

7.2.2 2025/26 MONASH EQUALITY & RESPECT GRANT RECIPIENT

Responsible Manager:	Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening
Responsible Director:	Tanya Scicluna, Director Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. **Notes the successful application submitted by Free from Family Violence (FVREE) to be funded through the Monash Equality and Respect Grant program to a total of \$48,024.51**
2. **Allocates the residual budget of \$3,975.49 to the 2025/26 Quick Response Grant budget to enable Council to continue assisting the community throughout the funding year**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the successful application to the Monash Equality and Respect Grant program.

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sustainable City

Ensure an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable municipality.

Inclusive Services

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

Good Governance

Ensure a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable organisation.
Effectively communicate and engage with the community.

BACKGROUND

The City of Monash has had a longstanding commitment to, and leadership role in, promoting gender equity in our community and workplace. Through Council's Monash Community Grant Program (MCGP), the program has historically prioritised initiatives that deliver on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, prevention of violence against women, community safety and respect. Additionally, this commitment has been demonstrated through Quick Response Grants, to further support community groups to deliver initiatives such as the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign.

To continue this commitment, at its meeting on 27 May 2025, when considering the allocation of the 2025/26 Monash Community Grants Program budget (\$2,591,894), Council resolved to:

[Allocate the] residual funds (\$52,000) to a grant program to support initiatives which contribute to the prevention of violence, and requests officers to prepare associated guidelines for Council's consideration.

As per the Guidelines that were subsequently endorsed at Council on 26 August 2025 the process was undertaken as follows:

- Applications submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 to 25 September 2025.
- Applications assessed by an internal Council Officer Panel.
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the November Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

Monash Council has had a longstanding commitment to, and leadership role in, promoting gender equity through Council's Gender Equity Framework, Gender Equity Advisory Committee, and recently completing the Free from Violence program (2022-2025) funded by the Victorian Government.

The Monash Equality and Respect Grant further demonstrate Council's commitment to fostering safety, respect, and inclusion through the provision of this grant program for community.

It has enabled organisations to apply for this grant to assist with furthering Council's work in the prevention of family violence and violence against women while having competency, sensitivity and focus on multicultural communities.

The assessment criteria consisted of the following:

1. Demonstrated knowledge and experience as a service provider of primary prevention of family violence and violence against women
2. Evidence of an understanding of working with multicultural and linguistically diverse communities
3. The ability and understanding to meet the community group needs for the delivery of the project.
4. The proposed approach to developing, delivering and evaluating the project
5. The capacity of the organisation to undertake the project
6. Budget expenditure

An evaluation matrix was developed, taking into consideration the guidelines, and ensuring that the application was considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way.

The assessment panel was comprised of four officers from the Community Strengthening team.

The available funding pool was **\$52,000**.

Ten applications, totalling \$302,124.51, were received, with the below applicant awarded the full requested funding.

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Free from Family Violence (FVREE)	Level Playground: Strengthening Capacity of Multicultural Early Years Services in Monash	\$48,024.51
TOTAL		\$48,024.51

Details of how the funding will be used, as provided by the applicant, is as follows:

FVREE (2526MER05) - \$48,024.51

FVREE, in partnership with the Migrant Information Centre (MIC), will deliver a culturally responsive gender equity (GE) initiative to strengthen the capacity of multicultural early years (EY) services in Monash, with a particular focus on Mandarin-speaking families and educators.

Recognising Mandarin as one of Monash's most widely spoken community languages, this project aims to promote GE, inclusion, and family violence awareness through tailored training and translated resources in EY settings. The project will be driven by community consultation and will scale up and tailor FVREE's established GE initiatives to the specific needs of Monash's multicultural community.

Key activities:

- Consultation with members and organisations of the Mandarin-speaking community, including educators, families, peer leaders, and Council
- Translating resources from FVREE's GE Resource Kit into Mandarin and the provision of 10 GE Kits to services
- Adapting existing training programs to better reflect the needs of Mandarin-speaking communities
- Delivery of five professional development sessions for EY services in partnership with MIC (GE and/or Managing Resistance Training)
- Delivery of five play-based workshops with Mandarin-speaking playgroups with a focus on GE and challenging stereotypes
- Delivery of two 3Rs of Family Violence training sessions, with an intersectional and multicultural lens. Beneficiaries include EY educators, Mandarin-speaking families, and broader multicultural communities in Monash. We will partner with MIC and Snuggles Early Years Service in consultation and co-development to ensure relevance and sustainability of the project.

Expected outcomes:

- Increased confidence in delivering GE and respectful relationships education in EY settings
- Increased access to GE resources, including translated resources to support respectful relationships education
- Increased confidence of parents/carers to challenge gender stereotypes through play
- Improved capacity among the Monash community to respond to disclosures of family violence
- Strengthened community connections between organisations that promote equity and inclusion



This initiative supports Monash's commitment to diversity, safety, and inclusion in the Early Years. As the funding requested is less than the funding pool, it is requested that the residual budget, \$3,975.49, is allocated to the 2025/26 Monash Quick Response Grant (QRG) program to enable Council to utilise this funding for community projects for the remainder of the financial year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Equality and Respect Grant is funded from the existing 2025/26 Monash Community Grants Program budget. The allocated budget for this program is \$52,000, with \$48,024.51 being awarded to the successful applicant, and the residual, \$3,975.49 to be allocated to the QRG program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Whilst this is a stand-alone grant program the Monash Equality and Respect Grant aligns with the MCGP Policy, that is based on Council's values and strategic objectives outlined in the Monash Council Plan 2025-2029, in particular 'A Healthy, Safe and Connected Community'.

Monash Council has a proud history of working in partnership with community-based organisations to meet the needs of local residents and to deliver positive community outcomes. The funded activities in this program will support key Council plans, strategies and frameworks including but not limited to:

- The Council Plan 2025-2029
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029
- Monash Gender Equity Framework
- Community Safety Framework 2022-2026

CONSULTATION

Community consultation was not required.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Equality and Respect Grant Program has strong social benefits. Not only does this grant align with strategic Council strategies and plans, but it furthers efforts in creating a safer, more respectful and empowered community. The grant will provide further opportunities for communities to come together to learn and challenge collectively, gender norms, promote respectful relationships, embody gender equality, and encourage more community-wide conversation and collective action to prevent family violence and violence against women. Providing the funding to a local organisation assists with building local capacity and ensuring cultural appropriate and inclusive programming. Overall, this grant funding will contribute to long-term cultural change and a more equitable and safe community for community members, regardless of gender.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The Monash Equality and Respect Grant are entirely consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 which segment broadly into the four themes of Freedom; Respect; Equality; and Dignity

In particular, the program supports:

- Right to life
- Right to protection of families and children
- Cultural rights
- Right to recognition and equality before the law;
- Taking part in public life

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Monash Equality and Respect Grant is a discreet program within the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). As these programs are both focused on having a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, revised a gender impact assessment (GIA) has been conducted in September 2025.

As per the GIA requirements, data will continue to be collected on how the program and the funded organisation/s address gender inequality, how inclusive/accessible it is and the anticipated reach of the program by gender.

CONCLUSION

The 2025/26 Monash Equality and Respect Grant successful recipient is presented to Council for endorsement within the available budget and the remainder of the funding pool is recommended to be allocated to the 2025/26 QRG program.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil