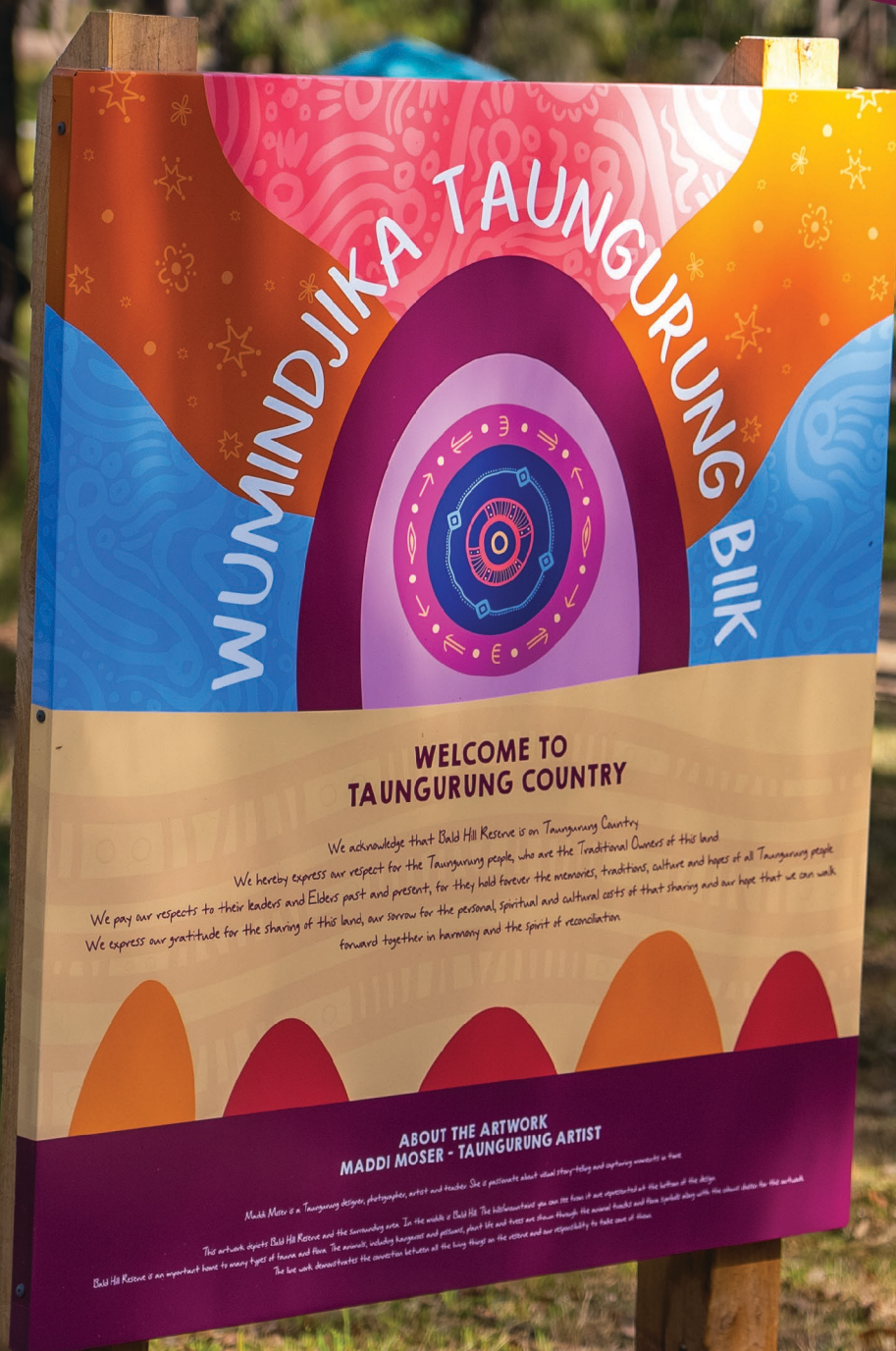




**Macedon  
Ranges**  
Shire Council

# Community Funding Scheme Guidelines 2025-26



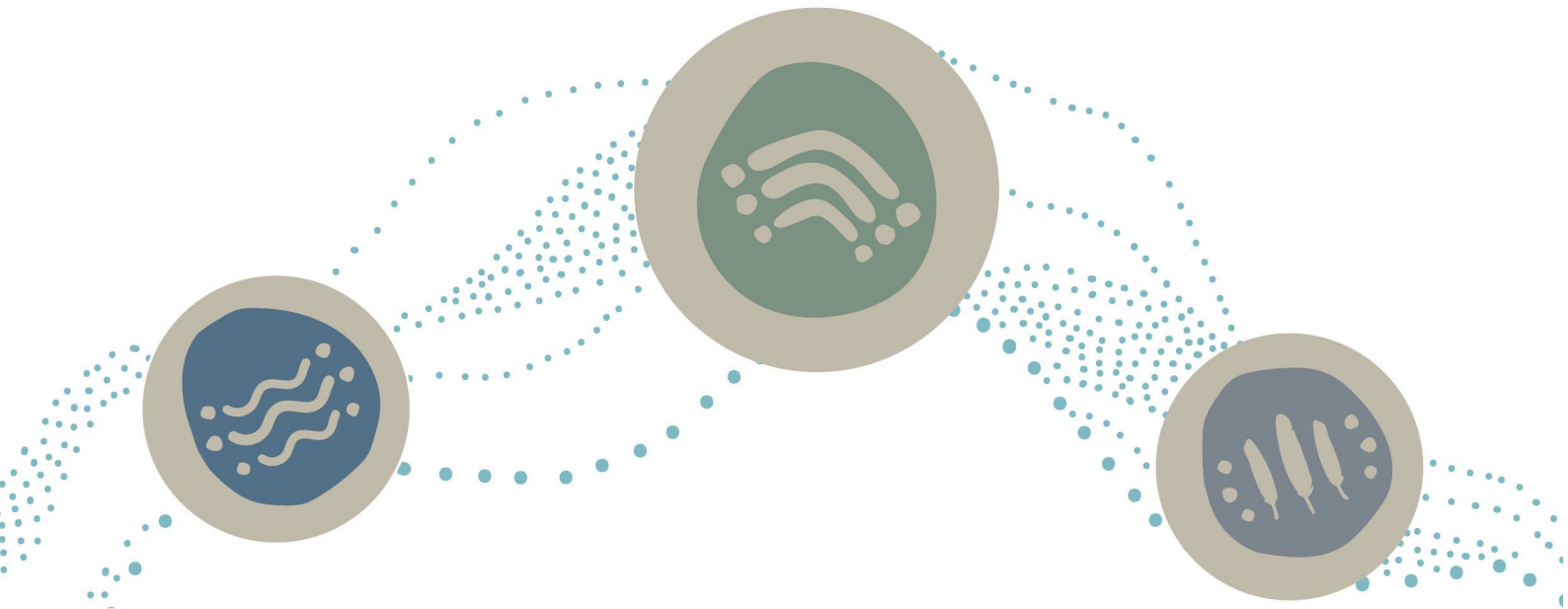
# Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

## Artwork by Taungurung artist Maddi Moser

“Both artworks talk about our connection, connection to Country, connection to places and connection to each other. This is signified by the whimsical circles that form the ‘rivers; that wrap around our lands and ourselves. It reminds us that we should look out for one another.”





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# Overview

## Program aims and objectives

The Community Funding Scheme grants public money to not-for-profit community groups for projects and initiatives that benefit residents of the Macedon Ranges.

