

7.3.6 CIVIC SUPPORT FUND POLICY

Responsible Manager:	Amanda Sapolu, Manager Corporate Governance & Legal
Responsible Director:	Simone Wickes, Director Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Adopts the Civic Support Fund Policy as per Attachment 1.**
- 2. Revokes the Councillor Discretionary Fund Policy and Procedures dated 27 November 2018.**

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A council with good governance, strong leadership and community involvement in decision making

A Council that provides governance and leadership for the benefit of our community through community engagement, advocacy, decision making and action.

BACKGROUND

Monash City Council's Discretionary Fund Policy provides for small, one-off grants (generally up to \$1000) to support local community activities and events that fall outside regular grant programs. These grants help Council respond flexibly to emerging community needs through the year.

Applications are assessed by Governance officers for eligibility, then reviewed by Community Strengthening before being presented to Councillors. Final decisions are made at formal Council meetings and are publicly recorded.

Council officers undertook a review of the Policy, informed by the Local Government Inspectorate review of Councillors Discretionary Funds (2013), the Monash City Council Community Grants Report by Crowe (2020) and the Victorian Auditor -General's Report on Fraud Control over Local Government Grants (2022). These reviews identified the need for stronger governance, clearer assessment criteria and mandatory acquittal processes.

The amended Policy and Procedures were considered at the September 2025 Strategy Meeting, the November 2025 Council Meeting, the March 2026 Strategy Meeting and the June 2026 Briefing Meeting.

DISCUSSION

Discussions were had regarding the key changes initially proposed in 2025 and again in 2026.

These key changes along with the guidance provided by Council in Strategy Meetings are addressed below.

1. Ability of Individuals to apply for funding

Councillors expressed the desire that the Policy continue to allow for the funding of individuals. Where possible, that individual should be auspiced by an incorporated association, but that an absence of, was not fatal to the application.

2. Development of an Assessment Criteria that applicants must address

Councillors were supportive of an assessment criteria but wished to retain the right to consider all applications, including those that may not meet all the criteria.

3. Formal Officer assessment of applications

Councillors were supportive of this.

4. Link to Council Plan

Councillors were supportive of the application linking to the outcomes of the Council Plan but, believed this assessment should come from officers and Council as opposed to the applicant having to make the link. While the applicant will be required to detail the scope, impact and intention of the activity requiring funding, Council officers are best placed to determine how this aligns with existing plans and policies including the Council Plan.

5. Alternate Funding Streams

Councillors were supportive of the assessment criteria including a requirement that the applicability of other funding streams should inform assessment but wanted to retain the discretion to consider all applications.

6. Acquittal Processes

Councillors were supportive of increased governance and probity around acquittal processes.

7. Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities

Councillors were supportive of the changes to the administration and implementation of the Policy but also acknowledged that this was an operational matter.

Amendment to Policy

As such, the Policy has been amended to reflect the guidance of Council.

Amendments to Procedures

Amendments have been made to the assessment document to reflect the obligations on officers to consider the application and to provide recommendations to Council.



Amendments have been made to the application form to minimise repetition, to make the form clearer and easier to complete and to align with the amendments to the Policy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

If adopted at the Council Meeting, this Policy will revoke the Councillor Discretionary Fund Policy.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no social implications to this report.

CONSULTATION

Community consultation was not required, the amended policies and procedures have been developed following extensive consultation with Councillors.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no human rights implications to this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of this work because this policy/program/service is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community. This appears in the Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Civic Support Fund Policy provides a mechanism for Council to fund small activities that may generally fall outside of other funding streams or funding cycles. The amended policies and procedures have been developed following extensive consultation with Councillors.

