

# Hepburn Shire Council

## Local Community Events Grants Program Guidelines 2025/26



*Hepburn*  
SHIRE COUNCIL

## Purpose

Hepburn Shire Council's Local Community Events Support Grant Program supports community-based events and initiatives that have a local audience and promote the culturally and artistically vibrant communities of Hepburn Shire.

Council has committed \$20,000 to support community driven events and days of celebration in 2025/2026. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate how their project aligns to the definition of Local Community Events within the Hepburn Shire Events Strategy. Funding is available for projects that can demonstrate benefits to a local audience, 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 Programs, 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 Local Community Events Support Grants Program provides funding annually to community groups and organisations. The application period is open year-round to service events operating during various times of the year.

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

Projects may include:

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

Council invites community groups to submit applications for their project. 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. All applicants are advised to contact Council's Events Officer at [events@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:events@hepburn.vic.gov.au) or the Community Strengthening Officer at [grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au) to ensure that the project meets the funding aims.

### Strategic Alignment

The Local Community Events Support Grants Program aligns with the principles and objectives outlined in the Council Plan and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022-25 and directly aligns with the Events Framework outlined in the Hepburn Shire Council Events Strategy 2022-25.

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.

### Application Process

1. It is strongly encouraged that all applicants contact Council's Community Strengthening Officer or Events Officer to discuss your initial idea for your project, application requirements and the online application process.
2. Applicants deemed eligible will be invited to apply by the Events Officer.
3. Visit: [www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants) for more information.

**Applications not meeting the eligibility guidelines will not be invited to apply.**

## Key Dates

Application Stage Opens	Ongoing
Application Stage Closes	Ongoing
Assessment Panel Convenes	Within 4 weeks of submission
Applicants notified of Assessment Outcomes	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 support Grant Program Guidelines.
- Meet the definition of Local Community Event outlined in the Events Strategy.
- Be a not-for-profit<sup>3</sup> 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.
- 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.<sup>1</sup>
- Have all permits, permissions and approvals for the project.<sup>2</sup>
- Have valid public liability insurance or can demonstrate the ability to obtain such insurance before the project commences.
- Be willing to participate in public relations for the project, including a potential media release and photo with members of the applicants' organisation and funding representatives.
- Involve community in its planning and implementation.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.
- Projects that have already commenced or have been completed.
- Applications made outside the Application Stage closing date.
- Organisations based outside the Shire, unless the Project 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 Hepburn Shire Council Events Strategy 2020-25
- 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.

### Funding

Applicants will be notified of the assessment panel outcomes within 6 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 grants portal as part of the acquittal process.

### 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
- 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 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, e.g., receipts.
- Ongoing maintenance and repair costs for equipment purchased with grant funds are the responsibility of the applicant.

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](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/grants) to view the Local Community Events Support 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](mailto:events@hepburn.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 5348 2306

Community Grants Officer

Email: [grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto: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.