



9.2 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM 2023/24
RECOMMENDATIONS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: ALLISON KENWOOD, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

PREPARED BY: EMMA BLACKFORD, TEAM LEADER GRANTS AND FUNDING
GAVIN MURPHY, COORDINATOR GRANTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Council endorsement of the recommendations made by the Community Grants Assessment Panel for funding of applicants for the Community Grants 2023-2024 Program.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Community Grants 2023-24 Program provides funding to community organisations to deliver programs that build on local capacity to develop active, healthy, connected and inclusive communities.
- 2.2 This year, the Community Grants 2023-24 Program opened 10 July and closed 21 August 2023.
- 2.3 Council received a total of 62 applications from 42 organisations under three funding categories: Community Strengthening received 44 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 8 applications and Program Support received 10 applications.
- 2.4 A total of \$428,087 was requested, with a total of \$285,000 funding available.
- 2.5 62 eligible applications were assessed by two assessment panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members (endorsed by Council) and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.
- 2.6 This report presents Council with a list of the recommended grants for 2023-24, prepared by the combined Community Grants Assessment Panel as well as recommendations for allocation of remaining funds.
- 2.7 The Panel has recommended grants applications which include programs that;
- support our most marginalised community members to socially connect and to access programs that improve health and wellbeing;
 - provide opportunities for skills development through educational workshops;
 - address isolation through creating opportunities for people from all backgrounds to participate in community life;
 - build the capacity of local community agencies and groups, including through engaging and deploying volunteers, and
 - continue to engage community activity to address environmental and climate change.
- 2.8 In total, 42 applications from 28 organisations are recommended to receive \$249,849 in funding. The recommended allocations are detailed in Attachment 1 (confidential).



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorses the Community Grants Assessment Panel's funding allocation recommendations for the Community Grants 2023-24 Program, as detailed in Attachment 1.
- 3.2 Makes public the list of successful applicants for the Community Grants 2023-24 Program on Council's website after the report is endorsed.
- 3.3 Endorses reallocation of the residual \$35,151 funding from the Community Grants 2023-24 Program as:
 - 3.3.1 \$20,000 for heat packs and other measures to address environmental and climate change and mitigate negative impact of an extreme summer heatwave on vulnerable community members.
 - 3.3.2 \$15,151 for potential allocation under the Quick Response Grants Program.
- 3.4 Formally thanks the voluntary members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for their valuable time and contribution to the community life of the City of Port Phillip.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The Community Grants Program provides Council with a strategic opportunity to support initiatives that help to strengthen the community service sector and community groups. The program aims to promote social inclusion and community engagement by supporting projects that value the contribution and participation of the Port Phillip community.
- 4.2 Structure of Community Grants Program:
 - 4.2.1 The Community Grants Program is an annual funding round established to support and encourage community organisations to develop and deliver projects and programs that respond to the needs of the Port Phillip community.
 - 4.2.2 There are three categories of funding: Community Strengthening, Social Inclusion Partnerships and Program Support:
 - The Community Strengthening category funds local organisations to design and deliver projects that meet the existing and emerging needs of local residents and encourage participation, social connection and value diversity. The aim is to strengthen and leverage the capacity of the local community and/or local community sector in supporting their ongoing sustainability, contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community, address health inequities, and support environmental and circular economy. The maximum funding for each grant under the Community Strengthening category is \$10,000.
 - The Social Inclusion Partnership category supports community organisations and groups to partner, develop and deliver projects and activities that increase social inclusion in the community. The aim is to engage residents who, for various reasons, may not otherwise have the opportunity to contribute to, participate in, or contribute to the broader community. The maximum funding for each grant under the Social Inclusion Partnership category is \$5,000.



- The Program Support category recognises that many small groups require funding to run their activities which form an important part of people's lives and wellbeing, regardless of whether they are project based. Activities are generally social, such as group outings, or physical such as walking groups. The maximum funding for each grant under the Program Support category is \$1,000.
- 4.2.3 Projects that have received funding previously may apply and be considered for funding in subsequent years. Projects that can demonstrate longer term sustainability are favourably viewed. There is no limit to how many applications a community organisation can submit across the three categories.
- 4.2.4 All organisations applying for funding, including those that have been funded in previous years are required to demonstrate sound accountability practices. Project acquittals from previously funded organisations are checked to ensure compliance with acquittal and evaluation requirements.
- 4.3 Community Grants Application Process:
- 4.3.1 Applications for Community Grant Program 2023-24 opened 10 July and closed 21 August 2023.
- 4.3.2 The Community Grants 2023-24 Program was advertised through Council's Social Media, CoPP This! (Community Sector News), Council's website and through direct emails to previous applicants.
- 4.3.3 Two Grants Writing Skills Development workshops were offered to prospective applicants.
- 4.3.4 Two public information sessions were held for prospective applicants to assist applicants in understanding the grants selection process and the use of the on-line grant application process.
- 4.3.5 Once received, all applications were checked for eligibility by the Grants and Funding Team.
- 4.4 Grant Application Assessment Process:
- 4.4.1 Council received a total of 62 applications from 42 organisations under three funding categories: Community Strengthening received 44 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 8 applications and Program Support received 10 applications.
- 4.4.2 A total of \$428,087 was requested, with a total of \$285,000 funding available.
- 4.4.3 62 eligible applications were assessed by two Assessment Panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members endorsed by Council and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.
- 4.4.4 All applications were assessed against the Community Grants 2023-24 Guidelines (available on Council website).
- 4.4.5 Recommendations include programs that;
- provide opportunities for skills development through educational workshops
 - support our most marginalised community members by providing opportunities to connect and access to health and wellbeing programs



- continue to tackle ongoing isolation concerns through social inclusion activities; and
- build the capacity of local community agencies and groups, including through engaging and deploying volunteers.

