



Community Grants Program Policy

Version No.	V3.0 - 25 September 2019 V3.1 - 15 March 2021 – Policy amended to align with new Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference adopted by Council on this date.
Endorsement	Policy Review Panel - 2 October 2019
Authorisation	Council - 14 October 2019
Review date	December 2022
Responsible officer	Manager Community Planning
Policy owner	Coordinator Community Capacity

1. Purpose

To provide a consistent application of a ‘best practice’ approach in delivering the Melton City Council’s Community Grants Program.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all community groups and individuals that wish to apply for Council support through the Council’s Community Grants Program. This includes the Council administered third party grants from The Club Caroline Springs and Harness Racing Victoria/Tabcorp Park Grants.

Those responsible for the administration, assessment and approval of received applications are also bound by this policy.

This policy does not apply to applications which are eligible to be assessed within the funding threshold of Council’s Community Requests for Budget Allocation Policy.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Acquittal	Reporting on how the grant was used and spent.
Responsive Grants	Financial support for essential activities that require a quick response that fit outside the scope of other funding opportunities.
Community Grants Program (CGP)	The program that administers funds to individuals, groups or organisations to support community led initiatives that derive community benefit.
Community Grants Program Guidelines	The practice for the promotion and delivery of the CGP.
Community Grant Procedures	Sequential actions to be followed in administering and delivering the CGP.
Community Grant	A conditional sum of funds provided to a recipient for an agreed specified purpose in a formal agreement between parties with the understanding that there will be a defined outcome that directly or indirectly benefits the community.

Word/Term	Definition
Community Group	An organisation that is a not for profit, incorporated group or association that is accessible and accountable to members of the community. A community group provides the broader community and/or its members with opportunities to engage in local community, cultural, leisure and/or educational activities.
Community Project	Any project proposed by a community group, club or organisation.
Commercial Organisation	An organisation commercial in nature or operated for the primary purpose of returning a commercial benefit, monetary gain or profit.
Delegated Authority	Person/s who are authorised to perform the function of approving and/or rejecting Community Grants.
Eligible	Having the right to do or obtain; satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Entry-Level	Groups, clubs or organisations who have little-to-no experience implementing grant-funded projects and are assessed at the discretion of Council Officers to face significant and demonstrated challenges applying for Council's regular Community Project Grants.
Ineligibility	Not having the right to do or obtain; not satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Establishment Grants	Funding to promote and develop the establishment of new community groups, clubs and/or associations.
Semi-Annual Grants	Financial support for community projects that increase community participation and access to information, services and facilitate a strengthening in social wellbeing across the City.
Sponsorship	Sponsorship is the right to associate the sponsor's name, products or services with the sponsored organisation's service, product or activity, in return for negotiated benefits such as promotional opportunities. It involves a negotiated exchange and should result in tangible and mutual compensation for all parties in the arrangement.
Subsidy	A subsidy is a form of financial assistance that is conditional upon meeting specific criteria. A subsidy can be used to support and to encourage community activities that would otherwise not take place, particularly to support the commencement and establishment of initiatives in becoming self-sustaining.
Service Level Funding Agreement (SLFA)	A negotiated legal agreement between Council and an organisation, that details the nature, quality and scope of a service to be provided. The Agreement will define the responsibilities of both Council and the organisation.

Word/Term	Definition
Third party Council administered Grants	Grant funds provided by community organisations to be dispersed through individual programs and administered by Council.

4. Policy

Melton City Council acknowledges its role in supporting, assisting and partnering with community groups in providing services which benefit the wider community, enhance community well-being and contribute to Council's strategic objectives.

There are a range of grant funding sources available to the Melton City community through:

- The private sector (including Electronic Gaming venues that operate in the municipality, which are required to redistribute a percentage of revenue to the community as defined by the Victoria Gaming Regulation Act 2003);
- Philanthropic organisations; and
- State and Commonwealth Grant Program streams.

Council support is provided and/or administered through the CGP via the following:

Opportunities for individuals and groups to make competitive application to access one off grants. These are provided through:

- Semi-Annual Grants. Includes two categories:
 - i. Community Project – available to eligible community organisations, clubs and not-for profits to apply for.
 - ii. Entry-Level – designed for clubs and groups with little-to-no experience implementing grant funded projects.
- Responsive Grants
- Establishment Grants
- Resident Achievement Contributions

Third party grant administration:

Council's administration of funds provided to the community via the following third party funding bodies:

- The Club Caroline Springs Grants - provides annual community project and entry- level grants.
- Harness Racing Victoria/Tabcorp Park Grants - provides annual community project and entry- level grants.

The CGP:

- Recognises, encourages and values the contribution of local residents in enhancing local community wellbeing and social connectedness;
- Builds resilient residents and communities through opportunities to increase civic participation and community activity;
- Increases the capacity and learning of local groups and individuals in the establishment and development of self-sustainable programs, projects and groups;
- Strengthens relationships and creates opportunities for collaboration between Council and our community; and
- Supports new innovative and inclusive initiatives, activities and events, which promote the uniqueness, heritage and cultural diversity of our City.

This Community Grants Program Policy pertains to the CGP and provides a clear administrative framework to inform the program's procedures and guidelines.

This policy observes statutory obligations pertaining to the distribution of public funds; incorporates community funding best practice principles; and supports delivery of the CGP.

4.1 Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Contribute to the achievement of Council's Vision, outcomes and objectives as documented in its Council and Wellbeing Plan and subsequent strategies through active engagement with community organisations.
- Provide community groups and individuals with financial support to meet identified community needs.
- Provide a standard approach and framework to assist our community to be culturally rich, active, healthy, safe and connected.
- Distribute and acquit funds in a transparent and equitable manner under the principles of good governance.

4.2 Policy Principles

The following principles underpin the policy:

Efficiency	Continuous improvement approaches that effectively respond to community and organisational need.
Transparency	Procedural integrity through public access to annual reporting of program outcomes, decision making and relevant documents.
Fairness	Ethical behaviour in program processes, adherence to CGP conflict of interest and Codes of Conduct contained in procedures to eliminate unfair advantage.
Consistency	Accountability of participant's and facilitator's compliance with statutory, regulatory and program procedural obligations.
Inclusiveness	Maintaining equity, openness and accessibility to program information, officer support and associated tools.
Responsiveness	Addressing identified community need through alignment of CGP criteria to Council Plan Strategic Objectives and prioritisation of need in assessment of applications.
Sustainability	Effective use of resources which increase the availability of service provision across the City and provides long term benefits to the community and best possible outcomes for resource expenditure.

5. Grant Eligibility Criteria

All applications will be subject to the eligibility criteria and specific assessment selection criteria as provided in the Community Grant Guidelines.

Council may only provide a grant to a community group when Council is satisfied that the Community Grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest; and the Community Grant is aligned with the objectives and eligibility criteria nominated in this policy.

5.1. To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- Be one of the following;
 - i. Incorporated not-for-profit community groups or organisations located in and providing the support, service or program within the City of Melton;
 - ii. Incorporated not-for-profit community groups or organisations located elsewhere, but providing support, services or programs to people living in the City of Melton; OR
 - iii. Incorporated community groups or organisations with auspice support from an incorporated not-for-profit organisation, providing the support, service or program within the City of Melton.
- Have no outstanding debts owing to Council;
- Align projects with Council priorities set out in its current Council and Wellbeing Plan;
- Adhere to Local, State and Federal laws;
- Ensure adherence with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and Child Safe Standards;
- Comply with the conditions outlined in Council's Alcohol Risk Management Policy, Responsible Gambling Policy, and Healthy Food and Drink Policy;
- Have met all acquittal conditions of previous Council funding;
- Have 80% of project participant's living in the City of Melton;
- Have an ABN;
- Have Public Liability Insurance of up to \$20 million;
- Have discussed the project application with the Community Funding & Project Officer and a relevant Council Officer (see page 10 for a list of Officers that will be able to assist with your project idea); and
- obtain quotations for goods and services from reputable suppliers such as industry accredited suppliers (we encourage applicants to source from suppliers within the City of Melton):
 - i. one quote for goods or services valued at over \$250,
 - ii. two quotes for goods or services over \$1,000.

5.2. Community Grants Program funding is ineligible to projects:

- That are facilitated by local schools/education providers that are limited to students only.
- Seeking support for ongoing operational costs, e.g. permanent staff, ongoing salaries, maintenance, venue hire.
- Seeking support over \$1,000 for exclusive events (those that do not include broad community participation).
- That take place outside the City, unless it is an element of an ongoing project and has a demonstrated and direct benefit to the City of Melton community.
- That are the clear responsibility of other levels of government e.g. school curriculum, infrastructure, concerts.
- Already receiving Council funds to do the same or similar activity.

- Deemed to be duplicating existing services in the municipality.
- That facilitate routine and regular maintenance work to existing facilities.
- Based at facilities where there is little or no public access.
- That operate solely for the purpose of fundraising for individual gain.
- That are the responsibility of Council to deliver or where the funds will be administered or managed fully or in partnership by Council.
- That are profit making ventures.
- For purchase of equipment and material to address Occupational Health and Safety issues; this is considered to be the responsibility of the agency or organisation concerned.

6. General funding and acquittal conditions

An acquittal process will be consistently applied to assess and reconcile Community Grants and ensure correct and intended use of funds has been adhered to by all recipients, to satisfy the CGP Funding Agreements, Guidelines and Procedures.

