



PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY

Investing in artists working in regional Australia

GUIDELINES

Version 1.0 October 2025

1. Program Overview

Practice in Community is about placing creativity at the heart of community life and supporting the arts to respond to community-identified priorities by acting as a catalyst for social connection, cultural expression, and long-term impact.

Designed and delivered by Regional Arts Australia, with support from Minderoo Foundation, the program invests in the sustainable development of independent artists working in the Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) sector. It provides artists with time, trust, and financial resources to do their most meaningful work alongside the people they live with.

Rather than funding short-term projects, Practice in Community values process over product, supporting the deep, slow, and relational work that builds genuine community connection and supports lasting impact. By embedding artists in everyday life, the program enables community-led projects that build connections, generate exchange, and create opportunities for local people to share stories, explore challenges, and imagine new futures together. The program will enable communities to take a creative and arts-led approach to responding to an identified local priority.

The program aims to:

- Increase community participation in the arts by creating exciting community-led projects.
- Provide vital support for artists by offering multi-year financial resources, mentoring, and professional development that sustains artistic practice and wellbeing.
- Invest in the sustainable development of the CACD sector through practice-led learning, shared knowledge, and stronger networks for artists embedded in community.
- Contribute to social impact outcomes through building connections, generating exchange, and creating opportunities in regional, rural, and remote communities.

- Measure and communicate this impact through a responsive and rigorous learning and evaluation approach.

For the purpose of the Practice in Community program, CACD is a collaborative and participatory practice that engages communities in creative activities that are meaningful to them. The creative process and direct involvement of community members are as important as the creative outcomes. The relationship between the artist and community is central to this cultural practice, as it is an empowering process that enables communities to voice their own stories, learn new skills, express diversity, identify and establish relationships, and communicate their concerns and aspirations for the future and in doing so contribute to building community capacity and wellbeing.

2. What's on Offer

Each Practice in Community grant is valued at \$160,000 over two years. Grants are designed to support both an artist fee (equivalent to a part-time wage) and project resources to support their community-engaged practice.

A total of eleven grants will be awarded

- Five grants in the first round (cohort one).
- Six grants in the second round (cohort two).

Each grant is structured so that:

- 50% of the funds provide an artist fee for the artist.
- 50% of the funds support project delivery, enabling artists to work with their communities and community partners to design and deliver creative initiatives.

In addition to funding, artists will also receive:

- mentoring and professional development, delivered through one-on-one and group sessions within the national cohort.
- mental health and wellbeing support throughout the program.
- support from an evaluation specialist to develop and implement a localised evaluation plan for their project.

This combination of financial, professional, and wellbeing support ensures artists are resourced to sustain their practice while maximising the impact of their work in community.

3. Who Can Apply

Practice in Community is open to individual artists who are committed to working with regional and remote communities through creative practice. To be eligible, applicants must be:

- an Australian citizen or permanent resident.
- must hold, or be able to obtain, an ABN.
- Over 18 years old
- living outside a Major City of Australia, as defined by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure – this means artists living in Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote, and Very Remote areas around Australia are eligible.
- resident within 100 km of the community in which the proposed project will take place.
- a professional, independent artist with at least five years of experience in Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) or community-engaged practice.
- able to demonstrate an established history of working with communities through creative projects.

- available to undertake the program over the relevant two-year term for their cohort, on a part-time basis.

Applicants will need to confirm that they live in an eligible location before applying. You can use our simple Eligibility Checker [here](#)

4. Who Can't Apply

The following are not eligible to apply for Practice in Community:

- organisations, collectives, or groups (applications are only open to individual artists)
- artists who plan to deliver the project as part of their employment with another employer
- those employed directly by, or serving on the Board of, Regional Arts Australia or the Minderoo Foundation
- artists currently funded through the Minderoo WA Artist Fund
- anyone with an actual conflict of interest with Regional Arts Australia, Minderoo Foundation, or the Practice in Community program – including staff, board members, and their immediate family members or partners

5. Where Can Projects Take Place?

While we recognise that “community” can be defined in many ways (for example, digital networks, affinity groups, or subcultures), this program requires an identified place-based community. Projects must be rooted in a specific geographic location, but the community you work with may be a particular group within that place — for example, young people, elders, migrant communities, or other locally significant groups. The key is that the work is connected to place and responds to the priorities of people living there.

