



# MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL 2 SEPTEMBER 2020

## 9.4 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM 2020-21 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

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

**PREPARED BY:** DENISE FOX, GRANTS & FUNDING OFFICER  
EMMA BLACKFORD, TEAM LEADER COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Council endorsement of the recommendations for funding for the Community Grants 2020-2021 Program by the Community Grants Assessment Panel.
- 1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with two supplementary reports relating to the 2020-21 Community Grants Program which are presented for separate consideration at this meeting, to manage the interests of Councillors and ensure a quorum of Council is maintained.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Community Grants 2020-21 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 2020-21 Program opened 10 February and closed 6 April 2020.
- 2.3 At the time the Community Grants 2020-21 Program closed, the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on service providers and the communities they support started to become apparent. The Council budget process was deferred to allow time to consider both the financial impact COVID-19 may have and impacts on the community requiring a response through services and programs.
- 2.4 Council put the Community Grants 2020-21 Program on 'pause' and sought feedback from the local community about how to best support organisations and residents. Specific community feedback was sought on Community Grants programs and associated expenditure, as part of preliminary consultation to inform the draft 2020-21 budget.
- 2.5 Following this feedback, the Community Grants 2020-21 Program was re-opened to enable organisations that had sought grants to provide a supplementary COVID response. This process acknowledged that applications submitted as part of the original Community Grants 2020-21 Program may no longer be relevant or require significant changes to support service providers to adapt and provide new services as a result of the COVID pandemic.
- 2.6 Council invited all eligible applicants to review their original Community Grants 2020-21 application and provide revised responses to capture COVID information and outline the support required to meet emerging needs. Applicants also had the option to leave their original application intact or withdraw their grant application.
- 2.7 The supplementary COVID Response to the 2020-21 Grants Program opened on 25 June and closed 20 July.



- 2.8 Council received a total of 80 applications from 50 organisations under three funding categories: Community Strengthening received 51 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 13 applications and Program Support received 16 applications.
- 2.9 A total of \$542,950 was requested, with a total of \$280,000 funding available.
- 2.10 Of the 80 COVID Response 2020-21 applications submitted, 68 applications were submitted with revised responses, 12 original applications were left unaltered and 1 original application was withdrawn (Social Inclusion Partnership).
- 2.11 Eligible applications were assessed by two Assessment Panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members (endorsed by Council) and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.
- 2.12 This report presents Council with a list of the recommended grants for 2020-21, prepared by the combined Community Grants Assessment Panel.
- 2.13 The Panel has recommended grants applications which have adapted project and program delivery to support our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations 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 elderly people;
  - continue to tackle ongoing environmental concerns with online activities; and
  - address people's anxieties through COVID-19 safety training.
- 2.14 In total, 45 applications from 27 organisations are recommended to receive \$257,214 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 2020-21 Program, as detailed in Attachment 1.
- 3.2 Makes public the list of successful applicants for the Community Grants 2020-21 Program on Council's website.
- 3.3 Endorses reallocation of the residual \$22,786 funding from the Community Grants 2020-21 Program for potential allocation under the COVID Quick Response Grants, established as part of Council's COVID Recovery Program.
- 3.4 Formally thanks the voluntary members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for their valuable contribution to the community life of the City of Port Phillip.

### 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 community groups. The program aims to promote social inclusion and community engagement by supporting projects that value contribution and participation of the Port Phillip community.



#### 4.2 Structure of Community Grants Program:

- 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 The Community Grants 2020-21 Program (supplementary COVID Response) retained the same funding categories as the original Community Grants 2020-21 Program.
- 4.2.3 The three categories of funding are: Community Strengthening, Social Inclusion Partnerships and Program Support:
- The Community Strengthening category funds local organisations to design and deliver projects that meet the needs of local residents, encourage leadership and participation, contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community, support human and technical resources, assist environmental sustainability and enhance local neighbourhoods. The maximum funding for each grant under the Community Strengthening category is \$10,000.
  - The Social Inclusion Partnership category supports community organisations and groups to partner, develop and deliver projects and activities that increase social inclusion in the community. The aim is to engage residents who, for various reasons, may not otherwise have the opportunity to contribute to, participate in, or contribute to the broader community. The maximum funding for each grant under the Social Inclusion Partnership category is \$5000.
  - The Program Support category recognises that many small groups require funding to run their activities which form an important part of people's lives and wellbeing, regardless of whether or not they are project based. Activities are generally social, such as group outings, or physical such as walking groups. The maximum funding for each grant under the Program Support category is \$1,000.
- 4.2.4 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.
- 4.2.5 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 checked to ensure compliance with acquittal and evaluation requirements.

