

auDA Public Benefit Program

2026 Community Grant Guidelines

July 2026





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1. Background

.au Domain Administration Limited (auDA) is the trusted administrator of the .au domain name system (DNS), which is Australian critical infrastructure, supporting more than four million .au domain names.

auDA has a proud history of community funding. Through the auDA Foundation, which is a registered charity, auDA has distributed grant contributions of more than \$5.8 million, supporting over 200 projects since 2006.

Access to online goods, services and information has become increasingly vital to the everyday lives of Australians. Through our work, auDA aims to ensure the secure and reliable operation of .au and the internet's naming system, and champion an open, free, secure and interoperable internet, for the benefit of all Australians.

One of auDA's strategic pillars is to deliver impact by leveraging auDA's expertise to develop the next generation of internet governance and DNS experts locally and regionally, and support under-served communities to establish an online presence.

auDA's Community Grant Program provides an annual grant round that delivers responsive, short-term funding designed to enable community-led research and education projects to enhance the benefits of the internet to the wider community through supporting under-served communities to establish an online presence.

The 2026 grant round will be delivered by auDA and funded by the auDA Foundation.

2. Definitions

auDA uses the following working definitions:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – People who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, and are accepted as such in the communities in which they live or have lived.¹

Australians Living with Disability – Disability is any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months.²

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). Profile of Indigenous Australians. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/profile-of-indigenous-australians>.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2019). Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release#disability>.



Digital inclusion – Enabling communities to improve access and use digital technologies effectively for their stakeholders ³

Digital innovation – Developing new digital tools or delivering information or services using digital tools that are novel for a sector or stakeholders that materially support one or more of the Priority Focus Areas.

Grant Agreement – The agreement to be executed between auDA and a successful grant recipient as a condition of receiving grant funding in the form set out in Attachment A to these Guidelines.

Grantee – A successful grant applicant who is selected by auDA as a recipient of grant funding and who signs a Grant Agreement.

Grantee Contribution – A committed in-kind or financial contribution to the Project budget of at least 10 per cent of the grant amount provided by the Grantee organisation without reliance on financial contributions or gifts of value from any third party, including other project partners.

Panel – Means the panel convened by auDA for the purpose of assessing the applicants to the 2026 Community Grant Program and making recommendations as to proposed successful applicants to auDA management. The role of the Panel is advisory only and the final determination as to successful applications is at the discretion of the auDA Board.

Priority Focus Area – Means one of the four sectors of the Australian community identified in section 3 of these Guidelines.

Project – The project is the series of activities and committed outcomes described in the application (including the articulated deliverables specified in the Grant Agreement) and based on the statements and commitments in the grant application. The project may itself be a discrete phase of a larger project which is not the subject of the grant as long as the discrete phase is described, including the assessable deliverables relevant to that phase, in the grant application.

³ <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/>

⁴ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australians/contents/demographic-profile>



Project Period – The Project period applicable to the grant is the period commencing on or about 1 January 2027 and completing on or about 31 December 2027 as described in the Grant Agreement.

Rural, regional and remote Australians – The term ‘rural, regional and remote’ encompasses all areas outside Australia’s major cities.⁵

Sustainability – Positively impact the environment through addressing issues such as climate, water, circularity or nature/biodiversity.

Young Australians – Young Australians means youth aged 12–24 years.⁶

3. Priority Focus Areas

The Community Grant program provides funding for community-led education, research activities and projects that enhance the benefits of the internet for under-served communities

The 2026 grant round will focus on digital inclusion and digital innovation with an emphasis on projects which: provide benefit to one or more of the following under-served groups:

- Rural, regional and remote Australians
- Australians Living with Disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Young Australians (12–24 years).

(the **Priority Focus Areas**)

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). Rural & remote Australians. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/population-groups/rural-remote-australians/glossary>

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia’s Youth. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-youth/contents/introduction>.



4. Available funds and expenditure of money

Total funds to be distributed as grants under the Community Grant Program for the 2026 grant round are \$750,000 AUD.

15 Grantees will receive \$50,000 each. The Grantee is responsible for determining whether or not the grant, when provided in the context of their Project and on the terms of the Grant Agreement, constitutes a taxable supply of goods or services subject to GST.

Once auDA has received a signed Grant Agreement, the funds will be released to the Grantee's Australian bank account, in full.

