Monash Community Grants Program Policy

Introduction

The City of Monash is committed to developing and fostering a healthy and resilient community. In doing so, it seeks to partner with local organisations to support the delivery of community-based services, programs, projects and events that involve and benefit the Monash community.

Monash is an inclusive city where all residents can feel safe, connected and engaged with their local community, and where everyone has equitable access to facilities, resources and support. One of the key ways in which Council seeks to achieve this is through the delivery of an annual community grants program.

This policy outlines Council's approach to providing cash and in-kind funding to not-for-profit community organisations whose work enriches community life, addresses evidenced needs and aligns with the strategic directions and priorities of Council.

Policy Intent

The intent of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy (MCGP Policy) is to provide a robust and transparent framework to guide the program through which Council provides cash and in-kind funding to community groups and organisations to assist them to deliver activities and services for the community of Monash.

Purpose

The Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) has been a major source of funding to the Monash community since 1995. Through this program, Council aims to:
- Develop partnerships between Council and community groups to achieve Council's strategic directions;
- Direct resources to both the emerging and specific needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities;
- Develop a positive approach to the resolution of local social issues;
- Support local groups, activities and community connectedness; and
- Support community organisations to develop skills and increase community participation.

Scope

The MCGP Policy applies to direct financial and in-kind funding to local community groups and organisations that may:
- Deliver a service needed by the community;
- Develop community capacity;
- Provide an opportunity for local community members to participate in civic life and/or socially connect with other members of the local community;
- Provide an opportunity for local community members to make a cultural and/or artistic contribution to the Monash community; and/or
- Organise an event or festival that is open to the whole Monash community

Roles & Responsibilities

Community organisations are responsible for planning, preparing and submitting their applications via the online application system (SmartyGrants). If successful, the funded organisation is responsible for the appropriate expenditure of all cash funds and the delivery of agreed outcomes as reflected in the Funding Agreement and approved Work/Event Plan.

The Monash Community Grants Assessment Panel consists of three (3) Council officers, with additional advice provided by other officers dependent on their area of expertise. The Panel will consider all eligible applications and is responsible for making annual funding recommendations. These final funding allocations will be considered at a full meeting of Council.

Council officers will administer the grants program and provide advice and support to applicants.

In implementing this Policy, Councillors and Council officers must comply with the Councillors Code of Conduct 2017 and the Local Government Act 2020 (where applicable).

Councillors and Council officers must declare any instance where they, or any member of their immediate family, has a significant interest or holds a position of influence or power in an organisation that is a grant applicant. Where an interest is declared, that person may not participate in any matter associated with the application (i.e. submission, evaluation, recommendation or approval). The onus is on the Councillor or Council officers to withdraw themselves from involvement and to declare an actual or potential conflict of interest to Council.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
Grants will be subject to an annual acquittal by all grant recipients, including financial and programmatic outcome reporting. Any recipient organisation which does not deliver the intended outcomes, or does not expend cash funding in line with their Funding Agreement, may be required to return the grant (either in part or in full).

Annual audits (programmatic and financial) will be carried out with a selection of grant recipients. A full external audit of the Monash Community Grants Program will be conducted every three years. Details of the Monash Community Grants Program will be available for inspection as required by the Local Government (General) Regulations (2015).

Budget
The Monash Community Grants Program operational budget is allocated through the annual Council Budget approval process, for the financial year 1 July – 30 June each year. The MCGP budget is allocated as cash and in-kind grants, subject to Council approval. Apportionment of funding across the categories remains at the discretion of Council.

In-principle approval will be offered to applicants prior to the annual budget approval; formal grant approval notification and payment will only be made after 1 July, subject to Funding Agreement terms and conditions (see Timelines section for further detail).

Eligibility
To be eligible to receive funding through the MCGP, all organisations must:
- be an incorporated community group or organisation with not for profit status OR auspiced by an eligible organisation;
- deliver the funded activity/services within the City of Monash boundaries;
- maintain a minimum of $20 million public liability insurance cover;
- have no debts to Council; and
- have completed all previous MCGP funding acquittal requirements.