The **objective** of the program is to support projects and activities that align with the priorities of the 2021-2031 Council Plan, specifically:

- Connecting communities; and
- Healthy environment, healthy people

The **aim** of the Community Funding Scheme is to support initiatives which:

- address local needs
- strengthen community relationships/partnerships
- encourage participation in civic life
- demonstrate a commitment to gender equity, accessibility, diversity, fairness and community wellbeing

It should be noted that Council offers other grants via a range of funding schemes. Before applying for the Community Funding Scheme, check if your project better fits these programs. Visit [mrsc.vic.gov.au/About-Council/Find-A-Grant](https://mrsc.vic.gov.au/About-Council/Find-A-Grant)

## Timeline

**Table 1. Timeline**

Information sessions	March 2025
<b>Applications open</b>	<b>28 April 2025 at 9am</b>
<b>Applications close</b>	<b>25 May 2025 at 11pm</b>
Applications assessed by panel	June 2025
Recommendations to Council	23 July 2025
Grant recipients advised	24-31 July 2025
Project delivery	01 July 2025 – 30 June 2026
Grants acquitted	30 June 2026

## How much is available?

The Community Funding Scheme grants budget for 2025/26 is a total of \$160,000. There are three categories of grants that groups can apply for, these include:

<b>Funding categories – Community Funding Scheme</b>	<b>Maximum funding/project</b>
Community, Cultural and Environmental Projects Grants	Up to \$10,000
Organisational Support Grants	Up to \$5,000
Small Community Infrastructure Grants	Up to \$12,000

# Eligibility

## Who can apply?

Incorporated and community-based not-for-profit groups operating or being established in the Macedon Ranges are eligible to apply for the Community Funding Scheme. Up to a maximum of two grants may be allocated per organisation per funding round.

Incorporated organisations who act as an auspice for another community group for the purpose of this grant may also apply for up to two grants for their own organisation, in addition to their auspice arrangements.

We welcome applications from LGBTQIA+, First Nations and other community groups who may not have applied for funding previously.

## Auspicing

If you are unincorporated you will need to find an incorporated organisation willing to act as an auspice for the purpose of this grant.

## Eligibility requirements

As part of the application process, applicants must first discuss their application with the grants team. Applicants may also be advised to discuss their project with other relevant Council officers, prior to submitting an application.

Enquiries can be made at any time, and we encourage applicants to start conversations with Council officers as early as possible.

Public Schools/churches are eligible if they can show a demonstrated need, as well as broad community benefit and participation in a project. Projects that are entirely school or congregation focussed will not be funded.

The following are ineligible to apply to the Community Funding Scheme:

- Individuals
- Political organisations
- For profit/commercial organisations (including private schools)

- Government agencies/organisations
- Groups that are in debt to Council
- Groups/auspices that have not completed the acquittal and reporting requirements of previous Council grants.

## **What will not be funded under the Community Funding Scheme?**

Projects or activities which:

- have already commenced, are recurrent or have been completed
- are commercial, religious, political, discriminatory, sexist, racist or disrespectful
- are considered fundraising/asking for donations<sup>1</sup>
- intend to raise funds beyond what is needed to deliver the project and aim to boost general operating profits
- are the funding responsibility of state or federal government
- activities held in gambling venues or where gambling occurs, including venues with electronic gaming machines (EGMs)
- projects or initiatives linked to gambling operators
- projects or initiatives that involve financial or in-kind contributions from gambling or electronic gaming machine (EGM) operators.
- activities that promote, involve, or are directly associated with gambling
- activities that receive sponsorships from gaming venues, online betting companies or other gambling providers (effective from 1 July 2025)
- do not support responsible drinking
- involve capital works on private property
- are defined as facility maintenance on community and Council-owned buildings<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An application for donations/fundraising activities is regarded as a request for sponsorship and therefore ineligible for a Community Funding Scheme grant.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the terms of your maintenance schedule in your lease/licence agreement.

- fund capital expenditure (the purchase of land, buildings, vehicles)
- award monetary prizes
- are recreational excursions (camps, holidays, tours)
- duplicate services already operating or planned for in a targeted community
- have been previously funded by Council
- have been allocated funding through the Council budget process for the same financial year
- are not well supported by evidence of need and where alternative solutions have not been adequately considered
- do not have broad support amongst the community
- have not been adequately master planned or equivalent (for larger construction projects)
- do not have appropriate heritage sign-off, including Aboriginal cultural management (where required)
- are eligible for Council's Events and Festivals grants.

Core business/operational costs such as:

- salaries for ongoing positions
- rent, insurance, utility costs, debts
- conducting an annual general meeting



# Funding categories and assessment criteria

## Category 1: Community, Cultural and Environmental Projects Grants

These projects will contribute to the enhancement or development of local community strength, wellbeing and culture, or address local environmental priorities, critical social challenges or encourage all people to participate in community life or expressions of culture. Council has existing strategies available on Council's website, which applicants are encouraged to read when developing their idea (refer to page 15 for details).

Examples of projects in this category include:

### **Community initiatives/activities that:**

- respond to social equity issues (improving accessibility and safety, supporting diversity and fairness)
- projects that respond to community health and wellbeing priorities
- activities/initiatives that support positive ageing
- activities/initiatives that support young people
- activities/initiatives that support families with young children

### **Cultural activities (that are not eligible for the Events and Festivals grants) that:**

- explore and share local Indigenous culture and history, in partnership with local Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation outcomes
- deliver artistic workshops for local practitioners
- explore community histories (such as heritage trails, recorded histories, exhibitions)
- celebrate our diversity
- activate public places through arts/cultural performance

**Environmental projects that:**

- reduce waste to landfill, such as community composting, food redistribution schemes, repurposing of waste products, projects that reduce use of plastic
- support new edible or indigenous gardens or enhancements to existing community or public gardens
- support activities/initiatives/workshops (not events) that raise awareness about sustainable living, sustainable land and waterways management, waste reduction and biodiversity, including citizen science projects and projects that increase access to nature
- protect and enhance biodiversity through ecological restoration of public land (weed control, revegetation, masterplans and environmental management plans)
- support sustainable transport initiatives (e.g. car or bike share schemes)
- facilitate reduced greenhouse gas emissions across different sectors of the community or assist them to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

**Table 2. Category 1 assessment criteria**

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
20%	Evidence of need	Research (as proof of evidence)  Letters of support
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities
30%	Community benefit	Number of people participating in project  Number of people benefiting from project  Impact of the community benefit  Inclusive outcomes
30%	Ability to deliver project	Demonstrate sound budget  \$\$ contribution from group  Volunteer hours contribution from group  Demonstrate good project planning  Demonstrate good risk management  Demonstrate organisational capacity <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Organisational capacity is demonstrated by minutes and financial statement from most recent AGM

## Category 2: Organisational Support Grants

These projects will directly support the operations of local not-for-profit organisations and community groups and fund enhancements to how committees and groups coordinate their local work and activities.

Examples of projects in this category include:

### **Governance enhancement projects that:**

- create a strategic plan
- prepare a feasibility study
- develop a policy and procedure manual

### **Training and development initiatives that:**

- provide skills training for members and/or volunteers
- enable groups to conduct information days and/or community forums
- fund the costs of food handling and responsible handling of alcohol courses for group members
- fund the costs of purchasing educational material for volunteers
- fund member attendance at leadership courses

### **Purchasing small equipment to assist volunteers such as:**

- digital cameras, projectors, portable computers
- barbeques, kitchen appliances, furniture for public spaces
- public address systems
- first aid and sporting coaches kits
- safety and injury prevention items for sporting clubs (e.g. goal post padding, high visibility vests)
- updated or replacement of sporting or other essential equipment

- upgrades to storage

**Developing promotional material for community groups such as:**

- portable signage, flags and banners
- brochures, booklets and website development
- branding and logo design

**Table 3. Category 2 assessment criteria**

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
30%	Evidence of need	Statement of need  Letters of support
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities
30%	Community benefit	Number of people participating in project  Number of people benefiting from project  Impact of the community benefit
20%	Ability to deliver project	Demonstrate sound budget  Demonstrate good project planning  Demonstrate good risk management



### Category 3: Small Community Infrastructure Grants

These projects (which must incorporate universal design principles) aim to improve the community outcomes we get from community places like public buildings, open space, reserves or streetscapes. Improved access, increasing useability, tailoring places to community needs and updating features are a way of achieving community outcomes in public places. More information about universal design can be found [here](#). Please speak with the relevant Council officer to ensure you have incorporated universal design principles in your project.

