

STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
2 JUNE 2008 **POLICY AND PLANNING**

A7 **2008/2009 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
COMMUNITY GRANTS ASSESSMENT
PANEL AND PROGRAM
RECOMMENDATIONS**

LOCATION/ADDRESS:

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **GEOFF OULTON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
PLANNING**

AUTHOR: **MICHELLE ALCHIN COORDINATOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY
AND PROGRAMS**

FILE NO.:

ATTACHMENTS: **ATTACHMENT 1: COMMUNITY GRANTS
ASSESSMENT PANEL TERMS OF
REFERENCE**

**ATTACHMENT 2:2008/09 ASSESSMENT
PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
FUNDING - CONFIDENTIAL**

**ATTACHMENT 3: 2008 COMMUNITY
GRANTS PANEL REPORT**

**ATTACHMENT 4: FUNDING STATS BY
PRIMARY TARGET GROUP**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks Council's endorsement of the recommendations of the 2008/09 Community Grants Program.
- 1.2. The City of Port Phillip Community Grants Program Assessment Panel meets annually. Their role is to assess and make recommendations to Council to fund successful applications for programs to be delivered by local not-for-profit community groups during 2008/09.
- 1.3. This report also presents the 2008 Annual Report of the Community Grants Program Assessment Panel.
- 1.4. Community representation on the assessment panel is sought through a publicly advertised expression of interest process, for a two year term. This is the first year of a new two year term for current community representation on the assessment panel.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Community Grants Assessment Panel

- 2.1. The City of Port Phillip has a tradition of incorporating community contribution to decision making within the Community Grants Program in partnership with Council Officers and Councillors.
- 2.2. Community representation on the Assessment Panel is for a two year term as noted in the Terms of Reference (Attachment 1).

Community Grants Program

- 2.3. The aim of the Annual Community Grants Program is to support a broad range of initiatives that respond to community identified needs and enhance the health and wellbeing of the Port Phillip community. Local not-for-profit groups and organizations that provide services to Port Phillip residents can apply for up to \$10,000 in funding.
- 2.4. There has been \$232,106 allocated to the budget estimates process for the 2008/2009 Community Grants Program.
- 2.5. Aligning with Council's commitment to social justice, \$26,000 of the total allocation has been quarantined this year for targeted programs which have received long term funding through the Community Grants Program. These programs support some of the municipality's most disadvantaged people.
- 2.6. Total funding for allocation by the community grants assessment panel was \$206,106.
- 2.7. Council has received 113 applications from 72 Community groups and organisations requesting \$355,714 in funding from the 2008/2009 Community Grants Program. This report outlines the assessment panel's recommendations to fund 87 of the 113 applications to 62 organisations to a total of \$206,106 from the 2008/09 budget allocation (Attachment 2). 67% of funded applications received their full request.
- 2.8. The numbers of applications were lower this year and should be seen in the context of changes to community grants program design and also community service planning:
 - 2.8.1. Quarantined funding meant that approximately 10-12 projects were not involved in the application process;
 - 2.8.2. There were 15 applications for \$9.5 - \$10,000, an unprecedented number compared to previous years. Some organisations who applied for this amount tended not to submit numerous small applications for numerous smaller projects - a change from previous years.
- 2.9. Applications were sought for projects that contribute to the building of stronger communities and respond to a range of priorities as outlined below:
 - Are new and innovative

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- Promote and support volunteerism as an integral part of wellbeing and active citizenship
- Increase the participation of and inclusion of communities who may be marginalised, disadvantaged or have special needs
- Increase the participation of and inclusion of disengaged communities (geographic communities or communities of interest)
- Support environmental sustainability
- Address issues of food security ie. Access for all people to regular healthy and nutritious meals
- Improve the health and well being of all residents and particularly those living in public or community housing, supported residential services, rooming houses and aged care facilities
- Promote reconciliation with Port Phillip's Indigenous communities and encourage understanding between different religious and cultural communities
- Support the shared interests of different generations eg. Grandparents and grand children
- Increase participation of the community in recreation and physical activity
- Support and strengthen the capacity of local community organisations and groups
- Demonstrate multi-agency or a group partnership in program planning and delivery
- Extraordinary – This priority is for initiatives that are extraordinary in nature i.e. may be for research oriented projects or projects that are new or still in developmental / pilot phase

2.10. The 2008/2009 Program opened on 25 February and closed 4 April. Three information sessions were held for prospective applicants over February and March with between 55-60 people in total attending.

2.11. Developing a "City of Port Phillip Funding Information Package" was continued this year due to positive community feedback from the initiative last year. Two other funding opportunities for community were opened concurrently, with all program details being available as a package and coordinated by the Community Development Policy & Programs Unit:

- Cultural Development Fund:
- Community Meals

Three other funding opportunities available throughout the year were also advertised as part of the “City of Port Phillip Funding Information Package”

- Small Poppies Scheme
- Community Celebrations Fund
- Multicultural Celebrations Fund

2.12. Applications that have not been recommended this year generally represent those that are either the funding responsibility of another level of government or those that did not score highly enough on the weighted scoring tool.

2.13. The Grants Program provides a unique window into emerging issues and trends within the broader community. In this way, the Grants Program offers an important entry point for community into the service system. It also identifies that the community service system remains responsive to changing need and is a pointer for Council broader service planning considerations. Trends noted this year include:

- Funding Requests v Allocation: The Community Grants Program received an additional \$50,000 this year in response to increased numbers of applications that, due to funding pressure, could only be partially supported. This year, 76% of all applications were funded. Out of those funded, 67% received their full request. Generally, panel recommendations did not require a final review to align with budget.
- Increased requests and allocation of \$10,000 Traditionally only a few applications are received for the maximum amount of \$10,000 and only one is funded the full amount. This year, the program received 15 applications for \$10,000.: 6 projects were funded their full request; 3 projects received partial funding and 6 projects were not recommended for funding but will receive advice and other support offered.
- Increased capacity of organizations to target environmental concerns with community: Environmental initiatives and/or environmental groups have not featured strongly in previous Grants programs. This year two large projects were funded \$10,000 each to support and model environmentally sustainable initiatives targeting young people as leaders and to low income households within the community. The support towards community gardens has continued with a new community garden being funded \$10,000.
- Local Innovation! Some very inspiring new initiatives will spring up next year, some examples are:
 - “Pets in the City – Park Towers Pilot Program” – a program that builds on the strengths in pet ownership in bringing people together. This program has the active partnership of CoPP’s Animal Management team within a community strengthening framework as opposed to an enforcement framework.

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- “Port Phillip Student Support Fund” – a multi-agency partnership set up to financially support increasing needs of young people with their aim to stay in school.
- “One step off the Street” Internet Project – a project involving homeless people in the design and delivery of online information and support for rooming house residents, homeless people and people who may be in danger of becoming homeless. This builds on a previous very successful project of the production of a booklet/guide to survival.

2.14. Application Feedback: Data received from 113 applicants on the application process:

Q: How did you hear about the Community Grants Scheme?

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Broadcast | 5 | 4% |
| Email | 2 | 2% |
| Local paper | 7 | 6% |
| No response | 5 | 4% |
| Previous applicant | 65 | 58% |
| Website | 11 | 10% |
| Word of Mouth | 18 | 16% |
| Total | 113 | 100% |

Although the majority of applicants felt the forms were clear there was enough feedback for us, and the panel, to review the design of application forms for next year.

2.15. Assessment Panel Feedback: Feedback was sought from the Community Grants Assessment Panel for consideration in next year’s planning. Feedback is as follows:

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| FEEDBACK | ACTION |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recurrent funding | |
| Make separate money available for programs running over consecutive years. This would include a more detailed application form reviewing the program. The assessment panel could also review the accountability forms | Due to budget and strategic considerations, the suggestion of a 3 year funding term for some projects under certain criteria would be the subject of a more comprehensive program review. A review is not planned over the next financial year. |
| Introduce a 3 year limit to program funding and make this clear on the application form. | To consider for next year's program. |
| Create a new question to include in the application form: "Have you received funding in previous years for this program?" | To be included in next year's application. |
| Emerging Community Groups | |
| Not many new groups applying for funding. This issue needs to be addressed and applications sought from emerging communities. | Acknowledged, for further internal discussion. |
| Promote inter-agency partnerships | |
| Help organisational partnerships and encourage inter-agency communication through creating incentives: eg. Applications for partnership projects are eligible for \$2k, rather than \$800 each. | This suggestion was targeting applications to the Social Support category – many in this category only require a contribution. For further discussion. |
| New question: "Are you working in collaboration with other organisations? If so, have they been consulted?" | To be included in next year's application. |
| In-kind Support | |
| Make the "in-kind support" clearer (perhaps locate above budget table) so that it is not accidentally included as part of the budget. | To be included in next year's application. |
| Helping create stronger applications | |
| The quality of the applications vary greatly and this may need to be addressed. | With such a diverse community, this is a working reality for us in the grants reading business! Annual training support is offered and will continue to be. |
| Council could provide a brief information evening and then an opportunity for those interested to return for an hour-long workshop | We'll trial for next year's program "Bring along your application". |
| Advertise guideline and opening date a few months before the program opens, to allow organisations to incorporate the application process and project design into their service and work plans. | Guidelines will be released at the end of January and program advertised at the same time. This will allow community groups more opportunity for program planning. |
| Encourage dot points to avoid unneeded text, drawing attention to the 3 main priorities for each question. | To consider for next year's program |
| Application form design | |
| Electronic form should have text boxes, not lines | To be included in next year's application form. |
| Budget headings in the social support category should be left blank for applicants to be able to complete themselves. Currently the budget table does not align with the spending of small community groups. | To be included in next year's application form. |

