

# **VOLUNTEER MUSEUM GRANT PROGRAM**

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## **2026 GUIDELINES**

Amount Available: Up to \$ 4,000

Closing Date: Round 1, Sunday, 5 April 2026

Round 2, Sunday, 6 September 2026

The Volunteer Museum Grant Program is a Museum & Galleries of NSW program.

# Purpose of program

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The Volunteer Museum Grant Program provides assistance to volunteer-initiated community museums and Aboriginal cultural spaces (such as cultural centres and Keeping Places) with collections and displays in NSW.

The program supports a wide range of projects. There are no fixed categories, and applications are welcomed for diverse initiatives.

## Amount available

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The maximum amount that can be applied for under the program is: \$4,000 (GST, exclusive)

All Volunteer Museum Grants are awarded free of GST. If the applicant is registered for GST M&G NSW will pay that component.

See the Terms and Conditions section for more details.

## Timeframe

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There are two rounds of Volunteer Museum Grants offered annually. No late applications will be accepted.

Applications for Round 1 must be submitted on or before **Sunday, 5 April 2026**.

- Projects cannot commence before June 2026 and must be completed no later than June 2027. Acquittal reports are due by 30 June 2027.

Applications for Round 2 must be submitted on or before **Sunday, 6 September 2026**.

- Projects cannot commence before December 2026 and must be completed no later than December 2027. Acquittal reports are due by 31 December 2027.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If successful in Round 1 of any given year, you may not apply in Round 2 of that year.

# Staff contact

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Applicants must contact M&G NSW to discuss your project. Staff are available to provide advice on writing grant applications, developing a project, budgeting and sourcing appropriate consultants. First-time applicants and those unfamiliar with grant-writing are encouraged to get in contact for detailed and ongoing assistance.

Enquiries can be directed to: Alana Leslie    Museum Coordinator  
Phone:                    (02) 5663 2338  
Email:                    [alanal@mgnsw.org.au](mailto:alanal@mgnsw.org.au)

OR

Emily Cullen    Sector Development Manager  
Phone:                    (02) 5663 2336  
Email:                    [emilyc@mgnsw.org.au](mailto:emilyc@mgnsw.org.au)

## Eligibility criteria

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To apply for a Volunteer Museum Grant, an organisation must:

- Be incorporated (or provide the details of an auspicing body that is incorporated, such as a local council) OR provide evidence of appropriate alternative governance structures (e.g. S355 Committee, Trust, Company limited by guarantee, Local government authority, etc.)
- Be not-for-profit
- Be an established museum or Aboriginal cultural space with a displayed collection (not an archive, library or historical society without a museum function)
- Be regularly open to the public at advertised times (i.e. not open by appointment only)
- Be entirely volunteer run for museums
- Have no more than the equivalent of two full-time paid positions for Aboriginal cultural space only
- Have discussed their application with a M&G NSW team member
- Agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the grant
- Have acquitted all previously awarded Volunteer Museum Grants

Museums & Galleries of NSW prefer grant applications to be submitted via the grant submission button on our website.

If you are unable to submit via the website, please email your application and supporting documentation on, or before the closing date to: [alanal@mgnsw.org.au](mailto:alanal@mgnsw.org.au)

If you are unable to email the supporting documentation you must inform M&G NSW and send the package to:

Volunteer Museum Grant Program  
Museums & Galleries of NSW  
Level 1, The Arts Exchange  
10 Hickson Rd  
The Rocks NSW 2000

# Assessment criteria

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## Primary Criteria

The selection process takes into consideration whether:

- The project satisfies best museum practice
- The museum or Aboriginal cultural space has a current and adequate Collection Policy
- Whether the application demonstrates the museum or Aboriginal cultural space has the capacity and resources (both financial and human resources) to undertake the project

## Secondary Criteria

- The project incorporates capacity building for the museum or Aboriginal cultural space's workers or volunteers, such as skill development or knowledge transfer
- The project aligns with a Strategic Plan to address mid to long term outcomes for the museum or Aboriginal cultural space
- The project builds on previous participation in NSW museum development programs (e.g. Standards Program, Museum Advisor Program, internships at state/federal institutions, etc.)
- Collaborative projects involving two or more museums, Aboriginal cultural spaces, and/or other community organisations. In the case of fully collaborative applications, all contributing organisations should be named, however one should be identified as the lead organisation or project manager
- The level of community access to the organisation and its collection (opening hours, website etc.)
- The financial situation of the applying organisation (i.e. is the organisation more in need of assistance than others)

# Applications for Collection Management Software

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Applicants applying for the purchase of collection management software need to:

- Describe how many objects are in the collection
- Describe how objects are registered and/or catalogued
- Provide examples of existing catalogue records, whether paper based or electronic
- Provide a training plan outlining who and how staff will be trained to use the software and long-term training support options
- M&G NSW will only fund a single license at the initial stage, but will consider future applications for extra licenses on demonstration of an active data entry program.
- State that the museum or Aboriginal cultural space (as opposed to a volunteer) owns a computer or tablet capable of running the CMS nominated.

# Applications for Digitisation Projects

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Applications for digitisation of original materials for preservation and access purposes should take note of the following requirements:

- The museum or Aboriginal cultural space must own a computer or tablet capable of storing and accessing the digitised collection.
- Applicants must include their budgeted plan for the digitisation process (including arrangements for scanning, back-up procedures, and access to the digitised records) with supporting quotes.
- Applicants must include their Digitisation Plan for the ongoing management of the digital copies.
- The project must comply with relevant Australian copyright law.
- Preservation of original materials should occur prior to digitisation.
- M&G NSW highly recommends applicants for digitisation projects refer to the M&G NSW publication, [Crystal Clear: standards and guidance for digitising regional collections](#) both in their application and during their digitisation process.

