

7.2.2 2024/25 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS - JANUARY/FEBRUARY

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 January 2025 to February 2025 to a total of \$14,585.45.

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 January 2025 to February 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 **\$14,585.45** has been awarded to four 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
Bengali Association of Victoria	BAV Cultural Evening	\$2,990.00
Zabava	Wide Maslenitsa Festival	\$1,995.45
St Christophers Catholic Church Syndal	Food, Fun and Friendship	\$4,600.00
Art Studio 48	Street Numbers for Kerrie Road Strip Shops and Workshops for Kerrie Neighbourhood House	\$5,000.00
TOTAL		\$14,585.45

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

Bengali Association of Victoria (2425QRG066) - \$2,990.00

BAV has planned to host a very special event that will be held over two evenings at the Clayton Community Centre. The event will have three distinct segments: a Bengali Drama, Traditional Cultural Dance and Indian Classical music. All performers are from the Indian community who are working tirelessly for the success of this event. The drama is specially targeted to the improvement of the mental health and wellbeing of women. It is expected to bring forth honest portrayals of mental illness, spreading awareness to the women within the wider Indian community, sharing the deeply personal stories of those who have endured the issues and also addressing them. It will portray how the modern women can through the society's support be empowered to overcome the challenges in practical life to improve their mental wellbeing in a positive way. The Cultural dance focuses on the joyful aspects of Indian culture and will be aimed at the community as a whole. The classical musical segment will have a great calming effect on all community members including the aged and the young. a soothing effect on the mind and body. It can help to reduce stress and anxiety by allowing the listeners to focus on the present moment and the music. The music from the classical sitar will have a meditative effect on the minds of all, helping to clear the mind and reduce distractions. Music is the only vehicle that will take one's soul into a state of silence and peace. The classical instrumental music will make the community members more delighted and would be a fantastic positive to their mental well-being.

Zabava (2425QRG068) – \$1,995.45

The "Wide Maslenitsa" Festival project is a vibrant celebration of Slavic culture designed to unite the Slavic community in Monash and introduce the broader Victorian community to its rich traditions. This event will feature various cultural activities, including performances of traditional folk songs, humorous tunes (chastushki), storytelling, theatrical acts with traditional characters like Jesters and Petrushka, folk and round dances, and a pancake-tasting contest. A complimentary buffet with traditional Slavic cuisine will also be offered. The primary beneficiaries of this event are the local Slavic community, families with special needs, and culturally curious individuals from diverse backgrounds. The event aims to strengthen cultural identity among Slavic residents while fostering inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding. Expected outcomes include increased awareness and appreciation

of Slavic traditions, stronger community connections, and enhanced engagement between Slavic and non-Slavic residents in Monash. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of Slavic culture, having participated in interactive activities that showcase the diversity and vibrancy of Slavic heritage. This project aims to celebrate multiculturalism, build bridges between communities, and promote a sense of belonging and inclusivity for all participants.

St Christophers Catholic Church Syndal (2425QRG065) - \$4,600.00

Bringing culture and community together to promote targeted food education, healthy eating across all life stages (including enabling new mums to eat for breastfeeding, preventing chronic health conditions like diabetes obesity and hypertension), and encourage use of healthy local sustainable and affordable meals and recipes. This in turn would foster neighbourhood connections among different racial communities by sparking curiosity of new cultures through experiencing new cuisines introduced in the 'Food Fun and Friendships' program. Cooking skills are lifelong learning for a healthy individual. Our mission is to ensure this will be a part of everyone's daily lifestyle. We also aim to aid in the learning of permaculture, composting, food waste and recycling in its connection to climate change. Our program also aims to include people from all walks of life, such as new mothers, lonely individuals, new immigrants, LGBTIQ+ etc., through the art and creativity of cooking food. Food makes people feel cared for and we encourage people to reach out in hard times and let others in so they can build quality relationships.

Goals of our program:

- bring community together
- combat loneliness
- learn to cook easy meals on a budget and healthy meals at home
- share stories and life experiences
- promote racial tolerance and interculturism

*Art Studio 48 (2425QRG019) - \$5,000.00**

I am writing to apply for the Quick Response Grant to fund my Community Project, which aims to use mosaic street numbers for strip shops in Kerrie Rd, and to run mosaic workshops from the Kerrie Rd Neighbourhood House. The project aims to beautify the strip shop community by using large, individualised mosaic street numbers for each of the participating businesses. The strip shop community is an important part of our local area, and it often lacks visual appeal. Through the project, we hope to make the community more vibrant and attractive to shoppers, as well as offering free mosaic workshops for the community, through Kerrie Neighbourhood House. The numbers are 34cm large and will be created individually for each business. The project will be completed within 30- 40 days. We believe that this project will have a positive impact for the health and wellbeing of the community, by bringing people together at the Neighbourhood House to create their own small mosaic project for their enjoyment, and for no fee. The Neighbourhood House Community is happy to promote these workshops through their newsletter. The proposed grant will be used to cover the cost of materials, including tiles, adhesive, grout, and workshops, as well as the artist's time and expertise. The estimated budget for the project

is \$5000. We believe that this project will have a positive impact on the community, creating a sense of pride, and belonging amongst residents and businesses. It will encourage visitors to explore the area and support local businesses. Thank you for considering this project as worthy of the Quick Response Grant. I look forward to the opportunity to bring this exciting project to life.

**Please note that the Art Studio 48 application was approved in August 2024, but was missed being included in the Council report for that period.*

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 **\$14,585.45** has been allocated in this period, and the overall allocations for the 2024/25 year totalling **\$49,471.52**. The remaining budget for the program is **\$25,528.38**.

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 January 2025 to February 2025 are presented to Council within the available budget.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil