

# Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

## HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2024/2025



## Purpose

Hepburn Shire Council is committed to supporting local community groups and organisations to remain agile and responsive to issues that arise in the local Hepburn community. The 2022/23 Council Grants Review identified the need for a *quick-response small projects grant scheme* to be available year-round for community groups to access outside the normal cycle of Community Grants.

The Quick Response Grant has been designed to support community groups who may have experienced an unforeseen disruption, urgent issue or to facilitate smaller projects that are significantly less costly than the amount available in other grants schemes. Quick Response Grants has faster assessment outcomes to facilitate adequate and timely responses to community issues.

Grants that address the key focus areas in the [Council Plan 2021-2025](#) or address priority areas outlined in the [Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan](#) are strongly encouraged

## Program Principles

Three principles guide the Hepburn Shire Council's Grants Programs, including how Council Officers work with, support, and respect the community and administer the program.

### 1. Transparency

Transparency is defined as the lack of hidden agendas or conditions and the availability of all information needed in order to collaborate, cooperate and make decisions effectively.

### 2. Equity

Equitable grant making is being conscious of the barriers and disadvantage being faced by some groups or individuals because of the inequitable distribution of power and resources.

### 3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

Every grant dollar should produce the maximum benefit for Hepburn Shire communities. Every grant should be both efficient and effective throughout the whole lifecycle of the Community Grant process, from promotion to evaluation.

## Program Objective

Council has committed \$12,000 to support community driven projects in 2024/2025 to support community groups remedy urgent issues or facilitate small projects. Applicants can apply for a grant up to \$1000 at any time during the application period and can only receive

one grant per year. Quick Response Grants will be open for applications from 1, August 2024, until 31 May 2025, or until the funding allocation has been exhausted.

**Applicants should note that due to the upcoming Council Election in 2024, the outcome of applications received after 17 September 2024, cannot be announced until after 26 November 2024 due to the requirements of Council's Election Period Policy and the Local Government Act 2020.**

Council encourages community groups to submit applications for their project. Submissions will be assessed for their impact by a panel consisting of Council officers. Technical support will be provided to guide and refine the scope of potential projects, before and during the application stage. All applicants are advised to contact Council's Grants Specialist to ensure that the project meets the funding aims.

### Strategic Alignment

The Quick Response Grant Program aligns with the principles and objectives outlined in the Council Plan and Vision 2022-25 and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022-25. The Quick Response Grants Program also aligns with the priorities outlined in the Hepburn Shire Council Grants Policy 2024.

### Who Can Apply

Local not-for-profits, sporting clubs and community groups in the Hepburn Shire, which are incorporated with an Australian Business Number (ABN) are encouraged to apply. Local groups not meeting these criteria may apply if they are auspiced by another organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN.

Previous funding from other Hepburn Shire Council Grant Programs will not affect eligibility for the Quick Response Grants, provided that, the previous grant was for a different project/activity and the applicant has completed the acquittal process and meets the eligibility requirements outlined above.

### Application Process

1. It is strongly encouraged that all applicants contact Council's Grants Specialist to discuss your initial idea for your project, application requirements and the online application process.
2. Visit: [www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/residents/support/grants) for more information.
3. Go to the [Hepburn Shire Council Grants Portal](#) and submit your application online with Smartygrants.

Applications not meeting the eligibility guidelines will not be considered for assessment.

### Key Dates

Applications open	1 August 2024
Applications close	31 May 2025
Assessment Panel convenes	Within 4 weeks of submission
Applicants notified of assessment outcomes	Within 6 weeks of submission
<b>COUNCIL ELECTION PERIOD:</b> For applications received during Council Election Period (17 September 2024 – 27 November 2024).	Notification of assessment outcomes will occur after 27 November 2024 at conclusion of Caretaker Period and appointment of elected Councilors.
All projects completed and acquitted	Projects must be completed with 12 months of signing the funding agreement.

### Eligible Projects for All Categories

To be eligible for assessment, projects and applicants must:

- Have read and understood the program guidelines.
- Be a not-for-profit group (NFP).<sup>1</sup> NFPs that employ paid staff, such as Coaches, Players, Administrators or Chairpersons, must clearly show a strong financial need for funding and explain the potential growth of their organisation due to the project
- Be completed within twelve months of signing the agreement and release of funds.
- Be held within the Hepburn Shire to the benefit of its residents.
- Be an organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN (eg, an incorporated association), or be auspiced by a suitable group.<sup>2</sup>
- Have all permits, permissions and approvals for the project.<sup>3</sup>
- Have obtained public liability insurance to the value of \$20 million AUD prior to commencing any works or expenditure.
- Demonstrate community involvement in its planning and proposed implementation.
- Be willing to participate in public relations for the project, including a potential media release and photo with members of the applicants' organisation and funding representatives.

If the project is expected to generate a minor financial gain, the applicant must clearly highlight how the profits will contribute to the group's sustainability or community benefit.

