

Façade Improvement Program



What is Council's Business Façade Improvement Program?

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 facades, 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, applicants must:

- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).
- 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 one year remaining). If applicant is leasing, building owners consent must be obtained.
- Proposed works must be approved by Council to be in line with design guidelines and heritage streetscapes (where applicable).
- Applicants must have submitted 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 strip, footpath, garden beds, etc.
- Must not be an Australian Charity and/or Not for Profit (NFP), political organization.
- Project cannot start prior to program launch date with completion expected to be completed withing 6 months.

- Only one grant awarded per property.
- Not be a current Council employee, contractor, Councillor and/or their immediate family member.

Eligible works

- Repainting of building facade and windows.
- Installation/upgrade of business signage.
- Renewal of exterior lighting or awning/structure.
- Digital displays.
- Repair or replacements of verandas.
- Improvements to frontages (eg. Server windows. Bi-fold doors or large windows) -excluding security screens and doors.
- Cleaning of existing facade 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 system such as locks, CCTV, security doors, grills, roller doors, etc.
- Any works carried out inside the property.
- Non fixed items such as A-frame signage, 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 considering an application are encouraged to contact a member of the Economic Development Unit, prior to submitting an application.

Email ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au or call 03 5036 2333.

- All FIP applications must be submitted via the SmartyGrants online portal, accessible on Council's website: <https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/Community/Grants-and-funding>
- A preview of the form will be available to view in the SmartyGrants portal.
- Applications open in December and close end of February.
- Applications that do not include all of 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 applicable).
- Outline necessary approvals and permits for proposed works – discuss with Council prior to commencement of application.
- Photographs showing the existing facade/building - “before photos”.

Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a panel of relevant officers, Directors and Councillors. Applications that meet the program criteria will be presented as recommendations 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 via email, following Councils decision.

Completion of works and claiming grant funds

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

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

Once complete, Council must be notified in writing 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, including assigned Purchase Order number.

Planning fees may be waived for businesses as part of the FIP.