Practice in Community seeks to support projects with deep, targeted, and sustained impact, to help a community respond to an identified priority. The

geographic reach of both the program and each supported project should therefore remain focused on a defined community, rather than being spread too thinly across multiple regions.

Practice in Community is focused on supporting artists working outside Australia's major cities. Projects must take place in communities classified as Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote, or Very Remote under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

6. What's Expected of You Over Two Years

Practice in Community is a two-year commitment. Successful applicants will be supported through a mix of mentoring, professional development, reporting, and evaluation, alongside the community-engaged work they lead. While each project will be unique, the program follows a broad set of stages and expectations.

In the first six months, artists will focus on establishing the foundations of their project. This includes building community partnerships, engaging with the community, and working closely with their mentor and an evaluation specialist to co-design and complete an evaluation plan including setting up a baseline from which to track the impact of the project. Artists will attend an induction briefing, take part in group and one-on-one mentoring sessions, and submit an initial progress report.

By the end of the first year, artists will be expected to have worked closely with their community partners to co-design the project in detail, along with continued engagement activities, refining project ideas, and preparing detailed six- and twelve-month budgets and workplans, and sought to leverage additional project funding. Additional mentoring sessions and peer group check-ins will support this process.

In the second year, the focus will shift toward project delivery and community outcomes. Artists will carry out their co-designed activities with the community, supported by mentoring and professional development. Regular progress reports will continue, along with further budget and workplan updates.

In the final six months, attention will turn to consolidating outcomes, legacy, and evaluation reporting. Artists will document their work, reflect with their community and mentors on the project's impact, and plan for what comes next. This includes legacy planning, final evaluation activities, and submitting a final acquittal report.

Throughout the two years, artists will:

- take part in one-on-one and group mentoring sessions.
- engage in regular reporting and reflection with Regional Arts Australia.
- work with their community and evaluation specialist to co-design and measure impact.
- continue to build partnerships and, where relevant, seek additional funding to extend the impact of their work.

At the end of the program we encourage you to stay connected with us and the cohorts to assist in establishing an ongoing community of practice.

7. Measuring the Impact

Practice in Community is also about understanding and demonstrating the impact creative practice has for and with communities in responding to identified priorities.

Successful applicants will work with a mentor, an evaluation specialist, and their community partner to co-design a localised evaluation plan for their project. This is a simple framework that shows how project activities lead to community outcomes. Applicants will be supported to develop a theory of change, a program logic, a step-by-step map of the work planned and the changes expected.

The co-design process ensures that evaluation is relevant, practical, and aligned with community priorities. It also helps build trust and transparency by giving communities a role in shaping how success is measured.

Applicants should discuss the capacity of their proposed community partner to be involved in evaluation when developing their application. As a guide, evaluation activities could include things like interviews, videos and photography, small group discussions or yarning circles, surveys or social media polls. Support with designing, setting up and analysing the findings from these activities will be provided by the evaluation specialist.

Throughout the program, artists will work with their community partner to gather information and evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of their initiative. These activities will align with your evaluation plan and will start with building a baseline, then periodically checking in with community to track impact. How these checks are done will be up to the artists, supporting community organisation and community to determine. Regional Arts Australia, our evaluation specialist and mentors will provide guidance and tools to support both artists and communities in this process.

8. Key Dates

Round One

Program Launch:	Thursday 16 October 2025.
EOIs close:	Friday 14 November 2025, 10:00 pm
Notification of shortlist:	Wednesday 17 December 2025
Full Applications close:	Thursday 5 February 2026, 5:00 pm
Interviews:	Thursday 5 March 2026
Notification of outcome:	Friday 13 March 2026
Projects commence:	Monday 6 April 2026
Projects finish:	Monday 5 April 2028

8. Key Dates continued

Round Two (indicative — subject to change)

Program Launch:	Monday 28 September 2026, 10:00 am
EOIs close:	Friday 6 November 2026, 5:00 pm
Notification of shortlist:	Thursday 10 December 2026
Full Applications close:	Thursday 4 February 2027, 5:00 pm
Interviews:	Thursday 4 March 2027
Notification of outcome:	Wednesday 10 March 2027
Projects commence:	Monday 5 April 2027
Projects finish:	Monday 5 March 2029
Projects finish:	Monday 5 April 2028

9. How to Apply

The Practice in Community application process has three stages.

The stages ensure applicants are supported to develop their ideas in collaboration with communities, rather than submitting a fully formed project at the outset.

All applications will be made online through SmartyGrants. Applicants may only submit one application. Visit our [website](#) to read guidelines, FAQs, check eligibility and start an application.

Stage 1: EOI

At this stage, you will be asked to provide information about:

- your experience and track record as an artist working in community.
- your ability to work in a community-engaged way.
- the place and community you wish to work with, and why.
- any identified community priorities that you may be able to respond to.

- your connection to that community, including any initial engagement.
- evidence of community invitation or trust, including at least one letter of support from a community organisation attesting to your role or reputation.
- your CV and details of referees.

Stage 2: Full Application

Shortlisted applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to submit a full application. To support this work, each shortlisted artist will receive \$1,000 to develop their proposal.

The full application expands on the EOI and includes:

- a community engagement strategy.
- a work plan for the first six months, showing how you will work with the community.
- a detailed budget for the first six months and a top-level budget overview for the two-year project.
- an initial project vision – what you hope to achieve with the community - where do your skills, your community's needs and your connections overlap to support this project.
- more detail on your community connection including letters of support and evidence of community invitation.
- commitment from a community partner.
- any proposed partners or creative team members you intend to work with.

Stage 3: Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a 20-minute interview with the assessment panel. This is an opportunity for the panel to ask questions about your proposal, and for you to demonstrate your passion, readiness, and commitment to the work.

Application support

If you need help applying because of disability or access requirements, please get in touch with our Accessibility Coordinator via email access@regionalarts.com.au or (02) 5999 1215. We will work with you to adjust the process to make it easier for you. Let us know how we can help.

10. Assessment

The following criteria will apply to the assessment of eligible applications:

1. **Community engagement and collaboration** – the strength of the applicant's connection with the community, evidence of invitation or support, and the approach to collaboration and co-design.
2. **Artistic and cultural merit** – the quality of the artist's practice and the potential for the project to contribute to cultural expression, creativity, and community identity.
3. **Social impact** – the potential of the project to deliver meaningful social outcomes, building community connections, generating exchange, and creating opportunities.
4. **Viability of the project** – the feasibility of the proposed project, including clarity of approach, realistic planning, use of resources, and the artist's capacity to complete or substantially progress the project in the time period.
5. **Cultural safety and ethical practice** – the extent to which the project demonstrates respect for cultural protocols, inclusivity, accessibility, and ethical engagement with communities. Strong applications will show capacity to work safely and responsibly, supported by testimonials or evidence from previous projects, and a clear commitment to doing no harm.

Regional Arts Australia will convene an expert panel to assess all applications.

At the EOI stage, assessors will focus on your past experience and track record to determine your potential to undertake this kind of project. They will be looking at your connection to the community with whom you wish to work, and whether there is evidence of invitation or support.

At the full application stage, assessors will be looking more closely at how you are starting to build the relationship with the community. They will consider the strength of your engagement plan, your work to date in developing trust and collaboration, and how prepared you are to begin co-designing the project together.

Artists proposing to work with children, young people and families, and those that identify as First Nations or are working with First Nations communities, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Assessors will not consider applications that propose fixed or predetermined artistic outcomes. Practice in Community is about supporting artists to work with communities through a process of co-design and collaboration, not delivering pre-set artistic products.

Expression of Interest (EOI) stage

- EOIs will be assessed by a panel of assessors.
- The panel will include people with experience in community arts and cultural development (CACD), regional and community life, and specialist knowledge relevant to the program.
- A maximum of 10 applicants will be invited to proceed to the full application stage.

Full Application and Interview stage

- Full applications will be reviewed by the assessment panel.
- Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to a 20-minute interview with the panel.
- The interview is an opportunity for:
 - Applicants to demonstrate their passion, readiness, and commitment
 - The panel to ask questions and explore the proposal in more depth
- The panel will make recommendations on the successful applicants.

Final decisions will be confirmed by Regional Arts Australia.

General feedback may be offered to applicants at the EOI stage. Shortlisted applicants who submit full applications will receive more detailed feedback from the assessment meeting. There is no appeal process, and all decisions are final.

11. Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will sign a two-year funding agreement with Regional Arts Australia. The agreement will cover milestones, payment structure and schedule, reporting requirements, conditions of acknowledgement, reputational matters, communications, compliance, dispute resolution, and termination conditions if obligations are not met. Funding agreements must be signed by the individual artist receiving the funding.

Payments

Funding will be paid in instalments according to a schedule set out in the agreement, and payments will be linked to reporting milestones, such as progress and financial reports. Payments can only be made to accounts that exactly match the ABN holder's name.

Compliance

Artists must comply with all relevant national and state or territory laws, insurances, and workplace requirements, which may include public liability insurance, working with children checks, or working with vulnerable people registrations. Projects must also respect cultural protocols and align with ethical standards for community-engaged practice. Privacy and data protection must be upheld when handling information.

Communications

Regional Arts Australia does not censor the works, words, or perspectives of recipients. We respect the right to creative and cultural expression, but expect all communications to align with our values of respect, inclusion, and integrity.

Funded artists must acknowledge the support of Practice in Community and Regional Arts Australia in all project communications, marketing, and publicity. Logos and credit lines will be supplied, along with guidance on when and how to use them. Any project communications, marketing, or publicity must not contain

hate speech, discriminatory or harassing language, promote or incite illegal activity, or include false or misleading claims about the funding, the Practice in Community program, Regional Arts Australia, or Minderoo Foundation.

Funded artists must also keep confidential any non-public information about the program, its partners, or participants.

Intellectual Property and ICIP

Artists will retain ownership of all intellectual property (IP) they create through their project.

Where a project includes community-owned or shared cultural knowledge — including First Nations cultural and intellectual property — ownership and control will remain with the relevant custodians or community. Artists must ensure appropriate permissions are obtained and that any use of such material aligns with community protocols and the Creative Australia Protocols for First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts.

Third Party Funding

While applicants are encouraged to seek Third party funding, RAA are to be notified.

Variations

Artists will need to seek approval before making any major changes to their funded project, including changes to the activity budget, key creative personnel, or project dates. Requests must be made in writing and considered before further funds are released.

Reporting and Acquittal

Reporting is a key part of the program. Artists will be asked to provide progress and financial reports, respond to information requests, and complete a final artistic and financial acquittal at the end of the project. Any unspent or unaccounted funds must be returned to Regional Arts Australia.

ABN Requirement and Tax

All applicants must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) before an agreement can be signed. The applicant name, ABN, and bank account must match. There are no exceptions. Funded artists are also responsible for managing their own tax obligations, including income tax and GST where relevant.

In summary, your agreement will ask you to:

- Sign and return a two-year agreement with Regional Arts Australia
- Receive payments in instalments linked to reporting milestones
- Hold an ABN, with your ABN, name, and bank account matching exactly
- Comply with national and state/territory laws, insurances, and cultural protocols
- Acknowledge the support of Practice in Community and Regional Arts Australia in communications
- Keep confidential any non-public information about the program, partners, or participants
- Obtain appropriate permissions for the use of any community-owned or shared cultural knowledge
- Adhere to directions regarding third party funding
- Seek approval before making major changes to your project
- Provide progress reports, a final artistic and financial acquittal, and return any unspent funds
- Manage your own tax obligations, including GST if relevant

12. Ethics & Protocols

Conflict of Interest

Applicants must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest at the time of application, or as soon as it arises during assessment or delivery. This includes relationships with staff or board members of Regional Arts Australia or Minderoo Foundation, and their immediate family members or partners.

Conflicts of interest may include:

- Personal or family relationships
- Financial or business relationships
- Situations where the applicant may gain an unfair advantage

Declared conflicts will be reviewed by Regional Arts Australia, and appropriate steps will be taken to manage them. Failure to disclose a conflict may make an application ineligible or result in funding being withdrawn.

First Nations Protocols

Applicants working with First Nations artists, communities, or cultural materials must comply with relevant protocols. This includes the Creative Workplaces Protocols for First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts and any local community protocols.

Cultural Safety and Inclusion

Applicants are expected to ensure that their projects create safe, respectful, and inclusive environments for all participants. Projects should consider accessibility, cultural safety, and equitable participation.

13. PREPARING TO APPLY

Before starting an application, if you have any further questions:

- Read the Frequently Asked Questions and Glossary
- Attend one of our information sessions or watch the recordings on our website.
- Check your location eligibility

All of these can be accessed from the Practice in Community webpage

<https://regionalarts.com.au/pic>

14. Accessibility

If you need help applying because of disability or access requirements, please get in touch with our Accessibility Coordinator via email access@regionalarts.com.au or (02) 5999 1215. We will work with you to adjust the process to make it easier for you. Let us know how we can help.