

6.13 Organisation-wide Grants and Sponsorship Policy

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Executive Summary

1. The City of Melbourne invests over \$15 million annually in grants and sponsorships to support business, events, community, and creative industries. Historically, grants and sponsorships programs have operated under program-specific frameworks and operational guidelines.
2. To create greater consistency across programs and ensure alignment with strategic priorities, City of Melbourne has developed a new organisation-wide Grants and Sponsorships Policy grounded in strong governance principles and informed by sector best practice.
3. The Grants and Sponsorships Policy aims to strengthen transparency and accountability by providing clear guidance for Council staff, Councillors, and applicants on standards, processes, and responsibilities.
4. Key changes introduced under the Grants and Sponsorships Policy include a shift to quarterly opening of funding rounds, new processes to support transparent decision making, and new Focus Area Profiles that articulate the purpose and objectives of grant-making across sectors.

Recommendation from management

5. That the Future Melbourne Committee resolves to:
 - 5.1. Endorse the Grants and Sponsorships Policy.
 - 5.2. Authorise the General Manager Community and City Services to make any further minor editorial changes to the Grants and Sponsorships Policy prior to publication.

Purpose

6. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the new Grants and Sponsorships Policy (The Policy) (Attachment 1).

Background

7. City of Melbourne invests \$15.2 million across grants and sponsorship programs annually to support business, events, community, and the arts.
8. These programs have historically operated under program-specific Council approved frameworks or operational guidelines.
9. To support greater consistency and strategic alignment, City of Melbourne has developed an organisation-wide Grants and Sponsorships Policy in line with governance and sector best practices.
10. The Policy aligns to the recently endorsed Council Plan 2025-2029 and M2050 Vision.

Key considerations

11. The new organisation-wide Policy provides guidance to Council staff, Councillors and applicants on the standards, processes and responsibilities that underpin City of Melbourne's grants and sponsorships program.
12. This Policy applies to all grants, sponsorships, and value-in-kind activities provided by the City of Melbourne. It also applies to instances where City of Melbourne receives funding to administer a grant program on an organisation's behalf.
13. To support transparency and accountability, the Policy provides guidance around how decisions will be made – including the use of external panels and decision-making delegations.
14. As part of this, the Policy stipulates that all grant recommendations will be considered in open Council meetings, with successful applicants being announced during the session. The details of unsuccessful applicants will be provided to Councillors in a confidential briefing. Some sponsorship arrangements may be considered commercial-in-confidence and will be treated as confidential.
15. The Policy also introduces new guidance around funding round frequency to enable greater visibility and consistency of when grant and sponsorship rounds open for applications.
16. The Policy will be supported by the introduction of new focus area profiles included as appendices to the Policy.
17. The focus area profiles articulate the purpose, context and objectives of City of Melbourne's grant-making in areas including business, events, community, and creative industries.
18. The Focus Area Profile – Community Grants and Focus Area Profile – Creative Funding supersede the existing [Community Grants and Partnerships Framework](#) and [Creative Funding Framework](#) respectively. It also introduces new Focus Area Profiles for Business Grants and Sponsorships, Events Partnership Program Funding and Other Grants which covers programs that sit outside of the other focus area profiles.
19. To support the implementation of the Policy, work is underway to align existing grants and sponsorship programs with the newly endorsed Council Plan 2025–29. Program guidelines will also be updated to align with the Council Plan 2025–29 and new requirements established under the Policy.

Legal

20. There are no direct legal implications as a result of the recommendation from management.

Finance

21. There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendation from management as the Policy does not propose changes to the existing grant programs or funding levels within these programs. The Annual Budget FY25/26 includes \$15.2 million for Grants and Contributions.

Conflict of interest

22. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

23. The recommendation contained in this report is compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* as it does not raise any human rights issues.

Health and Safety

24. Some of the grants and sponsorship programs delivered within the scope of the Policy will support positive health, wellbeing, and safety outcomes within the community. The standards of practice within the Policy also give consideration to factors such as Child Safety.

Consultation

25. The Policy was developed in consultation with City of Melbourne Councillors and staff involved in grant administration and management. Feedback received throughout this process was used to inform key settings within the Policy.

Relevance to Council Plan and Council Policies

26. A strategic review will be undertaken to ensure grants and sponsorships programs align with the strategic priorities set out in Council's newly endorsed Council Plan 2025–29.
27. The Policy aligns with Council's commitments within the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures, Delegations Policy, Child Safe Policy, Employee Code of Conduct/Councillor Code of Conduct, Inclusive Melbourne Strategy, Fraud and Corruption Policy, Public Transparency Policy, Record Management Policy and the Privacy Policy.
28. The Policy establishes standards of practice that articulate the City of Melbourne's commitments to accountability and transparency and align with the organisation's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Procurement Framework and Child Safety Policy.

