

7.2.1 2024/25 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS - DECEMBER/JANUARY

Responsible Manager:	Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening & Economic Development
Responsible Director:	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 from 11 December 2024 to 10 January 2025 to a total of \$7,056.30.

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 11 December 2024 to 10 January 2025.

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 **\$7,056.30** 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
Melbourne Chinese Drama Play Group	The Fate of April	\$2,556.30
Chinese Professionals Club of Australia	Ballroom Dancing, Percussion Music Practice, and Photography Exhibition	\$2,000.00
Glen Waverley Happy Seniors Association	Building Community and Enhancing Senior Wellbeing	\$2,500.00
TOTAL		\$7,056.30

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

Melbourne Chinese Drama Play Group (2425QRG061) - \$2,556.30

We are excited to announce an upcoming event featuring the performance of the captivating drama “The Fate of April.” Set against the evocative backdrop of the Republic of China era, this play delves into the intricate and often tumultuous lives of the prominent Chinese poet Xu Zhimo (the first divorced man in Chinese history) and three pivotal famous women - Zhang Youyi (the first divorced woman by her ex-husband in Chinese history, and later on, the first Chinese female bank CEO); Lin Huiyin (the first Chinese female architect who designed the Chinese national emblem), and Lu Xiaoman (a well-known Chinese female painter). Through their stories, the drama explores the multifaceted nature of love, the profound sources of artistic inspiration, and the inevitable twists of fate that shape their destinies. Xu Zhimo’s arranged marriage with Zhang Youyi highlights the constraints of traditional societal norms and the struggle for personal freedom. His passionate yet unfulfilled love for Lin Huiyin reveals the delicate balance between artistic muse and unattainable desire. Finally, his turbulent relationship with Lu Xiaoman underscores love's intense, often destructive nature and the ultimate price of pursuing one’s heart. Each relationship is portrayed with tenderness and the volatility of an April breeze - gentle yet unpredictable, beautiful yet fleeting. As their stories unfold, the audience is invited to reflect on the ephemeral nature of human connections and the enduring impact of love and loss. “The Fate of April” is a poignant journey through a historical period rich with passion, creativity, and the inevitable dance of destiny. This event aims to bring to life the emotional depth and the historical significance of these intertwined lives, offering a powerful narrative that resonates with contemporary audiences.

Chinese Professionals Club of Australia (2425QRG064) – \$2,000.00

This project is primarily for 2 new activity teams, the ball dancing team and the percussion music team which were formed earlier in the year, and whose space requirements were not available to be incorporated into the 24/25 space requirements planning of our Club. The ballroom dancing group has very quickly attracted about 100 members. Ballroom dancing is a much-loved performance and socialisation activity which helps promote social interactions, as well as the health and wellbeing of the participants. Being an internationally recognized and widely accepted form of dancing, it also promotes cross-cultural socialisation in the local community. The percussion music team, currently mainly

using various drums, is more reflective of a Chinese cultural tradition. A third activity team, the photography group, will also participate in the project on a less frequent basis.

Seniors Happy Life Club (2425QRG050) – \$2,500.00

We propose the establishment of the Glen Waverley Happy Senior Association to support over 100 local seniors in fostering community engagement, improving well-being, and enhancing quality of life.

Who We Serve: This initiative is for senior residents of Glen Waverley, many of whom face challenges such as isolation and limited social opportunities. With 113 current members and an estimated 50-60 additional members joining post-registration, the association will provide a welcoming space for seniors to connect and thrive.

What We Will Do - We will offer a variety of organised activities, including:

- Health and Wellness Programs: Morning exercises and group hikes.
- Interest-Based Groups: Cooking, knitting, music, photography, and English language learning.
- Social and Cultural Events: Reading circles, group games, and celebrations.
- Community Engagement: Tree planting, neighbourhood clean-ups, and professional lectures on health and seniors' policies.
- Support Services: Access to counselling and assistance for members.

Expected Outcomes: Our activities aim to reduce loneliness, promote physical and mental health, and build a strong, supportive community. We expect these efforts to contribute to happier, healthier seniors who remain active and engaged in society, thereby reducing healthcare costs and enriching the local community. To achieve these goals, we request Council support in the form of financial assistance for programs and events, and a communication channel for updates and collaboration. With your support, the Glen Waverley Happy Senior Association will become a vital resource for our senior community.

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 \$7,056.30 has been allocated in this period, and the overall allocations for the 2024/25 year totalling \$34,886.07. The remaining budget for the program is \$40,113.83.

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 from December 2024 to January 2025 are presented to Council within the available budget.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil