



Community Grant Program Governance Policy

Version 3

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1. Background

Latrobe City Council has a proud history of working in partnership with the community to meet local needs. One of the ways Council supports community organisations is through the annual Community Grant Program, which delivers funding for projects that:

- Reflect our community’s priorities and vision as set out in Council plans and policies.
- Strengthen communities and provide opportunities for enhanced participation in public life.
- Provide benefits to the local community.
- Improve accessibility or inclusion for priority groups as identified in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Improve health and wellbeing in the community.
- Contribute to the social, cultural, environmental and economic development of our community.

The Community Grant Program represents a significant contribution by Council to local projects through various grant streams. Grant funding acknowledges the contribution that individuals and organisations make to benefit Latrobe City community life.

2. Objectives

The Community Grant Program Governance Policy (the Policy) addresses standardised governance arrangements for the conditions and management of Council’s outgoing community grants.

The Policy demonstrates and outlines Council’s role in supporting the community. Council’s Community Grant Program extends the community’s capability to conduct activities, create opportunities for community capacity building, develop and maintain sustainable community infrastructure and build strong partnerships for community benefit.

The Policy also assists Councillors and Council employees to achieve consistency in the governance of the grants when assessing, monitoring, acquitting, and evaluating applications.

3. Scope

This policy does not govern Council's provision of subsidies, donations or the administration of the Latrobe City Trust. This policy does not govern Council's provision of grant or sponsorship programs which support individuals or predetermined community organisations.

This policy;

- Provides a basis for Council to allocate Community Grant Program funds in an equitable and effective manner.
- Provides consistent governance arrangements for the application, acquittal and management of the Community Grant Program streams issued by Council.
- Ensures management accountabilities are understood and processes to manage compliance exist and are applied consistently.

4. Principles of Management

Prepare for Applications

Annually, following adoption of the annual budget, grant stream guidelines, supporting documents and procedures are updated to ensure best practice in grant management and continual improvement.

Application Process

Grant stream guidelines are made available to the community advising funding round dates and required submissions for an application to be considered. This information is made available on Council's website.

The applicant must provide:

- Identification information related to the applicant or organisation.
- An email address for correspondence.
- A contact person within the applicant or organisation.

An application can be submitted once the applicant has completed a declaration, confirming that the information provided in their application is true and correct and that they agree to adhere to the terms and conditions of funding.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Community Grant Program funds, applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit organisation that is an incorporated body holding a current Australia Business Number (ABN) and that is not within the categories of ineligible applicants below. An applicant that is not an incorporated body but is otherwise eligible may arrange an auspice agreement with an eligible organisation that is willing and able to accept legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- Have no outstanding debts to Latrobe City Council.
- Hold appropriate public liability insurance.
- Physically operate and/or be registered within the municipality of Latrobe City.
- Be able to provide a satisfactory budget, including one quote for projects under \$5,000 and two quotes for projects over \$5,000.

Ineligibility

Meeting any of the following criteria will render an applicant or application ineligible, meaning that it will not progress to assessment.

Ineligible Applicants

- State and Federal Government departments, agencies and authorities.
 - Rural Country Fire Authority Brigades and State Emergency Services Units will be permitted to apply under the quick response streams.
- Applicants who have an open acquittal form from previous Community Grant streams provided by Latrobe City Council.
- Community groups, organisations, or clubs that host or promote gambling.
- Any for-profit entity, applicant operating to support for-profit activity or entity that has any purpose that is not a charitable purpose for the public benefit. This includes but is not limited to any entity that is able to distribute profits, capital or income to members or beneficiaries under its governing documents, whether or not those documents also allow distribution for not-for-profit purposes.
- Companies limited by guarantee.
- Schools and educational institutions.
- Any organisation who has an existing, active Community Grant Program funding agreement in place.

If Latrobe City is made aware of disputes or legal proceedings pertaining to the applicant which may negatively impact the delivery of proposed project, or cause reputational risk or damage to Latrobe City, the application may be ruled ineligible with General Manager approval.

Ineligible Expenditure

- Items that are part of an organisation's core business or regular operational expenses.
- General maintenance expenses. This includes the ongoing care of an existing asset.
- Sponsorship signage and sponsorship agreements.
- Requests for the purpose of raising funds.
- Trophies, awards, scholarships, subscriptions, prizes and honorariums.
- Projects or events at venues where there are gaming machines, gambling, and betting; unless there is no appropriate alternative venue and the applicant has considered the potential impact to participants.
- Projects, events or works that exclusively benefit applicant members and do not benefit the broader community.
- Repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire or other natural disasters where the incident will be covered by insurance. Expenses not covered by insurance will be considered eligible for funding where documentation demonstrating that insurance will not cover the costs, such as a letter from insurer is supplied, and the project aligns with the funding stream.
- Projects, events or works that engage in activities or items which promote discrimination, violence or anti-social behaviour.
- Projects or items that have already been purchased, started or completed.
- Purchase of land.
- Projects or events where the primary focus is to advocate for religion or faith.
- Projects or events that promote political views.
- Catering, alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, firearms and fireworks.
- Projects that duplicate existing services and programs.
- Latrobe City Council owned or run activities, projects, programs and events.
- The repair of used goods or equipment.

Ineligible Applications

- Multiple applications for the same project. Only individual organisations may apply for funding.
- Incomplete applications.
- Applications submitted by Councillors or Council Officers. Councillors and Council Officers may assist applicants in the application process.

Mandatory documents

Applications will be rendered ineligible if the following documents are not submitted by round closure date:

- One written quote for projects up to \$5,000 and two written quotes for projects over \$5,000 from a registered tradesperson or business using a consistent specification. Screenshots of catalogues or online advertising will be accepted as sufficient quotes, provided they are an Australian company.

- One written quote for expenses over \$500 for event stream applications. Screenshots of catalogues or online advertising will be accepted as sufficient quotes, provided they are an Australian company.
- Current Certificate of Public Liability.
- Letter from auspice organisation (if applicable) confirming their commitment to assume full legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- Written approval from other user applicants who share the existing facilities associated with the project.
- Written permission from the asset owner to complete the project.
- For applicants completing works on Latrobe City Council buildings, written approval, or acceptance of the project in full is required from Latrobe City Council's Building Maintenance Team; and
- For Sport and Recreation Clubs, written approval from Latrobe City Council's Coordinator Recreation and Open Space. This evidence must clearly show that permission has been requested and granted for the entirety of the project.

Advertisement of Grants

Council advertises grants on an annual basis in line with funding round dates set out in the applicable grant stream guidelines. Council may use the following avenues to advertise grant funding opportunities:

- Social media.
- Radio.
- Print.
- Internet.

In addition, Council will conduct a number of accessible community information sessions prior to, or during a round to highlight grant availability. Staff will be available to assist with application enquiries.

Conflicts of Interest

During all stages of the grant assessment and approval process, any potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest of a Councillor or officer must be declared and documented.

Where any conflict of interest exists, the relevant person must not have any involvement in discussions or decisions relating to the specific application.

Any conflicts of interest will be managed according to the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Conflict of Interest Operational Policy.

Applications

Applicants are required to thoroughly review and adhere to the grant guidelines, ensuring that all relevant criteria outlined in the application are addressed. The submission of applications must be completed online through Council's designated grant management system. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted, except in exceptional circumstances with prior approval from the Coordinator Social Policy and Inclusion. All information should be provided through the online grant management system or via email to the Grants Officers following prior approval by the same. Information provided through alternative channels, such as the Latrobe City Customer Focus team, client contact centre or Councillors will not be accepted.

Assessment Criteria - General

Applications for all grants, excluding quick response streams will be assessed by Officers against the following criteria:

Standardised Scoring Criteria

Total score out of 40

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Amount of Latrobe City Council Community Grant funding received over the previous five financial years.	20
Demonstrated in-kind contributions e.g., monetary, voluntary services etc.	20

Assessment Panel Scoring Criteria

Total score out of 60

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
The project addresses a community need and describes how the community will benefit from the project.	20
The applicant has demonstrated ability to deliver the project.	20
The application is consistent with the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and other strategic documents.	20

In addition to the criteria outlined above, Council may also consider the following assessment criteria factors in determining whether to support grant applications:

- Number of grant applications received and the amount of funds being sought.
- Amount of grant funding available within the Community Grant Program budget.

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Assessment Criteria – Quick Response

Applications for quick response streams will be assessed by Officers against the following criteria:

Standardised Scoring Criteria

Total score out of 50

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Amount of Latrobe City Council Community Grant funding received over the previous five financial years.	25
Demonstrated in-kind contributions e.g., monetary, voluntary services etc.	25

Assessment Panel Scoring Criteria

Total score out of 50

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
The project addresses a community need and describes how the community will benefit from the project.	50

Assessment Process – General

Once an application is received, Officers will:

- Complete an eligibility check against the Policy and program guidelines.
- Confirm that outstanding acquittals have been received where funding may have been provided previously.
- Determine assessors who may include:
 - Staff members who possess the necessary level of expertise and subject matter knowledge to provide recommendations; and
 - Inclusion of at least one assessor at a Coordinator level
- Provide relevant assessment training to the assessor.
- Provide assessment guidelines for each grant stream which aid the assessors in their determination.
- Manage any Conflicts of Interest between the assessors and the application/applicants.

Assessors

Assessors will be required to complete assessments on all applications within the allocated stream and round. Assessors will be required to score each application in accordance with the information outlined in Assessment Criteria.

Assessors will also be required to document assessment commentary that includes the following information:

- If the application has been recommended for funding or not;
- Why an application is or is not recommended for funding;
- How much funding is being recommended (fully funded or part funded and the amount); and
- Any comments and funding conditions relating to the application.

Based on defined scoring protocols, applications will be ranked accordingly.

Councillors

Councillors will be invited to attend an Out of Session Briefing where they will be provided with the following information for all streams excluding quick response:

- Applications received.
- Assessment panel recommendations, scores, and comments.

Councillors will be provided with the opportunity to offer any comments on applications as well as declare any Conflicts of Interest. Any correspondence between Officers and Councillors regarding Community Grant recommendations is considered confidential and will remain so, until such a time as a report on the matter has been released in subsequent Council Meeting agenda, minutes paper or is approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer.

Recommendations for Community Grant Program funding distributions, excluding quick response streams, are approved by Council at an Ordinary Council Meeting. Recommendations for quick response funding distributions are approved by the General Manager Community Health and Wellbeing in writing per funding rounds scheduled in applicable guidelines.

Application Funding

Applicants will be advised of their assessment outcome in writing. The following payment process will be followed for successful applications:

- **No Funding Conditions:** Payment will be processed once outcome notification letter has been sent to the applicant.
- **Funding Conditions:** Applications with funding conditions applied during assessment will be required to complete a funding agreement which outlines the funding conditions. Applicants will need to agree to the funding conditions and attach any documents requested by the Grants Officer or assessment panel. Payment will be processed following signing and receipt of the funding agreement.

All funding agreements will include an offer expiration date after which Latrobe City Council may refuse to grant funds.

All payments are made electronically, direct to the applicant's bank account in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

Auspice

If a community applicant is not a legal entity, they can approach an organisation to auspice the project.

The auspice organisation will:

- Work with the applicant on the funding application, although the application will still be in the applicant's name.
- Receive any funding that may be granted to the applicant.
- Partner with the applicant to deliver the project.

The auspice organisation must meet the Community Grant Program eligibility criteria and provide a letter indicating that they accept full financial accountability for the project.

The auspice organisation is not considered to be the applicant and may apply for their own funding.

Insurance

Public liability insurance is a mandatory requirement for all Community Grant Program applicants. A copy must be attached to the application to be eligible. The insurance policy must be appropriate for the proposed activity or event and offer a minimum coverage of \$10 million. The insurance policy must be in the name of the applicant unless there is an auspice agreement in place. Where an auspice agreement is in place, their public liability insurance policy must cover the activity or event.

Acquittal

The Acquittal report will be a reconciled statement of expenditure and income associated with the grant and will ask the applicants to provide detail on the outcomes of the project that were achieved as a result of the funding.

Applicants will also be required to attach:

- Evidence of how Council's support for the project was recognised.
- An actual income and expenditure budget for their project.
- Photo evidence that demonstrates the completed project and community participation.

The applicant must acquit their project within two (2) months of the identified project completion date, unless otherwise agreed. Acquittals will be considered overdue if they are not completed within these two (2) months of the specified project completion date.

Applicants can only have one acquittal form open at a time.

By submitting the acquittal, the applicant provides permission to Latrobe City Council for the use and publication of the information provided.

Lost or Misplaced Proof of Purchase Records/Receipts

Applicants who lose or misplace proof of purchase records/receipts will be required to:

- Provide relevant bank statement(s), highlighting all items purchased using Latrobe City Council funding. All funds must be accounted for on the statement; or
- Provide a signed Statutory Declaration.

Failure to provide one of the above documents will result in the funds being returned to Latrobe City Council.

Funding Variations

Applicants must submit a Variation Request in writing to Council if:

- The scope of a project changes.
- Proposed expenditure items change.
- If there is a change to the proposed outcomes.

The Variation Request will be reviewed by the relevant Officer and approved at management level. Variation Requests will initially be reviewed against the program guidelines then assessed based on impact.

If the Variation Request is approved applicants will receive a letter notifying them of the approved changes. This letter will form part of the applicant's Funding Agreement with Council. If the Variation Request is unsuccessful, applicants will be asked to submit a revised request or return funding to Council.

Unspent Funds

Applicants will be required to return any unspent and excess funding to Latrobe City Council when submitting the Acquittal form.

Event Cancellation

Where an event is cancelled, the applicant is required to advise Council's Senior Grants Officer and Senior Events Officer immediately and any unspent funds are to be returned.

In the instance that the event can be postponed to a later date (within the same financial year) you must contact Council's Senior Events Officer in writing to request a change to the event date and a transfer of grant funds. You must not proceed with your event until approval has been provided by Council's Senior Events Officer.

Reporting Provision

Reporting to Council will consist of either:

- Recommendation reports specifically prepared to seek funding approval during an Ordinary Council meeting; or
- Scheduled reports in cases where grant approvals have been delegated to Council staff. These reports will be presented for information.

Manage Records

All records relating to the Community Grant Program will be filed in Latrobe City Council's online grants management system. These records include all attachments, photos, financial reports. All relevant documents that are not recorded in the online grants system including spreadsheets and outcome notification emails will be recorded in Council's online management system.

General Funding Guidelines

Each grant stream may have its own guidelines and conditions of funding which may render applicants and applications ineligible in addition to criteria specified in the Policy. The following guidelines are applicable to all grant streams:

- Funds must be expended and acquitted within six (6) months of funding endorsement. Applicants may request in writing an extension to the acquittal form due date. Requests will be reviewed by the relevant Officer and approval will be provided in writing.
- Approval of funding does not grant permission to proceed with the project. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the necessary permissions and approvals to deliver the project. Please refer to mandatory documents regarding the approvals process.
- Projects should align to Council strategies and plans including the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Applications must clearly outline the aims and objectives and provide a full description of the project. Latrobe City Council may request additional information to assist in assessing an application.

- Applicants are encouraged to provide financial or in-kind assistance to the project.
- Applications must be completed in full and include sufficient evidence to make a reasonable assessment of the application.
- Applicants who fail to comply with the conditions set out in the application form, funding agreement and grant program guidelines will be required to return funds to Council. Additionally, any funds that were not utilised as intended and unspent funds must be returned to Council when submitting the acquittal.
- Funding must not be regarded as a recurrent commitment from Council. There is no guarantee a recurring project will be funded in the future. Funding is limited.
- Latrobe City Council must be given prior notice if invited to participate in any public relations activities associated with the event/project.

5. Accountability and Responsibility

Accountability and responsibility for this policy is outlined below.

- Council**
 - Responsibility to ensure this Policy is consistent with Latrobe City Council Strategic Direction and other Latrobe City Council Policy.
 - Responsibility for the decision to approve this Policy by Council Resolution.
 - Responsibility to approve funding allocations for select grant steams.
- Chief Executive Officer**
 - Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy.
 - Overall responsibility for enforcing accountability.
 - Overall responsibility for providing resources.
 - Overall responsibility for performance monitoring.
 - Responsibility to approve funding allocations for select grant steams.
- General Manager**
 - Responsibility for compliance with this policy.
 - Responsibility for enforcing accountability.
 - Responsibility for providing resources.
 - Responsibility for performance monitoring.
 - Responsibility to approve funding allocations for select grant steams.
- Manager**
 - Develop frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy.
 - Enforce responsibilities to achieve compliance with frameworks and procedures.
 - Provide appropriate resources for the execution of the frameworks and procedures.

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- Responsibility to approve funding allocations for select grant steams.
- e. Employees, Contractors and Volunteers.
 - Participate where required in the development of frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy.
 - Comply with frameworks and procedures developed to achieve compliance with this policy.

6. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed on request of Council, in the event of significant change in the Executive team, significant changes to legislation applicable to the subject matter of the policy or, in any other case, during each Council term (generally four years).

7. Definitions

Grant - A payment provided to a recipient for a specific purpose or project, generally as part of an approved Council program, with the understanding that there will be a defined outcome that directly or indirectly benefits the public, but with no expectation of commercial return to Council.

Auspice – An auspice agreement means that an organisation with a legal not-for-profit status takes responsibility for ensuring grant funds are used as specified in the grant allocation. Auspice agreements are commonly undertaken for community organisations or applicants that are not legally constituted as a not-for-profit entity.

Acquittal - Acquitting a grant means accurately reporting on the funded activities and the expenditure of the funding. Acquittals are required upon completion of the project, within two (2) months of the specified project completion date.

Overdue Acquittal - Acquittals will be considered overdue if they are not delivered within two (2) months of the specified project completion date.

Sponsorship - The right to associate the sponsor's name, products or services with the sponsored organisation's service product or activity, in return for negotiated benefits such as money or promotional opportunities. It involves a negotiated exchange and should result in tangible and mutual compensation for all parties in the arrangement.

Quick Response – A grant program that is specifically designed to provide quick access to grant funding for expenses that do not require extensive consideration of assessment criteria and enable community groups to address immediate needs.

8. Related Documents

Community Grants Program Procedure.
 Community Grant Program Guidelines.
 Procurement Policy
 Council Plan
 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

9. Reference Resources

Local Government Act 2020
 Conflict of Interest Operational Policy

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