Grants Policy

Date adopted	December 2025
Adopted by	Council
Review due	December 2028
Responsible officer	Manager Healthy Connected Communities
Records reference	12101034

1. Purpose

The Grants Policy provides a framework for Melton City Council to grant Council funding consistently and transparently through its externally facing community funding programs.

2. Application and Scope

This policy applies to:

- The granting of funds via competitive, merit-based program(s), from Council to the City of Melton community that are considered and approved by Council for specific agreed purposes aligning to Council Wellbeing Plan 2025-29, such as but not limited to, the following funding streams:
    - Community Grants Program
    - Resident Achievement
    - New Group Establishment
    - Social Investment Partnerships
    - FairGo 4 Youth
    - Heritage Assistance
- All grant recipients, which may include residents, community groups or organisations.
- All Council Departments involved in the promotion, assessment, and management of grant programs where Council is providing a contribution directly to an organisation, auspice or individual.

The policy does not apply to:

- Sponsorship for External Activities and Events
- Community budget submissions

3. General Provisions

Melton City Council acknowledges its role in supporting, assisting, and partnering with individuals, community groups and not-for-profit organisations to enhance community wellbeing, and contribute to Council's strategic objectives.

Council will actively support organisations and individuals with funding support so that they can deliver their projects.

The level of financial resourcing available is limited by Council's budget allocation and its priorities. No applicant can be guaranteed funding, nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full requested amount.

The amount of funding available for each grant category is determined through Council's annual budget process and are updated annually in the publicly available Grants Administration Guidelines. The Guidelines stipulate any caveats that may apply to funding limits for specific items or projects.

3.1. Grant Categories

Council grants are provided and administered through the following funding streams:

Grant category	Purpose
Community Grants Program	To support community groups to develop and deliver projects that contribute to the achievement of Council's wellbeing priorities. Projects can relate to: • Environment & Nature • Festivals & Events • Cultural Celebrations • Sports & Hobbies • Healthy Living • The Arts The Community Grants Program is open throughout the year for applications in four (4) rounds.
Resident Achievement	To assist individuals to participate in activities at a high level – within Victoria, interstate or overseas.
New Group Establishment	To assist the establishment of new community groups.
Social Investment Partnerships	To support community organisations to provide long-term solutions that address current and emerging social issues. Priority areas for funding include: • Food insecurity • Community safety • Physical and mental wellbeing • Pathways to employment
FairGo 4 Youth	Applications are open twice a year: • July-August for term 2 or summer season activities, and • January-February for term 1 or winter season activities

Grant category	Purpose
Heritage Assistance	To support landowners, companies or community groups to maintain, repair or conserve a heritage place, or for preparation of conservation management plans for a heritage place within the municipality.

3.2. Policy Objectives

The Policy supports community organisations, groups and individuals to seek funding for a diverse range of activities, services and programs that:

- Build community capacity and strengthen partnerships with Council in response to local needs.
- Enable Council to achieve its strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Wellbeing Plan.
- Celebrate community achievements and support participation in community life.

3.3. Policy Principles

The Grants Policy is guided by the following principles and intentions:

Capacity Building	Funding support the capacity of local organisations and individuals to achieve long-term benefits for the community.
Access and Equity	Council funding is accessible for all eligible individuals and organisations and they are actively supported to access grant funding. All funds are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.
Efficiency	Information and processes for applicants are well organised and guidelines are continuously reviewed.
Measurable Outcomes	Funded projects and funding deliver clear outcomes for the community.
Responsiveness	Funding support will respond to emerging community priorities and assist Council realise its strategic objectives.
Sustainability	Funding is provided to support the initiation of new projects that can be sustainably managed by awardees.
Transparency	Processes are robust and governance is clear and strong.

3.4. Policy Implementation

Council will facilitate the delivery of transparent grant and funding processes whilst mitigating against fraudulent or corrupt use of funds to ensure accountability through the following mechanisms:

3.4.1 Governance

- Each grant-funding program will have publicly available guidelines that include eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
- All material changes, including recommendations to cease offering a grant funding program must be approved by a resolution of Council.
- An independent assessment panel will be convened to assess applications for the Community Grants Program through an EoI process. This panel will be governed by Terms of Reference and must be approved by a resolution of Council.
- An independent assessment panel will be convened annually to assess applications to the Social Investment Partnership Program stream.
- Resident Achievement and FairGo4Youth Grants will be awarded to those who meet the eligibility requirements with financial accountability consistent with all funding programs.
- Recipients of all Council funding programs will be presented to a Council meeting for noting and acknowledgement.

3.4.2 Administration

- A Grants Administration Guide will provide Council Officers guidance on the management of the grants program, including the application process, assessment procedures, promotion and assistance in developing a project or navigating the application process, funding agreements and acquittals.
- All programs will be managed within Council's online administration system to ensure records are maintained and fully auditable.
- Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

3.4.3 Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Specific eligibility criteria for each stream are as follows:

Stream	Eligibility
Resident Achievement Grants	Applicants must: • Reside in the City of Melton. • Show evidence of being selected to participate in activities at a high level – within Victoria, interstate or overseas.

Stream	Eligibility
New Groups Grants	New groups must: • Be located within the City of Melton who are intending to be incorporated or have been incorporated for less than 12 months prior to application • Aim to have 80% of members from the City of Melton
Community Grants Program	Applicants must: • 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.
FairGo 4 Youth	Applicants must: • Reside in the City of Melton. • Be aged from 8 to 18 years of age (at time of application) • Priority is provided to Health Care Card holders. • Unspent funds for each round will be re-opened for applicants who can demonstrate financial need via a referral process from a school or sporting group.
Social Investment Partnerships	Applicants must: • Be an incorporated not-for-profit, registered charitable association or registered beneficial social enterprise which provides a direct service to the residents of the City of Melton. • Be able to demonstrate that they have been in operation and delivering services, programs or projects in the City of Melton for a minimum of two continuous years. • Be able to demonstrate how the service directly contributes to the City of Melton community.

Stream	Eligibility
	• Provide a Sustainability Plan that outlines the applicant's and/or project's strategies to reduce gradual dependency on Council funding.
Heritage Assistance Grants	The fund is open to companies, individuals, community groups and committees who own or manage a heritage place in the City of Melton.

3.4.4 Project Eligibility Criteria

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 demonstrated and direct benefit to the City of Melton community.

Not be the responsibility of:

- Other areas of Council or already receiving Council funding.
- 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:

- Operational costs such as permanent or contract wages, rent, utility bills, insurance, facility maintenance or capital improvement.
- Personal expenses such as petrol or phone bills that are incurred by individuals rather than the group.
- Mandatory equipment addressing Occupational Health and Safety regulatory requirements. For example: Personal Protective Equipment, basic First Aid Kits, Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets. Note: Defibrillators are not considered a legislated OHS requirement.
- Purchase of alcohol, tobacco, fireworks and activities or items related to gambling.
- Political activities or activities of a discriminatory, sexist, racist, disrespectful, illegal, or unsafe nature.
- Gift vouchers or rewards for group members.

3.4.5 Assessment

Decisions regarding the allocation of funds through this policy will be made through formal eligibility and assessment processes for each grant category as set out in Council's Grants Administration Guidelines.

To ensure a separation of decision making and allow an avenue for independent oversight, an individual or entity with the power to approve grants will not form part of an Assessment Panel (i.e., Councillors / Financial Delegate).

The General Provisions for assessment are:

- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed to assessment.
- Applications to the Community Grants and Social Investment Partnerships Program are assessed by an Independent Assessment Panel against predetermined assessment criteria using a Scoring Matrix as a guide.
- Following assessment, funding recommendations are made to the Chief Executive Officer.
- A clear set of criteria is utilized to assess applications against Council's priority areas, community need and benefits, long-term sustainability and project plan and budget.
- Applicants are notified in writing of Council's decision.
- Unsuccessful applicants are provided feedback and offered advice and assistance for future funding applications.

3.4.6 Funding Conditions and Variations

- 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
- Once funding has been provided to a recipient, any changes to an approved project must be endorsed by the relevant business unit Manager via a Variation Request and documented in Council's online grants administration system.

3.4.7 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.

3.4.8 Reporting

- Council will be provided regular updates on the financial position of all funding programs.
- Community Grants funding outcomes are noted in Chamber.
- Funded projects are reported publicly on Council's website.

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 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.
Cultural Celebrations	An indoor or outdoor activity involving 50 or less people that is not subject to Council approvals per the Community Events Policy.
Delegated Authority	Person/s who are authorised to perform the function of approving or rejecting Council grants.
Eligible	Satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Events and Festivals	Public gatherings of 50 or more people that are of a size and nature that may impact on residents and businesses and/or are to be conducted on public open spaces and roadways that are under the care and control of Melton City Council. See Community Events Policy.
Ineligible	Not satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Independent Assessment Panel	A group of individuals that provide impartial, objective and independent assessments for a specific project or program.
Scoring Matrix	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.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/local-government-act-2020
Melton City Council Community Events Policy	https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/Publications/Documents-Reports-Strategies
Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029	https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/About-Council/Council-Plans-and-Budget

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