The following requests are considered ineligible and will not be funded through the MCGP:
- Individuals;
- Projects/services occurring outside the City of Monash boundaries;
- Commercial/for-profit projects/services;
- Fundraising activity, with the exception of local service clubs (such as Lions and Rotary clubs) with no links to Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) for one event per year;

- Retrospective funding;
- Conference registration/travel expenses;
- Debt payment;
- Capital Infrastructure;
- Research;
- Employment of staff in an ongoing position;
- An individual person's expenses;
- Utilities and rates;
- Insurance;
- Gifts and prizes;
- Administration expenses over $100;
- Alcohol;
- Assets & equipment over $250
- Digital equipment, including tablets, computers, phones, etc;
- Groups that meet in venues that have EGMs;
- Projects/services that are inconsistent with Council's objectives;
- Projects/services that are considered the funding responsibility of other tiers of government;
- Projects/services that are for specific religious purposes or seeks to proselytise or influence a person's religious beliefs (this does not include community celebrations of annual calendar religious festivals or events);
- Projects/services that are held for political purposes or seeks to influence a person's political beliefs;
- Projects/services that duplicate other existing projects/services;
- Applications that are submitted late;
- Community groups that hold significant financial reserves; and
- Positive Ageing category applicants who have less than 20 Regular Monash Participants (RMP) participating in their activity.

Program Principles & Priorities

The Monash Community Grants Program focuses on strengthening the Monash community through its people. Community development principles underpin the approach that Monash takes to grant making. These principles include:

- Asset based thinking, building on the strengths that exist within the community
- Evidence based approach that acknowledges the needs and aspirations of our community
- Access and equity to ensure a socially inclusive community
- Collaborations and partnerships

These principles guide both how Council works with the community and the types of services and projects that will be prioritised for funding.

Funding priority will be given to applications that deliver health & wellbeing outcomes within a community setting, which contribute to community cohesion and enrich people's lives. All applications must respond to identified community needs and align with the priorities outlined in the *Council Plan –2021-2025*, *the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* and other strategic plans of Council.

Applications must demonstrate innovation, either by delivering a new concept, or by building upon an existing program, service or event.

Funding Categories & Assessment Criteria

The City of Monash will provide annual funding across nine (9) categories of the Monash Community Grants Program;
- Community Strengthening;
- Hall Only
- Specialist Services
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Positive Ageing;
- Arts and Cultural Projects;
- Community Events;
- Major Festivals; and
- Active Projects

Organisations may apply for funding under multiple categories within the same round, provided that the applications are not submitted for the same project/service. This is limited to one application per category. If multiple applications are submitted by the same organisation in the same category, the organisation will be asked to nominate their preferred project and withdraw the other(s) or rework their project plan to resubmit one application for the category.

Assessment Criteria

Each category of the MCGP has a unique mix of funding available and assessment criteria.

All applications will be assessed against both the *Program-Wide Criteria* as well as the relevant individual *Category Criteria* under which the application has been submitted. Applications will be scored based upon the extent to which the proposed activity/program addresses each criteria.

Program-Wide Criteria (with the exception of Hall Only and Positive Ageing):
- Addresses an evidence-based community need (20% score weighting)
- Demonstrates innovation (either new concept or development of existing project/service/event) (10% score weighting)
- Relevance to Council's strategic plans (10% score weighting)
- Financials and budget (10% score weighting)

Category Assessment Criteria:

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	FUNDING AVAILABLE
Community Strengthening	• Increase social inclusion • Respond to emerging community needs • Increase skills, knowledge and leadership in order to build community capacity	• Number of Monash residents participating in the funded activity (10%) • Level of contribution (cash and/or in-kind) provided by applicant organisation (15%) • Inability to access other funding (15%) • Demonstrated potential for sustainability beyond Council funding (10%)	**Cash:** Up to $20,000 **In-kind (hall hire):** Capped at $20,000 One year funding only
Hall Only	• Increase social inclusion • Respond to community needs	• Number of Monash residents participating in the funded activity (20%)	Cash funding is not available under this category

Attachment 1: Monash Community Grants Program Policy

	• Increase skills, knowledge and leadership in order to build community capacity	• Addresses an evidence based community need (40%) • Outline of the service provided to the Monash community (40%)	**In-kind (hall hire):** Capped at $15,000 Applications for funding for up to three (3) years will be considered
Specialist Services	• Support for established service delivery organisations • Improve the health and wellbeing of Monash residents through direct service delivery • Support residents to participate fully in community life • Complement other services available in City of Monash	• Number of Monash residents accessing the service annually (10%) • Level of contribution (cash and/or in-kind) provided by applicant organisation (10%) • Expertise available to deliver the funded service (15%) • Evidence of partnerships with Council or other organisations in Monash (15%)	**Cash:** no cap *It is expected that applicants must demonstrate a financial contribution to the service and/or evidence of funding partners.* **In-kind (hall hire or facility rental):** no cap Applications for funding for up to three (3) years will be considered
Neighbourhood House	• Add value to core services and programs delivered by Neighbourhood Houses • Develop community capacity and empowerment	• Delivers clear community development outcomes (15%) • Builds social cohesion (15%) • Increases community participation, particularly through diversity and inclusion (10%) • Number of Monash residents directly participating in and/or attending the service (10%)	**Cash:** Up to $10,000 per annum **In-kind (hall hire or facility rental):** no cap Applications for funding for up to three (3) years will be considered
Positive Ageing	• Support social inclusion initiatives specifically for senior Monash residents. • Support the provision of regular activities and nutritious meals in a social setting.	• Applicants must have a minimum of 20 Monash residents members that actively participate in the group's activities (Regular Monash Participants) • If applying for meal subsidy funding, meals provided must be substantial and nutritious.	**Cash**: Up to $5,000 Cash funding is calculated based upon Regular Monash Participants (RMP) and frequency of meals provided (if applicable), capped at $4,000 Operational funding = $10 per RMP Meal subsidy funding = ($10 x RMP) + ($1 x RMP x meals served per year)

Attachment 1: Monash Community Grants Program Policy

			Probus Clubs are eligible for in-kind funding only **In-kind (hall hire):** Capped at $30,000 **In-kind (printing):** Printing funding = RMP x (pages x editions) Printing is provided based upon the number of Regular Monash Participants (RMP). Up to 4 pages (8 sides) will be printed, a maximum of 12 times per year. Prints may run at less pages and less frequent editions, depending on the group's needs. Applications for funding for up to three (3) years will be considered
Arts and Cultural Projects	• Create opportunities for community expression • Encourage collaboration between community, artists and other local partners • Increase cultural awareness and cohesion	• Number of Monash residents directly participating in and/or attending the activity (10%) • Demonstrated cultural awareness (10%) • Ability to create opportunities, jobs or experiences for the local community (15%) • Evidence of capacity to deliver (15%)	**Cash:** Up to $5,000 **In-kind (hall hire):** Up to $10,000 One year funding only
Community Events	• Support for community-produced events which celebrate occasions relevant to the Monash community • Celebration of diversity and inclusion.	• Increases community participation, particularly through diversity and inclusion (15%) • Demonstrated engagement with local businesses and/or residents in the production of the event (10%)	**Cash:** Up to $7,000 **In-kind (hall hire):** Capped at $5,000 One year funding only

	• Create opportunities to showcase local artistic content • Delivery of small-scale events which encourage participation by anyone in the community *Member-only events are not considered to be community events*	• Evidence of understanding of event management planning and expertise (10%) • Ability to connect with the community beyond current members (15%)	
Major Festivals	• Support for large-scale events which have broad community appeal. • Celebration of diversity and inclusion. • Deliver high levels of participation, both through audiences and content delivery. • Create community pride and contribute to Monash's sense of place.	• Evidence of professional event management planning and expertise (10%) • Demonstrated evidence of a cohesive, local steering committee/advisory group to assist with the delivery of the festival (15%) • Level of contribution (cash and/or in-kind) provided by applicant organisation, as well as other sources of funding (15%) • Demonstrated potential for sustainability beyond Council funding (10%)	**Cash:** No cap In-kind funding is <u>not</u> available under this category One year funding only
Active Projects	• Support for the introduction of innovative participation-based sports and recreation programs. • Create a more inclusive environment for participation. • Create a sustainable club.	• Delivers clear strategies for increasing participation across one or more cohorts identified as under-represented in the club/sport (15%) • Evidence of steps taken to create a more inclusive environment (15%) • Evidence that the club will engage in the development of improved/revised governance practices (20%)	Cash: Up to $2,000 One year funding only

Assessment

All applications received via Smarty Grants by the closing date will be assessed. A pre-eligibility check will be undertaken to ensure applications meet the eligibility criteria.

