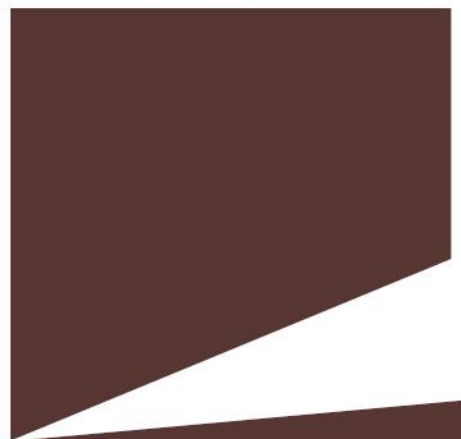


Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation Sector Strengthening Program for Vocational Education and Training (VET)

2026 Program Guidelines



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The Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation Sector Strengthening Program for Vocational Education and Training 2026 is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and Tasmanian Government.

This program will be administered by the Department of State Growth, on behalf of the Crown in Right of Tasmania.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges and pays respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live. The government honours Aboriginal people's enduring connection to Country, including the lands, seas, skies, and waterways of Tasmania.

To deliver training and workforce development in Tasmania, we acknowledge the importance of understanding Aboriginal knowledge, languages, cultures, and voices, which provide important contributions and value across our workplaces, training providers, partnerships, and communities.

1. Terminology

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges varying preferences about how to reference First Nations people. In this document the term 'Aboriginal people' is generally used because Tasmania's First Nations people are Aboriginal people. This acknowledges Tasmanian Aboriginal people's original ownership and ongoing custodianship of Country. The term 'Aboriginal people' should be read as inclusive of all First Nations people in Tasmania, including Torres Strait Islander people.

2. Program aim

The Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation Sector Strengthening Program for Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a Department of State Growth funding program administered by Skills Tasmania.

This program aims to support operational and capacity and capability building projects within Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) related to the VET sector in Tasmania.

The ACCO VET Program is intended to fund projects that:

- build the capacity and capability of ACCOs to deliver VET
- develop new and/or uplift existing services that support Aboriginal people in VET, for example, through mentoring, transport assistance for training, and support to navigate the VET system
- will support growth of the Tasmanian ACCO skills and training sector, for example, by supporting ACCOs to develop partnerships with registered training organisations (RTOs) to deliver training, and to support ACCOs to progress towards becoming an RTO
- will help address identified workforce and capability needs, for example through:
 - the [Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan](#)
 - the [Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy](#)
 - [Tasmania's Plan for Closing the Gap](#).

The ACCO VET program does not fund training places for Aboriginal people in a VET course.

3. Funding available

The total funding available for the ACCO VET Program is \$500,000.

Grants will be provided from \$2,000 to a maximum of \$200,000. If your project may need less than \$2,000 or more than \$200,000, please contact Skills Tasmania to discuss your project before you apply.

It is likely not all applications will receive a grant. Funding will be allocated to ensure the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

4. Project timeframes

Your project will need to be completed, and all the grant money spent, by 30 September 2028.

5. Eligibility

5.1. Eligible applicants

To be eligible for a grant your organisation must:

1. be a Tasmanian-based Aboriginal community-controlled organisation as defined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (Clause 44):

An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation delivers services, including land and resource management, that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:

- a) incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit
 - b) controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
 - c) connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services
 - d) governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.
2. be able to provide a financial statement for the 2024-25 financial year
 3. have evidence of \$20 million public liability insurance for each individual claim or series of claims arising out of a single occurrence
 4. have appropriate provisions in place regarding the [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#).

You may be asked to provide extra information to support your organisation's eligibility claims after you have submitted the application.

If your organisation is eligible, it does not mean your organisation will automatically receive a grant.

Joint applications

Your organisation may work in partnership with others to deliver a project, but the applicant needs to meet the eligibility criteria above. For example, an ACCO can partner with a private training provider to deliver a project, but the ACCO must lodge the application.

If you are applying for a project delivered in partnership, you will need to include details of how the partnership will work.

Refer to **Appendix A** for guidance on the evidence you will need to include with your application.

5.2. Eligible projects

Applications should address the ACCO VET Program aims in Section 2 of these guidelines.

Projects could focus on:

- organisational planning, for example, governance activities or succession planning
- developing partnerships with ACCO RTOs and/or other types of RTO (including TasTAFE, other public providers, or industry/private RTOs) to support training activity
- building the capacity and capability of the VET workforce
- developing or upgrading training materials, tools or resources, including by using new technology
- developing new, and/or uplifting existing services that support Aboriginal people currently engaged in, or planning to undertake VET.

Examples of eligible projects are provided at **Appendix B**.

5.3. Eligible expenditure

The ACCO VET Program will only fund agreed activities that are directly relevant to the project. You will need to identify all the expenses you need funding for on the budget template that forms part of your application.

Project activities that may be eligible for funding include:

- conducting research or engaging independent advice to inform future training activity
- determining aspirations and barriers for Aboriginal people to participate in the VET system
- evaluating existing training and/or support resources and identifying improvement options
- identifying gaps in training support for Aboriginal people engaged in VET
- identifying opportunities for developing or uplifting services that support Aboriginal people engaged in VET
- identifying opportunities for sustainable organisational growth
- providing professional development opportunities for the ACCO workforce to support VET.

Up to 15 per cent of the total project funding may be used for overheads if these are necessary for the project to be feasible.

Examples of project overhead costs are:

- development of promotional material to attract participants to the project
- project-specific accommodation and travel (where projects are delivered outside of the ACCO base location)
- project-specific rent (where projects require additional space outside of the ACCO base location)
- recruitment of project participants
- support for project participants, such as childcare or transport
- telecommunications and information technology (IT) equipment

- travel for staff to attend professional development to support organisational capability
- wages for project-specific staff, for example, project coordinators/managers, service delivery and administrative staff.

5.4. Ineligible expenditure

The following project activities will not be funded:

- activity that does not take place in Tasmania
- direct support for VET training places for Aboriginal people (*as per Clause A95 of the National Skills Agreement*)
- recurrent operational costs associated with 'business as usual' such as:
 - staffing and payroll: salaries and wages for staff not working on the project
 - location expenses: rent, mortgage payments, rates and land tax for locations not specifically for the project
 - utilities: electricity, gas, water, and internet service fees for locations not specifically for the project
 - routine maintenance: ongoing repair and upkeep of equipment and facilities not specifically for the project
 - ongoing administration: software subscriptions, professional fees (legal/accounting), and office supplies not specifically for the project
 - insurance: premiums for property, liability, and worker's compensation insurance
- project overhead costs (see Section 5.3 above) greater than 15 per cent of the total cost, without a satisfactory explanation
- purchase of land or property, and property improvements
- purchase of vehicles
- activities begun or purchases made before the funding agreement is finalised
- repayment of loans or debts.

6. Assessment criteria

Table 1 (below) shows the assessment criteria you will need to address in your application form and the criteria weighting.

Please note, you will need to:

- provide context and background information about your organisation as the assessment panel may not be familiar with your organisation
- make sure the application is complete and that it relates to the assessment criteria as the assessment panel will only assess the information you provide in your application
- refer to specific page numbers in any attachments you want to be considered as the assessment panel may not find relevant information if you attach long reports or long documents
- make sure your budget is accurate and complete and is on the template provided in the application form

- be specific and clear about what you want to achieve, for example, how many people will benefit from the project, how long activities will run for, and planned outcomes or impact
- include examples and evidence to support your claims.

Table 1. Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria	Weighting
1. Project design, impact and alignment	60%
<p>The Project Proposal section of the application form will ask a series of questions about the project. This will ask you to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your organisation wants to do, and what the project is • Why your organisation wants to do the project, or why it is needed • Who the participants will be, for example, Aboriginal people in VET, teachers, trainers, ACCO staff • What the benefits will be for the ACCO or Aboriginal people engaged in VET • How much funding the organisation is requesting for the project. 	
2. Capacity of the ACCO to deliver the project	20%
<p>The application form will ask you to upload a Project Plan for your project. The Project Plan template is provided at the beginning of the application form.</p> <p>The template will ask your organisation to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps will be taken for the project, and when • Who is responsible for each step, for example, roles and responsibilities • What experience the organisation has with delivering projects • How the organisation will achieve the outcomes sought, for example, methods that will be used, key stakeholders that will be engaged • How the organisation will measure the outcomes of the project • Any examples of previous work using the same services/people/methods and the achieved outcome (if applicable) • Plans to engage participants (if applicable). <p>If the application is for a project to be undertaken in partnership with another organisation, you will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how the partnership arrangement will work, for example, roles and responsibilities of each organisation, which organisation is taking the lead, which organisation is responsible for reporting • commit to a formal agreement being in place between the organisations to deliver the project, and identify the type of formal agreement, for example, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or contract agreement. <p>A letter of support for the partner organisation/s will be required as supporting documentation.</p>	
3. Budget	20%
<p>The application form will ask you to upload a Project Budget document. The Project Budget template is provided at the beginning of the application form.</p> <p>The Project Budget needs to show how the amount of funding requested will be used to deliver the project.</p>	

The project budget should be broken down into separate items for each activity, for example, separate lines for consultant fees, professional development courses, project staff salaries.

Evidence to support costs should be provided where possible and relevant, for example, quotes that your organisation has received for project activities, and information provided by other organisations about costs for their services.

7. Timeframes

Description	Date/time
Program application period opens	6 May 2026
Program application period closes	22 June 2026 – 2.00pm
Applications assessed	by 17 July 2026
Applicants notified (estimated date)	by 31 July 2026
Completion	All activities must be completed by 30 September 2028

Applications will not be accepted after the program application period closes.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing, by email.

8. Contact details

For queries about this program, contact:

- Grant Program Manager, Skills Tasmania
- ACCOSectorStrengtheningProgram@skills.tas.gov.au
- (03) 6166 4485

9. How to apply

You must submit your application form and any attachments requested through the SmartyGrants online grant management system.

You will need to be registered with SmartyGrants before you can apply. Use the online [Smarty Grants applicant help guide](#) to register.

Contact Skills Tasmania if you have difficulty using SmartyGrants to submit your application.

Steps to preparing your application:

- Prepare:** Read these program guidelines before starting your application. The application form is designed to help structure your responses to the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in the guidelines. The Department of State Growth publishes a help guide for grant

applicants which is [available here](#).

- b) **Start:** The application form is available at: stategrowthtas.smartygrants.com.au/ACCOProgram
- c) **Complete:** The application form includes:
 - a. questions about the project in the Project Proposal section
 - b. a Project Plan template, to be uploaded
 - c. a Project Budget template, to be uploaded.
- d) **Confirm:** Ensure all information and documentation is accurate and uploaded. You may not be able to change or add information after you submit your application.
- e) **Submit:** You will receive an email notification from SmartyGrants after you submit your application. Keep this email as confirmation of your application.
- f) **Eligibility check:** The Department of State Growth will review your application against the eligibility criteria (Section 5). If your organisation has not supplied evidence of its eligibility, you may be contacted for further information. Applications from organisations that are not eligible for the program will not be assessed.
- g) **Assessment:** Eligible applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria (Section 6) by an assessment panel.
- h) **Notification:** You will be notified of the outcome of your application in writing, by email.

The Department of State Growth may ask you to provide extra information or documentation after you have submitted your application if the assessment panel needs this to complete the assessment.

If you are asked for extra information or documents, you will be told the date by which your organisation must provide them. Providing the requested information by this date will allow your application to continue to be assessed.

10. Application assessment

The assessment panel will be made up of senior representatives from across the Tasmanian Government.

Each panel member will individually assess each eligible application against the assessment criteria in Table 1 (Section 6).

Following individual assessments, the panel will meet to discuss the applications and agree final scores.

The panel then make a recommendation on which projects should be supported to the Department of State Growth.

11. Appealing a decision

If your organisation's application is unsuccessful, you may appeal the decision. Appeals may be made in relation to whether fair and consistent processes were applied; and in relation to concerns with grants management processes.

All appeals must be in writing and addressed to the Director of Strategy and Reform, Skills Tasmania. Your request must be received within 28 days from the date of notification of your organisation's application outcome and include the reasons for requesting a review.

For further information about the appeal process, contact ACCOSectorStrengtheningProgram@skills.tas.gov.au

12. Grant funding agreement

If your application is successful, your organisation will need to commit to a legally binding funding agreement. The funding agreement, along with these program guidelines, will provide the grant terms and conditions. You will not receive payments until the funding agreement is completed.

13. Grant payments

If your application is successful, you will be asked for your organisation's bank account details to receive the grant payment.

The bank account must be in the name of the organisation. You may be asked to provide a copy of your organisation's bank statement or a letter from your bank to confirm account details.

You need to provide the correct bank account details for your organisation to ensure grant payment and to avoid significant delays. The Tasmanian Government cannot guarantee recovery of funds paid to an incorrect bank account.

Grant payments will be paid in instalments depending on the size of the grant. Your organisation will need to submit an appropriate tax invoice.

Payments will be subject to completion of project reporting as outlined in the funding agreement.

Your organisation will need to return some or all the funds if:

- your organisation does not complete the activities required under the funding agreement
- your organisation does not use some or all of the funding provided
- your organisation's situation changes in a way that prevents completion of the project or provision of the grant
- it is found that the information provided to the Tasmanian Government is false or misleading.

14. Reporting

If your application is successful, your organisation will be required to provide a progress report every six months, and a final report that includes a financial acquittal.

The payment of grant instalments is subject to the submission of these reports and that each funding agreement requirement is met to the satisfaction of the Department of State Growth.

Reporting templates for completion will be provided via SmartyGrants.

14.1 Acquittal

An acquittal is a statement that confirms the grant was completed as per the funding agreement.

We will send you an acquittal form using SmartyGrants. Your acquittal must include:

- a final report on the activities completed and the outcomes achieved, and

- a financial acquittal.

Evidence such as invoices, receipts, attendance records, and images may be required at the discretion of the grantor.

You may be asked to provide a Statement of Expenditure certified by an independent, professional auditor. Your organisation will be responsible for the cost of obtaining the certified Statement of Expenditure.

Contact us to discuss any issue preventing the acquittal of the grant.

15. Taxation and financial implications

Grants distributed under this program may be treated as income by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

It is strongly recommended that, prior to applying, you seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor, and/or the ATO, about the possible tax implications of receiving the grant.

Grants distributed under this program attract Goods and Services Tax (GST).

If you are registered for GST, the grant amount will be grossed up to include GST. A valid tax invoice must be supplied by the successful applicant to the Department of State Growth.

Information on invoices can be found on the Business Tasmania website:

www.business.tas.gov.au/running-a-business/money-tax-and-finance/invoicing

16. Publicity of grant assistance

The Department of State Growth is accountable for its spending of public funds, including grants. As part of the accountability process, it may publicise, without further notice, information about grants provided, including the amount of financial assistance, the identity of the recipient, and the purpose of the financial assistance.

If you have received a grant from the Department of State Growth:

- despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant funding agreement or deed, a party may publish all or any part of the grant funding agreement or deed without reference to another party, and you consent to the disclosure of your name in this context.
- all obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas) still apply.

17. True and accurate information

You must take care to provide true and accurate information. Any information that is found to be false or misleading may result in action being taken and grant funds, if already provided, may be required to be repaid to the Department of State Growth.

18. Right to information

Information provided to the Department of State Growth may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

19. Information collection and usage

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates, on request to the Department of State Growth.

The Department of State Growth may use and disclose the information you provide for the purposes of discharging its functions under the ACCO VET Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses. The department may also use information received in applications and during the delivery of the project for reporting purposes.

20. Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.

Appendix A: Guide for evidence of eligibility

Eligibility Criteria (Section 5.1)	Suggested evidence
1a. Incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit	<p>One of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). • Registration as an Australian Public Company, Limited by Guarantee on Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). • Registration with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Charity Register (ACNC). • Governing documents (such as a constitution or rules) that include a non-profit clause. • Formal letters from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) confirming not-for-profit status.
1b. Controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extract from the organisation’s constitution requiring all or the majority of members to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the organisation’s constitution/rule book and assess clause/s relating to membership. <p><i>If registered with ORIC, the constitution/rule book will be available as a public document.</i></p> <p><i>Governing documents are downloadable from the ACNC.</i></p>
1c. Connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services	<p>Connection to community can be explained or demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation, board and/or members living in and/or having connection to the community they operate in.
1d. Governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extract from the organisation’s constitution requiring the majority of the Board Directors to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the organisation’s constitution/rule book and assess clause/s relating to membership/directorship. <p><i>If registered with ORIC, the constitution/rule book will be available as a public document.</i></p> <p><i>Governing documents are downloadable from the ACNC.</i></p>
2. Able to provide 2024-25 financial statements.	<p>Financial statements should show how the organisation has been operating in areas such as profitability, cash flow, assets, and liabilities.</p>

<p>Financial reporting guidance can be found on ACNC Charity Reporting Obligations.</p>	<p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audited financial statements • financial statements prepared for your board • financial statements submitted at your last annual general meeting • management prepared financial statements • independently prepared financial statements.
<p>3. \$20 million public liability insurance for each individual claim or series of claims arising out of a single occurrence.</p>	<p>A Certificate of Currency (CoC) issued by an insurer that includes the insured party, policy type, coverage limits, and expiry date.</p> <p><i>An insurance provider or broker will issue this certificate, often instantly upon purchase or renewal, or downloadable from the insurer's website.</i></p>
<p>4. Appropriate provisions in place regarding the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework.</p>	<p>All Tasmanian organisations are expected to be safe for children and young people — even those that are not legally required to follow the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework.</p> <p>Organisations can determine if they will have to comply with the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework through this guide.</p> <p><i>If the applicant has any documentation related to the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, this can be uploaded (optional).</i></p>

Appendix B: Examples of eligible projects

Focus area	Project/activity examples
Organisational planning Governance Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the skills and capability of Board members i.e. contracting governance specialists to support skills and capability development. • Collaboration or partnerships between the ACCO and other entities (ACCO RTOs, other RTOs, TasTAFE, public providers, industry/private RTOs) that further build the capacity and capability of the ACCOs or improve service or program outcomes. • Conducting research or engaging independent advice to inform future training activity. • Contracting finance, HR, and legal specialists to build and support core administrative systems and functions such as recruitment and partner/collaboration arrangements for current or future training activity. • Contracting specialists to work with the organisation to develop and publish key business documents related to skills and training, for example, strategic planning, operational direction. • Exploring process and feasibility for the organisation to register as a training organisation. • Identifying requirements to enable sustainable organisational growth in skills and training capability. • Undertaking a needs assessment to identify funding requirements for organisational growth and development for skills and training capability.
Workforce/staff/people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural training workshops or developing cultural safety models for internal or external audiences in the training system. • Enabling staff to attend workshops and training which are relevant to skills and training activity. • Exploring aspirations, opportunities, and barriers for workforce development. • Providing professional development opportunities for the organisation's workforce relevant to skills and training activity. • Upskilling staff and volunteers, for example, technical skills, financial management, contract management, human resources, business administration, mentoring to support the organisation's capacity relevant to skills and training activity.
Teaching materials, tools or resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising and promotional strategy development and implementation including website development relevant to skills and training activity. • Developing new or improved systems, for example, information technology, information and data management, reporting systems, and data sovereignty projects relevant to skills and training activity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating existing resources and identifying improvement options to support the organisation’s capacity relevant to skills and training activity. • Purchase of non-nationally recognised training, training materials, and associated training costs.
<p>Services to support Aboriginal people in VET</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating sustainability and suitability of training through non-ACCO training providers and identifying more appropriate options and or/ improvement options. • Identifying gaps in support specifically for Aboriginal people in VET. • Identifying opportunities for the organisation to develop new and/or uplift existing services that support Aboriginal people engage with VET, for example, mentoring, transportation assistance for study, support to navigate the VET system. • Production of materials and/or resources required to provide tailored training or training support that addresses barriers for Aboriginal people.



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