ATTACHMENT LIST

1. Civic Support Fund Policy July 2026 [7.3.6.1 - 8 pages]
2. Civic Support Fund Application Form [7.3.6.2 - 4 pages]
3. Civic Support Fund Officer Review and Recommendation Template [7.3.6.3 - 2 pages]



Civic Support Fund Policy

COUNCIL

Corporate Governance and Legal (Corporate Services)

OVERVIEW:

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for the distribution of Civic Support Funds. It is essential for Council to have this policy in place to ensure that the community has equitable and transparent access to timely support during periods of need.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:

Manager Governance and General Counsel for the corporate implementation, review, and interpretation of this policy.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:

Corporate Governance and Legal

APPROVED or RESOLVED BY:

COUNCIL

DATE:

[insert date approved/adopted]

EDNA NO:

[insert EDNA reference number]

REVIEW DATE:

[insert review date]



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1. Introduction

The Civic Support Fund Policy (Policy) provides a transparent and accountable framework for the allocation of discretionary funds by Monash City Council (Council), particularly in the case of applications that are not already covered in Council's formal grants program. It ensures funding decisions align with Council's strategic objectives, comply with legislative requirements, and are made through a fair, transparent and consistent process.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Civic Support Fund requests submitted to Council. It outlines the eligibility, assessment, approval, and acquittal processes for applications.

The Policy does not apply to applications made under Council's Community Grants Programs, which are governed by separate policies and procedures.

3. Background

This Policy has been informed by the Local Government Inspectorate review of Councillor Discretionary Funds (2013), the Monash City Council Community Grants Report by Crowe (2020) and the Victorian Auditor-General's Report on Fraud Control over Local Government Grants (2022). These reviews generally identified the need for strong governance, frameworks appropriate to guide the exercise of discretion, clearer assessment criteria, and mandatory acquittal processes to ensure public funds are used responsibly and transparently.

4. Legislative Context and Governance Statement

Section 70 of the *Local Government Act 2020* prohibits councils from allocating funds to individual councillors for discretionary use.

In generating this Policy, Council confirms that its development, implementation, and review comply with the overarching governance principles outlined in the Act. This Policy has considered the importance of engagement, strategic planning, financial management, transparency, and service performance.

5. Definitions

Word	Definition
Acquittal	Means the process of providing evidence of expenditure and outcomes following receipt of Council funding.
Acquittal Reflection	Means a written statement included alongside the financial reporting to help Council understand the impact of the funding and the outcomes delivered.
Applicant	Means an individual, group or organisation submitting a request for the Civic Support Fund.
Assessment Matrix	Means a tool used by Council officers to evaluate applications and provide recommendations to Council.
Connection to Monash	Means where the applicant resides in, or is based in Monash Council or the activity benefits the Monash Community.
Community Benefit	Means the positive social, cultural, environmental, or economic impact an activity has on the Monash community.
Community Grants Program	Means Councils competitive funding initiative designed to support community-led projects that promote social inclusion, cultural diversity, civic engagement, and community development.
Council	Means Monash City Council.
Councillor	Means a Councillor of the Monash City Council.
Council officer	Means an employee of the Council.
Council Plan	Means the strategic document outlining Monash City Council's priorities and objectives.
Incorporated Association	Means a legal entity registered under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).



Civic Support Fund	Means financial support provided by Council outside of formal grant programs, typically in response to emerging or urgent community needs.
Value for Money	Means the extent to which the proposed activity delivers outcomes efficiently and effectively relative to the funding requested.

6. Responsibilities and Roles

Who	Role
Community Strengthening Team	Is responsible for the application process, liaising with applicants, and oversees acquittals.
Councillors	Are responsible for making informed decisions to ensure responsible outcomes for community. May initiate applications but must not bypass the assessment process.
Council officers	Are responsible for conducting eligibility checks, assessing applications using the evaluation criteria, and providing formal recommendations.
Executive Leadership Team	Is responsible for overseeing the Policy and subsequent procedures.
Governance Team	Is responsible for providing advice on policy oversight, compliance, and supporting the Community Strengthening Team.

7. Civic Support Fund Application Process

This section applies to all funding applications submitted to Council via this Policy.

7.1. Pre Application Process

All applications must comply with the conditions outlined in this Policy. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Funding Amounts

Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding amounts less than \$1,000. Requests exceeding this amount will be considered, but must include a clear and compelling justification.

Generally, Council encourages incorporated associations to apply for an amount less than \$1000 and individuals to apply for an amount less than \$500.

Eligibility



To be eligible, applications should:

- Be submitted in writing directly to Council (application forms are available on Council's website).
- Be submitted three weeks prior to a scheduled Council meeting to be considered at that meeting.
- Clearly demonstrate a connection to Monash City Council Local Government area.
- Include proof of incorporation status (for groups).
- Not be associated with any gambling venue, in line with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy. This requires that a group not meet regularly in, promote, or advertise gaming venues.
- First explore other Council or external funding options if appropriate before applying to the Fund.
- Not have received funding from this program within the last 12 months.
- Not generally be under the responsibility of another level of government. Councillors may exercise discretion in considering the application.
- Provide quotes or other proof of need before the application is considered.

