Community Strengthening Grants Guidelines

~~Updated August 2023~~DRAFT JUNE 2024

1. Governance and Structure

1.1 Introduction

This document has been prepared to assist community groups in preparing an application for the Moira Shire Council's Community Strengthening Grants Program.

Council is a major provider of funding for community groups. In addition, it supports community organisations indirectly through a variety of other methods including the provision of buildings, maintenance and planning advice. Assistance and staff input is provided through various committee structures, the total cost of this is significant. It is recognised that the grants program is an important component of Council's support for the community.

Please note this information is specifically provided for the Community Strengthening Grants Program.

1.2 Program Owner

Moira Shire Council Community Strengthening Program is funded by Council, and managed by the Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture Department.

1.3 Target Groups

The program is of particular interest to community organisations who are seeking funding for projects and/or events.

1.4 Overall Purpose

Council aims to provide a Community Strengthening Grants 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. Council recognises the economic, socio-cultural and health benefits projects and events can bring to Moira Shire and its communities.

Additionally, the program aims to support programs and organisations which 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.

1.5 Grant Categories

Funding will be allocated under the following categories. Council retains the right to vary the amounts granted. As required, Council may release focused grant programs. These will be advertised through our regular channels.

Quick Response Grants

Open round

Stream 1 - Up to $1,000
Stream 2 - Up to $5,000

These grants aim to provide community organisations an opportunity to apply for funding for small projects or events.

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.*

1.6 Grant Aims

Through the different grant categories, the program seeks to:

- Support strategic objectives identified in the Moira Shire Council Plan and/or align with the Moira 2035 Community Vision.
- Support community organisations that 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.

1.7 Responsible Officers

The following people will perform identified roles in the management and coordination of the Community Strengthening Grants Program:

Job Title	Role in Program
Manager Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture	Manager of program
Team Leader Business Support	Leader of program
Administration Support Officer	Administrator of program
Council Officers from various departments	Assessment Panel members, project supports and sponsors

1.8 Eligibility

For Community Organisations 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 benefits to residents in 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, where economic or amenity benefit to Moira Shire can be demonstrated.
- 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/stream 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 laws;
  - Human rights;
  - Disability;
  - Child Safety;
  - Occupational Health and Safety;
  - Privacy, confidentiality and freedom of information;
  - Registration or accreditation of professional employees;
  - Accounting and auditing requirements;
  - Preparation and dissemination of annual reports.
- Have relevant 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 below:
  - Accommodation daily limit $220
  - Catering:

    For grants over $5,000 the maximum available is $1,500

    For grants under $5,000 the maximum available is $750

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1.9 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);
- 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);
- 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 or 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 the 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 Grants Guidelines.

1.10 Promotion

Quick Response Grants will be advertised regularly in local newspapers and on Council's website www.moira.vic.gov.au 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 included as part of Council's Community Newsletter.

1.11 SmartyGrants

SmartyGrants is an online grant administration system that Council uses to manage its Community Strengthening Grants Program. It provides an easy way for grant applicants to complete their application form online. Some of the features of SmartyGrants are:

- You can save your progress and return to

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complete your application at a later time or date.

- Your application is stored online, therefore there is nothing for you to save to your own computer and;
- You can be certain that the grant maker has received your application when you submit.

2. Application Process

2.1 Application Process

Eligible groups must make an application by the due date using Council's online grant management system, SmartyGrants. If you are a first time user of SmartyGrants you will need to register. We suggest you use an organisational email address to register to ensure all your grant applications are in one place and can be accessed over time by relevant committee members.

Applications should not be submitted before reading the eligibility criteria and conditions.

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

Important note – if the project is on Council land or at a facility owned by Council you will need to complete a Community Project Proposal form – to begin this process, please contact us.

2.2 Application Support

It is important to Council that applicants are able to submit a well thought through and well developed application that answers all required questions, addresses all criteria and provides the evidence and support documentation required. If you are after some further guidance on how to complete an application form, Council offer one on one sessions to assist. Please contact the Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture Department on 5871 9222 to book an appointment.

