

GRANTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose

The intent of the Grants Policy is to ensure that recipients are able to deliver quality programs, events, products and services which are of great benefit to Ballarat and which bring a wide range of social, environmental and economic returns to the City.

2.0 Scope

The Grants Policy includes 3 funding programs that target specific need and provides for a consistent approach to administering grants. Each funding program provides for administrative arrangements relating to that program detailed in the policy and guideline documents (refer Clause 7 - “References and Related Policies” below).

In addition to the programs listed within this policy, Council may also provide for specific contributions within its annual budget to groups, organisations and businesses that align with the Council Plan, Council strategies and the purposes/principles in this policy.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 Grant Programs

3.1.1 Strategic Partnership Program

Strategic Partnerships operate as a non-competitive process to fund organisations or businesses to deliver Council identified initiatives. Strategic Partnerships are considered for requests exceeding \$20,000. They can be applied for at any time and can operate over multiple years.

Decisions about Strategic Partnership funding is made via a Council Report at a Council meeting, noting that any commercial in confidence information provided by applicants will be considered under Section 66 of the *Local Government Act* as a confidential attachment.

Strategic Partnerships must align with community needs and Council’s Strategic Objectives, as articulated in the Council Plan and based on the following principles:

- Partnerships are with sole providers or identified strategic partners that Council is able to work with collaboratively to deliver community outcomes.
- Submitters will have to complete an Investment Logic Map to define the core problem, benefit and solution.
- City of Ballarat has no direct responsibility to deliver these initiatives.
- Strategic partners are identified to make the most of opportunities to meet the needs of the community and deliver on outcomes identified in the Council Plan.
- Strategic partnerships are negotiated by Council officers and approved via the annual budget and planning processes with transparent decisions made in open meetings and published on the Council website.
- Strategic partnerships have consistent reporting and contractual agreements. Recipients are required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Council that outlines reporting requirements and a mutually agreed evaluation framework that focuses on performance and outcome measures.

- Recommendations on the term of the Funding Agreement for Strategic Partnerships will be made by management, taking into consideration the time required to have an impact on outcomes and the term of the strategic documents to which they align.

Assessment:

There are three (3) phases of the assessment process for the Strategic Partnership Program.

Phase 1 - The application is reviewed by Council officers checking that it is complete and that it contains all the necessary supporting documentation. All incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for further development.

Phase 2 - The application is assessed by Council's Executive Leadership Team in accordance with Council's Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Council Plan, and in line with the principles highlighted above. Applications which fail to meet Council's Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Council Plan or the principles highlighted above will be returned to the applicant for further development.

Phase 3 - Projects recommended for funding are considered at the Council meeting and applicants will be advised within two weeks of the outcome.

It is expected that the assessment process will be completed within 12 weeks of commencement.

The Director Business Services is responsible for this program.

3.1.2 Tourism Event Grants Program

Tourism Event Grants are for projects, festivals, events or activities which advance and encourage increased visitation, participation and yield and / or contribute to the presentation or marketing of Ballarat as a tourism destination of choice. Applications from not-for-profit and for-profit organisations and businesses will be considered for up to \$20,000. Applications will be considered via a quarterly rounds process with the requirement for grants to be acquitted within a twelve-month period. Tourism Event Grants are not available over multiple years. Applications will be considered by Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

Specific assessment criteria will apply regarding value for money, increased visitor numbers and increased yield, this may include sporting events.

Assessment:

The Tourism Event Grants Program has up to four rounds of application for funding per year. Dates of round opening and closure will be published in advance. Rounds will cease when all allocated funds for the program for the year have been distributed.

There are two (2) phases of the assessment process:

Phase 1 - The application is forwarded to Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee for assessment in accordance with the criteria relevant to the program.

Phase 2 - The Grant Allocations Delegated Committee will determine projects to be funded and the level of funding to be provided for the project. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the determination of the Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

It is expected that the assessment process will be completed within eight weeks of commencement.

