

Destination NSW

Regional Event Fund - Incubator Event stream

Incubator Event Stream

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025



Grants Program Details	
Closing date and time	Midnight on 9 April 2024 – Sydney Time
Application outcome date	20/05/2024
Project delivery timeframe (for successful applications)	01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Decision-maker	Minister for Jobs & Tourism and/or nominated delegate
NSW Government Agency	Destination NSW
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST)	Total funding available for Incubator Event stream: \$600,000 Applicants may apply for any amount up to and including \$20,000 (excl. GST)
Enquiries	Grants Administration Team via email grants.admin@dns.w.gov.au

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1

Overview of grant program

1 Overview of grant program

The Regional Event Fund was established in 1996. The program is a mechanism to grow regional visitation by assisting events that contribute to the unique character of the tourism regions of NSW to market themselves to visitors from outside of their Local Government Area.

The Regional Event Fund comprises three individual funding streams providing a development pipeline for events from inception, through emergence, to their establishment as tourism events in Regional NSW.

The three individual streams of the Regional Event Fund are:

- Incubator Event stream – supports the establishment of new events
- Flagship Event stream – supports the marketing of emerging events to increase their profile and encourage visitation; and
- Event Development stream – supports the strategic development of established events as drivers of tourism.

Each of the three streams within the Regional Event Fund have different eligibility, selection criteria and assessment processes. Applications for the three streams are managed separately.

The primary objective of the Regional Event Fund is to provide grants to events in regional NSW that have demonstrated they are, or have the potential to become, tourism drivers for their region. Depending on the stream, grants are focused on event delivery, event marketing or specific growth initiatives.

Secondary objectives include leveraging supported events through Destination NSW marketing and communications activities to build the profile of NSW and specific destinations, and, through the application and feedback process, to offer guidance to event organisers to improve event management capabilities.

The Regional Event Fund will deliver value for money by providing targeted funding to event organisers to undertake specific marketing activities directly tied to promoting the event to new markets and attracting increased visitation across regional New South Wales.

Ultimately, the funding program aims to increase visitation to regional events and increase economic benefit to destinations.

The Regional Event Fund (inclusive of all three funding streams) has delivered more than **\$13 million** to more than **470 events** across regional NSW over the past 28 years.

The Regional Event Fund continues to provide an important contribution to the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 target of total visitor expenditure of \$65 billion by 2030, including \$25 billion in regional NSW.

This document provides information on the **Incubator Event stream** of the Regional Event Fund only. Guidelines for the Flagship Event stream and Event Development stream are available separately via the website.

The **Incubator Event stream** is open to Regional NSW events that are being held for the first or second time. The stream is an open and competitive grants program.

The **Incubator Event stream** supports innovative events that demonstrate sound organisational planning, have a unique alignment with the character and culture of the local region and which can demonstrate a broad appeal likely to promote tourism and attract overnight visitation.

Application to the Incubator Event stream is a single-stage process consisting of an online application form responding to a series of questions that address the selection criteria (eligibility and assessment criteria).

To be considered for funding, events must be delivered between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.

This program is funded and administered by Destination NSW.

Destination NSW is the lead agency, champion and voice for the visitor economy within the NSW Government.

Our vision is for NSW to be the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific by 2030.

Our mission is to deliver economic and social benefits to the people of NSW by growing the visitor economy.

The NSW Government's Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 provides a roadmap to support all industries involved in the visitor economy to recover from the impact of drought, bushfires and COVID-19 and to grow in the future.

The Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 outlines five strategic pillars that underpin the NSW Government's vision to be the premier visitor economy in the Asia-Pacific region by 2030:

- Road to Recovery – a comprehensive program of marketing and industry development to ensure NSW recovers quickly from the impacts of COVID-19, bushfires, drought and floods
- Build the Brand – compelling new brands will be developed for Sydney and NSW to provide a strong foundation for differentiation, consumer messaging, local pride and competitiveness to turbo-charge recovery and accelerate future growth
- Showcase our strengths – NSW is a state of breathtaking diversity and bucket list visitor attractions and experiences. We will focus on existing strengths and develop new opportunities to ensure place making, destination marketing, events and visitor experiences drive visitation
- Invest in world-class events – An accelerated investment in signature sporting and cultural events such as the 10 World Cups and Vivid Sydney as well as business events will help position Sydney and NSW as the events capital of the Asia-Pacific, drive visitation and enhance the social wellbeing of NSW residents
- Facilitate growth – investing in infrastructure, job creation, industry resilience and sustainability, future planning, and better ways to do business will ensure the continued growth and future prosperity of the NSW visitor economy.

For more information on the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, visit:

<https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/about-us/visitor-economy-strategy-2030>

NSW Creative Communities policy is a 10-year vision for supporting and growing the creative industries in NSW. The Regional Event Fund supports this new integrated policy for arts, culture and the creative industries by:

- Supporting communities in regional NSW.
- Promoting NSW arts and cultural venues and activities, including local festivals and events, alongside major international and national experiences.
- Broadening the range of festivals and creative hospitality on the state's calendar to engage local audiences and attract visitors, which play an important part in fostering social cohesion, tourism, and local innovation and celebration.

- Strengthening the co-ordination of festival support in NSW to properly position and grow the festivals sector, leveraging the wide range of industries involved.

For more information on the Creative Communities policy, visit: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/arts-and-culture/engage-nsw-arts-and-culture/resource-hub/creative-communities>

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Incubator Event stream is to offer seed funding to events in Regional NSW to support their first and second years of activity.

The stream supports innovative events that demonstrate sound organisational planning, have a unique alignment with the character and culture of the local region and which can demonstrate a broad appeal likely to promote tourism and attract overnight visitation.

1.2 Grant value

A total budget of up to \$1,500,000 (ex GST) has been allocated to the Regional Event Fund in FY2024/25.

Of this total budget, \$600,000 will be allocated to the Incubator Event stream. This stream offers one-off annual grants of up to \$20,000 (excl. GST)

The budget allocation above is indicative only. Final allocations will be based on the number and quality of the applications received for 2024-25 and may deviate from the indicative allocations within the context of the total Program budget.

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Selection criteria

2 Selection criteria

Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read the Incubator Event stream Guidelines before beginning their application.

To be considered for funding through the Incubator Event stream, applicants must submit an application that sufficiently addresses and demonstrates it meets the following Incubator Event stream selection criteria. Strong applications require robust data and supporting information.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to apply for any of the three streams of the Regional Event Fund, applicants must:

- be the event owner (i.e. own the rights to the event and hold the relevant approvals for the event)
- be financially solvent
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be a sole trader, company, incorporated association, or trust entity
- have at least \$20 million public liability insurance, or be able to secure before entering into a Funding Agreement

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include:

- Australian, State or Territory Government agencies or entities, including New South Wales
- Destination Networks
- Political parties

Eligible Events

To be eligible for the **Incubator Event Annual** grant, your event must:

- take place between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025
- be held for the first or second year in the year of funding
- be held in one of the following seven Destination Network regions listed below:
 - Destination Central West
 - Destination Country & Outback NSW
 - Destination North Coast incl. Lord Howe Island
 - Destination Riverina Murray
 - Destination Southern NSW
 - Destination Sydney Surrounds North
 - Destination Sydney Surrounds South

(Please note: the Local Government Areas of Penrith, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Wollondilly are no longer included in the above Destination Networks. For further information on Destination Networks please visit <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/about-us/destination-networks>)

Ineligible Events

The following event types are not eligible for funding from the three streams of the Regional Event Fund, including the Incubator Event stream:

- events held in Local Government areas not included in a Destination Network mentioned in the Eligible Events criteria
- regular (weekly/monthly) community events such as markets and bazaars, local sports meets (home/away games, regional tournaments), club gatherings (RSL, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce), classes, workshops etc.
- one-off events that are not planned to continue after a single year (e.g.: anniversary celebrations, concerts, exhibitions, theatre seasons, sporting championships etc.)
- religious events i.e. events that have a religious ceremony as the principal focus such as Easter or Christmas celebrations. Events held over weekends such as Easter may be considered if the religious element is not the focus (e.g.: a food or music festival)
- community public holiday celebrations such as Anzac Day, Australia Day, King's Birthday if the holiday is the primary focus. Events held over public holidays will be considered if the holiday is not the focus (e.g. a food or music festival)
- event series such as sporting events, music festivals or exhibitions held in multiple locations across NSW and/or Australia
- touring events such as concert tours, circuses and fun fairs
- promotional events (i.e. where marketing a specific product and/or cause is the principal objective)
- events held in Greater Sydney including Penrith, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Wollondilly
- events whose overnight visitation impact is not immediate i.e.: that promote visitation to a destination at a later date
- business events (e.g. trade shows and exhibitions, conferences, industry meetings).
- consumer events that include a business event as an extension event will not be excluded from the Regional Event Fund provided the consumer event is the primary applicant
- events owned and/or operated by an agency or entity of the Federal Government, or a State or Territory Government including New South Wales

Eligible Costs

The Incubator Event stream offers seed funding for activities that are likely to establish the event as a driver of visitation. Activities for which funding will be offered include, but are not limited to:

- venue hire and other costs specific to the event, determined on a case by case basis
- temporary event infrastructure (marquees, stages etc.) that is likely to improve the visitor experience
- marketing and promotions
- marketing, PR and digital specialist or consultancy fees subject to Destination NSW approval of a brief
- brand design and development
- visitor research.

Destination NSW funding is intended to supplement existing expenditure and support the event to deliver a superior visitor experience or raise its profile outside of its immediate area.

Ineligible Costs

Grant funds cannot be used to replace previous or other funding for the Event, such as:

- prize money, gifts, or contributions to charitable groups
- travel expenses
- local Council fees
- general administration costs such as staff costs, salaries, administration and services
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation.

Additional Eligibility

- An event awarded a grant through previous Regional Event Fund rounds that has been deferred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or extreme weather are not eligible to apply for additional funding for the same event from the Regional Event Fund in 2024/25.
- A single event may not receive grant funding from more than one stream of the Regional Event Fund program (Incubator, Flagship or Event Development) in the same year.

2.2 Assessment criteria

The Regional Event Fund **Incubator Event stream** is an open, competitive grants program. Eligible applications will be assessed on their merits against the selection criteria, be compared with and ranked against other applications. Applications with the highest scores are more likely to be funded.

Assessment will be based on the following assessment criteria:

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required	Weighting
1. Economic Impact	Destination NSW targets its investment in events that will deliver new expenditure into a region through visitation. Applicants need to demonstrate that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Their event will attract audiences from outside the event's Local Government Area. b) Sufficient accommodation capacity exists to attract overnight visitation. 	30%
2. Strategic marketing alignment and community impact	This refers to effective promotion of your event and its region to visitors outside of the region while also engaging the local community. Applicants need to demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How the event concept will create and raise awareness for the region; including showcasing its character and culture. 	30%
3. Event planning and due diligence	Event organisers need to demonstrate sound event management practices, and that they've undertaken sufficient due diligence in their event planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Applicants need to demonstrate a clear event management plan detailing the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ event overview ▪ operational processes incl. accessibility and sustainability ▪ risk management ▪ rationale for timing of the event ▪ relevant insurance cover ▪ method for collecting and measuring attendee and visitation numbers, and evaluation plan. A mandatory requirement of this component of the criteria is a clear strategy and plan for collecting data and assessing ex-region visitation numbers and experience. b) Applicants need to demonstrate sound financial management and provide an: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Itemised budget incl. income and expenditure c) Applicants need to demonstrate that the event will deliver new expenditure into their region through increased visitation, often achieved by holding the event in off-peak or shoulder seasons. Applicants need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide the rationale for the timing of your event d) Applicants should detail their plan for collecting data as an input to measure and evaluate visitation and the visitor experience (e.g. post event survey): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How you (or plan to) collect and analyse visitation data and feedback 	40%

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Application process

3 Application process

3.1 How to apply

- Applicants are encouraged to:
 - read the program Guidelines in full
 - check their eligibility for the program
 - speak to their Destination Network to advise of their intent to apply
 - start their applications early during the application period to ensure they are completed in good time before the closing date. Destination NSW is not responsible for delays to the submission of applications caused by technology, connection or other issues outside of its control.
- Grants in the 2024/25 Incubator Event stream will be allocated in a single round for events taking place between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.
- All applications for grants from the 2024/25 Incubator Event stream must be submitted through the Destination NSW on-line application platform.
- Applications sent via email, post or fax will not be accepted.
- The Application Form includes multiple opportunities to upload supplementary information in support of the application and applicants are encouraged to do so.
- Applicants will be required to attach the following documents to their online application:
 - Completed Event Plan detailing your:
 - event overview
 - operational processes
 - risk management
 - team structure
 - evaluation plan
 - Itemised budget for the 2024/25 event including projected revenue and expenditure
 - certificate of currency for at least \$20 million public liability insurance, or evidence of ability to secure before entering into a Funding Agreement
- All applications must be received by Destination NSW no later than the advertised closing date.
- Applications received after the closing date and time will not be accepted. No extensions to the submission date and time will be provided.
- Applicants may be contacted by Destination NSW for verification or for further information provided in their application.
- Applicants must not provide false or misleading information.
- Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by email following submission.
- If an acknowledgment email is not received following submission, or if require support throughout the application process please contact the Grants Administration team via email grants.admin@dnsw.com.au

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Assessment process

4 Assessment process

4.1 Assessment of grant applications

The **Incubator Event stream** is an open and competitive grants program.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and the assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines. Eligible applications are assessed on their comparative merits against the nominated criteria.

All eligible applications will be assessed by a panel convened by Destination NSW. The assessment panel consists of representatives with experience in events and regional tourism. Each application is assessed by a minimum of three different members of the assessment panel.

The Panel will make its recommendations for which events should receive Incubator Event stream grants according to the following principles of the fund:

- the Incubator Event stream is a co-operative arrangement between Destination NSW and the regional event.
- the Incubator Event stream is a Destination NSW grant program that supports the promotion of selected regional events to achieve tourism outcomes of benefit to regional NSW.
- the Incubator Event stream seeks to assist the promotion of those events that expressly contribute to the unique identity of the tourism regions of the State, and that demonstrate the potential to act as 'flagships' for those regions.
- it is the aim of Destination NSW, but not a certainty, that at least one event will be supported in each of the seven Destination Network regions, subject to the quality of the applications received. Destination NSW reserves the right not to award funding in any region if the applications are of insufficient merit in the opinion of the Panel.
- receipt of a grant through the Regional Event Fund in a previous year is no indication that a current application will be successful. The Panel will make its recommendations for future funding based on the merits of the event's application for that year.
- as part of the assessment process, Destination NSW may seek additional insights on the tourism potential of events that have applied for funding from the Destination Networks to help inform its decision-making.

Based on the assessments, a recommendation will then be made in writing to the Decision-Maker.

The Decision-Maker will provide the final funding approval of the event and funding amount.

4.2 Notification of application outcome

Applicants will be advised via email and/or letter of the outcome of their grant application once approval is determined by the Decision-Maker.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing and offered the opportunity of a feedback session about their application (upon request made to Destination NSW).

Successful applicants will be advised of their application status and may be requested to keep the status and details confidential until an announcement is made.

Successful applications will be announced publicly. Successful applicants will receive a letter of notification following this announcement.

Following the announcement of events to be funded in the 2024/25 Incubator Event stream, no further Incubator Event stream grants will be available until a future Regional Event Fund program opens.

4.2.1 Feedback on applications

Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to contact Destination NSW to receive feedback on their applications following assessment but should note that:

- information provided by Destination NSW is a guide only and is prepared in good faith. Destination NSW has sought to ensure that the information is true and correct at the time of presentation.
- feedback supplied is based on the information provided to Destination NSW. Destination NSW does not make any representation or warranty about the accuracy, suitability, reliability, currency or completeness of any feedback provided.
- Destination NSW cannot promise any results or benefits from an applicant's participation in feedback. All applicants are responsible for determining any further investigations, information and consideration that might be required.
- it is the applicant and event owner's responsibility to decide, based on their full knowledge and understanding of their business situation, how relevant the information is. Destination NSW recommends seeking independent professional advice (legal, financial or otherwise).
- Destination NSW is not liable for any loss resulting from any action taken or reliance made by the applicant on any feedback and information provided. No guarantees are made of any particular outcome if an applicant chooses to rely on the feedback.

