



Community Cool Places Grants Guidelines

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Purpose of Community Cool Places Grants

The purpose of the Community Cool Places Grant is to facilitate community organisations and groups to establish and operate cool safe places on behalf of their local community as part of making Melbourne a [Heat Safe City](#)¹.

Providing cool safe places is important to provide relief from extreme heat and help prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths. We know that not everyone has access to air conditioning in their homes, and that having a trusted and safe place to go is especially important during heatwaves. Community Cool Places are run by the community for the community. They can provide an alternative to government-run services, such as libraries.

Objectives of Community Cool Places Grants

Community Cool Places Grants seek to:

- Reduce the community's heat exposure by providing safe and accessible places for community members to go when a severe or extreme heat health warning has been issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer.
- Increase community participation, connection, equity, diversity and inclusion during times of extreme heat.
- Empower the community to identify, prepare and respond to extreme heat.

What are we seeking from a cool place?

- Cool places are indoor, air-conditioned places that community members can access to seek respite when a severe or extreme heat health warning has been issued. A passively cooled place does not meet the requirements of a cool place
- They should be a safe and accessible place for any community member. However, they may be especially targeted to support those community members that your organisation has strong links to.
- They are cool and comfortable places while maintaining other uses and functions. They should provide comfortable rest areas (chairs and benches), free water, and access to toilets.

Important note – cool places funded by this grant are NOT for people that need medical care, who must go to the appropriate health centre.

What are heat health warnings and how frequently are they issued?

Based on the Bureau of Meteorology's heatwave warning system, the Victorian Government issues a [heat health warning](#)². A heat health warning notifies the community, local governments, hospitals, health and community services of the risk and likely impact on people's health. City of Melbourne uses its communication channels to alert service and community organisations in the municipality when a heat health warning has been issued.

¹ <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/heat-safe-city>

² <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/heat-health-warning>

A heat health warning includes a category of heat risk:

- **Low-intensity** heatwaves – Most people can cope.
- **Severe** heatwaves – Vulnerable people at risk.
- **Extreme** heatwaves – Everyone is risk, even people who are healthy.

A heat health warning also includes a duration of concern. For instance, 'Friday 16 February to Saturday 17 February 2025'.

On occasion, the Victorian Chief Health Officer may issue a heat health warning independent of the Bureau of Meteorology for a single day of extremely high temperatures.

In a hot summer, Melbourne will typically experience 1 to 3 severe or extreme heat health warnings, each lasting 1 to 3 days. These tend to occur between December and mid-March.

What are the expectations of providing a cool place when a severe or extreme heat health alert has been issued?

The expectation of providing a cool place is to:

- Remain operational during the period of 1 December and 31 March during a severe or extreme health warning. Additionally, you can consider activating on hot days and low-intensity heatwaves as your community needs.
 - Warnings are typically issued between 24-48 hours ahead of a severe or extreme heat period.
 - Participating organisations will be added to our mailing list to receive an alert from City of Melbourne when a heat health warning has been issued.
 - If you are unable to operate for every day of a severe or extreme heatwave, you should prioritise opening on the final days. i.e. open on the second and third days of a three-day heatwave.
 - Inform the City of Melbourne what your operating hours are during severe or extreme heatwaves.
- Record how many people use the cool place to seek respite (see 'Grant terms and conditions' section below).
- Know the maximum capacity of your facility and the location of other nearby cool places to direct community members if you reach capacity (e.g. local libraries).
- Promote and share communications with your networks about the availability of a community cool place. City of Melbourne will also share information through its website.

You may opt in to City of Melbourne's active promotion. This would involve:

- Informing the media officer of when your cool place is open
- Responding to media enquiries
- Liaising with the media officer for any other promotional opportunities including case studies.

What if no severe or extreme health warnings are issued over the summer?

If this occurs, we expect funds to be used to go towards heat preparedness and resilience enhancement within your community, such as heat health workshops etc. You may also activate your cool place on hot days and low-intensity heatwaves to meet your community's needs.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding through Community Cool Places Grants, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisations must be:
 - A not-for-profit constituted body.
 - A school
 - A Body Corporate/Owners Corporation, applicants must provide a copy of their Body Corporate/Owners Corporation constitution or rules.
 - Auspiced applications are also permitted in this program.
- Applicants must be located within or be delivering a project within the City of Melbourne municipality.
- Applications must have a focus on providing outcomes for City of Melbourne's local communities.
- One application per year, per applicant will be accepted for Community Cool Places Grants.

