

Community Grants Policy

Date adopted: 24 November 2025

Responsible Service Area: City Futures

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out Council's approach to the provision of financial assistance to the Maroondah community through the Maroondah Community Grants Program. It supports transparency, fairness and equity in the way Council grants are allocated and administered for community benefit.

Background / Context

Council is committed to working in partnership with the community to deliver a wide range of local social, cultural, recreational and environmental initiatives that strengthen the Maroondah community.

To enable this commitment, Council provides grants each financial year through the Maroondah Community Grants Program to individuals, community groups and organisations in line with shared community and Council strategic priorities set out in [Maroondah 2050 – Our future together](#), [Council Plan 2025-2029](#) and [relevant supporting strategies and plans](#).

These grants must also address a range of related legislation, policies and other compliance requirements that work together to ensure public funds are used appropriately by Council and the community.

Scope

Grants

This Policy applies to the grant streams of the Maroondah Community Grants Program listed below and summarised in [Appendix A: Grant Stream Overview](#).

- Quick Response Grants
- Annual Community Grants
- Annual Arts and Cultural Grants
- Changemaker Grants

This Policy also applies to any additional grant streams that Council approves under the Maroondah Community Grants Program at any given time.

Other Council grant programs are not explicitly covered by this Policy.

This Policy does not apply to donations, sponsorships, procurement, or any organisations under a multi-year partnership or service agreement with Council.

Council representatives

This Policy applies to all Council officers, Councillors and external personnel who have responsibility for planning, assessing, deciding, managing and/or evaluating grants in scope for this Policy.

Community representatives

This Policy applies to community members who apply for and/or receive a grant (i.e. applicants and recipients), or who at Council's discretion, may be engaged by Council to contribute to the assessment of grant applications.

Objectives

Key objectives of this Policy are to:

- Assist the delivery of shared community and Council strategic priorities.
- Articulate what grants are available to the community.
- Support fair, inclusive and equitable access to available grants.
- Commit to processes that ensure accountable use of public funds by Council and the community.

Policy Principles

The following principles guide Council's overall approach to provision of grants in scope for this Policy:

- **Responsive to needs** – our grants will link to strategic priorities and identified community needs, seeking to financially assist those in the Maroondah community who will benefit most.
- **Equitable and inclusive** – we will strive to ensure high levels of community awareness, ease of participation, and access to available financial support by all in the Maroondah community.
- **Efficient and effective** – our grants will be offered, measured, communicated and celebrated in a manner that seeks to maximise value to the Maroondah community.
- **Responsibly managed** – our grants will be well-designed and well-managed in ways that are best-fit for purpose and ensure accountable, efficient and justifiable use of available financial support.

Relationship to the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision

Grants under this Policy relate to all community outcomes of the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision. The management and delivery of the Grants program relates strongly with the following community aspirations.

Outcome Area: Our Community's Aspiration	A well-governed and empowered community Council continues to be a transparent, accountable, and future-focused leader that collaborates locally and regionally, and actively champions local needs. Everyone in Maroondah is informed about matters that affect them and provided with opportunities to meaningfully engage regarding Council decision-making.
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Relationship to the Council Plan 2025-2029

The management and delivery of the Grants program relates strongly with the following Council Plan 2025-2029 key directions:

Key Directions	5.1	Ensure transparent and accountable governance, including balanced and sustainable decision making that is evidence informed and is in the best interests of the community.
	5.7	Foster and leverage local and regional partnership opportunities with community organisations, service providers, businesses, and other levels of government.

Alignment with Council's mission and values

This Policy supports Council's mission to be dynamic and innovative leaders, working in partnership to enhance community wellbeing. It embodies each of Council's values of being accountable, supportive and inclusive where all are respected and where excellence and performing at our best drive our approach to the provision of grants.

Policy position

Eligibility

Minimum eligibility requirements apply as set out below. Additional eligibility requirements may be specified for individual grant streams in the published Program Guidelines. Applicants must meet the minimum eligibility requirements, plus any specified additional eligibility requirements, to be considered for a grant.

