

Façade Improvement Program Guidelines



We are committed to supporting the local economy and making our shopping precincts more attractive and inviting to enhance the appeal of our CBD streetscapes.

The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) will support businesses with visible street frontage to upgrade their façades, enhancing the attractiveness and appeal of the municipalities commercial and shopping precincts.

How much can I apply for?

Council has dedicated \$50,000 per financial year to help bricks and mortar businesses to enhance their facade, by offering 1:1 grants of up to \$5,000 for eligible businesses.

For example:

Businesses have a total project cost of \$8,000 (excl GST) - business provides \$4,000 (excluding GST), Council provides \$4,000 (excl GST).

Businesses can choose to contribute more to the total project cost but will still only be eligible for a maximum of \$5,000 (excl GST) from council.

Note: Council contribution is subject to the number of applicants and funding requested versus the total budget allocated to the program.

Eligibility

Grants will be available to small to medium businesses to enhance their street appeal. To be eligible for funding, applicant must:

- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Not be an Australian Charity, Not-for-Profit (NFP), political or religious organisation.
- Be located within a commercial / township area of the municipality that has street frontage.
- Be a property owner or tenant with a lease agreement (with a minimum of one year remaining). If applicant is leasing, building owners' consent must be obtained.
- Proposed works must be approved by Council and be in line with design guidelines and heritage streetscapes (where applicable).
- Submit all required information with completed application form to be considered.
- Improvements works to be undertaken by local trades / businesses where possible.
- Projects must be on private property and not on or impacting public assets such as nature strips, footpaths, garden beds, etc.

- Project cannot start prior to program launch date with expected completion within 6 months of successful notification.
- Only one grant awarded per property.
- Successful recipients can't reapply for funding for a period of 3 years.
- Not be a current Council employee, contractor, Councillor and/or their immediate family member. Council reserves the right to review this on a case-by-case basis.

Meeting the eligibility criteria is not a guarantee of funding. The decision made by Council is final. Council will not be responsible for any expenses incurred because of an applicant's anticipation of successful funding.

Eligible works

- Repainting of building façade and windows.
- Installation/upgrade of business signage.
- Renewal of exterior lighting or awning/structure.
- Digital displays.
- Repair or replacements of verandahs.
- Improvements to frontages (eg. Sliding windows. Bi-fold doors or large windows) - excluding security screens and doors.
- Cleaning of existing façade and removal of redundant signage / air conditioning units or hoardings.
- Minor repairs, maintenance or reinstatement of missing elements of the façade.
- Limited permanent interior improvements (if visible from the exterior).

Non-funded activities

- General business expenses such as wages, rent, insurance, etc.
- Security systems such as locks, CCTV, security doors, grills, roller doors, etc.
- Any works carried out inside the property.
- Non fixed items such as A-frame signs, planters, tables, chairs, movable lights, heaters, etc.
- Any activity applied for without a supporting written quotation.
- Costs associated with permits, licences or any other similar expense payable to Swan Hill Rural City Council, State or Federal government bodies.
- Any works that have been completed or have already commenced prior to the outcomes of the application being advised.

Develop Your Application and Apply

Applicants are encouraged to contact a member of the Economic Development Unit, prior to submitting an application 03 5036 2333 or by email ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au.

- All FIP applications must be submitted via the SmartyGrants portal, accessible on Council's Business Façade Improvement Program webpage.
- A preview of the form is available to view in the SmartyGrants portal.
- Applications will open annually in July for a five-week period.
- Applications that do not include all the required information will be deemed ineligible.
- Late applications will be encouraged to re-apply in the following financial year.

Documentation

The following must be provided as part of an application:

- Clear description with demonstrated benefits and an itemised list of proposed works.
- At least one quote from contractor/s (local, where possible).
- Signed consent from property owner (where possible).
- Outline necessary approvals and permits for proposed works – discuss with Council prior to commencement of application.
- Photographs showing the existing façade / building – “before photos”.

Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed by a panel of relevant officers, Directors and Councillors, against the following criteria:

- Increased appeal of the business frontage
- Use of local trades/suppliers to undertake proposed works
- Overall improvement to visual amenity of the streetscape

Recommendations will be provided at a Council meeting for final decision.

Notification of outcomes

Successful applicants will be notified via email with a confirmation letter, funding agreement and financial details form or Purchase Order number, following Councils decision.

Completion of works and claiming grant funds

The proposed works must be carried out as per the original application and funding agreement, or a variation request must be submitted to Council.

All works must be completed within 6 months of applicant receiving successful notification.

Once complete, an acquittal form must be submitted with the following details, to claim grant funds:

- Receipts/invoices from trades/contractors.
- Photographs of completed works.
- Invoice from applicant for the agreed grant amount.

(Last reviewed June 2026)