Local libraries and Community Houses are able to provide access to a computer and internet for grant applicants to work on their applications. Please contact the service to make an appointment if you are interested:

Goulburn Valley Libraries
Tel: 1300 374 765

- **Cobram Library**
  14 Punt Road, Cobram
- **Yarrawonga Library**
  26-30 Belmore Street, Yarrawonga
- **Nathalia Library**
  75 Blake Street, Nathalia
- **Numurkah Library**
  18 McCaskill Street, Numurkah

Cobram Community House
43-45 Punt Road, Cobram
Tel: 58722224

Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House
1 Hargrave Court, Yarrawonga
Tel: 57443911

Nathalia Community House
17 Harcourt Street, Nathalia
Tel: 58662449

Numurkah Community Learning Centre
99 Melville Street, Numurkah
Tel: 58622249

Assistance with access to translation services can be provided.

2.3 Application General Conditions

The following information is designed to guide applicants in preparing and submitting their applications. Adhering to these conditions is compulsory. Please read carefully, as failure to comply with these conditions may have a negative impact on the assessment of the application.

1. Applications must be made via SmartyGrants.
2. Funded projects and/or events must be for a specific project and/or event and have a defined operating period. Funding cannot be used for any other purpose without prior consultation and agreement by Council.
3. Applicants must indicate all other sources of funding they have sought and/or received in relation to the project and/or event in their application.
4. Each Community Organisation must provide copies of the previous year's Financial Statements (if requested).
5. Applicants are to contribute an amount which Council believes adequate based on the type of project, their financial position and their ability to secure alternative funding. Subject to this the degree of contribution will be considered in the assessment process.
6. Groups that receive a grant must sign the Terms and Conditions of Grant before they are eligible to receive the allocated funds.
7. A Completion Report (including all receipts for money expended) must be submitted at the completion of the project and/or event.
8. ~~Applications for portable objects must have a minimum cash contribution of 50 percent of the total cost of the project and/or event. For the purpose of this application, mobile objects are considered to be items that can be easily taken, driven, lost or stolen and that do not have a permanent fixed position.~~
9. 8. The Community Strengthening Grants are made on the basis of a one off payment and no ongoing commitment by Council is implied.
10. 9. Grant monies must be accounted for separately within the organisations records and any unspent funds must be returned to Council.
11. 10. If the project and/or event is discontinued within 12 months from receipt of the grant, all unspent funds must be returned to Council and/or approval to reuse the funds must be negotiated with the Manager Community Wellbeing, Health and Culture.
12. 11. Council will look favourably at applications which show consideration for availability of water, shade and healthy food and drink choices at events along with smoke and alcohol free zones.
13. 12. Council approval for projects or events that are to take place on Council owned/managed land or facility must be received prior to applying for a grant via a Community Project Proposal application.
14. 13. Applicants must have received relevant permissions and permits from other land or water management bodies.
15. 14. Council will look favourably at applications that actively seek to engage diverse groups within the community.

2.4 Assessment Criteria

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.

An Assessment Panel will conduct the initial assessment of the grant applications. The Assessment Panel is made up of relevant Officers and independent Council Officers.

	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.
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 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 Council at a Scheduled Council Meeting for decision and approval.

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.

2.5 Notification Process

Quick Response Grants

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

Major Grants

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

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

3. Managing Grants

3.1 Funding Contract

All successful applicants will be required to enter a Funding Contract with Council via completion of the Terms and Conditions of the Grant.

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

3.2 Payment Arrangements

The payment process for the Community Strengthening Grants program is as follows:

- Payments are made by Council on receipt of the completed Terms and Conditions and Appendices.
- Payments will be made electronically.

