

1. PURPOSE

Horsham Rural City Council (Council) is committed to supporting the local community through grant programs that further the objectives of the Council Plan 2025-2029, including:

- Liveability – a healthy, connected and vibrant community that supports people to live, work and thrive
- Sustainability – a region that grows sustainability and protects what matters
- Accessibility – a municipality that is easy to access, move through and participate in

This policy provides the framework for Council to grant public funds consistently and transparently through four community grants streams and should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for each stream:

1. Community Development
2. Community Events
3. Youth
4. Urgent Need Small Grants

2. INTRODUCTION

Council's Community Grants Program allocates grants to local not-for-profit organisations each year, across four streams.

This policy outlines the funding priorities, eligibility, application requirements, assessment criteria, grant approval and payment processes, timelines and reporting process, and general information relating to the four funding streams.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the distribution of funding through Council's Community Grants program.

4. PRINCIPLES

The Council's Community Grants program is allocated as part of Council's budget process to not-for-profit community organisations. The amount allocated for each stream is determined by Council as part of the yearly budget process and may vary from year to year. The principles underpinning the allocation of funds are:

Inclusion: providing opportunities for disadvantaged groups and individuals to meaningfully take part in community life

Equity: Consciously addressing the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups and individuals

Impact: Take a purposeful approach to funding projects that deliver meaningful social impact

Capacity building: Supporting individuals and groups to develop skills and resilience

Collaboration: encouraging networks and partnerships to deliver strategic outcomes together

Transparency: delivering a funding program that is transparent and accountable in all processes and decisions

4.1 Funding Priorities

4.1.1 Community Development Grants and Community Events Grants

The funding priorities for the Community Development Grants and Community Events Grants streams align with the key priorities of the current Council Plan, Youth Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, and Age Friendly Plan.

Applicants are asked to indicate which priorities their applications support on the application form.

The maximum allocation per organisation is \$10,000 although most successful applications range between \$500 and \$5,000. Council may consider a larger staged project over several years for an application in excess of \$10,000.

Projects which have a significant cash and/or in-kind contribution by the applicant organisation are encouraged.

4.1.2 . Youth Grants

Youth grants aim to support activities and projects that benefit young people who live, work or study in our municipality.

Minimum grant request is \$200

Maximum grant request is \$2,500.

The funding priorities for the Youth Grants stream align with Council's Youth Strategy.

Applications must identify project priorities relevant to Council's Youth Strategy.

4.1.3 Urgent Need Small Grants

The Urgent Need Small Grants stream aims to support urgent and short-term requests for funding support from not-for-profit groups within our community.

Applicants should first consider if they can apply within the timelines of other grant programs (refer Section 4.7). If these timelines are restrictive, applicants may apply for an Urgent Need Small Grant.

Minimum grant request is \$200

Maximum grant request \$1,000

Applications must support commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029 and detail the urgent nature of the grant request.

4.2 Eligibility

The guidelines for each stream outline eligibility criteria for funding, including the type of projects eligible to receive funding.

4.2.1 Eligibility requirements for all streams

All not-for-profit organisations, groups and associations based within Horsham Rural City Council may apply for these Grants.

The project must be delivered within the Horsham municipality and include direct benefits for residents of the municipality.

The following are not eligible for Community Grant funding:

- Projects of a private or commercial nature
- Projects that involve building works to upgrade/renew Council owned or managed buildings, including fixtures and external landscaping works (these projects are the responsibility of Council)
- Ongoing organisational operating costs
- Projects that are the responsibility of other sectors of government
- Projects seeking funding for religious assets

4.2.2 Specific eligibility requirements for the Youth Grants stream -

Applicants must be between 10 and 24 years of age and the application must be for the benefit of young people between 10 and 24 years of age that live, work, or study in the Horsham municipality.

The applicant must be auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation.

4.3 Incorporation and Public Liability Insurance

All applicants or auspice organisations must be incorporated as a not-for-profit organisation and have public liability insurance that covers the proposed project.

As part of the application process, applicants (or auspice) will be asked to confirm that they are an incorporated not-for-profit organisation that has public liability insurance. During the assessment process, applicants may be required to provide evidence of incorporation and public liability insurance, depending on the nature of the project and perceived risk.

4.4 Application Process

Applications to all four funding streams are to be lodged on-line using the SmartyGrants platform. The guidelines and application form can be found at <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Grant-Information/Community-Development-Grants-Program>.

All applications must include:

- Details of what the grant funds will be spent on
- An indication of other funds that will be put towards the project
- An estimate of volunteer in-kind support for the project
- A quote for all goods and services over \$1,000 (if applicable)
- A copy of the organisation's most recent audited financial statements where the application shows a cash contribution from the organisation of >\$5,000 (Community Development and Community Events streams only)
- A copy of any permits required for the project i.e. planning/building
- Land owner consent for all building works and activities on land not owned by the project applicant, including private and Crown Land
- Endorsement of all groups/organisations who will use or benefit from the project.

There are separate Guidelines that outline the specific requirements for each stream.

4.4.1 Urgent Need Small Grants

The application process and form are simpler for this stream.

