

## Community Grants Program Policy

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## 1. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to guide the delivery of the Greater Dandenong City Council Community Grants Program.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Council recognises the important role of the Community Grants Program in providing funding to support the community to deliver projects and provide programs, activities and services that respond to emerging community priorities and assist Council to realise the community vision and achieve their strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Plan.

## 3. SCOPE

The Policy applies to grants provided to the community by Council for specific agreed purposes. It applies to all Council staff, Councillors, grant recipients and other parties that may become involved in the grants process where Council is providing a funding contribution directly to an organisation, auspice organisation or individual with an expectation that the money will be used for an agreed and specified purpose.

The grants included within the scope of this policy include:

Category	Grant Streams
Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual Achievement Grants.</li><li>• Community Group Activities Grants.</li><li>• Entry Level Grants.</li><li>• Responsive Projects Grants.</li></ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Development Projects.</li><li>• Arts, Festivals and Events.</li><li>• Individual Artists.</li><li>• Climate Change Action Grants.</li></ul>
Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnership Grants.</li><li>• Strategic Project Grants.</li><li>• Festivals and Events Sponsorship Grants.</li></ul>

The grants excluded from the scope of this policy include:

- Business and Grants and Assistance.
- External sponsorship sought by Council.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise specified within this policy, the following key terms are defined to mean the following in terms of this policy.

Key Terms	Definition
Grant	A sum of money given to organisations or individuals with an expectation that the money will be used for an agreed and specified purpose.
Auspice organisation	An organisation that agrees to distribute and manage a grant on behalf of another organisation. The auspice is mainly responsible for financial and acquittal requirements.
Acquittal	Information provided by a grant recipient that ensure the funds have been administered responsibly and in line with the conditions of the grant program.
Community Groups	Not-for-profit or voluntary groups that receive minimal or no funding to run group activities or programs that provide benefit to members and/or the wider community. Includes groups deemed to be providing services and activities that involve and benefit residents of the City of Greater Dandenong, such as sporting and hobby clubs, seniors' groups, youth groups, children's and family's groups, cultural groups, service clubs, environmental groups, emergency service volunteer groups and social support groups (e.g. disability support groups).
Community Service Organisation	Not-for-profit service organisations, charities or voluntary service groups that provide services to support the community.
Council	Greater Dandenong City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
Councillors	The individuals holding the office of a member of Greater Dandenong City Council.
Council Officers	The Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
Council Plan	The Council Plan, incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, outlines the key priorities for Council over a four-year period including how Council will protect, improve, and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipality. These priorities are influenced by the community vision, municipal health status and determinants, and the legislative requirements of local government.

Key Terms	Definition
	Progress against this plan and the health and wellbeing priorities is reported quarterly to the community and key stakeholders.
Incorporated	Incorporated under the Associations of Incorporations Act 1981 or other Relevant Legislation.
Individuals	Residents of the City of Greater Dandenong (excluding Council staff).
Individual Artist	An individual artist is defined as a practicing artist who is recognised by their peers, is committed to devoting significant time to artistic activity and/or has a history of public presentation.
Legal Entity	An incorporated association, a co-operative, company limited by guarantee or trust.
Not-for-profit	An organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain, or other benefit of particular people (for example, its members, the people who run it or their friends or relatives).
Operating costs	The costs associated with the maintenance and administration of an organisation on a day-to-day basis. Operating costs may include rent, payroll, other overhead costs, and maintenance expenses.
Project	The program, activities, event, or service being funded through the grant.
Schools	Primary and secondary schools in the City of Greater Dandenong only in relation to grant applications for activities that are not part of the core school curriculum and include the broader community.
School Based Community Hubs	Community Hubs based in schools in the City of Greater Dandenong only in relation to grant applications for activities that are not part of core school curriculum and student welfare based.

## 5. POLICY

Council is committed to delivering the Greater Dandenong Community Grants Program to provide funding to community organisations, groups, and individuals that deliver services and activities consistent with Council's strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Plan. In delivering the program, Council will ensure that decision-making is transparent, accountable, and equitable and that organisations are actively supported to develop their applications and deliver their projects.

## 5.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Greater Dandenong City Council Community Grants Program are to:

- Strengthen the Greater Dandenong community through supporting a diverse range of activities, services, and programs that are responsive to community needs.
- Promote the active participation of the local community in events, activities, services, and programs.
- Support the development of projects which are consistent with Council's community vision and strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Plan.
- Support the community to work in partnership with Council to reduce factors that lead to social disadvantage and inequality.
- Build the capacity of local organisations and strengthen partnerships within Greater Dandenong to support collaboration and sustainability in responding to local needs.
- Increase intercultural connections, promotes understanding and celebrate diversity.
- Promote access, inclusion of individuals or groups that may experience exclusion.

## 5.2 GRANT PRINCIPLES

In line with good governance and best practice Council is committed to delivering grant programs that reflect the following seven grant principles:

Principle	Intent
<b>1. Partnerships between Council and the recipient</b>	Grants are a partnership with Council and the recipient.
<b>2. Build organisational capacity</b>	Grants support organisational capacity building and sustainability.
<b>3. Open, accessible, and accountable</b>	The grants program is open and accessible for all eligible organisations. Grant processes are robust and stand up to scrutiny, governance is clear and strong.
<b>4. Transparent</b>	Grants, funding decisions and outcomes are transparent and the achievements (reporting) of funded outcomes are publicised.
<b>5. Efficient and customer focused</b>	Grants information is accessible and processes for applicants are well organised, streamlined, and enables timely decisions.
<b>6. Strategic and needs based</b>	Grants respond to emerging community priorities and assist Council realise the community vision and to the achieve the strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Plan.

Principle	Intent
7. Measurable Outcomes	Granted projects and funding deliver clear outcomes for the community.

### 5.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The Community Grants Program is developed and administered in the context of Councils Community Development Framework with the following principles to be reflected in grant practices:

Principle	Practice
<b>Inclusion and Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing genuine and meaningful opportunities for residents to participate in processes whose outcomes affect their advancement and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Valuing all people equally, extending consideration to marginalised or vulnerable individuals, who often face difficulties in affirming their rights and participating in engagement.</li> <li>• Considering the diversity of needs and interests of all people and organisations throughout the process.</li> <li>• Enabling members of the community to have a say in their own future, make their own decisions, contribute to solutions to issues that are important to their lives, and foster connections with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking communities, individuals, groups, agencies, and Council.</li> <li>• Establishing partnerships to achieve favourable outcomes for residents by encouraging different communities to work together and build lasting, constructive relationships.</li> <li>• Fostering and maintaining trust among participants.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working and learning together to help increase understanding, awareness, and empathy for each other.</li> </ul>
<b>Place based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on neighbourhoods and places where people meet, to identify opportunities for improvement.</li> <li>• Defining and working within specific precincts, locations, and suburbs to co-ordinate planning and activities within those localities.</li> </ul>



Principle	Practice
<b>Strength based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying strengths which exist among the community, encouraging individuals, local organisations, and institutions to unite to apply and build upon those attributes. Strengths may include physical spaces, skills, local knowledge, associations, and networks, as well as financial resources.</li> <li>Such strengths may be viewed and defined differently by different individuals and influenced by their experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Collective Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathering people and organisations together to enable them to speak with a united, strong, and confident voice.</li> <li>A vision for change is developed, including a community understanding of the issue and an approach to tackling it.</li> </ul>
<b>Building Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals, families, and communities are encouraged to identify strengths needs and supported to develop solutions at a local level.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reacting promptly to societal changes and local issues as the emerge.</li> <li>Operating in an honest and forthright way that encourages openness amongst others.</li> <li>Welcoming and responding to feedback from the community</li> <li>Setting process in place to monitor progress and outcomes.</li> </ul>

## 5.4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRANTS PROGRAM

### 5.4.1 GRANT CATEGORIES

The grant categories will be reviewed every four years in line with the development of the community vision and the Council Plan.

### 5.4.2 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM BUDGET

The budget for the Community Grants Program budget will be determined by Council through the annual budget process. Budgets for each category will be determined at an operational level and promoted as part of the Grants Program Guidelines.

### 5.4.3 APPLICATION PROCESS

Grants program guidelines will be developed every four years in line with the development of the Council Plan. The guidelines will be made publicly available and offered to each grant applicant. The guidelines will provide detailed information about:

- The grant categories and supporting rationale.

- The application process.
- Support available for applicants.
- Eligibility and assessment criteria.
- The assessment process.
- Timelines.
- Feedback on application process and outcome.
- Funding conditions.

The amount of detail required from the applicant will be proportional to the grant amount.

Council will use an online grants administration system to ensure a consistent, efficient, and user-friendly customer experience. Customer support on the use of this system will be provided at Grant Information sessions or upon request.

Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

#### 5.4.4 ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING

Council Officers will conduct an eligibility check on all applications received.

For medium and large-scale grants Community Grants Assessment Panels will assess applications against assessment criteria and make recommendations for funding. Where possible, community members will be involved as members of the Community Grants Assessment Panels. All members of the Community Grants Assessment Panels members will adhere to Council's Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, and the Terms of Reference for the Community Grants Assessment Panel.

To ensure an accountable and transparent assessment process anyone with a conflict of interest will follow Council's Conflict-of-Interest procedure and will not participate in any discussions or decision relating to the specific application.

The status of applications will be communicated to applicants through all stages of the assessment process.

Funding recommendations and summary rationale for large scale grants will be presented to Council for final decision and endorsement.

Funded projects will be reported to the public after each round on Council's grant website and in the Annual Report.

Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants to support learning and provide suggestions for improvement for subsequent applications.

#### 5.4.5 STANDARD CONDITIONS

The following conditions apply to the Community Grants Program:

- Council's contribution is limited to the amount granted with all other costs associated with the project being borne by the grant recipient.

- Grants are subject to conditions which will be outlined in the grant agreement. Changes can only be made if requested in writing and approved by Council beforehand.
- When an organisation or individual accepts a grant and/or signs an agreement it means that they accept the conditions within this policy and the guidelines relevant to the specific grant category.
- For medium and large-scale grants, where organisations are unable to demonstrate good governance or risks are identified, Council officers will offer support to identify opportunities and training to improve governance processes before a grant is approved.
- Community Grants Assessment Panels may recommend additional conditions for funding
- Grant recipients will be required to complete period reports and acquit grants, including reporting on expenditure of funds and project outcomes.
- Council reserves the right to withdraw funding and/or cease partnership with a grant recipient if Council deems that the project is not progressing satisfactorily, the organisation ceases to be eligible, the organisation breaches funding conditions, or the project risks the positive reputation of Greater Dandenong Council. If this occurs, the grant recipient will be fully liable for costs involved and grant funds must be returned to Council.

#### 5.4.6 EQUITY

Support will be provided to applicants to minimise barriers arising from language, culture, and mobility or where access to and usage of technology creates difficulty.

The availability of the community grants, including the funding available through each of the categories, will be widely promoted across the municipality using a variety of promotional avenues to ensure those who are eligible to apply for a grant are given an opportunity to do so.

Information will be provided in languages other than English where possible and appropriate.

Applications must demonstrate that proposed projects are available in the community without discrimination based on access, equity, community participation and human rights and responsibilities.

## 6. RESPONSE TO THE OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

Section nine (9) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. This policy is consistent with the principles set out in *the Act*.

By utilising a community development approach to achieve the objectives of the Community Grants program, and through the underpinning grants principles that reflect good governance and best practice in grants administration, this policy reflects the intent of each of the overarching governance principles outlined in Sections 9 of *the Act*.

The Community Grants Policy will be considered by Council in an open public meeting with minutes of the meeting and the decision published. This process reflects transparency in the way the policy shall

be considered, as the Act requires. Recommendations for medium and large-scale grants will be considered in a similar manner, with decisions publicised accordingly.

The policy incorporates provisions to monitor activities to inform resident and staff about the policy and its implications for their work, and to adjust such promotional efforts, support, grant guidelines and the application process where required.

## 7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 has been considered in relation to whether any human rights under the Charter are restricted or contravened by the enactment of any part of this policy.

It is considered that the policy is consistent with the rights outlined in the Charter and that it advances the following rights, through its emphasis upon building the strength of community through supporting a diverse range of activities, services, and programs that are responsive to community needs; promoting the active participation of the local community in events, initiatives, and programs; and addressing social disadvantage and inequality:

- Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief (S. 14).
- Freedom of expression (S. 15).
- Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (S. 16).
- Taking part in public life (S. 18).
- Cultural rights (S. 19).