All applications will be reviewed and assessed by the Monash Community Grant Assessment Panel against a scoring matrix to ensure consistency, equity and transparency across the program

Timelines

The following timeline should be used as a guide only. Exact dates will be confirmed annually via the MCGP Initiation Report to Council.

Milestone	Date
MCGP Information Sessions & Application Support Workshops	February
Applications Open	Late January
Applications Close	Early March
Application Assessments	March – April
Grant Allocations Approved by Council	May
Successful and Unsuccessful notification letters sent out	May
Council Budget Approved	June
Funding Agreements sent out	July

Returning of Grant Funds

A successful recipient of a MCGP grant must comply with all conditions outlined in the MCGP Guidelines, as well as any other such additional conditions specified by Council in approving the Grant. If these conditions are not met or the grant is spent on ineligible items, as identified in the expenditure statement provided in the acquittal report, Council reserves the right to request the funds to be returned.

Any unspent funds at the end of the project must be returned to Council.

Dispute Resolution Pathway

Applicants that do not agree with the outcome are able, in the first instance, to make contact with the Community Grants Officer (CGO) or Coordinator – Community Partnerships & Health Promotion (CCPHP) to seek further information and feedback relating to their application provided by the Assessment Panel.

Should this not be resolved, the applicant is not comfortable or consider it appropriate to contact either the CGO or CCPHP the applicant can apply for a review to the Manager – Community Strengthening (MCS). The MCS will acknowledge receipt of the dispute within five (5) business days and provide and outcome of the review within ten (10) business days.

Should this not be satisfactory a further review can be submitted to the Director – Community Services. The Director will finalise their review of the original decision within 14 days of receiving the request for the review and advise the outcome in writing.

Related Documents:

Strategies	Including, but not limited to: • Monash Council Plan 2021-2025 • A Healthy & Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2021-2025 • The Ashwood Chadstone Community Action Plan • The Oakleigh Community Action Plan • The Clayton Community Action Plan • The Mulgrave Community Action Plan • The Notting Hill Community Action Plan • The Monash Public Art Policy • Monash Public Health Approach to Gambling Policy • The Gender Equity Strategy • Monash Loneliness Framework 2020-2025 • Age Friendly Monash
Guidelines *	Monash Community Grants Program Applicant Guidelines
Legislation	Local Government Act (Vic) 1989

*Guidelines and other supporting materials such as templates and example documents will be updated annually, or as required.

Definitions

Community Grant	Support offered to an organisation, either as cash or a non-cash value, following a competitive, open and transparent application process. A community grant is provided specifically to support a particular project, program or service as outlined in the approved application.
Cash Grant	A sum of money provided to an organisation to deliver a particular project, program or service as outlined in the approved application. Cash grants are paid to the organisation and conditions, reporting and acquittal requirements apply.
In-kind funding	A non-cash arrangement to waive the cost of one-off or repeat use of a facility. The in-kind grant provided reflects the dollar value of a facility's hire fees or leased market value. In the case of the Positive Ageing category only, in-kind funding can also apply to the cost associated with printing, where Council provides printing as part of a grant.
Not-for-profit organisation	An entity that does not return profits or surplus to members, owners, directors or communities and is not primarily guided by commercial goals. Any funds raised or profits made with a not-for-profit community organisations are held and/or invested back into the organisation.
Community organisation	Not-for-profit organisations and groups that encompass a wide range of activities, programs and services that are aimed at improving people's quality of life. Council only funds not-for-profit community organisations that are legal entities.
Incorporated association	A club or community group that is a registered legal entity, usually established for recreational, cultural or charitable purposes. The association must have at least five members and all profits must be returned into the association's activities.
Auspice	Under an auspice arrangement, an eligible (incorporated not-for-profit) organisation (the auspicor) acts as the applicant on behalf of an unincorporated organisation (the auspicee). Under an auspice arrangement, Council will enter into a funding agreement with the auspicor on behalf of the auspicee. The auspicor will receive the grant funds on behalf of the auspicee. While it is understood that the auspicee will actually deliver the funded activities, the auspicor will be responsible to Council for the delivery of the funded activities and the acquittal of funds.