

2.3 2021/22 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 that includes two streams of funding; the general Quick Response Grants (QRG) and the Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants (CRR).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to continue adapting positively to the challenges of COVID-19. In 2021/22 Council has made two streams of funding available. The QRG was designed to support local community groups and individual creative efforts that has arisen outside of the normal funding cycle of the Monash Community Grant Program (MCGP), whilst the CRR was designed to help the Monash community recover from the impact COVID-19 has had on social connections.

Three (QRG - 2, CRR - 1) applications were assessed between the period of 22 October to 25 November 2021. Funding of \$7,098.00 has been awarded to two successful applications in the QRG stream and \$8,000.00 has been awarded to one successful application in the CRR stream.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2021/22 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The General Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$60,000, of which \$7,098.00 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$19,163.36, with a remaining budget for the program of \$40,836.64.

The Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$50,000, of which \$8,000.00 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$11,591.79, with a remaining budget for the program of \$38,408.21.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 22 October to 25 November 2021 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 two streams of the Quick Response Grant program during the period 22 October to 25 November 2021 to a total of \$15,098.00.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program that includes two streams of funding the General Quick Response Grants (QRG) and the Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants (CRR).

BACKGROUND

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to continue adapting positively to the challenges of COVID-19. In 2021/22 Council has made two streams of funding available:

- **General Quick Response Grants** were designed to support local community groups and individual creative efforts to assist in strengthening community and building cohesion and whose project, program or issue may arise outside of the normal funding cycle of the Monash Community Grant Program.
- **Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants** were designed to help the Monash community recover from the impact COVID-19 has had on social connections. Projects or programs funded through this stream should focus on helping our community recover from the pandemic and reconnecting vulnerable or socially isolated people. Funding will be provided to build the capacity of people impacted by COVID-19 and to strengthen community resilience. Projects or programs should ideally occur over a period of time (not a once-off event or activity) to ensure that meaningful and sustainable connections are fostered.

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 continuation of the 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 25 May 2021 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 July 2021 until the allocation has been exhausted
- Applications will be assessed by an internal Council Officer Panel
- Applicants will receive a response from Council within six 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 2022
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next applicable Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

The QRG provides an opportunity for groups or individual artists whose idea, program, or issue falls outside of the normal grant round and previously had no opportunity to apply for funding through Council. By providing this source of funding it ensures that Council is continuing to remain adaptive and agile to community needs. Community groups and artists can apply in this stream for up to \$4,000 in cash and/or in-kind hall hire, with the total budget allocation of \$60,000.

Given the impacts and ramifications that COVID has, and will continue to have, throughout the community Council committed to support resilience and recovery in 2021/22 by providing an additional stream of funding. The CRR is to assist with programs and projects that directly respond to the communities' response to recovery and resilience from COVID. In this stream Neighbourhood Houses, community and service organisation are able to apply for up to \$10,000 in cash and/or in-kind hall hire, with a total budget of \$50,000.

It is important to note that Quick Response Grants were developed for the community to provide innovative projects 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:

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

The grants opened on 1 July 2021 and each stream will remain open until the allocations are exhausted.

Three applications were assessed between the period of 22 October to 25 November 2021. Of these three, two applications were for the QRG stream and one for the CRR stream.

The assessment criteria consisted of the following:

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Relevance to Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
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 **\$15,098.00** has been awarded to three successful applications, outlined in the tables below. These amounts were determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

General Quick Response Grants

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Telugu Ladies Club	Yoga for Wellbeing	\$3,850.00
Happy Seniors Club	Happy Seniors Club	\$3,248.00
TOTAL		\$7,098.00

Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Women's Health East	Kids, Coffee and Connections: Bringing Mothers Together	\$8,000.00
TOTAL		\$8,000.00

Details of the projects are as follows:

Telugu Ladies Club (2122QRG0042) - \$3,850.00

This project seeks to continue Yoga classes in coming weeks and months which is not only beneficial to strengthen the physical health but also for mental emotional and spiritual health. These classes also in a way re-enforce the importance of having self-confidence and assertiveness. These classes are helping mental health aspects in participants along with family violence scenarios. The key thing is that participants, being part of these uplifting Yoga classes, feel more empowered and thereby able to deal better with different adverse scenarios that may come up in their day to day lives.

Happy Seniors Club (2122QRG0043) - \$3,248.00

Happy Seniors club is formed by a group of Chinese seniors living in the City of Monash. It aims to provide a platform to promote healthy and active ageing, social connection, mutual support and cultural inclusion. The Club emphasises equal participation and respect. The club will organise diverse activities such as: English group, Accordion group, Bridge group, table tennis group, Taichi and dance, gardening and gourmet for Chinese seniors. We will also encourage members with special skills to share their experience and teach in the class.

Women's Health East (2122QRG0041) - \$8,000.00

As a result of the social distancing measures put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, many mothers are experiencing social isolation. Women's Health East (WHE) see an opportunity to connect local women through the formation of a local walking friendship group in Notting Hill.

The Kids, Coffee and Connection: Bringing Mothers Together project will target women who parented a new baby/young child during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns and have missed out on important formal and informal supports, such as face to face parenting groups.

The project will endeavour to provide support for women to take ownership of the group at the cessation of the formal project, to enable sustainability of desired outcomes.

With the support of the Notting Hill Neighbourhood House (NHNH), WHE will deliver five planned walking sessions, across a ten-week period with the intention of building the women's capacity and desire to continue meeting on a regular basis. A guest 'walker' will be invited to attend each walk. It's envisaged that topics presented by guests may include maternal and child health and wellbeing issues. The inclusion of a guest walker also encourages connections to services and support that women may need.

The project will be supported by the NHNH, which will act as a meeting place for the women. Walks will be conducted around the Notting Hill area, with the option of convening at the NHNH, or in a local park for conversations, connections and coffee after the walk.

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 Council's Health and Wellbeing 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 is 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 continuation of the Quick Response Grant will enable Council to be adaptive to the community's needs and for 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 2021/22 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

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2021/22 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The General Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$60,000, of which \$7,098.00 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$19,163.36, with a remaining budget for the program of \$40,836.64.

The Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$50,000, of which \$8,000.00 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$11,591.79, with a remaining budget for the program of \$38,408.21.

CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 22 October to 25 November 2021 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.

Quick Response Grants

Assessed 25 November 2021

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Telugu Ladies Club	Yoga for Wellbeing	\$3,850.00	\$3,850.00
Happy Seniors Club	Happy Seniors Club	\$3,248.00	\$3,248.00
TOTAL		\$7,098.00	\$7,098.00

The overall QRG Budget is **\$60,000**. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are **\$19,163.36**, with a remaining budget for the program of **\$40,836.64**.

NB: The score for an application to be successful is 60 or above.

Telugu Ladies Club (2122QRG0042) – SUCCESSFUL (72)

\$3,850.00

This project seeks to continue Yoga classes in coming weeks and months which is not only beneficial to strengthen the physical health but also for mental emotional and spiritual health. These classes also in a way re-enforce the importance of having self-confidence and assertiveness. We see a good degree of evidence in spades to say that these classes are helping mental health aspects in participants along with family violence scenarios. The key thing is that participants, being part of these uplifting Yoga classes, feel more empowered and thereby able to deal better with different adverse scenarios that may come up in their day to day lives.

This group were the recipient of a QRG in 2020/21 for a different project, however due to restrictions and lockdowns were unable to proceed and returned the funds.

This was a strong application that outlines a project this group has successfully delivered previously, addressing the priority areas of mental health, active community engagement and preventing violence against women & children. It indicates a substantial number of participants for an online program and assessors are confident of their ability to deliver this successfully.

Assessors were pleased to see a contribution from the organisation towards the project and recommend fully funding the cash amount requested.

Happy Seniors Club (2122QRG0043) – SUCCESSFUL (64)

\$3,248.00

Happy Seniors club is formed by a group of Chinese seniors living in the City of Monash. It aims to provide a platform to promote healthy and active ageing, social connection, mutual support and cultural inclusion. The Club emphasises equal participation and respect. The club will organise diverse activities such as: English group, Accordion group, Bridge group, table tennis group, Taichi and dance, gardening and gourmet for Chinese seniors. We will also encourage members with special skills to share their experience and teach in the class. The club will be processing the application of being an incorporated organisation from Consumer Affairs Victoria by early 2022.

This is a group that have been working closely with Council's Community Partnership Officer to determine the greatest opportunities available to them after breaking away from the previous group they were a part of. They were put in contact with Ada from Centre for Holistic Health (the auspice) who will assist the requirements of becoming an incorporated organisation and then apply for a PA grant in the 2022/23 MCGP.

The application demonstrated a need within the community and addresses the priority areas of active living, loneliness and lifelong learning. Assessors are confident in their capacity to deliver the project, and are encouraged to see they are learning of the requirements of being an incorporated association before registering with CAV.

Assessors recommend fully funding the hall hire that has been requested.

General Quick Response Grants

Funded projects to 25 November, 2021

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded	Status
Hum Tum Taskforce	Inspiring Hope in the Monash Indian Community: breaking barriers of isolation & loneliness	\$3,600.00	In Progress
Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association	Hall hire for rehearsals	\$2,665.36	In Progress
Bengali Association of Victoria	Spring festival on-line	\$1,800.00	In Progress
Playhouse Players	Stage Productions	\$4,000.00	In Progress
Telugu Ladies Club	Yoga for Wellbeing	\$3,850.00	Approved
Happy Seniors Club	Happy Seniors Club	\$3,248.00	Approved
TOTAL		\$19,163.36	

The overall QRG Budget is **\$60,000**. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are **\$19,163.36**, with a remaining budget for the program of **\$40,836.64**.

Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants

Funded projects to 25 November, 2021

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded	Status
Friends of the Children Foundation	COVID Recovery Community Project	\$3,591.79	In Progress
Women's Health East	Kids, Coffee and Connection: Bringing Mothers Together	\$8,000.00	Approved
TOTAL		\$11,591.79	

The overall Community Resilience & Recovery QRG Budget is **\$50,000**. The total allocations made to date are **\$11,591.79**, with a remaining budget for the program of **\$38,408.21**.