

7.2.2 MONASH COMMUNITY GRANTS REVIEW

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the recommendations arising from the review undertaken of the Monash Community Grants Program, with the aim of strengthening the program's alignment with community needs and Council priorities

INTRODUCTION

Each year, Council provides funding to local organisations and community groups through the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of recommendations provided from a review undertaken of the Monash Community Grants Program.

The report presents the outcomes of the review and provides improvements that aim to modernise and streamline the program, ensuring it remains responsive to the changing needs of the Monash community and enhances simplicity and accessibility for community groups.

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sustainable City

Ensure an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable municipality.

Inclusive Services

Community development and advocacy to support the Monash community.

Deliver high performing services.

Fostering an equitable, just and inclusive Monash.

Good Governance

Ensure a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable organisation.

Effectively communicate and engage with the community.

BACKGROUND

Monash has provided financial support annually to the community through the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) since 1995 and has long prided itself on being one of the largest Council grant programs in the state. Widely recognised across the municipality, the program plays a vital role in supporting the diverse and vibrant communities of Monash by empowering local groups to deliver projects, activities, and events that foster 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. While the program has consistently evolved to meet the changing needs of the Monash community, its overall structure has remained relatively consistent over the past decade.

Over the past several years, a number of changes have been introduced to improve the accessibility, responsiveness, and relevance of the program. Additionally in 2022 VAGO undertook an audit of local government grant programs (Fraud Control over Local Government Grants) which resulted in a number of recommendations for Councils to strengthen their fraud controls and improve guidance, grants management/processes and training for grant related fraud. This included consistently identifying conflicts of interests in grants programs and processes, assessing applications against specific criteria, documenting decisions and panel processes, checking how funds are used/acquitted and evaluating grant programs' outcomes. Monash City Councils program has taken into account these recommendations and the recent review continues to strengthen controls and ensure appropriate due diligence and process in the management of the grants program.

An internal review is held in September each year involving officers from across Council who are involved in the program. Their feedback around continuous improvement assists in refining the program with a view to simplify the program and to assist our community to access the program.

At the conclusion of the 2023/24 program, an annual evaluation was conducted which recommended that a full and comprehensive review of the Monash Community Grants Program be undertaken.

DISCUSSION

The Monash Community Grants Program has long been a highly valued program that supports community capacity, inclusion and wellbeing across Monash. A full review of the program was undertaken in the first half of 2025 to assess whether the program continues to meet the evolving needs of the community, aligns with best practice and reflects Council's strategic priorities.

This review has reaffirmed the program's importance for and to the community and identified key opportunities to enhance effectiveness, accessibility and alignment with Council's goals when providing funding to the community.

The resulting report (attachment 1) presents a series of recommendations proposed for Council's endorsement that will be implemented at the beginning of the next three-year funding cycle (2026/27 to 2029/30).

The recommendations outlined below are proposed to simplify the program structure, improve accessibility, enhance governance and ensure equitable distribution of funding. They are grounded in extensive consultation with community groups, internal stakeholders and benchmarking across the sector.

Funding Types

1. The Hall Only grant category name is changed to Monash Halls Subsidy.
2. With the exception of Seniors Group Support, in-kind hall hire is only eligible to be applied for through Monash Halls Subsidy.
3. Other Venue Hire is removed as a separate type of funding and include community venue hire fees as an eligible item under cash funding which can be applied for and used to pay venue hire.
4. Facility Rental funding is removed from the program. Removing Facility Rental from the program would have no impact on the funding available through the grant budget

allocation. It would align these facilities with how other leased community facilities across Council are managed, would streamline the process and significantly reduce the administrative burden for both recipients and Council staff.

Program Structure

5. The Community Group Cultural Celebrations is removed from the MCGP and a new year-round subsidy of \$1,000 is available to be applied for.
6. The annual grants format is changed from five activity-based categories to three cash only funding tiers.
7. That the multi-year grants are reduced from funding five categories to three streams.
8. Grants provided for Monash seniors' groups are renamed from Positive Ageing to Seniors Club Support.
9. Seniors Club Support grants are changed from the current formula and subsidy format to being tiered funding based on the number of Monash members with a cap of 75% for food/catering.
10. Probus Clubs to be eligible for \$500 cash funding through a separate stream on the Seniors Club Support grants.
11. The name of the Specialist Services stream to be changed to "Partnership Grants" and that a funding cap of up to \$85,000 in cash support per organisation be introduced.
12. Neighbourhood House be removed as a funding category.
13. Monash's 10 Neighbourhood Houses and some identified current Specialist Services grant recipients to be provided ongoing funding at the same level currently received through a service agreement.
14. The funding currently allocated to the Glendi and Lunar New Year festivals be incorporated into the grants program budget with funding for these events to be applied for through the formal grant application process in the Partnerships Grants stream.
15. Discontinue the Council's Discretionary Fund as a separate program and allocate its budget and purpose into the Quick Response Grants program.

Eligibility

16. To require organisations to hold an active ABN to be eligible.
17. Remove significant cash holdings as an eligibility criterion and include demonstrating financial need as part of the assessment process
18. Remove the criteria that prohibits organisations affiliated with an educational institution from applying through the program
19. Reinstate all fundraising activities being ineligible
20. Explicitly state that activities held in private residences are ineligible for funding.
21. Align the criteria relating to gambling directly with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy.
22. The cap for equipment costs be increased to \$1,000
23. Introduce a separate cap of \$1,000 for uniforms, costumes, and activity-specific items, in addition to the general equipment funding limit.

24. Catering should be an eligible expense across all funding streams, with a cap of 20% of the total cash allocation. For Seniors Club Support, a higher cap of 75% should apply.
25. Remove auspice fees as an ineligible item.
26. Remove the cap for online meeting subscriptions.
27. Explicitly state in the program policy and guidelines that food relief is an ineligible item for funding.

Program Name

28. Change the program name to Monash Community Grants & Partnerships Program (MCGPP) to reflect the expanded scope of support that includes grants, service agreements and in-kind subsidies.

By implementing these service improvements Council will continue strengthen the program that supports and fosters connected communities across Monash, ensuring that funding is accessible, fair and reflective of evolving community needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total annual grants allocation for the 2025/26 funding year is \$2,636,357 and the changes recommended in this report will not impact on this going forward.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

An updated policy reflecting the approved changes will be developed and tabled at the October Council meeting. The review has been undertaken, and recommendations provided, with Council's values and strategic objectives outlined in the Monash Council Plan 2025-29, in particular "A Healthy, Safe and Connected Community" in mind.

Monash Council has a proud history of working in partnership with community-based organisations to meet the needs of local residents and to deliver positive community outcomes. To further strengthen this partnership approach, as will be included in the updated Monash Community Grants & Partnership Program Policy, organisations seeking funding will be required to demonstrate how their project/initiative will support key Council strategies including but not limited to:

- The Council Plan 2025-29
- Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29
- Monash Loneliness Framework 2020-2025
- Monash Public Health Approach to Gambling Policy
- The Gender Equity Framework
- Active Sports Club Framework 2022-2027
- Monash Arts and Culture Strategy 2025

CONSULTATION

As part of this review consultations were undertaken with various internal and external stakeholders.

In May 2025 three community consultation sessions were held with 21 representatives from current and previous grant recipients.

A fourth, and final, consultation occurred in June 2025 with the Team Leader, Connected Communities attending a Neighbourhood House Coordinators meeting. As a group these organisations make up 10% of the applications that are funded through the program and will receive 26% of the funding that has been allocated in 2025/26.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The social implications of the funding council provides through grants are significant. Grant funding:

- Strengthens a sense of community by facilitating cultural and artistic activities, stakeholder participation, recognition of diversity, cultural heritage and social cohesion.
- Provides support for community services to support the diverse needs of our Monash community (e.g. children and families, young people, older adults and people with disabilities) and facilitate the accessibility of community services.
- Strengthens community health and well-being through public safety initiatives and facilitate participation of community members in healthy lifestyles and community festivals.
- Fosters education and skills development by supporting the number and quality of education options for the community in life-long learning opportunities.

In response to the needs of local services, Council maintains its priority of supporting agencies and groups that are locally focused and responsive to municipal needs.


HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The funding provided by Council through grants is entirely consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The recommendations proposed to be made to the current Monash Community Grants Program does not compromise this. In particular, the program supports:

- freedom of expression
- peaceful assembly and freedom of association
- taking part in public life
- cultural rights

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) has previously been undertaken of the program and the findings from this have formed part of this review as it is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community.



As there was a comprehensive GIA undertaken on the grants program so recently a higher-level GIA Review will be undertaken as part of the policy development phase to assess if anything has changed since the last GIA and/or if further changes should be made.

CONCLUSION

The Monash Community Grants Program has long been a highly valued program that supports community capacity, inclusion and wellbeing across Monash. The review undertaken in the first half of 2025 reaffirmed the program's importance for and to the community and identified key opportunities to enhance effectiveness, accessibility and alignment with Council's goals when providing funding to the community.

The recommendations outlined in the report aim to modernise and streamline the program, ensuring it remains responsive to the changing needs of the Monash community. By simplifying the structure, strengthening governance and expanding the scope of support Council can continue to deliver a program that reflects what the community wants and needs, now and into the future.

ATTACHMENT LIST

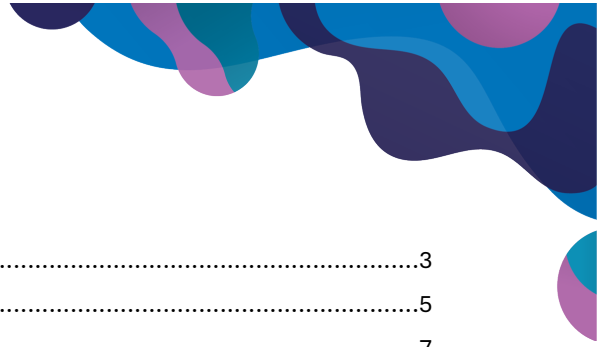
1. Monash Community Grants Program Review [**7.2.2.1** - 38 pages]
2. 2025 Monash Community Grants Program Review - Attachment 1 - Council Benchmarking [**7.2.2.2** - 4 pages]
3. 2025 Monash Community Grants Program Review - Attachment 2 - Implementation Plan [**7.2.2.3** - 1 page]



Monash Community Grants Program Review

July 2025





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Executive Summary

The Monash Community Grants Program has been a cornerstone of Council's support for community development, inclusion, and wellbeing since 1995. Widely recognised across the municipality, the program empowers local organisations to deliver projects and initiatives that foster connection, cultural expression and community participation.

Following the conclusion of the 2023/24 program, an annual evaluation recommended a full and comprehensive review to ensure the program continues to meet the evolving needs of the Monash community. This review, informed by extensive internal and external consultation and benchmarking against other Councils, has resulted in a series of proposed changes aimed at modernising the program, improving accessibility and strengthening governance.

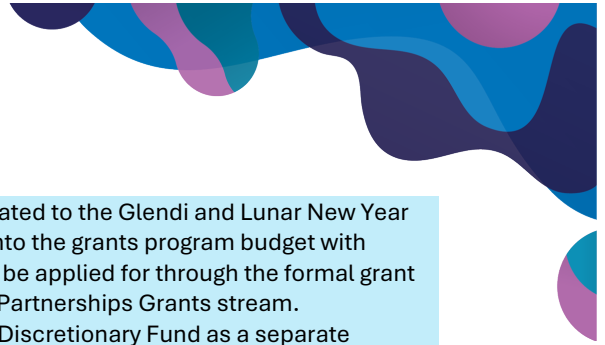
The review has resulted in 32 recommendations proposed to simplify the program structure, improve accessibility, enhance governance and ensure equitable distribution of funding. These recommendations are grounded in extensive consultation with community groups, internal stakeholders and benchmarking across the sector. The recommendations outlined in this report are proposed for implementation at the beginning of the next three-year funding cycle (2026/27 to 2029/30).

Funding Types

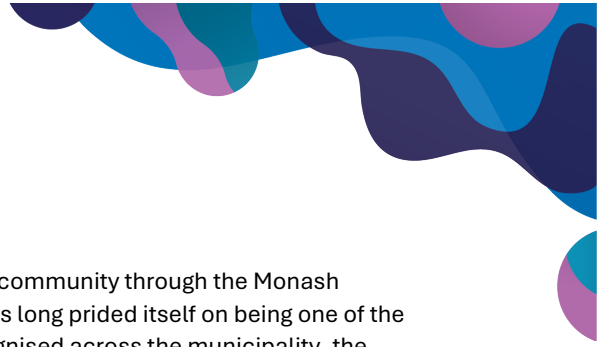
1. To maintain the real value of funding over time and ensure continued support for community needs is available an annual CPI increase is applied to the grants budget.
2. The Hall Only grant category name is changed to Monash Halls Subsidy.
3. With the exception of Seniors Group Support, in-kind hall hire is only eligible to be applied for through Monash Halls Subsidy.
4. Other Venue Hire is removed as a separate type of funding and include community venue hire fees as an eligible item under cash funding which can be applied for and used to pay venue hire.
5. Facility Rental funding is removed from the program.

Program Structure

6. The Community Group Cultural Celebrations is removed from the MCGP and a new year-round subsidy of \$1,000 is available to be applied for.
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12. The name of the Specialist Services stream to be changed to Partnership Grants, and that a funding cap of up to \$85,000 in cash support per organisation be introduced.
13. Neighbourhood House be removed as a funding category.
14. Monash's 10 Neighbourhood Houses and some identified current Specialist Services grant recipients to be provided ongoing funding at the same level currently received through a service agreement, with a CPI increase applied in line with recommendation 1.



	<p>15. The funding currently allocated to the Glendi and Lunar New Year festivals be incorporated into the grants program budget with funding for these events to be applied for through the formal grant application process in the Partnerships Grants stream.</p> <p>16. Discontinue the Council's Discretionary Fund as a separate program and reallocate its budget and purpose into the Quick Response Grants program.</p>
Eligibility	<p>17. To require organisations to hold an active ABN to be eligible.</p> <p>18. Remove significant cash holdings as an eligibility criterion and include demonstrating financial need as part of the assessment process</p> <p>19. Remove the criteria the prohibits organisations affiliated with an educational institution from applying through the program</p> <p>20. Reinstate all fundraising activities being ineligible</p> <p>21. Explicitly state that activities held in private residences are ineligible for funding.</p> <p>22. Align the criteria relating to gambling directly with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy.</p> <p>23. The cap for equipment costs be increased to \$1,000</p> <p>24. Introduce a separate cap of \$1,000 for uniforms, costumes, and activity-specific items, in addition to the general equipment funding limit.</p> <p>25. Catering should be an eligible expense across all funding streams, with a cap of 20% of the total cash allocation. For Seniors Club Support, a higher cap of 75% should apply.</p> <p>26. Remove auspice fees as an ineligible item.</p> <p>27. Remove the cap for online meeting subscriptions.</p> <p>28. Explicitly state in the program policy and guidelines that food relief is an ineligible item for funding.</p>
Program Name	<p>29. Change the program name to Monash Community Grants & Partnerships Program (MCGPP) to reflect the expanded scope of support that includes grants, service agreements and in-kind subsidies.</p>



Background

Monash has provided financial support annually to the community through the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) since 1995 and has long prided itself on being one of the largest Council grant programs in Victoria. Widely recognised across the municipality, the program plays a vital role in supporting the diverse and vibrant communities of Monash by empowering local groups and organisations to deliver projects, activities, and events that foster connection, inclusion, wellbeing and cultural expression. It consistently demonstrates Council's commitment to strengthening participation and engagement and investing in community capacity and is highly valued by the community. While the program has consistently evolved to meet the changing needs of the Monash community, its overall structure has remained relatively consistent over the past decade.

Over the past several years, a number of changes have been introduced to improve the accessibility, responsiveness, and relevance of the program. These include:

- 2019/20 - Updates were made to the application criteria and the way questions were presented to applicants to improve clarity and accessibility. The program's eight-category structure remained unchanged.
- 2020/21 - A new category was introduced for hall users seeking only in-kind hall hire support that increased the number of categories to nine.
- 2020/21 - The COVID-19 Quick Response Grants program was launched to support the community respond to pandemic-related challenges. This stream has since become a permanent feature of the program, with a quarantined allocation of \$60,000 annually from the MCGP budget for the Quick Response Grants.
- 2023/24 - A new category was added for Community Group Cultural Celebrations, bringing the total number of categories to ten.

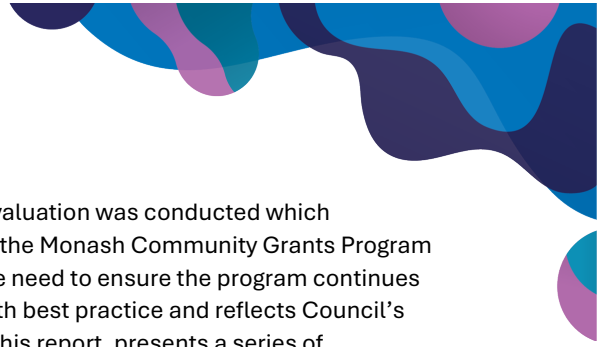
The budget for the program has remained the same over this 10-year period, with the exception of 2022/23 when a CPI increase was applied, however much of this is provided in-kind, rather than as cash funding. The budget does not include specific allocations for these different types of funding, but approximately provides each year:

- \$1.15M in cash funding (including other venue hire)
- \$900k for in-kind hall hire
- \$540k for in-kind leased facility rental

In 2020, an internal audit of the MCGP was conducted by Crowe, which identified several areas for improvement including governance, transparency, and risk management. It recommended removing Councillors from the assessment process to reduce bias and reputational risk, and called for clearer eligibility criteria, stronger acquittal processes, and formalised procedures. These changes were implemented before the 2021/22 program.

These findings were later reinforced by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) in its 2022 report, [Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants](#). Monash's self-assessment showed compliance with nine of the ten recommendations, with the final one, grant fraud risk training for assessors, now also in place, further strengthening program integrity.

An internal review is held in September each year involving officers from across Council who are involved in the program. Their feedback around continuous improvement assists in refining the program with the view to simplify the program and to assist our community to access the program.



At the conclusion of the 2023/24 program, an annual evaluation was conducted which recommended that a full and comprehensive review of the Monash Community Grants Program be undertaken. This recommendation was based on the need to ensure the program continues to meet the evolving needs of the community, aligns with best practice and reflects Council's strategic priorities. The resulting review, as outlined in this report, presents a series of recommendations proposed for implementation at the beginning of the next three-year funding cycle.



About This Review

Council Benchmarking

As part of the review, benchmarking has been undertaken against ten Council grant programs across the East and South-East of Melbourne. Direct feedback was received from six Councils (Glen Eira, City of Yarra, Kingston, Knox, Manningham and Maroondah), with further desktop research undertaken on another four neighbouring Councils (Boroondara, Greater Dandenong, Stonnington and Whitehorse).

These councils all have differing budgets, resourcing and programs that are delivered but provide an opportunity to look at what is being provided to other communities across the sector. This has assisted to identify improvements that could be introduced to the Monash program.

More information received as part of this benchmarking exercise can be found in Attachment 1 - Benchmarking.

Consultations

As part of this review consultations have been undertaken with various internal and external stakeholders.

In May 2025 three community consultation sessions were held with 21 representatives from current and previous grant recipients.

The final consultation occurred in June 2025 with the Team Leader, Connected Communities attending a Neighbourhood House Coordinators meeting. As a group these organisations make up 10% of the applications that are funded through the program and will receive 26% of the funding that has been allocated in 2025/26.

Internal consultations occurred with 8 teams between February and April 2025, as outlined below. An overview of the current program was provided, and discussion occurred on the barriers for the current program and opportunities that could be implemented for future rounds.

- Arts & Cultural Development
- Economy, Place & Connected Communities
- Equity & Wellbeing
- Events & Festivals
- Monash Halls
- Recreation
- Social Inclusion
- Sustainability

One-on-one meetings also occurred with the Manager, Community Strengthening and Director, Community Services.

Funding Types

The current program provides four different types of funding that can be applied for, though these funding options differ across categories:

- [Cash](#)
- [In-kind Hall Hire](#)
- [Other Venue Hire](#)
- [Facility Rental](#)

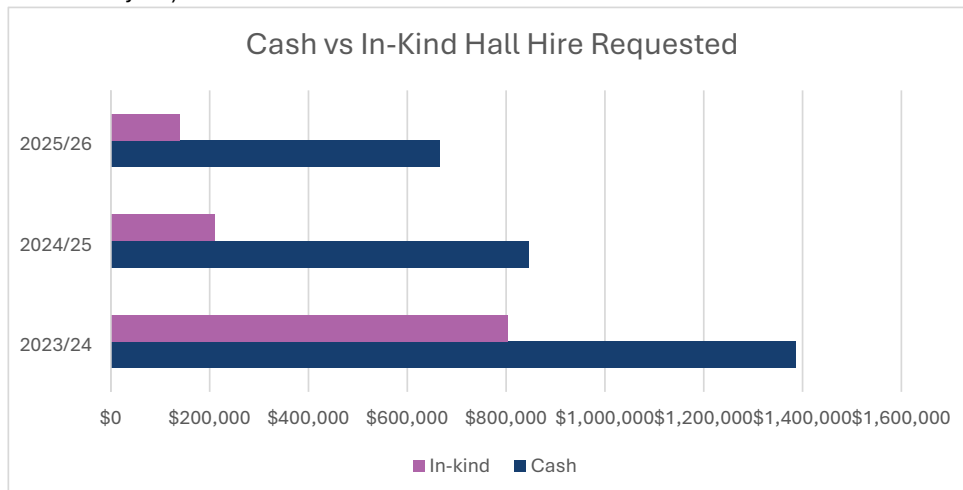
As outlined in the background there isn't a specific allocation to each of these types of funding, with the exception of the Facility Rental.

Cash

Current Situation

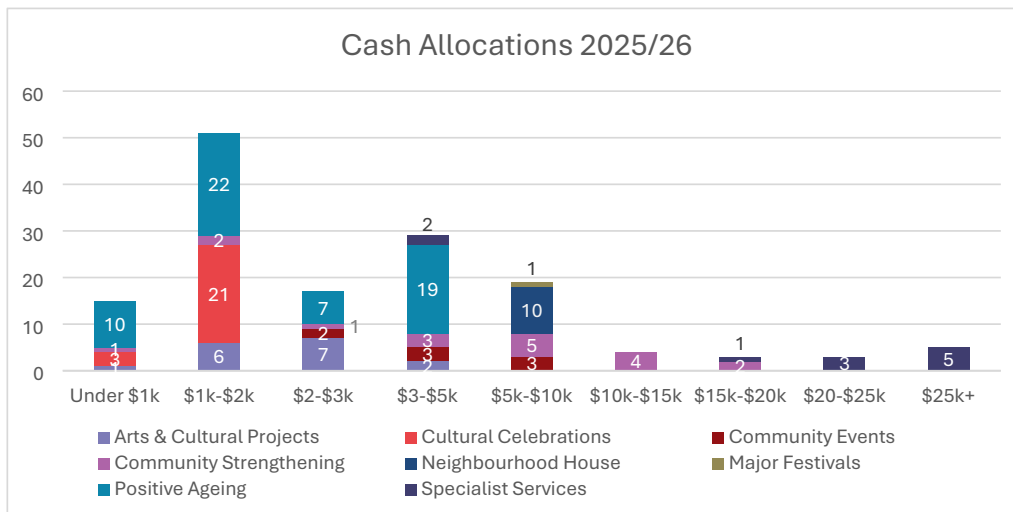
Council provides cash funding to support community projects and initiatives. This funding is paid directly to recipients, allowing them to manage their own expenses. While most payments are made upon submission of a funding agreement, some categories—such as large Specialist Services and outdoor events—have additional reporting or staged payment requirements.

There is consistently high demand for cash funding, with significantly more requests for cash than in-kind support. Over the past three year there has been a 2.5:1 ratio of cash to in-kind hall hire requested, as outlined in the chart below (58% in the first year, 25% in the second, and 21% in the final year).



The amount of cash funding available varies based on the category and specific needs of the applicants, with only one category, Hall Only, not having cash funding as an available funding type.

