

## 7.2.2 2024/25 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS- SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER

<b>Responsible Manager:</b>	Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening & Economic Development
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	Russell Hopkins, Director Community Services

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the Quick Response Grant program during the period 3 September to 16 October 2024 to a total of \$11,542.13.**

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program (QRG).

### COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### **Inclusive Services**

Community development and advocacy to support the Monash community.  
Deliver high performing services.  
Fostering an equitable, just and inclusive Monash.

#### **Good Governance**

Ensure a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable organisation.

### BACKGROUND

Monash Council has one of the largest community grant programs in Victoria and is proud of its commitment in supporting and valuing the dedicated community groups and organisations within our municipality.

At its meeting in June 2020 Council endorsed the establishment of a Quick Response Grant program (QRG). The basis for this grant program was to enable the Monash community and Council to remain adaptive and agile in response to COVID and ensure that groups could continue to meet and bring the community together. This program was proven to be extremely successful.

Council, at its meeting in May 2021, endorsed the QRG as a permanent open grant program, utilising the allocated funds each year.

The continuation of the Quick Response Grant Program has enabled Council to continue to support the local community groups and artists to remain agile and innovative. An additional eligibility criterion has been added for the 2024/25 funding year stating projects that have received funding through the QRG in previous years are ineligible.

As per the Guidelines that were endorsed at Council on 28 May 2024 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 June 2024 until 9 May 2025, or until the allocation has been exhausted.
- Applications will be assessed by an internal Council officer panel.
- Applicants will receive a response from Council within six weeks of the application being received.
- After receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2025.
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next applicable Council meeting.

## DISCUSSION

The QRG provides an opportunity for groups or individual artists whose idea, program, or issue falls outside of the normal grant round and previously had no opportunity to apply for funding through Council. By providing this source of funding, it ensures that Council is continuing to remain adaptive and agile to community needs. Community groups and artists can apply for up to \$5,000 in cash and/or in-kind hall hire, with the total budget allocation of \$75,000.

It is important to note that Quick Response Grants were developed for the community to provide innovative projects and are not to be a duplicate of an existing program, whether funded through MCGP or other avenues.

The QRG have been promoted through multiple Monash platforms, including:

- Monash Bulletin
- Monash social media
- Monash Council's website
- As part of a mail out to current grant recipients

The grants opened on 1 June 2024 and will remain open until 9 May 2025 or until the allocations are exhausted.

Three grants have been awarded for the period of 3 September to 16 October 2024.

The assessment criteria consist of the following:

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Relevance to Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
3. The number of Monash residents that will benefit
4. The capacity of the organisation/community/individual to undertake the project
5. Budget expenditure

An evaluation matrix was developed, taking into consideration the guidelines, to ensure the applications were considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. The matrix provides the assessment process with rigour and consistency.

A total of **\$11,542.13** has been awarded to **three** successful applications, outlined in the table below. The amount awarded was determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
<b>SalamFest</b>	Mindful Connections Day	\$3,800.00
<b>We Are One Club</b>	Theatre Play Workshop for Individual of all Abilities	\$4,732.00
<b>Seniors Happy Life Club</b>	Mental Health and Wellbeing for Retirees	\$3,010.13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$11,542.13</b>

Details of the projects as provided by the applicants are as follows:

*SalamFest (2425QRG041) - \$3,800.00*

Mindful Connections Day is a one-day mental health session dedicated to the City of Monash senior citizens and the project will be delivered on 9 February 2025. Organised by SalamFest, this event is designed to address the pressing issue of loneliness, which significantly impacts the mental health of older adults. Many senior citizens experience feelings of isolation, leading to a decline in their emotional well-being. Understanding the need for connection and empathy, SalamFest has decided to bring this project to the City of Monash to create a safe and supportive environment where seniors can engage with others who share similar life experiences. The session will be guided by a mental health facilitator or counsellor from SalamFest, who will begin with a brief lecture on mental health, its various aspects, and the importance of maintaining it as we age.

