

Community Grants and Partnership Program Policy

Community Strengthening. Community Services

The City of Monash acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Diversity statement

The City of Monash is inclusive and welcoming, celebrating the diversity of our community and employees. We want every individual to feel safe, respected and celebrated regardless of our differences of age, race and ethnicity, sex, gender identity and sexuality, ability, faith, and religious beliefs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait identify and /or socio-economic status.

OVERVIEW:

This policy outlines guidelines and procedures for Community Grants and Partnership Program. It is essential for Council to have this policy in place to ensure that a robust and transparent process is in place to guide the most effective decision-making for community benefit.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGER: Fee Harrison

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Community Strengthening

APPROVED BY:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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1. Introduction

The Monash Community Grants and Partnerships Program (MCGPP) provides funding to support incorporated associations and not-for-profit organisations to deliver projects, activities and events to strengthen, enhance and benefit the Monash community.

The purpose of the Monash Community Grants and Partnerships policy is:

- Providing guidance and criteria for applications to the community grants and partnership program.
- Ensuring compliance with Council's overall budget as provided to the program.
- Creating a transparent, accountable and fair process for all community groups, incorporated associations and not-for-profit organisations who wish to apply to this program.
- Setting clear expectations for officers assessing applications.
- Ensures the assessment process aligns with this Policy.

2. Scope

The Monash Community Grants and Partnership Policy applies to direct financial and in-kind funding to local community groups and not for profit organisations that may:

- Deliver a service or program/s that respond to community need/s
- Build community capacity and resilience
- Create opportunities for community members to participate in civic life and connect socially
- Support Council's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Promote and foster a fair and inclusive community
- Provide opportunities for cultural and artistic contributions to the Monash community
- Organise community events of festivals that are open, welcoming and accessible to all
- Make effective use of Monash community assets and maximises their value to the community.
 This includes community centres, libraries, recreation and sporting facilities, parks and open space, arts and cultural venues, and neighbourhood houses.

3. Background

Monash has provided annual financial support to the community through the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP), now known as the Monash Community Grants and Partnership Program, since 1995 and has prided itself on being one of the largest Council grants program in Victoria. Widely recognised and applauded, this program plays a vital role in supporting diverse and vibrant communities by empowering groups to deliver projects, activities and events that fosters connection, inclusion, wellbeing and cultural expression. It consistently demonstrates Council's commitment to strengthening civic life and investing in community capacity and is highly valued by the community.

Over several years, the program has been reviewed and modified to keep up with community feedback and to ensure the relevance of the program. In 2025, a comprehensive review of the program was undertaken that strengthens the program and streamlines the application process that also provides greater community benefit. As part of the review, three consultations sessions were held with 21 representatives from current and previous grant recipients. A special consultation session was held with Neighbourhood House co-ordinators, and a benchmarking exercise was undertaken with several neighbouring Councils who also manage and coordinate a community grants program. In addition, consultations were held with internal stakeholders who are involved in the assessment process and implementation of the grants program.

4. Legislative Context and Governance Statement

- This policy aligns with the Local Government Act 2020, Section 94 (1) as this program forms part of the Council plan 2025- 2029, specifically, A healthy, safe and connected community.
- This policy aligns with the 2025-2029 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, under the priorities of strengthening mental health and social connection and promoting and support a fair and inclusive community.
- This policy aligns with Local Government Act 2020, Section 91 (1) as it forms part of the Council financial plan adopted by Council annually.
- This Policy aligns with the Local Government Act 2020, Section 88 (1) as it forms part of the Community Vision, a strong sense of community and an engaged community.
- The Policy aligns with the Gender Equality Act 2020 Section 7 (a), part 2, that requires Councils to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.
- This policy aligns with the Community Engagement policy as defined in the Local Government Act 2020, Section 55 (1) as community engagement has formed part of the review process and led to several recommended changes resulting from the community engagement undertake.
- Responsible officer Statement:

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 for receipt of Council funding.	
Applicant	Means an individual, group or organisation submitting a request for responsive assistance funding.
Assessment Matrix	Means a tool used by Council officers to evaluate funding applications against set criteria.
Auspice	An arrangement where one organisation (the auspice organisation) manages grant funding on behalf of another organisation or group that is not eligible to apply directly. This organisation takes on financial liability and other risks.
Budget	A Council must prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and subsequent 3 financial years by 30 June each year.
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, community development and other initiatives outlined in the Council Health & Wellbeing Plan.
Connection to Monash	Means where the applicant resides in, or is based in Monash Council or the activity benefits the Monash Community
Council	Means 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.
Eligibility Criteria	Means the conditions that must be met for an application to be considered for funding.
Incorporated Association	Means a legal entity registered under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).
Responsive Assistance	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.

