

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM POLICY

Date adopted	26 February 2024
Adopted by	Council
Review due	26 February 2027
Responsible officer	Manager Healthy Connected Communities
Records reference	9195410

1. PURPOSE

To provide a consistent leading practice approach in delivering Melton City Council's Community Grants Program (CGP).

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all community groups who wish to apply for Council support through the Council's CGP. Those responsible for the administration, assessment, and approval of received applications are also bound by this policy. Note that there are separate policies for:

- Community Funding Program (CFP)
- Community Grants Program (CGP)
- Community Requests for Council Budget Allocation

3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Melton City Council acknowledges its role in supporting, assisting, and partnering with community groups to enhance community wellbeing, and contribute to Council's strategic objectives.

This policy provides a clear administrative framework to inform the procedures and guidelines of the CGP. This policy observes statutory obligations pertaining to the distribution of public funds; incorporates community grants leading practice principles; and supports delivery of the CGP.

3.1. Community Grant Categories

Council support is provided and administered through the following Community Grants Program:

Grants	<p>Provides opportunity for groups to submit competitive applications to access a grant every two months under the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment & Nature • Festivals & Events • Sports & Hobbies • Healthy Living • The Arts <p>Maximum funding for all grant categories is \$5,000 per project.</p>
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	<p>Applicants cannot be awarded more than \$10,000 in grants per financial year.</p> <p>Open year round for applications from 1 March 2024, with applications assessed every two months from the end of April, June, August, October & December.</p>
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3.2. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Provide a standard approach and framework to assist our community to be involved in community strengthening work.
- Distribute and acquit funds in a transparent and equitable manner under the principles of good governance.
- Administer a user-friendly process that responds to the diversity of the municipality while also ensuring good governance.

3.3. 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 applicant, participant, or administrator and reliable compliance with statutory, regulatory and program procedural obligations.
Inclusiveness	Promote equity, embrace diversity and provide accessibility to program information, officer support and associated tools.
Responsiveness	Addressing identified community need through alignment of CGP criteria to Council Plan Strategic Objectives.
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.

3.4. Eligibility Criteria

All applications will be subject to both applicant and project eligibility criteria. In exceptional cases where a project does not fully meet the grant requirements but demonstrates exceptional merit and community benefit, the CEO is authorised to make exceptions to the eligibility criteria at their discretion.

3.4.1. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- Reside in the City of Melton
- Demonstrate not-for-profit status or be receiving auspice support from a not-for-profit organisation;
- Have no outstanding debts owing to Council;
- Have fully acquitted previously funded projects;
- Have Public Liability Insurance of at least \$20 million. However, in exceptional circumstances, a minimum coverage of \$10 million may be deemed acceptable, subject to individual evaluation on a case-by-case basis.
- Have discussed the project application with a Council Project Officer responsible for activities best aligned with the proposed project (as described in the Council Project Officer Listing);
- Obtain quotations from ABN registered suppliers who provide goods and services aligned with the primary purpose of their business
 - i. one written quote for a single item of a good or service valued at over \$250,
 - ii. two written quotes for a single item of a good or service valued at over \$1,000.

3.4.2. Project Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding, projects must:

- Directly benefit Melton residents;
- Not relate to the delivery of core curriculum of education providers;
- Not take place outside of the City of Melton, unless it has a demonstrated and direct benefit to the City of Melton community;
- Not be the responsibility of:
 - i. other areas of Council or already receiving Council funding
 - ii. other levels of government, noting government affiliated local volunteer groups are eligible for project funding which provides community engagement and awareness raising activities;
- Not be for the following costs:
 - i. Operational costs such as permanent or contract wages, rent, utility bills, insurance, facility maintenance or capital improvement.
 - ii. Personal expenses such as petrol or phone bills that are incurred by individuals rather than the group;
 - iii. Mandatory equipment addressing Occupational Health and Safety regulatory requirements;
 - iv. Purchase of alcohol, tobacco, fireworks and activities or items related to gambling;
 - v. Political activities or activities of a discriminatory, sexist, racist, disrespectful, illegal, or unsafe nature;
 - vi. Gift vouchers or rewards for group members.

3.5 Assessment & Approvals

Decisions regarding the allocation of funds within the CGP will be made through formal eligibility and assessment processes in compliance with the Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

3.5.1 Application Assessments

- Applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed to assessment.
- Applications are assessed by an Assessment Panel against predetermined assessment criteria using a Scoring Matrix as a guide.
- Assessment Panels are utilised to assess applications and make funding recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Assessment criteria focuses on project description (defining need and benefit), whether the project is a priority area for Council, project plan and project budget.

3.5.2 Feedback to applicants

- Applicants will be notified in writing of Council's decision.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback from the Community Grants team and offered advice and assistance for future funding applications. This process will provide reasoning as to why their application was not successful.

3.6 General Funding Conditions

- Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding agreement before funding is provided.
- Where funds are contingent upon a specific condition, evidence of the condition must be provided before Council funds are released.
- Projects must be completed within twelve months from date of success letter from Council.
- All grants are exclusive of GST. If the payee is registered for GST the payment of the grant will have the GST component added to the approved grant amount.

3.7 Variation Conditions

- Any changes to the project outcomes, dates, costs, or location must be disclosed to Council through a Variation Form. This form must be requested by the applicant to the Community Grants team.
- All variations must be approved by Manager, Healthy Connected Communities, with evidence that the project outcomes will be similar in nature.

3.8 Acquittal Conditions

- Organisations must submit an acquittal (final report) describing the project outcomes and providing evidence of how the funds were spent.
- Acquittals must be submitted within one month of project completion.
- Any unspent funds at the conclusion of the project must be returned to Council within one month of project completion.
- Time extensions for acquittals and return of funds can be requested for extenuating circumstances.
- Information contained in grant acquittal documentation may be used in Council produced promotional and advertising material.

3.10 Budgeting

The budget for the CGP and CFP will be allocated by Council on an annual basis. Once this budget is completed, the program will close for the year.

3.11 Reporting

A bi-monthly report, detailing the status of grant applications, outcomes and current improvement initiatives will be presented to the CEO for sharing with Council. Community Grants Program funding outcomes are reported publicly in Council's Annual Report.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Acquittal	End of project reporting on funded activities, used to confirm that the terms of the funding agreement have been met.
Auspice	An organisation who manages grant funding on behalf of the group that completes the actual project work. Auspice organisations are often used to meet application eligibility requirements not met by those completing the project work (such as public liability insurance or Certificate of Incorporation).
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.
Community Grants Program (CGP)	The program that administers grants to groups and organisations to support community led initiatives that derive community benefit.
Community Grants	The practice for delivery of the CGP. Guidelines are a document outlining best practice processes that are strongly recommended.

Program Guidelines	Guidelines are written to provide information and advice on a particular subject.
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 its members with opportunities to engage in local community, cultural, leisure or educational activities.
Community Project	A planned project hosted by a Community Group which responds to local challenges and opportunities.
Delegated Authority	Person/s who are authorised to perform the function of approving or rejecting Community Grants.
Eligible	Satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Ineligible	Not satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Scoring Matrix	The Scoring Matrix is a tool to ensure consistency in how applications are assessed. It is available to both the applicant and the assessor and outlines how responses will be assessed based on the detail and inclusions provided by the applicant.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Name	Location
Local Government Act 2020	https://www.austlii.edu.au/lga2020
City of Melton Community Grants Guidelines	https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Services/Grants-Awards-and-Training/Community-Grants
Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (2022)	www.audit.vic.gov.au/
Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025	www.melton.vic.gov.au

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