

Regional Event Fund Guidelines

2026 - 2027

Events and festivals are a crucial part of South Australia's cultural and tourism story



Events are at the heart of South Australia's way of life

Across our regions, they bring people together, locals and visitors alike, to share food, stories, landscapes and moments that feel unmistakably South Australian. They create reasons to travel, to stay longer, and to return.

Through the Regional Event Fund (REF), the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) supports leisure events that strengthen regional pride, deliver meaningful visitor experiences, and contribute to long-term tourism growth.

Purpose of the fund

The Regional Event Fund supports events that directly contribute to the objectives of the South Australia Tourism Plan 2030. By supporting events that highlight our distinctive strengths, such as nature, local flavors, wine, and lively festivals, the Fund welcomes visitors to immerse themselves in unforgettable moments.

Supported events typically demonstrate how they will:

- Encourage visitors to travel to regional South Australia, stay longer, spend more, and return over time.
- Add depth and diversity to the regional events calendar, including addressing seasonality.
- Create events that are built to last, delivering long-term economic, environmental and community benefit.
- Strengthen collaboration across regional organisers, government and industry partners.
- Amplify the South Australian story.

(1)



Events the fund supports

The fund supports leisure tourism events that:

- Attract a minimum of 500 attendees.
- Generate event-specific visitor expenditure (including intrastate and/or interstate visitation).
- Are strategically important to their tourism region.
- Align with the South Australia Tourism Plan 2030.
- Contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the region.
- Are financially viable and sustainably managed (drive a force for good).

Events not eligible

To ensure the fund remains focused on leisure tourism outcomes, the following event types are not eligible:

- Business events, conferences or trade shows
- Agriculture events
- Trade shows
- Award ceremonies or commemorative events
- Firework displays
- South Australian rotational events
- Tours
- Open gardens/ open days
- Seasonally dedicated markets/fairs (i.e. Christmas markets)
- Reunions
- Christmas pageants
- Charity or fundraising events
- Events already receiving SATC funding

Applications will be deemed ineligible if the event has previously failed to acquit a Regional Event Fund sponsorship.

If you are unsure if your event is eligible, please email ref@sa.gov.au prior to applying.

Use of funding

Funding should be used to elevate the visitor experience and showcase the details that help an event feel unmistakably South Australian, while also fostering sustainable growth for the event.

Eligible uses include:

- Event presentation and visitor experience enhancements
- Marketing that increases awareness and visitation
- Short-term specialist personnel
- Strategic planning and evaluation
- Temporary infrastructure improving access, safety or experience

Funding must not be used for prize money, legal costs or insurance.

Funding categories

Established event

This category recognises events with a strong track record that are ready to evolve and deepen their tourism impact.

Funding: \$20,000–\$50,000 (plus GST) per year, for up to three years.

It is expected that applicants will present a clear business case, accurate event data (including tourism benefit), a marketing plan, and a detailed event budget.

Applications must demonstrate:

- The event has been staged for a minimum of four years.
- How funding will enable the event to grow its intrastate and interstate visitation and benefit to the region.
- Accurate attendance reporting, tourism visitation and economic benefit figures collected through surveys, ticketing data or research.
- A minimum attendance of 6,000 with 20% of those attendees travelling from intrastate and 10% from interstate.

Development event

This category supports new and emerging events with potential to become a significant event for their region.

Funding: \$5,000–\$20,000 (plus GST) per year, for up to three years.

Applicants are asked to provide an event proposal, previous event data where possible, how the event will be marketed, and an event budget.

Applicants must demonstrate:

1. How funding will support the growth and innovation of the event.
2. Accurate attendance, tourism visitation and economic benefit estimates through surveys or ticketing data (New events are required to provide reasonable estimates).
3. A minimum of 500 attendees with 20% of those attendees travelling from intrastate.

Event Dates Eligibility

The Regional Event Fund is an annual funding program (offered as one round of funding per year). Applicants should apply in the relevant round of funding, according to the event dates, as follows:

Regional Event Fund 2026-27:

Events staged between 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027 (current round).

Regional Event Fund 2027-28:

Events staged between 1 September 2027 to 31 August 2028.

Regional Event Fund 2028-29:

Events staged between 1 September 2028 to 31 August 2029.

Application requirements

Applications will be received through South Australia Tourism Commission's (SATC) dedicated Regional Event Fund portal, from Friday 27 February 2026 until 5pm, Thursday 26 March 2026. Applications submitted after this time will not be accepted.

(2)



Timelines and Assessment

APPLICATIONS OPEN:

Friday 27 February

APPLICATIONS CLOSE:

Thursday 26 March at 5pm

(Submissions will not be accepted outside of this period)

Eligible applications will be assessed using the information provided in the application as well as required supporting documentation. Applications will be evaluated against the REF Guidelines, the ability of the event to meet aims and objectives of the Regional Event Fund, eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria, and will be assessed comparatively with other applications.

The REF funding program is very competitive, and successful applicants are not guaranteed to receive the full amount nor the full term requested on their application. In the case that the event has previously received funding, ongoing funding is also not guaranteed.

Applications are reviewed by an assessment team, and by a panel in the final stages, to determine the successful applicants. Assessments will be conducted once submissions are closed.

The SATC aims to notify all applicants via email of the outcome of their application mid year. Shortly thereafter, a public announcement of the successful events will be released.

Funded organisations must:

- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) 'active status' on or prior to the application date that is registered to the entity applying for the funding, or be a duly incorporated entity registered with either the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) or Consumer and Business Services, or a South Australian Government Body;
- Hold a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance and any other insurances reasonably expected of an entity undertaking the activities of the applicant;

Be located and operating in Australia.

(3)

Elements of the application must include:

- Event description
- Event positioning/audience
- Tourism value
(Visitation, length of stay, expenditure)
- Marketing plan
- Event budget and profit/loss*
 - Including a detailed breakdown of how the funds will be used clearly outlined
 - Supporting notes should identify what the event will achieve with this funding versus if the event is not successful in its application
- Event evaluation data from previous events
- Organisational structure
- Profiling of South Australian produce (food and beverage) and utilisation of South Australian suppliers
- Partners/sponsorship/collaborations (in progress or confirmed)
- Inclusive, accessible and sustainable event practices
- Risk management



Tourism value and economic benefit

- Intrastate visitation – The number of attendees who travel to the event from within South Australia (more than 25km) or who do not live in the region where the event is held.
- Interstate visitation – The number of attendees who travel to South Australia from interstate for the event.
- Length of stay – The number of days the visitor will stay in the region for the event.
- Bed nights - Average number of nights the visitor will stay in the region for the event.
- Visitor Spend – Approximate daily spend per intrastate, interstate or international attendee.
- Visitor expenditure – Calculated as visitation x estimated daily spend x length of stay. (This figure should not include expenditure related to local attendees).

Marketing and media value

The ability of the event to raise the profile of the destination through media coverage.

- Strength and extent of the marketing strategy.
- Alignment of the event with the region's tourism plan.

Strategic value

Alignment of the event within context of the South Australia Tourism Plan 2030 as well as the government's broader tourism goals.

- Ability to smooth seasonality and trigger visitation in off-peak periods for the region.
- Exclusivity to South Australia and uniqueness of the event.
- Nature and size of the event, including ability to appeal to the State's target audience of 'Cultural Contributors', 'Authentic Connectors' and 'Achievement Seekers'.
- Return on investment.

Social and cultural benefits

The opportunity offered to the local region, driving positive social and cultural legacies.

- Positive community participation and engagement of local businesses.
- Create a positive legacy for the community, region and state.
- Use of South Australian produce and suppliers, with a focus on local businesses

Development and sustainability

The extent to which the funding will assist with the enhancement and development of the event, and support a financially, environmentally and socially sustainable approach, including:

- Potential to develop into a significant and strategically important event for the state.
- How funding will build the event toward long-term financial sustainability within the terms of the funding (evidence may include business plans, marketing plans, event budget).
- Ability to deliver a successful event with no adverse environmental or social impacts.
- Risk management planning.

Financial viability

The financial viability of the event, including:

- Strength of the event's budget and the management and financial skills of the event organisers.
- Ability to generate financial support beyond the Regional Event Fund.
- Confirmed cash and in-kind support from community and corporate organisations, other sponsors, local councils and Regional Tourism Managers.

Preference will be given to those applications that demonstrate a balanced budget.

* All events should be financially viable prior to seeking funding from the SATC. Preference will be given to applications that include evidence of confirmed cash or budget relief from the community, local council or commercial partners.

(4)



Conditions of Funding

This document is a summary of the key conditions of funding. Please note that the Sponsorship Agreement governs the sponsorship arrangement between SATC and the successful applicant and sets out all conditions in details.

Applicants must address the following evaluation criteria. Applications that do not adequately address the evaluation criteria will not be considered.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a sponsorship agreement with the SATC detailing the terms and conditions, funding obligations, key performance measures, deliverables, benefits, and conditions of the sponsorship.

SATC will receive sponsor benefits such as sponsor recognition, logo placement, branding and signage at event venues and tickets for official and programmed events.

Administration and reporting

The Regional Event Fund is administered by the South Australian Tourism Commission, Acquisition and Development team, who will appoint a dedicated account manager to each sponsorship.

Event organisers (the Recipient) will be required to:

- Meet regularly with their account manager
- Submit progress reports
- Submit a post-event report
- Evaluate the event via an independent economic impact assessment or the SATC's Event Evaluation Tool.

Reporting templates and further information will be provided. If you would like to access templates during the application process, please email ref@sa.gov.au.

Conflict of interest

All applicants will be required to declare whether the applicant or anyone within the event organisation has any financial or other personal interests, which could be considered an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest relating to or in connection with, the sponsorship application for the event.

A declaration of a conflict of interest is required if anyone from the event organisation:

- Has a personal relationship with a member of the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC); or
- Has a financial, business or other relationship with the SATC or a member of the SATC, or
- Which may compromise the organisation's as the recipient of sponsorship from the SATC,

Please ensure this is declared as part of your application.

If the application is successful and after notice of successful application, the SATC becomes aware of a conflict that is not declared as part of your application, the SATC may elect to terminate the sponsorship.

The Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector requires public sector employees to avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest. For further information see [Code of Ethics | Office of the Commissioner](#) for Public Sector Employment.

Use of information

Applicants will be required to accept the following Privacy Notice (via the portal) which explains how the SATC will use personal information provided by applicants.

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) will use the information requested on this form for the purpose of:

- Assessing, administering and managing applications for funding through the Regional Event Fund;
- Where applicable, awarding successful applications sponsorship funding.
- Sending emails and other communications about your application;
- Sharing that information with:
 - Third parties who supply goods and services on which the SATC's products and systems are built-in including the regional events online application portal and application assessment process which may utilise AI technologies or
 - Other South Australian Government agencies, regional tourism organisations or local council for the purpose of assessing your application and conducting the event; preventing or detecting unlawful or dishonest behaviours, to protect the SATC's legal rights or as otherwise permitted by law; ensuring the security of SATC's operations; and
 - Conducting market research and analysis that helps the SATC improve and customise its products and services.

Personal information provided, will also be collected and managed in accordance with the SATC's Privacy Statement (tourism.sa.gov.au/privacy) and the Government of South Australia's Information Privacy Principles Instruction (IPPS), a copy of which can be obtained here.

You can gain access to, update or correct any personal information held by the SATC by contacting the SATC Privacy Officer at satc.privacy@sa.gov.au.

Freedom of Information

The SATC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1993 (SA), which provides a general right of access to documents held by State and Local Government agencies.



Contact Us

South Australian Tourism Commission
Acquisition and Development Unit

E: ref@sa.gov.au

W: tourism.sa.gov.au
southaustralia.com