The Director Development and Planning is responsible for this program.

3.1.3 Community Impact Grants Program

Community Impact Grants are for local community projects and initiatives which increase community participation, encourage connected communities, promote healthy lifestyles and build resilient communities. Applications from not-for-profit organisations will be considered for up to \$20,000. Applications will be considered via a quarterly rounds process with the requirement for grants to be acquitted within a twelve-month period. Community Impact Grants are not available over multiple years, although groups are welcome to submit multiple applications each year up to a maximum of \$20,000 of grant funding each financial year. Applications will be considered by Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

Specific assessment criteria will apply regarding value for money and community need for the project. The Community Impact Grants Program will accept Arts & Culture, Sport and Active Living, Youth, Environmental Sustainability, Heritage themed applications.

Assessment:

The Community Impact Grants Program has up to four rounds of application for funding per year. Dates of round opening and closure will be published in advance. Rounds will cease when all allocated funds for the program for the year have been distributed.

There are two (2) phases of the assessment process:

Phase 1 - The application is forwarded to Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee for assessment in accordance with the criteria relevant to the program.

Phase 2 - The Grant Allocations Delegated will determine projects to be funded and the level of funding to be provided for the project. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the determination of the Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

It is expected that the assessment process will be completed within eight weeks of commencement.

The Director Community Development is responsible for this program.

3.2 Budget and Timing

Council budget allocations are made each financial year and each funding program has its own dedicated budget. The Strategic Partnerships Program will be open from the first Monday in August each new financial year.

The Tourism Event Grants Program and the Community Impact Grants Program will be run over four rounds annually in August, October, February and April. Both programs will be closed when the budget allocated to that specific programs is exhausted.

3.3 Equity of Grant Distribution

To ensure an equitable distribution of funding through each funding program and to extend the benefits of Council funding most broadly across the community, the following limits to the number of applications will apply:

- Any eligible organisation can make one application per year in each of the funding programs for a specific project.
- Multiple applications across funding programs for the same project will not be accepted.
- Organisations applying for Tourism Grants are welcome to submit multiple applications as long as the funding is sought for different and unrelated events or activities.
- Groups are welcome to submit multiple applications to the Community Impact Grants Program and can access up to a maximum \$20,000 each financial year.

3.4 Fundraising Events

Events that have a primary purpose to raise funds and the majority of profits generated are distributed to third-party organisations, agencies or charities without limited direct benefits to City of Ballarat residents, are not eligible for funding from the Council.

Where an event includes fundraising as a secondary purpose to a community event or activity with high local and visitor attendance (e.g. tourism event) and the fundraising will directly benefit City of Ballarat residents, align with the Council Plan or are seed funding, it may be considered.

3.5 Ongoing Funding

The City of Ballarat grant programs are not designed for ongoing funding. Organisations and groups seeking funding through the grant programs should consider the grant as seed funding and events or activities funded should have reasonable potential to be self-sustainable following initial funding support by the Council.

With regard to the Strategic Partnership Program, the level of funding and period of support will be determined on the following criteria:

- Level of community benefit.
- Level of economic benefit.
- Extent of alignment with the Council Plan.
- Amount of funding previously provided.
- Potential to be self-sustainable.

3.6 Grant Conditions

- Funded organisations will be required to sign a funding agreement prior to commencement of any funded project.
- All funded projects must be based in the City of Ballarat or otherwise provide evidence that the project/event/activity will involve and support a significant amount of people from the municipality.
- Council funding must be used in accordance to the project approved by the Council as detailed in the funding agreement.
- All funded projects must include all relevant and required consents, permits or approvals prior to commencement.
- Funded organisations are required to meet all relevant legislative requirements (e.g. Occupational Health & Safety, Risk, Equal Opportunity, Workers Compensation).

