

7.2.4 2025/2026 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS - JUNE 2025 - JANUARY 2026

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the Quick Response Grant Program during the period from June to December 2025 to a total of \$78,975.49. The budget for the program is now exhausted and will be closed to new applications for the remainder of the funding year.

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. An additional eligibility criterion has been added for the 2024/25 funding year stating projects that have received funding through the QRG in previous years are ineligible.

As per the Guidelines that were endorsed at Council on 27 May 2025 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 June 2025 until 12 May 2026, 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 2026.
- 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 **\$78,975.49**.

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
- Monash Council's website
- As part of a mail out to current grant recipients

The grants opened on 1 June 2025 and through to 12 May 2026 or until the allocations are exhausted.

Thirty grants have been awarded for the period of June 2025 to January 2026.

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 **\$78,975.49** has been awarded to thirty 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
Clan Gregor Pipers	City of Monash Practice Hall	\$1,444.80
Casey Tamil Manram	Kids' Drama Workshop	\$2,420.00
Kathryn Watt – Watt Shotz Photography	Saluting Service, Courage & Resilience	\$5,000.00
Wavlink	"Unseen Symptoms, Unheard Voices": Health Equity for Women with Disabilities	\$4,895.00
Victorian Uzbekistan Association	Uzbekistan migrants community celebration	\$1,500.00
Chinese Photography Association of Victoria Australia	Chinese Photography Association of Victoria - monthly meeting	\$1,215.00
Faros Senior Citizens	Celebrating 20 years of Local Service To Senior Citizens	\$2,500.00
Monash Chinese Senior Friendship Association	Mid Autumn Festival Seniors Festival	\$1,500.00
South East Volunteers	Connect & Assist Network – C.A.N	\$5,000.00
Victoria Shandong Commerce Chamber Inc	AI for All: Robotics Program for Monash Youth	\$3,500.00
VCCAA Home for Seniors Inc	Healthy Body & Mind for Seniors	\$4,474.80
Perwira Perhimpunan Warga Indonesia Di Victoria	Rahwana Prelude Festival	\$2,878.00
Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association	2026 Monash Chinese New Year Concert and Indoor Garden Party	\$1,600.00
Vipanchika Grandhasala	Australian Malayalee Literature Festival 2 nd Edition	\$1,715.20
Meals @ the Bridge Lifeline	Feed Ashwood at Power Avenue	\$3,000.00
Sri Lankan Dance Academy of Victoria	Annual Sri Lankan Cultural and Traditional Dance Workshops	\$1,429.70
Footscape	Foot Care Kits	\$250.00
Melbourne 7-Melody Notes	Chinese Horse Year Festival Show	\$1,250.00
We Are One Club	Farewell 2025, Welcome 2026	\$4,581.80
Bengali Association of Victoria	Festival of Lights - Diwali	\$1,250.00
Australian Hindu Community	Seva Diwali – Community Donation & Unity Drive	\$3,550.00
Monash Men's Shed	Celebrating Men's Health now and into the future	\$2,000.00

L S Archer Consulting	Silver Threads and Golden Needles	\$4,500.00
VCCAA Inc	Multicultural Original Bilingual Stage Musical: Songs of Hope	\$4,000.00
Nourish Nation Foundation	An Awareness Workshop on Understanding Food Triggers and Supports in Autism	\$2,800.00
Wasteman Music	Kerrie Road Acoustic Sundays	\$3,990.00
Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc	Mankara Sankranti Festival 2026	\$2,755.70
Zabava Inc	Slavic Sun and Spring Festival "Lakomka"	\$1000.00
Australian Coptic Families Social Club Inc	2026 Coptic Community Festival	\$1,785.44
Australian Tamil Literary and Art Society	Celebration of Success 2026	\$1,190.05
TOTAL		\$78,975.49