Funding will **not** be considered for:

- Core operational funding
- Activities with a religious focus. For example, activities that include religious service, education, preaching or proselytising, or those that exclude community members of different faiths from participating.
- Party political activities
- Activities based on the consumption of alcohol or gambling
- Commercial activities and/or organisations
- Interstate and international travel costs including travel costs for facilitators/consultants
- Incomplete applications
- Upgrades of council-owned assets
- Late submissions.

Funding available

The Community Cool Places Grants are up to \$7,000 (excluding GST) each. Funds can be used for:

- Providing a community room with cooling equipment and refreshments.
- Note, Community Cool Places are expected to already be equipped with an air conditioning system. Funding to purchase portable air conditioners or fans to supplement cooling will be considered.
- Extension of service opening hours through additional staffing and operational costs.
- Programming with activities, for example movies, board games, arts and craft, reading materials etc.

- Promotion and engagement with community members around heat safety and resilience.
- Providing outreach services to vulnerable community members during extreme heat events. This could include:
 - Supporting those experiencing homelessness to access a cool place or cooling personal equipment.
 - Outreach to vulnerable community members, such as wellbeing checks.
 - Transporting people to a local cool place.
- Other reasonable activities outlined in a grant application that help to deliver on the 'objectives' outlined above.

Key dates

- 12 September 2025, 5.00pm applications close.
- By 7 November 2025 applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application, and an inception meeting will be scheduled with City of Melbourne representatives.
- By 1 December 2025 successful applicants will receive funds.
- By 6 February 2026 a mid-Summer check will be held with City of Melbourne representatives.
- 31 March 2026 funding must be spent by.
- 30 April 2026 acquittal must be submitted.

Assessment process

After the application period has closed and we receive your application:

- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.
- Your application will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria. Ineligible applicants will be notified that their application is ineligible.
- Funding recommendations will be advised to Council. Council will make the final decision on the outcome of all eligible applications.
- All applicants will receive a notification via email with the result of their application by the end of November.
- Information about grant decisions will not be given over the phone.

Assessment criteria

Community Cool Places Grant applications are assessed against the assessment criteria below. Only applications that adequately respond to the assessment criteria will be considered.

1. Alignment to the purpose and objectives of the program (35%)

- How will the organisation create and deliver a community cool place?
- Will your cool place provide any programmed activities, or any outreach services?
- How many City of Melbourne community members are likely to participate and benefit?

2. Community need (35%)

- Does this initiative target a vulnerable group?
- How will the project encourage community connection, social inclusion, access or participation in the City of Melbourne community?

3. Budget (30%)

- Does the budget accurately reflect the scope and scale of the activity/organisation?
- What is the minimum amount of funding required to deliver your program?
- If applicable, have quotes been provided to support capital purchases?

Additional assessment notes:

City of Melbourne reserves the right to:

- Not consider applications that do not meet the eligibility or assessment criteria
- Request further information to inform our assessment
- When making final recommendations, take into consideration any funding that is already received from the City of Melbourne
- Recommend partial funding
- Require normal permits for all projects. If relevant, these should be outlined in the application (refer to the [City of Melbourne website](#)³ for permits required within the City of Melbourne)
- Request a declaration if quotes and/or other proposed services are provided by family, friends or committee members.

Essential attachments for all applications

- Applicants must provide a certificate of currency for public liability or other relevant insurance.
- If the project targets children or young people aged 0-18 you must provide a copy of the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Plan. Ensure your organisation's Plan is updated to reflect the new Child Safety Priorities that are mandatory from January 2023.
- If you are applying to purchase significant single expenditure items (i.e. any items over \$1000) you must include at least one quote.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying in relation to an application is strictly prohibited during the application process. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant that canvasses or lobbies the Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne.