This category of funding is designed to enhance public places that serve an important role in encouraging community participation. This category funds projects at a variety of locations to reflect a mixture of public ownership and management models. Projects that propose changes to community places score higher if they benefit Council owned and local community managed facilities or spaces. Improvement projects may focus on one or more of the various stages of improving a place; the planning, design, construction or renovation phases.

This grant category is not designed to fund maintenance that is cyclical or otherwise.

Council has the following existing strategies available on its website, which applicants are encouraged to read when developing their application:

- > [Open Space Strategy 2013](#)
- > [Walking and Cycling Strategy 2014](#)
- > [Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2018 - 2028](#)

Examples of projects in this category include those that:

- upgrade shared community spaces such as meeting places and public halls that benefit a broad audience of users
- improve accessibility to community facilities and encourage greater inclusiveness for users
- improve open space areas, village greens/commons, or public streetscapes to benefit a broad audience of users
- create public art that enhances community spaces
- establish or upgrade interpretive signage and visitor infrastructure

- support the creation of masterplans for mechanic institutes, community halls, parks, commons, recreational facilities to ensure a planned approach to facility improvements
- support the completion of feasibility studies or business cases to create an evidence base to support future infrastructure proposals
- improve the environmental performance of community facilities through works that reduce demand for energy and water use (e.g. solar panels, insulation, LED lighting, double glazing, water tanks, environmental audits).

### **Community building improvements**

For projects that involve upgrades/minor capital works on Council buildings or spaces, please contact the Coordinator Facility Projects on 5421 9633.

Seeking approvals/permissions/permits

It is your responsibility to obtain any permits/approvals/permissions that may be required.

Copies to Council must be provided. You must also factor in application and permit costs, and the time required into your applications. You can discuss these requirements with the Coordinator Facility Projects.

Council acknowledges that not all permits/approvals will be obtained until after your funding is confirmed. It is expected that your application outlines which approvals you will be seeking and in the event you are successful, your plan for their obtainment.

When proposing construction work projects, it is advantageous to submit working drawings of any construction works you are proposing with your application. These can be formalised into specifications and designs/plans after you have obtained the grant funds.

It is mandatory for infrastructure projects to be managed by a Council project manager. This cost will need to be factored into the project funding being applied for to deliver a project at a rate of 10% of the total project cost.

**Table 4. Category 3 assessment criteria**

Weighting	Criteria	What we are looking for
25%	Evidence of need	<p>Photographs</p> <p>Professional reports</p> <p>Letters of support</p> <p>Master plans</p>
20%	Alignment to Council priorities	Demonstrated relationship to Council priorities
25%	Community benefit	<p>Number of people participating in project</p> <p>Number of people benefiting from project</p> <p>Inclusive outcomes</p> <p>Incorporate universal design principles</p>
30%	Ability to deliver project	<p>Demonstrate sound budget</p> <p>\$\$ contribution from group</p> <p>Volunteer hours contribution from group</p> <p>Demonstrate good project planning</p> <p>Demonstrate good risk management</p> <p>Demonstrate organisational capacity</p> <p>All permissions in place</p>

# Applications

## Legal requirements

### Incorporation status

Applicants must be registered as an incorporated body or arrange for a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation to manage (auspice) the funds.

Council does not auspice applicants.

For more information on auspice arrangements visit the [Not-for-profit Law Information Hub](#).

### Child safe standards

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is committed to a zero tolerance approach to child abuse, through actively promoting child safety and ensuring compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required, under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005, to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

As a Child Safe organisation, Council requires that all grant applicants demonstrate their compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and read/understand Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct, available from [Council's website](#). Within the application form, applicants will be required to identify whether their project involves direct or incidental contact with children and young people and complete either a Child Safe Statement of Commitment or submit their Child Safe Policy and a Child Safe Direct Contact Checklist.

Please note: If your organisation is auspiced for the purpose of this grant, the auspice organisation will also need to meet the Child Safe Standards.

