



Community Grant Program

Guidelines 2026-2027



Mildura Rural City Council

Guidelines

The Mildura Rural City Council Community Grant Program provides opportunities for not-for-profit community groups to deliver innovative local projects and programs that support our communities vision of being “A liveable, people friendly community”.

The Community Grant Program aims to

- Support **everyone to reach their full potential** through initiatives that strengthen our community, reduce barriers to participation and improve access, equity and inclusion.
- Support programs that strengthen the **physical, mental and emotional wellbeing** of our community through initiatives focused on health and wellbeing, community support, community spirit, civic pride, volunteering, arts, history and culture, and the environment.
- Support our **community to live sustainably** through projects and initiatives that create cooler, greener places, reduce waste, protect biodiversity and take action to address climate change.

Assist council to deliver identified objectives, priorities and strategies and align with the Council Plan.

Applicants are encouraged to refer to the Council Plan before considering an application:

The 2025-2029 Council Plan can be viewed on Council’s website at the following location:

<https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Council/Policies-plans-and-strategies/Community-Vision-Council-Plan>

What the Guidelines Cover

- Funding levels
- Program priorities
- Who can apply
- What will **NOT** be funded
- The application process
- Reporting and acquittals
- Assessment
- The funding conditions
- Auspice Application
- Potential Projects
- Additional Information
- Who to contact for further information and assistance

Funding Levels

The Community Grant Program has three funding levels to facilitate the various eligible projects and programs.

Name	Maximum amount per application	Length of funding agreement	Round Open	Funding co-contribution
Large	\$6,001 to \$10,000	12 months	July	1:2
Small	Up to \$6,000	12 months	July	Nil
Quick Response	Up to \$2,000	12 months	Dec - May	Nil

Large Grants

These grants provide support for the delivery of community projects and initiatives

For every \$2 contributed by Council to the cost of the project the applicant is required to co-contribute \$1. This must be a cash contribution.

Examples of projects:

- Solar panels on community buildings
- Projects that help people feel included
- A climate change awareness campaign
- A heritage conservation project
- Art projects or productions

Small Grants

Small Grants help pay for community projects and programs.

You do not need to put money towards the project.

Examples of projects:

- A hearing loop
- Barbecue trailers and cooking equipment for community groups
- A heritage or environment trail
- Projects that improve community buildings and spaces
- Projects that help people take part in the community
- Projects that support volunteers
- Online training

- Governance workshops
- Civic pride projectsPlanting of trees and native plants
- Reusable Christmas decorations

Quick Response

These grants open in December 2026, are assessed upon submission, and are intended to provide support to meet an immediate need in the community.

Applicants are not required to provide a co-contribution.

Examples of Projects:

- Community functions such as a workshop,
- small revegetation project,
- marketing and promotion of a community project,
- emergency response and relief.

Council may reprioritise this grant program during emergency situations to support community response, relief and recovery.

Program Priorities

- Support our environment to be cooler and greener
- Reduce waste production and/or increase recycling
- Reduce energy and waste and/or increase the use of renewable energy sources
- Support revegetation projects or manage pest plants and animals to protect biodiversity in our region
- Increase community education and awareness of environmental issues that address climate change
- Reduce barriers and encourage active participation in the community
- Provide opportunities to create connections and belonging in our community
- Support children and our youngest residents to have the best start in life
- Deliver initiatives and programs that help people feel safe
- Provide diverse community and recreation services
- Develop our vibrant arts and culture community
- Support community relief and recovery projects
- Promote gender equality to prevent family violence
- Encourage community festivities/spirit, including community decorations
- Support reconciliation in our community

Who Can Apply?

You can apply if you are:

- A legal entity, not for profit, incorporated community group (or be auspiced by one)
- A registered charity, public benevolent institution or have a DGR status.

- Unincorporated not-for-profit community groups being auspiced by an eligible incorporated organisation.
- A state government organisation, if the project is not normally funded by state or federal government
- A school, if the project is not for buildings and is not part of normal curriculum
- An individual artist with an active sole trader ABN

An arts-related business with an active sole trader ABN

What will NOT be funded

- Projects that require re-current or ongoing funding from Council.
- Reoccurring programs, events or activities.
- Programs, events or activities that have a fee or cost to attend (unless it is subsidised or considered low-cost/community accessible).
- Profit generating programs, events or activities.
- Projects that could be fully funded from other sources (e.g. user fees, fundraising, other funding bodies, business or other sponsorship).
- The applicant organisation has significant infrastructure and resources – unless the project is unique, not your core business and provides an additional service with demonstrated high community need.
- The service or project is the responsibility of another level of government or services abandoned by state or federal government (cost shifting).
- Projects that have received funding through another Council Grant program.
- Projects that encourage leisure initiatives to increase participation in sport and recreation activities or increase access to