Table 1 – Definitions

6. Responsibilities and Roles

Who	Role
Director Community Services	Approve the grants program assessment and draft recommendations prior to a Council decision.
Manager Community Strengthening	Review the grants program assessment and draft recommendations prior to a Council decision.
Co-ordinator Economy, Place and Connected Communities	Ensure the grants program is conducted in accordance with this policy, application guidelines and assessment procedures.
Team Leader Connected Communities	Co-ordinates the day-to-day operations of the MCGPP from when applications open to the final assessment and draft recommendation process.
Connected Communities Officer	Co-ordinates and administers operations of the MCGPP and QRG throughout the year, including management of documentation and liaising with funded organisations and community groups. Also works to build the capacity of funding organisations and community groups through a range of workshops and forums.

Table 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

7. Program Principles & Priorities

The MCGPP focuses on strengthening the Monash community through its people. Community development principles underpin the approach that Monash takes to grant making. These principles include:

7.1 Partnerships

What this means

Partnerships are important to strengthen and build relationships between community organisations and individuals.

Partnerships foster social cohesion and broaden understanding of difference and build on the strengths and assets that exist within the community.

What will we do

Council will continue to support organisations who identify different partners that can form part of their program, event or initiative.

Council will provide advice to community groups around potential partners that may be able to assist or provide advice.

7.2 Intersectionality

What this means

We recognise the diversity, complexity and intersecting factors that shapes community experience, and prioritise approaches that remove system and social barriers to achieve full and active participation, are inclusive, accessible and responsive to intersecting needs.

What will we do

Council will support community groups to learn more about our diverse community through our community capacity building program, education and advice.

We encourage grant applications that are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of these priority population cohorts outlined in the Guidelines and Health & Wellbeing Plan.

7.3 Health and Wellbeing Priorities

What this means

Council has set out a number of priorities as part of its Health and Wellbeing plan. These are:

- Healthy eating and active living
- Building a respectful and safe community
- Strengthening mental health and social cohesion.
- Tackling climate change and its impact on health.
- Promoting and supporting a fair and inclusive community.

What we will do

Council will ask community groups/ organisations to prioritise one or more of the above Health and Wellbeing priorities.

Council will provide community organisations with relevant information around these health and wellbeing priorities that will strengthen their application and program.

These principles guide both how Council works with the community and the types of services and projects that will be prioritised for funding.

Funding priority will be given to applicants that deliver health and wellbeing outcomes within a community setting, which contributes to community cohesion and enrich people's lives.

8. Eligibility

To be eligible to receive funding through the MCGPP, all organisations must:

- Be an incorporated association or organisation with not-for-profit or ACNC status OR auspiced by an eligible organisation.
- Hold a current ABN.

- Deliver the funded activity/service within the City of Monash boundaries.
- Maintain a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance cover.
- Have **no** debts or outstanding documentation to Council.
- Ensure all requirements for maintaining incorporated association or ACNC registration, including ensuring all submissions to Consumer Affairs Victoria, are current and up to date.
- Align with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy, including not regularly meeting or holding funded activities in a venue that have electronic gaming machines (EGMs)
- Apply for no more than two applications across the annual program to a total of \$30,000.

Quick Response Grant applicants must adhere to all MCGPP criteria in addition to the following. All applicants must:

- Be an incorporated association or organisation with not-for-profit or ACNC status OR auspiced by an eligible organisation OR be an individual artist with an ABN
- Have not received funding for the same project in any Monash grants program previously.
- Are only eligible to receive funding for one QRG project per year.

Further information on ineligible activities and items that cannot be funded are outlined in Section 20.1.

8.1 Item caps

Item	Cash Cap
Assets & equipment	\$1,000
Uniforms & costumes	\$1,000
Administration expenses	\$250
Marketing & promotion expenses	\$500
Catering	20% of total requested grant funds (75% of total requested cash for Seniors Club Support)

Table 3 – Item Caps

9. Funding Streams

The City of Monash will provide annual funding across three streams of the MCGPP.

These are:

9.1 Year-Round Funding

Quick Response Grants – up to \$5k

Quick Response Grants are available all year round, closing 7 weeks before the end of the financial year or when all funding has been allocated. The same application criteria as MCGPP applies, noting that individual artists with an ABN are eligible to apply, and a project may only be applied for once.

These grants encourage applications for projects that are responsive to community needs throughout the year.

Cultural Celebration Subsidy – up to \$1k

Cultural Celebration subsidy is available for incorporated community groups all year round, closing 7 weeks before the end of the financial year or when all funding has been allocated, and the same MCGPP eligibility criteria is applicable for one celebration per year.

The Cultural Celebration Subsidy offers a simple and accessible way for community groups to host small, member-focused cultural events. These projects should foster meaningful cultural exchange, encourage connection among participants, and provide creative opportunities to celebrate and share cultural traditions.

9.2 Annual Funding

The streams under the annual funding program will be provided on an annual basis and will be cash only.

Small Grants – up to \$5k

This stream aims to fund small projects that address community needs and support priority cohorts outlined in the Health & Wellbeing Plan. This stream will have a simplified application and acquittal process, with five (5) criteria that applicants will need to align with. Projects are expected to create opportunities for community connection and learning.

Medium Grants – up to \$10k

This stream will support more substantial projects and will involve a moderately detailed application process with seven (7) criteria to be addressed. This stream is aimed at larger and more ongoing projects that address priority actions and cohorts from the Health & Wellbeing Plan.

Projects in this stream are expected to demonstrate innovation and demonstrate the potential for their services to remain sustainable for the community beyond Council funding.

Large Grants – up to \$20k

This stream will fund large-scale projects with significant community impact. Applicants in this stream will need to address these requirements across nine (9) criteria. Projects in this stream are not only expected to demonstrate innovation and financial sustainability but will need to demonstrate their capacity to undertake the project with a project plan and a minimum 50% contribution to the project.

9.3 Multi-Year Funding

Partnership Grants – up to \$85k

This funding program will be for three (3) years to align with the Council Health and Wellbeing Plan. A funding of up to \$85k in cash can be provided based on the application process.

This stream of grants is for projects delivered by specialist service organisations delivering in the City of Monash.

These projects will deliver on projects that address priority actions and cohorts in the Health and Wellbeing Plan across the three (3) year term of the grant. These organisations will work in partnership with Council to deliver the project and services as they should be addressing needs in the area not already addressed by Council and reduce barriers for marginalised members of our community.

Projects in this stream should also demonstrate economic outcomes for the community, whether through opportunities for local businesses or employment, or through provision of low-cost services.

This stream also welcomes applications for delivery of major festivals that will provide a range of opportunities for creative and cultural expression in Monash.

Seniors Club Support – up to \$5k cash & up to \$30k hall hire

This grant stream is available to Senior Citizens clubs in Monash to apply for cash funding, based on the number of Monash members, with a cap of 75% for food/catering expenses, and in-kind hall hire for regular meetings.

Projects within this stream should support social inclusion for Monash residents and create opportunities for interpersonal connection with the aim of reducing loneliness. Projects should also aim to address Health & Wellbeing needs of older adults through activities like provision of healthy meals or physical activity.

Number of Monash members	Cash funding available
201 or more	\$5,000
151 to 200	\$4,000
101 to 150	\$3,000
51 to 100	\$2,000
20 to 50	\$1,000

Table 4 – Seniors club membership as it relates to cash funding available

Probus Clubs within Monash will be eligible to apply for a subset of this stream to access \$500 cash funding in addition to in-kind hall hire.

Monash Hall Subsidy – up to \$15k

All requests for in-kind Monash Hall hire, except for those receiving funding through Seniors Club Support, are to be submitted through this stream of funding. Community groups can apply for up to \$15,000 per annum of in-kind support to cover the cost of hall hire for community-based activities. This support is available for a period of up to three years, aligning with the same cycle as other multi-year streams.

Service agreements

Service agreements will be provided as a part of the MCGPP to essential service providers. This will provide greater consistency for these organisations and improve their planning capacity over the term of the agreements.

An updated service agreement will be provided to each organisation, and these agreements will be for three years. These service-based organisations will not need to apply to the grants program to access this funding, however, they will need to agree to the service agreement and provide an annual monitoring and evaluation report to Council.

A service agreement will provide predictable timelines and streamlined reporting requirements, assisting the organisations with their ongoing planning and programming for the community. Service agreements will encourage consistency of service delivery for organisations delivering essential services to the Monash community.

Any changes to current funding arrangements will depend on Council's annual budget process.

Neighbourhood Houses

The City of Monash has 10 Neighbourhood Houses within its municipal boundary. Neighbourhood Houses provide a range of programs and services at a local level. They are a community conduit and are a valuable, social connection point for many communities. Neighbourhood Houses are funded by the State Government, however, 8 out of the 10 houses operate in a Council owned facility. Council officers work with Neighbourhood Houses on a range of events and programs that promote community strengthening and community cohesion.

A service agreement will be provided to each Neighbourhood House for a three-year period. Neighbourhood Houses will not need to apply to the grants program to access this funding, however, agree to the terms of a service agreement and provide a monitoring and evaluation report to Council on an annual basis.

Other Service Organisations

The City of Monash has existing agreements with a number of service organisations. These arrangements have been in place for a number of years due to the level of discrete service that these organisations provide. The funding will vary across each organisation.

10. Application Process and Assessment

Applications for the MCGPP will open the first business day after 26 January each year for a period of 5 weeks. Applications will need to use the online application portal to submit their applications in addition to speaking to a relevant Council officer to confirm their eligibility.

Officers will be available by phone to discuss application eligibility. In person and online officer support will be provided to all potential grant applicants between the opening and closing dates of the program. Officers are only able to assist with the recording of assessable answers for accessibility purposes. Additionally grant writing workshops and budget workshops will be made available to potential applicants.

Interpreter services will be promoted and made available as a part of the application assistance process.

Council is committed to providing translated communications material, including guidelines, in our priority languages, as well as an accessible text version of guidelines for use on a screen reader.

Assessment of all applications will be conducted by a group of internal officers, that as best as possible reflect the diversity of experience of our community, against a scoring matrix to ensure consistency, equity and transparency over a period of 8 weeks, with assessments concluded by the end of April. Unconscious bias training will be provided to all assessment panel officers prior to the assessment process.

A Council report will review the recommendations made by officers at the May Council meeting.

All successful and unsuccessful grant applicants will receive acknowledgement of their application within 2 weeks of the Council report.

Limited in person and online officer support will be provided for acquittals of grants. It is an expectation that grant applicants will provide their acquittals to Council within the given timelines.

Each applicant will need to address the criteria of the program as outlined in the guidelines to be eligible for a community and partnership grant.

10.1 Budget

The MCGPP operational budget is allocated through the annual Council budget approval process, for the financial year 1 July – 30 June each year. MCGPP is allocated as cash and in-kind grants, subject to Council approval. Apportionment of funding across the stream remains at the discretion of Council.

11. Grant Documentation

At the commencement of the financial year in which the grant is awarded, all successful applicants are required to complete a Funding Agreement and comply with the conditions outlined therein to access the approved funds. The Funding Agreement serves as a formal contract with Council and outlines the reporting requirements expected of the grant recipient.

All grants are subject to an annual acquittal process, which includes both financial reporting and program outcome reporting. If a recipient organisation fails to deliver the agreed outcomes or does not expend the funds in accordance with the Funding Agreement, Council may require the return of the grant funds, either in part or in full.

11.1 Returning Grant Funds

A successful recipient of a MCGPP grant must comply with all conditions outlined in this policy, the MCGPP Guidelines and the agreed to Funding Agreement, as well as any other such additional conditions specified by Council in approving the Grant. If these conditions are not met or the grant is spent on ineligible items, as identified in the expenditure statement provided in the acquittal report, Council reserves the right to request the funds to be returned.

Any unspent funds at the end of the project must be returned to Council.

11.2 Late Documentation

Late submission of grant documentation may impact eligibility for future funding.

Cash payment will not be made until all relevant documentation is submitted.

Where grant funding includes hall hire, acquittal and all supporting must be submitted within six (6) weeks of 1 July. Submissions received after this deadline may result in hall hire expenses not being backdated, with funding only applicable from the date the documentation is received.

12. Dispute Resolution Pathway

Applicants that do not agree with an outcome are able, in the first instance, to contact the Team Leader, Connected Communities (Team Leader) to seek further information and feedback relating to their application provided by the Assessment Panel.

Should this not be resolved, the applicant is not comfortable or considers it inappropriate to contact the Team Leader the applicant can apply for a review to the Manager, Community Strengthening (Manager). The Manager will acknowledge receipt of the dispute within five (5) business days and provide and outcome of the review within ten (10) business days.

