



The Inter-Varsity Events Capital



Canberra**liberals**

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The Inter-Varsity Events Capital of Australia

Canberra's universities are among our city's greatest assets. No other Australian city has such a significant portion of its population working and studying at local universities.

Jon Stanhope has done nothing for our university community in his seven years in office. He hasn't leveraged their strengths, assisted them on the national stage, or developed policies that enhance the quality of student life in Canberra.

The Canberra Liberals recognise the important contribution that our universities make to Canberra's community life and to its economy. We will strategically invest in attracting Inter-Varsity events to Canberra, to make our city the Inter-Varsity Capital of Australia.

This policy will bring many extra visitors to Canberra each year, it will enhance Canberra's share of Australia's domestic tourist market and it will hugely enrich the lives of students attending Canberra's four universities.

The Inter-Varsity Tradition

Inter-Varsity events are annual gatherings of clubs of students from different campuses across Australia, often for purposes of competitive events. Inter-Varsity events are hosted by different universities each year, with campuses in different states making competitive bids to host each fixture. Examples of Inter-Varsity events include sporting contests, debating championships, choral festivals, cultural performances, mooting competitions and academic symposiums.

The Benefits:

- These events allow students to engage in elite competition, the interchange of ideas, the discussion of mutual challenges and relationship building.
- Inter-varsity events can be significant formative experiences for these young adults, which help build character and provide opportunities for them to test their potential.
- The Canberra Liberals recognise that our university communities are at their strongest when students have access to clubs and societies that allow them to forge friendships, learn new skills and engage in the pursuit of excellence outside the lecture theatres.

The Modern Challenges:

- Intervarsity events have become increasingly expensive for students who are juggling full-time study and part-time work.
- Some Intervarsity events in Australia have shrunk in duration over the years from week-long events to weekend events, because many students do not have the financial capacity to afford accommodation expenses in capital cities.
- The most successful Inter-Varsity fixtures are those which have the prestige to attract students from top international universities. But with dwindling or static numbers of domestic attendees in recent years, some Australian Inter-Varsity events do not have the scale of size and the depth of program necessary to attract participants from overseas universities.

An Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme

The Canberra Liberals will establish an Inter-Varsity Grants Scheme to support student-focussed conventions, competitive events and academic symposiums at Canberra's universities. We will fund total support of up to \$200,000 per year, to provide grants that range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per event.

The aims of the Grant Scheme will be to:

- increase the opportunity for participation by Canberra students in Inter-Varsity events by bringing more of these events to our doorstep;
- boost fitness, competitive skill levels and social skills among young people at university by attracting them into campus clubs and societies;
- make Canberra the venue of choice for Australian Inter-Varsity events and an international venue of renown for International Inter-Varsity events;
- raise Canberra's profile amongst interstate and overseas students, as a place worth returning to for study, work or recreation; and
- broaden Canberra's tourism base and build the capacity of local tourism operators to cater for the Inter-Varsity sector of the convention market.

Grant Decisions

The Vice-Chancellor of each University in Canberra will be asked to appoint a representative to the Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board. This will include representatives from the Australian National University (ANU), the University of Canberra (UC), the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

The Vice-Chancellors' representatives will be appointed from the professional staff of each university and will be chosen on the basis of relevant experience in areas such as event planning and financial management.

The Board will meet four to five times a year to consider grant applications and progress made by event organisers at different stages of the planning process after funding has been agreed. The meetings will need to:

- consider grant applications, approve winning bids and enter funding agreements with each successful host organisation;
- consider the adequacy of event preparation, including by reviewing reports on budgets, venue bookings, reservation responses and financial controls; and
- approve grant acquittals and consider reconciliations of financial reports.

Accountability and Oversight of Event Planning

The Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board will establish a set of standard conditions for grants and payments of the grants will be staged according to delivery against key milestones.

- Much of the funding for each event will be conditional on completion of the event, although early advances will be permitted for up-front expenses such as venue booking deposits.
- Organisers shall report at quarterly intervals on progress with event planning, budgeting, venue bookings and student reservations, or at other times where there are significant changes to event details.
- A good behaviour undertaking must be provided by organisers and by event participants.

In the rare event that a funding agreement is breached (for instance where planning for an event is inadequate), the Grant Scheme Board may decide to withdraw support from an event and commit the withdrawn funding towards other events.

Decisions by university clubs about a choice of Inter-Varsity venue is usually made a one to two years ahead of each event, to provide adequate time for planning. This will mean that the Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board will need to monitor some individual events across more than one calendar year.

