

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES ROUND 1, 2023/2024



Purpose

The Community Grants Program supports community-based projects and initiatives that enhance the social, environmental and economic life of Hepburn Shire.

Community Grants can help community groups to implement projects that promote community wellbeing, increase social connection and build capacity for leadership and independence.

Funded programs can strengthen the community by creating opportunities for participation, celebration, development, inclusion and sustainability.

Funding is awarded for projects and initiatives that show community benefit and align with one or more of the focus areas in the [Council Plan 2021-2025](#):

- A resilient, sustainable, and protected environment.
- A healthy, supported, and empowered community.
- Embracing our past and planning for the future.
- Diverse economy and opportunities.

Program Principles

Three principles guide the Community Grants Program, including how Council Officers work with, support and respect the community, and administer the program.

1. Transparency

Transparency is defined as the lack of hidden agendas or conditions and the availability of all information needed in order to collaborate, cooperate and make decisions effectively.

2. Equity

Equitable grant making is being conscious of the barriers and disadvantage being faced by some groups or individuals because of the inequitable distribution of power and resources.

3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

Every grant dollar should produce the maximum benefit for Hepburn Shire communities. Every grant should be both efficient and effective throughout the whole lifecycle of the Community Grant process, from promotion to evaluation.

Program Objective

The Hepburn Shire Council's Community Grants Program will provide \$85,000 in 2023/2024 to fund proposals from the community for programs and events that are conducted in Hepburn Shire to the benefit of its residents.

There are four categories of Community Grants with an emphasis on funding new types of programs and events, or substantial improvements to existing programs and events.

There are two categories ('Charitable Purposes' and 'Welcome to New Residents') that do not need to be all-new; they can be a repeat of a previous successful event or programs. Please note: 'Charitable Purposes' grants are available in Round 2 only, and 'Welcome to New Residents' grants are available in Round 3 only.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must be a local not-for-profit organisation, sporting club or community group in the Hepburn Shire that is an incorporated organisation with an Australian Business Number (ABN).

Local groups not meeting this criteria may apply if they are auspiced by another organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN.

Funding Opportunities

Community groups and organisations will have the opportunity to apply for Community Grants in three Rounds per year, or until the funding allocation has been exhausted, but a group is only eligible to receive funding once per year. Council has increased the maximum grant request to \$5,000 for Categories A, B, C and D. Council continues to invite applications for less costly proposals, so that more community groups can be assisted each year.

Community Grants Program Categories

- A. Active and engaged communities.
- B. Quality community infrastructure.
- C. Sustainable environments.
- D. Children's programs.
- E. Charitable purposes. (Round 2 only)
- F. Welcome to new residents. (Round 3 only)

Please note – these categories will be revised for Rounds 2 and 3 of 2023/2024.

Types of Community Grant Projects

A. Active and engaged communities - up to \$5,000

Focus on creating connected, healthy and vibrant communities.

Projects could include:

- Activities, resources or initiatives which support **reconciliation** and may relate to Council's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#).
- Community events or days of celebration.
- Projects aimed at connecting communities, or growing skills or capacity.
- Initiatives that support the key pillars in Hepburn's [Council Plan 2021-2025](#).
- Projects that promote culturally or artistically vibrant communities.

B. Quality Community Infrastructure (including small equipment) - up to \$5,000

Focus on minor/small-scale community infrastructure or equipment.

C. Sustainable Environment – up to \$5,000

Focus on sustainability and taking action to reduce environmental impacts and contribute to becoming a more sustainable community.

D. Children's Program - up to \$5,000

Focus on programs, activities or events for children aged 8-12 years to provide opportunities to engage in activities they may normally not have access to.

Programs must be FREE to attend, and accessible to children of all abilities.

The principles stated in Council's [ACE Youth Strategy 2022-2030](#) for 12-25 year olds are also relevant to our priorities for the 8-12 years age group.

E. Charitable Purposes - up to \$2,000 available per Council Ward (Round 2 only)

Providing programs, activities or events for vulnerable or disadvantaged community members. Existing, ongoing and new programs are all eligible to apply.

This grant is awarded once per year, in Round 2 (January 2024).

F. Welcome to New Residents- up to \$1,500 available per Council Ward (Round 3 only)

Providing programs, activities or events that have the explicit purpose of welcoming new residents to the local community. Existing and ongoing programs are eligible.

This grant is awarded once per year, in April 2024.

Please note – Projects in all categories must be completed within 12 months of receiving grant funds.

Application Process

1. All applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Council's Community Strengthening Officer to discuss your initial idea for your project, the eligibility requirements and the online application process.
2. Visit: www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants for more information.
3. Go to the [Grants Portal](#) and submit your application online with SmartyGrants.

Applications that do not meet the guidelines will not be recommended for approval.

Key Dates

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application shortly after the Grant Review Panel Meeting when the Community Grants Round decision is taken.

ROUND 1	
Opens 9am	9 October 2023
Closes 11.59pm	5 November 2023
Grant Review Panel Decision	13 December 2023
ROUND 2 - including Charitable Purposes	
Opens 9am	15 January 2024
Closes 11.59pm –	12 February 2024
Grant Review Panel Decision	27 March 2024
ROUND 3 - including Welcome to New Residents	
Opens –9am	2 April 2024
Closes 11.59pm	29 April 2024
Grant Review Panel Decision	12 June 2024
Assessment Process: 3 times per year, except Categories E/F, which are annual.	
Decisions by Executive Team: 3 times per year, except Categories E/F, which are annual.	
Acquittal and Evaluation Form: Due 12 months after funds are granted.	
Review of Guidelines: Community Grant Program Guidelines are under review. New guidelines will be published before Round 2 opens in January 2024.	

Key Council Contact

Position: Community Strengthening Officer
Email: grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au
Phone: (03) 5348 2306

Please get in touch if you need more information or help to complete your application.

Eligible Projects for All Categories

To be eligible for assessment, projects must:

- Be a new or one-off event or program, or, a new initiative for an existing event or program. Exceptions apply to Category E - **Charitable Purposes** and Category F - **Welcome to New Residents**, which can be a repeat of previous programs.
- Be completed within twelve months of signing the agreement and release of funds.
- Be held within the Hepburn Shire to the benefit of its residents.
- Be an organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN (eg, an incorporated association), or be auspiced by a suitable group.¹
- Have all permits, permissions and approvals for the project.²
- Be a not-for-profit group (NFP).³ NFPs that employ paid staff, such as Coaches, Players, Administrators or Chairpersons, must clearly show a strong financial need for funding and explain the potential growth of their organisation due to the project.
- Demonstrate community involvement in its planning and proposed implementation.
- Be an organisation that has valid public liability insurance or can demonstrate the ability to obtain such insurance before the project commences.

If the project is expected to generate a minor financial gain, the applicant must clearly highlight how the profits will contribute to the group's sustainability or community benefit.

¹ An Auspicing Agent is another organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN. A letter signed by two committee members from the auspicing agent must be submitted with the grant application, confirming they will auspice the application and that they will not charge a fee for this service.

² If the project is to undertake works on; Council owned/managed land or property, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action property, or Parks Victoria land, you must provide written approval from the relevant land manager.

³ Your organisation may meet the requirements of being a not-for-profit by having specific dissolution clauses in its governing rules. Category C Children's Programs will consider applications from organisations such as schools.

Ineligible Projects for All Categories

- Individual applicants, profit-making organisations and political parties.
- An activity that is the funding responsibility of the state or federal government, or can be funded by fees, sponsorship or service agreements.

- Applicants that have successfully obtained funding through this program within the past 12 months.
- Applicants that have an outstanding community grant acquittal or unpaid invoice from Council.
- Projects that have already commenced or have been completed.
- Recurrent or ongoing Projects (with the exception of Category E and Category F applications). Annual events can only apply if they demonstrate the introduction of a new initiative.
- Organisations based outside the Shire, unless the Project is of benefit to Hepburn Shire residents.
- Schools and health services, with the exception of Category D Children's Programs. We encourage these applicants to partner with other community organisations to achieve their projects.
- Applications completed by a third party on behalf of an applicant will not be considered.

Assessment for All Categories

- Assessment for the Community Grants Program is made by members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel which is comprised of Council Officers.
- Applications are assessed against the Assessment Criteria listed below.
- Councillors will be informed of the panel's decisions.

Assessment Criteria for All Categories

- **Description of the Project** – Provide a snapshot of the overall project and a summary of what the funded activity is. Describe the opportunity or issues that the Project addresses. Explain why the Project is important or how the need is demonstrated (plans, letters, minutes, etc). Estimate the number of members, participants, groups, club, etc, who will benefit from the Project.
- **What will the Project achieve and how will it be implemented?** - Present the aims and objectives of the Project. Explain who in the community will benefit. Outline the timeframe and dates by which the key tasks will be completed.
- **Risk Assessment** – Describe the risks involved in your Project and strategies you will use to avoid harm or injury.
- **Budget** – Complete a budget that accurately reflects your Project. Income and expenditure must balance.

Funding Conditions and Requirements for All Categories

- All planning and building permits and other applicable authorisations remain the responsibility of the applicant. Evidence of permits/permissions should be provided where relevant.
- Public Liability Insurance is the responsibility of the applicant and must be obtained prior to commencing any works that has been funded.
- An offer of a grant does not mean an ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Council.
- Hepburn Shire must be acknowledged on any promotional material related to the Project / Event. This must be approved by Council's Communications Officer prior to distribution. You are required to extend a written invitation, with a minimum of two weeks' notice, to the Mayor and Hepburn Shire CEO to attend openings and events when available.
- Councillors to be invited to attend openings and the event when available.
- Successful applicants, or their Auspicing Agent, are required to enter into a formal funding agreement with Council. If the Project/Event does not adhere to the conditions of the agreement, Council may require grant funds to be returned.
- All funded Projects must complete an Evaluation and Acquittal including evidence of expenditure, eg, receipts.
- Ongoing maintenance and repair costs for equipment purchased with community grant funds are the responsibility of the applicant.
- In the event of a Project/Event only being part-funded, Council will provide an explanation on request.

For applicants who are also seeking funding from external grant sources, you are required to advise Council as soon as possible on the status of this external grant funding.

If your application budget includes external funding, and if the external funding becomes unavailable, you will be required to submit an alternative proposal and budget within 30 days of the external funding decision date.

Applications are submitted online only. Council officers can assist with this process where required, eg, if you have an impairment that prevents you using the online process.