6.1 The following conditions apply to any Community Grant:

- Successful applicants will be required to sign a Service Level Funding Agreement before funding is provided. The Service Level Funding Agreement will include the conditions of the funding.
- Successful applicants are required to complete the grant acquittal within 12 months of receiving funding or 2 months of completion of the project (whichever is sooner).
- Any unspent funds at the conclusion of the project/initiative must be returned to Council.
- Any changes to the project dates, costs or location must be disclosed to Council through a Variation Form. This form must be requested by the applicant to the Community Funding & Project Officer.
- All grants are exclusive of GST. If the payee is registered for GST, this must be stated on the application form, and the payment of the grant will have the GST component added to the approved grant amount.
- Where funds are contingent upon the receipt of other funds or specific conditions, proof of success must be provided before Council funds are released.
- Organisations must submit a final report outlining the use of the funds at the conclusion of the project.
- Organisations with outstanding Council grant funding are ineligible to apply for further funding until all funding is acquitted.
- Information contained in grant applications may be used in Council produced promotional and advertising material.

7. Assessment and Approvals

Decisions regarding the allocation of funds within the CGP will be based around formal application and assessment processes.

7.1 The following conditions apply to assessment and approvals:

- Applications are assessed by an Assessment Panel against predetermined assessment criteria.
- Assessment Panels are appointed and are governed by Council adopted Terms of Reference.
- Assessment Panel members will be required to sign a Confidentiality and Disclosure of Interests Agreement before taking part.
- Council Officers participating in Internal Feedback will be required to sign a Confidentiality and Disclosure of Interests Agreement before asked to provide feedback.
- Assessment Panels are utilised to assess applications and make funding recommendations to Council or the Chief Executive Officer.
- Applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be presented to Assessment Panels.
- Council reserves the right to request further information in considering any application.
- Applicants must declare any conflicts of interest in submitted applications; and ongoing detailed discussion in the form of campaigning and or soliciting approved support by Councillors or assessment panel members is prohibited.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of Council's decision, including the conditions of the funding agreement, if applicable.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback from the relevant Council Officer upon request, and offered advice and assistance for future funding applications. This process will provide reasoning as to why their application was not successful.

7.2 Assessment Panel recommendations are made to the following authorities for approval:

i. Semi-Annual Grants	
Timeframe	Open twice per year for set advertised period.
Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Council Officers • 3 Community Representatives (1 per ward) • Manager Community Planning (no vote) • Community Grants & Awards Officer (no vote) • Diversity must be considered in the appointment of Committee members
Authority to Approve	Assessment panel recommendations are endorsed by Council at a scheduled meeting of Council.

ii. Bi-Monthly Grants (Responsive, Establishment, Resident Achievement Contributions)	
Timeframe	Open bi-monthly; on the first and closing on the last day, every second month starting in July.
Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Council Officers • Coordinator Community Capacity (no vote) • Community Grants & Awards Officer (no vote) • Diversity must be considered in the appointment of Committee members
Authority to Approve	The Melton City Council Chief Executive Officer has delegated authority to implement Assessment Panel recommendations through provision of Funding Agreements and funding.
iii. The Club Caroline Springs Grants	
Timeframe	Open once per year for set advertised period.
Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 organisation representative • 2 Council Officers • 3 Community Representatives (1 per ward) • Manager Community Planning (no vote) • Community Grants & Awards Officer (no vote) • Diversity must be considered in the appointment of Committee members
Authority to Approve	Assessment panel recommendations are endorsed by Council at a scheduled meeting of Council.
iv. Harness Racing Victoria/Tabcorp Park Grants	
Timeframe	Open once per year for set advertised period.
Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 organisation representative • 2 Council Officers • 3 Community Representatives (1 per ward) • Manager Community Planning (no vote) • Community Grants & Awards Officer (no vote) • Diversity must be considered in the appointment of Committee members
Authority to Approve	Assessment panel recommendations are endorsed by Council at a scheduled meeting of Council.

8. Reporting

A bi-monthly report, detailing the Bi-Monthly Grant outcomes, will be presented by the CEO to the Mayor during their scheduled weekly meeting.

Community Grants Program funding outcomes are reported publicly in Council's Annual Report.

9. Responsibility/Accountability

9.1	Melton City Council
	Receive recommendations from Assessment Panels for Semi-Annual Grants and authorise funding in accordance to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
9.2	Appointed representatives
	Appointed representatives on Assessment Panels participate in assessment processes in accordance to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
9.3	Chief Executive Officer
	Receive recommendations and reports from Bi-Monthly Grants Assessment Panels to authorise funding in accordance to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
9.4	Coordinator Community Capacity
	Oversee the administration of the Community Funding Program and adherence to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
9.5	Community Grants & Awards Officer
	Administer the Community Funding Program with adherence to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
9.6	Community Funding Advisory Panel
	Provide recommendations to Councillors and Chief Executive Officer with adherence to the Community Grants Program Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

10. References and links to legislation and other documents

Name	Location
Local Government Act 2020	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
VLGA Best Practice in Local Government Community Grants Programs 2002	www.vlga.org.au
Council and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021	www.melton.vic.gov.au