

RAWA Assessment Panel

Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

Background

Regional Arts WA applies for funding from different sources such as Federal and State Governments, organisations like Healthway, philanthropic trusts and the corporate sector. This funding is then distributed to regional artists and communities through competitive grant programs.

The Assessment Pool refers to the pool of members that assess funding programs administered by Regional Arts WA that require assessment by peer assessors.

Small grant programs such as the Regional Arts Fund Quick Response grant or travel assistance programs are often assessed internally by Regional Arts WA staff, however, the majority of grant programs are assessed by members of the Assessment Pool.

Assessment Pool Membership

The Assessment Pool aims to be broadly representative of regional Western Australian arts practitioners, art forms, arts organisations, producers, presenters and communities. Most members are drawn from regional or remote areas and includes representation from First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and young people.

Any regionally based artist, arts worker, or community member who is committed to the arts can submit an expression of interest to join the Assessment Pool at any time.

By 'regionally based', we mean anyone living in the following WA Regional Development Commission Boundaries:

- Gascoyne
- Goldfields-Esperance
- Great Southern
- Kimberley
- Mid West
- Peel
- Pilbara
- South West
- Wheatbelt

When expressing interest in being part of the Assessment Pool, applicants are asked to identify their areas of expertise and their experience so that they can be appointed to assess the most relevant grant programs.

While most members of the Assessment Pool are from regional or remote WA, individuals from elsewhere may also be invited to be part of the Assessment Pool if there is a need for a specific skillset or representation that cannot be met otherwise. The Assessment Pool can also include staff from government departments and all Regional Arts WA Board Directors automatically become members of the Assessment Pool, once elected.

All appointments to the Assessment Pool require approval from the Regional Arts WA Board of Directors. Regional Arts WA staff cannot be part of the Assessment Pool.

Assessment Pool members may be called upon to promote the funding programs to groups and individuals within their region and attend events that have been supported by the funding programs.

The names of the members of the Assessment Pool are published on the Regional Arts WA website and in the Regional Arts WA Annual Report.

The Assessment Pool aims to maintain a balance between:

- continuity and renewal;
- diversity; and
- geographic spread of representation across the state.
- artform representation

Principles and Purpose

The purpose of the Assessment Pool is to assess applications to Regional Arts WA's competitive funding programs and recommend which applications should be funded.

Each time a new grant program is required to be assessed by external peer assessors, Regional Arts WA endeavours to select members from the Assessment Pool that can bring a variety of expertise, skills, diversity and representation to the assessment process.

An Assessment Panel of at least 3 members are brought together to discuss the applications through a process which is facilitated by an Independent Chairperson also drawn from the Assessment Pool.

The assessment process will comply with Regional Arts WA Funding Procedures, and the guidelines and criteria of the relevant funding program.

The assessment process for grant applications must be undertaken in accordance with the following principles;

- Assessment processes must be accountable and free from conflicts of interest with all discussions and decision making by the Assessment Panel appropriately documented.
- Assessment processes must be conducted with efficiency, economy, fairness, impartiality and integrity.
- The grants which are approved must demonstrate the proper use of public money, value for money and be oriented to outcomes which reflect the criteria of each funding program.
- Assessment will take into account the amount of funding requested in relation to the total project expenditure, and the program funds available.

- The Investment Panel will maintain confidentiality of the applications assessed and not disclose funding recommendations or speak directly with applicants.
- Only the Chair of the meeting will be publicly disclosed as attending an Assessment Panel meeting after the meeting has taken place. All other meeting attendees will remain confidential.

Terms of Office

- Proposals for membership must be submitted to Regional Arts WA with a short biography attached. New members of the Assessment Pool will be sent to the Regional Arts WA Board of Directors for approval. There is no limit to the number of years that an individual can be part of the Assessment Pool.
- Accurate records will be kept by Regional Arts WA including date of appointment.
- The term of a Pool member may be terminated by the Regional Arts WA Board if the member has acted in a manner to harm or bring disrepute to the organisation or the Assessment Pool.

Accountability

- The Assessment Pool is accountable to the Regional Arts WA Board of Directors.
- All recommendations for investment made by an Assessment Panel are signed off by the CEO of Regional Arts WA and are presented to the Regional Arts WA Board.
- All recommendations for funding awarded through the Federal Government's Regional Arts Fund, except for the Quick Response Grants, are approved by the Federal Minister.

Assessment Panel Quorum

- The Assessment Panel will be made up of a minimum of three members from the Assessment Pool and an additional member who is appointed to act as a Chairperson.
- For decision making, the Assessment Panel must have a minimum of three members to constitute a quorum.
- If a member is unable to attend a meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, their assessment may still be considered if they have provided scores prior to the Assessment Panel meeting, and this will be considered membership in absentia.
- Grants which require a quick turnaround will be made up of a minimum of two Assessment Pool members or Regional Arts WA staff members.

Payments

- Board Directors who are members of the Pool are not eligible for any honorarium or payment beyond normal Board reimbursements.
- Staff from government departments are not eligible for any payment if they are representing their employers on the Pool.
- Eligible Assessment Pool members will be offered an honorarium for their time.

Code of Conduct - Protection of Confidential Information

- Assessment Pool members will handle confidential and sensitive personal, commercial or political information and must ensure that such information is not disclosed to a third party.
- Confidential material must not be assessed or discussed by anyone other than the appointed Assessment Pool members. The Assessment Pool members will keep all funding recommendations confidential.
- Official information must only be used for assessment related purposes and not for personal benefit.
- All Assessment Pool and assessment information and materials are confidential and must be kept in a safe place to maintain integrity.

Integrity and Public Interest

- Assessment Pool members must perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner.
- Decisions and actions by members of the Assessment Pool should be reasonable and appropriate to the circumstances and based on a consideration of all the relevant facts and supported by adequate documentation.
- Assessment Pool members must always act in the public interest and not in their private interest.
- Assessment Pool members must not accept any gift or benefit that is intended to, or likely to, influence their decisions or assessment method.
- Assessment Pool members should advise the Chair if they believe they have been offered a bribe or inappropriate attempts have been made to influence their decision- making.
- Assessment Pool members must not disclose their participation in specific Assessment Panels. Membership of the Assessment Pool will be made publicly available through the Regional Arts WA website and Annual Report.

Conflict of Interest

- Conflict of Interest exists when it is likely that a member of the Assessment Panel could be influenced, or perceived to be influenced, by a personal and/or professional interest in carrying out their public duty.
- Conflict of Interest exists where Assessment Panel members have friends and/or personal relationships that go beyond the level of a professional working relationship, or relatives connected to the application being assessed.
- Conflict of Interest can exist where other Board association, employment or membership compromises the integrity of the member of the Panel.
- Conflict of Interests that lead to biased decision-making may constitute corrupt conduct.
- Conflict of Interest can exist when the member of the Panel stands to receive any financial or other gain:
 1. Members of the Assessment Pool must make a declaration of all conflicts of interest when participating in an Assessment Panel meeting by submitting the Declaration of Pecuniary and Other Interests form.
 2. It is also the responsibility of the member of the Panel to disclose any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interests to the Chairperson at the start of the Assessment Panel meeting.

Resolution of Conflict of Interests

Conflict of Interest will be resolved in the following ways:

- By declaring and recording conflict of interest during the Assessment Panel meeting, ideally at the beginning.
- By the Panel member withdrawing from the assessment of the application/s for which they have a conflict of interest for.
- By withdrawing from the proceedings of the Panel if so requested by the Chairperson if there is considered to be a conflict of interest.

Voting rights

- Votes or resolutions of the Assessment Panel will be passed by a majority of the Assessment Panel members present, on the basis of one vote per person.
- All members of the Panel have the right to vote or abstain from voting.
- Members of the Panel will not vote or take part in the deliberation on applications being assessed where a declared conflict of interest exists.
- In the advent of a tied vote the Chair has the right of the casting vote.

Meetings and Minute taking

- Minutes and discussion points will be recorded at all Assessment Panel meetings by Regional Arts WA staff. The Chair of the Assessment Panel will approve the Minutes.
- In preparation for each Assessment Panel meeting, members will be required to read and make preliminary assessments of the applications received and be willing to play an active part in the assessment process.

Termination of membership to the Assessment Pool

Members of the Pool who fail to attend a meeting that they have been scheduled to attend without due reason will be deemed to have resigned their position.

Review

The Assessment Pool and its membership shall be reviewed by the full Board annually to ensure it reflects the diversity of the regional arts sector.

Disclaimer

The Assessment Panel is not responsible for matters of financial concern; these are to be referred to the Regional Arts Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

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