To receive an urgent need grant, applicants must:

- a. Discuss the project with Councils Community Grants Team
- b. Complete the short version on-line application form.

4.5 Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria are different for the four Community Grants streams and are detailed in the relevant Guidelines available on Councils website.

4.6 Assessment Process

- All applications are received online and assessed through Council's Community Grant management platform.
- Community Grants will prepare a grants summary by funding stream and provide administration support for the relevant assessment panels.

4.6.1 Community Development Grants Assessment

- The assessment panel will consist of six officers approved by the Chief Executive Officer from a cross-section of Council departments

- Assessment will be against set criteria.
- The assessment panel will make recommendations to Council's Executive Management Team with final approval made by the Chief Executive Officer.
- The list of grant recipients will be published on Council's website

4.6.2 *Community Event Grants Assessment*

- The assessment panel will consist of two officers approved by the Chief Executive Officer
- Assessment will be against set criteria.
- The assessment panel will make recommendations to Council's Executive Management Team with final approval made by the Chief Executive Officer.
- The list of grant recipients will be published on Council's website

4.6.3 *Youth Grants Assessment*

- Assessment of applications against set criteria will be conducted by two officers from the Youth and Early Years business unit appointed by the Director Communities and Place.
- The assessment panel will make recommendations to Council's Executive Management Team with final approval made by the Chief Executive Officer.

4.6.4 *Urgent Need Small Grants Assessment*

- The application will be assessed by a Community Grants officer
- Assessment will be against set criteria.
- The grant allocation will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

For all funding streams:

- Council may only allocate part funding for a project rather than the full amount requested in the application.
- A grant allocation by Council does not mean any ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Council.
- Council grant assistance should be acknowledged on any promotional material or media coverage relating to the successful project.

4.7 Conflict of Interest

Members of assessment panels for the Community Grants program across all streams must:

- Undertake specific training in relation to the administration of grant programs prior to the assessment process each year.
- Adhere to Council's Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure
- Complete a Conflict of Interest for each assessment round that is included in the Council's official records.
- Remove themselves from the assessment of any application where a conflict of interest is identified.

4.8 Timelines

Funding Stream	Funding cycle	Open dates	Grant allocation
Community Development	Annual	February	From July 1
Community Events	Annual	March	From July 1

Youth	Ongoing	Until funding exhausted	From approval date
Urgent Need	Ongoing	Until funding exhausted	From approval date

4.9 Grant Payment

Payment of grants will be made upon receipt of invoices or evidence of project payments by the organisation. These invoices and payments must coincide with the grant period as detailed in the respective funding stream guidelines.

4.10 Grant variation/change requests

At times, a community group may request a change to project scope or delivery timelines. The applicant must request such a variation in writing, stating the reasons for the change, how the proposed changes align with Council’s relevant strategies or plans, plus any impact the variation may have on community outcomes.

The Chief Executive Officer will review the request and determine whether to grant the variation. Community Groups will then be notified in writing of the outcome.

Note: a request for an increase in grant allocation will not be considered.

4.11 Grant Reporting

Successful applicants are required to complete an on-line Community Grants Project Report upon completion of the project via the online portal.

5. COMMUNICATION

The Community Grants program has a dedicated area on Council’s website at: <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Grant-Information/Community-Development-Grants-Program>.

The annual Community Development Grants Program is promoted during February each year across all Council media platforms. Community information sessions are coordinated by the Community Grants Team in February each year.

Other grant streams are promoted regularly throughout the year across all Council media platforms.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner: Chief Executive Officer

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually or as required by changed circumstances including changes to legislation and plans, strategies or policies of Council.

7. DEFINITIONS

Nil

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
HRCC Community Grants Program – Funding Guidelines	Internet
HRCC Community Grants Program – Application template	Internet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment	Review Date
01	3 March 2014	Council	New Policy	
02	February 2017	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Access Criteria Revised notification month Inclusion of project ranking Inclusion of Grants Information Session 	
03	19 March 2017	Council	Changes to funding categories	
04	N/A	N/A	Change in Departmental titles only	
05	16 Dec 2019	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of Youth category References to new strategies and plans Removal of S86 reference Copy of any permits required for project Projects that require ongoing funding from Council Projects seeking funding for religious assets 	
06	14 December 2020	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several minor changes to reflect organisational changes Assessment criteria – extent of previous assistance, shortened to be more readable 	December 2021
07	24 January 2022	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Criteria – changes to reflect the new Council Plan Project Assessment Team Crown Land Assessment Requirements 	December 2023
08	Nov 2022	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor administrative changes only 	31 December 2023
8.1	March 2023	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New logo 	31 December 2023
09		Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major re-write for inclusion of new streams 	31 December 2023
10	28 January 2025	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of title of Quick Response Grants to Urgent Need Grants Youth Grants (maximum grant \$2,500) to be approved by CEO rather than Council November round of Community Event grants only open if funds not exhausted in May Urgent Need Small Grants required to support Council priorities (identification of specific priorities not required) 	31 December 2025
11	28 January 2026	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major re-write to align policy with best practice, governance principles and VAGO recommendations from the report on Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants. Policy also updated to align with Council's recently adopted key strategic documents 	31 December 2026