

Hepburn Shire Council

Local Community Event Grants Program Guidelines 2026/27



Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL

Purpose

Hepburn Shire Council's Local Community Events Grant Program (LCE) supports community-based events and initiatives that engage local audiences and promote the culturally and artistically vibrant communities of Hepburn Shire.

Funding is available for events that can demonstrate benefits to a local audience, have the potential to generate intrastate visitation, and promote the arts and culture of Hepburn Shire.

Program Principles

Three principles guide the Hepburn Shire Council's Grants Program.

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.

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.

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 LCE Program provides funding annually to community groups and organisations. The application period opens at different times of the year.

An event is an organised activity which is open to the public being held on public or private land, where an open area, facility, venue, road or temporary structure is being used by more people than are usually found in that location.

What is not considered an event:

- A regular activity like a weekly or monthly market or park run
- A private party like a wedding, birthday party
- A regular user group activity like a sporting grand final
- Filming

Organisations can apply for funding of up to \$2,500, to support a new, one-off event or to support a new initiative for an existing event. In-kind support from Council may be available as part of the application. Events and days of celebration which aim to promote the artistic and cultural diversity of Hepburn Shire are encouraged.

Events may include:

- Festivals or gatherings that highlight the food and drink production of Hepburn Shire.
- Days of celebration for cultural occasions that are community inclusive.
- Events that highlight the regions rich and diverse history and culture
- Events or festivals that highlight the region's natural surroundings, mineral springs or accommodation venues.
- Events that drive community participation and engagement with local businesses.

All applicants are advised to contact Council's Events Officer at events@hepburn.vic.gov.au to ensure that the event meets the funding aims.

Strategic Alignment

The Local Community Events Grant Program aligns with the key focus areas in the Council Plan 2025-2029 and Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and draws on the Events Framework outlined in the current Hepburn Shire Council Events Strategy.

The applicant will need to identify how their project aligns with the Events Framework and meets the definition of Local Community Event as described within the strategy.

Who Can Apply

Local not-for-profit and community groups in the Hepburn Shire, which are incorporated with an ABN, or have an auspicing agent, are encouraged to apply.

Council invites community groups to submit applications for their event.

Application Process

It is strongly encouraged that all applicants contact Council's Events Officer to discuss their initial idea for their project, application requirements and the online application process.

Applicants deemed eligible will be invited to apply by the Events Officer.

Submissions will be assessed for their impact by a panel consisting of Council officers. Technical support will be provided to guide and refine the scope of potential projects, before and during the application stage.

Successful applicants will need to demonstrate how their project aligns to the definition of Local Community Events within the Hepburn Shire Events Strategy.

Visit: www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants for more information.

Key Dates

Application Stage Opens	28 August 2026
Application Stage Closes	31 May 2027
Assessment Panel Convenes	Approximately within 4 weeks of submission
Applicants notified of Assessment Outcomes	Approximately within 6 weeks of submission
All projects completed and acquitted	Within 12 months of signing the funding agreement.

Eligible Projects for All Categories

To be eligible for assessment projects must:

- Have read and understood the Events Strategy and the Local Community Events Grant Program Guidelines.
- Meet the definition of Local Community Event outlined in the Events Strategy.
- Be a not-for-profit³ or a community group
- Complete their activity or project, including acquittal, within 12 months of signing the funding agreement.
- Be conducted solely within Hepburn Shire to the benefit of its residents and local community
- Have an organisation that is a legal entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN). For example; an incorporated body, co-op, trust, or be auspiced by a suitable group.¹
- Have all permits, permissions and approvals for the event.²
- Have valid public liability insurance or can demonstrate the ability to obtain such insurance before the project commences.
- Acknowledge Hepburn Shire Council funding contribution for the event in promotional material.
- Include an invitation to Hepburn Shire representatives in public relations for the project, such as a media release and photo with members of the applicants' organisation and funding representatives.
- Involve community in its planning and implementation.

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

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

³ Your organisation meets the requirements of being a not-for-profit by having specific statements in its governing rules; the not-for-profit and / or dissolution clause
<https://www.ato.gov.au/non-profit/getting-started/is-your-organisation-not-for-profit->

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.
- An activity that already receives or has received monetary from other sources within Hepburn Shire Council, i.e., funding agreements or sponsorship arrangements. (in-kind support can be provided by Council to further support the event, for details please discuss with the Events Officer)
- Applicants that have an outstanding Council grant acquittal or unpaid invoice from Council.
- Events that have already commenced or have been completed.
- Applications made outside the Application Stage closing date.
- Organisations based outside the Shire, unless the Event is of benefit to Hepburn Shire residents.
- Applications completed by a third party on behalf of an applicant will not be considered.

Assessment

- Technical and grant writing support will be made available to applicants before and during the application stage.
- Once submitted, applications are reviewed to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria. Those not meeting the criteria will be notified and will not progress to assessment.

- Eligible applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of Council Officers against the Assessment criteria.
- Applications are ranked by overall average score, with funding allocated to the highest scoring applications until the funding pool or pool of suitable applicants is exhausted.

Assessment Criteria

All Council Grant Programs are assessed against the following Assessment Criteria.

- Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity.
- Demonstrates alignment with the current Hepburn Shire Council Plan and Events Strategy
- Demonstrates a clear benefit to Hepburn Shire Council residents.
- Demonstrates a clear ability to carry out and undertake the project/activity/event through to completion.
- Provides supporting documentation including quotations.
- Demonstrates no ethical or other conflict of interest.
- Local Events grants can only be applied for once in the Callander
- Funding

Applicants will be notified of the assessment panel outcomes within six weeks from submission date. Once notified, successful applicants are required to sign a funding agreement and submit a tax invoice to Council using the Smartygrants platform.

In-kind support may be offered by Council to further support the event. For details, please discuss with the Events Officer.

Acquittal Process

An online acquittal must be completed through the SmartyGrants portal at the conclusion of the funded event.

Successful applicants are required to keep records of all items used and purchased in facilitating the grant project/activity/event and upload these records to our grant's portal as part of the acquittal process.

Not providing an acquittal will impact on future grant submissions from the applicant.

Funding Conditions and Requirements

- All planning and building permits and other applicable authorisations remain the responsibility of the applicant. Evidence of permits / permissions must be provided where relevant and when requested.
- Public Liability Insurance (minimum \$20 million coverage) 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 event. This must be approved by Council's Communications Officer prior to distribution.
- A written invitation submitted [online](#) via Council's website, with a minimum of two weeks' notice, be provided to Hepburn Shire Council for Councillors and Executives to attend openings and events
- 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, e.g., receipts, photographs and an overview of the event.
- Ongoing maintenance and repair costs for equipment purchased with grant funds are the responsibility of the applicant.
- If the planned activity or event is cancelled, or is unable to proceed for any reason, the use of the grant funds will be at the discretion of Council. You must

contact the Grants Officer as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances and any requirements relating to the funding. Funding may be asked to be returned to Council.

For applicants who are 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 includes grants funds from Council and another source of funding; if the external funding source 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, e.g., if you have an impairment that prevents you using the online process.

How to Apply

Visit www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/grants to view the Local Community Events Grants Program page. All grant applications are made through the SmartyGrants portal – [Hepburn Shire Council Grants Portal](#).

Key Council Contacts

Events Officer

Email: events@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 5348 2306

Community Grants Officer

Email: grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 5348 2306

Please get in touch if you would like additional information, or if you require assistance to complete your application.