Social and environmental impacts**Social impacts**

29. City of Melbourne's grants and sponsorship programs create positive social impacts by enabling community, cultural, business, and creative initiatives that foster inclusion, strengthen local identity, support economic participation, and improve wellbeing across the municipality.

Gender Impact Assessment

30. A Gender Impact Assessment on the Policy has been completed. Assessment findings informed the introduction of consistent quarterly opening of funding rounds, ensuring assessment panels are gender balanced, ensuring support is available where needed for the use of the online grant application systems and the inclusion of a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Environmental impacts

31. There are no direct environment implications as a result of the recommendation from management.

Attachment List

1. Grants and Sponsorships Policy [6.13.1 - 23 pages]



Grants & Sponsorship Policy

Adopted by Council on XXXX 2025

Grants & Sponsorship Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for the governance, administration, and delivery of City of Melbourne’s (CoM) grants and sponsorships. It provides guidance to Council staff, Councillors and applicants on the standards, processes and responsibilities that underpin City of Melbourne’s grants and sponsorships program.

2. Policy statement

The City of Melbourne is committed to good governance, public accountability and the responsible management of public funds. City of Melbourne’s grants and sponsorship program provides support for initiatives that enhance the city’s social, cultural, environmental, and economic life. Initiatives supported through this program align with strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2025–29 and the M2050 Vision.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Council employees, contractors, consultants and Councillors. It also applies to all not-for-profit organisations, for-profit organisations, sole traders, individuals, owners’ corporations, unincorporated community groups and government agencies who apply for City of Melbourne grant and sponsorship funding.

This policy applies to all grants, sponsorships, and value-in-kind activities provided by the City of Melbourne. A full list of current grant and sponsorship programs, their guidelines, eligibility, assessment criteria and key dates can be found at [City of Melbourne website – Grants and Sponsorships](#). This policy also applies to instances where CoM receives funding to administer a grant program on an organisation’s behalf.

Council may wish to, at times, approve grants and sponsorship outside this policy to achieve a specific outcome in alignment with the [Council Plan 2025-29](#).

This policy does not apply to the procurement of goods, services, works and facilities which are covered by [City of Melbourne’s Procurement Policy](#).

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
The Act	The Local Government Act 2020
The policy	The City of Melbourne’s Grants & Sponsorship Policy
Guidelines	Guidelines for individual grant or sponsorship programs which must be consistent with this policy and relevant legislation and made publicly available on CoM’s website. At a minimum, these will cover key dates, funding categories, application timelines and processes, minimum and maximum funding amounts, program eligibility criteria, ineligibility, assessment criteria and process, acquittal processes.
Council	The City of Melbourne
Councillor/s	City of Melbourne Councillor/s, including the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor
Applicant	An individual, organisation or entity that formally applies for funding through a grant and sponsorship program.

Assessment Panel	A group of individuals selected to evaluate and make decisions about applications in line with this policy or individual program guidelines.
Grant	Cash support provided to applicants for a specified project or purpose to achieve Council objectives and consistent with this Policy.
Sponsorship	A commercial agreement which has explicit obligations the receiving organisation must deliver on, commensurate to the level of investment. For example, naming rights, promotion, marketing, speaking opportunities and/or tickets.
In-kind support	The provision of non-financial support to organisations, separately or alongside a grant or sponsorship. This can include resourcing, technical assistance, marketing support, site hire fees, rental subsidy, goods or services and data/information at no or reduced cost.

5. Standards of practice

Governance, Accountability, Transparency and value for money

The City of Melbourne is committed to openness transparency. We share information about our programs, decisions, and performance, and we uphold principles of good governance in all activities.

We will administer grants and sponsorships in a manner that is fair, accountable, and proportionate throughout the entire lifecycle. This includes:

- **Transparency in program guidelines and timelines**, ensuring key dates are clearly communicated.
- Application processes that are proportionate to the size and scale of the grant and aligned with expected outcomes.
- **Objective and transparent assessment procedures** to maintain fairness and integrity.
- Our investment decisions will **prioritise projects that deliver strong public value and demonstrate responsible use of resources and funds**.
- We will also **actively seek feedback from the community and program recipients** to improve systems, processes, and outcomes.
- Ensuring that our processes and decisions do not negatively impact one gender over another, promoting equity and inclusion.

This Policy is consistent with City of Melbourne’s [Environmental, Social and Governance Procurement Framework](#).

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Our grant and sponsorship programs will support accessible activities that contribute to a diverse, inclusive and equitable city. Melbourne has always been a significant gathering place. Our city’s Aboriginal culture, knowledge and heritage, and our migrant stories of resilience, aspiration and contribution provide the foundation for today, a place where all cultures, backgrounds, genders, sexualities and abilities are welcomed, celebrated and protected. Our [Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-32](#) will help realise our vision of a truly inclusive Melbourne over the next 10 years. It provides a framework for the City of Melbourne to advance inclusion and equality and outlines how we will embrace the diversity of cultures, ages, genders, sexualities, backgrounds, religions and abilities of all who live, work, visit and study in the city.

Child Safety

The City of Melbourne is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. All children and young people are valued members of our community and have the right to be and feel safe. We are committed to embedding child safety into the everyday thinking and practice of all employees, volunteers and contractors. Grant recipients must comply with all applicable child safety laws and adhere to their responsibilities according to Council's Child Safety Policy. For community-funded programs, activities, or services, recipients are required to:

- Consistently implement and follow the Standards.
- Provide Council with a copy of their child safety policy whenever reasonably requested.

Information on the Child Safe Standards is available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>.

Under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), people engaging in child-related work must obtain a Working with Children (WWC) Check. Grant recipients must:

- ensure that all their relevant employees, contractors and volunteers who are providing the services or facilities in any Council-funded program hold a valid and current WWC Check (or for interstate visitors, an equivalent Check from their home State/Territory) as per the requirements outlined in Council's Child Safety Policy;
- maintain an up-to-date register of WWC Checks;
- provide evidence of a valid and current WWC Check for each of their employees, contractors and volunteers providing the services or facilities to Council at any time upon reasonable request; and
- notify Council immediately if any of their employees, contractors or volunteers who are providing the services or facilities to Council have their WWC Check suspended or revoked or are issued with a WWC Check Exclusion.

Information about the WWC Check is available at <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>.

6. Outcomes

Grant and Sponsorships programs are to be aligned with the priorities of the [Council Plan 2025–29](#) and the aspirations of the [M2050 Vision](#), ensuring that funding decisions contribute to immediate priorities while shaping a long-term future for our city. Outcomes realised through the delivery of grants and sponsorship will directly contribute to the outcomes articulated under these six strategic priorities:

- Governing for our future
- Healthy, safe, clean and connected communities
- Building a city for people
- Vibrant and creative Melbourne
- Leveraging our economic strengths
- Living sustainably

7. Conflicts of Interest & Lobbying

Conflicts of Interest – Councillors and Council Officers

Councillors and Council Officers are required to disclose conflicts of interest and conduct themselves in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Governance Rules. Council Officers must also adhere to the Conflict-of-Interest Policy and Procedures.

Disclosable Interests – External Assessors

External Assessment Panel members are not subject to the conflict-of-interest provisions under the *Local Government Act 2020*. They will instead be required to declare any of the following disclosable interests:

- **General Disclosable Interest:** Where an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the external assessor's private interests could result in them acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty as a grants assessor.
- **Material disclosable interest:** Where the external assessor may be involved in a relationship or situation ('affected person') that could result in the external assessor or the affected person, suffering a benefit or loss which is:
 - Direct or indirect: A direct benefit or loss includes where the external assessor or the affected person is the immediate recipient of the benefit or will directly suffer the loss. An indirect benefit or loss includes where the external assessor or the affected person is affected because of the impact on another person or body, or as an indirect effect of a process; and/or
 - Pecuniary: A benefit or loss is one that can be measured in money.
 - Non-pecuniary: A benefit or loss which is not measured in money.

The term 'affected person' includes:

- The external assessor
- A family member of the external assessor
- A body corporate of which the external assessor or their spouse or domestic partner is a Director or member of the governing body
- An employer of the external assessor, unless the employer is a public body
- A business partner of the external assessor
- A person for who the external assessor is a consultant, contractor or agent
- A beneficiary under a trust or an object of a discretionary trust of which the external assessor is a trustee
- An applicant the external assessor has received one or more gifts, benefits or hospitality from in the last 5 years, with a total value of, or more than, \$500.

External assessors cannot take part in any matter relating to a grant application for which they have declared a disclosable interest.

