2025-2026 Community Grants Program Guidelines

- **Quick Response Grants**
  - Includes In-Kind Grants

NOTE:

All applicants, successful and unsuccessful, will have their organisation, project description, funding outcome, grant amount (cash and/or in-kind) published on Council's website.

Introduction

The City of Stonnington's Community Grants Program supports eligible community groups and not-for-profit organisations delivering Stonnington-based programs that:

- improve community health, wellbeing, and safety
- enhance social connections
- promote accessibility and inclusiveness
- advance social cohesion and reconciliation
- actively promote environmental sustainability.

The project must meet the objectives and priorities in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and key Council strategies.

Program objectives

The objectives of the Community Grants Program are to:

- foster community participation, build social connections, and reduce isolation
- respond to local issues and priority areas of need within the community
- provide accessible and inclusive opportunities for communities who are considered vulnerable or under-represented
- build the capacity of local groups and organisations to develop, implement and sustain positive impacts in their community
- encourage sustainability and strong governance in the delivery of services and programs.

Principles and funding priorities

The Program is underpinned by the following principles, which inform funding priorities:

- **Access and equity** – We will support programs and organisations that address social inequity, promote social inclusion, embrace diversity, and establish environments that support all people regardless of age, ability, culture, or identity.

- **Social and economic participation** – We will support programs and organisations which support the local community and economy, encourage community involvement, facilitate volunteerism, and empower the community.

- **Positive working relationships** – We will support programs and organisations which operate with transparency, link with Council priorities, and maintain relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

- **Flexibility and responsiveness** – We will support programs which recognise and can adapt to changing needs and circumstance.

- **Sustained benefit** – We will support programs with approaches that can remain financially viable and achieve sustained participation and positive impact into the future.

- **Environmental sustainability** – We will support activities with low to zero environmental impacts and promote environmentally sustainable practices including plastic waste avoidance and reduction.

In addition, Council may determine specific priorities for a funding year in response to an identified community need or strategic issue. Any specific priorities will be announced by Council as part of releasing the Community Grants Program.

Eligibility requirements

Not-for-profit, community organisations residing in Stonnington, or providing services to residents of Stonnington, are eligible to apply for a Community Grant. All applications will be assessed on an individual basis and will be determined in accordance with the assessment criteria. The applicant must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or an eligible auspice organisation with an ABN and written consent; **AND**

- be not-for-profit and incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act* or enacted under legislative provisions for charitable purposes; **OR**

- be supported by an Incorporated Association that is deemed to be a not-for-profit, as classified by the Australian Taxation Office (section 103A(2) (c) of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936*).

- comply with Child Safety Standards and attach a Child Safe Policy to the grant application if the organisation provides services and facilities for children (anyone under 18 years old). Information on the Victorian Child Safe Standards can be found online at ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/.

- have current Public Liability Insurance of no less than $20,000,000

- have acquitted any previous Council grants and have no outstanding debts to Council.

Applications will only be considered if they:

- are completed via online SmartyGrants application by the closing date and time

- propose an activity that will commence and conclude in the 2025-2026 financial year

- propose an activity which takes place within the City of Stonnington boundaries or is part of a broader project that has a clear benefit to Stonnington residents

- have beneficial outcomes for the Stonnington community

- offer accessible and inclusive activities and programs without discrimination or restrictions

- have supplied all financial and other information that is requested.

For In-kind Grants (Council facilities and/or community transport):

- have a least 30% members who are residents of Stonnington with a minimum of 10 resident members (for membership-based groups).

- are a small charitable organisation, volunteer-led community group, school, kindergarten, sporting club, local interest group, or community service provider located within or servicing the City of Stonnington.

All applicants are encouraged to strengthen their financial sustainability through proactive strategies such as fundraising, annually reviewing membership fees and charges, grant seeking and donations, and implementing efficiency measures.

Funding will not be considered for:

- commercial enterprises

- sole traders or businesses including those applying under an auspice organisation

- business as usual – staff salaries and operational expenses except where there is substantial evidence the program would otherwise not operate without funding support

- permits and insurances

- groups with access to revenue from electronic gaming machines

- recipients of previous Community Grants who have not returned an acceptable completed acquittal form

- proposals from current City of Stonnington employees or contractors

- hire of venues of a commercial nature

- carnivals, fairs, and festivals (please refer to the [Arts and Cultural Grants Program](#))

- political, religious, or spiritual organisations where the key focus of the program is to promote their beliefs (this does not include community celebrations of cultural festivals)

- activities that are considered the responsibility of State or Federal Government to fund (e.g., core school curriculum activities)

- activities that duplicate an existing service or program provided by City of Stonnington

- projects that have detrimental environmental impact or produce large quantities of waste

- structural building works, refurbishment or building maintenance

- retrospective funding (i.e., funds for expenditure that has already commenced or occurred)

- projects/events outside the current financial year

- projects that have been approved by the Council under another budget or funding program

For In-kind Grants (Council facilities and/or community transport) funding will not be considered for:

- activities charging *higher than nominal fees* for attendance or participation; except for fundraising events

- activities funded under an existing service agreement with the Council or offered by organisations using Council-owned venues through an occupancy or license agreement.

