

2.7 2020/21 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

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

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants were designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

15 applications were assessed between the period of 1 July – 12 August 2020 and funding of \$17,600 has been awarded to five successful applications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2020/21 Monash Community Grants Program budget with an allocation of \$135,000.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 1 July – 12 August 2020 are presented to Council within the available budget, recognising the implications on future Council budgets given the impact of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures currently in place.

These projects have demonstrated how resilient, adaptive and caring the Monash community is during this challenging time.

2.7 2020/21 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program for the period 1 July – 12 August 2020 to a total of \$17,600.

INTRODUCTION

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

BACKGROUND

Monash Council is committed to supporting the community to adapt positively to the challenges of COVID-19. The Quick Response Grants were designed to support the adaptation and continuation of local community groups and individual creative efforts to help build community resilience, cohesion and connectedness during and after the pandemic.

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. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program has enabled Council to continue to support the local community groups and artists to remain agile and innovative as they respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

Council endorsed the program guidelines at its Meeting of 9 June 2020:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 July 2020 until the allocation has been exhausted
- Applications will be assessed by an internal Council Officer Panel
- Applicants will receive a response from Council within four weeks of the application being received
- Once receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2021
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next applicable Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

The current COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges for Council and community alike, both from an operational and economic perspective. Council is acutely aware of the importance of many of our community groups and the role that they play in combating social isolation and loneliness amongst our community members.

The establishment of a Quick Response Grant Program (QRG) has enabled our community to apply for a once-off grant of up to \$5,000 for a project that demonstrates innovation in response to the impact of COVID-19 on their group and our local community.

It is important to note that Quick Response Grants were developed for the community to provide innovative ways to respond to the issues that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 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:

- July Bulletin
- Monash social media – Facebook, Instagram and twitter
- As part of a mail out to current grant recipients
- Art & About e-newsletter

The grants opened on 1 July 2020 and will remain open until the allocation of \$135,000 is exhausted.

15 applications were received via the SmartyGrants portal for the period 1 July – 12 August. Applications were assessed by an internal officer assessment panel.

The assessment criteria consists of the following;

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Demonstrated response to the impacts of COVID-19 on an organisation/community
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, ensuring the applications were considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. This provided the assessment process with rigour and consistency.

A total of **\$17,600** has been awarded to has successful applications, outlined in the table below. These amounts were determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

Recipient	Project Name	Amount Awarded
Tasmina Khan Majiles	Zoom Art Journal	\$1,600.00
Subramanya Sastry	Raga Series	\$3,500.00
Mt Waverley Cricket Club	Getting our Club COVID-19 Ready	\$2,700.00
Cameron Noble	Monash Social Distance Music Project	\$4,800.00
Kate Elise Ashforth	Treasures of Oakleigh	\$5,000.00
	Total	\$17,600.00

Details of these projects are as follows:

Tasmina Khan Majles (2021QRG0012) – \$1,600.00

Tasmina is a professional visual artist with a Masters in Creative Arts by research (painting) and she would like to present an online based zoom art project 'Zoom Art Journal', targeting mainly youth and mothers living in the City of Monash Council. Classes will be limited to 20 participants, from the age of 18 and above, both male & female. Mental health has taken centre stage in this Pandemic. These 1 hour art sessions will be focussed to engage the community through creativity and improve mental health and overall wellbeing. The art sessions will be focussed methods that would help distress, process emotional pain, encourage new ways to express and enhance self-awareness. Six zoom art sessions will be facilitated over 6 weeks.

Subramanya Sastry (2021QRG0003) – \$3,500.00

In conjunction with Multicultural Arts Victoria's (MAV) Raga Series, Subu will present 'Bamboo Flute for Mental Health' targeting the Monash community in a virtual guided meditative environment. The project will connect individuals of all age groups and elevate mental, physical as well as emotional well-being especially during these stressful times. The intent of the project is to use Indian classical music - focusing majorly on the bamboo flute and other instruments to promote a meditative environment for mental well-being.

He wishes to apply his knowledge of the ragas (scale patterns) and carefully curate/host an online web series of two episodes structured around addressing different mental health such as anxiety and depression. Each Raga, tapping into the ancient Indian wisdom, has been constructed to evoke a certain healing response. Episodes will feature a local artists Sam Hartley (Pianist), Ravi Madhawan (Tabla player) or a guest (who is experienced in the mental health sector) and will explore more intricate concepts. This series will be made available on MAV's website; via the council's social media platforms (TBC); and through local and community networks. The benefit of live streaming these episodes allows for organic discussion and can engage with viewers with any questions they may have. They may focus on specific elements of the raga upon request, but the intent is to keep the session loosely structured and interactive.

Mt Waverley Cricket Club (2021QRG0019) – \$2,700.00

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way our community operates and behaves in ways that many of us cannot put into historical perspective – at least not in our living memories. The effect of the pandemic in our community has been serious and widely felt. Many people have lost their jobs, businesses have been under enormous pressure and the winter sports have had their seasons cancelled or significantly interrupted.

Mt Waverley CC seeks funding to help support the changes the Club will need to make in order to meet the evolving requirements in response to COVID-19, and to ensure our community and its members are safe. These include a shift to video conferencing, the capacity to film / stream virtual training sessions to promote activity throughout the community, engage a number of mental health speakers to come and talk to address social isolation and mental health for players, families and supporters, as well as developing the capability to have contactless training records to assist with contact tracing.

Cameron Noble (2021QRG0028) – \$4,800.00

Work with local artists via zoom to create a music project, to tell the story our creatives have faced during 2020/covid19.

This will be an at home project, engaging local singers & musicians to collaborate and record a song together. Due to the COVID19 impact, creatives have been unable to collaborate easily, and this project will teach how all artists can work together online to create a great body of work.

Kate Elise Ashforth (2021QRG0029) – \$5,000.00

Kate will create an art walk where people are drawn to particular shops in Oakleigh that are usually frequented during busier times. The art will be based on the people who work in these places; the characters and offerings that reside there. A2 art will be designed around interviewing staff and the products and services they provide. Quotes of hope and positivity would potentially be a part of these artworks.

As Kate is a local practicing artist, she knows the people that live within the perimeters of Oakleigh central, and will also be connected to Council's Place Making and Economic Development teams. Areas like the market, the donut shop, the bread shop, particular restaurants, and coffee shops need people to be drawn to them for a reason. She hopes locals can take photos of themselves in front of local businesses and artworks they are drawn to. A hashtag can be attached to this and linked to Instagram.

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 A Healthy & Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan and other relevant strategic documents.

The Program encourages community connectivity and participation, as well as focusing Council's support on the groups most in need. The MCGP Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the changing needs of both Council and the community.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash community sector has a history of innovation and promoting community participation. The establishment of a Quick Response Grant will enable many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively to the impact that COVID-19 has had on their members and local community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The 2020/21 Monash Quick Response Grants Program addresses the four key themes: freedom, respect, equality and dignity of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of **\$135,000**, of which **\$17,600** has been allocated in this period. This leaves a remaining pool of **\$117,400** available.

CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 1 July – 12 August 2020 are presented to Council within the available budget, recognising the implications on future Council budgets given the impact of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures currently in place.

These projects have demonstrated how resilient, adaptive and caring the Monash community is during this challenging time.