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

Clan Gregor Pipers (2425QRG001) - \$1,444.80

Clan Gregor Piper's are a new Highland Pipe Band recently formed in 2024 under the leadership of Pipe Major Deborah Clark. The band are based in Monash, due to being residents and is without a Highland Pipe Band. Our aim is to promote and strengthen our Scottish Cultural Heritage within and Alongside Victoria's Rich and Culturally Diverse Community of Today through our Music and Dance. We have currently Piper's (1 of which Learner, and 1 also a Highland Dancer). We do not have any Drums for our Drum Corp. We are currently receiving inquiries from experienced players in the area to join us! this including employee's of City Monash Council. We have been approved by the Clan Gregor Society in Scotland to proudly wear MacGregor Red and Green Tartan. 3 Piper's have acquired with own finance full uniforms. This unfortunately is not viable for all members. We have recently received funding to help towards uniform and equipment. We practice regularly on a Tuesday, and, in addition our Learner members attend practice with other Bands. And prior to events we will meet in addition to rehearse. We need urgent assistance with a City of Monash Halls Practice Venue as our current is a Residential Property. In order for our Band to Survive and Grow we are in urgent need of Uniform, Equipment and a Practice Hall. We also attach for your perusal link to our Facebook Page to demonstrate that we walk the talk!
<https://www.facebook.com/share/15xm2XSwCW/?mibextid=wwXlfr> Hopefully this demonstrate our immediate needs to attain much higher recognition of the values of Scottish Enlightenment and their relevance to Australia today. We confirm we will acknowledge funding support if successful from the Council on our advertising material, and, we will provide a report on the project activity.

Casey Tamil Manram (2526QRG002) – \$2,420.00

Casey Tamil Manram Inc. (CTM) is proposing a series of children's drama workshops involving 60+ participants aged between 3 and 15 years. These workshops are designed to creatively explore and raise awareness of key issues impacting young people today, including mental health, peer pressure, and parental expectations. Each session will incorporate age-appropriate activities and performances that aim to educate, engage, and empower both the participants and the wider community. Through interactive drama exercises, participants will be given a platform to express

themselves, build confidence, and develop essential life skills such as teamwork, communication, and empathy in a safe and supportive environment. The workshop series will culminate in a final showcase performance, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in length, open to families and community members. This event will highlight the creative journey of the participants and reflect the themes explored during the program. By blending artistic expression with meaningful social dialogue, this initiative aims to promote emotional well-being, foster open communication, and strengthen community understanding of the challenges children and adolescents face today. The workshops will be facilitated by subject matter experts and delivered in both English and Tamil to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

Kathryn Watt – Watt Sholz Photography (2526QRG004) - \$5,000.00

Saluting Service, Courage & Resilience Photography Exhibition by Kathy Watt The Exhibition will tell the stories of veterans of varying ages, from different deployments or Wars; as well as advice for younger Veterans on the transition from Military Careers to civilian life. The project will touch on wellbeing, courage, strength & resilience & mateship through the Photos, Website & Video.

Wavlink (2526QRG006) - \$4,895.00

Women with disabilities in Australia often have their physical health needs overlooked; symptoms go unrecognised by both the individuals themselves and the carers or healthcare providers who may attribute everything to their mental condition. To address this critical gap, our project will host 3 Informative forums that bring together women with disabilities, their families and carers, support workers, and Professionals (Support coordinators). During each forum, we will deliver a focused educational workshop designed to: - Highlight common physical health risks faced by women with disabilities (e.g., undiagnosed chronic conditions, reduced screening uptake) - Provide guidance on effective communication strategies for advocates, carers, and participants so that physical complaints are investigated rather than dismissed Forums will be facilitated by a qualified events coordinator such as Women's Health Victoria in collaboration with disability advocates, these sessions will use clear, jargon-free language and incorporate interactive elements to ensure practical learning. Immediately following each event, attendees will receive pictorial "Easy Read" summaries that distill the workshop content into accessible visual guides. These materials will reinforce key messages, support ongoing self-advocacy, and help carers and families maintain attention to physical health indicators between appointments. By concentrating our efforts into three well-publicized, community-based gatherings, we aim to: 1) Increase awareness among carers and families of the importance of routine physical health monitoring in women with disabilities. 2) Empower women with disabilities to recognize and communicate physical health concerns. 3) Foster stronger connections between participants and their carers and local health resources. This targeted, awareness-raising approach anchored by engaging meals, expert-led workshops, and accessible take-home guides will help reduce diagnostic overshadowing and improve the overall health outcomes of women with disabilities in our community.