All applicants

All individuals, community groups and organisations must:

- Be located in the Maroondah municipality or, if located outside the Maroondah municipality, be able to demonstrate majority benefit to the Maroondah community.
- Have or be able to obtain Public Liability Insurance with minimum cover of \$20 million.
- Have successfully acquitted any previous Council grants received.
- Have no outstanding debts owed to Council or have entered into a debt repayment plan.
- If a Council property tenant, have no active breaches against the Council tenancy agreement.
- Have no active breaches with Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Australian Not-for-Profit and Charities Commission, or the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, as applicable.
- Have no active liquor licence breaches.
- Have not received financial assistance for the same or similar activity from other Council grants or budget sources in the same financial year running July to June.
- Submit a complete application within the advertised application period, including budget, attachments or other supporting information requested by Council.
- If successful, provide banking details in the applicant's name (or auspice/authorised person if used).

Community groups and organisations

In addition to eligibility requirements for all applicants, community groups and organisations must:

- Be legally constituted as an incorporated association or corporation, company limited by guarantee, or be a registered pre-school or school.
- Be not-for-profit and managed by a board or committee.
- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Be financially solvent.

Professional artists

In addition to eligibility requirements for all applicants, professional artists must:

- Be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident (with an appropriate visa).
- Be legally constituted as a sole trader or company limited by guarantee.
- Provide proof of identity and residence.
- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).

Individuals

In addition to eligibility requirements for all applicants, individuals must:

- Be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident (with an appropriate visa).
- Aged 18 years or over (or have parent/legal guardian authorisation if aged under 18 years).
- Provide proof of identity and residence.

Ineligibility

Council will not consider applications from:

- Community groups or organisations that are not legally constituted and do not have an auspice.
- TAFEs or universities.
- Hospitals.
- Statutory Authorities or other public entities under other levels of government.
- Privately held for-profit companies (other than creative professionals or arts and cultural organisations where eligible).
- Applicants that benefit from, promote or advertise gambling, including but not limited to electronic gaming machines, sports betting, and online gambling.

Council will not consider:

- Multiple applications to an individual grant stream from the same applicant in the same financial year (July to June).
- Applications that exceed the limit of one (1) Quick Response Grant plus one (1) further application from any other individual grant stream available in the same financial year.
- Core operating, administration and staff costs.
- New or improved capital works projects to buildings or grounds.
- Building or grounds maintenance costs.
- New vehicles, vehicle accessories, vehicle signage, or ongoing vehicle maintenance costs.
- Activities related to worship, congregation, secular promotion, protest, activism, or campaigns.
- School activities that are curriculum-based or confined to the school property or school community.

- Single-use/purpose items such as year-specific flags or banners, commemorative merchandise, and memorial plaques or signs.
- Lease/hire or use of a venue with electronic gaming machines or other forms of gambling.
- Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, gambling products, or other items that cause community harm.
- Public art projects on Council-owned sites or on private property that is not publicly accessible.
- Fireworks, trophies, prizes or awards.
- Application preparation fees, paid or due, including professional grant writer fees.
- Funding requests above the maximum grant available in the published Program Guidelines.
- Funding requests arising from lobbying or canvassing support from Councillors.
- Funding requests made outside of Council's official application process.
- Funding requests that present unacceptable risk to Council by association.
- Retrospective funding (i.e. starting an activity before the grant has been approved).
- Late or incomplete applications.

Late and incomplete applications

To uphold integrity and fairness in the grant process for all applicants, late applications will not be accepted and no new information in support of a submitted application will be accepted after the closing date.

Council at its discretion may allow late applications in extenuating circumstances outside the control of Council or the applicant. For example, Council may authorise an extension for all applicants if there is a grant management system failure coinciding with the closing date, confirmed by the system provider.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary information requested in the application form is complete, accurate and true. Council will provide application support prior to the closing date but no new information from applicants will be accepted after the closing date.

Funding priorities

To maximise benefits and best use of available funding for the Maroondah community, funding priorities may be established from year-to-year for consideration in the assessment of received grant applications. Any applicable funding priorities will be communicated in the published Program Guidelines.

Policy implementation

Implementation of this Policy activates the [Policy Principles](#) and is guided by high standards of governance.

