

PARTNERSHIPS AND GRANTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose

The intent of the Partnerships and 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 Partnerships and Grants Policy applies to three (3) funding programs and provides for a consistent approach to administering partnerships and grants.

In addition to the programs listed within this policy, Council may also provide for 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 via specific individual service agreements.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 Partnership and Grant Programs

3.1.1 City Partnerships Program

City Partnerships exist to fund organisations or businesses to deliver Council-identified priorities. City Partnerships are for strategically planned projects and programs which may occur over multiple financial years. City Partnerships can be applied for between 1 October and 1 March. A set of guidelines will be published on Council's website to assist all potential applicants including details of ineligible organisations and project areas.

Two streams of the City Partnerships exist with applicants requested to select which partnership stream they are applying to.

a). Community Stream:

- Available exclusively for Not-For-Profit and Charitable Organisations.
- Organisations based primarily in Ballarat.
- Funding range: \$20,000 - \$100,000 per applicant per financial year.
- Maximum funding agreement available is for three (3) years).
- Assessment based on alignment with current Council Plan, Project Need, Use of local suppliers, Community Benefit (participation rates and community inclusion), value for money, contribution from applicant.

b). Commercial Stream:

- Open to Business and Not-For-Profit Charitable Organisations.
- Funding range: Applications greater than \$20,000
- Maximum funding agreement available is for three (3) years).

- Assessment based on alignment with current Council Plan, Project Need, Economic Return on Investment, Community Benefit (community inclusion).

Assessment and Decision Making:

Assessment and recommendations for all City Partnerships will be carried out by a panel of Council Officers consisting of representatives from across the organisation.

Council Officers will submit an assessment report with recommendations to a delegated Committee of Council comprising of all Councillors. At the delegated Committee meeting Councillors will confirm which applications will progress through to the annual budget process.

Minutes from the delegated Committee will be made public by a Committee Report to Council, 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.

Final endorsement for projects supported by the delegated Committee will take place as part of the annual Council budget process.

All City Partnerships will 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.

The Director Community Wellbeing is responsible for the co-ordination of the overall program.

3.1.2 Tourism Events Grants Program

The Tourism Events Grants Program is directly linked to the implementation of Council's Ballarat Events Strategy 2018-2028 and the Visitor Economy Strategy. Program funding is for festivals, events (including sporting 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, including a small grants option for applications under \$5,000. Applications will be considered throughout the financial year until the annual budget has been allocated. Tourism Events Grants are not available over multiple years and groups are required to fully acquit grants within a twelve-month period.

Assessment:

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

Phase 1 – Applications are forwarded each month to members of Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

Phase 2 - Council's 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 one week of the panel meeting.

It is expected that the assessment process will be completed within a period of one to five weeks depending on when in the month an application is received.

The Director Community Wellbeing is responsible for the program with support from the Executive Manager Events and the Arts.

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, including a small grants option for applications under \$2,000. Applications will be considered on a rounds basis with up to four rounds per year. All grants are required 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 for different projects up to a maximum of \$20,000 of grant funding each financial year. Applications will be considered by Council's Grant Allocations Delegated Committee.

Assessment:

The Community Impact Grants Program has up to four rounds of funding per year. Dates of grant 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 the grant round closing.

The Director Community Wellbeing is responsible for the program with support from the Executive Manager Engaged Communities.

3.2 Budget and Timing

The City Partnerships Program will be open for applications between 01 October and 01 March. All supported projects via the delegated Committee will progress through for consideration as part of the annual budget process. Groups will receive notification of the outcome of their application following the adoption of Council's budget.

Tourism Event Grants Program will be open from the first Monday in July at the start of the new financial year. The program has a dedicated annual budget and will close once the annual budget has been exhausted.

The Community Impact Grants Program will be run over a maximum of four rounds per financial year. The program has a dedicated annual budget and will close once the annual budget has been 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:

- Organisations applying to the Tourism Event Grants Program 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 for different projects and can access up to a maximum \$20,000 each financial year.
- In response to the Gender Equality Act 2020, it is expected that all applications for funding will demonstrate that they have considered how people of different genders may be impacted by their proposed program, activity or event. This includes demonstrating that they have made attempts, where relevant, to provide an equitable opportunity.

3.4 Fundraising Events

Events that have a primary purpose to raise funds and where 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

None of the grant programs are designed for continuous ongoing funding. Whilst available over multiple years, City Partnerships can only operate over a maximum of three financial years. Both the Tourism Event Grants Program and the Community Impact Grants Program operate a twelve-month acquittal process. All grant recipients are encouraged to ensure the appropriate conclusion or ongoing sustainability of projects at the end of the Council funding commitment.

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 with the project approved by the Council as detailed in the funding agreement. Where funds are used for non-approved purposes, it is expected that funds will be repaid to Council.
- 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, Child Safety Standards, 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:

- City Partnership payments will be paid on an annual basis, subject to the submission of satisfactory annual milestone reports.
- All one-off grant payments over \$10,000 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 \$10,000 or less in Council funding, recipients will receive a single full payment. All projects of \$10,000 or less 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 until the outstanding acquittal is approved.
- 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 the official City of Ballarat template and include evidence of agreed expenditure.
- Completion of the 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.
- A summary of all acquittal documents be provided to Councillors on an annual basis via a Council Report as part of an overall grants summary report.

3.9 Checklists, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

- The production of an annual partnership and grants report to Council at the conclusion of each financial year which includes the findings and recommendations from audits and evaluations undertaken as part of a continuous improvement process.
- 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 City 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 change and the rationale or reasoning for the variation in the grant award.
- Satisfactory annual milestone reports for City Partnerships grants funded over multiple years are required before recipient's drawdown additional years of funding. Milestone reports should be submitted using the official City of Ballarat template and include evidence of agreed expenditure.

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 using 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.

4.0 Supporting documents and references

4.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

4.2 Associated Documents

- *Council Plan 2021-2025*

5.0 Policy owner

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

6.0 Authorisation

Adopted by Ballarat City Council, 24 August 2022. R123/22