Ineligibility

Council reserves the right to consider all applications and retains its discretion to consider applications which may not meet all of the above criteria.

However, applications that are not in line with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy can be rejected by officers in the first instance and reported to the Council thereafter.

7.2. During the Application Process

Evaluation Criteria and Recommendation to Council

Applications will be assessed by Council officers in the first instance, having regard to the following criteria:

- Alignment with Council Plan Strategic Objectives
- Demonstrated Community Benefit
- Financial Need and Value for Money
- Capacity to Deliver the Activity

This assessment will inform the recommendation provided to Councillors.

Council Decision

All funding decisions will be made at formal Council Meetings held throughout the year, with outcomes publicly disclosed and applicants notified in writing.

7.3. Post Application Process

Compliance and Acquittal

All successful applicants must submit receipts and evidence of expenditure and an Acquittal Reflection on the outcomes of the funded activity.



Failure to submit Acquittal documentation may lead to ineligibility for future funding and/or a requirement to repay the grant. Applicants may also be asked to provide further information. Any unspent or ineligible funds identified in the Acquittal process must be returned to Council.

8. Gender Impact Assessment

Council has a legislative responsibility under the Gender Equality Act 2020 to conduct a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) on all new policies, programs and services (and those that are up for formal review) which have a direct and significant impact on the community.

The GIA identified that while the policy is designed to be inclusive, there is potential for unconscious bias to influence decision-making, particularly in the absence of structured assessment criteria or clear documentation of funding decisions.

To address this, the revised policy introduces:

- A formal evaluation criterion including alignment to Council's Strategic Objectives outlined in the Council Plan to assess applications objectively.
- Emphasis on officer-led recommendations to guide the exercise of discretion.
- Mandatory documentation of decisions and Acquittals.
- A clause encouraging Applicants to seek other funding streams first, ensuring equitable access to limited discretionary funds.

These changes aim to reduce the risk of bias and ensure that funding decisions are fair, transparent, and inclusive of all genders. Council officers will monitor application trends and outcomes to identify any disparities and recommend adjustments as needed.

9. Human Rights Considerations

Council must give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Proper consideration to human rights must be undertaken before a decision is made and may impact on people's rights.

All applications are to be considered fairly and equitably by Council Officers during assessment. All decisions will be transparent and fairly heard by Council at public meetings.

We confirm that this policy has been carefully reviewed to ensure it does not affect human rights. We are committed to respecting human rights and will continue to monitor the policy to ensure it remains compliant.

10. Administrative Amendments

From time to time, circumstances may require minor amendments be made to this Policy. Where this does not materially alter the Policy, such amendments may be made administratively by the Chief Executive Officer.

Any amendment which materially alters the Policy must be approved by Council in consultation with the organisation.

11. Review

This Policy will be reviewed by the Manager Governance and General Counsel 12 months after adoption and thereafter every four years, in consultation with the Community Services Directorate, or earlier if required.

12. Document Version

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Comments
1.0	17/04/2026	Coordinator Governance	Manager Governance and General Counsel	Council	Full review and format change from 2018 version.

13. Contact

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact Council:



By emailing: mail@monash.vic.gov.au



By calling the Governance Team on (03) 9518 3555

14. Appendices

1. Civic Support Fund – Application Form
2. Civic Support Fund – Officer Commentary



Civic Support Fund

Application Form

Privacy Collection Statement

Monash City Council ("Council") is collecting your personal information for the purposes of processing and deciding on your application. As part of the approval process, your personal information, including your name, may be included in a public Council report for Council decision making. Other than as stated, Council will not release or provide your personal information to any other person or body, unless (a) it has been authorised to do so by you, or (b) it is permitted or required to do so by law, or (c) it is appropriate or required in the performance of the functions of Council. If you do not supply the requested information, we may not be able to provide you with the service and/or fulfill our statutory responsibilities. You may gain access to your personal information by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9518 3555 or email at mail@monash.vic.gov.au. Further details are available at the Privacy page on Council's website (www.monash.vic.gov.au).