In the 2025/26 grant cycle, approximately \$1.15 million in cash funding has been allocated, supporting a diverse range of community projects. The amount of funding varies from \$115,000 awarded in Specialist Services to \$250 at the lower end through Active Projects. The table below shows the number of applications awarded funding across different cash brackets, grouped by category, demonstrating a large majority receive less than \$10,000 cash.



Rationale

Cash funding offers flexibility for community organisations to allocate resources where they are most needed. This is especially valuable for smaller groups with limited access to other funding sources. The current structure ensures responsible distribution, with added oversight for higher-value grants.

The strong preference for cash grants highlights their importance in enabling effective project delivery and community impact.

Impact

The program continues to support a wide range of community-led initiatives. To help maintain the real value of funding over time and ensure the program remains responsive to community needs it is recommended that an annual CPI increase be applied to the grants budget.

No changes are proposed to the availability or structure of cash funding within the overall grants program.

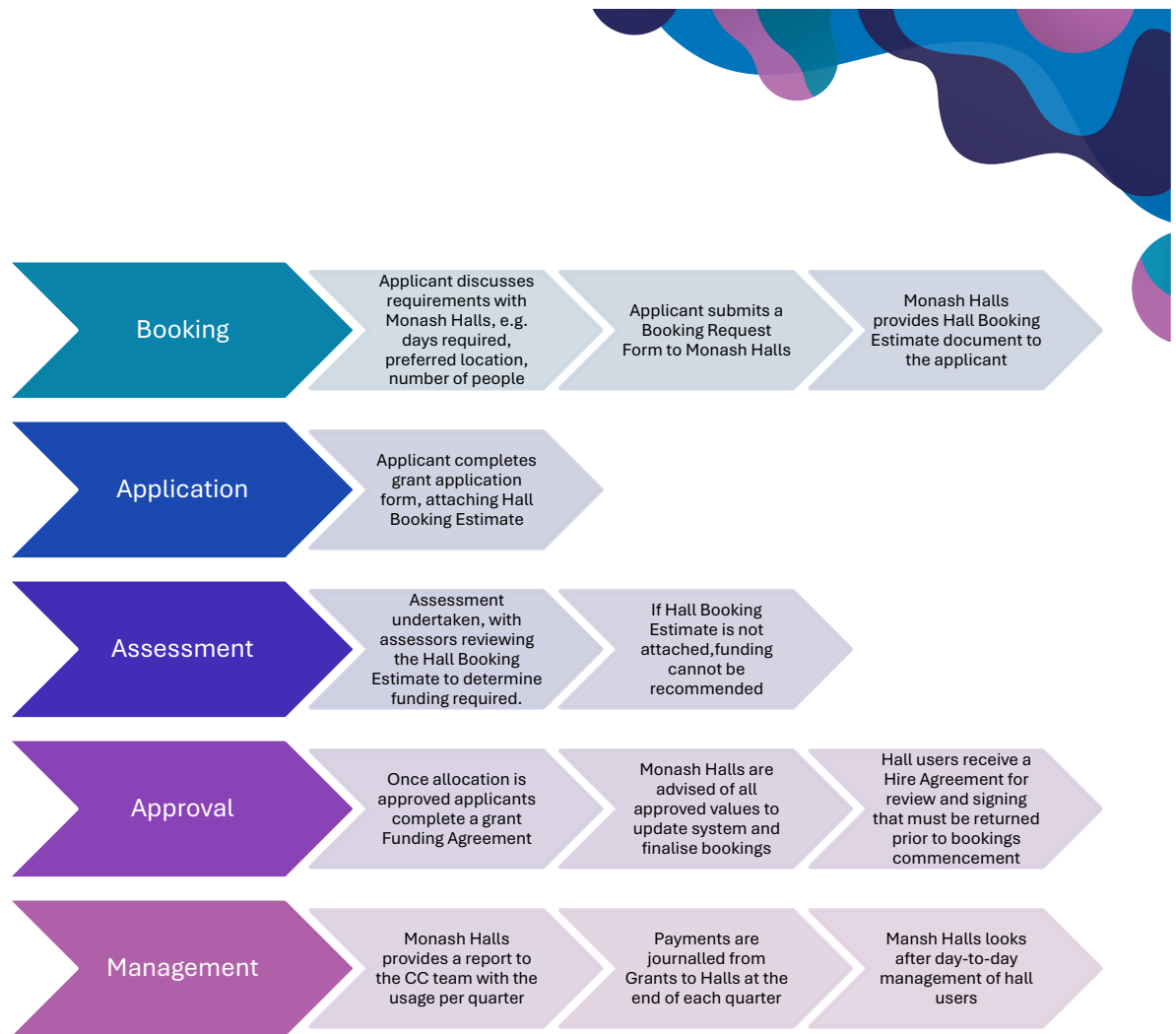
Recommendation: *To maintain the real value of funding over time and ensure continued support for community needs is available an annual CPI increase is applied to the grants budget.*

In-Kind Hall Hire

Current Situation

Council provides in-kind funding to organisations that use Monash Halls. Funding is allocated to recipients but there is no payment made to them. The funding is 'paid' directly to Monash Halls on a quarterly basis through a journal transaction from the Community Grants budget line.

The process for the applicant involves:



Rationale

The audit that was undertaken on the MCGP in 2019, highlighted in-kind hall hire as an area for improvement, with a recommendation that *“Management need to undertake an assessment as to the inclusion of In-kind Hall contributions in the overall annual grant program. Benchmarking across the local government sector should be used to assist with this assessment.”*

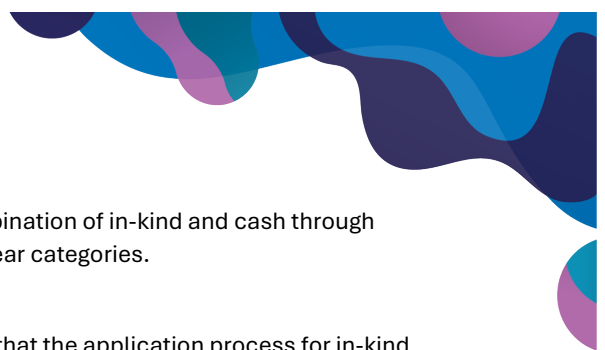
Since the audit recommendations a new category was introduced to make it simpler for organisations that only require assistance to cover the costs of their meeting spaces to apply only for that type of funding.

Monash Halls Subsidy

Current Situation

The current Hall Only category receives the second-highest number of applications. This stream allows applicants to request up to \$15,000 of in-kind support for hall hire and/or other venue hire. Currently, three groups receive the maximum allocation, with the average awarded being \$3,482.46.

As outlined earlier in this report, 146 groups receive support to cover in-kind hall hire. Of these, 62 receive in-kind hall hire only (across all categories), 54 receive it as part of their Positive



Ageing grant alongside cash funding, 22 receive a combination of in-kind and cash through annual grants, and the remaining eight through multi-year categories.

Rationale

Feedback from recipients has consistently highlighted that the application process for in-kind funding, particularly for small amounts, can be onerous for volunteer-run organisations. These groups have expressed a strong preference for a simpler, more accessible process.

To address this, it is proposed that applications for in-kind hall hire be separated entirely from cash funding applications (with the exception of Senior Club Support). All requests for in-kind hall hire would instead be submitted through a single, multi-year category. This would enable groups to apply for up to \$15,000 in support for up to three years.

Impact

While this change may require some applicants to submit separate applications for cash and in-kind support, for most, the process will be significantly simpler. The application form will be streamlined by removing several questions, requiring only a brief description of the proposed activities and the expected number of participants, including Monash residents. This will also enable a less formal assessment process, with a focus on community benefit and local participation.

Recommendation: *The Hall Only grant category name is changed to Monash Halls Subsidy.*

Recommendation: *With the exception of Seniors Club Support, in-kind hall hire is only eligible to be applied for through this stream.*

Other Venue Hire

Current Situation

Organisations are able to apply for funding to cover other community venues, such as Neighbourhood Houses and church halls, if there are no suitable Council halls available for their use. The reasons for this could be accessibility, parking or there is no booking availability for halls the size that is required for the dates available.

There was a large jump in the amount of this funding that has been awarded from 2023/24 to 2024/25, going from just under \$30,000 to just over \$80,000. This again increased by another 5.5% in 2025/26.

Rationale

As a cash payment is made by Council rather than provided in-kind, venue hire could be incorporated into the cash grant awarded to the organisation. This would allow the organisation to manage the funding in the same way as other grant funded items. The current process has become increasingly complex and time-consuming, with a growing number of invoices and Purchase Orders required.

Impact

Including community venue hire fees as an eligible item within the cash funding would streamline the application and payment process. Organisations would receive the funding

directly and manage it alongside other project costs. This change would simplify the process for applicants, improving clarity and consistency across the grants program.

Recommendation: *Other Venue Hire is removed as a separate type of funding and include community venue hire fees as an eligible item of cash funding that can be applied for and used to pay.*

Facility Rental

Current Situation

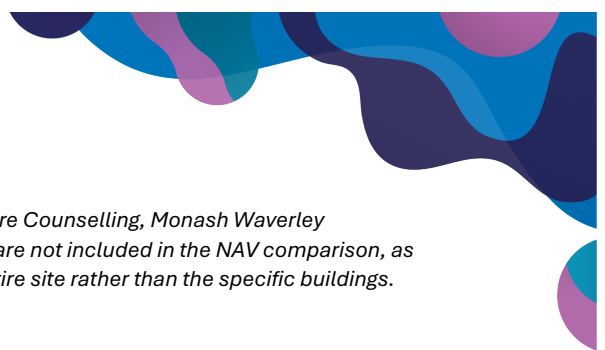
Facility Rental is provided as in-kind funding to a limited group of organisations, specifically six Neighbourhood Houses and five Service Organisations, that lease Council-owned buildings. This funding was originally introduced to reflect potential foregone commercial rental income, but all eligible organisations hold peppercorn leases with Council at a nominal annual fee of \$1. Their access and obligations under these leases remain unchanged regardless of grant applications.

Other facilities on similar leases, such as Wadham House, Fleigner Hall, Waverley Gem Club and Waverley Woodworkers are not required to submit for this type of funding.

No other Council's include this type of funding in their grant programs. There is no financial benefit to Council in maintaining this arrangement, as the value of support can be measured through other internal processes. The administrative burden however remains high, with all eleven organisations required to submit full applications and be assessed under the same criteria as those applying for cash funding, even if they are not seeking additional support.

The Facility Rental amounts allocated do not align with the Net Annual Value (NAV) of the properties. NAV is calculated as either a rough estimate of rent for non-residential properties or all the facility rental funding allocated is significantly lower than the NAV, as outlined in the table below.

Organisation/Site	Facility Rental Allocated	NAV	% of NAV
Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre	\$64,251.00	\$86,500.00	74%
Kerrie Neighbourhood House	\$31,351.00	\$95,500.00	33%
Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service	\$22,053.00	\$63,500.00	35%
Mount Street Neighbourhood House	\$80,463.00	\$344,000.00	23%
Notting Hill Neighbourhood House	\$33,019.00	\$69,500.00	48%
Waverley Community Learning Centre	\$65,443.00	\$90,500.00	72%
Wavlink	\$34,331.00	\$76,500.00	45%
Total	\$330,911.00	\$826,000.00	40%



NB: Four sites, Mackie Road Neighbourhood House, Wavecare Counselling, Monash Waverley Community Information & Support and Monash Men's Shed are not included in the NAV comparison, as the valuations provided by the Property team were for the entire site rather than the specific buildings.

Rationale

Removing Facility Rental from the program would have no impact on the funding available through the grant budget allocation and would align these facilities with how other leased community facilities across Council, such as Wadham House, Fleigner Hall, Waverley Gem Club and Waverley Woodworkers, are managed.

The current structure also creates governance issues. As the funding is tied to holding a lease rather than the application process, it must be provided even if an application is not submitted. This occurred in 2019 when Amaroo Neighbourhood House did not apply for the Neighbourhood House category but was still required to submit a late application to receive the Facility Rental funding. This was identified in the audit undertaken by Crowe as being outside of policy and an example of poor program governance.

