

May 2024

# Business Façade Improvement Grants

Guidelines 2024-25  
(Grants up to \$5000)

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Program objectives .....	3
Matched funding levels .....	4
Types of projects supported .....	4
Project examples .....	5
Projects not supported .....	6
Eligibility criteria .....	7
Applications from trusts .....	7
Who is not eligible to apply? .....	8
Assessment criteria .....	8
Assessment panel .....	9
Application process .....	9
How to apply .....	11
Key dates .....	11
Further information and support .....	11

## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge that Stonnington is on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.



## Introduction

The City of Stonnington is committed to enabling a thriving local economy and creating more attractive and inviting commercial precincts, which supports our vision to achieve:

- a thriving and unique place
- an inclusive and healthy community
- a people-centred and future-ready city.

The Business Façade Improvement Grants program supports business and property owners to improve the visual appearance of business façades in the City of Stonnington’s commercial precincts.

## Program objectives

The program aims to support façade improvement projects that help achieve outcomes aligned to the City of Stonnington’s Council Plan and Place-led Economic Development Strategy 2023-27:

<p><b>Identity and destination</b></p>	<p><b>Increase visitation</b> Strengthen the City of Stonnington’s unique identity as a destination of choice, to continue to attract and create advocates of residents, businesses, and visitors.</p>
<p><b>Thriving and desirable businesses</b></p>	<p><b>Increase economic activity</b> Attract industries, anchor tenants and the right mix of businesses for our 20-minute neighbourhoods and align with precinct identities.</p>
<p><b>Pride of place and character</b></p>	<p><b>Improve place perceptions</b> Provide safe, inviting, accessible and well-maintained streetscapes, neighbourhoods and public realm, as defined by our community, to promote pride of place and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.</p>

## Matched funding levels

A total grant funding pool of \$50,000 is available.

City of Stonnington will provide matched funding (dollar for dollar) for up to 50 per cent of the total improvement costs up to a maximum of \$5000, with the remaining amount to be contributed by the applicant.

City of Stonnington contribution	Minimum matched funding required from applicant	Total minimum project cost
\$2000	\$2000	\$4000
\$5000	\$5000	\$10,000

## Types of projects supported

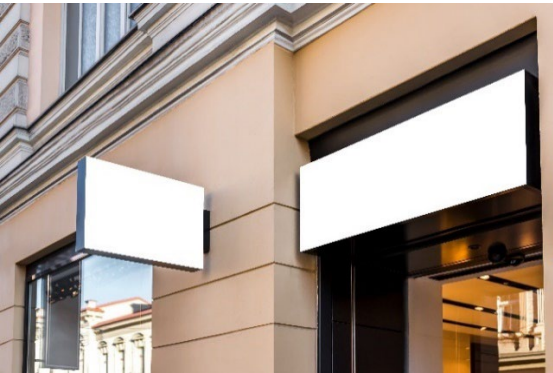
The following projects or initiatives will be eligible for a Business Façade Improvement Grant:

- Façade and/or awning enhancements (shopfronts), upgrades and or repairs e.g. repainting of external shop frontages, or external treatments that improve the appearance of attractive or unique details such as texture, tiling or other materials
- Green walls, planter boxes or greenery that can be seen from the footpath and are within the property boundaries or footpath trading areas
- New signage or improvements to signage as a part of a broader shopfront enhancement project (subject to conditions, [approvals and permits](#) being obtained from the City of Stonnington)
- Removal of privately owned visual clutter that detracts from the appearance and appeal of the shopfront e.g. signage and awnings that are in disrepair, or are not consistent with heritage aspects of the building
- Artistic lighting treatments that achieve improved aesthetic and amenity outcomes
- Footpath trading area enhancements e.g. installation of movable greenery barriers, planters or other outdoor decorative features (subject to the applicable [conditions, approvals and permits](#) being obtained from the City of Stonnington)
- Laneway wall enhancements for corner properties, such as mural or lighting installations
- Other external façade improvements that reflect the intent of the grant.

**Project examples**



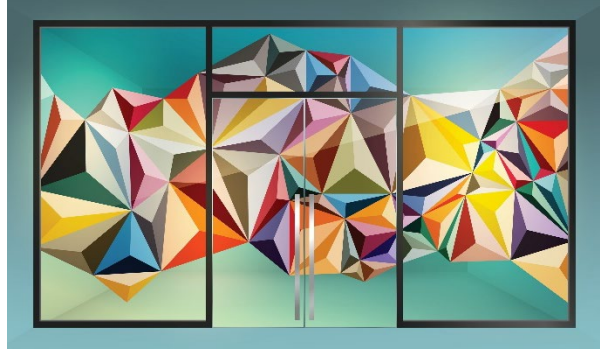
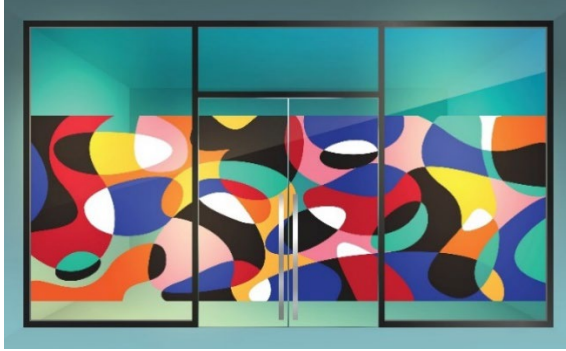
*Painting and façade upgrade/refresh*



*Updated store signage*



*New and mural roller shutters*



Vacant shop window artwork/skins



Green walls and murals



Decorative planter boxes in footpath trading areas

Please note: Any building and/or planning permits (including, if applicable, a heritage related planning permit) must be obtained by the applicant prior to the commencement of any works. Costs related to building and/or planning permits are not eligible for grant funding.

### Projects not supported

The following projects or initiatives are ineligible for a Business Façade Improvement Grant:

- Internal fit-out works
- Advertising and/or marketing campaigns
- Structural works for a building that doesn't align to the objectives of the grant funding
- One-off events, temporary or short-term projects

- Ongoing operating or general maintenance costs such as staff wages, salaries and remuneration, rent, utilities bills, administration overheads, stock, and personal expenditure
- Expenditure incurred prior to the project commencement
- Projects that have detrimental environmental impact or produce large quantities of waste
- Projects where the primary purpose could be considered political
- An application for multi-staged projects where the City of Stonnington has supported a previous stage through City of Stonnington sponsorship and grant funding
- Changes to the public realm or public-owned assets
- Projects that denigrate or exclude parts of the community or have adverse effects on public health, safety, or any other reason Council deems applicable.

### **Eligibility criteria**

The City of Stonnington's Business Façade Improvement Grants are designed to assist small to medium sized businesses.

To be eligible for a Business Façade Improvement Grant of up to \$5000, applicants must:

- be a legally constituted entity or a registered business and have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have a demonstrated investment in the city including:
  - a signed commercial property lease arrangement within the City of Stonnington extending at least 1 year from the time the application is submitted, and/or
  - ownership of a commercial property located in the City of Stonnington
- have a total business turnover of less than \$2 million in the previous financial year
- be delivering a project that improves a business façade
- have a project that will be completed between 1 October 2024 – 30 June 2025 which include ground floor façades if works affect the property
- Have all appropriate insurances, permits and licenses for the proposed project or can demonstrate that the projects have been discussed with the relevant authorities including but not limited to the City of Stonnington's Planning, Building, Local Laws and Health departments, and relevant paperwork for these processes have been lodged
- Have no pending acquittals or debts to the City of Stonnington or have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with the City of Stonnington
- Submit the application before work begins
- Have demonstrated financial viability without the City of Stonnington's funding (e.g. the applicant is able to provide evidence that the business has the cash flow to undertake the project).

### **Applications from trusts**

Applications from trustees acting on behalf of trusts are required to provide a copy of the Trust Deeds to the City of Stonnington as part of the application process.

## Who is not eligible to apply?

A Business Façade Improvement Grant will not be awarded to:

- an applicant who does not meet the eligibility or assessment criteria listed above
- political organisations or businesses that have a political purpose
- Government departments or agencies, foundations or grant making bodies
- an employee or Elected Member of the City of Stonnington or their immediate family. This does not include an application from an organisation that an employee, Elected Member, or their immediate family member may be part of
- An applicant that the City of Stonnington considers to support, promote or facilitate violence, intolerance, or discrimination
- an applicant who has outstanding debts to the City of Stonnington
- an applicant who is in legal conflict with the City of Stonnington
- an applicant who has failed to provide satisfactory acquittal reporting for any previous City of Stonnington funding
- an applicant who has already received City of Stonnington funding (including in-kind) for the same project within the same financial year
- an applicant who has already applied for City of Stonnington funding (including in-kind) for the same project within the same financial year, and been refused
- an applicant who conducts themselves in a way that the City of Stonnington considers to be injurious or prejudicial to the character or interests of the municipality
- an applicant with or who has had a major/critical non-compliance order
- unincorporated associations, branches, large and/or established franchisees or subsidiaries of larger companies.

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the degree to which they meet the following criteria:

	<b>Key criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>1.</b>	Demonstration of business financial viability.	20%
<b>2.</b>	Façade improvements that will positively contribute to the attractiveness and appeal of the commercial precinct.	40%
<b>3.</b>	Project management, experience and capability.	30%
<b>4.</b>	Use of City of Stonnington-based suppliers/ tradespeople to deliver proposed works.	10%



## Assessment panel

The assessment panel will be comprised of City of Stonnington Officers with representation from the following departments:

- Economic and Place Development
- Finance
- Planning
- Building
- Local Laws

Applications will be assessed on their eligibility and ability to deliver on the program objectives. Eligible applicants are not guaranteed funding. Only the strongest applications will receive funding through a competitive assessment process. Ineligible applications will be excluded from the assessment process. All funding decisions are final. All applicants will be notified of the result of their application.

