

<h2>COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS POLICY</h2>	Date Adopted:	14.12.2022
	Adopted By:	Council
	Review Due:	14.12.2025
	Responsible Officer:	Manager Communications and Engagement
	Directorate:	Office of the CEO
	EDRMS No:	

PURPOSE

Council's Community Partnership Grants Policy provides an overarching framework for the Community Partnership Grants program facilitated by Southern Grampians Shire Council. The program seeks to assist Southern Grampians based community groups and organisations whose grant activities address specific community needs and Council's strategic objectives. This policy provides a consistent and transparent approach to the assessment of all Community Partnership Grant applications.

SCOPE

The policy applies to the administration, management, and delivery of Council's Community Partnership Grants Program, delivered by Southern Grampians Shire Council's Community Development team.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Each year, Council delivers two rounds of Community Partnership Grants to facilitate and support community groups and organisations to apply for assistance to deliver projects and initiatives addressing various community needs. These include community projects, events, arts projects, environmental initiatives, community development initiatives, heritage projects and other activities. The grant categories and their purpose are outlined in the Council's Community Partnership Grants guidelines.

Council's Community Partnership Grants Policy confirms Council's commitment to providing funding avenues and support to community groups and organisations and ensures an equitable, open, transparent and accountable decision-making process.

It is a competitive process and is limited by the amount of funds available. Applicants are not guaranteed funding, nor the full amount requested. Projects funded previously cannot be guaranteed funding in future years. This needs to be considered when developing an application.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Council's Community Partnership Grants, applicants must meet the following criteria at the minimum:

- Either be based within Southern Grampians Shire or provide services, projects, events or programs within the boundaries of the municipality that directly benefit the Southern Grampians Shire.
- Be a not-for-profit, incorporated organisation, community groups or club. Applications from individuals will be eligible for the Arts and Culture and Heritage categories only.
- If an applicant is not an eligible organisation as defined above but meets all other eligibility criteria, they may be auspiced by an eligible organisation to apply on their behalf.
- Applicants must hold an adequate public liability insurance policy to cover the staff, members and the general public, as appropriate.
- Applicants must provide evidence of advice obtained regarding relevant permits, approvals, permissions and licenses from the relevant authorities prior to application.

The following groups or activities are not considered eligible for Council's Community Partnership Grants:

- Organisations, activities, or programs which are the responsibility of another level of government, eg. Education and Health.
- Political parties or associated lobby groups.
- Fundraising activities.
- Activities that have already started and/or need retrospective funding.
- Applications for fixed assets, works or improvements on facilities or equipment that is owned or managed by Southern Grampians Shire Council.
- Projects that don't meet the aims of the Council's Community Partnership Grants program or align with the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan or other Council strategies and plans.
- Items that are part of an organisation's core business or normal operating expenses e.g. salaries, insurances, utilities, rental of business premises.
- Applications that do not provide all required supporting documentation on closure of the grants round.
- Groups that have outstanding acquittals from a previous successful grant application.
- Privately-owned, for-profit businesses.

Application

All applications must be submitted through the SmartyGrants online system. Applicants who require support submitting an application are encouraged to seek support from Council.

All applications must be completed in full on closure of grant round. All supporting documentation requested must be provided. Applications that do not include all the required supporting information will not be eligible for assessment.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

In any financial year, applicants can make one or more submissions for different projects. The maximum amount that could be allocated per applicant per financial year is \$15,000.

Applications for more than \$2,500 must demonstrate matching cash contributions. Applicants must provide evidence of cash held, or other approved funding sources by submitting bank statements or grant approval notification. In-kind contributions cannot make up cash component.

Any applicable annual operational subsidies provided by Council are not to be used as the applicant's cash contribution toward the project.

Public Liability Insurance

Public Liability Insurance is an eligibility requirement for Council's Community Partnership Grants program. Applicants must demonstrate insurance that is both appropriate to the grant activity proposed and a policy must be obtained to the minimum value of \$10 million as part of the application process.

This insurance must be in the name of the applicant, group or organisation. Where an applicant is being covered an auspicing agency's public liability insurance, they must ensure the cover is sufficient.

Assessment

Applications for Community Partnership Grants will be assessed against the criteria as outlined in the Community Partnership Grant program guidelines.