Victorian Uzbekistan Association (2526QRG009) - \$1,500.00

This project aims to bring together members of the Uzbek migrant community living in the City of Monash and surrounding Melbourne areas to celebrate Uzbekistan's Independence Day. The event will provide an opportunity for community members to connect, celebrate their cultural heritage, and strengthen social ties. It will include traditional music, food, and performances, creating a sense of belonging and pride. The celebration will also help raise awareness of Uzbek culture within the broader community and support the social inclusion of newly arrived migrants.

Chinese Photography Association of Victoria Australia (2526QRG012) - \$1,215.00

Our seminars are open every month to all our Chinese photography Association Victoria Australia members and the public. Sometimes a short training class will be arranged in the same venue for all our members, and the exhibitions have been planned to hold yearly. Most of the visitors and learners are satisfied with our service delivery.

Faros Senior Citizens (2526QRG015)

We are holding a 20th anniversary celebration to celebrate 20 years since the inception of Faros Senior Citizens Club. Our aim is to make members feel welcome in a special way, celebrating this milestone of the life of the Faros Senior Club. Members will enjoy sharing memories and reminisce in their cultural and traditional ways. It will mainly be serving Greek speaking people but other ethnic people from the broader Monash community will be invited to join in and experience cultural celebration.

Monash Chinese Senior Friendship Association (2526QRG008) - \$1,500.00

This project celebrates cultural heritage, active ageing, and community connection through two intergenerational events: the Mid-Autumn Festival (We plan to hold the Mid-Autumn Festival on a Monday within the period from 22 September to 6 October). and the Seniors Festival (We plan to hold the Seniors Festival event on 3 November). which is designed to promote inclusion, well-being, and cultural appreciation among seniors and the broader community. - Mid-Autumn Festival: A joyful gathering featuring mooncake sharing, lantern-making, and storytelling that honors family reunion and Chinese traditions. - Seniors Festival: A vibrant program including Tai Chi demonstrations, traditional dance and musical performances, and hands-on food making and tasting sessions. These activities encourage older adults to stay active, express creativity, and connect with others. Together, these events foster intergenerational respect, cultural continuity, and social inclusion, enriching the lives of seniors and strengthening community bonds.

South East Volunteers (2526QRG014) - \$5,000.00

The Connect & Assist Network is a program that will assist the community of Monash to access services available to them. The funding will be a start-up of the program, and the plan is to take this on as a partnership with our student placement program after this initial start-up stage, which will ensure sustainability of the program. Funding is required for set-up/start up only and we envisage that the \$5000 limit will cover wages for the period of time we believe it will take to put everything in place prior to launch/commencement. We will create a physical place to go for information and support that are located where the people are in multiple locations across Monash; a person to talk to and help support accessing services; and will listen to what people really need in a safe and inclusive environment. We will include relevant talks on important topics and invite other agencies to participate from these locations. We aim to create a community in which we all worked together to service our residents. That we share information, and support each other, and we were effective at delivering services and information through working as a collective towards a common goal. And, services go to where the people are, not the other way. We want to implement a service that makes people's lives easier, more dignified, and more connected.

Victoria Shandong Commerce Chamber Inc (2526QRG018) - \$3,500.00

This project aims to promote artificial intelligence education among children aged 5 to 16 from culturally diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds within the City of Monash. The program includes AI robotics workshops and competitions, delivered through engaging, hands-on learning experiences. A highlight of the project is our ENJOY AI competition, which has been recognised by the Guinness World Records as the world's largest robotics competition. Since last year, in partnership with Clayton Library, we have provided free AI robotics learning opportunities to around 40 local children—many from single-parent or low-income families. With support from this grant, we plan to extend this impact by offering more free places in 2025. Participants will learn basic programming, AI concepts, and build functional robotic systems using educational kits. The program will culminate in a robotics competition held in October–November 2025. Our goal is to create an inclusive, future-focused learning environment where young people can discover their passion for STEM, improve their digital literacy, and build confidence through teamwork and creativity.