5. Eligibility

Please read these Guidelines before filling out an application. Eligibility criteria cannot be waived, and submission of an application confirms your agreement to the terms of the grant (including the Grant Agreement) and your ability to meet the eligibility criteria set out below.

Eligible applicants

- Not-for-profit organisations and research institutions, including universities, that are registered with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission](#) (ACNC) are eligible to apply. Applicants must be up to date with their reporting to the ACNC and have a publicly available annual report.
- All entities/organisations must be registered in Australia under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law, such as a company, partnership or incorporated association
- Each organisation may submit **one** application. An application from a university must be signed off by the Advancement/Giving team and/or the Research Office.

Eligible Projects

- The Project must comply with relevant Australian laws, standards and guidelines.
- The Project must focus on digital inclusion and/or digital innovation and benefit one or more of the Priority Focus Areas and meet the eligibility criteria of these Guidelines.
- The Project must result in deliverables and output which has a clear and demonstrable value to the Australian community in the Priority Focus Areas, with such output being broadly accessible to the Australian community via the internet.

Past Grantees



Past Grantees are welcome to apply. A past Grantee must have successfully acquitted their previous grant.

Grant Agreement

Applicants must be willing and able to sign a Grant Agreement in the form set out in these Guidelines.

6. Selection criteria

auDA is committed to maintaining the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality and fairness of auDA processes.

A Panel will assess the applications against the criteria set out in this section of the Guidelines and make recommendations as to the successful applicants to auDA management. Management will confirm that the Panel-selected applicants meet the relevant eligibility criteria for endorsement as grant recipients, and present the selected applicants to the auDA Board and the Board of the auDA Foundation Pty Ltd as the trustee of the auDA Foundation for approval.

Applications will be assessed and must demonstrate achievement at some level against each of the criteria listed below, each of which carry an equal weighting during assessment.

Criteria:

- Supports under-served communities to establish an online presence
- Addresses an evidenced need in the Australian community in at least one of the Priority Focus Areas (see section 3)
- Demonstrates support from stakeholders impacted by the Project. Letters of support clearly demonstrate financial/in-kind support from partners
- Creates social or economic value for one or more of the community groups in the defined Priority Focus Areas
- The applicant has the digital capability to successfully implement the Project
- Project outcomes will be shared and implemented beyond the Project Period
- The Project's broader positive impact on Sustainability.

In addition, reviewers will rate all eligible proposals on the following:

- Identified need and expected outputs, outcomes and impact
- Digital innovation
- Merit
- Accessibility

7. Funding exclusions



auDA will not support the following types of projects or budgetary items:

- Projects for a religious, political or sectarian purpose
- For-profit organisations, including any projects which grant material proprietary rights to the project outcomes to for-profit partners
- Ongoing service delivery or existing committed programs (but will consider applications for strategic expansions of existing programs or new/innovative additions to an existing program)
- Retrospective funding
- Requests for sponsorship
- Endowments, memorials or named academic chairs
- Conferences
- Projects where the primary focus is outside of Australia
- Overseas travel
- General fundraising appeals
- General digital capability for your organisation
- Generic IT training (such as introduction into social networking or trading websites)
- Website design (such as development of a new website or redesign of existing website) rather than focusing specifically on delivery of the Project using the website
- Requests for IT equipment or the provision of IT equipment including devices and data.
- Marketing or market research activities, even where that research is about website/internet usage.
- Projects which will not deliver material benefit by way of public rights of access to the Project materials.



8. Application requirements

All applications must be submitted online using the auDA *GivingData* Grant Management Platform <https://auda.givingdata.com/portal/campaign/2026CommunityGrantProgram>. By submitting an application, applicants agree to any applicable terms and conditions of the third party supplying the Grant Management Platform.

By submitting an application, applicants agree to execute and be bound by the Grant Agreement if they are selected as a grant recipient.

auDA will use the ACNC Charity Register to confirm an organisation's documentation. Please ensure that your reporting is up to date on the [Charity Register](#).

Please provide the following information in your application:

Project:

- Executive summary and Project description
- Project plan and timeline
- Expected Project outputs, outcomes and impact
- Project budget
- Letters of Support which note in-kind or financial contribution from project-related stakeholders

Organisation documentation:

- ACNC link for your organisation where we will find:
 - Most recent audited financials – these should be signed by the auditors and Board Chair
 - List of current Board members and/or responsible persons
- Most recent annual report. A weblink will be sufficient.

