



# **Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panels 2025-2028**

Terms of Reference

## 1. Purpose and Objectives:

- 1.1. The City of Melbourne is committed to supporting individuals, organisations, groups and businesses to achieve their goals in alignment with the [Council Plan 2021-2025](#). Council targets its support and resources via a number of grants and sponsorship programs through a transparent and accountable external assessment process.
- 1.2. The grants and sponsorship programs include:
  - Arts Grants - [Multi-year Arts Grants](#), [Annual Arts Grants and Residencies](#), [Aboriginal Arts Grants](#), [Quick Response Arts Grants](#)
  - [Community Grants and Partnerships Program](#) (multiple programs)
  - Business Grants - [Small Business Grants](#), [Business Events Sponsorship](#)
- 1.3. More detailed information about individual grants and sponsorship programs is available from the City of Melbourne [website](#).
- 1.4. The purpose of the Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panels' is to review, assess and provide objective, independent recommendations to Council in relation to allocation of funding for grants and sponsorship programs.
- 1.5. The Assessment Panels ensure that guidelines and assessment criteria endorsed by Council have been applied consistently and equitably for all applications.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1. Council is committed to ensuring equity and transparency in decision making processes.
- 2.2. Assessment panels will be representative of the diversity within the community in relation to gender, cultural background, abilities and age to ensure diversity of views and perspectives.
- 2.3. Council believes that the use of representative assessment panels will lead to greater impacts.
- 2.4. To ensure that diverse perspectives are acknowledged, panels may include observers where appropriate. Observers have a responsibility to adhere to the principles outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) and may provide relevant advice to the assessment panel, though they do not have voting rights.
- 2.5. Privacy and confidentiality of Council, applicant information and assessment discussions will be maintained at all times.

## 3. Composition and Membership

- 3.1. External Assessment Panels will be comprised of independent non-Council representatives.
- 3.2. The Council will make appointments to the Assessment Panels based on merit, skill and expertise in the relevant grants and sponsorship program areas as outlined in Attachment 1.

### ***Appointment process***

- 3.3. The following appointment process applies to the external assessment panels:
  - Council will run an advertised Expression of Interest (EOI) process to encourage interested members of the community to nominate for a position as an external assessment panel member.
  - Council will broadly promote the opportunity to participate on the external assessment panel amongst professional and community networks to maximise the potential for diverse representation and appointment.

- Interested community members apply via an online EOI form addressing the relevant selection criteria.
  - EOI applicants are reviewed by Council staff based on merit, skills and expertise, taking into account diversity principles.
  - Nominated applicants are presented to Council for approval at a confidential meeting.
  - Applicants are advised of the outcome and appointed panel members are noted on Council's website.
- 3.4. Council reserves the right to increase the pool of members or invite appropriate specialists or community delegates to ensure diverse and adequate skill sets are maintained. Specialists may include legal or ethical representatives depending on the panel needs. All panel members are required to complete an EOI and address the selection criteria.
- 3.5. Former Council staff must not have worked at Council for a minimum of 12 months prior to participating in any assessment process.

***Panel term***

- 3.6. The TOR is valid for a four-year period and Assessment Panel members are appointed for a four-year term from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2028.
- 3.7. During the four-year term, appointed panel members may be called upon to participate in the assessment process for a grants and sponsorship program round.
- 3.8. Panel members may choose to participate, or not, based on their circumstances at the time, as well as taking into consideration any potential conflict of interest which may impact their availability; and
- 3.9. More external panel members than are initially required will be approved by Council. This is undertaken to ensure an adequate pool of panel members are consistently available across the four-year term.
- 3.10. Council will endeavor to provide the opportunity for approved panel members to participate in an assessment during the four-year term.

***Selection Criteria***

- 3.11. The selection criteria are noted in Attachment 1.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

***Responsibilities of panel members***

- 4.1. City of Melbourne values of integrity, courage, accountability, respect and excellence are to be demonstrated by all panel members.
- 4.2. Adherence to the principles outlined in the TOR including full declaration of any conflict of interest. Conflict of interest and pecuniary interests are declared prior to assessing applications, or immediately upon becoming aware of a conflict (whichever occurs sooner). Assessors who have a conflict will not participate in the assessment and discussion of the relevant application.
- 4.3. Canvassing of panel members provides grounds for ineligibility for applicants.
- 4.4. Provide objective advice to Council and undertake assessment using Council's approved assessment criteria.
- 4.5. Complete assessment within the designated time frames.
- 4.6. Attendance at briefing sessions and meetings either virtually or in person.

### ***Role of the Convenor***

- 4.7. All external assessment panels have a Council representative who takes on the role of convenor. The convenor, together with other Council staff in attendance at assessment panel meetings, has the following role and responsibilities during the meeting:
- Ensure panel members are equal participants in the discussions, assessment and decision making;
  - Facilitate the discussion as well as support the panel to come to an agreement on funding recommendations;
  - Remain impartial regarding the outcome and/or recommendation; and
  - Provide oversight on the consistent and equitable application of the policy and guidelines, as well as ensuring that the funding allocation is consistent with its associated rationale.

### ***Support and meetings***

- 4.8. All assessment panel members are briefed on the context of individual grants and sponsorship programs, their own role and the process of making recommendations.
- 4.9. Panel members are supported by Council officers from the relevant grants and sponsorship program area and provided with all necessary tools for assessment.
- 4.10. All assessments are to be completed online via Smartygrants, with advice and support provided to panel members about their use of this system.
- 4.11. All assessment meetings are minuted to ensure the rationale for funding recommendations are clearly noted and to ensure accountability.

### ***Time commitment***

- 4.12. The time commitment required for each grants and sponsorship round is variable, depending on the number of applications received and the complexity of the program.
- 4.13. Panel members may be asked to assess applications online only, within a panel meeting discussion, or both.
- 4.14. Panel members' participation in large programs may require a week or more of reading and assessment time and a one or two-day meeting time per grant round.

### ***Confidential and sensitive information***

- 4.15. Members are expected to comply with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and Information Privacy Principles.
- 4.16. Members are expected to comply with the confidential information provisions contained in sections 3(1) and 125 of the Local Government Act 2020.
- 4.17. Members must treat information they receive as confidential and must only use the information for the purpose of performing their function as a member of the Grants and Sponsorship Panel.

## **5. Honorarium**

- 5.1. Panel members are offered an honorarium which takes into consideration the number of applications, the subsequent time commitment, and the complexity of the grants and sponsorship program.
- 5.2. The minimum honorarium offered per round is \$250 and the maximum offered per round is \$1,500.
- 5.3. Honorariums may be taken from the City of Melbourne's grant funds.
- 5.4. Reimbursement of reasonable expenses such as parking, childcare or interpreting services may be made, subject to prior agreement and approval.

## 6. Review

- 6.1. The Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panels Terms of Reference will be reviewed after the current term. Next review date will be December 2028.

Attachment 1

Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panels Selection Criteria			
Program	Arts Grants	<a href="#">Community Grants and Partnerships Program</a>	Business Grants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Multi-year Arts Grants</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Annual Arts Grants and Residencies</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Aboriginal Arts Grants</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Quick Response Arts Grants</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Inclusion grants</li> <li>- Community Events grants</li> <li>- Social Investment Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Small Business Grants</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Business Events Sponsorship</a></li> </ul>
Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art expertise and experience in one or more artforms, demonstrated by having a current arts practice or relevant experience working in the arts sector.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of the Melbourne and national art scene.</li> <li>• Understanding of Federal, State and Local Government funding.</li> <li>• Experience in grants assessment desirable but not essential.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional for Multi-year Arts Grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in senior roles within arts organisations such as General Manager, Director, Board Member or CEO.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of Melbourne's community sector and community development principles.</li> <li>• Relevant expertise and knowledge of various sectors including youth, Aboriginal, families and children, homelessness, older people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ, gender equity, disability, sport and recreation.</li> <li>• Experience in program development, planning, budgeting, delivery and evaluation is desirable.</li> <li>• Experience in grants assessment desirable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional for Social Investment Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and/or experience of social enterprise or BCorps, shared value principles and/or business modelling.</li> <li>• Knowledge and/or experience in innovation applicable to for-purpose sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical industry knowledge and experience in key sectors driving Melbourne's economic prosperity.</li> <li>• Extensive experience in business development including planning and financial management.</li> <li>• Practical experience and knowledge in business support and government assistance programs.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of sustainable principles relevant to the business community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional for Business Events Sponsorship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive experience and knowledge of the business events industry including sponsorship, logistics/operations, financial management, marketing and risk management.</li> <li>• Good local knowledge of the City of Melbourne and its business event market, calendar and venues.</li> </ul>
Number of assessors	25-30 members across 6 grant rounds.	4-6 members per round	Up to 5 members per round, depending on application numbers.
When	Multiple dates in a calendar year.	Community Inclusion grants: multiple dates in a year. Community Events: annually Social Investment Partnerships: as required	Multiple dates in a calendar year.