In-kind grant applications for use of Council facilities and/or community bus must be for activities or programs which:

- aim to raise funding addressing issues of concern to the community

- celebrate achievements, milestones, or culture of a group

- consist of learning or accessing information

- bring health and wellbeing to participants

- are offered at a low cost or free of charge.

Quick Response Grants opening and closing dates:

Applications open	Friday 1 August 2025
Applications close	**Until funds exhausted or 11.59pm Thursday 30 April 2026 (whichever is sooner)** **Applications must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the activity commencing to allow sufficient time for assessment.** Applications must be submitted via SmartyGrants and will be acknowledged via a confirmation email.
Applicants notified	4-6 weeks post submission date

Grant categories

The 2025-2026 Community Grants Program includes Quick Response Grants to assist eligible organisations with access to small amounts of funding support throughout the year. Organisations are limited to one application per financial year and additional criteria applies to this grant category. As an auspice, there is no limit to the number of applications an organisation can auspice in this grant category.

Grant name	Amount	Summary	Frequency
Quick Response Grant (Redirected unused funds from the annual program)	Up to $1,000 cash and/or up to $2,500 in-kind	The Quick Response Grant supports eligible organisations with limited self-funding capacity, that have missed the annual grant application process or to address unforeseen challenges.	Monthly, opens 1 August until funds exhausted or 30 April 2026, whichever is sooner.

For more information on each grant stream please visit Council's website:
www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Community/Grants/Community-Grants

Quick Response Grants (Up to $1,000 cash and/or $2,500 in-kind)

Description: Quick Response Grants provide cash and/or in-kind (facilities or community transport) funding to support:

- groups that have missed out on applying to annual grants due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., incapacity of person in charge responsible for the grant application)

- unforeseen challenges that cannot wait for the annual community grants program.

Frequency

- Quick Response Grants open in August and are offered throughout the year. This grant will close when funds are exhausted or on 30 April each year.

- Applications must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the desired start date of the requested funded activity to allow sufficient time for assessment.

- Additional criteria to support the urgent nature of the application is required and only one application per annum is allowed.

In addition to the in-kind community bus, the in-kind facilities offered under this grant category include:

- Grattan Gardens Community Centre

- Phoenix Park Community Centre

- Prahran RSL

- Prahran Square

- Orrong Romanis Recreation Centre

- Prahran Aquatic Centre

- Harold Holt Memorial Swim Centre

- Malvern Library Meeting Room

- Toorak/ South Yarra Library Meeting Room

- Malvern Community Arts Centre

- Malvern Town Hall (Main Hall)

- Malvern Town Hall (Banquet Hall)

- Margaret Connellan Stadium (located at the Stonnington Sports Centre).

Assessment:

Additional Assessment criteria: Quick Response Grants must provide a clear and valid reason for urgent funding (refer "Assessment Criteria" section in this document).

Please Note:

If you are applying for an in-kind grant, you will be required to attach evidence of the confirmed booking for the use of the Council owned facility or community bus for which you are requesting in-kind funding.

This requires you to contact Council and confirm the venue or community bus booking before submitting your community grants application via the SmartyGrants application portal.

For further information on who to contact, refer to the 'Where to get help' section in this document.

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed on the extent to which the proposed project meets the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
1. Quick response justification Is there a clear and valid reason for the application to be funded urgently?	30%
2. Strategic alignment Is the project, and its intended outcomes, clear and easy to understand? Will the project achieve one or more of the objectives of the Community Grants Program? Are there strong links with priorities in the Council Plan 2021-2025 or other key Council strategies?	25%
3. Community benefit Does the project address an issue or need within the community? Is it clear how the project will be successful in addressing this need? Is the project inclusive and open to all community members either generally or within a defined target group?	25%
4. Project Management Has the applicant demonstrated their capacity to manage the project successfully? Does the project plan and budget accurately reflect the scope of the application?	20%

Essential attachments that must be included with your application

- Certificate of Incorporation or evidence of legislative provisions for charitable purposes
- Current Certificate of Currency – Public Liability Insurance
- Minutes from your organisation's last Annual General Meeting
- Current annual report or financial statement
- Child Safe Policy if your project includes contact with children aged 0-18
- Copies of quotations for minor equipment (up to $2,000).

Auspice applicants must attach a letter of approval from the auspice organisation.

In-kind applicants must provide:

- evidence of a booking confirmation, for the in-kind use of a Council owned venue and/or community bus
- a current group membership list, including names and postcodes.

The application process:

All applications must be completed online through the SmartyGrants portal before the closing date. SmartyGrants can be accessed through www.smartygrants.com.au or by visiting the website at www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Community/Grants/Community-grants. After the application period has closed:

- you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application

- your application will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria by a panel of assessors. Except for taxation eligibility, Council retains discretion to waive or amend assessment and/or eligibility criteria

- applicants that do not meet taxation eligibility will be withdrawn from the assessment process

- funding recommendations will be submitted for a decision by the CEO, who has discretion to refer an application to Council for a decision

- all applicants will receive a notification via email and in writing with the result of their application and will be provided with an opportunity for feedback

- all funding decisions are final. There is no appeal or review process.

It is strongly suggested not to leave your application to the last minute to submit. System errors or delays may occur at times of heavy use with others submitting applications, which could result in your inability to lodge your application before the deadline.

Tips for writing a successful application:

- Consider the objectives and underlying principles of the Community Grants Program (refer 'Program objectives and 'Principles and funding priorities' in this document) when writing your application.

- Use evidence to help explain the need for your project and what it will achieve. For example, research findings, data, or statistics; media articles; project evaluations, etc. A greater level of evidence will be expected of applications seeking significant funding amounts.

- Review and clearly address each of the assessment criteria in your application.

- A succinct and clear application is often more effective than a long, overly detailed application, which can make the key information difficult to identify.

- Attach all the 'Essential attachments' outlined in this document.

- Speak with a Council officer if you require further assistance (refer to 'Where to get help' below).

Where to get help

Assistance is available from the following Council staff.

Assistance with	Contact
General enquiries and advice regarding the Community Grants Program or SmartyGrants system.	Community Grants and Programs Officer: 0438 790 116 communitygrants@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Assistance for cultural and linguistically diverse seniors groups.	Nadereh Edwards, Cultural Diversity Community Development Officer: 8290 3206 nedwards@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Prahran Aquatic Centre - Harold Holt Memorial Swim Centre	Carmen Gartenmann (Details required) 8290 1678 acquaticbookings@stonnington.vic.gov.au
To book Community Transport (community bus hire)	Community Transport Team Leader: 8290 3349 communitytransport@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Phoenix Park Community Centre - Prahran RSL - Orrong Romanis Recreation Centre - Malvern Community Arts Centre - Malvern Town Hall	Venues Booking Team: 8290 1213 venues_booking@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Malvern Library Meeting Room - Toorak/ South Yarra Library Meeting Room	Margaret Kantaras, Libraries Administration Officer: 8290 8002 mkantara@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Prahran Square	Prahran Square Activation Officer: prahransquare@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Margaret Connellan Stadium at the Stonnington Sports Centre	Shane Palmer, Senior Team Leader Stadiums: 8290 8030 spalmer@stonnington.vic.gov.au
Bookings: - Grattan Gardens Community Centre	Sergio Deodata, Team Leader Facilities-Based Program: 8290 1460 grattangardenscc@stonnington.vic.gov.au

Note: Where an application includes a request for an in-kind venue or community transport, applicants must contact Council and confirm the venue booking before submitting their community grants application via the SmartyGrants portal.

Conditions of funding

If your application is successful, your grant will be subject to the following terms and conditions.

The funded organisation must:

- enter into a funding agreement with Council, which will outline the terms and conditions of the grant funding

- ensure all relevant staff, contractors, volunteers, and committee members hold a valid Working with Children Check and provide Council with a formal declaration of compliance, if the funded project includes contact with children aged 0-18 years. Copies of these checks are to be provided to Council if requested

- use grant money solely for the purpose/s approved by Council unless prior permission for a variation is obtained from the City of Stonnington

- obtain all appropriate permits, approvals, insurances etc. relating to the program or project for which the grant has been awarded

- comply with reasonable requests by the Council for information about the program or project activities

- cooperate with requests from Council for publicity to be used by Council in relation to the Grant for the purpose of promotion and creation of media content

- acknowledge assistance by the City of Stonnington in all media releases and promotional material, using the words "Proudly Supported by the City of Stonnington". Partnership Grants may be required to also include the City of Stonnington's corporate logo

- complete the project within the advised budget and timelines. If there are proposed changes to program or service as described in the grant application, or to your contact details, notify Council as these will need to be agreed to

- maintain records to show and account for the uses of grant funds allocated and submit acquittal form showing evidence that the grant was spent in accordance with the funding agreement by the due date. Receipts for funded items must be attached to the acquittal

- provide Council access to records to verify grant expenditures and activities

- acknowledge that there is no guarantee of ongoing grants each year

- advise Council of any unspent grant funds and/or any grant funds that cannot be used for the purpose specified in the submitted grant application

- repay any portion of the funds not used for the specified purpose/s

- as the auspice organisation, be responsible and accountable for the proper use and acquittal of the funding grant.

- participate in an independent audit process at Council's discretion

For In-Kind (Facilities Hire) Grants, applicants must adhere to venue hire conditions, available on Council's website stonnington.vic.gov.au/Community/Venue-hire/Conditions-of-use-Community-facilities

Please note:

- Applicants should be aware the level of assistance available is limited by Council's budget allocation and its priorities. No applicant can be guaranteed funding, nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full requested amount.

- Information on the Community Grants Program will be shared broadly through Council officers and networks to encourage broad participation and uptake. This is not to be considered a direct approach and all applicants will be assessed on the merit of their application.