



# National Disability Conference Initiative 2025–26

## Feedback for applicants

The Department of Social Services (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the National Disability Conference Initiative 2025–26 (NDCI) grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

## Overview

The application submission period opened on 21 November 2024 and closed on 28 January 2025.

The NDCI grant opportunity provides grants to eligible conference organisers to assist people with disability to participate in nationally-focused, disability-related, conferences held in Australia. Grants may also support eligible conference organisers to provide accessibility measures that will maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at their conference.

The intent of the NDCI grant opportunity is to support organisations, especially those run by and for people with disability and/or their families, which have limited resources/finances for implementing accessibility measures for their conference.

The objectives of the program are:

- to support the vision of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* (ADS) for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community
- to support organisations, especially those run by and for people with disability and/or their families, which have limited resources/finances to implement accessibility measures for their conference.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- greater participation and inclusion of people with disability and their carers at nationally-focused, disability-related conferences held in Australia
- greater awareness of the ADS launched on 3 December 2021.

## Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The Hub undertook the preliminary assessment on all eligible applications through an open competitive grant process. Applications which underwent preliminary assessment were provided to the department's selection advisory panel (panel) for deliberation.

The panel, established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was based on:

- meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines
- meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria outlined in the guidelines
- how well the proposed use of funding demonstrated value for money
- demonstrated capability of the organisation to manage the grant and deliver the conference
- how applications compared against other applications
- minimisation of possible duplication with other Commonwealth or State or Territory government programs
- identification of risks for the department and the Commonwealth and the proposed mitigation strategies.

## Selection Results

There was strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements, outlined in the guidelines, based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what was quality responses to the assessment criteria.

## Criterion 1

### National disability focus

When addressing this criterion strong applicants:

- demonstrated how their conference aligns with one or more of the outcome areas of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*
- described the focus of the conference and what the expected outcomes are
- demonstrated how the conference has a national focus
- demonstrated how the conference has a disability focus.

### Strong applications:

- clearly identified an outcomes area or areas of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* and linked these areas to a specific focus of their conference
- described clearly what the conference is about, the intended audience, and how it focusses on disability and national issues
- described clearly how people with disability would benefit from the conference.

## Criterion 2

### Maximising the inclusion and participation of people with disability

When addressing this criterion strong applicants:

- demonstrated how the grant funding would be used to maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at the conference

- where applicable, demonstrated how the NDCI funds would be used for accessibility measures that organisations would be expected to provide as part of their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), and demonstrated why such adjustments would cause major difficulties or excessive costs for their organisation (refer to section 5.1 Eligible grant activities).

**Strong applications:**

- clearly described the role or roles that people with disability would have in the conference, for example in designing the program, speaking or leading workshops, or as attendees
- clearly outlined how grant funding would be used to support the inclusion and participation of people with disability and their families, carers and kin at the conference. This included providing clear examples such as supporting the costs of travel, accommodation and registration fees for people with disability, providing on-site support workers, or recording conference proceedings for publication through websites or social media so they can be accessed on an ongoing basis
- where applicable, applicants provided evidence outlining why accessibility adjustments that an organisation would be expected to provide as part of their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, would cause excessive or unreasonable costs for the applicant. This included demonstrating the accessibility costs the conference organiser proposed to meet from their own resources or from other sources of funding.

### Criterion 3

#### Organisation capacity and capability

When addressing this criterion strong applicants:

- demonstrated their organisation's capacity and capability to administer the grant
- included examples of any previous grants, conferences or similar projects their organisation has successfully undertaken
- demonstrated how the relevant experience, skills and qualifications of members of their organisation would assist in delivering the project.

**Strong applications:**

- outlined their organisation's capability and capacity to fulfil the grant objectives with reference to supporting details such as years of operation, staffing, governance and financial management
- provided specific examples demonstrating experience in supporting the inclusion of people with disability, managing grants effectively, and successfully hosting national conferences
- identified key members of staff or members of the organisation, provided evidence to support their specific experience, skills, and qualifications, and provided detail about how these skills would assist in fulfilling the grant objectives.

### Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.