

COMMUNITY GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES POLICY

Policy Ref: QA3004839

Date of Adoption: 25 May 2021

Date of next Review: 25 May 2025

Responsible Officer: Manager Community Planning and Development

This policy complies with the Charter of Human Rights Legislation

INTRODUCTION

This policy relates to the provision of grants and subsidies by Wyndham City Council. Grants and subsidies are provided in order to achieve outcomes towards Council's strategic objectives.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT – PROCUREMENT POLICY

Under Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2020, Councils are required to adopt and comply with a procurement policy. Wyndham City Council's Procurement Policy was adopted in 2019.

Funding provided under the Grants and Subsidies Policy will generally not:

- result in Council acquiring or transfer ownership to Council of any goods, works, or property of other kinds, nor
- perform activities or services for which Council is directly responsible, either through statute or other accepted authority, to deliver to residents; and, as a result, is considered to be outside the definition of 'purchasing goods, services and works'.

As such, grants under this policy are not considered to be required to comply with the Procurement Policy or the requirements of Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2020.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the provision of grants is to support the delivery of aspects of Council's current strategic objectives which have been informed by the *Wyndham 2040 Community Vision*, along but not limited to:

- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Wyndham City Plan
- Wyndham Community Health, Wellbeing and Safety Plan
- Towards Equality
- Accessibility Action Plan 2019-2022
- Wyndham Festival and Events Framework
- Child, Youth and Family Interim Plan 2019-2020
- Family Friendly Cities Charter
- Volunteer Strategy 2019-2024
- Sports Strategy 2045
- Environment & Sustainability Strategy 2016-2040
- Waste and Litter Strategy 2016-2040
- Community Strengthening Policy and Framework
- Social and Economic Inclusion Framework
- Festivals and Events Framework

This includes superseded versions of the above strategies and plans over the life of this policy that can be found at: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/planspoliciesstrategies>

The main grants offered under this policy are Small, Medium and Large Grants. These categories ensure the program is inclusive and broad in scope, encouraging a diversity of applications, whilst encompassing a range of expected outcomes derived from the strategic objectives and council documents listed above. Other Wyndham City policies relevant to this Grants and Subsidies Policy include:

- Procurement Policy;
- Access and Inclusion policies;
- Community Strengthening Policy and Statement; and
- Strengthening Community Service Organisations in Wyndham Strategic Statement

Whilst these plans and strategies have formed the basis for the development of Wyndham City's grants and subsidies, this policy is likely to remain relevant beyond their lifespan. At each review of this policy, strategic objectives will be refreshed to reflect any superseded policies or strategies and consideration will be made for their continued relevance to the policy.

In addition, a mechanism to support identification and promotion of Council annual priority focus areas will be established and communicated to encourage grant applications.

POLICY STATEMENTS

GRANTS

A grant is an arrangement where money is paid by Council to a recipient in order to assist the recipient to achieve its goals as well as to achieve outcomes towards Council's adopted strategic objectives.

Specifically, grants are provided in line with the role of local government in grant giving: to fund projects designed to meet pre-defined community development outcomes. Grants will not be awarded to fund service delivery which is the sole responsibility of State and/or Commonwealth governments, ongoing operational costs or ongoing staffing.

Council does not expect to receive equal economic value directly in return. However, recipients are required to act in accordance with the terms and conditions of agreements including reporting on expenditure.

Council will only provide grants as a result of transparent submission-based processes that meet eligibility criteria, have clear budgets, links to Council's strategic objectives, application processes and application assessment processes.

SUBSIDIES

A **core community subsidy** will be provided to organisations that Council considers to be of significant long-term importance to the community and where Council considers itself to be the most appropriate organisation to provide financial assistance. The categories that these organisations belong to are:

- Not for profit organisations established with Council support to manage Council owned community centres and deliver on their community purpose;
- Key emergency services or organisations that deliver emergency prevention and resilience activities to the Wyndham community; and/or
- Not for profit organisations that provide broad community-based access to physical learning resources in rural Wyndham, or to early years or youth populations.

Organisations may be added to the list of organisations receiving core community subsidies if it is considered that the organisation fits one of the three agreed categories and that adding the organisation will contribute to equity and fairness.