VCAA Home for Seniors Inc (2526QRG019) - \$4,474.80

The Healthy Body & Mind Program for Seniors from Diverse Backgrounds is a weekly community-based initiative led by VCAA Home for Seniors. It aims to support older adults—particularly those from migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds—living in the City of Monash. Over 80% of participants are local Monash residents aged 60 and above. The program consists of a series of accessible and inclusive activities tailored to senior needs: Tai Chi for gentle physical exercise and balance improvement Healthy eating and nutrition workshops Basic English learning for daily communication Practical skill-building sessions (e.g. digital literacy, emotional wellbeing, personal safety) These activities help seniors stay physically active, socially connected, and mentally engaged. They also support greater independence, prevent isolation, and improve the quality of life among CALD senior communities. The program is designed to be culturally inclusive, age-friendly, and language-accessible, with support in Mandarin, Cantonese, Teochew, and other community languages as needed. It will strengthen cross-cultural understanding, promote lifelong learning, and build a more connected and resilient community in Monash.

Perwira Perhimpunan Warga Indonesia Di Victoria (2526QRG022) - \$2,878.00

Rahwana Prelude Fest is a cultural celebration that invites the public to experience the sights, sounds, tastes, and spirit of the epic story of Ramayana, which aligned with our upcoming theatrical production Rahwana. This community-based activation fuses a multicultural market atmosphere with immersive storytelling, food, art, and a red carpet theatrical experience. Visitors can explore themed zones styled after the world of Rahwana, enjoy live music and traditional dance, and sample dishes from local and migrant vendors. New in this edition is a Red Carpet Preview, where audiences can meet the cast and creative team, take photos with performers in full costume, and hear behind-the-scenes stories. This “festival-meets-premiere” format is designed to ignite interest in cultural storytelling while providing a platform for local creatives and community celebration.

Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association (2526QRG034) - \$1,600.00

The 2026 Monash Chinese New Year Concert and Indoor Garden Party is an innovative community multicultural initiative by the Spring Arts Multicultural Seniors Association. The event is divided into two main sections: 1. Cultural Performances. From 10:30 to 12:30, performers and audiences can enjoy karaoke, dance, instrumental performances, and talent shows. 2. From 1:30 to 3:30, the Spring Arts Troupe will present the Chinese New Year Concert. The concert will feature orchestral ensembles, folk music ensembles, solo performances, solo chorus, and dance. 3. Garden Party

(running concurrently with the cultural performances). In the back half of the venue, approximately ten interesting stalls will be set up, including a Santa Claus photo booth, traditional Chinese food stalls, traditional Chinese handicrafts, calligraphy and painting lessons, and Chinese knot making workshops. 4. Activities will run from 10:30 to 16:00, lasting five and a half hours. The target number of attendees is 350 spectators and visitors, plus 150 volunteer performers. A total of 500 people participated in the event.

Vipanchika Grandhasala (2526QRG040) - \$1,715.20

Vipanchika Grandhasala Melbourne Inc., a community-driven cultural organization established in 2016, is proud to present the second edition of the Australian Malayalee Literature Festival (AMLF). The festival will be held on 15th November 2025, from 2:00 PM to 9:00 PM at Clayton Hall, 264 Clayton Road, Clayton VIC 3168. Rooted in our mission to preserve and promote the Malayalam language and Kerala's rich cultural heritage, AMLF is a vibrant celebration of literature, language, and identity. This annual event brings together local Malayalee authors, publishers, artists, and readers to engage in a shared space of storytelling, dialogue, and creative expression. The festival includes book launches, author readings, panel discussions, cultural performances, and interactive sessions designed to promote Malayalam literature within the Australian multicultural context. AMLF also fosters connections between generations, offering younger audiences an opportunity to explore their heritage while encouraging broader community engagement and cross-cultural understanding. Beyond being a literary event, AMLF reflects Vipanchika's broader commitment to community well-being and inclusion. Through initiatives such as mental health support, cultural education, and wellness programs, Vipanchika fosters a strong and resilient multicultural community. Our 2025 theme, "Together We Rise, Together We Heal," underscores the power of literature and culture in fostering empathy, resilience, and community bonding. We invite everyone—regardless of background—to join us in celebrating diversity through the beauty of the written and spoken word.

Meals @ the Bridge Lifeline (2526QRG046) - \$3,000.00

Our organization currently provides 50+ nutritious sit-down community lunches every Tuesday at the Power Avenue Neighborhood House, offering a welcoming space for locals in need. In addition to these on-site meals, we prepare and deliver meals to individuals who are older, infirm, or unable to cook, ensuring each Tuesday, at least, those who attend get a great meal and the opportunity to make connections. This program embodies a strong sense of community and connection among residents, many of whom live in state housing nearby. Cara Hardwick has been instrumental in supporting the program by generously providing the venue, but as a small charity, we rely on outside assistance to sustain and expand our efforts. We are seeking support to continue and enhance this vital service, improving the lives of our neighbors and strengthening community ties.

Sri Lankan Dance Academy of Victoria (2526QRG044) - \$1,429.70

Sri Lankan Dance Academy of Victoria Inc run weekly dance workshops at Monash Community Inn, Clayton for over five years on every Thursday between 6.30 and 9.00PM. Over 30 participants attend the sessions in two structured workshops. From 6.30 to 8.00PM for Junior and Intermediate members and from 8.00PM to 9.00PM, The Dancing Angels workshop for mothers and adult participants. The project will cover the cost of the Venue hire, other associated costs of running the sessions and costume making for the 30 participants.

Footscape (2526QRG048) - \$250.00

Established in 2009 Footscape is an Australian Podiatry charity that assists disadvantaged persons encountering debilitating foot problems. Organisation projects include Foot Care Kits. Footscape assembles basic foot care kits for distribution to persons seeking asylum, homeless persons and First Nations persons through project affiliate organisations. Through this project recipients of kits are empowered by accessing resources to undertake daily self care foot practices to promote health and well being. The expected outcomes and relevant measures of success for this project pertain to: - Expected Outcome One: To enhance foot health for Homeless Persons, First Nations persons and Asylum Seekers by improving access to necessary resources. Measure of Success: Number of Foot Care Kits distributed throughout the project period. - Expected Outcome Two: To empower Homeless Persons, First Nations persons and Asylum Seekers by facilitating daily selfcare practices. Measure of Success: Feedback received from recipient clients at the conclusion of the project period. - Expected Outcome Three: To promote quality of service provided by Community Health Podiatry Departments to Homeless Persons, First Nations persons and Asylum Seekers. Measure of Success: Feedback received from recipient clients and participating Podiatry Departments at the conclusion of the project period. - Expected Outcome Four: To strengthen relationships between Footscape and participating Community Health Podiatry Departments. Measure of Success: Feedback received during the project review from Footscape and participating Podiatry Departments.

Melbourne 7-Melody Notes (2526QRG051) - \$1,250.00

Celebrate the 2026 Lunar New Year at Clayton Theatre! (Year of the Fire Horse Gala & Chinese Cultural Dance Spectacle). Join the Clayton community in welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse with an exciting cultural celebration at Clayton Theatre. Taking place during the peak Lunar New Year period (15–22 February 2026), this gala will feature a vibrant lion dance performance, symbolizing prosperity, strength, and good fortune. The Lunar New Year officially begins on Tuesday, 17 February 2026, and celebrations traditionally span several days. Our event offers the perfect opportunity to experience the energy and color of this cherished festival close to home. Enjoy a dazzling display of movement, music, and tradition as the lion dance brings the spirit of renewal to life. Whether you're reconnecting with your heritage or discovering something new, this is a celebration for all ages. Come celebrate Chinese culture, community, and the exciting start of a new lunar cycle!

We Are One Club (2526QRG055) - \$4,581.80

Farewell 2025, Welcome 2026 is a vibrant multicultural celebration hosted by We Are One Club Inc., in collaboration with the Chinese Hubei Association and the Australia Comrades Association Inc. Scheduled for 6 December 2025, this one-day event will bring together seniors, migrants, families, and culturally diverse communities to reflect on the year past and joyfully welcome the new one. The program will feature traditional and contemporary performances—including Chinese ethnic dances, Filipino, Greek, and Fijian dances—fostering cultural exchange and inclusion. Engaging activities such as a Tai Chi session, Chinese drum experience, and a Calligraphy corner for New Year's wishes will promote mental well-being and intergenerational connection. We anticipate strong community participation: 111 attendees from We Are One Club Inc., with 90% residing in Monash 150 attendees from partner organisations, with 60% Monash residents. An additional 100 Monash attendees are expected through promotion via the Monash newsletter and event website. These numbers reflect our commitment to inclusivity and local engagement, while acknowledging that attendance may vary due to the nature of community events. By creating a welcoming space for cultural expression and connection, this initiative empowers participants to feel seen,

celebrated, and supported. It embodies the values of harmony, resilience, and celebration—offering a joyful close to 2025 and an inspiring start to 2026 for the City of Monash community.