#### 4.3 Community Grants Application Process:

- 4.3.1 Applications for Community Grant Program 2020-21 opened on 10 February 2020 and closed 6 April 2020.
- 4.3.2 The Community Grants 2020-21 Program was advertised locally in the Leader, Divercity, Council Social Media, CoPP This! (Community Strengthening Newsletter), Council's website and through direct emails to previous applicants.
- 4.3.3 Three Grants Writing Skills Development workshops were offered to prospective applicants. The final Grants Writing Skills Development Workshop was offered online due to COVID restrictions.



4.3.4 Four public information sessions were held for prospective applicants from January until March to assist applicants to understand the grants selection process and the use of the on-line grant application process. The public information sessions were held at Port Melbourne and St. Kilda and included an evening session to encourage increased attendance.

4.3.5 Once received, all applications were checked for eligibility.

**4.4 Community Grants - COVID Response Process:**

4.4.1 At the time the Community Grants 2020-21 Program closed, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had started to become apparent.

4.4.2 The Community Grants 2020-21 Program was 'paused', with community feedback sought on the Community Grants programs and associated expenditure, as part of consultation to inform the draft 2020-21 budget.

4.4.3 Following this feedback, the Community Grants 2020-21 Program was re-opened to enable organisations that had sought grants to provide a supplementary COVID response. This process acknowledged that applications submitted as part of the original Community Grants 2020-21 Program may no longer be relevant or require significant changes to support service providers to adapt and provide new services as a result of the COVID pandemic.

4.4.4 All eligible applicants were invited to review their original Community Grants 2020-21 application and provide revised responses to capture COVID information and outline the support required to meet emerging needs. Applicants also had the option to leave their original application intact or withdraw their grant application.

4.4.5 The Community Grants Program (COVID Response) remained a competitive program and was only available to applicants who submitted their Community Grants (Community Strengthening, Social Inclusion Partnership and Program Support) applicants prior to the original closing date of 6 April.

4.4.6 The supplementary COVID Response to the 2020-21 Grants Program opened on 25 June and closed 20 July.

4.4.7 All eligible applicants were contacted by email and phone to support organisations through the supplementary application process.

**4.5 Grant Assessment Process:**

4.5.1 Council received a total of 80 applications from 50 organisations under three funding categories: Community Strengthening received 51 applications; Social Inclusion Partnerships received 13 applications and Program Support received 16 applications.

4.5.2 A total of \$542,950 was requested, with a total of \$280,000 funding available.

4.5.3 Of the 80 2020-21 applications submitted, 68 applications were submitted with revised COVID responses, 12 original applications were left unaltered and 1 original application was withdrawn (Social Inclusion Partnership).

4.5.4 Eligible applications were assessed by two Assessment Panels, each consisting of one Councillor, two local community members endorsed by Council and a City of Port Phillip Council Officer.



- 4.5.5 All applications were assessed against the Community Grants 2020-21 Guidelines (available on Council website) and the COVID Response Community Guidelines 2020-21. The supplementary COVID Response Community Guidelines 2020-21 were provided to all eligible organisations along with the invitation to review their original application/s.
- 4.5.6 The Panel has recommended grant applications which have adapted project and program delivery to support our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations 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 elderly people;
  - continue to tackle ongoing environmental concerns with online activities; and
  - address people's anxieties through COVID-19 safety training.
- 4.5.7 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.
- 4.5.8 In total, 45 applications from 27 organisations are recommended to receive \$257,214 in funding. The recommended allocations are detailed in Attachment 1.
- 4.5.9 Successful applicants who receive funding under the Community Grants 2020-21 Program have until 1 June 2021 to submit their project status reports and 1 December 2021 to submit their acquittal reports.

## **5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS**

- 5.1 Eligible applications were assessed by two Panels. Panel A consisted of Cr Katherine Copsey, a Council officer (Head of Evidence and Policy, Community Capacity) and two local community members. Assessment Panel B consisted of Cr Tim Baxter, a Council officer (Team Leader Community Capacity Building) and two local community members. The four local community members were endorsed at previous Council meetings.
- 5.2 Panel members assessed assigned applications individually prior to convening for group discussion and assessment over two meetings. Due to COVID restrictions, all panel meetings were held online.
- 5.3 Panel members also provided feedback on the COVID Response Community Grants 2020-21 Program and assessment process.
- 5.4 Council thanks the voluntary members of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for their valuable contribution to the community life of the City of Port Phillip.

## **6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no known risks to Council in endorsing this recommendation.
- 6.2 Conflict of interest process are embedded into the program to ensure unbiased decision making 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 In addition, all Councillors are required to declare any conflict of interest prior to the preparation of the Council report. Where a Councillor declares a conflict of interest those affected applications appear in the attachments of the supplementary Council reports submitted.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

7.1 The Panel recommendations are to allocate funding to the value of \$257,214. This is within the total budget of \$280,000 set aside for the 2020-21 Community Grants Program.

7.2 Council could consider re-allocation of the residual \$22,786 of community grants funding, to the COVID Quick Response Grants (\$20,000 allocation) established as part of Council's COVID Recovery Program.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

8.1 The COVID Response Community Grants 2020-21 Program encourages applicants to apply for funding to deliver sustainability projects and/or to consider sustainability in their project planning and implementation.

## **9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 The Community Grants 2020-21 Program promotes social inclusion and community engagement by supporting projects that value contribution and participation to the Port Phillip community.

9.2 The Community Grants 2020-21 program (supplementary COVID response process) provides funding to support community initiatives and activities that have adapted to the COVID pandemic.

9.3 The Community Grants Program is one way that the Council ensures 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.

9.4 The Community Grants Program funds local community programs and services which enables continued employment in the Non-for-Profit Sector.

## **10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY**

10.1 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 contribute to the Council Plan Strategic Directions and are evaluated according to how well they meet program priorities.

10.2 Community Grants program aligns with Direction 1: 'We embrace difference, and people belong' and contribute to the related 'outcomes' including:

a) A safe and active community with strong social connections.

b) Supporting programs that create social connections and strengthen community networks.



- c) Building community capacity by harnessing the knowledge, expertise and spirit within our community.
- d) Supporting programs that reduce the harms associated with alcohol and other drug use, family violence and enabling all people to reach their health potential.
- e) Establishing and facilitating partnerships to support delivery of diverse and innovative projects to reduce the risk of homelessness.
- f) Community diversity is valued and celebrated.
- g) Supporting programs and events that engage, honour and are inclusive of our diverse social and cultural communities.

10.3 As part of the implementation of Council's Community Funding Policy, further work is being completed to ensure the effectiveness of the Community Grants program. This will include reviewing recurrent funding arrangements and the potential to transition programs with strong alignment to Council's long-term strategic direction from the annual grants program to multi-year funding agreements.

## 11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Following Council endorsement, outcome letters will be emailed to both successful and unsuccessful applicants by mid-September 2020.
- 11.1.2 Funding will be distributed to successful applicants throughout September 2020.
- 11.1.3 Successful applicant organisations and the funded projects will be made available on the Council website in September 2020.
- 11.1.4 Further work will be done as part of the implementation of the Community Funding Policy to identify whether some projects that have received funding from Council over several years, are more appropriate for a funding deed.

### 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 The General Manager Community Wellbeing and Inclusion is the Executive Member responsible for authorisation of this report. He has previously held the position of CEO in one of the organisations that the assessment panels have recommended for two grants. The General Manager Community Wellbeing and Inclusion has had no direct involvement in the grants receipt, assessment or recommendation process.
- 12.2 No other officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

**TRIM FILE NO:** 40/07/15

**ATTACHMENTS** 1. Confidential - Community Grant Program 2020 - 2021  
Recommendations for Funding