Impact

The level of support and access to Council facilities would remain unchanged. Consultation with Neighbourhood House Coordinators indicated overwhelming support for this change, as it would streamline the process and significantly reduce the administrative burden for both recipients and Council staff.

Recommendation: *Facility Rental funding is removed from the program.*

Program Structure

The MCGP offers three different lengths of funding, and this review does not propose to change this:

- [Year-Round Funding](#)
- [Annual Grants](#)
- [Multi-Year Grants](#)

This meets the various needs of the range of organisations and projects that are funded through the program. However, improvements to the structure within these timeframes have been identified, which will better serve the needs of the Monash community.

Year-Round Funding

Quick Response Grants

Current Situation

The Quick Response Grant program is available all year, closing seven weeks before the end of the financial year or when the budget is exhausted. As a subset of the MCGP, it is guided by the same policy and has the same eligibility criteria, with the exception that individual artists with an ABN are eligible to apply. It is in place to provide funding for community groups to ensure that Council can continue to support community groups to respond to issues as they arise outside of the annual funding cycle of the MCGP. It has also been an opportunity for groups that



have been unsuccessful through MCGP to further develop their application and receive funding to deliver their projects.

This is a popular program that has seen an average of 40 applications submitted annually over the past four years. Of these approximately half, on average, are successful in receiving funding.

Currently, up to \$5,000 cash and/or in-kind funding can be applied for and awarded through this program. The average amount that has been awarded to Quick Response Grant recipients over the past four years is \$3,002.01.

Year	# Applications received	# Successful Applications	Average \$ Awarded
2024/25	45	21	\$2,844.26
2023/24	48	30	\$2,569.32
2022/23	40	21	\$3,286.56
2021/22	29	13	\$3,307.91
Average over period	40.5	21.25	\$3,002.01

Rationale

The Quick Response Grant program plays an important role in enabling timely and flexible support for community initiatives. The current funding cap allows applicants to respond to urgent needs and deliver meaningful projects for the community throughout the year. Although the average amount awarded is lower than the maximum available, retaining the \$5,000 cap ensures that the program remains adaptable to a wide range of projects and community needs.

Impact

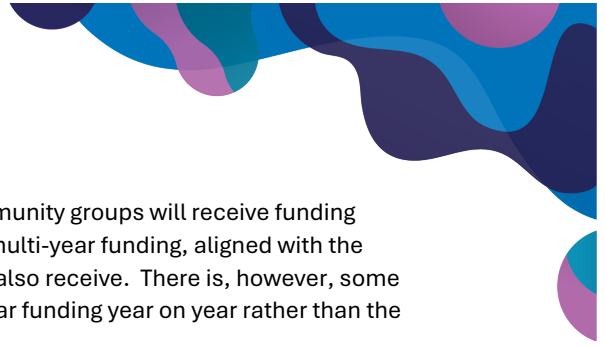
Maintaining the existing program structure and funding cap supports the continued success and responsiveness of the program. With \$60,000 allocated annually from the MCGP budget and average grant amounts remaining around \$3,000, the program remains financially sustainable. Retaining the current format allows Council to continue supporting diverse and impactful community initiatives throughout the year.

Cultural Celebrations Subsidy

Current Situation

The Community Group Cultural Celebrations category was introduced in the 2023/2024 three-year funding cycle. This funding was made available for regularly occurring one-off cultural celebration events such as Diwali, Lunar New Year & Eid. Our local community groups can apply but the events are aimed at group members rather than the wider Monash community.

By creating a separate category, it enabled the assessment criteria to be aligned with the scale of the event taking place and assists groups to celebrate their significant cultural celebrations within their community groups.



The category has proven popular & in 2025/26, 24 community groups will receive funding through this stream. These grants were introduced as multi-year funding, aligned with the Positive Ageing grants which many of these applicants also receive. There is, however, some confusion with many groups applying only for single-year funding year on year rather than the eligible 3 years.

Proposed Structure

It is proposed that funding for these events be transitioned out of the MCGP and into a standalone Community Cultural Celebrations Subsidy program. This subsidy would be available year-round, in line with the timing of the Quick Response Grants, offering greater flexibility and responsiveness to community groups.

The program would have an initial annual budget of \$30,000 and a funding cap of \$1,000 per event, with the expectation that this structure will support a larger number of groups. The budget allocation will be reviewed in the following year to assess its adequacy and adjust if necessary.

Rationale

This change aims to simplify the application process while maintaining support for cultural celebrations. The new structure would eliminate the need for groups to submit applications far in advance, sometimes 12 to 15 months before their event occurs, allowing them to apply closer to the time of delivery and better reflect their actual needs and plans. During community consultations, current recipients responded positively to the proposed changes, recognising the benefits of a more flexible and accessible model.

Impact

The new structure will allow Council to continue supporting small, localised community cultural celebrations while improving accessibility, ease of applying and responsiveness for local groups. The reduced per-event cap is expected to extend support to a greater number of groups and the simplified process will lessen the administrative burden for applicants.

Recommendation: *The Community Group Cultural Celebrations is removed from the annual MCGP and a new year-round subsidy of \$1,000 is available to be applied for.*


Annual Grants

Current Situation

The Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) currently operates under a category-based model, consistent with other Councils included in the benchmarking exercise. Some Councils however, that have recently reviewed their programs are shifting towards tiered funding models.

Currently, five categories are available for community organisations to apply to each year: Active Projects, Arts & Cultural Projects, Community Events, Community Strengthening, and Major Festivals. Each category offers a different mix of funding options depending on the type of activity or organisation applying.

Category	Maximum Cash Available	Maximum Hall Hire Available	Number of Criteria
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Active Projects	\$2,000	-	6
Arts & Cultural Projects	\$5,000	\$5,000	7
Community Events	\$7,000	\$5,000	7
Community Strengthening	\$20,000	\$20,000	8
Major Festivals	\$20,000	-	8

This structure has highlighted limitations, particularly in the Active Projects category, which is the only option available to sports clubs. This category consistently receives low application numbers and poor-quality submissions, suggesting that the funding cap and eligible items do not meet the needs of these groups. Over the past three-year cycle, only 12 applications were received, with just four being successful, two of which were from the same club.

There is also a perceived inequity in funding across categories, that has been highlighted by applicants. For example, while Community Strengthening projects can receive up to \$20,000 by addressing eight criteria, arts-focused activities such as photography or theatre are limited to \$5,000 under the Arts & Cultural Projects category, despite still needing to address seven criteria. This difference in funding levels may not accurately reflect how these activities are valued.

Proposed Structure

It is recommended that the annual grants program be restructured from activity-based categories to a simplified tiered funding model providing cash only funding. This tiered approach would strengthen alignment with the application and reporting requirements with the level of funding requested ensuring that administrative burdens are proportional to the funding received.

This new structure would consist of three funding tiers - Small, Medium, and Large - replacing the current five categories. Applicants would be limited to submitting two applications per round, with a proposed maximum funding cap of \$30,000 per organisation. This model aims to encourage greater inclusivity by allowing groups to determine the level of funding they seek in line with the number of criteria they are prepared to address and greater accountability requirements.

The tiered model will also allow flexibility in assessment. Applications submitted under a higher tier will not be deemed ineligible if the project scope does not fully align; instead, a lower funding amount may be awarded where appropriate.

The proposed tiers are:

- **Small Grants – up to \$5k**
This stream will support smaller initiatives and will have a simplified application and acquittal process. There will 5 criteria that applicants will need to address emphasising the importance of addressing community need or inclusion.



- **Medium Grants – up to \$10k**
This stream will support more substantial projects and will involve a moderately detailed application process with seven criteria to be addressed, emphasising the importance of capacity building and future sustainability.
- **Large Grants – up to \$20k**
This category will fund large- scale projects with significant community impact and applications will be required to submit a comprehensive project plan, with a minimum 50% cash or in-kind contribution to the project and must address nine criteria. Preference will be given to innovative projects.

As proposed, these grants would be for cash only. The vast majority of in-kind hall hire funding is currently provided through the Hall Only and Positive Ageing categories, which offer three-year funding. Only 22 annual grants in 2025/26 will receive in-kind hall hire, most under the Arts & Cultural Projects category. By broadening the proposed Monash Halls Subsidy to allow applications from all groups and limiting annual grants to cash only, this change will help clarify funding types and allow applicants to focus on the financial support needed to deliver their projects.

Rationale

The current category model has created confusion and inequity in funding availability and application requirements. The proposed tiered model simplifies the structure and aligns funding levels with the number of criteria applicants are required to meet. The proposed tiered model simplifies the structure, aligns funding levels with the number of criteria applicants are required to meet and supports a more inclusive approach. It recognises the diverse capacities and capabilities of community groups and promotes flexibility to better reflect the varied experiences and needs across the community. It also addresses the needs of underrepresented groups, such as sports clubs, by removing restrictive category boundaries.

Feedback from community group representatives has been overwhelmingly positive, with 95% in favour of the proposed model.

Impact

The proposed tiered model will streamline the grants process, promote equity and access across different types of organisations and projects, and better accommodate the varying capacities of applicant groups while maintaining rigorous assessment standards. By simplifying the structure and focusing on cash funding, Council can ensure that the program remains accessible, responsive and aligned with community needs.

Recommendation: *The annual grants format is changed from five activity-based categories to three cash only funding tiers.*

Multi-Year Grants

Current Situation

The remaining five categories are open to applications for up to three years of funding, depending on when the application is submitted within the three-year funding cycle.

- If an application is submitted in the first year, funding can be requested for the full three years.
- If submitted in the second year, funding can be requested for up to two years.
- If submitted in the third (final) year, only one year of funding is available.

The categories that multi-year funding is available for are:

- Community Group Cultural Celebrations (this has been addressed earlier in Year-Round Funding)
- Hall Only
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Positive Ageing
- Specialist Services.

Again, these different categories offer a mix of funding that is available, though it is noted that no cash funding is available through Hall Only and the cash available in Positive Ageing is calculated with a formula.

Category	Maximum Cash Available	Maximum Hall Hire Available	Number of Criteria
Cultural Celebrations	\$1,500 (combined cash & hall hire)		5
Hall Only	-	\$15,000	3
Neighbourhood Houses	\$10,000	-	8
Positive Ageing	\$5,000*	\$30,000	4
Specialist Services	No Cap	No Cap	8

Proposed Structure

As with the Annual Grants, it is recommended that the number of multi-year streams be reduced from five to three:

- [Seniors Club Support](#)
- [Monash Halls Subsidy](#) (as outlined earlier in this report)
- [Partnership Grants](#)

This change aims to simplify the program and ensure consistency across funding types. Details of the proposed Seniors Club Support and Partnership Grants are outlined over the following pages.

Rationale

It was considered whether the current three-year timeline for multi-year grants should be extended to four years to align with the Council Plan cycle, particularly given the grant program's role in delivering actions under the Monash Health & Wellbeing Plan. While aligning with the Health & Wellbeing Plan timeline would offer some benefits, a three-year cycle remains appropriate for supporting long-term, community-focused projects and provides a manageable timeframe for both applicants and Council.

Impact

Reducing the number of multi-year streams will simplify the grants program and make it easier for applicants to navigate. It will also ensure that funding is targeted to areas where long-term support is most appropriate, while maintaining flexibility and responsiveness in other parts of the program. The retention of a three-year cycle supports continuity and stability for funded organisations, while aligning with sector practice and Council's strategic priorities.

Recommendation: *That the multi-year grants are reduced from funding five categories to three streams.*

Seniors Club Support

Current Situation

Seniors' clubs are an important part of the Monash community, with Council connected to approximately 80 groups through the Community Strengthening and Social Inclusion teams. These clubs play a vital role in helping older residents remain socially connected within their local communities.

Historically, Council has supported these clubs through the Positive Ageing category of the grants program. This category is open to clubs that meet within Monash, have at least 20 Monash residents as members, and where more than 75% of members are aged over 60. Probus Clubs are an exception in this category, as they are only eligible to apply for hall or venue hire and not for cash funding.

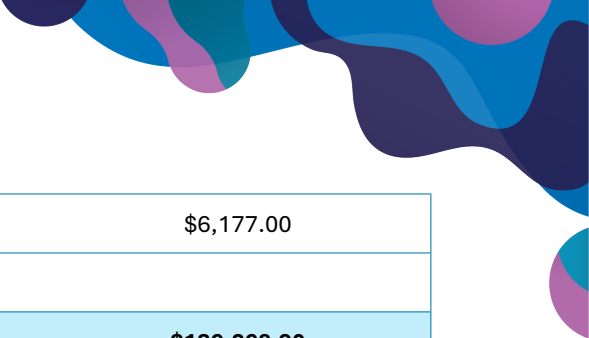
This category receives the highest number of applications and has the highest rate of successful applications across the program. In 2025/26, 64 applications will be funded through Positive Ageing, representing 29.5% of all funded applications and 31.6% of total funding awarded. The breakdown of this funding is:

- \$136,208.90 in cash
- \$620,302.40 in in-kind hall hire
- \$22,048.10 in other venue hire

This equates to an average of \$12,165 per application, with \$2,128.26 in cash and \$10,036.73 in hall/venue hire.

Average number of Monash residents: 118

Tier	Number of recipients	Total Funding
Full \$5k	9	\$45,000.00
\$4k-\$5k	3	\$13,214.00
\$3k-\$4k	7	\$24,313.00
\$2k-\$3k	7	\$17,890.00
\$1k-\$2k	22	\$29,674.90



Under \$1k	10	\$6,177.00
None (HO)	6	
	64	\$136,268.90

Cash funding is currently calculated using a two-part formula: \$10 per Monash member for operational activities, and \$1 per Monash member per meal served. While this structure has supported many clubs, feedback indicates that the meal subsidy component is confusing and may lead to inaccurate reporting.

Whilst food is a great way to bring people and communities together the structure and way many seniors groups in Monash operate now has changed. New groups to the program are more likely to focus on activities during their meetings rather than sharing a regular meal, such as lunch, which the original meal subsidy was designed to support.

It is proposed that the funding structure is changed from this two-part formula calculation to become tiered funding based on the number of Monash residents who are members of the club. This approach will simplify the application process, align with the proposed changes to the annual grants program and provide greater clarity around how funding amounts are determined.

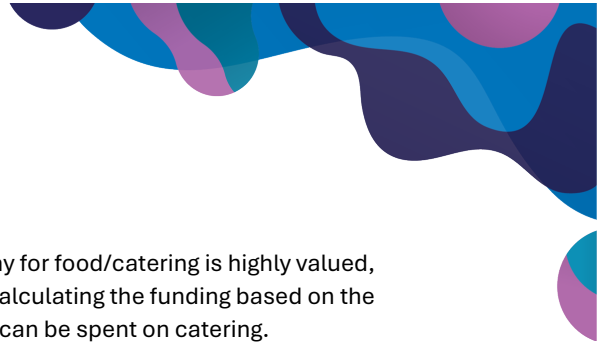
This proposed change was included in the community consultation held with current Positive Ageing recipients who, whilst indicating they would like the maximum amount of funding increased, on the whole were supportive of the change. They indicated they could see the benefits of it being simplified.

Proposed Funding Structure

It is proposed that the funding structure be simplified by replacing the current formula-based calculation with a tiered model based on the number of Monash residents who are members of the club.

Under the proposed model, clubs will be grouped into tiers based on Monash membership numbers, with funding amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The average cash awarded under this model is expected to increase to \$2,627.12.

Tier	Monash Members	Number of recipients*	Expected Funding
\$5,000	201 or more	10	\$50,000.00
\$4,000	151 to 200	2	\$8,000.00
\$3,000	101 to 150	15	\$45,000.00
\$2,000	51 to 100	21	\$42,000.00
\$1,000	20 to 50	10	\$10,000.00
None (HO)	N/A	6	
		64	\$155,000.00



The feedback received from groups is that funding to pay for food/catering is highly valued, catering will remain as an eligible expense. Instead of calculating the funding based on the number of meals served it will be a flat cap of 75% that can be spent on catering.

To reflect Council's broader rebranding and move away from the term "Positive Ageing," it is recommended that this category be renamed to **Seniors Club Support**. This change was developed in consultation with the Social Inclusion team and aligns with Council's Age Well philosophy, which focuses on helping older residents live well, stay connected, and thrive.

It is proposed the exclusion for Probus Clubs accessing cash funding is removed to bring them more in line with how other seniors' clubs are treated. Based on the most recent information provided in applications:

- The average cash holdings of the 13 Probus Clubs is \$8,540, with only one club holding more than \$13,000. This is significantly lower than the average cash holdings of other Positive Ageing recipients, which is approximately \$25,000.
- The average number of Monash members in Probus Clubs is 68, compared to 118 for other seniors' groups.
- Monash residents make up a very high proportion of their total membership, with an average of 83%. None of the clubs have less than half of their members residing in Monash, and all but two have at least 74% Monash residents.

Including Probus Clubs in the proposed tiered model would result in an estimated \$23,000 increase in cash funding, which would place pressure on the overall program budget. To manage this, it is recommended that a subset stream be introduced within the Seniors Club Support category, allowing Probus Clubs to access up to \$500 in cash funding. This would support essential costs such as online meeting subscriptions, marketing and administration - expenses identified by the clubs as priorities.

Rationale

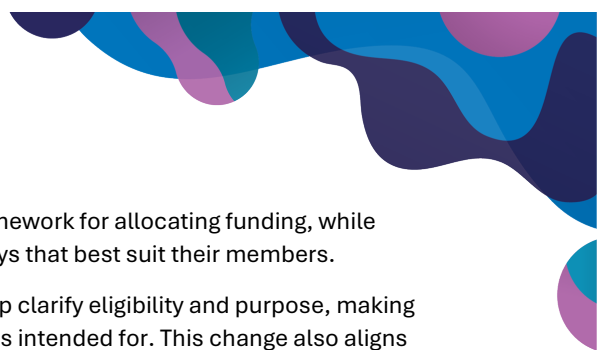
The proposed tiered structure simplifies the process, improves transparency, and better reflects how seniors' clubs operate today. Feedback from current recipients indicates strong support for the change, with many clubs recognising that they may receive more funding under the new model.

Renaming the category to Seniors Club Support provides clearer guidance on the purpose of the funding, which is specifically for the operational needs, such as running costs and member support, of Monash's Seniors' Clubs. It distinguishes this stream from broader ageing-related initiatives or programs that promote ageing well more generally which could be applied for and delivered through other funding streams.

The proposed approach to Probus Clubs acknowledges their unique structure and financial position, while ensuring they are not excluded from accessing meaningful support. Introducing a dedicated funding stream within the Seniors Club Support category provides a fair and manageable solution and reflects Council's recognition of the value they provide to the community.

Impact

The proposed changes will make the application process easier for seniors' clubs, reduce confusion around funding calculations and ensure that support is distributed more equitably.



The tiered model will provide a fair and transparent framework for allocating funding, while maintaining flexibility for clubs to use their grants in ways that best suit their members.

Renaming the category to Seniors Club Support will help clarify eligibility and purpose, making it easier for applicants to understand what the funding is intended for. This change also aligns with Council's broader strategic direction and community language preferences.

The introduction of a dedicated funding stream for Probus Clubs will ensure these groups are supported in a way that reflects their needs, without placing undue pressure on the overall grants budget.

If the recommendation is adopted, this will result in an additional \$25,000 being allocated to senior's clubs through this stream of funding, based on the current groups and numbers funded, from within the existing budget.

If approved, the recommendation will allocate an extra \$25,000 to senior clubs from the current budget, based on existing groups and funding levels.

Recommendation: *Grants provided for Monash seniors' groups are renamed from Positive Ageing to Seniors Club Support.*

Recommendation: *Seniors Club Support grants are changed from the current formula and subsidy format to being tiered funding based on the number of Monash members with a cap of 75% for food/catering.*

Recommendation: *Probus Clubs to be eligible for \$500 cash funding through a separate stream on the Seniors Club Support grants.*

Partnership Grants

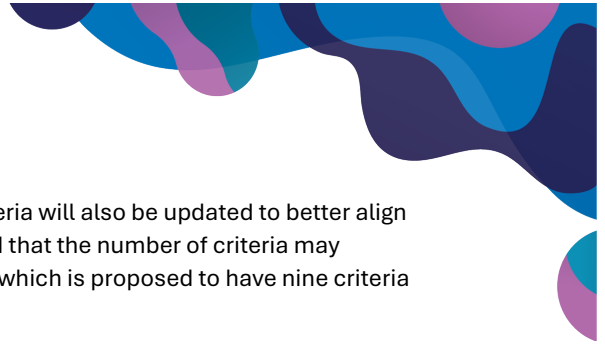
Current Situation

The program currently includes the Specialist Services category, which provides multi-year partnership funding to not-for-profit organisations. There is no cap on the amount of cash, in-kind hall hire, or facility rental that can be applied for. In 2024/25, an average of \$43,784 in cash funding has been awarded to eleven organisations through this stream, with individual grants ranging from \$9,500 to \$115,000.

Having a dedicated multi-year category for partnership funding is common across the sector and works well for supporting larger-scale and longer-term projects delivered in Monash.

Proposed Structure

It is recommended to retain the overall structure of the existing model but rename the category from *Specialist Services* to *Partnerships Grants* to better reflect its purpose. A funding cap of up to \$85,000 per organisation would be introduced, covering all current grants awarded under this category with the exception of Wavecare and South East Volunteers. It is proposed that these two organisations be funded through an alternative method better suited to their service delivery and funding needs (see [next section](#)).



As part of the policy development, the assessment criteria will also be updated to better align with the program's intended outcomes. It is anticipated that the number of criteria may increase to ten, in line with the annual grants program, which is proposed to have nine criteria for grants up to \$20,000.

Rationale

Introducing a funding cap will provide greater clarity and predictability around the level of funding available through the Partnerships Grants stream. The proposed cap of \$85,000 reflects the current distribution of funding and ensures that the model remains sustainable while continuing to support a diverse range of organisations. Transitioning Wavecare and South East Volunteers to a more tailored funding arrangement acknowledges their unique service models and ensures their continued support outside the constraints of the capped structure.

Renaming the category to Partnerships Grants will help clarify its purpose and align with sector language, making it easier for applicants and stakeholders to understand the intent of the funding.

Impact

The proposed changes will maintain the strengths of the current model while improving transparency and alignment with broader program goals. The funding cap will help manage expectations and ensure equitable access to resources, while the updated assessment criteria will enhance the program's ability to evaluate and support impactful, community-focused initiatives.

Recommendation: *The name of the Specialist Services stream to be changed to Partnership Grants, and that a funding cap of up to \$85,000 in cash support per organisation be introduced.*

Neighbourhood Houses & Service Agreements

Current Situation

Currently, there is a standalone category that allows Monash's ten Neighbourhood Houses to apply for up to \$10,000 per year in cash funding to deliver a project over the three-year funding period (up to \$30,000 in total). This is also the category these organisations must submit the [facility rental](#) request under.

Neighbourhood House Coordinators have provided feedback that this current grant-based funding model is no longer fit for purpose. This feedback has been taken into consideration as part of this review.

While eligibility criteria in the program states that activities considered the responsibility of another tier of government are ineligible, Neighbourhood Houses occupy a unique position. Although they receive State Government funding for coordination and support through the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing, the programming they deliver is not considered a state responsibility. In addition, the majority of Neighbourhood Houses (8 out of 10) operate from Council-owned facilities, meaning they also receive significant in-kind support through subsidised access to community infrastructure.

Across the local government sector, there is no consistent approach to how Councils fund or support Neighbourhood Houses, with models and levels of support varying widely. Council has

strong relationships with Monash's Neighbourhood Houses and recognises the value they deliver to and provide for the community.

