



ACT
Government

MAJOR EVENT FUND

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

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1. ABOUT VISITCANBERRA

VisitCanberra is part of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) within the ACT Government.

VisitCanberra leads the Canberra region tourism industry by creating and implementing a range of marketing, development and partnership programs that aim to significantly increase the economic return from domestic and international visitation to the ACT.

2. ABOUT THESE FUNDING GUIDELINES

These funding guidelines provide details for eligible event organisers wishing to apply for assistance under the Major Event Fund.

The Major Event Fund is an ACT Government funding program administered by VisitCanberra.

All terms and conditions contained in previous funding guidelines for the Major Event Fund are superseded by this document.

3. ABOUT THE MAJOR EVENT FUND

The ACT Government is committed to growing and nurturing Canberra's visitor economy, along with developing and supporting a diverse events calendar that reflects the essence and character of the Canberra region.

The Major Event Fund supports this commitment by delivering a mechanism for investing in, supporting and leveraging major events in Canberra.

The Major Event Fund has been established to support major event opportunities that can:

- drive **substantial economic impact** for Canberra through event-based tourist **visitation and visitor spend**, and by filling identified gaps in Canberra's annual events calendar.
- provide opportunities for **marketing and promotion** of the Canberra region to key domestic and (when applicable) international audiences.
- provide **high quality, enticing event experiences** which support and enhance the Canberra brand, generate city vibrancy and profile Canberra as a leading tourism and events destination.
- **reflect, engage and involve** Canberra's diverse communities.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Major Event Fund applicants should seek to demonstrate how their event and associated marketing activity will support the ACT Government in growing the visitor economy and achieving its broader economic development objectives.

Phase 2 of the [T2030 ACT Tourism Strategy](#), released in December 2025, was developed by the ACT Government (through VisitCanberra) to be delivered collaboratively with industry and visitor economy stakeholders. It sets out an ambition to grow the ACT's visitor economy by \$1 billion over the next five years to 2030.

Initially launched in December 2022 as the roadmap for visitor economy growth, [T2030 Phase 2](#) reinforces the priority areas of focus that will provide the greatest opportunity to achieve an additional \$1 billion in tourism expenditure.

These include:

- Increasing domestic visitation and spend from priority target markets.
- Leveraging major events as visitation drivers.
- Making it easier and more affordable to visit Canberra.
- Realising Canberra's potential in international markets.

VisitCanberra's current [Destination Marketing Strategy](#) provides a framework that informs and supports VisitCanberra's tourism marketing approach, along with an overview of key target audiences.

[CBR 2030: The ACT's Strategic Economic Development Framework](#) is a mission-led strategy that outlines the ACT Government's economic development priorities for the period 2025 to 2030. A key mission outlined in this document is '*Building Canberra's future today*', which includes a focus on investing in tourism infrastructure to support the visitor economy and creating experiences.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF A MAJOR EVENT

The term 'major event' is a classification given to events that generate **significant and immediate economic, social and cultural benefits to a destination**. These events have a national profile outside of their immediate region and attract large numbers of interstate and/or international spectators and/or participants.

Examples include:

- [Regular Anchor Events](#) — these are recurring events that generate significant return on investment and overnight visitation outcomes. These events are automatically associated with the destination.
- [One-off Major Events](#) — these are one-off feature events that generate significant media coverage and raise destination awareness. These events drive strong overnight visitation outcomes but may not be automatically linked or directly associated with the destination.

As a guide for consideration under the Major Event Fund, events should be able to demonstrate capacity to attract more than 5,000 unique interstate and/or international visitors to Canberra (and/or capacity to generate over 15,000 visitor nights in the ACT).

6. FUNDING AVAILABLE

The minimum amount of funding per Major Event Fund application that may be applied for is \$50,000, with a maximum funding request of \$500,000.

It is important to note that the cooperative nature of the Major Event Fund **requires supplementary financial investment from event partners** to fund the necessary acquisition, creation, development and operational delivery of proposed events.

Funding support through the Major Event Fund will not be provided to underwrite events.

Applications to the Major Event Fund should ideally be submitted 6 months prior to the commencement of the event. This provides sufficient time for the application assessment phase to be completed, and in the case of successful applications, time to develop a funding agreement and ensure the most effective use of the funding support being provided.

7. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

VisitCanberra **will not** provide funding for the following through the Major Event Fund:

- Business events such as conferences, conventions, trade shows and expos.
- Events and activities that have limited capacity to meet relevant evaluation criteria and do not classify as a major event under these guidelines.
- Applications from individual persons.
- Capital projects, equipment, staffing and capital costs associated with the conduct of the event.
- Events that are proposed to be predominantly staged outside of Canberra.
- Events or organisations that have previously failed to acquit funds provided by the ACT Government.
- Underwriting support for an event.
- Retrospective event activity.

Funding applicants must also:

- have a current Australian Business Number (ABN).
- hold Public Liability Insurance (PLI) with a reputable insurer for the sum of no less than \$20 million per incident and present a current certificate of currency with the application.
- agree to indemnify the Territory, its employees and agents from and against all actions, suits, claims, costs and demands directly or indirectly arising from the operation of the business.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

VisitCanberra will consider and assess Major Event Fund applications in line with the following evaluation criteria:

Economic Benefit – 40% weighting
Outline capacity of the event to deliver significant contributions to the visitor economy, including: • The estimated economic impact (i.e. direct tourist/visitor expenditure) generated by the event for the ACT (see Appendix A). • The anticipated number of visitors from outside the ACT who will travel specifically to Canberra to attend the event (see Appendix A). • The average visitor length of stay for these visitors – i.e. visitor nights (see Appendix A). • The cost of the event relative to expected returns – i.e. return on investment. • The ability to substantiate visitation and economic impact claims through post-event evaluation (to be conducted by an independent research provider at the cost of the applicant, using an agreed evaluation methodology developed in consultation with VisitCanberra). • The ability of the event to also generate economic contributions by locals. Demonstrated relevance and alignment with relevant tourism and events strategies and broader economic development objectives for the ACT (including CBR 2030) will also be considered.
Marketing Impact – 25% weighting
Evidence of a well-developed marketing and media plan aimed at delivering interstate, international (where applicable) and local attendance should be provided, including: • Defined target audiences and measurable objectives. • Clearly identified splits between local, interstate and international marketing spend. • Suitable marketing/promotional strategies that outline how the event will generate destination awareness, showcase the Canberra region, align with the Canberra brand and generate positive media coverage and user-generated content across a variety of marketing channels, including social media. • Potential to align with VisitCanberra's destination marketing activities and key audiences.
Social and Community Benefit and Event Leveraging Opportunities – 20% weighting
Outline the positive social and community benefits that the event can provide, including: • Demonstrated opportunities for local community involvement/participation. • Demonstrated opportunities for local business engagement, including partnerships to drive local and interstate visitation and other opportunities that enable local business to benefit and leverage off the event. • Demonstrated enhancement of city vibrancy, community pride and social cohesion. • A clear rationale for event timing, including the ability to fill event calendar gaps and to complement existing events or experiences in the Canberra region.
Event Management Capacity and Capability – 15% weighting
All events supported by the Major Event Fund must demonstrate financial strength and sustainability, including: • Evidence that the event is not solely reliant on ACT Government funding (e.g. through supply of an event budget breakdown). • Clear demonstration of how Major Event Fund support will enhance the execution of the event. • The demonstrated skills and expertise of key personnel delivering the event. • Evidence of risk management strategies relating to WHS and acknowledgment of other key event risks. • Demonstrated ability to abide by/meet any applicable COVID Safe requirements or compliance advice.

9. FUNDING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

While there is no standard application format for the Major Event Fund, applicants will be required to submit an application that **clearly addresses each of the Evaluation Criteria outlined in Section 8** (including relevant supporting prompts listed under these criteria).

Where possible, each Evaluation Criteria should be addressed under a separate heading/section of the application.

This will ensure that assessment panel has the necessary information required to make a thorough assessment.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet and discuss their proposal with VisitCanberra prior to submitting an application.

Applications to the Major Event Fund should ideally be submitted 6 months prior to the commencement of the event (where practical).

Other important considerations

Applicants should also be sure to provide:

- A comprehensive overview of the event – including:
 - the event venue/s.
 - event date/s and duration.
 - key program highlights and unique event selling points.
 - the planned on-site visitor experience and supporting activities/public programs.
 - an event budget breakdown.
- A comprehensive breakdown of how projected attendance figures, visitor figures and economic impact figures have been calculated – including the projected split of local attendees and interstate/international visitors (daytrip and overnight visitors), visitor length of stay and visitor spend (see Appendix A).
- A detailed marketing and communications plan overview (supported by relevant data and/or research where possible), including:
 - marketing objectives and success metrics.
 - an outline/split of local versus interstate/international marketing spend.
 - associated marketing timelines and planned activity (including any scheduled media buy) across all key marketing channels, including social media.
 - target audiences and marketing messaging to support destination promotion.
 - supporting marketing investment from the applicant.
 - any planned media/PR partnership activities to support marketing efforts.
- An overview of commercial partnerships, tourism industry partnerships, business engagement initiatives and local community engagement activities that will extend promotion and awareness of the event and support economic activity.

10. APPLICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications will be **comprehensively assessed on merit against the Major Event Fund evaluation criteria** via a process conducted by VisitCanberra and Events ACT, with a recommendation then made to the Minister for Tourism.

Final decisions on funding are made at a ministerial level.

Applications require robust data and supporting information to assist the assessment process. **Please assume the assessment team holds no prior knowledge of your organisation, event, or previous event delivery experience.**

Successful applicants will be notified in writing by VisitCanberra, followed by the issue of a Deed of Grant that will outline the benefits, deliverables, milestones, KPIs and payment schedule associated with the allocation of funding.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by VisitCanberra in writing and will be provided with the opportunity for a formal debrief on their application.

11. DEED OF GRANT

Successful applicants will be required to enter a legally binding Deed of Grant with the ACT Government. This agreement will set out:

- the rights and obligations, conditions and warranties of the ACT Government and the applicant.
- the agreed work plan, timetable for completion, and the funded budget.
- the benefits, deliverables and KPIs to be met by event partners.
- the marketing activities that the successful applicant and the ACT Government agree to, including media and creative approval processes.
- the payment schedule to be made following the successful completion of agreed milestones and achievement of prescribed KPIs, including overnight visitation targets set out in the application.
- reporting, acquittal and accountability obligations, including the prescribed post-event evaluation methodology which will capture data on event attendance, visitor origin, length of stay and visitor spend (to be conducted by an independent research provider at the cost of the applicant, using an agreed evaluation methodology developed in consultation with VisitCanberra).

A final instalment of funding (of approximately 10% to 15%) is withheld until funding objectives are satisfactorily met, including demonstrated performance against visitation outcomes and completion of post-event reporting requirements.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

All material submitted to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is provided in confidence. However, the ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the Major Event Fund and the applicant.

Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission. However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the ACT Government's possession.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

VisitCanberra reserves the right to amend or alter these guidelines from time to time at its absolute discretion.

VisitCanberra is under no obligation to accept applications which are deemed incomplete, ineligible, or do not otherwise comply with the requirements of the Major Event Fund.

Please note that there is no actual or implied guarantee of funding and/or levels of funding for any application, group or organisation.

It should also be noted that an event which already receives funding via another program administered by the ACT Government may not be eligible for the Major Event Fund.

For more information on the Major Event Fund guidelines, key funding objectives and eligibility requirements, please contact:

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