## Volunteer Museum Grant will fund

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The program supports a wide range of projects. There are no fixed categories, and applications are welcomed for diverse initiatives, including:

- Skills development and networking activities, such as engaging a professional consultant to deliver one-off or short workshop programs
- Strategic or innovative projects with medium- to long-term outcomes, including strategic planning, exhibition development, or professional advice
- Short-term, collection-focused projects, such as conservation of significant objects, collection management, or audience development

## Volunteer Museum Grant will not fund

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- Retrospective projects or projects that have already started
- Capital works projects of any kind
- The purchase of office equipment of any kind
- Plaques of any kind

Please call M&G NSW staff for information on other funding sources available for these types of projects.

## Application process

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To apply, contact Museums & Galleries of NSW to discuss your project with a staff member and request the application form.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Museums Coordinator to receive grant-writing assistance whenever needed. Applicants may also pursue external grant-writing assistance. However, it must be clear that the museum volunteers have ownership over the project.

**If your application specifically involves Aboriginal culture and heritage, you must supply evidence of consultation and support from the relevant communities.** It is recommended you refer to Create NSW's [Aboriginal Arts and Culture Protocols](#).

**It is the applicant's responsibility to complete and submit their application.**

M&G NSW will acknowledge receipt of the application when it is formally submitted. **It is the applicant's responsibility to contact M&G NSW if this acknowledgement is not received.**

## Important things to remember

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- You may not start your project before the time stipulated in the Timeframe section of this document or before receiving confirmation of grant success by M&G NSW.
- In the Project Summary refer only to the activities, purchases or consultant that the program is being asked to fund. This section is not to be used to express any other aspect of the project or the museum's activities; you may do so in the Project Description.
- The budget must be expressed in GST exclusive amounts.
- A grant application from an unregistered organisation cannot be made unless the application is willing to proceed without GST being awarded.
- You must attach a quote for each dollar being applied for. Any items included in the budget that do not have an accompanying quote will not be funded. No rounding up will occur. You will be asked to resubmit your application if there are multiple issues with your budget.
- You must supply both your Financial Report and your Bank Statements.
- Collection Policies are an important part of the assessment process for the Volunteer Museum Grants so it is important to check that previously submitted current documents are submitted or on file with M&G NSW. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check this. M&G NSW does not undertake to keep an archive of museum documentation. If in doubt, simply resubmit the documents with each application.
- A Treatment Proposal and a Significance Assessment is important to supply for each object if applying for conservation work.
- If applying for a digitisation project, applicants must include a Digitisation Plan outlining the ongoing management of the digital copies.
- If the project is employing an outside consultant to undertake any work, please attach a copy of the consultants CV.
- M&G NSW will acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact M&G NSW if this acknowledgement is not received.
- M&G NSW is not able to return any submitted supporting documentation.
- If you have any queries into the progress of your application, please contact M&G NSW.
- If emailing application:
  - Submit your application form and project description as a searchable PDF or Word document. Do not send scanned application forms. If you submit a scanned copy of a typed application form or project description you will be asked to resubmit. Scans of supporting documents are accepted.
  - Please submit your application and supporting documents as separate attachments to an email.
  - The maximum file size that can be received is 8MB. You may submit your application over several emails as long as you make clear how many emails are to be expected.

## Assessment process

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Once your application has been confirmed to be eligible, it will be assessed by the Volunteer Museum Grant Program Assessment Panel consisting of:

- Three members of M&G NSW's Panel of Peers. For further information on the Panel, please see M&G NSW's website <https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/about-us/register-of-peers/>
- One independent member drawn from those working in a supporting capacity with volunteer museums
- An appropriate senior member of M&G NSW staff.

The decisions of the Volunteer Museum Grant Assessment Panel are final. A new panel is convened for each round of the Volunteer Museum Grant Program.

M&G NSW will notify applicants of their outcome by phone call and/or email. Funds will not be available until the relevant grant acceptance documentation is completed.

## Terms and conditions

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Applicants should be mindful of the following terms and conditions associated with accepting a Volunteer Museum Grant. These include:

- All Volunteer Museum Grants are awarded free of GST. If the applicant is registered for GST M&G NSW will pay that component. A grant application from an unregistered organisation cannot be made unless the application is willing to proceed without GST being awarded.
- All awarded monies must be expended as per the approved application. A variation in the project must be reported to M&G NSW via email for approval.
- Unused monies must be reported to M&G NSW and returned in the proper manner (please do not send in a cheque before discussing the matter with M&G NSW).
- Successful applicants will be required to provide an acquittal report (see the Timeframe section for due dates). The acquittal report includes a one page report to be written by the applicant on an overview of the project, and the resulting benefits to the museum, and/or the individuals involved in the project. Photographs, media clippings and brochures should be included in the acquittal documentation where available. M&G NSW may use all or parts of this report in marketing material for the Volunteer Museum Grant Program or other related M&G NSW activities.
- M&G NSW must be publicly acknowledged as supporting the project by using the appropriate logos and text acknowledgement on all printed and/or electronic material produced in relation to the funded activity. This includes publications, invitations, banners, websites and any printed or electronic material. Any products developed as a result of the funded activity must also carry the M&G NSW logo and acknowledgments and the NSW Government logo.
- The following wording must be used: *The Volunteer Museum Grant is a Museum & Galleries of NSW program*. This must be followed by the M&G NSW logo and the NSW Government logo.
- The logos and written acknowledgement should be placed in a position appropriate to the level of support. Logos and style-guides are available from the M&G NSW Information and Resources Officer on 02 9339 9900 or email [comms@mgnsw.org.au](mailto:comms@mgnsw.org.au).