

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 is designed to support local community groups and individual creative efforts that have arisen outside of the normal funding cycle of the Monash Community Grant Program (MCGP), whilst the CRR is designed to help the Monash community recover from the impact COVID-19 has had on social connections.

Seven (QRG - 4, CRR - 3) applications were assessed between the period of 11 August to 22 September 2021. Funding of \$8,065.36 has been awarded to three successful applications in the QRG stream and \$3,591.79 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 \$8,065.36 has been allocated in this period. The remaining budget for the program is \$51,934.64.

The Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$50,000, of which \$3,591.79 has been allocated in this period. The remaining budget for the program is \$46,408.21.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 11 August to 22 September 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.

2021/22 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the two streams of the Quick Response Grant program during the period 11 August to 22 September 2021 to a total of \$11,657.15.

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.

Seven applications were assessed between the period of 11 August to 22 September 2021. Of these, four applications were for the QRG stream and three were 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 **\$11,657.15** has been awarded to four 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
Hum Tum Taskforce	Inspiring Hope in the Monash Indian Community: breaking barriers of isolation & loneliness	\$3,600.00
Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association	Hall hire for rehearsals	\$2,665.36
Bengali Association of Victoria	Spring festival on-line	\$1,800.00
TOTAL		\$8,065.36

Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grants

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Friends of the Children Foundation	COVID Recovery Community Project	\$3,591.79
TOTAL		\$3,591.79

Details of the projects as provided by the applicants are as follows:

Hum Tum Taskforce (2122QRG0023) - \$3,600.00

Lockdowns are critical to manage the spread of COVID 19. But these lockdowns have affected our lives in many ways – we may feel lonely and isolated due to limited connection within community, worried about loved ones and be managing new responsibilities such as working from home, home schooling, studying online, or we may currently be out-of-work.

There has been definitely an elevated sense of stress and anxiety in Indian community particularly around social distancing, isolation and disconnection from family, friends, in India. To cope with mental issues we should try to do something that gives a sense of pleasure and/or achievement. HTTF has decided to help & cheering up city of Monash Indian Community at grass root level by following activities:

1. Gully Games - Physical Activity to lower depression and anxiety.
2. Adventurous Cooking - Face to face or Zoom activity where participants will be provided with the ingredients from leftovers and they have to create a dish and share recipes.
3. Karaoke Singing – Music is a therapy that connects People thus break isolation and loneliness. Face to face Or Zoom Activity.

Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association (2122QRG0029) - \$2,665.36

To provide music training and development for senior citizens from non-English speaking backgrounds and provide entertainment for residents of aged care homes in the City of Monash. To participate in community activities by providing musical performances at council run events at various venues

Bengali Association of Victoria (2122QRG0033) - \$1,800.00

The project- Spring festival on-line - has been prepared with the object of infusing positivity in the Bengali community in the current COVID climate. The community celebrates this festival, every year and is greatly enjoyed not only by the Bengali community but other ethnic groups as well. It brings the community together. Under current restrictions it is not possible to have a F2F gathering. Due to travel ban many families have not been able to travel to India (for almost two years) to connect with their families. This has created a sense of loneliness and social isolation. Hence, we have moved this celebration to a digital platform. With this end in view, this programme has been designed to present the following:

1. A short musical concert
2. A dance cum poetry narrative
3. Member interaction to foster positive emotions

Friends of the Children Foundation (2122QRG0011) - \$3,592.00

In line with FOTCF's core objectives, we are partnering with Rotary Satellite Club of Waverley to deliver this project, which aims to support individuals, families and our local community particularly residing in Monash City Council areas, which have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 situation. The project would especially be focused on women who are suffering from mental health issues, anxiety and depression because of job loss or other reasons.

Activities would be conducted via zoom and face-to-face to engage our local community members who are feeling overwhelmed by the pressures and challenges that this unrepresented COVID-19 situation has caused over last many months & continuing with more severity with no end in sight. The various activities can be summarised as:

- Health & Well Being Activities and programs
- Skill Upgrade, Mentoring, Job Ready Programs and Educational Seminars
- Community Gardening
- Morning tea and afternoon tea sessions
- Music – Singing, using musical instrument for relaxation
- Encourage youths to join our efforts (e.g. Monash Youth Committee)

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 \$8,065.36 has been allocated in this period. The remaining budget for the program is \$51,934.64.

The Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$50,000, of which \$3,591.79 has been allocated in this period. The remaining budget for the program is \$46,408.21.

CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 11 August to 22 September 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.