# Grants Policy

Corangamite Shire

November 2022

# Council Policy

## Grants Policy

### Introduction
Corangamite Shire Council is committed to ensuring our Shire is a great place to live and assisting with strengthening the development of our local communities.

Each year through the budget process, Council makes funds available under various grant programs (see below) to help assist the community.

### Purpose
This policy provides a broad framework which will guide the provision of consistent grant administration across all of Council's grant programs.

It will ensure that all guidelines, criteria, application forms, advertising, assessment, agreement and accountability processes are presented in a transparent, consistent and equitable manner, and are understood by the community.

### Scope
This policy is applicable to the following grant programs offered by Council.
- Community Grants Program
- Facility Grants Program
- Environmental Support Program
- Events and Festival Grants Program
- Facility Design Grants Program
- Business Façade Improvement Program
- Small Business Assistance Program
- Enabling Grants Program
- Leverage Grants Program (Berrybank Wind Farm Grants)
- Project Grants Program (Berrybank Wind Farm Grants).

This policy does not apply to funding that is provided to the community through other means that can include but is not limited to:
- direct budget allocations
- funding provided to halls and recreation reserves
- funding provided to facility management
- Council discretionary funding allocations
- funding provided through the Community Planning Program.

This policy does not apply to the Quick Response Grants program, which has a specific policy adopted by Council.

This policy also does not include funding provided via sponsorships or donations by Council.

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To be reviewed by: November 2025

Page Number: 2

**Definitions**
Grant
A sum of money provided to organisations or individuals for a specific purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with Council's strategic direction. The recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria and funding is subject to entering into an agreement with Council that outlines accountability requirements.

**References**
- Corangamite Shire Council Plan 2021-2025
- Media Relations Policy
- Events and Festivals Grant Program Policy
- Business Façade Improvement Program Policy
- Small Business Assistance Program Policy

**Policy Detail**
This policy framework is supported by a series of detailed processes that are consistent with Council's strategic direction for the community. The Council Plan and other strategies, plans and policies have guided the development of this framework to ensure that Council provides funding to grant programs that are consistent with Council's overall direction for the Shire.

Each of Council's grant programs will adhere to the following key processes:
1. Documented guidelines with clearly defined criteria
2. Application form
3. Advertising process
4. Assessment process
5. Conflict of interest
6. Formal agreement process
7. Acquittal process

The following content and information will be included within all grant programs to ensure consistency and clear requirements of grant applicants.

**1. Guidelines and criteria**
- Description of grant program
- Link to Council Plan
- Eligibility, detailing any specific exclusions
- Assessment criteria
- Conditions of funding
- Acknowledgement of Council
- Timeline
- Step by step guide to the application process

**2. Application form**
- Applicant details
- Assessment criteria
- Permits required
- Budget breakdown
- Signed verification
- Generic email address grants@corangamite.vic.gov.au to be used
- All applications to be stored electronically in Council's record management system.

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Page Number: 3

### 3. Advertising process
- Minimum six-week advertising period.
- During this time, as a minimum, two of each the following should be completed:
  - Media release
  - Public notice (completed as per Council's Media Relations Policy)
  - Social media post on Facebook and Instagram
- Other forms of promotion can include:
  - Corangamite Shire News articles
  - Community newsletter articles
  - Radio advertisements

### 4. Assessment process
- Clearly defined assessment process that uses the following scoring methodology:
  - 5 – Greatly exceeds criteria
  - 4 – Exceeds criteria
  - 3 – Generally meets criteria
  - 2 – Meets part of criteria
  - 1 – Fails to meet criteria
  - This scoring methodology is to be used as part of a system where all questions in the assessment criteria are weighted with a percentage amount totalling up 100%.
  - Scoring is then completed where if a question in the assessment criteria is worth 20% and the grant application is scored 4 for a question, a score of 16 would be provided as the score for this question.
- Applications assessed against set criteria.
- Minimum of three people to form part of the grant assessment panel.
- Data inventory to compute individual and total scores for each application assessed.
- Funding recommendations to be presented as part of a Council Report for approval that rank applications in order of scoring and include a short description of the project.
- Funding will not be provided to an applicant if they have overdue debts with Corangamite Shire, or an outstanding Council grant acquittal.

### 5. Conflict of interest
- 'Conflict of Interest' or 'No Conflict of Interest' form to be completed by each member of assessment panel and saved into record management system.
- If a conflict of interest is declared, that person will not assess the relevant application and the scoring will be averaged using the other two panel member's scores.
- If a panel member has a conflict of interest with more than three applications, that panel member will be ineligible to participate and another panel member required.
- If two panel members declare a conflict of interest for the same application, a new panel member must be selected and replace one of the existing members.
- Councillors must assess whether they have a conflict of interest in the approval of the grant allocations.
- If a Councillor is deemed to have a conflict of interest, they must complete a 'Conflict of Interest' form and this will saved into the record management system.
- If a Councillor declares a conflict of interest, they will not be involved in any discussions, debate or decisions relating to the grant allocation.

### 6. Funding Agreement Process
Written documentation detailing as a minimum:
- Funded body/business/group
- Amount funded

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Page Number: 4

- Funding period
- GST requirements
- Conditions of the grant
- Acknowledgement of Council
- Reporting requirements

## 7. Acquittal Process

Successful applicants to any of Council's Grant Program will be required to:

- Notify in writing any changes to agreed project funding/terms.
- Provide a report on the outcome of the grant that includes copies of relevant documentation as required in the conditions of the grant (e.g. photos, invoices, receipts, permits).
- Return unexpended funds to Council or obtain written approval for extension of agreed funding.
- Acknowledge Council in all publicity/promotional/advertising material regarding the grant.
- Complete a grant acquittal form and return to Council.

## 8. Evaluation of Grant Programs

To support fairness, transparency, and accountability and to ensure that ratepayer funds are being used effectively all grant programs will be assessed every two years. The assessment will include the following considerations:

- The intent of the program
- Eligibility criteria
- Assessment criteria
- Evaluation of benefits
- Other matters as relevant.

An internal review, with a set format will be conducted to evaluate the grant programs. Findings of the grant program assessments will be reported to Council.

Feedback Process

All applicants must be informed of the outcome of their application in writing and offered the opportunity to discuss the application/selection process.

Conflict of Interest Provisions

To ensure an accountable and transparent assessment process is maintained, Council Officers assessing grant applications and Councillors approving grant allocations are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest. This may include, but is not limited to, personal connections with any applicant. Anyone having a conflict of interest should not debate, be involved with any discussions, or vote on any matter relating to the specific applicant.

To ensure increased transparency, a declaration of 'No Conflict of Interest' is to also be completed by any Council Officers assessing grant applications.

Reallocation of Grant Program Funding

As Council completes several Grant Programs simultaneously, if one of these grant programs is undersubscribed and the other is oversubscribed, funding may be reallocated to allow a greater number of applicants to be funded.

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Page Number: 5

If this is to occur, a clear additional Officer Recommendation is required in the Council Report that states the additional applicants to be funded and how much funding is required to be reallocated from one program to the other.

Grants/Funding Database
As recipients are entitled to apply to Council for various forms of funding/grants, a database that contains all forms of funding should be kept updated as grants are awarded, and then also as individual grants are acquitted.

Templates
To assist Council to provide advice regarding its grant programs in a professional, consistent way, a variety of document templates have been developed for use across all of Council's grant programs which include:
- Corangamite Shire Council Successful Grants Letter Template
- Corangamite Shire Council Unsuccessful Grants Letter Template
- Corangamite Shire Council Funding Agreement Template
- Corangamite Shire Council 'Conflict of Interest' Form
- Corangamite Shire Council 'No Conflict of Interest' Form

**Reference to linked Procedure or Guidelines, if applicable**
- Community Grants Program Guidelines
- Facility Grants Program Guidelines
- Environmental Support Program Guidelines
- Events and Festivals Grant Program Guidelines
- Facility Design Grant Program Guidelines
- Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines
- Small Business Assistance Program Guidelines
- Enabling Grants Program Guidelines
- Leverage Grants Program Guidelines (Berrybank Wind Farm Grants)
- Project Grants Program Guidelines (Berrybank Wind Farm Grants)

**Review Date**
November 2025.

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.*

It is considered that this policy does not adversely impact community members or employees of different genders and has been developed in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020.*

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