Lobbying: Lobbying Councillors in relation to open grant applications is strictly prohibited. All communications regarding grant programs or applications must be directed through Council's designated officers or official processes. Councillors must not be approached by applicants or their representatives to influence decisions during the period when a program opens for applications until after the Council decision awarding the grants, and any such attempts must be reported to the Chief Executive Officer. Applicants who engage in lobbying will be disqualified from the grant process. This ensures impartiality, transparency, and compliance with Council's Code of Conduct and governance principles.

8. General Eligibility

In addition to specific eligibility criteria included in individual program guidelines, to be eligible for a grant or sponsorship, the applicant must:

- Be a not-for-profit, organisation, community organisation or auspiced organisation. For some programs individuals may be eligible – this will be detailed in the relevant grant program guidelines.
- Apply for a project, activity or initiative within the City of Melbourne [municipal boundary](#), or that clearly demonstrates a direct impact or benefit in the municipality
- Have the appropriate level of Public Liability and Insurance

- Have the appropriate type of insurance, and consideration for, employee and/or volunteer health and safety

Non eligibility

In addition to eligibility criteria included in individual program guidelines, City of Melbourne will not consider applications from:

- A Commonwealth or State Government department; however, where stated in program Grant Guidelines schools (including public schools) may be eligible
- A political party or considers the primary purpose of the project to be political
- Political lobbying or advocacy activities are not eligible for funding.
- An applicant that has failed to provide satisfactory acquittal reporting or conditions of previous grants
- An applicant that has outstanding debt to Council
- An applicant that is insolvent
- An applicant that is in legal conflict with Council
- An employee or elected member of Council, or their immediate family, however this does not include an application from an organisation that an employee, elected member or their immediate family member may be part of
- An applicant that conducts, or has conducted, themselves in a way that the CoM considers to be injurious or prejudicial to the character or interests of the City of Melbourne
- An applicant that requests a grant for reimbursement of funds already spent
- An applicant that requests funds for debt reduction or operational deficits
- That City of Melbourne considers denigrate or exclude parts of the community or have an adverse effect on public health, safety, the environment or heritage
- Where possible, the City of Melbourne will ensure that grant recipients do not receive funding from multiple programs for the same purpose. This aims to maximise the equitable distribution of resources and avoid duplication of funding. Exceptions may apply where program guidelines explicitly allow for complementary funding or where unique circumstances require flexibility to achieve strategic outcomes.

9. Roles, Responsibilities and Processes

Detailed responsibilities are outlined in individual program guidelines.

Employees

- All City of Melbourne employees involved in decisions and the management of grants and sponsorships must be aware of, and comply with their responsibilities under the Grants and Sponsorship guidelines and this policy
- Develop individual program guidelines, coordinate assessment of applications and development of funding recommendations, develop funding agreements, assess and approve acquittal reports
- Negotiate, execute and administer grants and sponsorship agreements
- Act in accordance with the City of Melbourne's [Employee Code of Conduct](#) and all relevant legislation

Councillors

- Approve recommended grants and sponsorship applications
- Raise the profile Council's investment in grants and sponsorships and communicate open grant rounds with their constituents
- Support and promote grant and sponsorship recipients, through representation opportunities such as speaking opportunities, attendance at events and activations
- Act in accordance with the [Councillor Code of Conduct](#) and adhere to [Councillor Protocol](#)

CEO

- Ensure transparent and effective grants management systems, guidelines, policies, procedures and decision-making processes are in place and that all grant applicants recommended to Council for support are in accordance with the requirements of those policies, procedures and processes
- May approve grants in accordance with authority delegated under the Local Government Act.

Assessment

- Grant and Sponsorship programs will be assessed against assessment criteria identified in individual program guidelines
- Council will engage external assessment panels on a program-by-program basis, as determined by the relevant General Manager, particularly for high-value or complex grant programs where specialist expertise and impartial advice would enhance decision-making. External panels will apply Council-approved assessment criteria and provide recommendations only, with final decisions remaining with Council or its delegated authority. All panel members must declare conflicts of interest and adhere to confidentiality and integrity requirements. Council will work to ensure assessment panels are gender balanced, reflecting our commitment to equity and inclusion in decision-making.
- External assessment panel members review, assess and provide objective, independent recommendations to Council in relation to funding grants and sponsorship programs. Panel members ensure that guidelines and assessment criteria endorsed by Council have been applied consistently and equitably for all applications. All assessors cannot submit a grant application in the grant round they are assessing.

Council Approval and Delegation

- Council has authority to approve grant and sponsorship applications
- Grant programs that operate on an always-open basis, are designed to provide quick responses to emerging community needs, or other programs identified as suitable for streamlined decision-making will be delegated to management for assessment and decision-making up to a maximum individual grant amount of \$20,000. This delegation ensures rapid support while maintaining alignment with Council-approved criteria and governance requirements. All decisions made under this delegation will be reported to Council at regular intervals and published on Council's website for public transparency and accountability.
- Council will make decisions on grants in a way that ensures transparency and accountability. Meeting papers will be released prior to the Council meeting, with the names of successful applicants withheld until the decision is made. Successful applicants will be announced during the Council meeting on the night of the decision, recorded in the public agenda and minutes, and published on Council's website in line with

meeting governance processes. Details of unsuccessful applications, including the rationale for decisions, will be provided to Councillors in a confidential briefing, and unsuccessful applicants will receive private feedback following the decision.

- Some sponsorship arrangements under this policy may be considered commercial-in-confidence and will be treated as confidential, this will be specified in the relevant Focus Area Profile.
- The names of successful applicants under all grant and sponsorship streams will be published on the City of Melbourne website within one week of approval. Successful applicants are subject to signing a formal letter of agreement with CoM, and as such, are subject to change and the website will be updated accordingly.

Funding Rounds

- The number of rounds each grant program has per year will be specified in the grant program guidelines. Except for always open grant programs, Council will open grant rounds at specified dates each quarter, with set opening and closing dates published in advance. These dates will be promoted through Council's website and relevant communication channels to ensure transparency and equitable access to funding opportunities throughout the year.

Practices

- Focus Area Profiles will be maintained as appendices to this policy. These provide a short overview of each granting focus area and articulate the purpose, context and objectives of City of Melbourne's investment alongside the outcomes to be achieved.
- The profiles will be endorsed by Council and it is proposed that reviews occur within 12 months of a Council Plan being endorsed.
- Programs will have individual program guidelines that include their purpose, objectives, eligibility criteria, key dates, funding categories or streams, funding amounts, application processes, assessment criteria, applicant support information, funding agreement expectations, acquittal requirements and terms and conditions.
- Program guidelines will be approved by the relevant General Manager in line with the approved processes in the competitive grants and sponsorship procedure.
- Programs, where possible, will be administered using the SmartyGrants grant administration system focusing on consistent implementation (round open, close, assess, approve, manage), acquittal and evaluation. Applicants who may need assistance will be supported to utilise the system, ensuring equitable access and participation.
- New programs will follow approved processes in being established through development of a business case that includes investment logic.

Funding Agreement and Acquittals

- If approved, the successful applicant for a grant or sponsorship must enter into a funding agreement with the City of Melbourne before any funding is provided to the successful applicant.
- The funding agreement must set out the terms and conditions for the sponsorship or grant and include performance measures and/or acquittal requirements.

- The successful applicant must provide an acquittal report within two months of the funded project being completed that acquits against agreed measures of success and evaluates performance.
- Council will report on the outcomes the grant and sponsorship programs and retain effective, accurate and open data related to grants and sponsorship recipients on their website.

10. Policy Review, Sponsor and Approver

The General Manager XXXX will review the policy as required and within twelve months of the adoption of a new Council Plan.

The General Manager XXXX is the sponsor of this policy.

Council is the approver of this policy.

11. Related Legislation and Policies

There is a range of legislation and Council documents that inform and support this Policy. This includes, but is not limited to:

Legislation

[Local Government Act 2020](#)

[Local Government \(Governance and Integrity\)](#)

[Regulations 2020](#)

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)

Council Documents

[Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures](#)

[Delegations Policy](#)

[Child Safety Policy](#)

[Employee Code of Conduct / Councillor Code of Conduct](#)

Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-32

Fraud and corruption policy

Public transparency policy

Record management policy

Privacy policy

12. Appendices – Focus Area Profiles

Focus Area Profile – Business Grant and Sponsorship Programs

1. Purpose

Over the next 4 years the City of Melbourne’s Business Grant and Sponsorship programs will focus on supporting businesses to grow, innovate, share ideas and promote, contributing to a thriving local economy.

This focus area profile outlines how we will:

- Support innovative businesses to thrive in Melbourne
- Encourage networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration within the business community
- Promote local businesses and new ways of working
- Drive social and environmental benefits for the community
- Advocacy to help businesses to remain competitive

2. Objectives

The objective of these grants will be to:

- Support innovation and build capacity in local businesses
- boost economic activity and investment opportunities
- encourage social and environmental benefits and
- strengthen Melbourne’s position as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship
- enhancing the city’s unique identity

3. Program Streams

We will invest in the following three programs. Specific grant opportunities and amounts are detailed below, however are subject to change:

Business Growth and Impact Grants	Grants offered annually for small business proposals that occur over a 12-month period - up to \$50,000
Precinct Business Association Program	Funding amount available annually to each precinct association - a minimum of \$45,000 to a maximum of \$130,000
Business Event Sponsorship Program	Small sponsorships offered annually for business-to-business events – up to \$10,000

3. Outcomes

The business grant and sponsorship programs align with aspirations of the M2050 Vision and the strategic priorities in the 2025-29 Council Plan. They’re focused on achieving outcomes across all years of the Plan.

In addition, the grants support all The Melbourne Advantage: Economic Development Strategy 2030’s strategic pillars and key priorities and other key strategies including Experience Melbourne 2028, Inclusive Melbourne Strategy and the International Engagement Framework.

Primary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Leveraging our economic strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne leverages our economic strengths and capabilities to drive innovation, education and investment • Melbourne's economy enables everyone to participate and benefit from our shared prosperity • Support the transformation of Melbourne's underutilised spaces • Melbourne's experiences and precincts underpin a robust visitor economy, connecting locals and visitors to Melbourne's identity, driving visitation and spend
Vibrant and creative Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniquely Melbourne experiences are accessible to everyone through city and local events and creative offerings • The places and partners that contribute to Melbourne's creative identity, collaborate to ensure Melbourne remains a world-class creative capital • Local creative talent is supported and retained within the City of Melbourne

Secondary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Building a city for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne's streets, squares and community spaces welcome people of all ages, identities and abilities, to meet and connect
Living sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our residents and businesses are supported to transition to a resilient, net zero city and circular economy

Focus Area Profile – Community Grants

1. Purpose

Over the next 4 years the City of Melbourne’s community grants and partnership programs will focus on partnering with residents and community groups on projects that build connection and resilience, celebrate diversity and help make our city fairer, more welcoming and a great place to live.

This focus area profile outlines how we will:

- Empower our communities to identify and respond to local areas of need.
- Activate community participation and connection.
- Partner with community organisations to deliver shared outcomes.
- Build capacity within the community sector.

2. Objectives

The objective of these grants will be to empower Melbourne’s diverse communities to connect, participate and take local action that strengthens inclusion, fairness, accessibility, resilience, health and wellbeing across our neighbourhoods and city.

3. Program Streams

We will invest in the following 11 programs. Specific investment programs and amounts are detailed below, however are subject to change:

Community Inclusion Grants	Grants offered annually to support the delivery of projects that support diverse communities through increased community connection, access and participation – up to \$20,000
Social Investment Partnerships	Multi-year grants offered every 2 years to support the development and delivery of projects that provide equitable opportunities, build capacity, and promote social inclusion – up to \$90,000 per year for 2 years.
Aboriginal Community Grants	Grants offered annually for projects supporting connection, inclusion, and access for First Nations people – up to \$10,000
Operational Support Grants	Multi-year grants offered annually for local volunteer-run groups to cover operational costs and costs of ongoing projects – up to \$2,500
Connected Neighbourhoods Grants	Always-on grant program for organisations or individuals to empower community members to identify and respond to local issues and priorities – up to \$2,000 per year
Community Meals Subsidy	Grants offered annually to not-for-profit organisations that provide opportunities for social cohesion and connection, wellbeing programs and access to nutritious, safe, fair and culturally appropriate food – up to \$10,000

Community Cool Places Grants	Grants offered annually to provide funding for the operation of facilities designed to keep communities cool during times of extreme heat – up to \$7,000
Community Use of Town Halls (CUTHS)	Always-on grant program to enable community groups to affordably access civic spaces to run events at City of Melbourne venues – up to \$7,000 per year
Community Events Grants	Grants offered annually to support local events that benefit the community through connection and belonging – up to \$10,000
Inclusive Sport and Recreation Grants	Always-on grant program to provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in community sport and to support individuals participating at an elite level to achieve their sporting goals – up to \$2,000 per year

Note: Neighbourhood House Agreements that were previously included in the Community Grants and Partnerships Framework have been removed from this Focus Area Profile as they are not delivered via a competitive grants process.

3. Outcomes

The community grants and partnership programs align with aspirations of the M2050 Vision and the strategic priorities in the 2025-29 Council Plan. They're focused on achieving outcomes across all years of the Plan.

In addition, the grants support all the health and wellbeing priority areas in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29, and the three priority areas within the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022–2032.

Primary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Healthy, safe, clean and connected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our neighbourhoods and communities enable physical and mental wellbeing. • People can access necessary services in times of need. • Melbourne is safe, clean and accessible to all. • Our diverse communities can actively participate, connect and experience a sense of belonging in Melbourne.
Governing for our future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Melbourne partners with First Nations people to further self-determination, advance truth telling and connect and care for Country.
Vibrant and creative Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniquely Melbourne experiences are accessible to everyone through city and local events and creative offerings.

Secondary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes

<p>Living sustainably</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community is prepared for extreme weather events through knowledge, strong local connections and a resilient built form and environment.
<p>Leveraging our economic strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne's economy enables everyone to participate and benefit from our shared prosperity.
<p>Building a city for people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne's streets, squares and community spaces welcome people of all ages, identities and abilities, to meet and connect.

Focus Area Profile – Creative Funding

1. Purpose

Over the next 4 years, the City of Melbourne’s Creative Funding programs will focus on delivering upon the Creative and Vibrant priority in the Council Plan – specifically how Melbourne is positioned as a world-class creative capital.

This focus area profile outlines how we will:

- Guide decision-making and strategic funding choices by clearly defining priorities and aligning investments with community needs and values.
- Affirm our commitment to good governance, transparency, and accountability.

2. Objectives

The objectives of these grants will be to deliver creative activities that are presented within the City of Melbourne:

- Support artists and small to medium arts organisations.
- Build and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal artists and arts organisations.
- Prioritise challenging, creative ideas and ambition.
- Champion diverse art across all art forms that convey progressive and leading creative ideas.
- Support creatives and projects that reflect the diversity of Melbourne.
- Encourage participation and activation of the arts within the municipality.
- Prioritise projects that contribute to and stimulate the creative transformation of Melbourne.
- Ensure projects benefit as broad a range of stakeholders as possible including residents, visitors, traders and students.

3. Program Streams

We will invest in the following Creative Funding programs. Specific grant opportunities and amounts are detailed below, however are subject to change:

Annual Arts Grants	Grants offered annually for one-off arts projects to occur in the following calendar year – up to \$20,000
Annual Aboriginal Arts Grants	Grants offered annually for Aboriginal artists delivering one off arts projects to occur in the following calendar year - up to \$20,000
Quick Response Arts Grants	Grants offered annually for one off arts projects - \$5,000 (fixed funding amount)
Arts Residency Funding	Grants and in-kind venue support offered annually for artists - \$5,000
Multi-year Arts Grants	Three-year funding to small, medium, and larger arts organisations – up to \$330,000 per year. Council will determine annual indexation.

Access Funding Grants for Artists with Disabilities	Funding to assist artists with disabilities to deliver funded arts projects (additional to grant funding) – up to \$2,000
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3. Outcomes

The Creative Funding programs align with aspirations of the M2050 Vision and the strategic priorities in the 2025-29 Council Plan. They’re focused on achieving outcomes across all years of the Plan.

In addition, the grants support existing Council strategies, frameworks and action plans, including the [City of Melbourne Creative Strategy 2018-2028](#), the [Economic Development Strategy 2030](#), the [Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan August 2024 – July 2027](#) and the [Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-2032](#).

Primary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Vibrant and creative Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniquely Melbourne experiences are accessible to everyone through city and local events and creative offerings The places and partners that contribute to Melbourne's creative identity, collaborate to ensure Melbourne remains a world-class creative capital Local creative talent is supported and retained within the City of Melbourne

Secondary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Leveraging our economic strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne's experiences and precincts underpin a robust visitor economy, connecting locals and visitors to Melbourne's identity, driving visitation and spend

4. Measures of Success

Who is funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of successful applicants (artists and arts organisations), including recipients who are Aboriginal, living with a disability or from the LGBTQIA+ community New grant recipients – recipients funded by the City of Melbourne for the first time Applicant success rate – artists/arts organisations as a percentage of total applications
What is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of art forms funded, ensuring a spread of representation across visual arts, dance, literary arts, music, theatre, film and beyond

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total days of activity delivered across the municipality
Benefit created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of audience members who attended funded projects • Total number of artists supported by projects delivered • Total number of projects that would not have gone ahead without funding support from City of Melbourne • Case studies showcasing funded artists' careers and success stories <p>Opportunities to expand these benefits involve prioritising specific place-based outcomes year to year that could involve working with specific trader or community organisations. Encouraging (or requiring) partnership with local traders or other cultural partners is also a way of expanding benefit.</p>

Focus Area Profile – Events Partnership Program Funding

1. Purpose

The City of Melbourne’s Event Partnership Program focuses on providing financial support to free and accessible events that are held within the City of Melbourne municipality.

This focus area profile outlines how we will:

- Support the delivery of third-party events within the municipality.
- Support events that grow or enhance event offerings for Melbourne by creating unique and positive experiences for visitors.
- Increase visitation and economic impact to the city.
- Encourage event organisers to choose Melbourne as the location for their events.

2. Objectives

The program aims to activate Melbourne and create memorable, engaging and innovative experiences for both locals and visitors. It will also drive economic impact, business engagement and visitation to the city, creating conditions for a strong, adaptive, sustainable and thriving future city economy. The program aims to make Melbourne an accessible and affordable city through offering programming that is accessible, inclusive, culturally aware and safe.

3. Program Streams

The Event Partnership Program is run as a single funding stream.

<p>Event Partnership Program (EPP)</p>	<p>Sponsorships offered annually to support events in the City of Melbourne up to \$150,000 (plus value in kind support).</p> <p>The Event Partnership Program is considered commercial-in-confidence and will be treated as confidential.</p>
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3. Outcomes

The Event Partnership Program aligns with aspirations of the M2050 Vision and the strategic priorities in the 2025-29 Council Plan. They’re focused on achieving outcomes across all years of the Plan.

In addition, the program supports EM28 notably the guiding principles of ‘we take an experience centric approach’, ‘we foster an inclusive and welcoming destination’ and the strategic priority of ‘stimulate visitation to the city’. It also talks to the experience pillars of ‘sports and events capital’, ‘vibrant people and places’ and ‘culinary kaleidoscope’.

Primary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
<p>Healthy, safe, clean and connected communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our diverse communities can actively participate, connect and experience a sense of belonging in Melbourne

Vibrant and creative Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniquely Melbourne experiences are accessible to everyone through city and local events and creative offerings • The places and partners that contribute to Melbourne's creative identity, collaborate to ensure Melbourne remains a world-class creative capital
Leveraging our economic strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne's experiences and precincts underpin a robust visitor economy, connecting locals and visitors to Melbourne's identity, driving visitation and spend
Building a city for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne's streets, squares and community spaces welcome people of all ages, identities and abilities, to meet and connect

Secondary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Leveraging our economic strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne's economy enables everyone to participate and benefit from our shared prosperity
Governing for our future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Melbourne leads, partners and advocates on issues important to our community • City of Melbourne partners with First Nations people to further self-determination, advance truth-telling and connect and care for Country
Vibrant and creative Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local creative talent is supported and retained within the City of Melbourne

Focus Area Profile – Other Grant Programs

1. Purpose

This Focus Area Profile outlines the grant programs that sit outside of the Community Grants, Creative Funding, Event Partnership Program Funding and Business Grant and Sponsorship Programs Focus Area Profiles.

2. Objectives

Each grant program delivers specific objectives that align with the Council Plan or related City of Melbourne Strategies.

3. Program Streams

There are currently two grant programs included in this focus area:

<p>Urban Forest Fund</p>	<p>Provides matched funding to support new greening projects on private property in the city. Grant applications are assessed by a panel of greening experts and community members who prioritise projects that will provide the most benefit to the community and environment.</p> <p>Amounts funded are determined based on the specific objectives and purpose of the funding round.</p>
<p>Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund (MHRF)</p>	<p>The Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund (MHRF) was established in 1988 and provides financial assistance to places of identified historical significance within the City of Melbourne. The purpose of MHRF is to encourage and assist owners of heritage places within the municipality to conserve and restore their buildings for the benefit of the community.</p> <p>Amounts funded are determined on a project-by-project basis.</p> <p>This program is administered by the Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund Committee of Management which includes the National Trust, the Heritage Council, Victoria and Heritage Victoria. The fund is not administered by the City of Melbourne.</p>

3. Outcomes

These grant programs align with aspirations of the M2050 Vision and strategic priorities in the 2025-29 Council Plan.

Primary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
<p>Building a city for people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne’s streets, squares and community spaces welcome people of all ages, identities and abilities, to meet and connect

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality design in our buildings and public places supports people-centered, creative and sustainable urban environments.
Living sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities across the municipality have local access to clean, high-quality parks, waterways and open space • Our residents and businesses are supported to transition to a resilient, net zero city and circular economy. • Community is prepared for extreme weather events through knowledge, strong local connections and a resilient built form and environment

Secondary Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Strategic Priority	Outcomes
Governing for our future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Melbourne leads, partners and advocates on issues important to our community.