This introduction will cover essential topics such as:

1. The categories of mental health
2. Common challenges faced by seniors
3. Practical strategies for improvement.

Following the lecture, the facilitator will lead participants through a series of carefully designed activities that encourage natural, unforced responses, allowing the seniors to express themselves comfortably. These activities are crafted to avoid causing discomfort or offense, ensuring that every participant feels safe and respected. As the session progresses and the seniors begin to feel more at ease, they will be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings with the group. This open dialogue will not only help individuals articulate their emotions but also foster connections among the participants, as they empathize with one another's experiences. By the end of the day, the event aims to leave the senior citizens with a renewed sense of belonging and the beginnings of meaningful social relationships, ultimately contributing to their overall mental well-being.

*We Are One Club (2425QRG046) – \$4,732.00*

This project is an inclusive initiative to unite people with disabilities and seniors from diverse backgrounds. This project aims to foster connection, build confidence, and enhance communication skills through the theatre play workshop.

Objectives:

1. **Promote Inclusivity:** Create a welcoming environment where participants from various backgrounds and abilities can come together and share their stories.
2. **Build Confidence:** Encourage participants to express themselves creatively, helping them to build self-esteem and confidence.
3. **Enhance Communication Skills:** Use theatre exercises and performances to improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills among participants.
4. **Foster Social Connections:** Provide a platform for participants to form meaningful connections and friendships, reducing social isolation.

Activities:

**Weekly Workshops:** Conduct regular theatre workshops focusing on different aspects of performance, including acting, singing, dancing, voice modulation, and body language.

**Collaborative Performances:** Organize group performances where participants can showcase their talents and work together towards a common goal.

**Community Events:** Host community events where participants can perform for an audience, promoting the capabilities and talents of people with disabilities, their hard work, and dedication. It will be a beacon of inspiration, encouraging others with disabilities to pursue their passions and dreams.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem among participants.
- Improved communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Stronger social connections and reduced feelings of isolation.
- Enhanced understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and abilities within the community.

Therefore, this project is more than just a series of workshops; it is a community-building initiative that celebrates diversity and inclusivity. It aims to break down stereotypes and demonstrate that everyone can achieve great things regardless of their abilities and backgrounds.

*Seniors Happy Life Club (2425QRG050) – \$3,010.13*

The Community Connection Promotion Project aims to promote the community connection for local residents. We have been delivering dancing, outings, workshops and board games activities in Brandon Park Community Centre and Glen Waverley Community Centre for 2 years. Now we have a group of music lovers need a hall to play music and to sing songs, and we need another hall to play music instruments for them to keep their hobbies. Playing music is a good way to keep brain function and stay away from dementia. This project is open to the public and will help them build social connection and promote their health surely. This project will include an event of Chinese traditional Spring Festival Celebration and 8 times Healthy Eating workshops, 2 mental health workshop and 4 law workshops.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2024/25 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$75,000, of which \$11,542.13 has been allocated in this period, with a remaining budget for the program of \$47,170.13.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Monash Quick Response Grants program is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy that has been implemented with the intention of supporting the Council Plan as well as Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan and other relevant strategic documents. The Program encourages community connectivity and participation, as well as focusing Council's support on community groups most in need. The MCGP Policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the changing needs of both Council and the community.

## **CONSULTATION**

Community consultation was not required.

## **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Monash community sector has a rich history of innovation and promoting community participation. The QRG program enables Council to be adaptive to the community's needs and for many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively for their members and local community.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS**

The 2024/25 Quick Response Grants Program is entirely consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In particular, the program supports -

- freedom of expression;
- peaceful assembly and freedom of association;
- taking part in public life; and
- cultural rights

## **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The QRG is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). As these programs are both focused on having a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a gender impact assessment (GIA) was undertaken in September 2023. This was included in the MCGP Service Improvement Report, which was tabled at the October 2023 Council meeting.

As per the previous GIA we are continuing to collect data on how projects address gender inequality, how inclusive/accessible they are and the anticipated reach of the projects by gender.



## **CONCLUSION**

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the 3 September to 16 October 2024 are presented to Council within the available budget.

## **ATTACHMENT LIST**

Nil