More details on the Child Safe Standards can be found on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](#).

### Public liability insurance

Public liability insurance covers incidents that occur during an activity being conducted by a group. All groups must be covered by public liability insurance and be able to provide a valid certificate of currency.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or recipient to arrange appropriate insurance, including collecting appropriate insurance from a contractor or tradesperson.

Groups without public liability insurance will need an auspice with public liability insurance or can contact Local Community Insurance which offers an affordable public liability scheme for not-for-profit community groups.

## **Budget**

The budget you submit needs to include all income and expenditure related to the activity/project (including permit fees) for which you are requesting funding. It is the costing of your project plan. The application form on SmartyGrants provides applicants with guidance on the information and level of detail required in your budget. We strongly encourage you to take note of any hints provided, as these will support you to improve your project budget score.

## **GST**

For groups who are registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must exclude GST. (GST will be added to the amount requested).

For groups who are not registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must include GST. (Grants will be made exclusive of GST).

For information about GST and ABNs contact the Australian Taxation Office.

## **In-kind support**

This covers contributions by volunteers and suppliers in terms of time, goods or professional services donated to the project and should be clearly identified in your project budget. The value of in-kind support should be reflected in both your income and expenditure.

Estimating the amount of volunteer work will help you determine the level of community contribution required and helps to demonstrate the true value of your project.

It is good practice to also supply a breakdown of estimated in-kind support to show how the figure in your budget total was reached. i.e.:

- General committee/community member contribution (e.g. planning, coordination, etc.) @ \$40 per hour.
- Specialist/expert contribution (e.g. tradesperson, professional service) @\$80/hr.



## **Additional funding sources**

Your budget must include any other funding that you have or are seeking in relation to this project. This may include budget bids submitted to Council, other grant programs, partnerships or sponsors. It is important to consider how your project may need to be adjusted depending on the outcomes of all funding sought. Please note that if your project is successful in a Council budget bid, it will not be eligible for funding through the Community Funding Scheme.

See a sample budget below:

**Table 5. Income**

Grant from Council (this application)	\$ 5000
Cash contribution from group	\$ 1000
In-kind contribution from group (total)	\$ 1000
Contributions from other sources (please specify):	\$ 2000
Department of Health and Human Services grant	
Other (please specify) Bendigo Bank	\$ 1000
Total income (please calculate)	\$ 10,000

**Table 6. Expenditure**

Facilitator costs	\$ 2000
Delivering consultation	\$ 1000
In-kind contribution from group	\$1000
Venue hire	\$ 500
Workshop materials	\$ 500
Permit approvals	\$ 1500
Costs of registered contractor	\$ 1000
Catering	\$ 500
Marketing and promotional activities	\$ 1000
Printing of promotional materials	\$ 350
Administrative overheads	\$ 650
Total expenditure (please calculate)	\$ 10,000

Make sure your  
total income and  
total expenditure  
are the same  
figure

List all  
expenditure  
items on  
separate lines

# Assessment

## How are applications assessed?

Eligible applications are assessed by an evaluation panel of officers from across the organisation. The assessment is based on responses provided in the application form within each of the sections of the application using the **scoring matrix** for each category. Responses are scored and the weighting is then applied to create an overall score. Eligibility does not guarantee funding.

Funding recommendations are presented to Council for consideration at a Scheduled Council Meeting. Scheduled Council Meetings are open to the public and streamed live online.

Council decisions are final, applicants who wish to discuss the outcome of their application are encouraged to contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via [grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au).

## What will strengthen my application?

Applications that address Council's wellbeing and environmental priorities will score more highly than those that do not. Please refer to page 12 of the [Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#) and page 3 of the [Environment Strategy](#). Your application should clearly state how your project or initiative will support/contribute to this priority.

Applications that consider gender equity and accessibility for diverse community groups will score more highly than those that do not. Applications that advance reconciliation and/or celebrate First Nations Peoples will also be highly regarded.