- 4.4.6 Applications which did not rate well against the selection criteria were not recommended for funding. All unsuccessful applicants will be offered the opportunity to receive feedback.
- 4.4.7 Some applications have been recommended for a grant but at a lower level of contribution than sought. This has occurred mostly where some budgeted items requested to be funded were not considered aligned with the intent of the grants or allowable items. Grant applications specified where a reduced budget would still enable the program to proceed (sometimes at a reduced scale), and this was taken into consideration.
- 4.4.8 In total, 42 applications from 28 organisations are recommended to receive \$249,849 in funding, leaving \$35,151 unallocated. The recommended allocations are detailed in Attachment 1.
- The assessment panel have encouraged Council to direct unallocated funds to community support initiatives. In previous years unallocated funds have been directed to the Quick Response Grants.
- 4.4.9 Successful applicants who receive funding under the Community Grants 2023-24 Program have until 1 June 2024 to submit their project status reports and 1 December 2024 to submit their acquittal reports.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Eligible applications were assessed by two Panels. Panel A consisted of Cr Andrew Bond, a Council Officer and two local community members. Assessment Panel B consisted of Cr Louise Crawford, a Council Officer and two local community members. The four local community members were formally endorsed by Council.
- 5.2 Panel members assessed assigned applications individually prior to convening for group discussion and assessment over a series of meetings.
- 5.3 Panel members also provided feedback on the Community Grants 2023-24 Program and assessment process.
- 5.4 Council thanks the voluntary members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for their valuable contribution to the community life of the City of Port Phillip.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no identified risks to Council in endorsing this recommendation.
- 6.2 Conflict of interest process are embedded into the program to ensure unbiased decision making at each stage of the assessment process. All panel members are required to declare any potential conflict of interest as part of the assessment process.
- 6.3 Where a conflict of interest has been declared, the impacted panel member is not provided with the application nor can they make comment or participate in the assessment process for that application.
- 6.4 In addition, all Councillors are required to declare any conflict of interest prior to consideration of the Council report.



7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The Panel recommendations are to allocate funding to the value of \$249,849 This is within the total budget of \$285,000 allocated for the 2023-24 Community Grants Program.
- 7.2 Council could consider re-allocation of the residual \$35,151 of community grants funding to responsive initiatives to support community health and wellbeing including:
 - 7.2.1 \$20,000 for initiatives, including procurement and provision of heat packs, to mitigate an expected extreme heatwave this summer. These measures will be targeted to supporting community members most vulnerable to these conditions.
 - 7.2.2 \$15,151 for responsive community building initiatives under the Quick Response Grants Program. Council has already allocated \$20,000 this financial year to the Quick Response Grants Program.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The Community Grants 2023-24 program encourages applicants to apply for funding to deliver sustainability projects and continue to engage community activity to address environmental and climate change. All applications are requested to consider sustainability in their project planning and implementation.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The Community Grants 2023-24 Program promotes social inclusion and community engagement by supporting projects that value contribution and participation to the Port Phillip community.
- 9.2 The Community Grants Program is one way that the Council ensures social justice for all in its delivery of services, programs and projects. This is achieved through the criteria for assessment having a strong emphasis on social inclusion and equity principles.
- 9.3 The Community Grants Program funds local community programs and services which enables continued employment in the Non-for-Profit Sector.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 Applications are sought for projects that enhance diversity, enable community participation and decision making, and contribute to the building of healthy, strong and inclusive communities. Projects need to contribute to the Council Plan Strategic Directions and are evaluated according to how well they meet program priorities.
- 10.2 The Community Grants program aligns primarily with the Council Plan Strategic Directions: Inclusive Port Phillip, and Sustainable Port Phillip.
- 10.3 Council's Community Funding Policy provides a framework for the Annual Community Grants program, including through the application of policy principles that ensure strategic alignment to the Council Plan, good governance and transparency, robust program planning and design, and ensuring maximum community benefit.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- 11.1 TIMELINE

MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL

15 NOVEMBER 2023



11.1.1 Following Council endorsement, outcome letters will be emailed to both successful and unsuccessful applicants by late November 2023.

11.1.2 Funding will be distributed to successful applicants throughout December 2023 and January 2024.

11.1.3 Successful applicant organisations and funded projects will be made available on the Council website in November 2023.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 All applicants will be informed of their application outcomes in writing by email. Unsuccessful applicants will also be encouraged to seek verbal feedback about their application.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Confidential - Community Grants Program 2023-24 Recommendations**