<sup>1</sup>Your organisation may meet the requirements of being a not-for-profit by having specific dissolution clauses in its governing rules. Category C Children's Programs will consider applications from organisations such as schools.

<sup>2</sup> An Auspicing Agent is another organisation that is a legal entity with an ABN. A letter signed by two committee members from the auspicing agent must be submitted with the grant application, confirming they will auspice the application and that they will not charge a fee for this service.

<sup>3</sup> If the project is to undertake works on; Council owned/managed land or property, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action property, or Parks Victoria land, you must provide written approval from the relevant land manager.

### Ineligible Projects for All Categories

- Individual applicants, profit-making organisations and political parties.
- An activity that is the funding responsibility of the state or federal government, or can be funded by fees, sponsorship or service agreements.
- Individual applicants that have already received a successful Quick Response Grant within the previous twelve months (judged from the date the funding agreement was signed)
- Funding to support the installation of AED stations – Contact Council's Work Place Health and Safety team to discuss other methods Council may support this initiative.
- Applicants that have an outstanding Council grant acquittal or unpaid invoice from Council.
- An activity that already receives or has received funding or in-kind-support from other sources within Hepburn Shire Council, i.e., funding agreements or sponsorship arrangements.
- Projects that have already commenced or have been completed.
- Applications submitted outside the Application Stage closing date.
- Organisations based outside the Shire, unless the Project is of benefit to Hepburn Shire residents.
- Applications completed by a third party on behalf of an applicant will not be considered.

## Assessment

- Technical and grant writing support will be made available to applicants before and during the application stage.
- At the conclusion of each month, applications are reviewed to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria. Those not meeting the criteria will be notified and will not progress to assessment.
- Eligible applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of Council Officers against the Assessment criteria.
- Applications are ranked by overall average score, with funding allocated to the highest scoring applications until the funding pool or pool of suitable applicants is exhausted.

## Assessment Criteria

All Council Grant Programs are assessed against the following Assessment Criteria:

- Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity.
- Demonstrates alignment with the Hepburn Shire Council Plan and relevant strategies (Municipal Health and wellbeing Plan)
- Demonstrates a clear benefit to Hepburn Shire Council residents.
- Demonstrates a clear ability to carry out and undertake the project/activity/event through to completion.
- Provides supporting documentation including quotations.
- Demonstrates no ethical or other conflict of interest.

## Funding

Applicants will be notified of the assessment panel outcomes by Council Officers. Once notified, successful applicants are required to sign a funding agreement and submit a tax invoice to Council using the Smartygrants platform.

The assessment panel may, in some circumstances, only offer partial funding or less funding than the applicant has requested. In the event of an application being part-funded, Council will provide an explanation for this decision. Applicants have the right to accept partial funding or withdraw their application.

## Acquittal Process

An online acquittal must be completed through the SmartyGrants portal at the conclusion of the funded project/activity/event. Successful applicants are required to keep records of all items used and purchased in facilitating the grant project/activity/event and upload these records to our grants portal as part of the acquittal process.

## Funding Conditions and Requirements

- All planning and building permits and other applicable authorisations remain the responsibility of the applicant. Evidence of permits / permissions must be provided where relevant
- Public Liability Insurance is the responsibility of the applicant and must be obtained prior to commencing any works that has been funded.
- An offer of a grant does not mean an ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Council.
- Hepburn Shire must be acknowledged on any promotional material related to the Project/activity/event. This must be approved by Council's Communications Officer prior to distribution.
- Applicants are required to formally invite the Hepburn Shire council Mayor and CEO via the [Invite portal](#) located on the Hepburn Shire Council web page.
- Successful applicants, or their Auspicing Agent, are required to enter into a formal funding agreement with Council. If the Project/activity/event does not adhere to the conditions of the agreement, Council may require grant funds to be returned.
- All funded Projects must complete an Evaluation and Acquittal including evidence of expenditure, e.g., receipts.
- Ongoing maintenance and repair costs for equipment purchased with grant funds are the responsibility of the applicant.
- In the event of a project/activity/event only being part-funded, Council will provide an explanation for this decision. Applicants have the right to accept partial funding or withdraw their application.

For applicants who are seeking funding from external grant sources, you are required to advise Council as soon as possible on the status of this external grant funding.

If your application includes grants funds from Council and another source of funding; if the external funding source becomes unavailable, you will be required to submit an alternative proposal and budget within 30 days of the external funding decision date.



Applications are submitted online only using the Smartygrants portal. Council officers can assist with this process where required, e.g., if you have an impairment that prevents you using the online process.

### **How to Apply**

Visit [www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/grants) to view the Community Grants page. All grant applications are made through the SmartyGrants portal – [Hepburn Shire Council Grants Portal](#).

### **Key Council Contacts**

Grants Specialist

Email: [grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:grants@hepburn.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 5348 2306

Please get in touch if you would like additional information, or if you require assistance to complete your application.