**Table 7: Summary of Council priority areas.**

Priority area	Council priorities
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• climate emergency</li> <li>• sustainable transport</li> <li>• waterway health</li> <li>• biolinks and habitat links</li> <li>• waste minimisation</li> <li>• community engagement and partnerships</li> </ul>
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting mental health</li> <li>• social connection and inclusion</li> <li>• encouraging gender equity and respectful relationships free from violence</li> <li>• promoting healthy eating and active living</li> <li>• preventing harm from tobacco, alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>• tackling climate change and its impact on health,</li> <li>• supporting the community to respond to and recover from emergencies</li> <li>• preventing harm from gambling</li> <li>• supporting a dementia friendly community</li> <li>• increasing access to affordable housing</li> </ul>
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiatives that advance reconciliation and/or celebrate First Nations Peoples will also be highly regarded</li> </ul>

Your application will be strengthened and will score higher if you can refer to specific actions from at least one of these strategic documents.

- > Council Plan 2021-2031
- > Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- > Environment Strategy
- > Disability Action Plan 2021-2025
- > Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028
- > Macedon Ranges Heritage Strategy 2014-2018
- > Youth Strategy 2018-2028
- > Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025: CREATE
- > Positive Ageing Plan 2020-2025
- > Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2023
- > 2019 Healthy Heart of Victoria Active Living Census
- >



# The funding process

## Funding agreement

Successful applicants will be sent a funding agreement to be signed and returned in order to receive grant funding.

Activities/projects must be completed by 30 June 2026.

Funds must be spent on the activity/project as described in the application.

## Additional Funding Conditions

Your funding agreement may have additional requirements that are specific to your project that must be met in order for funding to be released.

Some examples of additional funding conditions may include:

Consultation with a Council Officer/department

Provide additional permits, permissions or updated documents.

Complete an acquittal for previous grant funding.

Please note, if your organisation has any outstanding items across other Council departments, this may also be included as a funding condition.

If you are unsure of how to meet a funding condition, please contact the grants team via [grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au) or 5422 0216.

## Project variations/extensions

Any variation, including extensions to an activity/project, must be applied for through SmartyGrants and be approved by Council. If you are encountering unexpected challenges in your project delivery, please contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via [grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au).

Extensions of up to 12 months may be approved if the recipient has experienced unforeseen circumstances that fundamentally delayed the project. Please note that if you apply for an extension and receive approval via SmartyGrants you will still be eligible to apply to other grant funding while the project is being completed. However, if the project is incomplete after the 12-

month extension period, then your group will be ineligible to apply for further grant funding until the project is fully acquitted.

## Reporting/acquittals

Successful applicants are required to submit an acquittal report by 30 June 2026. This report relating to funding from Council must include:

confirmation that objectives for the project were achieved;

a financial statement, detailing expenditure signed and authorised by the treasurer; and

two photographs which may be used for promotional purposes.

Groups who do not submit an acquittal will not be eligible to apply for further funding from Council until the activity/project has been acquitted.

## Incomplete projects and unspent funds

If a project is unable to be completed, the grant recipient must contact the Community Development team for advice as soon as possible on 5422 0216 or via [grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@mrsc.vic.gov.au). Any unspent funds are to be returned to Council.

## Permits and permissions

The applicant is responsible for any regulatory and statutory requirements associated with the project, such as planning and building permits and permissions from the building/landowner. If you are unsure of what permits or permissions your project may require, please discuss with the grants team or appropriate Council Officer.

## Auditing of funded projects

Council reserves the right to undertake a spot financial and programmatic audit of a funded project. This may include a detailed examination of all financial records pertaining to the project.

## Privacy

The collection and handling of personal information is in accordance with [Council's Privacy Policy](#), which is displayed on Council's website and available for inspection at, or collection from, Council's customer service centres.

## Contact the grants team

Contact	Title	Phone
Lisa Richards	Community Projects Officer	03 5422 0216  0475 977 287
Maria Lorient	Community Partnerships Officer	0472 902 287
Renae Knight	Coordinator Community Development and Youth	03 5422 0286

If you are unable to reach one of the above contacts in relation to your application, please call Customer Service on 03 5422 0333.