4.3 Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration Guide requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) (**GIPA Act**), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

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Successful grant
applications

5 Successful grant applications

5.1 Grant agreement

The provision of Incubator Event stream grants by Destination NSW to successful applicants is subject to the event owner entering into and abiding by the terms of a Funding Agreement signed by the event owner and Destination NSW.

Successful applicants are required to:

- enter into a Funding Agreement with Destination NSW by 14 June 2024, or as otherwise agreed with successful applicants
- deliver on grant milestones prior to receiving grant payment
- acknowledge the support of the NSW Government in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines
- notify Destination NSW in writing of any proposed changes such as event date – requests for variations or changes to the event will be considered in limited circumstances
- pay back unspent funds, or any funds not spent in accordance with the Funding Agreement

5.2 Grant payment

Funds will not be available until a Funding Agreement is signed by Destination NSW and the successful applicant, and all requirements of each milestone are met. All successful applicants registered for GST will be paid the approved grant amount plus 10 per cent GST.

Grants will be paid in full upon:

- execution of a Funding Agreement
- receipt by DNSW of a valid certificate of currency for public liability insurance
- evidence of a current event listing of the Event on www.visitnsw.com

For more information on the Destination NSW Funding Agreement please contact grants.admin@dnsw.com.au.

5.3 Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

Successful applicants are required to complete and submit a post event report via the online platform no later than 2 months after the last day of the event. Failure to submit the post event report may jeopardise the applicant's future eligibility for Destination NSW funding.

Destination NSW will, from time to time, request event information and high resolution imagery and video content to assist with the marketing of Incubator events. A photo brief can be requested from Destination NSW. Successful applicants may also be required to provide progress reports or status updates on the delivery of the event to Destination NSW, upon request, and at regular intervals in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

5.4 Evaluation

Destination NSW will undertake an evaluation of the Program.

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Additional information and resources

6 Additional information and resources

6.1 Complaint handling

Complaints about the program or individual applications should be made in writing to grants.admin@dnsw.com.au

6.2 Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

For information relating to Destination NSW's Access to Information, please visit <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/access-to-information>

6.3 Ethical conduct

6.3.1 Conflict of interest management

All parties involved in the assessment process must declare all conflicts of interest. Actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government Sector Employees. A Conflict of Interest register will be maintained for the program.

6.3.2 Confidentiality

By lodging an application, applicants give consent for the application, information in the application and the applicant's contact details to be shared with the staff members of Destination NSW, the relevant Destination Network and external advisors of Destination NSW for the purposes of assessment and communication and for information purposes to certain NSW Government Ministerial Representatives.

All assessors are bound by confidentiality agreements and codes of conduct. Your business information will be treated as Commercial-in-Confidence.

Detail relating to successful applicants will be published on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined. Detail published includes the recipient name, recipient location, event delivery location, and the individual funding amount.

For further information, please consult our Privacy Policy on the management of Privacy www.destinationnsw.com.au/privacy-policy.

6.4 Additional Conditions

The following other conditions apply:

- Destination NSW may provide additional in-kind marketing support to events funded by the Flagship Event stream as part of its ongoing marketing activities.
- Destination NSW reserves the right, as a condition of funding, to make use of event data for the purposes of market research and evaluation to enable the long-term development of events in New South Wales
- successful applicants should retain all records relating to the event, including expenditure, and make them available for audit purposes if required.
- Destination NSW is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation.
- all events financially supported by Destination NSW through the Incubator Event stream are encouraged to consolidate their financial position through corporate and other support whilst they are part of the Incubator Event stream.

6.5 Destination NSW Discretion

Potential applicants should note that:

- no funding application is guaranteed to result in funding from Destination NSW
 - no applicant is guaranteed funding to the full amount requested in their application.
 - Destination NSW reserves the right to vary the amount of funding at any time.
 - Destination NSW reserves the right to vary the terms of Incubator Event stream funding at any time in particular the awarding of funding.
 - the number and location of events that will be funded by Destination NSW will be determined by the Decision-Maker, at their discretion.
 - funding through the 2024/25 Incubator Event stream is available to events taking place between 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, although Destination NSW reserves the right to vary this as it requires.
-