

Event Support Fund Guidelines

Council recognises the benefits of events to our community and municipality, including tourism and the local economy through the Event Support Fund and provides assistance to new and existing local events that are of social and economic benefits to our communities.

We strongly encourage you to read the following guidelines and contact Council's Economic Development Team with any questions before completing your application form.

Develop your application and apply

- Council's Event Support Fund opens annually providing four levels of funding to meet the varying needs of our community.
- The Program is advertised in local media, on Council's Facebook Page and website, as well as its grant mailing list.
- Discuss your event with Council's Economic Development Team to determine which level of funding best suits your event.
- If eligible under the guidelines, begin your application via SmartyGrants. A link will be available via Council's [Event Support Fund](#) webpage.
- Write your application by providing adequate details and information. Do not assume that anything is known about your group / organisation or event.
- Obtain and attach relevant quotes (e.g. venue hire, equipment hire, etc) and complete the budget section, making sure income equals expenditure (any queries, please contact Council's Economic Development Team).
- Include details of any additional sponsorship or grants applied for or received.
- Attach any additional material in support of your application such as letters of support, testimonials etc.
- Submit your application.

All applications must be lodged online. Applications need to be completed in full, with any supporting documentation included at the time of submission. Applications that do not include all the required information will be deemed ineligible. Late applications will not be accepted.

Prepare your budget

When preparing a budget for your project, please consider the following:

- It is important that all costs are realistic and justified/explained within your application.
- Make your budget as detailed as possible, this helps the Assessment Panel understand the amount requested and demonstrates what the impact of reduced funding might be.
- If you have applied for other funding or sponsorship for your event, please note this in your budget and ensure it is clear if the funding/sponsorship is confirmed or unconfirmed.

What and how much can I apply for?

The Events Support Fund has four levels of funding:

Name	Max amount per application	Length of funding agreement	Rounds
Quick Response Event Grant	Up to \$1,000	12 months	Opens annually each July till funds expended
Event Support Grant	\$1,000 to \$5,000	12 months	One round per year May to June
Event Partnership Grant	\$2,000 to \$10,000	3 years	Open every 3 years
Major Festival & Event Grant	\$10,000 to \$30,000	12 months	Opens annually each July till funds expended EOI prior to formal application process

The Event Partnership Grant will be by invitation only with selected applicants asked to enter a contract arrangement with Council and receive a set funding amount every financial year for a 3-year period.

For the Major Festival & Event Grant stream an initial expression of interest must be submitted outlining the proposed event. If the proposed event meets the prescribed criteria and receives support, the organisation will be invited to submit a full application with detailed budget, timeline and supporting documentation.

Council support may consist of:

Logistical Support (In-kind) - Provide information or advice, provision of signage, traffic management, park/reserve preparation, cleaning, etc.). and / or

Event Sponsorship (Financial) - Provide financial assistance to eligible applicants that satisfy the funding criteria.

If the event is held on Council owned or managed grounds the organiser must contact Council's Events Officer, so that the event can go through Council's Event Management Approval process.

In exceptional circumstances the panel may recommend that an event receive more than the above maximum allocations.

Groups / organisations can submit multiple applications to the Event Support Fund, but each submission must be for a different event. Groups / organisations can also apply to the Community Development Fund; however, submissions must comply with eligibility criteria for that funding stream.

Groups / organisations who have outstanding acquittals are INELIGIBLE to apply for future rounds of funding until their acquittal has been received and approved by Council, unless exceptional circumstances outside of the applicants control deem it to be appropriate.

Who is eligible?

Funding will be provided to organisations/groups that satisfy all the following:

- Have a formal legal structure or are auspiced by a community group or organisation that fulfil this requirement (i.e. incorporated or auspiced by an incorporated organisation)
- May have limited capacity to raise funds.
- Are located within the municipality and primarily serve residents of the Swan Hill Rural City Council or are located outside the municipality but provide an event that primarily impacts upon Swan Hill Rural City Council residents and visitors (evidence of this service may be required).
- Ensure adequate legal and insurance requirements are met.
- If previously funded by Council, have satisfactorily fulfilled all requirements regarding financial acquittal and reporting.

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.

What could be funded?

Support will be considered for events that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- New or emerging events.
- The ability to have strong economic and/or social benefit to the region.
- Promote growth, encourage visitation to the region and innovation.
- Promote and encourage participation across all sectors of the community.
- Celebrate diversity.
- Reduce the isolation of individuals and groups within a community.
- Are inclusive and accessible to all members of the community, including youth and older persons.

- Demonstrate partnerships with other local groups and individuals.

Existing events that have been funded for more than three years will have to show new or innovative elements to continue to receive funding.

Successful funding through the event category does not imply ongoing funding. Groups should always work towards a sustainable funding model for ongoing events.

What will NOT be funded

Funding will not be provided for:

- Events that have already commenced or been completed, unless Council's prior written consent has been received.
- Recurrent operating or maintenance costs for day-to-day operations.
- Salaries, where the salary forms part of the organisation's usual responsibility.
- Events which have already been held, or for costs that have already been expended.
- Events that are clearly a duplication of an existing event.
- Events that have a political or religious purpose and objective.
- Events that are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.
- Prize money, awards or activities associated with prizes or awards (e.g. trophies).
- Events or activities that benefit an individual only.
- Events that have received funding through other Council programs /sponsorship.
- Organisations that support or the intended purpose of the event promotes gambling or alcohol, drugs, or tobacco use.
- Groups or organisations that are in debt to Council, or who have not previously acquitted a grant to the satisfaction of Council.
- Education events, including events organised by tertiary institutions, primary or secondary schools or kindergartens.
- Capital works projects, facility maintenance or purchase of capital equipment.
- Insurance fees associated with risk and governance such as public liability insurance, event insurance or fees payable to a governing body.
- Breakfast, luncheon or dinner events and gatherings which are predominantly attended by a niche or small cohort of the intended community.
- Sporting, cultural, arts, education, special interest or other gatherings that take place on a regular basis such as monthly or weekly.

How do applications get assessed?

- A preliminary review of each application is completed to assess eligibility.
- Eligible applications are evaluated by an assessment panel specific to each grant funding stream.
- Recommendations are made based on the panel's decisions.

Each application is assessed on its merits, through a weighted evaluation process, with the following factors considered:

Quick Response Event Grant

- Clearly describe and provide evidence of an immediate need for the grant.

Event Support Fund and Major Festival & Event Grant

- Economic benefit to the region (particularly regarding local businesses). (40%)
- Social benefit to the region (contribution, alignment with tourism objectives, ability to boost region's profile, opportunities to engage with or showcase our cultural, arts, sporting or leisure elements). (30%)
- Growth and innovation (event format, attendance, economic impact, skills and learnings). (30%)

Other considerations:

- Events that engage local businesses will be looked upon favourably.
- Events that foster social and economic development which increases knowledge and awareness and engages community members in meaningful participation and involvement in community life.
- Events that are striving towards sustainability (i.e. without Council support) and can create long-term benefits for the community.
- Applications that include a cash contribution from the group/organisation, will be looked on favourably.
- Project budget has been completed correctly, with income equalling expenditure.

Recommendations from the panel are presented to Council for approval at the July Council Meeting. Applicant organisations will be advised in writing of the grant amount and whether their submission was successful by the end of July. In exceptional circumstances an organisation or community group may require earlier notification, and this request must be approved by the panel. All unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback.

Process for claiming funds pre-event and acquittal post-event

- Applicants must read and acknowledge the Grant Agreement (must be completed by a member of the applicant organisation or auspicing body if applicable).
- Funding is released once Council receives a Tax Invoice for the grant amount approved. If not registered with Council or your bank details have changed, you will need to complete an EFT Supplier Form. This form can be completed online.
- Funded projects are to be completed and acquitted by the end of the financial year they are received in, unless an extension of time is approved by Council.
- Requests for variations, regarding scope of project or timeframe, must be made in writing to Council. Approval must be obtained before proceeding.
- Council's funding contribution to the project must be acknowledged in publicity such as newsletters, social media pages etc.
- An acquittal report must be submitted within two months of completion of the event detailing how the grant funds were spent including proof of purchases (e.g. receipts, copies of paid invoices, etc) to verify project expenditure. The report should also include photos of the event.

In the exceptional circumstance that an event cannot proceed within the financial year it received funding for, Council may approve one (1) roll over until the end of the subsequent financial year with the same contractual arrangements in place.

Should the event be unable to be held within this extended time frame, due to circumstances outside of the groups/organisations control, the applicant must formally notify Council in writing. This information will enable Council to make an informed decision regarding the amount of grant funds which must be returned to Council. If the unspent funds are not returned as requested, it will affect future applications for funding.

What happens if my grant is not fully funded?

While Council strives to fund submissions to the amount requested, with limited funds available that is not always possible. Sometimes, successful applicants are offered a lower amount than requested when the full funding is not available, but the panel believe the event will still be viable and worthwhile.

If your application is successful but you did not receive the full amount of funding requested, the Economic Development Team can discuss any changes you may need to make to the event.

Further information

If you require any further information or need clarification on anything listed in these guidelines contact Council's Economic and Development team on (03) 5032 3033 or via email events@swanhill.vic.gov.au.

(Last reviewed March 2026)