3.3 Application of GST to Funding

The imposition of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) applies to some funding submissions. In order for Council to comply, the following approach will be taken so that no applicant will be worse off:

1. Successful applicants must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) to apply or be auspiced by a group /organisation that has an ABN.
2. Applicants who are registered for GST must provide their GST details. Applicants that have applied for an ABN or for GST registration but have not yet received confirmation must state so on the form. Successful applicants will be required to provide completed details before funding can be paid.
3. The Council will determine if the funding is considered a taxable supply for GST purposes and add GST to the funding if those conditions (set by the ATO) are met.
4. If GST is added to the funding submission, applicants that are registered for GST will be required to report the funding on their BAS statement. Applicants that are not registered for GST will not be required to take any further action.

3.4 Terms and Conditions of Grant

If successful in this funding round, applicants will be subject to the following conditions:

1. The Grant must be used solely for the project and/or event as detailed in the Application Form.
2. The Grant will be paid in full when Council receives all of the required documentation.
3. The Completion Report must be signed off by a Council Officer.
4. The Grantee shall satisfactorily complete the project and/or event by the date nominated in the Terms and Conditions signed by successful applicants.
5. The Grantee must ensure that Council's contribution to the project and/or event is acknowledged on promotional materials, media reports and/or by appropriate signage.
6. The Grant is made on the basis that the Grantee provides a financial contribution to the project and/or event. If the funded project and/or event is of a mobile nature, the contribution must be 50 per cent cash.
7. The Grant recipient must advise Council immediately if the project and/or event is terminated. If a termination occurs, Council will request the refund of whole or part of the Grant previously paid to the Grantee.
8. The Grantee shall advise Council if the project and/or event is completed for less than the project and/or event total cost as set out in the Application Form. In such cases the Grant may be reduced on a pro rata basis.
9. Upon reasonable notice, the Grantee shall permit a Council Officer access to accounting records relating to the project and/or event and where relevant, to inspect any project and/or event site, works and/or equipment.

10. Any variations to the conditions of the Grant (as detailed in the Application Form) must be submitted through SmartyGrants. Variations are subject to approval by Council. Council reserves the right to deny any variations.
11. If any Grant conditions are breached, or if Council is of the reasonable opinion that the project and/or event is not proceeding satisfactorily, Council may withhold payment to be made under this Grant and/or require the repayment to Council of the amount determined.
12. Council reserves the right to publicise the benefits accruing as a result of the provision of this Grant.
13. Council has the right to issue a mutually agreed media release regarding the project and/or event.
14. Council must include the name of the Grantee and the amount of the Grant in its Annual Report.
15. The Grantee shall comply with all relevant Local Laws, Federal and State legislation, including but not limited to:
    - Equal Employment Opportunity and anti-discrimination;
    - Human rights;
    - Disability;
    - Child Safety;
    - Occupational Health & 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.
16. Have applicable management plans in place, including:
    - Risk
    - Project
    - Event
    - Traffic
17. The Grantee shall engage where and when required, suitably qualified trades persons to complete works requiring certification.
18. The Grantee shall ensure that their funded project and/or event and all contractors/employees have appropriate insurance coverage.
19. The Grantee must obtain any necessary permits (for example–building, planning) and there after comply with the requirements of such permits.
20. Should the Grantee not commence the project and/or event by the nominated date in the returned Terms and Conditions document, the Grant may be terminated at the discretion of Council and the funds requested to be returned to Council.
21. The Grantee will sign and return the Terms and Conditions document by the date nominated.

4. Acquittal and Feedback

4.1 Acquittal

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.

Completion reports are to be submitted as per the timeframes identified through SmartyGrants and are to include all supporting documents requested.

All completion reports will need to be submitted through SmartyGrants.

4.2 Feedback

In order to continually improve the manner of grant allocation, feedback from the community regarding the criteria, timing and targeting of these grants is encouraged. Any comments regarding these matters should be directed to:

Moira Shire Council
PO Box 578
Cobram VIC 3644

or via email grants@moira.vic.gov.au