In addition to the grant program criteria outlined in the respective guidelines, to support an equitable and transparent distribution of funds, Council may also consider the following assessment criteria and factors, in determining whether to support grant applications:

- Number of grant applications received, and funds sought
- Amount of grant funding available within the Council's Community Partnership Grants annual budget
- Distribution and spread of funded activities across the municipality
- Degree of involvement of other stakeholders
- Evidence of community inclusion principles, targeting and supporting all people regardless of age, gender, race, ability, or socio-economic status
- Potential to develop and maintain project/event sustainability following Council support.

To ensure an accountable and transparent assessment process:

- Applications for grant funding \$2500 and under will be assessed by two or more Council officers and approved under delegation by the CEO.
- Applications for grant funding above \$2,500 up to \$15,000 will be assessed by three or more Council officers and approved under delegation by the CEO.
- Applications will then be ranked accordingly, based on defined scoring protocols.
- CEO will present approved applications to Councillors for noting at Council meeting.
- Successful applicants will be advised following a Council meeting.

The assessment process (including assessor names, conflict of interest declarations, decision comments for each application and recommendations) will be recorded within SmartyGrants.

All applicants will be informed of their application outcomes, and the successful applications will be announced publicly. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered the opportunity to discuss the application process.

All successful applicants will receive the approved funding from Council subject funding conditions.

Conflict of Interest

To ensure probity and fairness, all Council officers involved in grant assessment processes are required to declare their interests prior to assessing any applications. All declarations are recorded in SmartyGrants.

In the event of a conflict of interest, the relevant person must decline to participate in any discussion about the application and have this declaration noted as per Council's conflict of interest process. This process ensures that any potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest is promptly identified and managed appropriately.

To ensure impartiality, Council officers who have assisted with an application, will not be part of the Grants Assessment Team. Councillors are not involved in assessing grants and will only note grants awarded for each funding round.

Funding Conditions

Successful applicants must agree to the following funding conditions:

- Obtain all relevant project and event related permits, approvals, permissions and licenses from the relevant authorities prior to commencement
- Keep Council informed of any changes to the proposed funded activity
- Submit an acquittal to Council after completion of the funded activity
- Return the full amount of the grant to Council if the funded activity is no longer viable and/or cancelled, or contact Council's Grants Team to discuss a variation.
- Acknowledge the support provided by the Southern Grampians Shire Council in the following ways - media releases, brochures, flyers, advertising, newsletters and digital media; at events and activities by way of signage, public announcements, opportunity for speech and or presentation and participation at the event; and inclusion in any relevant publications e.g. annual report

Variations

Any change to the funded projects or funding amounts will require a formal variation request by Council. This request will need to be submitted online and will be assessed and approved by the assessment panel. Applicants should not make changes to projects without receiving

approval in writing. Failure to comply with this process may render applicants ineligible for future funding.

Acquittal

It is a condition of accepting a grant that successful applicants submit an online acquittal within sixty days of completion date of each funded project.

In general, acquittal reports may request (but are not limited to):

- A summary of the activity undertaken
- How the project achieved its objectives
- An evaluation including attendance figures, community impacts and outcomes
- Participant feedback received
- What challenges were encountered and how they were overcome
- Were there any unanticipated benefits
- Any future plans related or as a result
- Financial documentation showing actual expenditure
- Supporting documentation, including publicity and promotional materials, items produced with Council's logo, reviews, photos etc.
- Applicant's feedback on the grant program.

Recipients who have an outstanding funding acquittal for a grant, and do not have an approved variation in place, may be ineligible for funding in future grant rounds until the outstanding acquittal is completed.

Council's Community Partnership Grants Dispute Resolution Process

The decision to award grants is made by Southern Grampians Shire Council. The decision is final and there is no review or appeal process. Any disputes or complaints regarding the Council's Community Partnership Grants program or process will be dealt with in accordance with Council's Complaints Handling Policy.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

The Southern Grampians Council's Community Partnership Grants Policy is supported by the following Council Plans:

- Council's Community Partnership Grants Guidelines
- Southern Grampians Shire Council Plan 2021 - 25
- Southern Grampians Shire Council Community Engagement Policy 2021
- Southern Grampians Shire Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

It is considered that this policy is compatible with the relevant human rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

GENDER EQUALITY COMPLIANCE

It is considered that this policy is compatible with the relevant gender equality principles identified in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Is a Gender Impact Assessment required?

- Yes (*legally required for all policies that have a direct and significant impact on the public*)
- No (*please provide an explanation why a Gender Impact Assessment is not required*)

REFERENCES

- The Victorian Local Government Act 2020

REVIEW

This Policy may be reviewed every 3 years from its adoption.

END