Individual subsidy amounts for each organisation to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and allocated in accordance with this policy and within the parameters of the budget approved by Council.

Core community subsidies will be administered through negotiation of service agreements up to four years. Recipients are required to act in accordance with terms and conditions of agreements including reporting on expenditure as specified.

From time to time, Council may consider adding categories of organisations to those receiving core community subsidies. This may only be achieved through acceptance of a Council report on the matter in relation to long term importance to the community and the appropriateness of Council providing financial assistance.

A **facility subsidy** is an arrangement where a community group is given discounted use of a Council facility or, in special circumstances, an alternative facility. Facility subsidies will be administered through negotiation of user or subsidy agreements. Recipients are required to act in accordance with the terms and conditions of said agreements.

Facility subsidies will only be provided as a result of transparent submission-based processes that meet eligibility criteria, have clear program budgets, links to Council's strategic objectives, eligibility criteria, application processes and application assessment processes.

Specific types of organisations are eligible to apply for facility subsidies, and the list of organisations may be added to from time to time if a community need for access to facilities is identified.

PRINCIPLES OF GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES PROVISION

Wyndham City Council's grants and subsidies will be provided in line with the following principles:

- To minimise cost shifting, funding will not be provided for service delivery which is the sole responsibility of State and/or Commonwealth governments, ongoing operational costs and/or ongoing staffing (See glossary for relevant definitions).
- Access and support will be provided in the application process, particularly to those who are experiencing disadvantage.
- Grant delivery will be governed by specific, documented processes and procedures which promote fairness, transparency and appropriate risk management.
- Private businesses and political organisations are ineligible for all grants, subsidies and sponsorships.
- Activities must demonstrate regard for Council's commitment to work with the community to ensure Wyndham is an inclusive, safe and welcoming city, which celebrates our diverse heritage and cultures and helps residents to stay healthy, active, and connected.
- Projects are expected to contribute to the overarching goals of Wyndham's Community Strengthening Framework – i.e. building organisations, building skills, building equality, building involvement and building identity.
- Both ethno-specific and cultural-specific projects and events may be supported.

FUNDING PRIORITISATION PRINCIPLES

The following principles relate exclusively to the grant programs under this policy (Small, Medium and Large Grants) and funding will only be provided for activities with a defined timeframe and objectives. These principles are not directly relevant to subsidy programs as they explain the basis for assessment and evaluation of fixed-term projects.

To discourage grant recipient dependency, to incentivise applicant and project sustainability, and to encourage key outcomes that benefit the Wyndham community and economy, the following funding priority principles will be included in the application assessment process and funding evaluation framework.

Higher priority will be given to projects that:

- explicitly contribute to Council's strategic objectives and official public communications;
- increase the self-sufficiency of community organisations;
- reduce environmental impact and/or provide energy, water and waste efficiencies;
- build skills, capacity and governance of community groups;
- demonstrate local collaboration and partnerships;
- create and support the establishment of new and innovative community events and festival
- activate places and spaces; and/or
- complement place-based service integration.

Higher priority will be given to applications that demonstrate evidence of:

- procuring goods and services from local businesses, from businesses that are social enterprises and/or Victorian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses;
- planning for respectful Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of lands on which Wyndham City is being built, including budgeting for cultural performances, where appropriate;
- committing to sound environmental practices.

Lower priority will be given to:

- the project outcomes that may duplicate those of existing Council, State or Commonwealth programs;
- applicants who have been awarded a Medium or Large council grant within the previous 12 months; and/or
- activities that have previously been awarded a Medium or Large council grant that are ongoing without an adequate sustainability plan.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

As a minimum requirement to be considered for funding under this policy, the applicant and/or the auspice, where applicable, must:

- have adequate public liability insurance;
- operate within the Wyndham municipality or offer a project in Wyndham, where at least 80 per cent of the targeted participants are Wyndham residents (except Little River community projects);
- have appropriate insurance and adhere to sound workplace health and safety practices (and pandemic regulations and advice when applicable);
- have no debt to council, or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with council, which are being met;
- have met acquittal conditions for previous council grants;
- supply financial statements and other relevant information upon request;
- meet all conditions associated with receiving the grant;
- have its most recent 12 months of financial statements assessed as low risk by council if applying for \$20,000 or more; and
- have not received an offer for sponsorship of a festival or event from council;
- demonstrate the proposed activity is consistent with Local, State and Federal laws, including the Charter Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