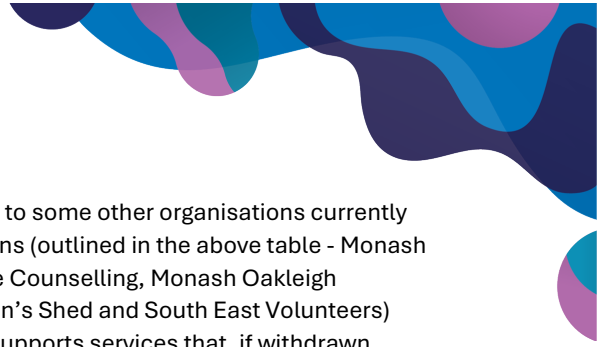
Current funding provided to Neighbourhood Houses and other service organisations being included in the proposed changes:

Organisation	2025/26 Cash	Facility Rental
Mackie Rd Neighbourhood House (KNH Inc)	\$10,000.00	\$118,250.00
Notting Hill Neighbourhood House	\$10,000.00	\$33,019.00
Power Neighbourhood House	\$10,000.00	-
Kerrie Rd Neighbourhood House (KNH Inc)	\$10,000.00	\$31,351.00
Waverley Community Learning Centre	\$10,000.00	\$65,443.00
Wavlink	\$10,000.00	\$42,794.00
Mount Street Neighbourhood House	\$10,000.00	\$80,463.00
Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre Inc	\$10,000.00	\$64,251.00
Fusion Oakleigh Youth and Community Centre	\$8,250.00	-
Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre	\$7,000.00	-
Monash Waverley Community Information & Support	\$10,000.00	\$22,649.00
Wavecare Counselling	\$115,000.00	\$34,331.00
Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service (MOCSIS)	\$9,500.00	\$22,053.00
Monash Men's Shed	\$25,000.00	\$22,666.00
South East Volunteers	\$119,140.00	-

Proposed Structure

It is proposed that from the 2026/27 financial year, this Neighbourhood House category be removed and replaced with a service agreement for each Neighbourhood House. Under this model, each House would receive \$10,000 annually, the same amount currently available through this category, allocated through a service agreement rather than a grant application. While this does not increase funding to the level that some Houses have advocated for, it maintains the current budget allocation and introduces greater consistency and certainty of funding. In alignment with Recommendation 1, it is also proposed that this funding be increased annually by CPI. This ensures equity, with all Houses receiving the same amount, and maintains the funding within the overall grant budget.

Moving to a service agreement model will provide more predictable timelines and streamlined reporting requirements, assisting the Houses with their ongoing planning and programming for the community. It will also reduce the administrative burden by eliminating the need to develop new projects and submit an application every three years.



Additionally, it is proposed that this model be extended to some other organisations currently receiving funding through the program. Five organisations (outlined in the above table - Monash Waverley Community Information & Support, Wavecare Counselling, Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service, Monash Men's Shed and South East Volunteers) have been identified that receive ongoing funding that supports services that, if withdrawn, would create significant gaps in the community that could not be readily filled. Four of these five also receive facility rental funding, further supporting the recommendation to remove as a separate funding type within the program.

Rationale

This proposal responds directly to feedback from Neighbourhood House Coordinators, who expressed strong support for a move to service agreements during dedicated consultation in mid-June. While some Coordinators proposed a higher level of funding and limitations on the number of additional grants that could be applied for, these suggestions will be considered in the development of the service agreements and grants policy.

It is important to maintain the core purpose of the grants program to support activities, programs, and events that respond to emerging community needs, rather than to fund ongoing service delivery. The service agreement model offers a more appropriate mechanism for supporting organisations whose work is foundational to community wellbeing and continuity.

Impact

If this recommendation is adopted, further work will be undertaken to develop the service agreement framework, ensuring that the agreements are fit for purpose and support long-term community outcomes. The shift to service agreements will provide greater consistency, reduce administrative burden, and improve planning capacity for Neighbourhood Houses and other identified organisations.

This change maintains the current budget allocation while introducing a more sustainable and equitable funding model. It also reinforces Council's commitment to supporting essential community services in a way that reflects their operational realities and long-term value.

Recommendation: *The Neighbourhood House grant category to be removed.*

Recommendation: *Monash's 10 Neighbourhood Houses and some identified current Specialist Services grant recipients to be provided ongoing funding at the same level currently received through a three-year service agreement, with a CPI increase applied in line with recommendation 1.*



Other Council Funding

Glendi & Lunar New Year Festivals

Current Situation

Council currently supports the *Glendi* and *Lunar New Year* festivals with a direct allocation of funding with no transparent process. This is done through service agreements, with each event receiving \$82,866 annually. These events are organised by not-for-profit and incorporated community groups, that would be eligible to apply for funding through the grants program and are recognised as significant cultural celebrations within Monash. In addition to financial support, Council also provides in-kind assistance such as access to Council-owned spaces, logistical support and promotional activities.

Proposed Structure

It is proposed that from the 2026/27 financial year, funding for major community events such as *Glendi* and *Lunar New Year* be incorporated into the *Partnerships Grants* category. The current budget allocation of \$82,866 for each event would be added to the overall grants program budget and remain within the proposed funding cap of \$85,000 per organisation. This cap has been set specifically to enable these events to continue receiving the same level of financial support through the formal grant application process.

Rationale

Incorporating these events into the grants program aligns with a holistic approach to how Council funds activities undertaken by community groups. It enhances transparency and governance by bringing these allocations into the formal grant assessment process, while maintaining the current level of support. The proposed cap ensures consistency across the Partnerships Grants stream and reflects the value placed on these events by the community and Council.

Although these events currently benefit from service agreements and additional in-kind support, transitioning to the grants program will ensure that all major community initiatives are assessed and funded through a unified and equitable framework.

Impact

This change will improve the transparency of the funding process for these major events within a single, formalised structure. It will provide a clearer and more equitable pathway for community groups to access funding, while maintaining support for existing festivals at their current levels.

The Glendi and Lunar New Year events will continue to receive support at their current levels, through a process that aligns with Council's broader funding principles and ensures equitable access to funding opportunities across the community.

Recommendation: *The funding currently allocated to the Glendi and Lunar New Year festivals be incorporated into the grants program budget with funding for these events to be applied for through the formal grant application process in the Partnerships Grants stream.*



Discretionary Fund

Current Situation

The Council's Discretionary Fund currently enables Councillors to approve small grants to residents and incorporated community groups in response to ad-hoc requests. These grants are intended to support small-scale activities and events that may not align with the timing or eligibility criteria of the annual MCGP. Funding is generally limited to \$1,000 per application, with exclusions in place for duplicate funding within the same financial year or for activities already supported through the MCGP, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Monash is unique across the benchmarked Councils being the only one that still has a Councillor or Mayoral Discretionary Fund, with the [Local Government Act 2020](#) point 70 outlining the prohibition of adopting or implementing a policy relating to Councillor discretionary funds. While the program does have guidelines and some governance mechanisms in place, it presents a significant risk to Council and is inconsistent with the recommendations of both the Crowe audit and the VAGO report.

Both audits highlighted the risks associated with Councillors being directly involved in decision-making related to community funding, particularly in terms of transparency, equity, and potential conflicts of interest. The fund also sits outside the Community Strengthening team that manage all other grant programs, with budget and responsibility held by Governance, further disconnecting the oversight and strategic alignment of Council's community funding.

Proposed Structure

To address these concerns and strengthen transparency, equity, and alignment with Council's broader funding structures, it is proposed that the Discretionary Fund be discontinued as a standalone program. Instead, its budget and purpose should be absorbed into the Monash Quick Response Grants program and managed by the Connected Communities team.

This would allow for ad-hoc and time-sensitive requests to be considered within a consistent and accountable process and assessed using established processes and criteria.

Rationale

The discontinuation of the Discretionary Fund aligns with legislative requirements and audit recommendations and ensures that all community funding decisions are made through transparent and equitable processes. Transitioning this funding into the grant program will eliminate the risks associated with Councillor-led decision-making and bring all community funding under the oversight of the Community Strengthening team.

Importantly, the existing Quick Response Grants already provides a mechanism for supporting time-sensitive and emerging community needs outside the annual grants cycle. In addition, the proposed Cultural Celebrations subsidy will further expand Council's ability to respond to ad-hoc requests, particularly those that support community connection and cultural diversity.

Impact

This change will consolidate all community funding into a unified and strategically aligned model, improving governance and reducing risk. It will ensure that all funding decisions are made through a transparent, criteria-based process and that the community has access to appropriate support through established grant streams.



By integrating the Discretionary Fund into the Quick Response Grants program, Council will maintain its ability to be responsive to community needs while ensuring consistency, accountability and alignment with best practice.

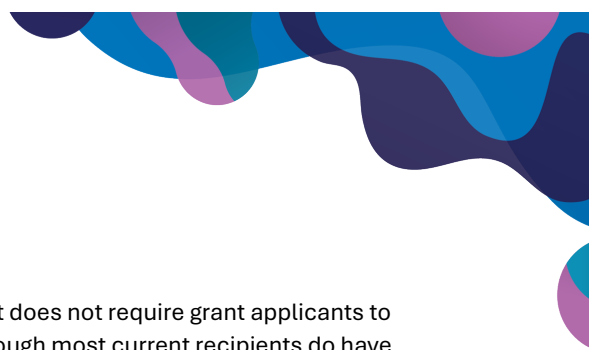
Recommendation: *Discontinue the Council's Discretionary Fund as a separate program and reallocate its budget and purpose into the Quick Response Grants program.*

Eligibility

Program Eligibility

The program has strong eligibility criteria for those who wish to apply to the program and are on the whole consistent with other benchmarked Council grant programs. However, it has been identified that there are some ways that it could be strengthened further and provide greater fairness and clarity.

Eligibility Area	Current Status	Proposed Status	Details / Notes	Recommendation
ABN Requirement	Not required	Required	Monash is currently the only benchmarked Council not requiring an ABN.	Require active ABN for eligibility.
Significant Cash Reserves	Ineligible if holding significant reserves	Removed (Included in assessment)	Replace with assessment of financial need based on financial statements.	Remove as eligibility criterion but will still be considered as part of the assessment of financial need.
Affiliation with Educational Institution	Ineligible	Included	Proposed to allow applications if projects engage the broader community. This does not include schools.	Remove exclusion for educational affiliation.
Fundraising Activities	Partially eligible (limited exemption)	Ineligible	Exemption for service clubs to be removed for consistency and equity.	Reinstate full ineligibility.
Private Residences	Not explicitly stated	Ineligible	Proposed to be clearly stated as ineligible for safety and clarity.	Explicitly state activities in private homes are ineligible.
Gambling (Venue-Based)	Ineligible (EGMs only)	Ineligible (Expanded)	Currently excludes venues with EGMs. Proposed to broaden to align with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy.	Strengthen criteria to align with Council's Gambling Harm Policy.



ABN

Current Situation

Monash is currently the only benchmarked Council that does not require grant applicants to hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN), although most current recipients do have one.

Rationale

Requiring an ABN aligns Monash with standard practice across other Councils and ensures organisations are registered for financial accountability. It also supports stronger governance and reduces risk.

Impact

Introducing this requirement will formalise existing practice, provide clearer guidance to applicants, and strengthen the integrity of the grants process. As most current recipients already hold an ABN, the impact is expected to be minimal.

Recommendation: *To require organisations to hold an active ABN to be eligible.*

Significant Cash Reserves

Current Situation

The program currently includes an eligibility criterion stating that organisations must not hold significant cash reserves. However, this is a subjective measure, as what constitutes "significant" varies depending on the size and nature of the organisation. For example, \$100,000 may be excessive for a small senior's group but reasonable for a Neighbourhood House.

Rationale

This criterion has not been used as a reason to mark an application as ineligible for the past two grant cycles, due to the subjectivity. Replacing it with a more inclusive and objective approach, by assessing financial need based on submitted financial statements, would allow for fairer assessment across diverse organisations and better reflect their actual capacity to fund proposed activities.

Impact

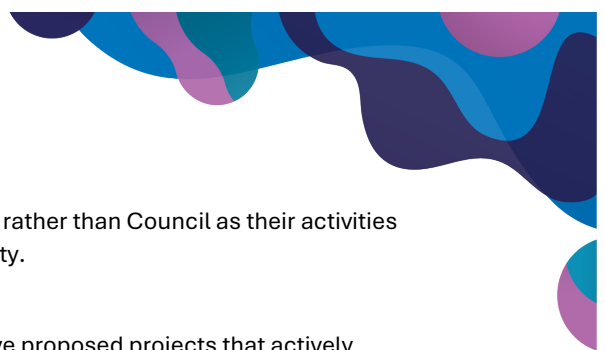
Removing this criterion and assessing financial need during application review will improve fairness and transparency. It will ensure that funding decisions are based on demonstrated need rather than subjective thresholds, supporting a more equitable distribution of resources.