Transparency and accountability

- Program Guidelines covering all individual grant streams with detailed application guidance will be developed and published.
- Required approvals will be made by the duly authorised Financial Delegate.
- Grants approved are published to the community on Council's website.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be able to seek feedback on their application.
- Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement before monies are released and to ensure accountable use of funding.

- Any variation to time, scope or value of an approved grant must be requested in writing and approved by Council.
- Successful applicants must acquit their grant as specified in the published Program Guidelines and their funding agreement to substantiate accountable use of funding.
- Council reserves the right to recoup grant funding from successful applicants if a grant acquittal is not provided in a timely manner, if Council is not satisfied that grant funding has been used as agreed, or if grant funding is unspent on completion of the funded activity.

Fairness and equity

- Grants will be equitably available to the community.
- Available grants will be widely promoted to the community using multiple channels.
- All best efforts will be made to remove barriers to participation in the grant process, as result of language, culture, mobility, disability, age, gender, and technology access and literacy.
- Application, assessment, funding agreement, and acquittal requirements will be scaled to value and risk.
- All applications will be assessed against the same criteria for individual grant streams set out in the published Program Guidelines.
- Applicants and recipients must ensure their activity is made available to the community without discrimination in line with human rights and responsibilities.
- Applicants and recipients must ensure the safety of children in line with Child Safe Standards.
- While Council's funding decisions are final, applicants will have the right of appeal to be facilitated in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy.

Impartiality and ethical conduct

- Collusive or otherwise unethical behaviours that may lead to bias or undue influence will be proactively managed throughout the grant process.
- The assessment process will ensure separation between those that assess and make recommendations on applications, to those that make decisions on applications.
- An Assessment Panel will assess and make recommendations, operating to documented Terms of Reference and assessment procedures, with at least three people to review and assess applications received during the grant process.
- All funding decisions will be recorded, with any inconsistencies between a recommendation and decision documented.
- Letters of support from Councillors or Council staff submitted with applications will not be considered during assessment.
- An independent probity representative may be appointed at Council's discretion.
- Funding recommendations will not be presented for decision at the time of Council elections, in accordance with Council's Election Period Policy.

Value for money

- Grants will interact with and deliver against shared Council and community strategic priorities, ensuring public funds are relevant to need.
- Applications will be considered against financial and non-financial considerations, aligned to standard assessment criteria in the published Program Guidelines and with consideration for best use of available funding resources.
- A periodic review of the effectiveness of grant administration arrangements will be performed.

Conflict of interest

- Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be proactively managed throughout the grant process and in line with Council's conduct, fraud and corruption control policies and procedures.
- Any Council officer, community representative or other external contributor involved in assessing or recommending applications will be required to sign a Conflict-of-Interest declaration before their involvement commences. Any disclosed conflict will be registered and managed consistent with Council's conduct, fraud and corruption control policies and procedures.
- Councillors will be subject to standing conflict-of-interest declaration and management processes in line with Council's Governance Rules and conduct expectations.

Confidentiality management

- Notwithstanding Council's commitment to transparency, some information collected, developed and held in relation to applications, applicants, recipients, and acquittals, needs to remain confidential to uphold grant process integrity.
- Council will use appropriate systems and procedures, including access permissions and controls, to ensure the security and disposal of grants information.
- Information about grants will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with time limits imposed to access certain information, as appropriate.
- Any person involved in assessing, making recommendations, and deciding on applications or otherwise having access to grants-related information will be subject to Council's conduct requirements for handling Council information.

Risk management

Supported by the probity practices under this Policy and aligned to Council's Risk Management Policy and Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Council will:

- Undertake risk assessment, including grant fraud risk, as part of annual implementation planning.
- Consider activity-level risks during application assessment.
- Establish appropriate treatments for any risks rated as high or above.
- Align risk management efforts to Council's risk management framework.

Budget

The grants budget is set each financial year as part of Council's annual budget planning process. Review of Council's allocated grants budget to determine appropriate funding levels will be conducted in conjunction with the next scheduled Policy review, or as otherwise directed.

