

2.2 2020/21 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program (QRG).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants were designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

There were 12 applications assessed between the period of 13 August – 9 September 2020 and funding of \$18,650 has been awarded to six successful applications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2020/21 Monash Community Grants Program budget. The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$135,000, of which \$18,650 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$36,250, with a remaining budget for the program of \$98,750.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 13 August – 9 September 2020 are presented to Council within the available budget, recognising the implications on future Council budgets given the impact of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures currently in place.

These projects have demonstrated how resilient, adaptive and caring the Monash community is during this challenging time.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the Quick Response Grant program during the period 13 August – 9 September 2020 to a total of \$18,650.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program (QRG).

BACKGROUND

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants were designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

Monash Council has one of the largest community grant programs in Victoria and is proud of its commitment in supporting and valuing the dedicated community groups and organisations within our municipality. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program has enabled Council to continue to support the local community groups and artists to remain agile and innovative as they respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

As per the Guidelines that were endorsed at Council on 9 June 2020 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 July 2020 until the allocation has been exhausted
- Applications will be assessed by an internal Council Officer Panel
- Applicants will receive a response from Council within four weeks of the application being received
- Once receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2021
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next applicable Council meeting

DISCUSSION

The current COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges for Council and community alike, both from an operational and economic perspective. Council is acutely aware of the importance of many of our community groups and the role that they play in combating social isolation and loneliness amongst our community members.

The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program (QRG) has enabled our community to apply for a once-off grant of up to \$5,000 for a project that demonstrates innovation in response to the impact of COVID-19 on their group and our local community.

It is important to note that Quick Response Grants were developed for the community to provide innovative ways to respond to the issues that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 and are not to be a duplicate of an existing program, whether funded through MCGP or other avenues.

The QRG have been promoted through multiple Monash platforms, including:

- July Bulletin
- Monash social media – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- As part of a mail out to current grant recipients
- Art & About e-newsletter

The grants opened on 1 July 2020 and will remain open until the allocation of \$135,000 is exhausted.

There were 12 applications received via the SmartyGrants portal for the period 13 August – 9 September. Applications were assessed by an internal officer assessment panel.

The assessment criteria consisted of the following:

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Demonstrated response to the impacts of COVID-19 on an organisation/community
3. The number of Monash residents that will benefit
4. The capacity of the organisation/community/individual to undertake the project
5. Budget expenditure

An evaluation matrix was developed, taking into consideration the guidelines, ensuring the applications were considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. This provided the assessment process with rigour and consistency.

A total of \$18,650 has been awarded to six successful applications, outlined in the table below. These amounts were determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

Recipient	Project Name	Amount Awarded
Black Hole Theatre	Spin a Yarn	\$5,000.00
Glen Waverley Cricket Club	COVID-19 Preparation Controls	\$300.00
Hum Tum Task Force	To empower the Monash Indian Community during COVID-19	\$4,000.00
HousingFirst	Pocket Market: COVID-19 Response	\$3,550.00
Notting Hill Brandon Park Cricket Club	Covid Interruption Programs and Support	\$800.00
Power Neighbourhood House	Seniors Shining Through Covid	\$5,000.00
	Total	\$18,650.00

Details of these projects are as follows:

Black Hole Theatre (2021QRG0037) – \$5,000.00

Black Hole Theatre will invite 10 members of the Monash community to bring a "story" that will then turn into a digital/video puppetry piece that they can have. The "story" could be an event from real life, a joke, a fantasy, a song, a poem, a short story, or anything that they would like visualised. The "authors" could be children, but also adults, families, members from the CALD community, and elderly people (including those in aged care facilities). Because the work between the puppeteers and the authors would be completely online, COVID safety precautions/protocols will be met.

Glen Waverley Cricket Club (2021QRG0045) – \$300.00

The current pandemic has introduced some clear challenges for the Club. These include co-ordinating most admin activities through online platforms and introduced new guidelines for safety and hygiene. This project hopes to address a key areas in the Club by providing administration support for online meetings and allow coaches and managers (20+) to up-skill without worrying about being timed out (Zoom software, online coaching/training platforms)

Hum Tum (2021QRG0038) – \$4,000.00

Hum Tum will offer a series of workshops to empower City of Monash Indian Community with the knowledge and tools to deal with the mental health issues due to COVID – 19 restrictions.

It seems that the community is feeling 'Restriction Fatigue' which is causing anxiety, loneliness, frustration, etc. Hum Tum aims to engage with community to deal with these effects of coronavirus to take care of the mental well-being as follows:

- General awareness about the mental issues due to coronavirus and help available by invited speaker
- Elders - reach out, to be connected
- Families – to listen the experience of people during Coronavirus moderated by invited expert
- Youth – to talk about children and young adults experience staying home all the using child psychologist for understanding the problems and providing helpful solutions.

HousingFirst (2021QRG0053) – \$3,550.00

For several years, HousingFirst has operated Pocket Market, a social enterprise produce market in Ashwood. Pocket Market provides a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables to people living on low incomes at below-cost prices.

When COVID-19 reached Australia and restrictions were put in place, HousingFirst pivoted to a produce home delivery service. For a flat \$5 fee, tenants could order a fresh fruit and veggie box which contained a range of staple and seasonal fruit and vegetables. From March-June 2020, over 1000 boxes of produce was delivered to residents in need.

Food insecurity won't just go away and if anything, may become worse over the coming 3-5 years as stimulus payments conclude. Funding from City of Monash will contribute towards the costs of fresh produce and grocery items to assist providing long-term food sustainability for Monash community members in need.

Notting Hill Brandon Park Cricket Club (2021QRG0044) – \$800.00

The Club seeks to provide virtual platforms and supporting tools and courses to players, members, families and supporters who form a significant part of the Monash community. This will allow opportunities to be actively involved digitally with team mates and friends whilst Covid restrictions are on. They will also be extending online capabilities for physical training and mental wellbeing sessions.

Power Neighbourhood House (2021QRG0055) – \$5,000.00

The project will provide local senior residents with special craft based activity, information and treat packs to assist them to gain or increase connection within their community. This is particularly vital in this Covid period as loneliness, depression and feelings of isolation have been a noted occurrence.

In the information pack there will be the names and phone numbers of local people who are happy to have a chat as well as a registration form to get a call, along with details of local services and supports.

The creative pack will be filled with targeted materials prepared in consultation with a successful art therapist and to help these seniors to understand and share some of their feelings and to encourage hope and community connections.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Quick Response Grants program is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy that has been implemented with the intention of supporting the Council Plan as well as A Healthy & Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan and other relevant strategic documents.

The Program encourages community connectivity and participation, as well as focusing Council's support on the groups most in need. The MCGP Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the changing needs of both Council and the community.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash community sector has a rich history of innovation and promoting community participation. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant will enable many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively to the impact that COVID-19 has had on their members and local community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The 2020/21 Monash Quick Response Grants Program addresses the four key themes: freedom, respect, equality and dignity of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 13 August – 9 September 2020 are presented to Council within the available budget, recognising the implications on future Council budgets given the impact of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures currently in place.

These projects have demonstrated how resilient, adaptive and caring the Monash community is during this challenging time.