9. Reporting

In addition to any other reporting obligations set out in the Grant Agreement, a successful grantee must:

- provide a progress report on the Project by 31 July 2027; and
- provide a final report on the Project including the deliverables described in the application by 31 January 2028 .
- Participate in any interviews post-project to ascertain the impact of the project



Reports will be submitted via auDA's *GivingData* Grant Management Platform. It is your responsibility to submit reports on time.

10. Grant conditions and reporting

In addition to any obligation, requirement or term in the Grant Agreement, applicants acknowledge and agree that:

- Successful applicants of the 2026 grant round will be required to execute and must comply with the terms of the Grant Agreement.
- The grant funding will be used exclusively for the Project described in the application and expended on the Project in accordance with the Project budget described in the Grant Agreement, within the Project Period.
- The Grantee is responsible for determining whether or not the grant, when provided in the context of their Project and on the terms of the Grant Agreement, constitutes a taxable supply of goods or services subject to GST.
- All grant funding awarded must be expended for the approved purposes of the Project within the agreed calendar year Project Period and in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.
- Subject to the terms of the Grant Agreement, the Grantee must acknowledge receipt of auDA funding in any published Project materials, and you will make those Project materials available to the public under a creative commons licence.
- If you do not acquit your grant on time, you may not be eligible for future funding.
- The auDA grant must not account for 100 per cent of the cost of the Project
- The successful applicant must specify the Grantee Contribution in the application using the budget template provided (the Grantee Contribution).
- All of the auDA grant money must be spent on activities within Australia for the benefit of the Australian community, and must prioritise the purchase of Australian goods and services where available and equivalent in the market.



11. Timeline

Below is a list of key dates for the 2025 grant round:

Applications open	1 August 2026 at 9:00am AEST
Applications close	31 August 2026 at 5:00pm AEST
Grant recipient notified and agreements finalised	October 2026 – December 2026
Grant announcement	December 2026
Progress report due	Before 31 July 2027
Final project report due	31 January 2028

12. Support

If technical support is required with your application, please contact us via email at PublicBenefit@auda.org.au and we will respond during AEST business hours.

13. Legal

auDA reserves the right to amend these Guidelines at any time and solely at its discretion.

The decision of the auDA Board as to the selection of successful applicants for grant funding will be final.

auDA will collect, hold, use and disclose the personal information of applicants in accordance with its [Privacy Policy](#) and in accordance with Australia's privacy laws and procedures.



14. Attachment A

2026 auDA COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GRANT AGREEMENT

.au Domain Administration Limited ACN 079 009 340 (auDA) agrees to facilitate a grant of \$50,000 to the grantee, <Company Name> <Company ABN> of <Company Address> (Grantee), paid by auDA Foundation Pty Ltd (ACN 105 776 583) as The Trustee for auDA Foundation (ABN 57 462 140 688), on the condition that the Grantee warrants that it does, and will continue to, meet and comply with the terms of this grant agreement (the Agreement) until delivery of the Final Report:

Definitions

Grant means the amount of \$50,000 provided or made available by auDA to the Grantee as part of the 2026 auDA Community Grant Program.

Grant Application means the Grant Application set out in Schedule 2 that forms part of this Agreement.

Grant Intended Use means the commitment made by the Grantee during the Grant application process and again by signing this Agreement and accepting the Grant, that the Grant will be applied exclusively to activities that will:

- (a) deliver against the outcomes and for the benefit of the Key Focal Areas as defined or specified in the Grant Guidelines;
- (b) facilitate and fulfil the public benefit and other assertions made in the Grantee's Grant Application; and
- (c) not lead to private financial benefit of individuals beyond incidental items such as payment of reasonable employment salaries.

Grant Guidelines means the rules governing the application and award of the Grant available at <https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/public-benefit-program/community-grant-program/>

Grant Process Project Materials means the Progress Reports, the Final Report and the Grantee's Grant Application.

GST has the meaning given in GST Law.

GST Law means the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (Cth).

Management, Promotional and Reporting Purposes means any internal or external report or material prepared by or on behalf of auDA for:

- (d) display on auDA's website and social media;
- (e) external promotional materials about auDA, the auDA Foundation or the Community Grant Program;
- (f) internal management reporting and reporting made to auDA members or its board of directors; and
- (g) any reports or communications made to relevant regulatory bodies.