Council will reserve the right to target funding to areas that align with its strategic priorities and other identified needs (i.e. funding priorities). The community will be notified of such preferences through the published Program Guidelines.

Privacy

Council is committed to the privacy principles as prescribed by the *Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic). Relevant information is collected to ensure that applications can be assessed and a determination made on it. Personal and identifying information will not be disclosed except as required by law.

Access to information provided, amendments that may be required, or any privacy-related enquiries must be directed to Council's Privacy Officer & Health Records Officer in line with Council's Privacy Policy.

Authorised Delegates

Relationship to other grants, services or programs

Where appropriate, Council at its discretion may:

- Transfer or delegate a request for funding support to another Council service or program for consideration.
- Consider and advise an applicant of alternative means of funding or in-kind support that may be appropriate for the nature of the application submitted. This support may be within or external to Council.

Exemptions

Exemptions to this Policy must be requested in writing to Council, with information outlining:

- Name of the relevant grant stream.
- Brief description of the proposed project or program; and
- Reason(s) as to why an exemption is being sought.

Requestors should note that exemption is not automatic and is subject to consideration. Approval must be authorised at manager level.

Roles and Responsibilities

Key roles involved in Policy implementation are summarised in Table 1. Specific Council positions will be assigned to Council officers as part of annual implementation planning.

In addition to specified responsibilities and aligned to high standards of governance, all roles must:

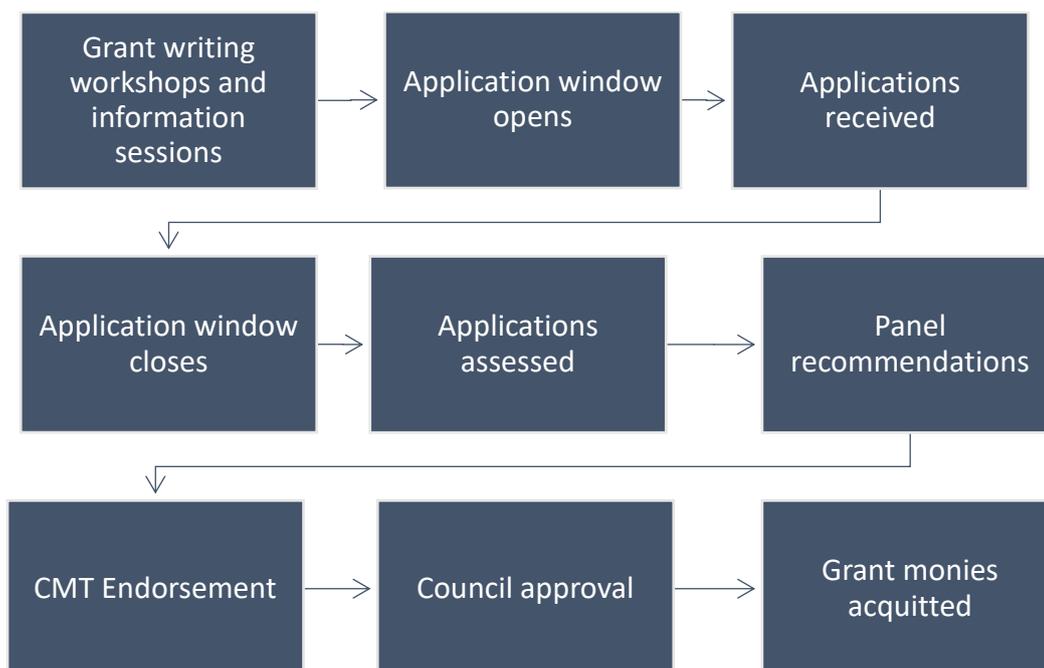
- Disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to the Program Owner
- Keep and maintain access to records in the grant process in accordance with Council's record-keeping requirements.