Applications will be kept confidential and not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process.

## Application process

Applicants must provide the following as part of the application process:

### Business information

- Name, address, and contact details
- Business activity
- Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Number of employees
- Evidence of property ownership or commercial tenancy agreement within the City of Stonnington.
- Evidence of business financial viability, including:
  - profit and Loss Statement for financial year ending 30 June 2023
  - last 3 quarterly Business Activity Statements (BAS)
  - last 3 months of business bank account statements
  - cash flow forecast (for FY25 – 12 months).

### Project details

- Project name
- Project brief
  - What – overview of the proposed works, including sketches, designs and/or site plans (including before and after depictions)

- Why – explanation of what the project will achieve (the improvements it will make)
- Where – location of the project including site plans and photos
- When – timeline for the project
- Who – outline the team that will manage and undertake the project, including project supervisors and contractors/installers, including a summary of their skills and experience
- How – detailed project delivery plan (steps of key activities from start to finish)
- How much – detailed realistic budget for proposed works and appropriate cash flow available to complete the project.

### **Project outcomes**

- Identity and Destination
  - Describe how this project will improve visitors' experience of the precinct.
- Thriving and Desirable Businesses
  - Describe how the project or initiative will contribute to the success and economic growth of your business and the wider precinct.
- Pride of Place and Character
  - Describe how the project will assist in establishing a safer, more inviting, accessible and well-maintained precinct.

### **Supporting documentation**

- Evidence of how the project will be funded.
- Minimum of 2 verified written quotes to outline that the project budget is realistic.
- Evidence of permits, approvals and licences that have been attained or are in the process of being acquired.
- Evidence of business ownership.
- Evidence of relevant business insurances.
- Evidence of written consent from the property owner for the project work (if applicant is a current tenant).
- Letters of support for the application from relevant local traders or organisations.

### **Business site visit**

A business site visit may be undertaken by City of Stonnington Officers to verify the current façade or to verify what has been submitted.

### **Grant acquittals**

On completion of the project, successful applicants will be required to submit an Acquittal Report through Council's [SmartyGrants](#) online platform by no later than 31 July, 2025.

## How to apply

1. Register online at *SmartyGrants* and preview a copy of the application form and requirements.
2. Attend an information session, the details of which will be advised by Council to interested parties, to gain additional information and insights into lodging an application. Please go to the [Business Façade Improvement Grants webpage](#) to see session times and to book your preferred session.
3. Plan, research and gather information required for the application.
4. Complete and submit the application online via [SmartyGrants](#).
5. Complete all questions and upload supporting documents before 1 August 2024.
6. Submit one application per proposal only.
7. On submission, you will receive an electronic reply acknowledging receipt from [SmartyGrants](#). No further editing or supporting materials will be accepted once the application has been submitted, so allow ample time and crosscheck.

## Key dates

<b>Applications open</b>	1 July 2024
<b>Applications close</b>	1 August 2024
<b>Assessment period</b>	August 2024
<b>City of Stonnington endorsement</b>	September 2024
<b>Applicant notified and agreements finalised</b>	October 2024
<b>Project completion</b>	By 30 June 2025
<b>Acquittal Report</b>	By 31 July 2025

## Further information and support

### Program questions

Applicants are encouraged to contact Council's Business Concierge to discuss any proposed ideas, specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application. Contact [businessconciierge@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:businessconciierge@stonnington.vic.gov.au)

### Refusal

The City of Stonnington may refuse any applicant who fails to comply with the outlined conditions, including as a consequence of the following:

- submitting after the closing time
- not substantially addressing the guidelines in the application

- submission is deemed likely to cause offence to the community
- applicant does not submit materials as consistent with deliverables.

The City of Stonnington reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to not enter a contract with any applicant, to not proceed with a submission and to not proceed with any project in relation to a Business Façade Improvement Grant for any reason.

### **Terms and conditions**

Applicants are required to comply with the following terms and conditions.

The City of Stonnington has the right to exclude an application if these terms and conditions are not adhered to.

- During the application process, canvassing or lobbying of Elected Members, employees of the City of Stonnington or assessment panel members in relation to any funding application is prohibited. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant who canvasses or lobbies an Elected Member, City of Stonnington employee or assessment panel member in relation to their application.
- No additional City of Stonnington grants can be applied for or used in conjunction with the Business Façade Improvement Grant funding for the same project.
- Upon successful application, applicants must sign an agreement that details all funding obligations. Applicants must complete and submit all required documentation as a condition of funding.
- The City of Stonnington has the right to request progress information such as financial records relating to the project at any time. This information must be provided within 5 business days.
- The City of Stonnington will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the funded recipient is unable to meet project costs.
- No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.
- The City of Stonnington retains the right to request the repayment of any unspent grant funds.