Personal Information has the same meaning as in the *Privacy Act 1988*. (Cth).

Project has the meaning described in the Grant Guidelines.

Project Material means any material or publication that is created as part of the Project other than the



Grant Process Project Materials.

Project Period has the meaning described in the Grant Guidelines.

Permitted Purpose

1. The Grantee will use the Grant exclusively for the Grant Intended Use as described by the Project.
2. The Grantee will undertake the Project in good faith and use its best endeavours to complete during the Project Period.
3. The Grantee must seek auDA written approval for any change to the Project or the Grant Intended Use.
4. The Grantee will promptly advise auDA of any fact or event which may affect the Grantee's ability to undertake or complete the Project within the Project Period and in accordance with this Agreement.
5. The Grant must be expended for the approved purposes of the Project within the Project Period and in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
6. The auDA grant must not account for 100 per cent of the cost of the Project.
7. The successful applicant must specify the Grantee Contribution in the application using the budget template provided (the Grantee Contribution).
8. All of the auDA grant money must be spent on activities within Australia for the benefit of the Australian community and must prioritise the purchase of Australian goods and services where available and equivalent in the market.
9. The Grantee will maintain separate management accounts in respect of the Grant so that it can readily account for and verify expenditure which will be in accordance with the budget submitted with the Application.
10. If you do not acquit your grant on time, you may not be eligible for future funding.

Acknowledgement and Intellectual Property

11. The Grantee must acknowledge the assistance of auDA in any published or display material resulting from the Project. The Grantee will seek auDA's written permission on the content and placement of such acknowledgment including the use of the auDA logo. Upon receipt of written permission for the use of auDA's logo and to reference auDA's involvement as set out in this clause, the Grantee's rights of use to the auDA logo will be governed by the terms of Schedule 2 to this Agreement.
12. The Grantee acknowledges that auDA and the auDA Foundation may report upon the progress and status of the grants program and the details of the Grantee's Application, and Project for which the Grant is awarded to the Grantee for Management, Promotional and Reporting Purposes. To the extent permitted by law, prior to reporting on relevant details of the Application, the Project or the Grant for any Management, Promotional and Reporting Purposes, auDA will provide a copy of the proposed report content and form in substantially the same form as that which is ultimately delivered to the report's recipient, to the Grantee.
13. The Grantee grants to auDA a royalty free, non-exclusive licence to the copyright in the Grant Process Project Materials as well as a licence to display the Grantee's logo and to reference the



participation of the Grantee for auDA's Management, Promotional and Reporting Purposes. Subject to clause 14 below, the Grantee acknowledges that auDA owns the copyright in the Grantee's Application.

14. To the extent that anything in the Grantee's Grant Application contains confidential information which the Grantee requires to be excluded from any material generated for Management, Promotional and Reporting Purposes, the Grantee must clearly identify the relevant sections of the Grant Application and the reasons for the restriction on usage in the Grant Application.
15. The Grantee will deliver to auDA the following reports in a form reasonably satisfactory to auDA and by way of the method for delivery set out in clause 16 below:
 - a. A Progress Report, no later than 31 July 2027 or at the reasonable request of auDA; and
 - b. A Final Report no later than 31 January 2027.
16. Reports will be submitted online via the link to the online form provided to the Grantee one month before the reports are due. In the event that the Grantee does not receive notification of the online form link for any reason in the time specified in this clause, it must notify auDA of this fact as soon as practicable prior to the submission date for the relevant report as described in clause 15 above,
17. In addition to any obligation to deliver materials set out above, the Grantee will provide auDA with a copy of the Project Materials.
18. With the exception of Project Materials that are embedded in or become part of independent or academic publications which are subject to their own subscription and licensing fees, the Grantee will make Project Materials, available to auDA and the public at no charge under a Creative Commons Public Licence (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)).

General Obligations

19. The Grantee will comply with the auDA Privacy Policy when collecting or using any Personal Information (as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*) throughout the Project. The auDA Privacy Policy can be found at: <https://www.auda.org.au/privacy-policy>.
20. The Grant will be paid from the Trustee of the auDA Foundation ABN 57 462 140 688. A receipt must be issued to the Trustee of the auDA Foundation within 14 days of payment of the Grant. . All amounts specified in this Agreement are to be read as the amount exclusive of any GST.
21. The Grantee acknowledges that, in the event that the Grantee commits a material breach of this Agreement:
 - a. auDA may seek and the Grantee must then immediately pay, full reimbursement of all amounts paid pursuant to the Grant; and
 - b. All licence rights or rights of usage granted by auDA to the Grantee in accordance with Schedule 1 of this Agreement are immediately revoked upon written notice from auDA.
22. To the extent permitted by law, auDA has no liability to the Grantee or any third party including, but not limited to, direct, indirect or consequential losses, liabilities, costs, charges, expenses, actions, proceedings, claims and demands, fines and damages, and/or interest in the event of any failure, inaction, loss, cost, expense, liability, damage or claim from or arising out of this agreement, the auDA Community Grant Program or the Grantee's participation therein.
23. It is the responsibility of the Grantee to ensure that it has all necessary, current and adequate



insurance policies in place in connection with the Project.

GST

24. The Grantee is responsible for determining whether or not the grant, when provided in the context of their Project and on the terms of the Grant Agreement, constitutes a taxable supply of goods or services subject to GST.

Interpretation

25. All amounts are in \$AUD.
26. Capitalised terms used in these conditions which are not defined in this document will have the meanings set out in the Grant Guidelines.
27. This Agreement is governed by the law in force in Victoria.

EXECUTED as an agreement.

EXECUTED by .AU DOMAIN
ADMINISTRATION LIMITED:

Signature of Authorised Representative

Title

Name

Date

EXECUTED by <Company Name>

Signature of director/CEO

Name



Schedule 1

Terms for use auDA name and registered trademark or logo

Part A – Terms

1. In this letter .au Domain Administration Limited ABN 38 079 009 340 (auDA) permits **<Company Name>** (you) to use auDA's name and the registered trade mark shown in Part C of this Attachment (together the Mark) on the following terms.
2. From the later of the date on which you provide an executed copy of this letter to auDA and the commencement of the Project, auDA as the registered proprietor and the owner of the intellectual property and goodwill in the Mark, grants you a limited, non-transferable, revocable permission to use the Mark solely:
 - as shown in Part C of this Attachment without modification, including any trade mark notices shown there;
 - for the purposes, and until completion, of the project described in Part B of this Attachment (Project) or until this permission is revoked by auDA, whichever happens first; and
 - subject to any limitations and restrictions set out in Part B of this Attachment.
3. Your right to use the Mark is limited to the form and manner of use described in Paragraph 2 above. No other use of the Mark is permitted under this agreement.
4. You must not place or depict the Mark in any manner or in any materials that may denigrate, disparage, tarnish, dilute, misrepresent or otherwise adversely affect or take advantage of the Mark or its reputation, auDA or any of our products or services.
5. auDA may revoke this permission at any time with immediate effect by written notice to you if you contravene any requirement of this letter or the terms of the Project.
6. You acknowledge that auDA owns and retains all rights, title and interest in and to the Mark.
7. You acknowledge that neither auDA nor any other person has made or makes any representation or warranty of any kind in relation to the Mark.
8. You may not assign, novate, transfer, mortgage, charge, subcontract, declare a trust over or deal in any other manner with any or all of your rights or obligations under this agreement. auDA may at any time assign, transfer, mortgage, charge, subcontract, declare a trust over or deal in any other manner with any or all of our rights or obligations under this agreement.
9. This agreement states all the express terms agreed by the parties about its subject matter. It supersedes all prior agreements, understandings, negotiations, and discussions in respect of its subject matter.
10. An amendment or variation of any term of this agreement must be in writing and signed by each party.
11. This agreement is governed by the law in force in Victoria. Each party irrevocably submits to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of courts exercising jurisdiction in Victoria and courts of appeal from them in respect of any proceedings arising out of or in connection with this agreement. Each party irrevocably waives any right it has to object to the venue of any legal process in the courts described in this paragraph on the basis that:
 - any proceeding arising out of or in connection with this agreement has been brought in an inconvenient forum; or



- the courts described in this paragraph do not have jurisdiction.

Part B – Purpose

For use by you in performance of your rights under the Community Grant Program as a Grant recipient and limited to rights of use and display associated with Grant process Materials and reports.

Part C – Mark

Number	Visual representation	Goods & Services classes
2167052		9, 16, 35, 38, 41, 42, 45

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