- a diverse range of quality sporting and recreation facilities and programs.
- Funding of management or administrative support, contributions to salary costs or ongoing operational costs such as annual rent, power, or labour cost not directly associated with your project.
- Funding of computer products for administration use that does not contribute directly to the grant project.
- Funding for the replacement of consumable items and/or equipment.
- The purpose of the project is political in nature.
- Funding for a religious group or purpose – unless the project is non-denominational and demonstrates a broader community benefit.
- Funding to assist an individual person.
- The Applicant organisation is a commercial enterprise or Government entity.
- The project intends to manufacture products that create a direct commercial return that do not demonstrate a broader community benefit.
- Funding of general fundraising campaigns, activities and appeals.
- The applicant organisation supports or the intended purpose of the project promotes gambling or alcohol, drugs or tobacco use.
- Funding of travel, study, or conferences (including feasibility studies).
- The applicant organisation has not satisfactorily acquitted a previous Council grant.
- The project replicates a service or program that already exists within the community (projects that complement or expand the capability of existing programs will be considered).

- The project has commenced or will commence before the grant funding is announced (we do not fund in retrospect).
- Funding of costs associated with preparing a grant application and/or sourcing of quotes.
- Infrastructure projects on private property.
- More than one Quick Response Grant for the same applicant in one funding round
- Projects may be referred to a more appropriate grant program.

The Application Process

- Applicants are encouraged to submit their application online through SmartyGrants. A copy of the grant application form is available on Council's website.
- Before submitting your application, contact Council on 5018 8100 to talk about your project idea with our grants officer, and to obtain the SmartyGrants application link.
- Council can offer support with the submission of applications. Handwritten or emailed applications will not be accepted without prior approval.
- Applications and all supporting material must be submitted by the due date. Any additional information or materials will **NOT** be accepted after this time.

Once you have submitted your application you will receive an email acknowledging receipt. A PDF copy of your application will be attached for your records.

Community Grants Program Key Dates	
Grants Open	13 July 2026
Grants Close	24 August 2026
Application Assessment	August-September 2026
Grant Applicants Notified	November 2026

Refer to page 3. For Quick Response timeline

Reporting and Acquittals

On the completion of the project applicants are required to:

- Complete an acquittal form. Links to the acquittal forms are listed under each application in the “My submissions” area of SmartyGrants.
- Evidence how Council’s support for this project was recognised.
- Provide an expenditure budget, including **proof of purchase** invoices and receipts for all items purchased using funding from Council.
- Return any unspent funds to Council at the end of the grant period.

Assessment

Applications must address the following mandatory criteria. If the application does not address the mandatory criteria, it will not be eligible for assessment:

- Provide details of all monetary and in-kind contributions (this must be in line with the requirements of the funding level, i.e. Large Grants 1:2).
- Provide a plan for consultation/engagement.
- Identify where the project aligns to the objectives and/or 4-year priorities of the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Applications will be scored and assessed according to the following assessment criteria:

No.	Criteria	Weighting
1	Tell us about your project. What will your project do? Explain how your project supports the community grant program priorities. <i>(Applications that address more than one priority area are encouraged)</i>	30%
2	What community need or problem will your project address, and how do you know this is needed? <i>(Please include any evidence (for example, statistics, research, consultation, meeting minutes, newspaper article).</i>	30%
3	How will you deliver your project? Include key activities, timing and any risks.	15%
4	What difference will this project make to the community?	15%
5	Demonstrate consideration for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusiveness and accessibility <i>Explain how the project will support people with specific needs to participate regardless of, age, gender, culture or ability. This includes recognising their diverse needs and reducing barriers so people can participate in a way that suits them.</i> • Social and environmental sustainability <i>Consider supporting local businesses, creating employment and participation opportunities for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or people with disability, promotion of environmentally friendly practices, purchase/use of products that consume minimal energy, water or other resources.</i> 	10%
	Total	100%

All questions in the application form must be answered, and any requested attachments provided.

The Funding Conditions

- The project must be completed within 12 months from the date the funding agreement is signed with Council.
- The project must be undertaken within the Mildura Rural City Council Local Government Area.
- Applicants must have a completed and approved permit/land managers consent to undertake activities for projects that will take place or be completed on lands with landowners (see **Land Managers Consent** under **Definitions**)
- Purchasing of goods meets Council's Water and Energy Use Guidelines for buildings and facilities to ensure the responsible use of water and electricity in buildings and facilities.
- Applicants must seek consent from Council for any variations to the original project. All requests will be considered, and the applicant will be notified of Council's decision. Approval must be received for all variations.
- The applicant must have public liability insurance with a suitable level of coverage relevant to the nature of the project. A copy of your current Public Liability Insurance Certificate (minimum \$10 million) must be submitted as part of your application.
- The applicant must supply a financial statement (less than 3 months old) if requested.
- Two quotes (less than 3 months old) must be submitted as part of the application for any individual budget items over \$1000. Additional quotes must be submitted upon request.

- A successful applicant must enter into a Funding Agreement with Council and adhere to all conditions outlined in the agreement.

Auspice Application

Not-for-profit community groups that meet all other eligibility criteria but are unincorporated can have their application supported by an auspisor, an eligible incorporated organisation.

The following conditions apply:

- The auspisor must be incorporated and have an ABN.
- The auspisor accept legal and financial responsibility for the grant if successful.
- Applications can be submitted directly by group being auspiced. However, the funding agreement for successful grants will be made between the auspisor and Council, and grant money will be paid directly to the auspisor.
- The auspisor must provide information for the application including contact details and ABN.

Additional Information

Multiple applications - Applications from the same club, group or organisation in multiple grant categories for different projects will be considered and assessed on their individual merit.

Information sessions – Are scheduled every grant round for applicants seeking further information. Interpreters can be arranged.

Aboriginal consultation – Council recognises The First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation including traditional owner groups Latji Latji, Nyeri Nyeri, Ngintait (Nintay) and Wergaia and Barengi Gadjin Land Council including traditional owner groups, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, collectively known as the Wotjobaluk peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands within the municipality. Consultation and cultural requests such as cultural awareness training, Welcome to Country ceremonies or smoking ceremonies and cultural heritage management should be directed to the appropriate traditional owner organisation.

Child Safe Standards - Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children (anyone under 18 years old) are required by law to implement Child Safe Standards to protect children from harm. If your project/program engages children as either participants or audience members you will be required to demonstrate that you are complying with the Child Safe Standards by uploading a supporting document of your organisation's Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

For further information on the Child Safe Standards see: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/>

Water and Energy Use Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities - specifies behavioral and purchasing guidelines to ensure the

responsible use of water and electricity in buildings and facilities.

These guidelines apply to Council staff, contractors users of Council buildings and facilities and any organisation purchasing goods with council funding (recipients of Council Grants).

More information can be found on Council's website at the following link:

<https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Services/Planning-and-Building/Building-Permits-Services-Land-Managers-Consent>

Who to contact for further information and assistance

Speak to a Council Officer 5018 8100

A Council Officer is available to help applicants with preparing their application. We can help in person with completing your application form to submit it online. This needs to be **by appointment** (to make sure we are available). Interpreters can be arranged.

If you are having trouble accessing your SmartyGrants user account, please contact SmartyGrants directly on 03 9320 6888 or via service@smartygrants.com.au.

Definitions

DGR status A Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) is an entity or fund that can receive tax deductible gifts.

ABN The Australian Business Number (ABN) is a unique 11- digit identifier that makes it easier for businesses and all levels of government to interact.

<https://abr.business.gov.au>

Acquittal The process by which a funding recipient demonstrates in writing to the funding body that it has expended all funds per the terms and conditions of the funding agreement on completion of the project.

Auspikor An incorporated organisation that accept legal and financial responsibility for an unincorporated applicant.

GST Goods and services tax often referred to as GST is a broad-based tax of 10% on most goods, services and other items sold or consumed in Australia. All Council grants are exclusive of GST.

Incorporated Association An incorporated organisation separates individual members from the entity. Incorporation makes a group of people, a single legal entity with certain rights and legal protections.

More information:

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-fundraising>

In-Kind Contribution A non-financial contribution (volunteer time, free venue, donated goods) from the organisation or community group that goes towards the project or program to make it happen.

Capital Infrastructure This refers to; upgrades or modifications to facilities or buildings, structural alternations/improvements or the installation of fixed built items, any addition that will add to the capital value.

Land Managers Consent (LMC) Grant applications seeking funds relating to capital infrastructure, or any works on Council owned, managed or controlled land and buildings, require a Land Manager's Consent application to be submitted to Council for processing and approval at the time of the grant application.

Applicants must factor in any requirements, governance or conditions of the Land Managers' Consent into their project.

Consent is also required from Land Owners other than Council i.e. Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP).

The Land Managers Consent application is available on Council's website at the following link:

<https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Services/Planning-and-Building/Building-Permits-Services-Land-Managers-Consent>