- The support of the City of Ballarat for funded projects must be acknowledged as detailed in the funding agreement and the City of Ballarat provided with an opportunity to speak at launches and openings.
- Funded organisations are required to ensure volunteers are registered with the organisation and adequately covered by insurance as detailed in the funding agreement.
- Funds are required to be expended within 12 months of the signing of the funding agreement, unless otherwise provided for within that agreement.
- Funds not expended within the agreed timeframe are to be returned to the City of Ballarat unless a written extension is obtained from Council.
- Funded organisations will be required to provide Council with a tax invoice if they are registered for GST, or an invoice if they have an ABN but not registered for GST, or an invoice and signed 'statement by supplier' if they do not have an ABN.

3.7 Schedule of Payments

The schedule of payments for funded projects shall include:

- In relation to Strategic Partnership agreements, actual amount payments will be determined by the level of complexity and risk of the funded project.
- All one-off grant payments over \$5,000 will receive a maximum of 50% of the grant up front. The remainder of the funding will be provided upon completion of the project and on receipt of a satisfactory acquittal.
- For projects receiving under \$5,000 in Council funding, recipients will receive a single full payment. All projects under \$5,000 will still be required to submit a satisfactory acquittal upon completion of a project.

3.8 Acquittals

- Funded organisations must submit a signed acquittal report to Council within one month of completion of the funded project as detailed in the funding agreement. Organisations who fail to provide an acquittal report will not be eligible to make any further funding applications.
- Where organisations fail to acquit a grant, City of Ballarat may request that the funding be returned.
- Acquittals are required from all grant recipients. All acquittals should be submitted using an official City of Ballarat template and include evidence of agreed expenditure.
- Completion of an official acquittal assessment form is to be completed by Council officers upon receipt of acquittal documents from grant recipients.
- Acquittals are subject to an ongoing audit process whereby each individual grant is reviewed with the aim of ensuring a consistent approach to the grants policy, processes and documentation.
- An assessment review outlining outcomes from grants (essentially a summary of the acquittal document) be provided to Councillors on an annual basis via a Council Report as part of an overall grants summary report.

The Director Community Development is responsible for the co-ordination of an annual grants summary report to Council which will provide a review of acquittal information received over the preceding 12 months.

3.9 Checklists, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

- The SmartyGrants online platform is to be used across all funding programs, including the filing and retention of all documentation within the platform. This includes but is not limited to: application forms, quotes, supporting letters, assessment reports, Committee or Council decisions, milestone reports, variations, acquittals and general correspondence.

- The use of a full detailed checklist charting all phases of documentation requirements within the grant process shall be subject to an internal annual review.
- On occasions the figure allocated to an organisation via a Strategic Partnership may change from the original application as a result of discussion in the Council Chamber. Where this is the case the Council meeting minutes should reflect the rationale or reasoning for the variation in the grant award.
- Satisfactory annual milestone reports for Strategic Partnerships grants funded over multiple years are required before recipient's drawdown additional years of funding. Milestone reports should be submitted using an official City of Ballarat template and include evidence of agreed expenditure.
- Summary information from received milestone reports is to be used within the annual grants summary report to Council demonstrating progress made against agreed outputs.

The Director Community Development is responsible for the co-ordination of an annual grants summary report to Council which will include information on monitoring, evaluation and reporting from across the organisation.

3.10 Ensuring Community Capacity to apply for grants

Council will promote the availability of grants and the process through Council publications, website, videos, social media and information sessions.

All grant applications must be made online the SmartyGrants platform.

Council support will be available to organisations and individuals who have difficulty in accessing the Council's website and navigating the SmartyGrants platform.

4 Supporting documents and references

4.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*

4.2 Associated Documents

- *Council Plan 2017-2021*
- *Grant Programs Guidelines and Assessment Criteria*

4.3 Definitions

5 Policy owner

Chief Executive Officer. For enquires regarding this policy can be directed to the Executive Manager Engaged Communities.

6 Authorisation

Adopted by Ballarat City Council, 24 June 2020 R160/20.