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security Small Grants Funding 2009

Applicant Feedback – October 2009

Thank you for applying for Diverse Australia Program and National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security Small Grants. This page provides applicants with information on the assessment process and feedback on the main strengths and weaknesses of applications.

General Overview

The Small Grants program, among other things, is designed to assist small organisations that may not be ready to manage major projects, to undertake activities that address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance. Grants of up to \$5000 (before GST) are offered for projects that promote respect, fair treatment, opportunities to participate, a sense of belonging and acceptance in a culturally diverse society.

There was a strong response to this second round of small grants with some 290 applications received.

Applicants are commended for their interest in strengthening the cohesion of their communities and providing opportunities for people to get involved in local activities.

Assessment of Applications

All applications were assessed by Department of Immigration and Citizenship staff against the criteria for the small grants published in the guidelines.

Applicants demonstrated a strong interest in strengthening communities and responding to social isolation. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has announced the funding of 64 projects to a total value of some \$303 423. Details of all the projects funded are available on the website.

See: [Grants to Support a Diverse Australia](#)

Feedback According to the Criteria

Because of the high number of applications, the small grants round was very competitive. However, there were some common shortcomings in applications that, despite their positive intentions, made them ineligible for funding under these programs. More information on these common issues with applications and on eligibility criteria generally is provided below, for the information of all applicants.

Eligible Organisation

Applications were sought from small, incorporated, not-for-profit community organisations. Most applicants met this requirement. The funding guidelines indicated that funding would not be available to a range of larger organisations including local government authorities and educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools. Several applications were received from local councils, tertiary institutions and schools. These were assessed as ineligible.

Applicants are advised to check the Guidelines for Small Grants carefully to find out which organisations and entities are eligible.

In keeping with the goal of assisting small organisations that may not be ready to manage major projects, applications were sought from eligible organisations with an operating budget of less than \$200 000 per year. The guidelines indicated that organisations funds would only be provided to small incorporated not for profit community organisations with an operating budget of less than \$200 000 per year.

Eligible Project

To meet this criterion, all projects were expected to **address issues of cultural, racial or religious intolerance by involving a wide cross-section of the population in activities to promote respect, fairness, inclusion and a sense of belonging**. In accordance with this objective, projects that would involve people engaging with each other across cultural, so called 'racial' or religious difference were strongly encouraged.

Many projects met this criterion of cross-cultural engagement and addressed the priority areas for the funding round. There was particularly strong interest in projects working with young people, new and emerging communities and community based activities.

However, a number of applications failed to meet this criterion because they were **focussed solely within one cultural or religious community or because they offered no meaningful opportunity for people to interact across cultural boundaries or improve their understanding of such differences**.

A number of applications were **concerned primarily with settlement, social welfare, health or other issues that fall under other government programs**, and would be more appropriately funded by another program, department or level of government.

Applicants are advised to **clearly state the issue of cultural, racial or religious intolerance** that they are seeking to address and to outline how the proposed activities are going to involve people from a variety of different cultural backgrounds to create stronger cross-cultural understanding. Applicants are also advised to outline how people will be attracted to participate in their activities and what those activities will comprise.

Stakeholder and Community Support

Applicants were asked to identify any other organisations or stakeholders with whom they would work. Many applications **did not identify organisations which could support them** to do the activities they were proposing or to **engage people from a range of different backgrounds**. Applicants were likely to fail this criterion if they only identified organisations from a single cultural background or did not provide sufficient detail of stakeholders.

In developing applications, applicants are advised to list the **'mainstream' or 'broad' community organisations** that will assist their projects as well as cultural or religious organisations.

Applicants are also advised to be as specific as possible about stakeholders and community groups. For example, it is better to give the name of an individual and their organisation than to generalise – so 'Mr Joe Bloggs, Valley Community Association' is better than 'local community leader'.

Project Budget

Applicants were asked for the major budget items for their projects. Budgets had to be **reasonable and appropriate to the project plan and objectives**. Most budgets were reasonable and represented 'value for money'.

The guidelines for funding stated that small equipment purchases that go towards achieving project outcomes would be considered. In most cases equipment or capital costs formed a small proportion of project costs and were accepted. However, in some cases purchases of equipment or capital items constituted the whole of the project budgets and were not strongly linked to achieving cross-cultural understanding.

Applicants are advised to ensure that the project budgets reflect the main costs of doing the activities that they have set out. While very detailed budgets were not necessary, the most successful applications included the costs associated with each stage of their project from consulting and organising, to promoting and holding the activities.

Other Funding Opportunities

Applicants may find other relevant funding programs through the Australian Government's grantslink website at <http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>. Applicants seeking money only for the purchase of capital items are advised to seek out other funding programs, such as the Volunteer Grants Program under the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Thank you

To all applicants, thank you once again for your interest in the small grants and your commitment to promoting stronger community relations.