Community Strengthening Grants Policy

Policy type	Council
Adopted by	Council
Responsible Director	Sustainable Communities
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture
Date adopted	~~23 November 2022 (amended August 2023)~~DRAFT
Scheduled for review	This policy will be reviewed four years from the date of adoption, or sooner if required.

PURPOSE

Council aims to provide a Community Strengthening Grant program that enhances the capacity of community organisations to develop and deliver services, manage facilities, coordinate events and promote tourism, environmental sustainability and health in the Moira Shire community.

This Policy establishes the operational remit of Council's Community Strengthening Grant program so that funding provided under this program:

- aligns with Councils strategic objectives and identified key initiatives and the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality identified in the Moira 2035 Community Vision
- aligns with the intent of the *Local Government Act 2020* and relevant regulations and guidelines;
- supports projects that address social inequity, promote social inclusion, embrace diversity, and establish environments that are supportive of all people regardless of gender, identity, age, disability, culture, religion and sexual orientation;
- does not involve Council in controversial issues such as political or cultural sensitivities, or expose Council to adverse criticism; and
- is used for a purpose that benefits the Moira Shire community.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Community Strengthening Grant Guidelines which provide specific guidance in respect of the operation of the program.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all requests for funding submitted through Council's Community Strengthening Grants Program.

This Policy does not apply to sponsorship, donations, advertising, naming rights and service level agreements.

DEFINITIONS

Acquittal	A reporting process to ensure that all funds have been fully expended for the purpose for which the funds were initially granted.

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Auspice	When an incorporated association applies for and receives funding on behalf of an unincorporated group, or organisation, and is responsible for

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	ensuring that the project or activity for which the funds have been granted is completed, acquitted, and the funds accounted for.
Community Organisation	An incorporated "not for profit" group or organisation with an open membership to residents of Moira Shire.
Capital Projects	Alterations to or creation of buildings or structures and infrastructure projects such as landscaping.

POLICY

The aim of the Community Strengthening Grant program is to:

- Support the strategic objectives identified in the Moira Shire Council Plan and/or align with the Moira 2035 Community Vision
- Support community organisations to provide diverse and inclusive local services, facilities, events and activities;
- Support delivery of community action plans resulting from the community planning process;
- Support delivery of Council's strategic plans and strategies
- Maximise the benefit of Council's investment through community funding contributions and external funding to support major projects and events.

GRANT CATEGORIES

Quick Response *Open round*	Stream 1 - Up to $1,000 Stream 2 - Up to $5,000	These grants provide community organisations an opportunity to apply for funding for small projects or event.
Major Grants* *Up to two rounds per financial year*	Up to $10,000	These grants aim to provide community organisations an opportunity to apply for funding for larger projects and events.
Triennial Grants	This grant category provides a mechanism for Council to offer a community organisation grant support in circumstances where Council deems funding stability over a number of years necessary to appropriately achieve the business outcome. This is not subject to the Community Strengthening Grants rounds and is offered at the discretion of Council.	

** Changes may be made to the number of rounds and maximum funding amounts through CEO approval.*

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For a Community Organisation to be eligible to apply for a Community Strengthening Grant they must meet the following criteria as a minimum:

- Be committed to providing a direct benefit to residents of Moira Shire.
  Please note, Council may consider funding events held outside of Moira Shire, particularly in the two cross- border communities of Cobram-Barooga and Yarrawonga-Mulwala,

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where economic or amenity benefit to Moira Shire and its residents can be demonstrated.

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- Be an incorporated 'not for profit' community organisation with open membership to residents in Moira Shire.
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or have a community organisation who is willing to auspice the application and accept responsibility for the administration of the grant.
- Hold adequate public liability insurance to cover the project or event as applicable.
- Not have their own grant giving program or fundraising program that provides money to finance other organisation's community initiatives. Some exclusions may apply.
- Projects or events where any funds raised support the sustainability of the activity.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous grants from Council, or if these are pending have no cause of concern regarding capacity to fully acquit.
- Have not received funding under the same grant category in the same financial year.
- Comply with all relevant Local Laws, Federal and State legislation, including but not limited to:
    - Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination;
    - Human rights;
    - Disability;
    - Child Safety;
    - Occupational Health and Safety;
    - Gender Equality;
    - Privacy, confidentiality and freedom of information;
    - Registration or accreditation of professional employees;
    - Accounting and auditing requirements;
    - Preparation and dissemination of annual reports.
- Have applicable management plans in place, including:
    - Risk
    - Project
    - Event
    - Traffic – Note: Grantees shall ensure that events on or adjacent to arterial roads have traffic management plans approved by Department of Transport and Planning.
- Have received Council approval for projects or events that are to take place on Council owned/manager land or facility via a completed Community Project Proposal application. Please note this process must be completed prior to applying for a grant.
- Received relevant permissions and permits from other land or water management bodies.
- Declare expenditure for catering and accommodation and adhere to the limits outlined in the Community Strengthening Grant Guidelines.

