

**2. 2020/21 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM**

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*****PURPOSE***

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council the establishment of a Quick Response Grants program.

***KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES***

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants are designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The Quick Response Grants program will be funded from the existing 2020/21 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

***CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION***

The establishment of a Quick Response Grant program will encourage the Monash community to be agile and innovative during a time that requires our community to think outside their norm. Monash Council has a proud history of supporting our community groups through the Monash Community Grants Program and the establishment of a Quick Response Grant program enables groups to be supportive and adapt and respond to the changing needs of our community as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

## 2. 2020/21 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council;*

- a) *Endorses the establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program*
- b) *Allocates a total of \$135,000 to this fund, that will be funded from the existing Monash Community Grant Program*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council the establishment of a Quick Response Grants program (QRG).

### **BACKGROUND**

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants are designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

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. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program will enable Council to continue to support their local community groups to remain agile and innovative as they respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

### **DISCUSSION**

The current COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges for Council and community alike, both from an operational and economic perspective. Council is acutely aware of the importance of many of our community groups and the role that they play in combating social isolation and loneliness amongst our community members.

The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program (QRG) will enable our community to apply for a once-off grant of up to \$5,000 for a project that demonstrates innovation in response to the impact of COVID-19 on their group and our local community. The grants will open on 1 July 2020 and will remain open until the allocation is exhausted. Guidelines have been established for this program to assist and guide applicants to ensure their eligibility (Attachment 1).

Applications will need to focus on how they are adapting and transitioning their programs during COVID-19 and how this innovation brings positive outcomes to their group/and or wider community.

Whilst previous funding from other Monash Council Grants Programs has no effect on an applicant's eligibility to apply, it is important to note that the Quick Response Grants are not a duplicate of an existing grant.

Grants that address significant social issues such as loneliness, mental health, family violence, community safety are encouraged to apply. Some examples of grants that may be funded through the Quick Response Grants are 'Zoom' accounts to enable groups to move their classes and/or meeting online, an art project that focuses on mental health or promoting racial tolerance, a neighbourhood project that encourages connection and reduces social isolation.

All applications to the Quick Response Grant Program will be required to submit their applications online, via the SmartyGrants portal.

An evaluation matrix will be developed, taking into consideration the guidelines, and ensuring that the applications are considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. This provides that the assessment process with rigour and consistency. Additionally it enables valuable feedback to be provided to applicants on their application.

The assessment criteria will consist of the following;

Assessment criteria

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Demonstrated response to the impacts of COVID-19 on an organisation/community
3. The number of Monash residents that will benefit
4. The capacity of the organisation/community/individual to undertake the project
5. Budget expenditure

To ensure the essence of the QRG is maintained, an Officer Evaluation Panel will assess the applications and provide feedback to all applicants within four weeks of their application being received. The cap of \$5,000 enables officer delegation to occur. Once receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2021.

All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next Council meeting.

### ***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The Monash community sector has a rich history of innovation and promoting community participation. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant will enable many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively to the impact that COVID-19 has had on their members and local community.

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

The 2020/21 Monash Community Grants Program addresses the four key themes: freedom, respect, equality and dignity of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The Quick Response Grants Program will be funded from the existing 2020/21 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

***CONCLUSION***

The establishment of a Quick Response Grant program will encourage the Monash community to be agile and innovative during a time that requires our community to think outside their norm. Monash Council has a proud history of supporting our community groups through the Monash Community Grants Program and the establishment of a Quick Response Grant program enables groups to be supportive and adapt and respond to the changing needs of our community as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

***ATTACHMENTS***

**Attachment 1**            2020/21 Quick Response Grant Guidelines