Table 1. Key roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Program Lead</p> <p>NB. The Program Lead may also fulfil Responsibilities of the Panel Chair, Grants Officer and/or Grants Agreement Manager.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Program documentation and variations to such. • Promote the Program and call for applications. • Develop and hold applicant and/or assessor briefings. • Approve appointment and replacement of the Panel Chair. • Manage the grant process, ensuring probity at all times, including managing conflicts of interest. • Develop reports for CMT and Councillors • Ensure all required documentation is prepared and stored. • Ensure compliance with all applicable legislation and policies. • Engage an external probity advisor, as required. • Engage an external consultant to evaluate the Program, as required.
<p>Panel Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, coordinate and provide advice to the Assessment Panel, including managing membership and facilitating meeting(s). • Ensure Panel Members' access to and use of Council-authorized system(s) for assessments. • Contact applicants for clarifications needed by Panel Members. • Determine acceptance or otherwise of late applications. • Manage the assessment process, always ensuring probity, including managing conflicts of interest. • Develop the Assessment Panel Report.
<p>Panel Members and other Assessors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available during the assessment process. • Ensure ability to use the Council-authorized system(s) to conduct assessments. • Assess applications in line with the assessment criteria and justify assessments with defensible scoring and comments. • Consider Topic Expert advice received when assessing applications. • Ensure compliance with all applicable legislation and policies. • Participate in Assessment Panel moderation activities. • Contribute to and endorse the Assessment Panel Report.
<p>Subject Matter Experts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available during the application and assessment process. • Provide advice on applications relevant to their area(s) of expertise. • Abstain from assessing or recommending applications, unless formally appointed as a Panel Member in a dual role.
<p>Grants Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Panel Chair with their responsibilities. • Update the Council website with the latest Program links. • Release the Grant Program Guidelines to the Council-authorized system(s), website and communication channel(s). • Set up the application, eligibility check, and assessment forms in the Council-authorized system(s), with conflict-of-interest declarations. • Open the grants in the Council-authorized system(s) and sign up the assessors. • Check applicant eligibility and if required, financial viability. • Respond to Program queries from potential applicants via Council's designated mailbox and phone number.
<p>Grants Agreement Manager</p> <p>NB. The Grants Officer may also fulfil the responsibilities of the Grant Agreement Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage funding agreements in accordance with the Community Grant Procedures document • Monitor risk, compliance and performance against agreement obligations and key performance indicators. • Manage funding agreement finances, including budgeting, payments, recovery of funds, and Topic Expert liaison. • Ensure the Program Lead is immediately apprised of any risks or issues arising with a grant recipient or activity.

Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information on funding agreements to the Program Owner to fulfil onward grant monitoring and reporting requirements.
Authorised Delegate	<p>As authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve this Policy. Approve grants budget as part of the annual budget cycle. Approve funding recommendations of the Assessment Panel. Approve the Program Implementation Plan (or equivalent). Approve the Program Guidelines. Sign and enter into funding agreements on behalf of Council within their Financial Delegation. Authorise variations to funding agreements on behalf of Council within their Financial Delegation. Authorise grant payments within their Financial Delegation.

Procedural Flowchart



Related legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*, with specific reference to:
 - s47 – Delegations by Chief Executive Officer
 - s49 – Code of conduct for members of Council staff
 - s53-54 – Audit and risk committee
 - s55-58 – Community accountability
 - s70 – Prohibition of Councillor discretionary funds
 - s107 – Complaints policy
 - s123-125 – Improper conduct
 - s126-131 – Conflict of interest
 - s137-138 – Gifts
 - s139-140 – Councillor conduct
- *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)*
- *Charities Act 2013 (Clth)*
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Child Safe Standards
- *Corporations Act 2001 (Clth)*
- *Emergency Management Victoria Act 2013 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Vic)*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)*

Related policies, strategies, procedures and guidelines

- Maroondah 2050: Our future together, Maroondah City Council (2025)
- Council Plan 2025-2029, Maroondah City Council (2025)
- Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy, Maroondah City Council (2025 Update)
- Maroondah Community Grants Program Guidelines, Maroondah City Council (annual)
- Governance Rules, Maroondah City Council (2022)
- Councillor Code of Conduct, Maroondah City Council (2024)
- Councillor Gift Policy, Maroondah City Council (2021)
- Election Period (Caretaker) Policy, Maroondah City Council (2024)
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Maroondah City Council (2024)
- Risk Management Policy, Maroondah City Council (2006)
- Privacy Policy, Maroondah City Council (2023)
- Complaints Policy, Maroondah City Council (2021)
- Risk Management Strategy Plan and Framework (2021)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Maroondah City Council (2024)
- Arts and Cultural Development Strategy, Maroondah City Council (2022)
- Maroondah Gambling Policy, Maroondah City Council (2018)
- Maroondah Disability Action Plan 2022-2026, Maroondah City Council (2022)
- Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029, Maroondah City Council (2024)
- Public Art Policy, Maroondah City Council (2015)
- Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031, Maroondah City Council (2022)

Definitions

Activity	A service, program, project, festival, event, or other pursuit that is the subject of an application or grant.
Acquittal	Information provided by a recipient that ensures that funds have been spent and administered in line with the conditions of the grant.
Applicant	An individual, community group or organisation who applies for a grant.
Application	The formal documented request for a grant submitted by an applicant, typically in response to a set of questions and information requested.
Auspice	An agreement where one organisation agrees to apply for and manage a grant on behalf of another organisation. The auspice is legally responsible for financial and acquittal requirements.
Capital works	In the context of this Policy, includes any one-off new, extension, or improvement works to buildings or grounds assets.
Funding agreement	Sets out the general terms and conditions, additional terms and conditions and schedules relevant to the funded activity.
Grant	Money given to organisations or individuals for a specified purpose that is consistent with and helps achieve priority objectives and outcomes of both Council and the organisation or individual.
Grant stream	A specific offering under an umbrella <i>grants</i> program tied to specific objectives. At times, they may have further specified objectives under grant categories in published Program Guidelines.
Legally constituted	An organisation that has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered under law (e.g. incorporated association, sole trader, company limited by guarantee, Pty Ltd company or Aboriginal Corporation) • Created by law (e.g. school, statutory authority, TAFE or university).
Organisation	An entity consisting of a group of people that has a shared purpose and carries out <i>activities</i> in support of the shared purpose. In context of this Policy, it includes community groups and clubs.
Recipient	An individual, community group or organisation who receives a grant.
Strategic priorities	Collective term referring to Council's focus outcome areas under <i>Maroondah 2050 – Our future together</i> and supporting policies, strategies, and plans.

Supporting documents

List any relevant documents that have assisted in the establishment of policy position statements.

- [Maroondah 2050: Our Future Together](#)
- [Maroondah Council Plan 2025-29](#)
- [Maroondah Liveability Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy](#)
- [Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy](#)

Appendix A: Grant Streams Overview

MCGP grant stream	Quick Response Grants	Annual Community Grants	Annual Arts and Cultural Grants	Changemaker Grants
Focus	Smaller scale community-led activities and individual pursuits.	Community-led activities aligned to strategic priorities.	Arts and cultural projects and events aligned to strategic priorities.	Strategic projects that address more complex needs and challenges.
Who the grants are for	Not-for-profit organisations Individual residents	Not-for-profit organisations	Not-for-profit organisations Arts & cultural organisations Creative professionals / artists	Not-for-profit organisations
Categories	Small Community Grants Individual Development Grants	Community Projects Community Festivals & Events Environment	No categories	No categories
Funding available	Up to \$1,500 (organisations) Up to \$500 + 15% financial hardship* (individuals)	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$20,000 (2 projects p.a.)
Funding term	Up to 1 year	1 year	1 year	2 years
Frequency offered	Always open (assessed bi-monthly until funds are exhausted)	Annual	Annual	Every 2 years
Application process	Open, non-competitive, 1-stage	Open, competitive, 1-stage	Open, competitive, 1-stage	Open, competitive, 2-stages
Assessment process	Council officer(s) assessment. Decision by Council officer(s) as per delegations.	Council officer(s) assessment and Panel recommendation. Decision by Councillors.	Council officer(s) assessment and Panel recommendation. Decision by Councillors.	Council officer(s) assessment and Panel recommendation. Decision by Councillors.
Contract type	Letter of Offer	Funding Agreement	Funding Agreement	Funding Agreement
Report type	Acquittal (Light)	Acquittal	Acquittal	Progress + Acquittal
Lead service area	City Futures	City Futures	Business and Precincts	City Futures