Should this not be satisfactory a further review can be submitted to the Director, Community Services. The Director will finalise their review of the original decision within 14 days of receiving the request and advise the outcome in writing.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Annual audits (programmatic and financial) will be carried out with a selection of grant recipients. A full external audit of the MCGPP will be conducted every three years. Details of the MCGPP will be available for inspection as required by the Local Government (General) Regulations (2015).

The program will aim to collect and disaggregate data by gender and other demographic characteristics where possible, in order to better promote intersectional gender equality in the program and enable greater understanding of the applicants and beneficiaries of the funding.

The MCGPP policy will be reviewed every three years to coincide with the funding cycle.

14. 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.

Council recognises that the introduction of a Community Grants and Partnership Program Policy can have a direct and significant impact on the community. A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed, and several changes have been made to the Policy that strengthen our commitments to gender equality. These include:

- Under Section 7 Program, principles and priorities section, a statement around our commitment to intersectionality has been included, what is means for the applicant and what Council will do.
- Under Section 7 Council's Diversity Statement is now included.
- Under Section 10 Application Process and Assessment, a range of new actions have been added.

Council is committed to providing translated communications material, including guidelines, in our priority languages and assisted by our language aides, as well as accessible text version of guidelines for use on a screen reader. Any images or graphics in communications material will also be reflective of our diverse community.

Assessment of applications will be conducted by a group of internal officers, that as best as possible reflect the diversity of experience of our community, against a scoring matrix to ensure consistency, equity and transparency over a period of eight weeks, with assessments concluded by the end of April. Unconscious bias training will be provided to all assessment panel officers prior to the assessment process.

Under Section 13, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review – a statement around the collection of gender disaggregated data in order to promote gender equality in the program has been added. This information will form part of the Council report recommending approvals of grant applications.

15. Human Rights Considerations

The funding provided by Council through the grants program is entirely consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2026. This policy supports:

Section of the Charter	Impact and Justification
Right to recognition and equality before the law.	The Community grants and partnership program offers all community groups the opportunity to apply, noting that guidelines and an assessment criterion needs to be met.
The right to freedom of movement, expression, thought, conscience, religion and belief.	All community groups can apply for a range of activities / programs that may involve religious and cultural celebrations and supporting a cohesive community.
The right to freedom of expression	The Community grants and partnership program is renowned for enabling continued freedom of expression by a range of community groups via the funding that is made available.
Cultural rights	The Community grants and partnership program affirms cultural rights of all groups who wish to apply to this program.

training as a part of the assessment process.

Table 5 – Human rights considerations

16. Administrative Amendments

From time to time, circumstance 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.

17. Review

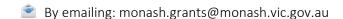
This policy will be reviewed by Team Leader Connected Communities, every three (3) years.

18. Document Version

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Comments
1.0	19/09/2025	Coordinator Economy, Place and Connected Communities	Manager, Community Strengthening	Council	

19. Contact

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



By calling the Connected Communities team on 9518 3555.

20. Appendix

20.1 Expanded Eligibility

Eligibility is outlined in Section 8 of this policy. This expanded eligibility details specific activities and items that cannot be funded under this program.

20.1.1 What activities are not eligible?

Council is unable to fund the following:

- Late applications.
- Activities outside the scope of Local Government, e.g. housing, education.
- Activities that take place in a private residence.

- Activities that are held for political purposes or seeks to influence a person's political beliefs.
- Activities that are held for specific religious purposes or seeks to proselytise or influence a person's religious beliefs (this may not include community celebrations of annual calendar religious festivals).
- Seniors Club Grant applicants who have less than 75% of members over 60 and less than 20 Monash Residents as members who regularly participate in the funded activities (with the exception of seniors groups with significant First Nations membership).

20.1.2 What cannot be funded

- Employment of staff in an ongoing position (or a contract that is longer than the timeframe of the funded activity)
- Research
- Food relief
- Activities that are primarily commercial
- Fundraising activities
- Activities that are inconsistent with Council's objectives
- Conferences or conference sponsorship
- Debt payment
- Travel expenses, including bus hire, public transport.
- An individual person's expenses
- Capital infrastructure
- Utilities, such as water, electricity, gas and rates
- Insurance
- Activities that duplicate existing services or programs in Monash
- Gifts and prizes
- Alcohol
- Digital equipment, including tablets, computers, phones, etc.

21. Attachments

21.1 MCGPP Assessment Criteria