Recommendation: *Remove significant cash holdings as an eligibility criterion and include demonstrating financial need as part of the assessment process.*

Affiliated with an Educational Institution

Current Situation

Organisations that are affiliated with an educational institution are listed as being ineligible for funding. This was introduced due to the expectation that groups like student organisations



should receive funding from the educational institution rather than Council as their activities are viewed as not being for the wider Monash community.

Rationale

Some applications from university-affiliated groups have proposed projects that actively engage the wider community and align with program priorities, particularly in areas such as cultural inclusion, innovation and social connection. Removing this exclusion would allow these types of initiatives to be considered, provided they demonstrate clear community benefit beyond the campus.

Impact

Removing this criterion will allow innovative and inclusive projects from university-affiliated organisations to be assessed on merit, expanding opportunities for collaboration between educational institutions and the broader community.

It's important to note that this change does not apply to schools or kindergartens, which will remain ineligible under the existing criterion that excludes activities considered the funding responsibility of another tier of government.

Recommendation: *Remove the criteria that prohibits organisations affiliated with an educational institution from applying through the program*

Fundraising Activities

Current Situation

Fundraising activities have been included as an ineligible activity for many years. In 2022/23 this was amended to include an exemption for local service clubs in order to provide in-kind hall hire for events such as book fairs and trivia nights run by these types of organisations. Since the exemption was introduced only one application has been received.

Rationale

The exemption has led to inconsistency and its limited use suggests it may not be necessary. Removing the exemption will ensure clarity and equity across all applicants and reinforce the program's focus on funding community benefit rather than for specific fundraising activities.

Impact

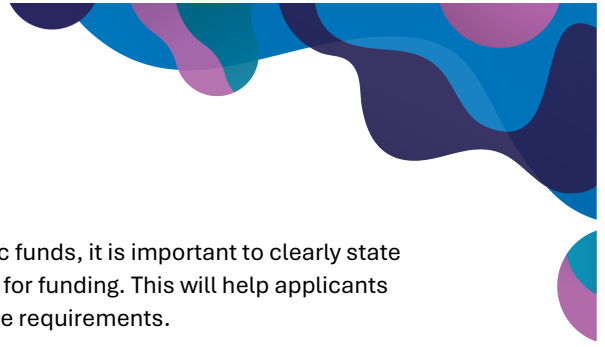
Reinstating the full exclusion of fundraising activities will simplify guidelines, provide equity for all organisations across the community and ensure that all funded activities align with the program's purpose of supporting community engagement and development.

Recommendation: *Reinstate all fundraising activities being ineligible*

Private Residences

Current Situation

While very few applications have proposed activities in private homes, the current policy does not explicitly state that such venues are ineligible.



Rationale

To promote safety, clarity, and appropriate use of public funds, it is important to clearly state that activities held in private residences are not eligible for funding. This will help applicants avoid investing time in proposals that do not meet venue requirements.

Impact

Explicitly listing private residences as ineligible venues will improve applicant understanding and reinforce Council's commitment to safe, accessible, and inclusive community programming.

Recommendation: *Explicitly state that activities held in private residences are ineligible for funding.*

Gambling

Current Situation

The current policy states that groups that regularly meet in venues with Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs) and activities that take place in such venues are ineligible for funding. However, the policy does not currently reference the connection with Council's *Public Health Approach to Gambling Policy*.

Rationale

It is proposed that the eligibility criteria be broadened to align directly with Council's *Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy* and its broader public health objectives. This change would strengthen the program's consistency with Council's stance on gambling harm and reflect a more comprehensive understanding of gambling-related risks.

Impact

This change will not affect social activities such as cards, bingo, or other games where there are no financial stakes involved, or fundraising-gambling activities, such as raffles, that have low financial impact. These types of activities are already factored into the approach taken under Council's gambling harm policy and are considered low risk. The updated criteria will ensure that the grants program aligns with Council's policy position on gambling, without having to while continuing to support safe, inclusive and socially beneficial community activities.

Recommendation: *Align the criteria relating to gambling directly with Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy.*

Eligible Items for Funding

The program includes specific information on eligible and ineligible items for funding, ensuring that resources are directed toward initiatives that deliver meaningful community benefit. Items are explicitly identified as ineligible or subject to funding caps within the current policy, feedback received from the community through informal and the formal consultations conducted and program analysis have highlighted areas where these restrictions may no longer reflect the needs of community groups. In particular, some existing caps and exclusions have

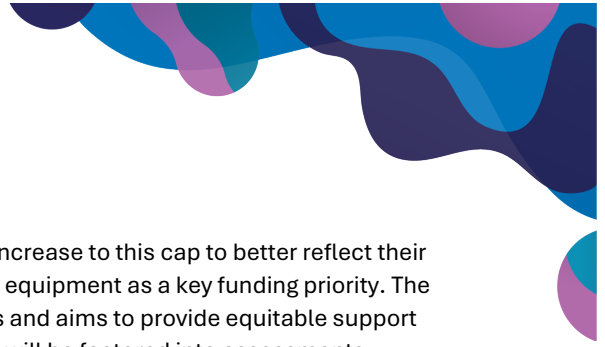
been identified as a barrier or inconsistent across categories. This section outlines proposed updates to eligible items, aimed at strengthening the program's fairness, clarity and alignment with community needs.

Item	Current Status	Proposed Status	Details / Notes	Recommendation
Equipment	Eligible (Cap: \$250)	Eligible (New cap)	Cap increased to \$1,000 - excludes tech items and defibrillators.	Increase cap to \$1,000
Uniforms & Costumes	Eligible (within current equipment cap)	Eligible (New Cap)	New separate cap of \$1,000	Introduce \$1,000 cap, separate to other equipment
Catering	Eligible (limited categories to different caps)	Eligible (Standardised)	Eligible across all streams. Cap of 20% of cash allocation for all annual grants 75% for Seniors Club Support.	Standardise eligibility across the program with consistent caps
Auspice Fees	Ineligible	Eligible	Introduced to support smaller/ emerging groups. Limits and conditions to be developed.	Remove from ineligible list
Online Meeting Subscriptions	Eligible (Cap: \$210)	Eligible (Remove Cap)	Cap removed due to rising costs and ongoing need.	Remove cap
Food Relief	Not explicitly ineligible	Ineligible	To be clearly stated as ineligible as considered a state responsibility.	Explicitly list as ineligible

Equipment

Current Situation

Historically, equipment was an ineligible item for funding but was introduced with a \$250 cap in 2022/23 following community feedback. Technology items such as laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and defibrillators remain ineligible.



Rationale

Community groups have continued to advocate for an increase to this cap to better reflect their needs—particularly sports clubs, which have identified equipment as a key funding priority. The proposed increase to \$1,000 acknowledges rising costs and aims to provide equitable support across all program areas. Sustainability considerations will be factored into assessments, encouraging applicants to consider the lifecycle and environmental impact of items.

Impact

Increasing the cap will better support the delivery of programs and improve access to essential equipment, especially for groups that have previously been underrepresented in the program. It maintains oversight through acquittals and aligns with Council's sustainability goals.

Recommendation: *The cap for equipment costs be increased to \$1,000*

Uniforms and Costumes

Current Situation

Uniforms and costumes are currently ineligible for funding under the program.

Rationale

Many community groups, particularly sporting clubs, cultural organisations and performing arts groups, have strongly advocated for support in purchasing uniforms, costumes and other activity-specific items. These are essential to program delivery and foster identity, participation, and inclusion. A separate cap of \$1,000 is proposed, in addition to the general equipment limit, to support the purchase of new items where a clear need is demonstrated.

Impact

Introducing a dedicated cap will ensure equity across art and sport-based programs and support participation in new initiatives, including those targeting priority cohorts such as women and girls in sport. Applicants will be encouraged to consider sustainability and lifecycle impacts in line with broader program principles.

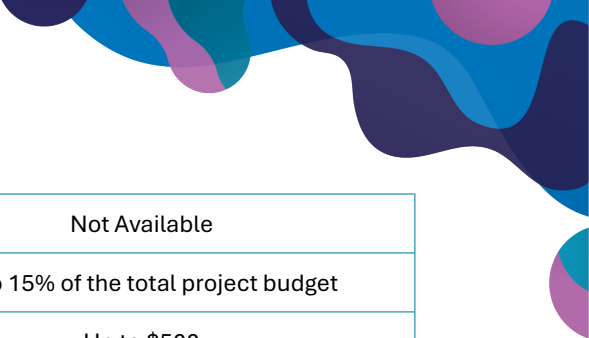
Recommendation: *Introduce a separate cap of \$1,000 for uniforms, costumes, and activity-specific items, in addition to the general equipment funding limit.*

Catering

Current Situation

Catering is currently one of the most inconsistently treated items across the program's funding categories. It is only eligible in some streams, with no standardised approach.

Category	Funding for Catering/Food
Active Projects	Not Available
Arts & Cultural Projects	Up to \$500 for exhibition openings only



Community Events	Not Available
Community Strengthening	Up to 15% of the total project budget
Cultural Celebrations	Up to \$500
Major Festivals	Not Available
Neighbourhood House	Not Available
Positive Ageing	\$1 per Monash member per meal served
Specialist Services	Not Available

Rationale

Catering was one of the most frequently raised topics during community consultation, following ongoing anecdotal feedback. Many groups expressed a need for this to be more readily available and better supported. Food is a key unifier in community settings, and making catering eligible across all categories will improve clarity and consistency.

Impact

Catering will be eligible across all cash grant streams, with a cap of 20% of the total cash allocation. A higher cap of 75% is proposed for the Seniors Club Support category, reflecting the nature of their activities and the demographic served. This change will support inclusive and engaging community activities.

Recommendation: *Catering should be an eligible expense across all funding streams, with a cap of 20% of the total cash allocation. For Seniors Club Support, a higher cap of 75% should apply.*

Auspice Fees

Current Situation

Auspice fees are currently listed as ineligible for funding.

Rationale

Consultation with Council's Arts team identified this as a barrier, particularly for individual artists and smaller or emerging organisations. Allowing auspice fees would help remove these barriers and promote broader access to funding opportunities, especially for underrepresented communities.

Impact

Removing this exclusion will support participation from a wider range of applicants. Further work will be undertaken to determine appropriate limits and conditions based on best practice and sector standards.



Recommendation: Remove auspice fees as an ineligible item.

Online Meeting Subscriptions

Current Situation

Funding for online meeting platforms (e.g. Zoom) was introduced in 2020 to support groups during COVID-19 restrictions. It was capped at \$210, based on the cost of an annual Zoom subscription at the time.

Rationale

The cost of subscriptions has increased (e.g. Zoom now costs \$267 annually), and the need for hybrid and online engagement remains. Removing the cap reflects current costs and ongoing demand.

Impact

Removing the cap will ensure groups can continue to meet and engage online without being limited by outdated thresholds. This supports accessibility and flexibility in community programming.

Recommendation: Remove the cap for online meeting subscriptions.

Food Relief

Current Situation

Over the past three years, the program has seen an increase in applications seeking funding for food relief. While this reflects growing community need due to rising living costs, food relief is not explicitly listed as ineligible in the policy or guidelines, unlike health and education, which are considered the responsibility of other tiers of government.

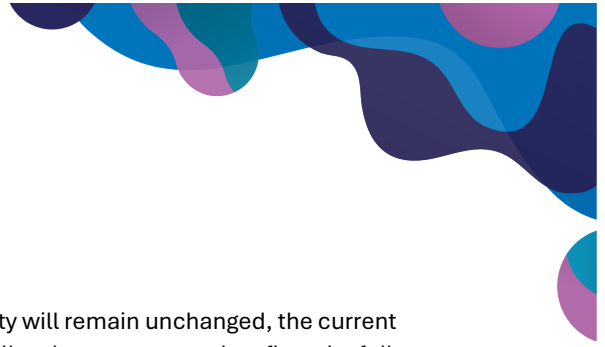
Rationale

Council has taken the view that food relief is not a local government funding responsibility. To avoid confusion and ensure applicants do not invest time in applications that will not be successful, it is proposed that food relief be explicitly listed as ineligible in the program policy and guidelines.

Impact

This change will provide clarity for applicants and reinforce Council's funding boundaries. It will not affect current support provided to Monash Waverley Community Information & Support (MWCIS) and Monash Oakleigh Community Support & Information Service (MOCSIS), which are recommended to receive ongoing funding through [service agreements](#). The purpose of that funding will be determined through the service agreement process.

Recommendation: Explicitly state in the program policy and guidelines that food relief is an ineligible item for funding.



Program Name

Current Situation

While the purpose of providing funding to the community will remain unchanged, the current name, Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP), will no longer accurately reflect the full scope of support being delivered if the recommendations within this report are approved. With the inclusion of service agreements and in-kind subsidies alongside cash grants, the program will evolve beyond a traditional grants model.

Rationale

It is proposed that the program name be updated to better represent the breadth of support offered. This change will help ensure that the significant investment, over \$2.1 million annually, continues to be recognised and celebrated as a unified commitment to strengthening the Monash community.

As part of the development of the new policy, several naming options were considered, ranging from modest updates to complete rebrands. Following this process, a modest change has been recommended:

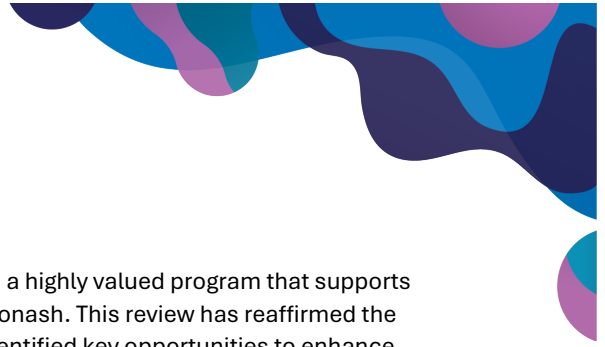
Monash Community Grants & Partnerships Program (MCGPP)

This name retains the grants focus while acknowledging the broader support now offered through the program.

Impact

Updating the program name will ensure that the full spectrum of community support, whether financial, in-kind or through service agreements, is clearly communicated and valued as part of a single, cohesive program. The new name will be reflected in all future policy, guidelines and communications, helping to reinforce the program's identity and purpose.

Recommendation: *Change the program name to Monash Community Grants & Partnerships Program (MCGPP) to reflect the expanded scope of support that includes grants, service agreements and in-kind subsidies.*



Conclusion

The Monash Community Grants Program has long been a highly valued program that supports community capacity, inclusion and wellbeing across Monash. This review has reaffirmed the program's importance for and to the community and identified key opportunities to enhance the effectiveness, accessibility and alignment with Council's goals when providing funding to the community.

The 32 recommendations outlined in this report aim to modernise and streamline the program, ensuring it remains responsive to the changing needs of the Monash community. By simplifying the structure, strengthening governance and expanding the scope of support Council can continue to deliver a program that reflects what the community wants and needs, now and into the future.

An implementation plan is attached to this report. Once these recommendations are approved by Council at the August meeting, policy development will commence, with the updated policy to be tabled at the October Council meeting. This will initiate the launch of a simpler, more accessible and community-responsive program from 1 November 2025, marking the beginning of the refreshed Monash Community Grants & Partnerships Program.



Attachment 1: Council Benchmarking

Council Benchmarking

As part of the review, benchmarking has been undertaken against ten Council grant programs across the East and South-East of Melbourne. Direct feedback was received from six Councils (Glen Eira, City of Yarra, Kingston, Knox, Manningham and Maroondah), with further desktop research undertaken on another four neighbouring Councils (Boroondara, Greater Dandenong, Stonnington and Whitehorse).

These councils all have differing budgets and programs that are delivered but provide an opportunity to look at what is being provided to other communities across the sector. This has assisted to identify improvements that could be introduced to the Monash program.

In-Kind Hall Hire

As outlined in the table below, of the Councils that have been benchmarked as part of this review only two (Glen Eira and Stonnington) provide in-kind venue hire support in a similar way to Monash. The others either have hall/venue hire as an eligible expense that funding can be used for or do not provide this at all through the grants program. Even if hall hire is not available through the grants program all Councils provide a discounted community rate for community groups and not-for-profits.

Council	Details
Boroondara	Only available through Community Arts Venue Grants program that offers in-kind access to Hawthorn Arts Centre and Kew Court House.
Glen Eira	GECC provides reduced rates for Not-For-Profit community groups to hire Council venues, however they can seek a grant to cover the fee through the Facility Hire grants program.
Greater Dandenong	Venue hire is an eligible expense, but not provided in-kind
Kingston	Hall hire is an eligible expense - can be added as part of grant for events.
Knox	Venue hire an eligible expense listed in the Small Grants program, restricted to 20% of the grant requested (max \$600).
Manningham	Provides subsidised hall hire separate to the grants program with the Community Facilities Access & Concession policy that outlines the discounts that are available to various groups. Venue hire is an eligible expense through the grant program.
Maroondah	Venue hire is an eligible expense - some organisations apply for venue hire assistance in the CD category.
Whitehorse	Offers proportional discounts on hall hire charges for Council-owned and operated venues. Open year-round to enable not-for-profit and incorporated organisations to book Council venues for meetings, activities and events at discounted rates: 50% for eligible NFPs and incorporated associations, 75% for service clubs, 90% for seniors' clubs, and 100% for fundraising events.
Stonnington	Applicants can apply for in-kind only funding or a single project/program can make a combined application with cash

	through the Community Capacity Building Grant stream for 13 Council managed venues.
Yarra (City)	The budget is \$105k for the Town Hall Subsidy Grant which provides 90% discount.

Quick Response Grants

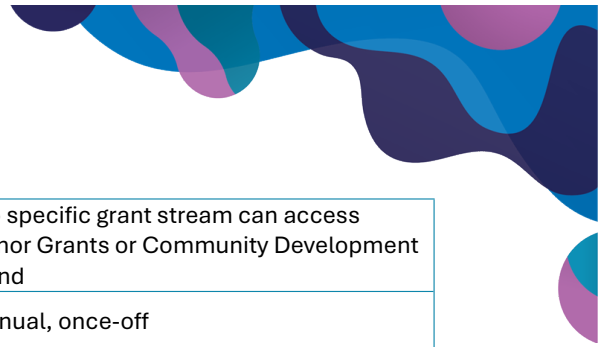
Benchmarking against other Councils for the maximum amount that can be applied for in similar programs across the sector. Seven of the ten Councils included offer a responsive grant program that is open throughout the year, with the average available to be applied for across these eight being \$2,285.70.

Council	Max for QRG or similar	Open
Boroondara	N/A	-
Glen Eira	Up to \$1,000	All year - notified 8 weeks
Greater Dandenong	Up to \$1,500*	All year
Kingston	Up to \$2,000.	All year
Knox	Up to \$3,000	All year - assessed monthly
Maroondah	N/A	-
Manningham	Up to \$3,000	All year – assessed quarterly
Stonnington	Up to \$1,000 cash and \$2,500 in-kind	Monthly
Whitehorse	N/A	-
Yarra City	Up to \$1,000 Community Up to \$2,000 Arts	All year - assessed monthly

Seniors Club Support

Only four of the ten Councils included in the benchmarking have dedicated categories for seniors' club grants.

Council	Max for Seniors Club	Notes
Boroondara	\$3,000	Do not have a dedicated 'seniors grants'. Can apply annually to the small grants program
Glen Eira	\$3,000	Only available for groups that use Council Seniors Citizens Centres – and waive rights to the other 'cash grants'
Greater Dandenong	N/A	No grants specific for seniors clubs but could apply for the "Community Group Activity Grants" in the Small Grants Program.
Kingston	\$4,000	Up to 3 years



Knox	N/A	No specific grant stream can access Minor Grants or Community Development Fund
Manningham	\$8,000	Annual, once-off
Maroondah	N/A	No specific grant stream can access Community Development and Small Equipment grants
Stonnington	N/A	No specific grant stream can access Community Capacity Building grants and in-kind hire grants.
Whitehorse	\$1,000	Seniors Participation Grants Also have annual Positive Ageing grants that are for programs and services to support positive ageing in the community
Yarra City	\$4,000	Annual Community Strengthening grants, not a dedicated senior's stream


ABN Requirement

All benchmarked Councils require organisations applying to their program to be incorporated to hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN).

Equipment Eligibility

The lowest cap on equipment of benchmarked Councils is Maroondah at \$750, with Knox having the highest providing up to \$3,000 for this purpose.

Council	Details
Boroondara	Small grants for equipment are capped at \$2,000
Glen Eira	No specific cap mentioned for equipment purchases
Greater Dandenong	No specific cap mentioned for equipment purchases, but small grants offer up to \$2,000
Kingston	One-time funding of up to \$2,000 through Small Equipment Grants available. Examples provided includes tools, defibrillators, appliances, safety items, uniforms, or technology like iPads or communication devices (capped at \$1,000).
Knox	Minor grants can be used for equipment purchases up to \$3,000
Manningham	Equipment purchase grants are capped at \$1,500, with a 50% co-contribution required
Maroondah	Small Equipment grants up to \$750
Whitehorse	Small equipment grants are capped at \$1,000
Stonnington	Minor equipment purchases up to \$2,000.

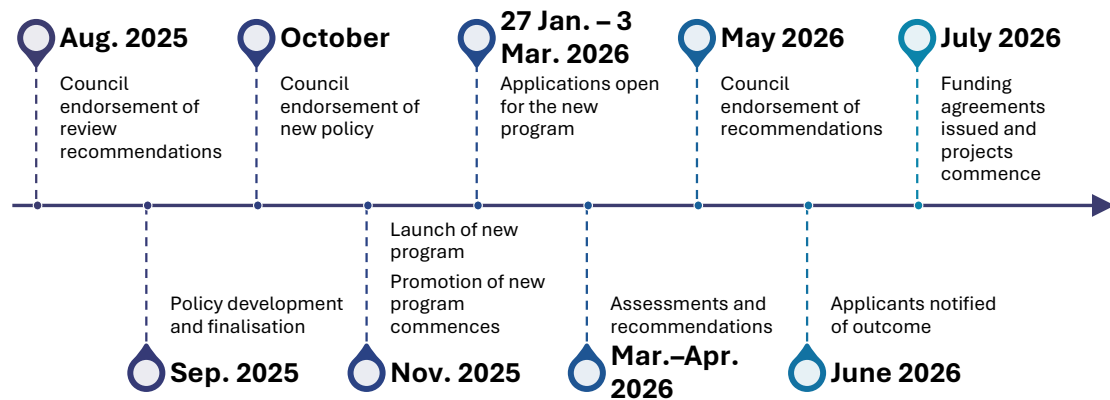


Yarra (City)	Up to \$1,000 available through the Sports & Recreation Equipment stream and up to \$5,000 through the Climate Action & Environment Grant.
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Auspice Fees

A benchmarking review of other councils revealed mixed approaches with most other councils not referencing auspice fees in their grant guidelines. Of the two that do mention these fees Boroondara does not fund auspice fees, while Stonnington does.

Attachment 2: Implementation Plan



Milestone	Description	Target Date
Council Endorsement of Recommendations	Council considers and endorses the recommendations from the program review.	August 2025
Policy Development & Finalisation	Drafting and finalising the new MCGPP policy, incorporating endorsed changes.	September 2025
Council Endorsement of New Policy	Council formally endorses the updated MCGPP policy.	October 2025
Launch of New Program at Grants Gathering	Public launch of the new program structure and guidelines at the annual Grants Gathering event.	November 2025
Launch of New Program Materials on Website	Updated guidelines, FAQs, and application forms published online.	November 2025
Promotion Period	Ongoing promotion and engagement with community groups.	November 2025 – February 2026
Applications Open	Application period for the 2026–2029 funding cycle.	27 January – 3 March 2026
Assessment & Recommendations	Review of applications and preparation of officer recommendations.	March – April 2026
Council Endorsement of Recommendations	Council considers and endorses funding allocations.	May 2026
Applicants Notified of Outcome	All applicants are advised of the outcome of their submissions.	June 2026
Funding Agreements Issued & Projects Commence	Agreements finalised and funded projects begin.	July 2026