## 8. RESPONSE TO THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

The Gender Equality Act 2020 came into operation on 31 March 2021. It requires that councils take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and promote gender equality in their policies, programs, and services.

As the primary focus of the Community Grants Policy is the public then it is determined that the policy and program will have a direct impact. Therefore, a Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken to examine major gender-related issues connected with the administration of the Community Grants Program, and their implications for this policy.

The gender impact assessment revealed that:

- Women are represented as one of the top ten grants beneficiaries for the Community Grants Program comprising just over eight percent (8%) of successful applicants.
- Several activities dedicated to women were funded including senior women's programs and Women's Empowerment programs.
- A comprehensive community engagement process was undertaken to refine and further develop the best practice grants principles as reflected in the Community Grants Program Policy, with translated information available in community languages.
- A greater number of women (56%) than men (35%) participated in the consultation process for the review of the Community Grants Program and Policy.

- Emerging community needs were identified through the review process. Those specifically relating to women included:
  - Family Violence and Gender Equality.
  - Women's/ Girls sport.
  - Social support and connection for Newly arrived Afghan women.
  - Promoting health and wellbeing of CALD women.

These findings are addressed in this policy and the guidelines for the Community Grants Program.

## 9. DIVERSITY, ACCESS, AND EQUITY POLICY

This policy is consistent with Council's Diversity and Access Policy in its objective of Strengthening the Greater Dandenong community through funding a diverse range of activities, services, and programs that are responsive to community needs; promoting the active participation of the local community in events, initiatives, and program; and supporting the community to work in partnership with Council to reduce factors that lead to social disadvantage and inequality. Overall, the aim of the policy is to ensure granted projects, services and activities meet the diverse needs of residents and address circumstances that limit access, opportunity, and inclusion for residents.

## 10. CONSIDERATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*, that the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, and Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council's Climate Change Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 is actively promoted through this Policy through the inclusion of a grant category dedicated to taking climate change action.

## 11. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility will rest with the Community Partnerships and Volunteers Team for informing Council staff and residents about the content and meaning of this policy. This may entail promotions through the Council website, emails, presentations, print and social media and other means.

The Community Partnerships and Volunteers Team will also monitor levels of knowledge and understanding of the policy among staff and residents if such steps are warranted.

## 12. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Community Partnerships and Volunteers Team will report on the details and outcomes of its efforts to inform residents about the policy, and inform staff of its application and relevance to their work, with measures which may include, but are not limited to:

- the nature of efforts to inform residents and staff about the policy and its importance.
- levels of resident and staff familiarity with the policy.
- resident and staff perceptions of the policy in achieving the grants principles.

The manner and extent to which the policy fulfils its purpose in providing funding to community groups and organisations that deliver services and activities consistent with Council’s strategic objectives as outlined in the Council Plan will be assessed during the life of the policy as well as during the process of formal review which preceded the development of this policy. This will include an assessment of whether Councils decision-making is transparent, accountable, and equitable and that organisations are actively supported to develop their applications and deliver their projects.

The policy will be reviewed every four years in line with the development of the Council Plan.

## 13. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following policies, strategies, procedures, legislation, or guidelines relate to the implementation of this policy.

### Legislation

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)

### Related Commonwealth Government Policies

- Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

### Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Alcohol Management Policy 2018-2022
- Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-25
- Arts, culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-26
- Children’s Plan 2021-26
- Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30
- Code of Conduct - Councillors
- Code of Conduct - Contractors
- Code of Conduct – Staff
- Community Grants Guidelines 2023
- Council Plan (The Plan) 2021-25 which incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Community Development Framework 2021

- Community Engagement Planning Framework 2022
- Diversity, Access, and Equity Policy, 2021
- Gambling Policy 2022
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25
- Indigenous Policy
- Make Your Move Greater Dandenong Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2030
- Positive Ageing Strategy 2017-25
- Privacy and Personal Information Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-23
- Risk Management Policy
- Sustainability Strategy 2016-30
- Youth and Family Strategy 2021-26.