

2.5 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 have 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.

Seven (QRG - 4, CRR - 3) applications were assessed between the period of 26 November 2021 to 3 February 2022. Funding of \$11,787.30 has been awarded to three successful applications in the QRG stream and there were no successful applications 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 \$11,787.30 has been allocated in this period. Including these decisions the total allocations made to date are \$30,950.66, with a remaining budget for the program of \$29,049.34.

The Community Resilience & Recovery Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$50,000, of which nothing 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 26 November 2021 to 3 February 2022 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 26 November 2021 to 3 February 2022 to a total of \$11,787.30.

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 26 November 2021 to 3 February 2022. Of these seven, four applications were for the QRG stream and three 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 **\$11,797.30** 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
Rashmi Gore	Resilience & Recovery Through Art Workshops	\$4,000.00
Multicultural Women Victoria (VIRWC)	Zumba for Multicultural Women	\$3,987.30
Natyalayaa Indian Classical Dance	Visions of India	\$3,800.00
TOTAL		\$11,797.30

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

Rashmi Gore (2122QRG0045) - \$4,000.00

Art can be used as a medium for expressing one's emotions, helping people socialise & come together as a community post Covid lockdowns. Art is a very good way to de-stress and relax a stressed mind. Rashmi will run a series of workshops designed specifically for different age groups, including an option of conducting an inter-generational workshop with the PALS team (where Grandparents can participate with their grand-children). The effects of lockdown on people including young children (speaking from experience of teaching online) has been tremendous.

A mix of art modalities (such as painting, mandala, clay work, upcycled art etc.) will be used as a means to help heal their minds & improve resilience to bounce back from psychological & social effects of lockdown and help bring communities closer together once again.

Multicultural Women Victoria (2122QRG0046) - \$3,987.30

Multicultural Women Victoria in partnership with the African Women and Families Network, will be offering Zumba for multicultural women in the City of Monash.

A great proportion of women are currently unable to access standard Gym's facilities for cultural reasons. In addition, most women are Muslim and will require to remove their religious clothing to participate. Therefore, the standard gym setting does not meet their requirements in addition to the cost most of them cannot afford.

MWV also sees the Zumba Classes to be a great opportunity for multicultural women from any cultural background and faith to meet and learn more about each other. This is also a great contributor to breaking the barriers of intercultural communication and greater understanding of other cultures.

Natyalayaa Indian Classical Dance (2122QRG0053) - \$3,800.00

A dynamic classical, semi-classical and folk dances will be presented with a new partnership with MGA during the Visions of India exhibition at MGA. It will showcase cultural performances that touch the hearts of migrant communities living and practicing the art form within Monash and generate awareness to the broader community of the richness of Indian Culture and festivities.

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

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CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 26 November 2021 to 3 February 2022 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.