

Feedback Summary for Website

Large Community Grants Funding 2009

Thank you for applying for *Diverse Australia Program* (DAP) Community Grants funding. This page provides applicants with information on the assessment process and feedback on the main strengths and weaknesses of applications.

General Overview

The Large Community Grants are designed to assist organisations undertake activities that address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance. Grants of between \$5 000-\$50 000 were offered for projects that promote respect, fairness, opportunities to participate, a sense of belonging and acceptance in a culturally diverse society.

There was a very strong response in 2009 with some 482 expressions of interest (EOIs) 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.

The high number of EOIs made the 2009 funding round very competitive with 122 applicants shortlisted to submit supplementary information. There were some common shortcomings in many EOIs that, despite their positive intentions, made them ineligible for funding under this program. More information on these common issues and on eligibility criteria generally is provided below for the information of all applicants.

The successful projects for 2009 were recently announced by the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson. Details of these projects are available on the website.

Assessment of Applications

All applications were assessed fairly and consistently against the published criteria for funding. Trained staff from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship assessed the applications and each application was examined by a minimum of two officers.

Feedback According to the Criteria

Eligible Organisation

EOIs were sought from incorporated, not-for-profit organisations. While most applicants met this requirement, several EOIs were received from State Government agencies and from un-incorporated organisations. These were assessed as ineligible.

Eligible Project & Work Plan

To meet this criterion, all projects were expected to address issues of cultural, racial or religious intolerance by involving a cross-section of the population in activities to promote respect, fairness, opportunities to participate, a sense of belonging and acceptance in a culturally diverse society. In accordance with this objective, projects that involved people engaging with each other across cultural or religious difference were 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 communities and community based activities.

However, a large number of applications failed to meet this criterion because they were focused 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 proposals were concerned primarily with settlement services, 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.

A number of proposals were deemed ineligible as they contained expenditure for major capital items, for example computers and materials to construct gardens. Other proposals were clearly a continuation of existing activities or deemed to be 'core business' of the organisation and therefore ineligible.

Applicants were advised to clearly state the issue of cultural, racial or religious intolerance 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. All proposals needed to demonstrate how people will be attracted to participate in the activities and what those activities will comprise. A number of shortlisted proposals failed to adequately provide this level of detail. Additionally, a number of proposals were targeted at the organisations existing clients only and did not adequately demonstrate how they would engage the broader community in the activities.

It should be noted that projects targeting issues of social isolation were not rated as highly as projects that were seeking to address a specific issue of racial, religious or cultural intolerance.

Proposals that focus primarily on one-off festival-type events with limited or no follow-up activities are not considered to successfully facilitate opportunities for ongoing cross-cultural interaction and were not rated highly.

Sport can be an effective way of engaging people, however, some proposals failed to include a strategy to integrate participants into existing clubs and teams rather than seek to create teams or competitions specifically for the participants.

Stakeholder and Community Support

Applicants were asked to identify any other organisations or stakeholders with whom they would work. Many proposals very successfully identified organisations which could support them to do the activities they were proposing or to engage people from a range of different backgrounds.

Applicants failed this criterion if they only identified organisations from a single cultural background or did not provide sufficient detail of stakeholders.

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 Bill Smith, Valley Community Association' is better than 'local community leader'.

Note that for projects seeking to engage the Indigenous and Muslim communities, stakeholders from these communities should be consulted prior to applying for funding.

Shortlisted applicants were expected to provide letters of support from all relevant stakeholders. For example, projects proposing to work with schools must identify the schools and provide a letter of support from these schools. Those letters that indicated commitment to and participation in the

proposed project were considered more favourably. Applicants were rated lower on this criterion if the stakeholder support was considered too limited.

Project Budget

Shortlisted applicants were required to provide a detailed breakdown of all budget items over \$2000. Applications that did not provide these breakdowns failed this criterion as the Department was unable to accurately assess the eligibility of the items. Budget items were examined to ensure they adequately provided funds for all proposed activities in the work plan.

A number of proposals included ineligible items such as ongoing running costs (rent and electricity) and capital expenditure for computers and other equipment. Applicants wishing to purchase equipment are encouraged to consider other funding programs, such as the Volunteer Grants Program under the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Other Funding Opportunities

Applicants may find other relevant funding programs through the Australian Government's grantsLINK website at www.grantslink.gov.au or at www.ourcommunity.com.au. The Department also delivers a Settlement Grants Program that might be relevant to some applicants. Information on this program can be found at www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants.

Thank you

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