

## 7.2.3 2023/24 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS - FEBRUARY

<b>Responsible Manager:</b>	Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	Russell Hopkins, Director Community Services

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the Quick Response Grant program during the period 13 December 2023 to 30 January 2024 to a total of \$13,270.41.**

### INTRODUCTION

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

### COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### **Inclusive Services**

Community development and advocacy to support the Monash community.  
Deliver high performing services.  
Fostering an equitable, just and inclusive Monash.

#### **Good Governance**

Ensure a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable organisation.

### BACKGROUND

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.

At its meeting in June 2020 Council endorsed the establishment of a Quick Response Grant program (QRG). The basis for this grant program was to enable the Monash community and Council to remain adaptive and agile in response to COVID and ensure that groups could continue to meet and bring the community together. This program was proven to be extremely successful.

Council, at its meeting in May 2021, endorsed the QRG as a permanent open grant program, utilising the allocated funds each year.

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 per the Guidelines that were endorsed at Council on 30 May 2023 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 June 2023 until 10 May 2024, or 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.
- After receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2024.
- 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 for up to \$5,000 in cash and/or in-kind hall hire, with the total budget allocation of \$115,042.

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

The grants opened on 1 June 2023 and will remain open until 10 May 2024 or until the allocations are exhausted.

Four grants have been awarded for the period of 23 August to 14 September 2023.

The assessment criteria consists 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, to ensure the applications were considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. The matrix provides the assessment process with rigour and consistency.

A total of **\$13,270.41** has been awarded to four successful applications, outlined in the table below. The amount awarded was determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Monash City Villarreal FC	First Aid Training to equip our volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills to respond club's medical emergencies appropriately	\$2,000.00
Shakti Mental Health	Creative community wellbeing activation project	\$3,527.86
Gamaka	Gamaka presents Classical Connections	\$3,000.00
Sirimavians in Melbourne	Sri Lankan New Year Celebration	\$4,942.55
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$13,270.41</b>

Two of the applications that have been funded in this period are previous recipients of funding from Council for these activities. They have been recommended to apply for the 2024/25 MCGP to support their activities in the future as the intent of this program is not to fund recurrent programs.

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

*Monash City Villarreal FC (2324QRG051) - \$2,000.00*

We are seeking funding to provide first aid training to our 16 volunteers. Our club is committed to ensuring that every competition we organize is not only well-planned, but also safe for all participants. As part of this commitment, we believe that investing in this training is essential to provide a safer environment. Our volunteers will learn how to recognize and respond to any injury or medical emergency that may occur, making sure that participants receive immediate medical attention. This training will equip our volunteers with the knowledge and resources they need to treat injuries as early as possible, minimizing the risk of any serious harm. Council's support will go a long way in helping us achieve our goal of providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all our participants, without adding any additional costs for participation.

*Shakti Mental Health (2324QRG064) – \$3,115.00*

Shakti mental health is looking to support the growing number of vibrant South Asian youth in the city of Monash by introducing monthly creative wellbeing initiatives over a six-month basis to reduce loneliness, isolation and mental health stigma in the community. These monthly creative activations will include cooking workshops, yoga facilitation, arts workshops, carrom (South Asian board game) and chai nights in an effort to up lift wellbeing using creative outlets. Instead of just discussing wellbeing in a room these creative activations encourage participants to move around, genuinely connect with each other and take part in monthly programs over a 6-month period to consistently support wellbeing. Because of cultural stigma, history of shame and tendency to keep wellbeing challenges private South Asian youth may find it difficult to open up and share issues such as depression, anxiety, isolation, loneliness and other challenges in a supported way. Our creative community wellbeing activations will bring South Asian youth together in ways they feel connected and comfortable to develop friendships, advocacy and continued support through different monthly activations. Throughout these monthly activations we will also work with culturally responsive facilitators to support the project with the expected results of increased

awareness of wellbeing resources, reducing community isolation and increase of community connection to the city of Monash.

*Gamaka (2324QRG069) – \$3,000.00*

Gamaka, a grassroots organisation born in the City of Monash, presents “Classical Connections”, a rare opportunity for local residents and migrant-owned businesses to connect over an evening of Carnatic Music.

The concert will take place on 17th March 2024 at the Ian Potter Centre for Performing Arts, a leading arts institution with superior acoustic and production facilities that elevate artist and audience experiences alike. Dedicated foyer activation will showcase local migrant-owned businesses, enabling them to form new connections and grow their reach.

The event is specifically targeted at City of Monash residents, including the local arts community, student population, migrant families and businesses. Funding from this grant will be prioritised towards activities that support local City of Monash residents, including targeted engagement with the local community and investment in an enhanced audience experience of the program.

*Sirimavians in Melbourne (2324QRG073) – \$4,942.55*

To celebrate the major annual Sri Lankan holiday, Sirimavians in Melbourne Inc (SIM) is organising the event "Sri Lankan New Year Celebration" in Monash on March 10, 2024. The event is mainly designed to reunite the Sri Lankan community in Melbourne, aiming to bring together individuals and families of all ages and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Having hosted the event for the first time last year, we received overwhelming requests from the attendees to continue the event annually.

This event will feature a traditional "New Year Table" filled with mouth-watering Sri Lankan delicacies including coconut milk rice and a variety of Sri Lankan New Year sweets. Various activities will be organised to create an enriching experience for both the Sri Lankan diaspora and the wider community in Monash. These activities include Sri Lankan cultural performances of dance and music, involving professionals as well as attendees who would like to showcase their talents.

Sri Lankan New Year serves as a shining example of how cultural festivals can bridge divides and strengthen the bonds among different ethnic groups by cultivating collective unity in commemorating a festive occasion. By organizing this Sri Lankan New Year Celebration, we aim to hold a joyous and inclusive event that not only connects the Sri Lankan diaspora with their cultural roots but also promotes cultural exchange and understanding within the broader community.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2023/24 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$115,042, of which \$13,270.41 has been allocated in this period with a remaining budget for the program of \$45,451.60.

## 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 community groups most in need. The MCGP Policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the changing needs of both Council and the community.

## CONSULTATION

Community consultation was not required.

## SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash community sector has a rich history of innovation and promoting community participation. The QRG program enables Council to be adaptive to the community's needs and for many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively for their members and local community.

## HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The 2023/24 Quick Response Grants Program is entirely consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In particular, the program supports -

- freedom of expression;
- peaceful assembly and freedom of association;
- taking part in public life; and
- cultural rights

## GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The QRG is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). As these programs are both focussed on having a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a gender impact assessment (GIA) was undertaken in April 2023. This was included in the MCGP Allocations Report that was tabled at the May 2023 Council meeting.

As per the previous GIA we are continuing to collect data on how projects address gender inequality, how inclusive/accessible they are and the anticipated reach of the projects by gender.

## CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 13 December 2023 to 30 January 2024 are presented to Council within the available budget.



ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil