



Call for Applications – Social cohesion programs in your library

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is seeking applications from public libraries to participate in the Libraries as Social Cohesion Hubs Project. This initiative is funded by the Office for Social Cohesion within the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) and has the support of the Australian Public Library Alliance (APLA).

Applications must address the selection criteria and be submitted via the **online form**. Do NOT fill out or sign the draft Contract.

Applications must be submitted by Midnight (AEST) Thursday 16 July 2026.

1. Background

The Australian Government is undertaking various efforts to create a stronger and more connected society. Everyone has a role to play in safeguarding social cohesion and creating communities where differences are respected, our democracy is valued and people are active participants.

The Office for Social Cohesion has engaged ALIA to manage the Libraries as Social Cohesion Hubs Project to reach up to 125 public libraries and communities across Australia. Libraries will deliver place-based community activities focusing on the theme of connection and bringing together individuals or groups who may otherwise not have opportunities to interact. As trusted community spaces libraries can build, grow and protect social cohesion in numerous ways. This program builds on the success of the 2025/26 Libraries are Community Cohesion Hubs project

2. Overview of services required

We are seeking public libraries that can deliver and report on a series of programs to support social cohesion. A program can either be:

- a workshop (2-3 hours); or
- an all-day event (6+ hours).

The programs must be pre-approved by ALIA and delivered **before 16 April 2027**.

The programs must fall under one or more of the following categories:

1. Community-led events and projects that bring different cultural, faith or social groups together



2. Youth engagement and leadership initiatives focused on belonging, civic participation and civic identity
3. Local dialogue or deliberative forums to address community tensions or misinformation
4. Training for community leaders and frontline workers from different sectors in conflict resolution, mediation and inclusive engagement
5. Place-based projects that strengthen connections between new and established communities and/or community organisations
6. Initiatives that build trust between communities and local institutions (e.g. councils, schools, services)
7. Programs supporting civic participation and volunteering across diverse groups
8. Support for local storytelling, arts and cultural activities that reinforce shared identity and belonging

In the application you are required to specify the number of workshops and all-day events you are proposing to deliver, however you are not expected to submit details for each program at this stage. Successful libraries will enter into a contract with ALIA. A requirement of that contract will be to submit program proposals for approval by ALIA prior to delivery. This application seeks information about:

- your experience in delivering social cohesion programs that align with the categories;
- current tensions or hot issues faced by your community that may be addressed or explored through a social cohesion program; and
- any existing partnerships you have with relevant community organisations or service providers.

A library service can apply to deliver multiple workshops and all-day events however at a minimum a library service must apply for 2 workshops **or** an all-day event. Libraries of different sizes can apply for the number of programs that matches their capacity. For example, a larger library service with multiple branches might decide to apply for 12 workshops and 3 all-day events. A smaller library service may decide to deliver one all-day event only.

ALIA will assess the applications and may decide to offer a library service fewer programs than they applied for. The mix of workshops and all-day events is not fixed and will depend on the applications received.

If your application is successful, you will be required to enter into a contract (based on the draft provided) with ALIA. You will then develop your workshop and/or all-day event proposals and submit them to ALIA for approval before they are delivered.

You will be required to check in with ALIA every month at a community of practice session and provide an evaluation report at the conclusion of each program. This will include an



overview of the activities, the level of engagement and number of participants, feedback from participants and an overall evaluation of its success and lessons learned.

3. Overview of resources and support

3.1 Introduction and briefing

ALIA will introduce the program to interested public libraries via a **webinar on 6 July**. This will include a representative from the Office for Social Cohesion. The webinar will run through the purpose of the program, expectations, outline how the funding may enable the delivery of quality programs and provide details on the evaluation and reporting requirements. It will also be an opportunity to ask questions.

3.2 Support and Resources

ALIA will support participating libraries to deliver activities in response to community needs ensuring a focus on promoting connection and a sense of belonging. This will include monthly community of practice sessions, access to a dedicated SharePoint site to connect with other participating libraries, share ideas and learn from each other, and a contact person at ALIA for questions and guidance.

Participating libraries will be required to attend a training session at the commencement of the program. This session will give guidance to support the development of programs, outline reporting responsibilities and provide an opportunity for libraries to connect.

ALIA will provide participating libraries with a resource kit which will include sample social cohesion programs and ideas that align to each of the categories. Additional resources from cultural institutions that support social cohesion programs and reporting templates will also be provided.

