Community Development Fund Guidelines

Through the Community Development Fund, Council provides the opportunity for financial support for groups / organisations to undertake projects, programs and activities which will contribute to the wellbeing of our community.

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

Develop your application and apply

- Council's Community Development Fund opens annually providing three levels of funding to meet the varying needs of our community.
- The Program is advertised in local media and on Council's Facebook page and website, as well as its grant mailing list.
- Discuss your project with Council's Community Development team to discuss which funding tier best suits your project.
- If eligible under the guidelines, begin your application via SmartyGrants. A link will be available via Council's Community Development Fund webpage.
- Write your application by providing adequate details and information. Don't assume that anything is known about your group/organisation or project.
- Applications for any capital works or new equipment MUST attach:
  - Detailed plans, including siting of infrastructure / equipment if relevant.
  - Quotes (two if possible) for the works or equipment supply and installation.
  - Photos/images and dimensions of relevant items where available; and
  - A letter of approval from the landowner / manager on which the project is to take place if applicable. This includes Council as landowner / manager.
- Complete the budget section, making sure income equals expenditure.
- Include any pledges of donated material / equipment and any other external grant funding opportunities you are applying for regarding your project.
- Attach any additional material in support of your application.
- 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 project 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 for your project, please note this in your budget and ensure it is clear if the funding is confirmed or unconfirmed.
- Funds allocated to project managers and / or consultants must be clearly stated.

How much can I apply for?

The Community Development Fund has three levels of funding:

Name	Max amount per appl.	Length of funding agreement	Rounds	Funding Ratio
Quick Response Project Grant	Up to $1,000	12 months	Open until funds are expended	Nil
Development Support Grant	$1,000 to $5,000	12 months	One round May to June	Nil
Community Partnerships & Major Projects	$5,000 to $25,000	12 months	Open until funds are expended	1:2

For the Community Partnership & Major Projects funding stream an initial expression of interest must be submitted outlining proposed project. If the proposed project meets the prescribed criteria and receives support, the organisation will be invited to submit a full application with detailed budget, timeline and supporting documentation such as plans, approvals, quotes to support costings, etc.

Groups / organisations can only submit one application to the Community Development Fund per funding round. Groups / organisations can also apply to the Event Support 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. This includes auspicing applications for other groups/organisations.

Who is eligible?

Funding will only be provided to community groups/organisations that comply with all the following statements:

- Operate within or provide services targeting residents within the municipality.
- Operate on a not-for-profit basis.
- Operate for the benefit of the community.
- Have a formal legal structure or are auspiced by a community group / organisation that fulfils this requirement (i.e. incorporated or auspiced by an incorporated body).
- Provide access to Council residents either as members, participants or supporters.
- Ensure adequate legal and insurance requirements are met.

- If previously funded by Council, have satisfactorily fulfilled 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?

Generally funding will only be provided for projects that include:

- Structural repairs or minor upgrades to community facilities.
- The purchase of new or upgraded equipment essential to the operation of the community group.
- Address current OHS or risk management issues.
- New programs or activities that provide broad community benefit or support specific high-need groups.
- Projects that promote local sustainability initiatives, environmental innovation, create proud community spaces and promote responsible water usage and conservation.
- Projects that support the development of the group / organisation, providing opportunities to share skills, encourage participation and increase club capacity.
- The protection, conservation and restoration of heritage items and assets.
- Projects that improve social connectedness and / or physical or mental health and provide access to recreation and leisure opportunities for all ages, particularly youth.
- Projects and activities that contribute to strengthening communities within the Swan Hill Rural City Council and create new opportunities for community participation in social, learning and civic activities.
- Projects that support the development of arts and culture initiatives.

What will NOT be funded

Funding will not be provided for:

- Individuals, religious groups and for-profit enterprises.
- Projects which have a political or religious purpose and objective.
- Projects that are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.
- Projects that are the responsibility of other agencies or government departments.
- Projects for capital works that are completed on private property. However, projects that are to be carried out on properties that are heritage listed are exempt.
- Management or administrative support, building maintenance or ongoing operational costs, such as rent, power or labour costs, not directly associated with your project.
- Salaries, where the salary forms part of the organisation's usual responsibility (not including instructor or tuition fees).
- Projects that have already been completed or for costs that have already been expended.
- Projects that are clearly a duplication of an existing service, program or project.
- Costs associated with preparing a grant application and / or sourcing of quotes.
- Costs associated with obtaining any relevant permit or approval.

- Groups / organisations that are in debt to Council, or who have not previously acquitted a grant to the satisfaction of Council.
- Organisations that support or the intended purpose of the project promotes gambling, alcohol, drug, or tobacco use.
- Catering, accommodation, travelling expenses or membership fees.
- Multiple/recurrent applications from a community group / organisation.
- Projects or activities that benefit a single person only.
- Projects that have received funding through other Council programs/sponsorship.
- Schools are ineligible to apply.

Do I need a permit?

- Applicants need to be aware that certain projects may trigger the requirement for a permit or multiple permits from Council or other organisations (e.g. land managers) prior to commencing any works.
- Early consultation will assist the applicant in determining a more accurate cost of a project.
- All planning and building permits and other applicable authorisations remain the responsibility of the applicant.
- Evidence of documentation relating to permits/permissions should be provided where applicable.
- Grant funds will not be issued until ALL appropriate permits / permissions have been provided.
- Funding through the grants program does not negate the need or constitute approval of any required permits.

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 where applicable, with the following factors considered:

Quick Response Project Grant

- Clearly describe and provide evidence of an immediate need for the project.
- Provide a brief budget with supporting quotes.

Development Support Grant & Community Partnerships and Major Projects

- Clearly describe and provide evidence of a need for the project and its anticipated benefit to the organisation. (40%)
- Provide details of its anticipated benefit to the community. (30%)

- Provide a concise and comprehensive budget for the project including quotes to support costings and details of any additional funding sought. (10%)
- Provide an achievable timeline for delivery of the project (must be within a twelve-month period) and the plan to sustain project outcomes into the future. (15%)
- Organisation's contribution to the project. (5%)

Other considerations:

- Does the project engage local businesses?
- Will the project be completed and acquitted within the financial year of the receipt of funds?
- Have the required supporting documents been provided (i.e. designs, site maps, letter of approval, etc)
- Has the group / organisation previously received funding through the Community Grants Program? If yes, was the project completed and acquitted?

Recommendations from the panel will be 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. All unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback.

What happens if my application is successful?

- 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.
- Depending on the amount of funding approved, payment may be made in instalments in line with agreed project milestones.
- 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 project 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 completed project.

In the exceptional circumstance that a project 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 project 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 the grants 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 project will still be viable and worthwhile.

If your application is successful but you did not receive the full amount of funding requested, the Community Development Team are available to discuss any changes you may need to make to the project.

Further information

If you require any further information or need clarification on anything listed in these guidelines, please visit Council's website www.swanhill.vic.gov.au or contact Council's Community Development team on 03 5036 2333 or via email communitydevelopment@swanhill.vic.gov.au.

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