Some expenditure is ineligible to be considered as project expenditure for the purpose of a grant application. This includes:

- political activities;
- capital works;
- projects or activities that are the responsibility of the State or Federal Government;
- initiatives that do not focus on or directly benefit the Wyndham community;
- applications where the applicant organisation/s promote and/or benefit directly from electronic gaming machines or activities at a business where these machines operate;
- initiatives that advantage the self-interest of an applicant or that promote the business or profit interest of the applicant or their associates, or where applicant committee/board members make a commercial profit;
- activities benefiting a group that does not have an open membership;
- projects that have already begun prior to a grant application being submitted;
- research that is not primarily focussed on the Wyndham community;
- applications submitted after the closing date;
- applications from schools for curriculum-based activities or where no broader community participation is included;
- requests for ongoing operational costs, including salaries, rent, and insurance etc.;
- applications seeking funding to cover outstanding loans or debts;
- applicant’s public liability insurance or any other insurance policies;
- projects run solely for fundraising purposes, without broader community benefit;
- activities in facilities where little or no public access is available or where accessibility (and facilities) for people with disability is not adequate; and/or
- applicants who fail to provide information requested by Council Officers for the purposes of assessment of funding applications or funded activity progress.

Senior Council Officers involved in the management and assessment of grants can approve reasonable project variation requests that remain aligned with the overall aims of a funded project within their relevant financial delegation level.

CO-FUNDING

Applicants applying for more than \$1,000 are required to co-fund projects as shown below:

Amount of council funding requested	Minimum co-funding requirement
Up to \$1,000	No requirement
\$1,001 - \$15,000	2:1 ratio of council funding to applicant co-funding
\$15,001 - \$40,000	1:1 ratio of council funding to applicant co-funding

Co-funding consists of cash and/or in-kind contributions towards a project or event and can include other grants secured by applicants, sponsorship (except council sponsorship for events and festivals) and other contributions that make up the project or event budgets.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Effective communication and reporting arrangements for grants and subsidies are essential for transparency and public accountability. Wyndham City Council’s website is a key tool in achieving outcomes towards this. In view of this, the following must be provided in an ordered and logical way on council’s website:

- Grants and Subsidies policy;

- Eligibility criteria, Program Guidelines and the online application portal for all programs;
- Previous recipients, funding amounts and project names (for current and previous financial year);
- Opening and closing dates for all application-based programs (where applicable);
- Referral to other opportunities for community to seek resources;
- Contact details for further information and application support for all programs; and
- A summary of the annual program's funded projects.

A mechanism to support identification and promotion of Council annual priority focus areas will be established and communicated to encourage grant applications.

In addition to this, council will ensure that people without direct access to the internet are not disadvantaged in their ability to access grants and subsidies. Council officers will support these applicants to apply online.

After final approval of each Medium Grants' round the Director City Life will immediately provide a list of successful applicants to Councillors.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Each of council's grants and subsidies will be subject to periodic reviews in order to ensure they remain responsive to the community's needs and in line with council's strategic objectives. A live evaluation process will be in place that includes the analysis of program implications that is informed by regular surveying of participants of grants training, applicants and recipients of funding.

The review will include analysis of:

- The relevance of the eligibility criteria;
- The effectiveness of the communication strategy;
- The effectiveness of the application assessment processes;
- Risk management;
- The links between the funded projects and council's strategic objectives; and
- Application and completion report question and response parameters.

Every fourth year, a review will be undertaken that will include evaluation framework findings and broader analysis of feedback from grant and subsidy recipients.

Grant type	Small Grants (Monthly)	Medium Grants (biannual/twice yearly)	Large Grants (Annual)
Amount (GST exclusive)	Up to \$2,000 (Incorporated Organisations only) Up to \$500 (Individuals/non-Incorporated Groups)	Up to \$15,000 80% initial payment / 20% final payment for grants above \$5,000	Up to \$40,000 80% initial payment / 20% final payment for grants above \$5,000
Frequency	Monthly (always open)	Biannual (2 times a year)	Annual (once a year)
Eligibility	Not-for-profit Incorporated Organisations. Individuals and un-Incorporated Groups up to \$500.	Not-for-profit Incorporated Organisations	Not-for-profit Incorporated Organisations
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that build social connections, strengthened community cohesion, encourage inclusion, support people's health and wellbeing, and/or improve sustainability practices and our local natural environment Events and Festivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that build social connections, strengthened community cohesion, encourage inclusion, support people's health and wellbeing, and/or improve sustainability practices and our local natural environment Events and Festivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that build social connections, strengthened community cohesion, encourage inclusion, support people's health and wellbeing, and/or improve sustainability practices and our local natural environment Events and Festivals
Typical projects	As described in Wyndham City communications and/or evidenced as a priority in published Council Strategies and Plans.	As described in Wyndham City communications and/or evidenced as a priority in published Council Strategies and Plans.	As described in Wyndham City communications and/or evidenced as a priority in published Council Strategies and Plans.
Application process	Apply through an online form. Assistance with the application can be provided on request.	Apply during an open round through an online form. Assistance with the application can be provided on request.	Apply during an open round through an online form. Assistance with the application can be provided on request.
Assessment process	Recommendation on eligibility by Grants Officer in collaboration with relevant council staff.	Recommendation by an Assessment Panel of Senior Council Officers.	Recommendation by an Assessment Panel of Senior Council Officers then reviewed by Cr Evaluation Panel followed by an independent review of process and recommendations.
Decision and timing	Final approval by the Director City Life (Approximately 4 weeks)	Final approval by the Director City Life (Approximately 12 weeks)	Final approval by Council at a Council Meeting (Approximately 16 weeks)
Contract	Exchange of Letters	Funding Agreement	Funding Agreement
Responsible Department	Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development

Grant Type	Community Pathways Scholarships	Core Community Subsidy	Facility Subsidy
Amount	Up to \$500 for individuals or up to \$1,000 if auspiced Up to \$1,000 for individuals competing overseas	Case by case basis via needs assessment	Up to 50% of the cost of hire for one full day's hire
Frequency	Fortnightly (always open)	As needed (up to 3 years)	Always Open
Eligibility	Individuals Individuals auspiced by a non-profit organisation Individuals are eligible for a scholarship once per financial year	Not for profit organisations and key emergency services as described in Typical Projects section	Not for profit organisations, schools and Wyndham based emergency services. One event per financial year at Encore Events Centre or Wyndham Cultural Centre.
Purpose	To assist Wyndham residents to progress a pathway in competitive events, the arts, or with their secondary school education	To ensure the ongoing viability of organisations of significant importance to the community and council	To support affordable and equitable access to indoor community activity spaces owned and managed by council
Typical Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals 25 or younger or over 50 competing or officiating in a national or international sport or recreation competition with progressive competition-based entry Emerging professional artists participating in professional development opportunities Community leadership development training, conferences, forums or workshops Students in need of financial support for educational and auxiliary school activity participation costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations established with council support to manage council owned community centres and deliver on their community purpose Key emergency services or organisations that deliver emergency prevention and resilience activities to the Wyndham community The provision of broad community-based access to physical learning resources in rural Wyndham, to early years and youth populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wyndham school performances, graduation ceremonies and formals etc. Local community group events, celebrations and gatherings Emergency service forums and functions
Application process	Through an online form. Assistance with the application can be provided on request	Through an online form. Assistance with the application can be provided on request	Directly to Encore Events Centre or Wyndham Cultural Centre respectively
Assessment process	Recommendation on eligibility by Grants Officer in collaboration with relevant council staff	Recommended by relevant council department	Administrative assessment process
Decision and timing	Final approval by the Manager Community Planning and Development (Approximately 2 weeks)	Final approval by the CEO (Approximately 8 weeks)	Final approval by relevant Coordinator (Approximately 3 weeks)
Contract	Exchange of letters	Funding Agreement	Exchange of letters
Responsible Department	Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development