³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/pay-report-request>

Grant terms and conditions

If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- Sign a funding agreement with the City of Melbourne that provides details about the terms and conditions of funding. The funding agreement will outline reporting and acquittal requirements specific to your application.
- Supply all requested information prior to any funding being released.
- Submit paperwork within the allocated timeframes. Funding is allocated from specific financial year budgets and if paperwork is not submitted within the allocated timeframe, then funding is forfeited by the funded organization.
- In some instances, meet or discuss your project with the grant manager and provide revised information.
- If the funded project includes contact with children aged 0-18, the organisation must have in place a Child Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The organisation must also ensure that all relevant staff, contractors, volunteers and committee members hold a valid working with children check and provide copies of these if requested by Council.
- Use the funding allocated for the purposes specified in the application. Grants may not be used for any purpose other than for which it is granted, without the written permission of the City of Melbourne.
- Deliver the project within the allocated budget. City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the applicant is unable to meet project costs.
- Acknowledge the City of Melbourne in all promotional materials relating to the successful application, including use of the logo.
- Complete the project by the date stated in the funding agreement. Requests for extensions will need to be considered and agreed to by City of Melbourne.
- Invite the Lord Mayor and Councillors to attend any significant launches or events associated with the project.
- Acquit the grant and provide receipts to demonstrate the expenditure of a minimum 75 per cent of the grant. Grants for capital works and/or capital purchases must provide receipts to demonstrate the full expenditure of the grant.

Completing your application

Applications will be submitted and managed online via SmartyGrants. Application forms can be accessed from the City of Melbourne website.

Applications will automatically be closed by the SmartyGrants system at 5.00pm on Sunday 12 September 2025.

Please avoid submitting your application at the last minute. If there is heavy use of the system with others submitting last-minute applications, there may be delays which will affect your ability to lodge your application before the deadline and it will be deemed ineligible.

When your application is fully submitted you will receive an automated email containing a PDF copy of your application and confirmation that it has been received.

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact SmartyGrants directly (contact information below).

Contacts

General enquiries

Please contact the City Resilience Project Officer at Climate.Adaptation@melbourne.vic.gov.au

SmartyGrants technical assistance

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact them directly on email: service@smartygrants.com.au or by phone: 03 9320 6888.

Further application assistance

If you are unable to complete the application form online due to access issues or you have difficulty using technology please contact us via email: Climate.Adaptation@melbourne.vic.gov.au and we will discuss how we can assist you to complete the forms.

Frequently asked questions

Q: Can my organisation submit more than one application?

A: No, only one application per organisation will be accepted.

Q: If we already have some funding allocated to this project, can we still apply for additional funding?

A: Yes. In fact, we encourage multiple funding sources for a project as this can strengthen the application and create greater sustainability for the project. The application form will ask you to declare additional funding sources for your project.

Q: My organisation is located outside of the City of Melbourne; can I apply?

A: To be eligible, organisations must be located within, or offer the project within, the City of Melbourne municipality. In addition, the program must have a focus on local and / or disadvantaged communities.

Q: My group is not incorporated; can I apply?

A: To be eligible, applications must come from a school or a not-for-profit community organisation that is a legal entity. If you are an unincorporated group, you will be required to find an auspice prior to applying for an Inclusive Community Grant. If you apply under the auspice of an organisation, the City of Melbourne requires that you provide a letter from your auspice confirming that they agree to this arrangement. Note that for successful applicants that have an auspice, the City of Melbourne pays the grant to the auspice organisation

Q: I am registered as a sole trader or my organisation is a for-profit can I apply using an auspice?

A: No, organisations that are registered as for-profit, or individuals are not eligible to apply either directly or using an auspice.

Q: What is an auspice?

A: An auspice is an organisation that agrees to take legal and financial responsibility for administering the grant on behalf of the applicant where an applicant is not eligible or unable to apply for funding. To find out more about an auspice arrangement visit [Not-for-profit Law – Auspicing](http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing)⁴

⁴ <http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing>

Q: How many years can I participate in this grant program?

A: We do not have a limit. However, applicants will need to reapply every year.

Q: Can I ask for funding for utility costs?

A: Yes, additional utility costs can be funded by this grant.

Q: Can I ask for funding for just an outreach service.

A: No, all applicants must have a cool place.