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FUNDING EXCLUSIONS

The following will not be funded:

- Requests that are considered by Council to be the funding responsibility of other levels of Government (such as state government agencies);

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- Applications from a Community Asset Committee;
- Applications from Primary or Secondary Schools *(Council encourages partnerships between Schools and community organisations, whereby the community organisation is the applicant);*

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- Community organisations that:
  - Do not support diversity, tolerance and inclusivity within the community.

    Please note applications that actively seek to engage diverse groups within the community will be looked upon favourably;
  - Are in debt to Council and are not meeting any agreed repayment arrangements;
  - Already receive funding from Council for capital, maintenance or equipment for projects relating to these activities; or
  - Receive direct income from electronic gaming machines.
- Organisations which have been non-compliant with Local Laws and/or state or federal legislation over the preceding year;
- Projects or events that:
  - Have demonstrated self-sufficiency by running at a profit that is not reinvested back into the community organisation for their next event or project;
  - Have been, or are being, funded by other parts of Council;
  - Have already started, been advertised or have been completed (no retrospective funding);
  - Are run by (or involved with) political or religious groups seeking to promote core beliefs;
  - May involve Council in potentially controversial issues such as those mentioned above or may expose Council to adverse criticism;
  - Are a clear duplication of existing services;
  - Are not open to the general public;
  - Are for interstate or overseas travel;
  - Are for operational expenses;
  - Are for funding of prizes, sponsorships, donations or gifts;
  - Will have a negative impact on the environment;
  - ~~Capital projects where the total cost of the project exceeds $15,000;~~Major projects involving building construction. Note: Minor construction works and/or purchase of equipment will be considered.
  - Projects or events that are deemed high risk.
  - Capital projects that include high risk construction activities as defined by WorkSafe - https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safe-work-method-statements-swms
- Projects/events on private property or government land– except where the project/event meets all other funding requirements and the applicant is able to provide evidence that:
  - There is no commercial gain for the owner/operator of the property;
  - Ongoing maintenance requirements and sale or change of ownership have been considered; and
  - Occupational, Health and Safety and/or Contractor and Risk requirements are met as per the Community Strengthening Grant Guidelines.

PROMOTION

Quick Response Grants will be advertised regularly in local newspapers and on

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Council's website and social media platforms throughout the year.

Major Grant funding rounds will be advertised in local newspapers and on Council's website and social media platforms for at least four weeks.

Other promotion may be Council's Community Newsletter.

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APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible groups must make an application by the due date through Council's online grant management system, Smarty Grants. Applications should not be submitted before reading the eligibility criteria and conditions in this Policy and the associated guidelines.

Incomplete applications or applications received after a funding round due date will not be considered under any circumstances.

Council will take an active role in supporting, facilitating and guiding community organisations through all the relevant application processes and promote quality applications by providing the following:

- One on one sessions by appointment;
- Providing access to technology to complete an application;
- Assisting with obtaining access to translation services if required;
- Providing detailed feedback on unsuccessful applications.

ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS

In addition to all applications meeting the eligibility criteria within this Policy, the application will also be assessed against the relevant programs assessment criteria. This criteria will be provided in the applicable application form.

Assessment Panel members will adhere to the Employee Code of Conduct, *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Conflict of Interest procedures.

	ASSESSMENT	APPROVAL
Quick Response Grants	- Applications will go through a pre-eligibility assessment and may be returned to applicant for further information if applicable. - Relevant Council Officers will then assess the application against the assessment criteria. - A total score of at least half of maximum available score must be obtained to be able to receive funding.	- Recommendation provided to Manager Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture for decision and approval. - All ineligible and unsuccessful applications will be reported to Director Sustainable Communities. Applications of concern will be forwarded to the Executive Leadership Team for approval.

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Major Grants	- Applications will go through a pre-eligibility assessment. Applications will not progress if they do not meet eligibility requirements. - An Assessment Panel will then assess the application	- Recommendation provided to Council at a Scheduled Council Meeting for decision and approval.

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	against the assessment criteria. - A total score of at least half of maximum available score must be obtained to be able to receive funding.	
Triennial Grants	- At Council's discretion.	- At Council's discretion.

Allocation of grant funding for eligible application/s is not guaranteed and will depend upon how well applications meet the assessment criteria, the number and quality of applications received, funds already held by the community organisations, and the amount available in Council's budget.

The highest scoring applications will be funded until the grant allocation is expended.

Council reserve the right to vary the amount granted.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via email notification following the Council Meeting and offered the opportunity to discuss the application process.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided feedback based in relation to their application and the decision.

ACCEPTANCE AND ACQUITTAL

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding contract with Council via completion of the Terms and Conditions of the Grant. Specific conditions in relation to applications will be provided to applicants (if applicable).

Council will require a completion report and financial acquittal of all payments to ensure grant recipients have complied with the Terms and Conditions of the Grant.

Specific reporting requirements and timeframes will be outlined in individual funding agreements and will depend on the nature and size of the grant.

RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2020
Gender Equality Act 2020
Equal Opportunity Act 2010
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005 and 2021)

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Community Strengthening Grants Guidelines
Grant Application, Assessment and Acquittal Forms
Community Strengthening Grants Administration Manual

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