Bengali Association of Victoria (2526QRG057) - \$1,250.00

The Festival of Lights (Diwali) is an annual festival celebrated to symbolise the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. The festival embodies deep cultural and spiritual meaning that resonate across various communities. Bengali Association of Victoria (BAV) celebrates this festival every year to bring the community closer and to impart a sense of belonging. This celebration will encourage participation from various socio-cultural backgrounds across Victoria. The planned project will include: 1. Invocation of divine blessings at commencement of festival. 2. Cultural programmes including songs, dance & recitation. 3. Candle/lamp illumination (no fire/smoke) display. 4. Audio visual representation on the significance of the festival. 5. Communal Dinner and Social Interactions among community members. The festival of lights event also coincides with Kali puja dedicated to Goddess Kali, the fierce embodiment of Shakti (divine feminine energy) which displays women as being powerful independent figures.

Australian Hindu Community (2526QRG058) - \$3,550.00

Seva Diwali is a community-led event that brings people together to celebrate the spirit of Diwali through giving, connection, and cultural exchange. Rooted in the principle of seva, selfless service, this project invites the Monash community to take part in a donation drive that collects non-perishable food and essential items for local charities supporting vulnerable people in our area. But it's more than just a food drive. Seva Diwali is designed to be inclusive, welcoming, and uplifting. It's a space where Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, refugees, migrants, and international students can come together, feel part of something meaningful, and celebrate their culture alongside others. There will be Diwali-themed decorations, music, storytelling, and cultural performances, creating a warm and festive atmosphere that encourages participation and understanding. Our goal is to strengthen social connections, especially for people who may be feeling isolated, such as newly arrived migrants or international students far from home. We also aim to raise awareness about the challenges some members of our community face—like food insecurity or loneliness—while offering practical support and a sense of hope. This initiative speaks directly to Monash Council's goals of building community and cultural connections, reducing loneliness, and promoting health and wellbeing. By encouraging acts of generosity and celebrating cultural diversity, Seva Diwali helps create a more compassionate and united Monash. Whether you're giving, receiving, volunteering, or just turning up to enjoy the day, everyone is welcome. Everyone belongs.

Monash Men's Shed (2526QRG059) - \$2,000.00

The project is the celebration of the first fifteen years of the Monash Men's shed and the programs and projects that they have undertaken and delivered since 2010. It is also the launch of our new Men's Health programs targeting a younger cohort of Monash men. We will launch our historical booklet and introduce to the community our plan for the support of younger men and our initiative of the transfer of skills between generations.

L S Archer Consulting (2526QRG050) - \$4,500.00

Gendered ageism is a key driver of elder abuse, and leads to women's lack of confidence to participate in their community, and has serious impacts on health, quality of life, and life expectancy. This project works with groups of older women to explore the gendered ageist comments that women receive about their looks and usefulness as they age and challenge these statements by dreaming of counter phrases 'past it' becomes 'next it', 'over the hill' becomes 'on the road'. Over six weeks, the women craft the ageist comment and its counter message on a cushion, which was chosen especially as a domestic item that is found in every home, where most elder abuse occurs. The project takes place over six weeks so that we can have a more nuanced conversation about family violence and elder abuse, where women reflect, and return for deeper and significant conversation. While family violence/elder abuse prevention messaging is important, it can be confronting. This slower, iterative pace allows for more space for women to reflect. This is critical as negative stereotypes towards older women cause internalised ageism and shame, and this might be the first time they are ever considered. We then capture portraits of women with their crafted items, and hold a gallery launch, so that women's craft work is honoured as art, and taken seriously. This project was piloted in the first half of 2024 and the evaluation shows that the women crafters felt confident to identify elder abuse, to say something when they heard it, and felt proud that they were contributing to women's inclusion and combatting family violence. Silver Threads and Golden Needles will be delivered with an existing women's group and Monash staff, with the launch to be held for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June 2026.

Victoria Chinese Culture & Arts Association Inc (2526QRG052) - \$4,000.00

This project focuses on the development and rehearsal of an original bilingual stage musical, combining Mandarin, Cantonese, Teochew, and English. Through community workshops and youth-driven performances, we explore stories of migration, cultural identity, and intergenerational connection. The project aims to foster creativity, build cultural confidence, and promote community harmony through performing arts.

Nourish Nation Foundation (2526QRG062) - \$2,800.00

The Awareness Workshop on Understanding Food Triggers and Supports in Autism is an educational initiative designed to support parents, carers, educators, and community members who care for or work with autistic individuals. The project aims to build knowledge and practical skills to identify and manage food-related triggers that may influence behaviour, mood, and overall wellbeing in people on the autism spectrum. The workshop is planned to be held in December 2025. Through an interactive workshop facilitated by qualified nutrition and autism specialists, participants will learn about the complex relationship between diet, sensory sensitivities, and behavioural responses. The session will cover key topics such as common food intolerances, the impact of certain additives or textures, strategies to introduce new foods, and creating positive mealtime environments. Practical demonstrations, group discussions, and resource-sharing activities will help participants translate knowledge into everyday practice. The workshop also seeks to foster peer connection, allowing families and carers to share experiences and solutions in a supportive environment. Expected outcomes include improved understanding of how food choices affect autistic individuals, enhanced confidence among carers and educators to implement supportive dietary practices, and increased community awareness of the importance of nutrition in autism care. In the long term, the project aims to promote healthier eating habits, reduce mealtime stress, and improve the overall quality of life and wellbeing for autistic individuals and their families.

Wasteman Music (2526QRG069) - \$3,990.00

Kerrie Road Acoustic Sundays is a community-focused live music activation designed to bring people together through accessible, family-friendly performances in the heart of Glen Waverley. The project will deliver a series of free acoustic music sessions at the Kerrie Road Parklet (opposite Kerrie Road Bakery) on select Sunday mornings between December and March (10am–1pm). Each event will feature performances by Charlotte Glover Duo, a local professional acoustic act, and a rotating lineup of emerging Monash-based musicians, offering residents an opportunity to enjoy quality live music in a relaxed, outdoor setting. The project aims to activate local public space, strengthen community connection, and support local creative careers in line with Monash City Council's Live Music Action Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. By animating an underutilised parklet, the initiative will encourage social interaction, increase visitation to nearby small businesses, and promote community wellbeing through shared cultural experiences. Expected outcomes include: -Increased community engagement and social cohesion through regular live music events. -Economic uplift for local traders and hospitality businesses. -Paid opportunities for local musicians and creative professionals. -Strengthened local identity and pride through inclusive, high-quality cultural programming. Ultimately, Kerrie Road Acoustic Sundays will create a welcoming and vibrant space where music, community, and local culture come together. A similar parklet event (similar, but not associated with Kerrie Road Acoustic Sundays) is going to be run in November or December by the Monash Council in the same location, with the same musicians, and will provide a springboard for Kerrie Road Acoustic Sunday's.

Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc (2526QRG071) - \$2,798.95

Makara Sankranti is a vibrant Indian/Hindu festival that celebrates the bond between Mother Earth and humanity. Unlike many traditional festivals, it is a social and community celebration that values creativity, connection, and gratitude. In Australia's multicultural context, this festival provides an opportunity to strengthen harmony and build meaningful relationships among diverse communities. The Makara Sankranti Festival 2026 will be held in January 2026, featuring an Art and Craft Exhibition and Cultural activities. The event aims to promote cultural understanding, environmental awareness, and social inclusion through creative expression.

Key Objectives: Promote multiculturalism and unity in diversity.

Empower women and youth by providing a platform to showcase their creativity and leadership.

Foster community interaction and cultural understanding.

Provide opportunities for artisans and artists to present their work.

Festival Highlights: Cultural Showcase: Classical and folk dances, vocal and instrumental music representing diverse cultural heritage. Art & Craft Exhibition: Display of handcrafted and heritage items in a relaxed setting. Art Workshop: Introduction to traditional Indian line drawings promoting creativity and mindfulness. Children's Storytelling & Drawing Session: Activities highlighting environmental care and sustainability as celebrated in ancient traditions.

Local Government representatives, Members of Parliament, and community leaders will be invited to support and participate in this event. The 2023 and 2024 festival, held at the Mount Waverley Community Centre, successfully engaged over 100 participants and showcased the local community's artistic talent. Building on this success, the 2026 celebration aims to reach a wider audience, strengthening intercultural dialogue, environmental awareness, and social unity. Funding support will assist with venue hire, materials, performances, and community engagement to ensure the event remains inclusive and accessible to all.

Zabava Inc (2526QRG063) - \$1000.00


Slavic Sun and Spring Festival "Lakomka" is a vibrant community celebration marking the arrival of European spring—a critical moment of renewal and hope in Slavic culture. Across Slavic countries, the dramatic change of seasons symbolises the return of warmth, sunlight, and new life, traditionally welcomed through music, dance, and joyful communal rituals. This festival brings these traditions to the City of Monash through a rich program of performances and interactive cultural activities. Who This Project Is For (Beneficiaries) The festival supports local Slavic families, newly arrived migrants, families with special needs, and children with limited access to cultural programs. It also welcomes the broader Victorian community interested in learning about Slavic heritage and seasonal traditions. Through inclusive, family-friendly activities, the event offers a safe space where people of all ages and cultural backgrounds can meet and celebrate together. What We Will Do (Activities) To share Slavic spring customs, the festival will present live folk songs, humorous chastushki, theatrical scenes featuring traditional wooden characters such as babushka and molodets, and lively communal round dances, a show of Slavic costumes (sarafans). A signature element will be the creation of symbolic "suns" made from karavai and pancakes, following ancient Slavic rituals welcoming warmth and sunlight back into the community. The program includes a karavai-tasting contest, hands-on craft workshops, and a complimentary buffet of Slavic dishes. What Effects We Expect (Outcomes) The festival will increase understanding and appreciation of Slavic seasonal traditions while helping younger generations and newly arrived families strengthen their cultural identity. Shared creative activities will reduce social isolation among Slavic-speaking residents and build stronger connections between Slavic and non-Slavic community members. Overall, this Festival will promote multicultural harmony, foster intercultural understanding, and offer a welcoming community space to experience the joy of Slavic spring traditions.

Australian Coptic Families Social Club Inc (2526QRG083) - \$1,785.44

The Coptic Community Festival is a 2-day, free and accessible community festival, which shares Egyptian/Coptic culture and tradition with the wider Victorian community. We celebrate culture through delicious traditional Egyptian food, cultural/historical displays, art, performances and entertainment. The festival is elevated with a partial road closure that hosts rides, petting zoo and mini traditional market stalls. It also draws together other many other cultural groups including Greek, Indian, Asian, Sudanese, Ethiopian and many other cultures, with a full program of stage performances. It encourages new and emerging groups to participate and connect with the wider Victorian community with the aim of enriching an ongoing sense of belonging, community and connection. Our event has continued to increase in popularity year upon year, drawing in people from all across Melbourne and has become an important event in the Monash events calendar for many.

Australian Tamil Literary & Art Society (2526QRG089) - \$1,190.05

The Australian Tamil Literary and Arts Society (ATLAS) is committed to promoting Tamil language and cultural engagement among youth in Melbourne's Monash region. Our initiative recognises and celebrates VCE students who have chosen Tamil as a Language Other Than English (LOTE), by awarding them trophies and certificates. We also honour the



contributions of Tamil school principals and teachers. Following the success of our inaugural awards ceremony last year—supported by Monash Council—we plan to continue this annual celebration, which also features traditional Tamil music and dance performances. This public, non-ticketed event aims to strengthen cultural identity among young Australians, foster intergenerational connection, and promote community participation. Bilingual event materials in Tamil and English ensure inclusivity and understanding across diverse audiences, including senior citizens from Australian and Tamil communities, who have shown strong engagement with the event as part of their active community involvement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2025/26 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of **\$78,975.49**, which was fully expended in this period to 30 projects through this program for the 2025/26 funding year.

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 2025/26 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 focused on having a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a gender impact assessment (GIA) was undertaken in September 2023. This was included in the MCGP Service Improvement Report, which was tabled at the October 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 from June 2025 to January 2026 are presented to Council within the available budget.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil