

2.1 MONASH COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM POLICY & TERMS OF REFERENCE (SW)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of both the Monash Community Grants Program Policy and the Terms of Reference for the Community Grants Program Evaluation Panel. This report also requires Council to note the key stages of the 2019/20 MCGP grants round, which is scheduled to open for submission of applications on Monday 29 October 2018.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) has been a major source of funding of the Monash Community since 1995. The program aims to:

- develop partnerships between Council and community groups to achieve Council's strategic directions;
- direct resources to both the emerging and specific needs of disadvantaged groups;
- develop a positive approach to the resolution of local social issues;
- support local groups, activities and community connectedness; and
- support community organisations to develop skills and increase community participation.

The MCGP primarily provide funding for small to medium sized projects, events and initiatives that respond to the social, cultural, recreational and economic needs of Monash residents.

The next round of the Monash Community Grants Program will fund activities occurring between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020. This round will open for applications on Monday 29 October 2018, closing on Friday 7 December 2018. All applications will be administered online via Smarty Grants.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2019/20 Monash Community Grant Program is anticipated to have a total budget allocation of \$2,596,520.49, subject to the adoption of the 2019/20 Council operational budget in June 2019.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council endorses the Monash Community Grants Policy and the Terms of Reference for the Community Grants Program Evaluation Panel, and that it notes the key stages of the 2019/20 round.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the 2019/20 Monash Community Grants Program Policy;*
- 2. Adopts the Terms of Reference for the 2019/20 Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel; and*
- 3. Notes the proposed stages and key timelines for the 2019/20 Round.*

INTRODUCTION

Each year Council provides funding to local organisations and community groups through the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy and the Terms of Reference for the Community Grants Program Evaluation Panel. This report seeks to summarise the funding principles and program framework outlined in the Policy, the associated governance considerations, as well as the key stages of the 2019/20 round of grants. Key stages include the launch of the new round, application open and closing dates, assessment and evaluation timelines, and the timing of notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

The MCGP Policy has been informed by learnings from previous funding rounds, by best practice benchmarking with other Councils delivering similar grants programs and through alignment with Council's current strategic direction. The MCGP is designed to encourage community applicants to seek funding to address existing and emerging needs within our community.

BACKGROUND

The Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) has been a major source of funding to the Monash community since 1995 and aims to:

- a) develop partnerships between Council and community groups to achieve Council's strategic directions;
- b) support local groups, activities and foster community connectedness;
- c) support community organisations to develop skills and increase community participation;
- d) direct resources to address the needs of both emerging and disadvantaged groups; and
- e) develop a positive approach to the resolution of local social issues;

These community grants primarily provide funding for small to medium sized projects and initiatives that respond to the social, cultural, creative and recreational needs of Monash residents.

DISCUSSION

The Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP) has been running annually since 1995. The MCGP has been delivered in its current programmatic format since 2014/15, when Council transitioned the grants program to a financial-year funding model. At the same time, Council implemented the SmartyGrants grant management system, enabling online applications and administration of funding.

Each year, community-based organisations operating within the City of Monash are invited to apply for funding to support their projects, activities, events and/or services.

All applications must meet eligibility criteria; the most significant of which relate to the organisation type, location of funded project and insurance coverage. A full list of eligibility criteria is outlined in the MCGP Policy (Attachment 1).

The MCGP allows for cash and in-kind grants to be allocated across eight (8) funding categories:

- Community Strengthening;
- Community Partnerships: Specialist Services;
- Community Partnerships: Neighbourhood Houses;
- Positive Ageing;
- Arts and Cultural Projects;
- Community Events;
- Major Festivals; and
- Active Projects.

Details of each of the categories' objectives, assessment criteria and types of funding available are outlined in the MCGP Policy (Attachment 1). To be considered for funding, projects/services must be consistent with Council's strategic plans and policy positions.

The MCGP is a competitive, fair and equitable funding program. All applications are assessed on their individual merit however not all applications received can be funded, as typically, the total value of funding requests received via the MCGP far exceed the available program budget.

Program Timelines

The proposed timeline of key milestones of the 2019/20 Grants Round is outlined below:

Milestone	Date
'Invitation to Apply' letters sent to all previous applicants	28 September 2018
Advertising Campaign	28 September 2018 – 3 December 2018
Information Sessions & Application Support Workshops	15 October 2018 – 3 December 2018
Applications Open For Submissions via SmartyGrants	29 October 2018 – 7 December 2018
Pre-eligibility Checks & Officer Assessment of Applications	10 December 2018 – 1 February 2019

Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel meetings <i>Grant Allocations recommended</i>	4 February 2019 – 22 February 2019
Report to Council <i>Grant Allocations endorsed</i>	March 2019
Letters of Advice (In-Principle Funding) <i>Letters sent to all Successful & Unsuccessful applicants</i>	April 2019
MCGP 2019/20 Budget Adopted	25 June 2019
Confirmation of Funding <i>Funding Agreements sent out to all 2019/20 Grant Recipients</i>	1 July 2019

Support for Applicants

All potential applicants will be able to seek direct assistance from Council officers in the following ways:

- **MCGP Information Presentations:**

Two (2) Information Presentations will be held in October. These presentations will be open to any interested community groups or organisations to attend and will provide an overview of the Monash Community Grants Program. Officers from the MCGP team will host the presentations, and will cover eligibility, categories of funding, priorities of Council and application requirements.

- **Grant Planning Workshops:**

Grant Planning Workshops will be open to all potential applicants to attend. These workshops are an opportunity for potential applicants to book in to speak with officers from the MCGP team, to discuss their grant ideas and seek advice on eligibility, alignment with Council priorities and guidance for project planning and application preparation. These sessions will run regularly throughout the application open period (between 29 October and 7 December 2018).

- **Application Support Sessions**

For applicants less confident about accessing and completing the Smarty Grants online application forms, officers will provide one-on-one assistance at these sessions, to assist groups to complete their application form. These sessions will run regularly throughout the application open period (between 29 October and 7 December 2018).

- **One-on-one Assistance:**

On request, applicants can make an appointment with MCGP officers to discuss their proposed application. This option is particularly suitable for applicants who would prefer the support of an interpreter or may require other assistance.

It should be noted that the multi-year grants (which are provided to the majority of applicants under the Positive Ageing, Specialist Services and Neighbourhood Houses categories) are not due for reapplication until the 2020/21 round. Direct assistance, however will still be provided to these grants recipients outside those opportunities outlined above to support these groups to complete annual reporting and acquittal requirements and to renew hall hire booking, where applicable.

Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel

Council will determine the Councillor membership of the 2019/20 Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel during the annual process for the allocation of Council committees, anticipated to occur in November 2018.

This report seeks endorsement of the Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel Terms of Reference (Attachment 2), which guides the governance of the Evaluation Panel and their role in the Monash Community Grants Program delivery.

Commencing in February 2019, Council officers will convene a series of Evaluation Panel meetings (3-4 as required) and provide administrative support to the Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel throughout the entire evaluation process.

Once the Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel has reviewed all grant requests (taking into consideration the officer assessment of each application), the Evaluation Panel will submit a report to Full Council, seeking their endorsement for the Evaluation Panel's funding recommendations.

Advice to Applicants

Following Council endorsement of the panel recommendations, all applicants will receive advice of the outcome of their application, whether successful or unsuccessful. If successful, this initial advice is to be considered 'in-principle' funding, pending adoption of the 2019/20 Council Budget in June 2019. Following the budget adoption, formal Funding Agreement documentation will be sent to all approved grants recipients.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The provision of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy (Attachment 1) is based on Council's values and strategic objectives outlined in the Monash Council Plan 2017 – 2021, in particular "*An Inclusive Community*".

Monash Council has a proud history of working in partnership with community-based organisations to meet the needs of local residents and to deliver positive community outcomes. To further strengthen this partnership approach, as per the Monash Community Grants Program Policy framework, organisations seeking funding will be required to demonstrate how their project/initiative will support key Council strategies including but not limited to:

- The Council Plan 2017 - 2021;
- A Healthy And Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021;
- The Public Health Approach to Gambling Policy 2016-2020; and
- The Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The social implications of the Monash Community Grants Program are significant. Grant funding will:

- Strengthen a sense of community by facilitating cultural and artistic activities, stakeholder participation, recognition of diversity, cultural heritage and social cohesion;
- Provide support for community services to support the diverse needs of our Monash community (e.g. children and families, young people, elderly people and people with disabilities), and facilitate the accessibility of community services;
- Strengthen community health and well-being through public safety initiatives and facilitate participation of community members in healthy lifestyles and community festivals; and
- Foster education and skills development by supporting the number and quality of education options for the community in life-long learning opportunities.

In response to the needs of local services, Council has maintained its priority of supporting agencies and groups that are locally focussed and responsive to municipal needs.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The 2019/20 Monash Community 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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2019/20 Monash Community Grant Program is anticipated to have a total budget allocation of \$2,596,520.49, subject to the adoption of the 2019/20 Council operational budget in June 2019.

CONCLUSION

The Monash Community Grants Program is a major community development and capacity building program for the Monash Community that recognises and supports the voluntary and community sector in Monash.

In 2019/20 Council expects to allocate \$2,596,520.49 in community grants to enable local organisations and community groups to deliver programs and activities, promoting wellbeing and social inclusion and produce arts and cultural activities for Monash residents to participate in. Council will allocate these funds under the Monash Community Grants Program Policy. This program enables Council to support and work collaboratively with local agencies and service providers, utilising their expertise, with the aim of delivering services in response to community need.

The 2019/20 Monash Community Grants Program will open for submission of applications from Monday 29 October 2018 and close on Friday 7 December 2018.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Monash Community Grants Program Policy

Attachment 2: Monash Community Grants Evaluation Panel Terms of Reference