3.3 Payment for services

Each participating library service will receive \$2,000 plus GST for each workshop and \$6,000 plus GST for each all-day event they deliver. The total funding amount will vary for each library depending on how many programs they are approved to deliver.

Payments will be made upon achievement of milestones, e.g. on signing the agreement, active participation and promotion of the program and completion of reporting requirements.

4. Selection criteria

- Details about the library service's experience delivering programs that address one or more of the 8 categories.
- Current tensions or hot issues faced by your community that may be addressed or explored through a social cohesion program.



- List of existing community groups or service providers that the library currently partners with to deliver relevant programs in the community.
- Ability to deliver the number of workshops and all-day events specified in the application before 16 April 2027.
- Ability to promote the programs to the community to ensure excellent attendance and engagement numbers.
- Ability to collect and collate data to report on programs and contribute feedback for the evaluation report.
- Ability to comply with the terms of the draft contract. You will be asked to indicate any terms which are not acceptable.

We are seeking a wide geographical spread of libraries across each state and territory. ALIA may also take into account the programs delivered by libraries who participated in the first round of the community cohesion program in 2025/26. Libraries who did not participate in the first round of the community cohesion program will not be at any disadvantage in the selection process.

5. Timeline

INDICATIVE TIMELINE	
By Date	Action
24 June	Call for Applications issued by ALIA
6 July	Information webinar for interested libraries
16 July	Closing date for Applications to ALIA via the online form
3 August	Successful libraries notified by ALIA and sent contract
12 August	Training session for successful libraries
21 August	Successful libraries return signed contract to ALIA

6. Contact details

Email: socialcohesion@alia.org.au

7. Information for Respondents

7.1. Definitions

Call means this Call for Applications.

Application means a response to this Call submitted by a Respondent in accordance with the terms and conditions.



Respondent means a library service that submits an Application.

7.2. Invitation

This Call is not an offer. It is a formal request for Respondents to submit an Application. Nothing in this Call is to be construed as creating any binding contract (express or implied) between ALIA and any Respondent.

7.3. Accuracy of Call

ALIA does not warrant the accuracy of the content of this Call and will not be liable for any omission from the Call documents.

7.4. Additions and amendments

ALIA reserves the right to change any information or to issue an addenda to this Call.

7.5. Representation

No representation made by or on behalf of ALIA in relation to this Call (or its subject matter) will be binding on ALIA unless the representation is expressly incorporated into any contract(s) ultimately entered into between ALIA and a Respondent.

7.6. Seek own advice

This Call is not business, investment, legal or tax advice. Respondents should seek their own independent professional advice in respect of all matters in connection with this Call.

7.7. Bear own costs

All expenses and costs incurred by a Respondent in connection with this Call, including preparing and lodging an Application, providing ALIA with further information, giving presentations, attending interviews and participating in any subsequent negotiations, are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

7.8. How to lodge the Application

Applications must address the selection criteria and submit their Application via the online form. Applications submitted by any other means including by hand or email, may not be accepted by ALIA.

Do NOT fill out or sign the draft contract.

Applications must be submitted by midnight (AEST) on **16 July 2026**.

7.9. Respondent's Acknowledgement



Respondent's acknowledge that:

(a) lodgement of their Application in accordance with the terms and conditions is entirely their responsibility;

(b) by providing their Application they accept the conditions set out in this Call;

(c) ALIA will not be liable for any loss, damage, costs or expenses incurred by Respondent's or any other person if, for any reason, an Application or any other material or communication relevant to this Call, is not received on time, is corrupted or altered or otherwise is not received as sent, cannot be read or decrypted, or has its security or integrity compromised; and

(d) submission of an Application may not result in selection by ALIA.

7.10. Selection Process

ALIA will use these terms and the selection criteria to assess all Applications from Respondents. This assessment will be based on information provided by the Respondent in their Application. ALIA may also seek clarification or additional information from Respondents in order to assist with the selection process.

ALIA will then make a recommendation on up to 125 successful Applications to the Department for approval.

7.11. Advice on outcome of Call for Applications

If an Application is successful, or partly successful where fewer programs are offered than the number proposed in the Application, the Respondent will be invited to enter into a contract with ALIA.

7.12. No contract

Nothing in this Call, or the submission of an Application constitutes a contract, express or implied, with ALIA. ALIA intends that no contract will be formed unless and until ALIA signs a formal contract with the successful Respondents.