

Policy Register

Community Grants Policy 2022-25

Policy Classification	- Community Programs
Policy N°	- POL/547 (D22/75617)
Policy Status	- Endorsed
Responsible Service Unit	- Economic and Cultural Activation
Authorised by	- Council
Date Adopted	- 12 December 2023
Next Review Date	- July 2025

This policy is part of a suite of policies adopted by Council or the Executive Management Team (EMT).

New or replacement policies can be created and developed within Service Units but can only be added to Council's Policy Register by Governance Services following the approval of the policy by Council or the EMT.

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PURPOSE

The Manningham Community Grant Program provides financial support for local not-for-profit community organisations to develop activities, programs and services that benefit and respond to current and emerging needs and interests of the Manningham community.

The Community Grants Policy 2022-25 (the Policy) confirms principles for the management of the Manningham Community Grant Program, including alignment with Council's strategic objectives, overarching funding and governance requirements, and key processes and practices to deliver a robust and well-governed funding program.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy is consistent with the key action areas included in the Manningham Council Plan 2021-25 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25.

The Policy is based on the following principles:

- Community Grants are available to incorporated associations primarily located within Manningham. These grants are specifically designated to facilitate the implementation of programs and projects within Manningham, with the overarching goal of benefiting the local community. This targeted approach ensures that the allocated funds directly contribute to the betterment of the Manningham Community.
- Council funds incorporated associations on the basis that they are sustainable and self-sufficient, and that Council grants add to their existing programs and projects and is not relied upon for their operational viability.
- Funding is not guaranteed from one funded period to the next.
- Community grants should also provide seed opportunities for new or emerging organisations to be funded through annual grants and small grants.
- The grant application process reflects the value of the funding allocation and is easy to understand.
- Applicants are aware of the assessment criteria, and the assessment process is consistent, transparent and supported by good governance.
- Community grants are offered in a way that encourages applications from our non-English speaking community.

Governance Principles

The management of the Policy will be based upon the following good governance principles:

- **Transparency** of the processes and practices supporting the program by providing clear and accessible information and ensuring well defined and well documented practices applied consistently across Council and the community.
- **Equity**, whereby all applicants will be offered the same level of information, advice, guidance and support, and will undergo consistent assessment and evaluation processes.

- **Accountability** through a rigorous process to ensure good governance is followed through appropriate policies and procedures and there are no conflicts of interest at any point throughout the grants management process.
- **Efficiency** of the program will be prioritised through thorough application processes, effective and timely assessment, as well as sound program administration and management systems to streamline the administrative tasks associated with grants management through an online grants management system.
- **Sustainable Practices** will reduce the reliance on paper-based practices and will embrace more sustainable practices such as online and digital systems.

Objectives

Community grants are an opportunity for Council to partner with community organisations and empower them to deliver key actions contained in Manningham’s Council Plan 2021-25 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25.

The Manningham Community Grant Program is underpinned by the principles of community and cultural development, which are reflected in the grant objectives below. Applicants are required to address these grant objectives in their applications.

Partnerships	Foster and develop partnerships between Council, groups and not-for-profit organisations for the delivery of shared outcomes.
Services and Activities	Provide a range of services and activities that respond to the needs of communities that align with Council's plans and strategies.
Participation	Foster community involvement and participation with a focus on groups and individuals that experience barriers to participating in community life.
Skills Development	Build community capacity and empower communities to further develop or gain new skills to enhance their quality of life.
Innovation	Pilot activities that provide an innovative response to local priorities and ensure ongoing environmental, economic and social sustainability.
Value	Provide a measurable, cost-effective and efficient means to deliver community outcomes in a transparent and accountable manner.

Funding Framework

The Community Grant Program is divided into six categories, with the grant processes detailed in the Community Grant Guidelines outlined below.

Grant Category	Purpose	Funding Allocation*	Assessment Timing
Community Partnership Grants	Available to not-for-profit or community organisations operating in Manningham to achieve longer term community development outcomes	Allocations of up to \$50,000 per year with a maximum of \$200,000 over four years	Four-year funding round
Neighbourhood Houses Grants	Support for Manningham's Neighbourhood Houses to deliver community development initiatives to benefit the health and wellbeing of the Manningham community	Allocations of up to \$60,000 per year with a maximum of \$180,000 over three years	Initial three-year funding round (2023-25)
Annual Community Grants	Support diverse range of community-led initiatives through three streams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development: responding to the needs of Manningham's diverse community • Arts: supporting activities that enable participation in the cultural life of Manningham • Festivals and Events: supporting the activation of key locations and the attraction of visitors to Manningham 	\$3,001 - \$20,000	Annual funding round
Small Grants	Support community strengthening initiatives and equipment purchases to enhance the quality of life of Manningham residents	Up to \$3,000. Equipment Purchase 50% contribution of the total cost up to \$1,500	Applications open all year with four assessment rounds per year
Senior's Club Grant	Available to Senior's Clubs to support programs and activities, including meals, that promote social	\$70,000 per year	Annual funding Round

	connection and have positive mental health outcomes for Manningham's ageing community		
Healthy Ageing Grant	Support not-for-profit organisations to deliver healthy ageing initiatives that reach a wide range of Manningham's older community.	\$80,000 per year	Annual funding round

* Funding allocations are subject to adoption of Council's annual budget.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The Policy scope includes the following funding programs within the suite of the Manningham Community Grant Program, comprising of:

- Small Grants (four rounds per year)
- Annual Community Grants, including its three streams:
 - Community Development Grants
 - Arts Grants
 - Festivals and Events Grants
- Community Partnership Grants (four-yearly)
- Neighbourhood Houses Grants (initially three-yearly)
- Seniors Club Support Grant (yearly)
- Healthy Ageing Support Grant (yearly)

RESPONSIBILITY

- **Project Lead:** Community Grants and Events Lead
- **Grants Team – Council Officers:** Administration of program and assessment of applications
- **Subject Matter Experts – Council Officers:** Assessment of applications and provide advice to Panel
- **Assessment Panel:** Consider Officer advice and provide recommendations to Council
- **Council:** Endorse Panel recommendations

Conflict of Interest

All members involved in the Community Grants program and Councillors have an obligation in relation to conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Conflicts of interest must be avoided when carrying out duties and any potential conflicts of interest must be declared.

- Officers will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration upon receipt of the applications and act in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy (POL/566).
- Panel will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration prior to assessment.
- Councillors are required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to endorsing any grants.

RELATED POLICIES

The Policy is strategically aligned with Council's planning framework and policies including the Council Plan 2021-25, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25, and other key strategic Council documents.

The Policy is also to remain consistent with the intentions of the Sponsorship Policy (POL/533) and the Conflict of Interest Policy (POL/566).

SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding through the Community Grant Program all applicants must be either a:

- Not-for-profit constituted body such as an Incorporated Association or a Company Limited by Guarantee or be an entity auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit organisation that accepts legal and financial responsibility for the funded activity; or
- School or kindergarten whose program or activity is not solely curriculum based and offers a benefit to the wider community. Schools and kindergartens are encouraged to partner with community groups to achieve this outcome.

Ineligible

- Individuals
- Unincorporated organisations
- Organisations with outstanding debts to Council
- For profit, commercial organisations

- Organisations which are not located in Manningham or do not predominately deliver programs and services within Manningham

What will not be funded?

The following are not funded by the Manningham Community Grant Program:

- inconsistent with the current Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities or Community Grant Program objectives
- are the responsibility of other tiers of government (e.g. State, Federal)
- that spend grant funding prior to signing of funding and service agreement (retrospective funding)
- have a religious or political purpose which seeks to promote core beliefs
- programs that involve gambling, tobacco, drugs and/or alcohol
- organisations in receipt of other funding; sponsorship or grants, whose primary focus is gambling, tobacco, drugs and/or alcohol
- duplicate existing services/activities unless it can be demonstrated that it meets an unmet community need
- would normally be part of a reasonable operating budget for the organisation, i.e. staff salaries or administration. Project management and administration costs for the grant-funded program may be accepted up to a maximum value of 20% of the grant value
- are funded through other Council programs or activities, including grants and sponsorship programs
- are Council owned and run
- offer social outings and gatherings, unless it can be demonstrated it is a core part of the project delivery
- provide catering, unless it can be demonstrated that catering is integral to the activity and not the sole purpose of the funding
- seek conference sponsorship or fundraising support e.g., financial or technical support
- seek debt payment support
- are solely curriculum based (kindergarten, primary or secondary school). Only applications that demonstrate a broader community partnership approach will be considered
- are for fixed / permanent equipment, building maintenance or capital improvements (such as heating or cooling systems, shade sails, solar panels)
- are for the purchase of capital assets i.e., motor vehicles
- are listed as a sports club responsibility as set out in Council's Outdoor Sports Infrastructure Guidelines (www.manningham.vic.gov.au/find-a-sporting-venue)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Grant rounds will be advertised through a range of avenues to promote the programs across the municipality to encourage eligible organisations to apply.

The Community Partnership Grant guidelines shall specify Council's priority outcomes and be subject to endorsement by Council.

Grant applications are administered via the SmartyGrants online grants administration system.

GUIDELINES

Each grant category will have its own guidelines that will set out:

- Objectives of the program
- Timelines
- Eligibility
- How to apply
- Assessment criteria
- Assessment process

Guidelines will be updated annually and will clearly communicate Council's priority outcomes for the next round of funding.

The Guidelines shall clearly detail the methodology, the weighting for each assessment criteria and shall include key dates and decision-making points in the process. Details surrounding acquittal requirements will also be provided within the Guidelines.

GRANT ASSESSMENTS

Council is committed to a process that is:

- Transparent
- Consistent
- Free from conflict of interest

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Informing the community of Council's priorities prior to commencing the process
- Ensuring that applicants will be aware of the assessment criteria prior to submitting an application
- Making applicants aware of the decision-making process

- Publicly reporting on outcomes of the assessment process - including unsuccessful grant applications
- Ensure all parties involved in the community grants process declare any conflicts of interest with applicants

Assessment Criteria

The priority outcomes for **all grants**, shall align with the key action areas contained in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25.

For **Community Partnership Grants**, Council shall, at its discretion, prioritise selected key action areas contained in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 and may target more specific outcomes where they align with key action areas. These priority outcomes as determined by Council shall be subject to endorsement prior to advertising the Community Grant Program Guidelines.

For Community Grants the assessment criteria is as follows:

- The alignment of the application with Council's priorities;
- The proposed community benefit derived from the program or initiative;
- An organisation's ability to successfully deliver the community outcome over time; and
- Public value

The assessment of community grant applications will be conducted based on the information provided by the applicant. Officers may seek further clarification on any information provided, however officers will not allow any grant applications to be re-written/re-submitted after the closing date.

While grant applications will be assessed against the proposed community benefit of the program or initiative, the evaluation process will also consider the accuracy and relevance of the information contained in the application.

With that in mind, grant applications will be evaluated against the published criteria and the level of detail required in an application shall reflect the level of grant funding sought.

Assessment Panels

Internal Panel

The Internal Panel will consist of:

- Two (2) senior council officers, comprising either Director, and/or Manager
- One service unit Coordinator

External Panel

- Two (2) senior Council Officers
- Three (3) independent community members

The community members will be selected through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The community members will be paid an honorarium. The senior officers will be voting members of the Panel.

The EOI process will be conducted annually, with the option to extend assessment panel membership for an additional year. Nominations are to be formally endorsed by Council.

The assessment panel will be chaired by the service unit coordinator, supported by one (1) grants officer, to ensure good governance and answer any questions from the panel. Both officers will not have voting rights. Prior to convening the independent assessment panel, officers with subject matter expertise will review the applications to ensure alignment with Council's priorities under the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Council Plan. The level of alignment with Council's priorities will be presented to the independent assessment panel with each grant application.

Assessment Panel	Small Grant Quarterly	Community Grant Annual	Neighbourhood House Grant 3-Year	Community Partnership Grant 4-Year	Seniors Club Grant	Healthy Ageing Grant
Senior Officer assessment panel	✓				✓	
Independent Community member/senior officer assessment panel		✓	✓	✓		✓

Assessment Process

Composition of the assessment panels for respective grant categories and the accompanying decision making process are referenced in the Community Grants Program Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

The assessment process shall be aligned to the grants program as follows:

Action	Small Grants	Annual Grants	Neighbourhood Houses Grants	Community Partnership Grants	Seniors Club Grant	Healthy Ageing Grant
Application assessed by Grant Officers for conformity with the eligibility criteria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Officers with subject matter expertise to provide feedback on the application, stated outcomes and evaluate against the selection criteria		✓	✓	✓		✓

Action	Small Grants	Annual Grants	Neighbourhood Houses Grants	Community Partnership Grants	Seniors Club Grant	Healthy Ageing Grant
Officers' evaluation referred to the assessment panel for recommendation		✓	✓	✓		✓
Panel recommendations presented to the Director Connected Communities for approval under delegation	✓				✓	
Panel recommendations referred to Council for endorsement		✓	✓	✓		✓

Any questions in relation to a specific application from Council will be directed to the Panel for consideration. An investigation will be conducted by the Panel and the outcome will be reported to Council.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Policy Title:	Community Grants Policy 2022-25
Responsible Officer:	Vanessa Bove
Resp. Officer Position:	Manager Economic and Cultural Activation
Next Review Date:	July 2025
To be included on website?	Yes

Last Updated	Meeting type? - Council or EMT	Meeting Date	Item N°
July 2021	Council	27 July 2021	10.1
December 2022	Council	13 December 2022	11.1
December 2023	Council	12 December 2023	11.2