PLEASE READ THE COUNCIL'S CIVIC SUPPORT FUND POLICY BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM

Eligibility Checklist

- ☐ The applicant/organisation has completed this Form.
- ☐ The applicant/organisation has a substantial connection to the City of Monash.
- ☐ The applicant/organisation has confirmed its commitment to Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy.
- ☐ The activity does not qualify or is not already funded under the Community Grants Program.
- ☐ The applicant/organisation has not received Civic Support funding in the last 12 months.

Attachments Checklist

- ☐ Proof of Incorporation (if applicable)
- ☐ Supporting documents (optional: for example, letter from supporting incorporated group)
- ☐ Budget quotes or cost evidence

293 Springvale Road (PO Box 1) Glen Waverley VIC 3150 **Web** www.monash.vic.gov.au **Email** mail@monash.vic.gov.au
T (03) 9518 3555 **National Relay Service** (for the hearing and speech impaired) 1800 555 660
Interpreter Services 普通话 4713 5001 廣東話 4713 5002 Việt Ngữ 4713 5003 Ελληνικά 4713 5004 हिंदी 4713 5005
 Other languages 4713 5000 Italiano 4713 5008 한국어 4713 5010 සිංහල 4713 5020 தமிழ் 4713 5021



Section 1: Applicant's Details	
Name of Individual or Organisation	
Contact Person (if applicable)	
Position/Role (if applicable)	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
Postal Address	
Are you an incorporated association?	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, attach proof of incorporation.
Are you an Individual?	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, if applicable, please attach any proof of support from incorporated group.
Gambling Declaration for Organisations/Groups	☐ Yes ☐ No I declare that in line with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy, this group does not regularly meet in, promote, or advertise gambling venues; funding will not be used in gambling venues.
Section 2: Project/Activity Details	
Title of Project/Activity	



Brief Description of the Project/Activity including Date and Location	
Clearly Define Connection to Monash City Council	
Describe the expected benefit to the Monash community (max 200 words): (Include who will benefit and how)	
Venue Booked *NOTE: If using Council Venue , you MUST have a confirmed booking before submitting application.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Target Audience	
Estimated Number of Participants	
Briefly describe your capacity to deliver the project (max 150 words):	
Section 3: Financial Details	



Amount of Funding Requested (up to \$1,000 for incorporated associations; up to \$500 for individuals):	\$ _____	
Purpose of Funding and Budget Breakdown		
Have you attached quotes or evidence of costs?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Have you received funding from City of Monash previously?	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide detail	
Declaration		
I declare that: • The information provided in this application is true and correct. • I understand that if successful, I must use the funds for the approved purpose. • I agree to submit acquittal documentation, including receipts and a brief report. I understand that failure to acquit may affect future funding eligibility	Name:	Signature:
	Date:	

Civic Support Fund – Officer Comment

Council Meeting [date]

Council Officer Commentary

Requesting Organisation/Individual	EDNA Reference		
Description of the application:			
Amount Requested: \$			
Previous Related Funding History (if applicable):			
Description (eg Hall hire, sporting, events etc)	Year	Amount Allocated	
Eligibility Checklist		Yes	No
Pre Application – Eligibility			
Has the application been submitted in time?			
Has the applicant submitted a fully completed application?			
If the applicant is an Incorporated Association, has supporting documentation been provided?			
If the applicant is an Individual, has a letter from an incorporated group been provided?			
Has the applicant indicated alignment with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy?			

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Is there a clear connection to Monash?		
Is the project or activity ineligible for funding under Council's Community Grants Program?		
Has it been confirmed that the activity or project has not received funding from Council's former Discretionary Fund program within the past 12 months?		
During the Application – Evaluation Criteria		
Does the activity align with one or more strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan?		
Does the activity or project clearly demonstrate a benefit to the community?		
Is the financial need well justified and does the proposal represent value for money?		
Has the applicant demonstrated sufficient capacity to successfully deliver the activity or project?		
Extra Criteria		
Is the funding request related to the hire of Council-owned or managed facilities? (Applicable to hire funding only)		
Is the activity or project under the jurisdiction of another level of government?		
Officer Comment		
Comments		