



9.1 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM 2021-22 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

PREPARED BY: EMMA BLACKFORD, TEAM LEADER COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Council endorsement of the allocation of grants funding for the Community Grants 2021-2022 Program, as recommended by the Community Grants Assessment Panel.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Community Grants 2021-22 Program provides funding to community organisations to deliver programs that build on local capacity to develop active, healthy, connected and inclusive communities.
- 2.2 This year, the Community Grants 2021-22 Program opened 5 July and closed 16 August 2021.
- 2.3 Council received a total of 80 applications from 51 organisations under three funding categories - Community Strengthening, Social Inclusion Partnerships and Program Support.
- 2.4 Community Strengthening received 48 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 14 applications and Program Support received 18 applications.
- 2.5 A total of \$532,640.53 was requested, with a total of \$280,000 allocated funding available.
- 2.6 Eligible applications were assessed by two Assessment Panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members (appointment endorsed by Council) and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.
- 2.7 This report presents Council with a list of the recommended grants to be awarded for 2021-22, prepared by the combined Community Grants Assessment Panel.
- 2.8 Grants applications recommended by the Assessment Panel include programs that:
- Support our most marginalised community members by providing socially distant and online programs.
 - Engage and deploy volunteers to safely assist socially isolated older persons.
 - Deliver initiatives that address environmental sustainability through online activities.
- 2.9 In total, 52 applications from 33 organisations are recommended to receive \$270,793.63 in funding. The recommended allocations are detailed in Attachment 1.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorses the Community Grants Assessment Panel's funding allocation recommendations for the Community Grants 2021-22 Program, as detailed in Attachment 1.
- 3.2 Makes public the list of successful applicants for the Community Grants 2021-22 Program on Council's website.
- 3.3 Advises all grant applicants of the outcome of the assessment process and Council's decision.
- 3.4 Formally thanks the voluntary members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for their valuable contribution to the City of Port Phillip community.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The Community Grants Program provides Council with a strategic opportunity to support initiatives that help to strengthen the community service sector and local community groups. The program aims to promote social inclusion and community engagement by supporting projects that value the contribution and participation of the Port Phillip community.
- 4.2 **Community Grants Program Structure:**
 - 4.2.1 The Community Grants Program is an annual funding round established to support and encourage community organisations to develop and deliver projects and programs that respond to the needs of the Port Phillip community.
 - 4.2.2 There are three categories of funding: Community Strengthening, Social Inclusion Partnerships and Program Support:
 - The **Community Strengthening** category provides a maximum of \$10,000 funding per grant application and funds local organisations to design and deliver projects that:
 - Strengthen and leverage the capacity of the local community and/or local community sector supporting their ongoing sustainability.
 - Meet the existing and emerging needs of local residents and encourage participation, social connection and value diversity.
 - Contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community and address health inequities.
 - Support environmental sustainability and the circular economy.
 - The **Social Inclusion Partnership** category provides a maximum of \$5,000 funding per application and supports community organisations and groups to partner in the development and delivery of projects and activities that increase social inclusion in the community. The aim is to engage residents who, for various reasons, may not have the opportunity to contribute to, participate in, or contribute to the broader community.
 - The **Program Support** category provides a maximum of \$1,000 funding per application for small groups. Council recognises that many small



groups require funding to run their activities. These groups form an important part of people's lives and wellbeing, regardless of whether they are project based. Activities are generally social in nature, such as social gatherings, or physical activities such as walking or exercise groups.

- 4.2.3 Projects that have received funding previously may apply and be considered for funding in subsequent years. Projects that can demonstrate longer term sustainability are favourably viewed. There is no limit to how many applications a community organisation can submit across the three categories.
- 4.2.4 All organisations applying for funding, including those that have been funded in previous years, are required to demonstrate sound accountability practices. Project acquittals from previously funded organisations are examined to ensure compliance with acquittal and evaluation requirements.

4.3 **Community Grants Application Process:**

- 4.3.1 Applications for Community Grant Program 2021-22 opened on 5 July and closed 16 August 2021.
- 4.3.2 The Community Grants 2021-22 Program was advertised locally using the following communication channels:
- Council's Social Media
 - Council's community strengthening newsletter, 'CoPP This!'
 - Council's website
 - Email correspondence to relevant networks and previous applicants.
- 4.3.3 Two Grant Writing Skills Development Workshops were offered to prospective applicants. Both workshops were offered online due to COVID restrictions.
- 4.3.4 Two public information sessions were held for prospective applicants to assist them in understanding the grants selection and online application processes. The public information sessions were all held online and included an evening session to encourage increased attendance.
- 4.3.5 Once received, all applications were checked for eligibility.

4.4 **Grant Assessment Process:**

- 4.4.1 Council received a total of 80 applications from 51 organisations under three funding categories: Community Strengthening received 48 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 14 applications and Program Support received 18 applications.
- 4.4.2 A total of \$532,640.53 was requested, with a total of \$280,000 funding available.
- 4.4.3 Eligible applications were assessed by two Assessment Panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members (appointment endorsed by Council) and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.
- 4.4.4 The assessment panel members complied with Council's conflict of interest policy and procedures. If a conflict of interest is apparent, then a formal declaration must be made by the assessor.



- 4.4.5 All applications were assessed against the Community Grants 2021-22 Guidelines.
- 4.4.6 Grants applications recommended by the Assessment Panel include programs that:
- Support our most marginalised community members by providing socially distant and online services.
 - Engage and deploy volunteers to safely assist socially isolated older persons.
 - Deliver initiatives that address environmental sustainability through online activities.
- 4.4.7 In total, 52 applications from 33 organisations are recommended to receive \$270,793.63 in funding. The recommended allocations are detailed in Attachment 1.
- 4.4.8 Successful applicants who receive funding under the Community Grants 2021-22 Program have until 1 June 2022 to submit their project status reports and 1 December 2022 to submit their acquittal reports.
- 4.4.9 Grant applications that are recommended to receive less funding than requested will be provided the Panel's reasons through the Grants and Funding Officer. This will include specific expenses not to be funded by the Grant (i.e. elements not the responsibility of Council or which should be funded in a different manner).
- 4.4.10 Applications which did not rate well against the selection criteria were not recommended for funding. All unsuccessful applicants will be offered the opportunity to receive feedback. Applications not recommended for funding include:
- Applications not aligned with the objectives of the grant program.
 - Evidence not provided regarding community need.
 - Capacity of the organisation to deliver the program not demonstrated.
 - Financial and environmental sustainability not demonstrated.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Eligible applications were assessed by two Panels:
- **Panel A** consisted of Cr Andrew Bond, two local community members and Council officer, Team Leader Community Capacity Building.
 - **Panel B** consisted of Cr Heather Cunsolo, two local community members and Council officer, Coordinator Grants and Community Building.
- 5.2 At the 4 August 2021 Council meeting, Council endorsed four community members to participate on the Community Grants 2021-22 Assessment Panel. The four community members provided their time voluntarily and their contribution was greatly valued.
- 5.3 Prior to meeting to allocate funding, all panel members were required to assess applications individually. Final assessments were conducted over two meetings. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, all panel meetings were held online.



- 5.4 Panel members were asked to provide feedback on the Community Grants 2021-22 Program and assessment process, to inform future processes.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no known risks to Council in endorsing the recommended allocation of the Community Grants 2021-22.
- 6.2 A conflict of interest process is embedded into the program to ensure unbiased decision making occurs at each stage of the assessment process. All panel members are required to declare any potential conflict of interest as part of the assessment process.
- 6.3 Whereby a conflict of interest has been declared, the impacted panel member is not provided with the application nor can they make comment or participate in the assessment process for that application.
- 6.4 All Councillors were required to declare any conflict of interest prior to the preparation of this Council report. A conflict of interest can be direct or indirect as per Councils Policy and procedures. There were no conflicts of interest declared for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The Panel recommendations are to allocate funding to the value of \$270,793.63. This is within the total budget of \$280,000 allocated for the 2021-22 Community Grants Program.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The following objective was included as one of the Community Grants Program 2021-22 objectives:
- Support sustainability initiatives that maximise reuse and recycling opportunities and supports the circular economy
- 8.2 Applicants were also encouraged to consider sustainability in their project planning and implementation.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The Community Grants 2021-22 Program has a far reaching and positive impact on the Port Phillip community, this includes:
- Creating opportunities for social inclusion and community engagement through projects/programs that support community participation.
 - Supporting community initiatives and activities that have adapted to or address issues, arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Ensuring social justice for all in its delivery of services, programs, and projects. This is achieved through the criteria for assessment having a strong emphasis on social inclusion and equity principles.
 - Supporting many local community groups and services to strengthen their capacity and sustainability.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The Community Grants program aligns with the Council Plan 2021-31 Strategic Direction - Inclusive Port Phillip: A City that is a place for all members of our



community, where people feel supported and comfortable being themselves and expressing their identities.

This direction includes the initiative to partner with *'community groups through grant programs to:*

- *strengthen and leverage the capacity of local groups and networks*
- *support programs that increase opportunities to participate in community life*
- *enable access and inclusion of culturally diverse groups and persons facing or at risk of social and economic disadvantage'.*

10.2 Applications are sought for projects that enhance diversity, enable community participation and decision making, and contribute to the building of healthy, strong and inclusive communities. Projects need to demonstrate alignment with the Council Plan Strategic Directions and are evaluated according to how well they meet program priorities.

10.3 Council's Community Funding Policy establishes principles that guide both the strategic approach and implementation of the Community Grants program, to ensure it is well targeted, equitable and effective.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 Following Council endorsement, outcome letters will be emailed to both successful and unsuccessful applicants by late November 2021.

11.1.2 Funding will be distributed to successful applicants in December 2021 and January 2022.

11.1.3 Details of the successful applicant organisations and funded projects will be made available on the Council website in November 2021.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 All applicants will be advised of the outcomes of their application in writing by email. Unsuccessful applicants will also be encouraged to seek verbal feedback about their application.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 Tony Keenan General Manager Community Wellbeing and Inclusion is the authoriser of this report. Mr Keenan previously held the position of CEO of one of the organisations recommended by the assessment panels to receive several grants. The General Manager Community Wellbeing and Inclusion played no part in the assessment process.

12.2 No other officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Confidential- Community Grants Program 2021 - 2022 Recommendations for Funding**