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3. RECOMMENDED OPTION

- 3.1. That Council fully endorses the recommendations made by the Community Grants Assessment Panel to fund 87 of the 113 applications totalling \$206,106 as outlined in Attachment 2.
- 3.2. That Council formally thanks the Community Grants Assessment Panel community representatives: Bruce Thorn, Sally Cunningham, Russell White, Jan Robins who are in the first year of their two year term.
- 3.3. Criterion for recommendation
- The panel has undergone a thorough and transparent assessment process that has been applied consistently and made recommendations in line with Council's priorities and policies.
 - The current mix of council and community representation is consistent with other council processes involving advisory groups and community consultation. It provides increased transparency and expertise to decision-making and allocation of funding. It is a community strengthening opportunity where council and community are working in partnership towards common goals. Community representation also provides a development opportunity for emerging community leadership.

| | |
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| <p>Sustainability assessment Social Pillar</p> | <p>Community strengthening principles underpin the Community Grants Program.</p> <p>Council priorities include projects that increase the participation of and communication with people that are culturally and linguistically diverse, people who have special needs and to improve the health and wellbeing of residents living in public or community housing and aged care facilities. We also fund projects that promote practices and behaviours that contribute to safe and healthy environments.</p> <p>Community representation in the assessment and decision making process contributes to a broader understanding around the role the program plays within the community, the extent and reach of Port Phillips's community service sector, program delivery and target groups.</p> |
| <p>Environmental Pillar</p> | <p>Environmental organisations are eligible to apply for funding and one of the priorities identified include the promotion of practices and behaviours that contribute to safe and healthy environments.</p> <p>The assessment panel provides a strong opportunity for discussion about strategies to promote environmental practices and behaviours that contribute to safe and healthy environments, through the community grants program.</p> |

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| Cultural Pillar | <p>The Community Grants Program is designed to promote social cohesion by encouraging and valuing participation. The program seeks to improve the quality of life of the community by supporting the provision of resources that enhance healthy living.</p> <p>Community representation on the assessment panel is designed to support active citizenship by valuing and encouraging participation in a key Council initiative. It provides a tangible place where local residents can be involved in a process of decision making on allocation of funding to community services, which have an impact on the quality of life and opportunity for other local residents.</p> |
| Economic Pillar | <p>The Community Grants Program supports many small community groups through to larger welfare based organisations to respond to identified need within their community. In addition all of these community groups are run by volunteers or use the services of volunteers.</p> |

3.4. Policy and legislative implications

Recommendations that have been made are consistent with published guidelines and Council priorities.

3.5. Risk implications

The main risk concerns the viability of partially funded programs, which has been addressed this year through increased funding

3.6. Resource implications

\$232,106 has been referred to the 2008/09 budget estimate process for the Community Grants Program. We have recommended that we fund \$232,106 and this will be fully covered by budget allocations.

\$2.5K is a recurrent expenditure item in the annual budget of the Community Development Policy & Programs Unit for assessment panel meetings, evaluation and a thankyou dinner.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. Alternative 1

This alternative is that Council not accept the advice of the assessment panel. This is not preferred as the panel has been through an open and transparent process that has been applied in a consistent way.

4.2. Alternative 2

The alternative for the assessment panel is that representation consists of

- Community representation only, or
- Internal representation only

The current mix is the preferred option due to its consistency with council processes involving advisory groups and community consultation

5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Internal

The people who have been engaged with in relation to this Program are:

- Carol Mayell, Manager Community Development
- Michelle Alchin, Coordinator Community Development Policy & Programs.
- Monique Cosgrove; Community Development Officer Community Programs
- Helene Agius Community Development Sport Recreation & Leisure Officer.
- Coordinators who have knowledge of and relationships with the community service sector.
- Cr Janet Bolitho – panel member.
- Cr Peter Logan – panel member
- Other Coordinators as listed in the Community Grants Guidelines as key contact people for advice on project design

5.1.1. Advice received and reflected in relation to panel recommendations.

5.2. External

5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

Expressions of interest for assessment panel community representation advertised in local media.

- Nominee's referees were contacted in support of applications
- Community panel members
- Bruce Thorn
- Russell White
- Sally Cunningham
- Jan Robins

5.2.2 Various community organizations and groups were followed up by request of panels in relation to applicant assessments.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve:

- 6.1. To endorse the recommendations made by the Community Grants assessment panel to fund 87 of the 113 applications, to a total of \$232,106 from the 2008/09 budget as outlined in Confidential Attachment 2 - 2008/09 Assessment panel recommendations for funding.
- 6.2. That the details of funded programs be made public once all applicants have been advised of the outcome of their grant applications.
- 6.3. Formally thanks Community Grants Assessment Panel community representatives Bruce Thorn, Russell White, Sally Cunningham and Jan Robins for their contribution in the first year of their two year term.