Eligibility for Grants

To be eligible to apply for a grant, the organisation responsible for an Inter-Varsity event must be an established university club or society of students, which has been operating for at least two years prior to making the application. The university with which that club is affiliated must be supportive of the application.

Other conditions for eligibility will include the following requirements.

- The event must assist students to achieve excellence in a field of either academic, cultural or sporting excellence.
- The sponsored Inter-Varsity event shall be based at locations in the Australian Capital Territory.
- Minimum attendance of 100 students should be planned, inclusive of at least 30 ACT-based university students.
- The event should deliver a net economic return to the ACT.
- The event must be organised under the aegis of a peak Australian student group representing clubs on at least five campuses, which has a history of running successful conventions.

Preference will be given to bids that can demonstrate that they have one or more of the following attributes

- The event achieves *outstanding* excellence in a field of either academic, cultural or sporting excellence.
- The bid is supported by co-sponsorship support.
- The event will have concessional accommodation provided by a host university in the ACT.
- The event is likely to attract international as well as interstate students.
- The event provides opportunities for spectator viewing that involves the Canberra public.
- The grant will be used to boost student participation in Inter-Varsity events above the usual attendance level, including participation by students who could not otherwise afford to participate.

Academic conferences that include professional university staff may qualify for funding, provided that they include a minimum attendance of 100 students and provided that there will be daily dedicated streams of activity tailored for student participants. Preference will however be given to student-focussed events.

Political events will not qualify unless there is a focus on activity of academic excellence, such as policy debates, mooting and/or presentation of academic papers.

The Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board may expand on the above eligibility criteria and will publish the criteria for awarding grants. Decisions on grants will be at discretion of the Board.

Funding Purposes

Funding may be used for travel assistance for interstate Australian students (economy fares only), budget accommodation, venue costs, printing, insurance and other such core costs relating to hosting a competition or the pursuit of excellence in the relevant field of endeavour.

Funding provided under the grants may *not* be used for alcohol, meals, or for other entertainment-related purposes.

Funding may not be used for payments to professional event organisers. Event organisation will be a responsibility of student volunteers.

Specialist Support for Inter-Varsity Organisers

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide a part-time support officer within the Events Assistance Program, with costs to be absorbed from within existing resources.

The support officer will receive grant bids from student clubs, receive basic progress reports from successful applicants, support meetings of the Grant Scheme Board and provide advice to event organisers. The officer will also maintain relationships with Canberra-based providers of hospitality services and the Canberra Convention Bureau, to ensure that student groups are aware of new products in the local convention and tourism market.

One condition of grant funding is that summary budget details from each event will be made available to be shared with future convention organisers. The support officer will maintain a database of previous grant agreements, event budgets and other useful planning guidelines that can be shared with event organisers.

In 2009 a Canberra Liberal Government will provide one-off funding of \$100,000 to commission research on best practice in Inter-Varsity event organisation. This funding will support the preparation of guidelines for event organisers, collation of specifications on local event venues and collection of ideas for event programs. The commissioning of this research and the production of these materials will be supervised by Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board.

Funding Support

From the second semester of 2009 onwards there will be an annual amount of \$200,000 available for grants.

Funding in the first year of the scheme may be provided for events where planning commenced prior to receipt of the grant applications. From 2010 onwards, applications should precede any financial commitments for which a grant subsidy has been sought.

Grants will be apportioned by the Canberra Inter-Varsity Grant Scheme Board into appropriate allotments, with awards not to exceed \$50,000 per event. The Board will also determine appropriate conditions for the minimum number of days for events funded under the Grants Scheme.

Under the Grant Scheme, student participants will be required to fund a fair share of their costs. Specifically delegates will be at the very least responsible for their food and entertainment related costs. To ensure appropriate cost sharing, the Board may make grant decisions that allocate a specific amount per participant, with the final amount to be reconciled at the end of the event and to be capped at the total grant amount.

The Board is not obliged to commit all the available funding in each year. If in a given year the quality of applications is not sufficient to justify grants covering all the available funding, then the total allocation for that year may be reduced by the Board by an appropriate amount.

To support the Grant Scheme, a Canberra Liberal government will commit \$600,000 million over four years, plus an initial one-off amount of \$100,000 for guidance materials for event organisers. The phasing of funding is set out below.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Commissioning Guideline material for event organisers	50	50	-	-
Grant Funding		200	200	200

A Canberra Liberal Government will support our local student communities to host Inter-Varsity events that are well resourced and provide access for local students who could not otherwise afford to attend an interstate fixture. We will make Canberra the Inter-Varsity Capital of Australia and will make Canberra an internationally attractive destination for events of academic, cultural and sporting excellence.