

# Arts and Cultural Annual Grants Program Policy

VERSION 1

CITY OF STONNINGTON ARTS AND CULTURAL ANNUAL GRANTS PROGRAM POLICY

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**Policy Owner**

Community and Wellbeing

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Arts and Cultural Annual Grants Policy Adopted by Council on 10 February 2025

## Introduction

The annual Arts and Cultural Annual Grants program reflects the City of Stonnington's vision to be a vibrant, imaginative and inclusive city of culture, where people are inspired, informed and connected through creative expression and shared experience.

## Purpose

Spanning a broad range of art forms and practices this grant program supports inclusive, innovative, engaging, empowering, resilient and environmentally friendly projects. Collectively these place value on the importance of our creativity and cultural identity and strengthen the social, community and economic development of the City of Stonnington.

## Scope

The Arts and Cultural Annual Grants program is open to all eligible organisations, community groups, emerging artists, and established artists wishing to deliver arts projects within Stonnington. Applicants can be located outside of the City of Stonnington, however their project must be delivered within our boundaries.

Eligible art forms include:

- theatre
- cabaret
- dance
- visual art
- circus/physical theatre
- live art
- music
- digital media/film
- interdisciplinary/hybrid
- arts festivals.

This policy applies to the Arts and Cultural Annual Grants program, including its grant categories and guidelines:

- Triennial
- Over \$20,000
- Under 20,000
- Chapel Off Chapel Venue Hire In-kind
- Venue Hire In-kind

## Objectives

The Arts and Cultural Annual Grants program objectives include:

- Promoting City of Stonnington as an exciting, attractive, safe, bold, and desired creative destination for community residents and those outside the boundaries.
- Supporting arts organisations, individuals, and groups to sustainably grow and succeed.
- Supporting the promotion and celebration of arts and cultural programs with a wide audience.
- Connecting communities through equitable, inclusive and accessible creative arts practices, activities, participation, locations and attractions.
- Embracing and supporting the knowledge, experience and cultures of different groups including First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people living with disability, and LGBTQIA+ people.
- Evaluating the outcomes and impact that creative arts and cultural projects have at personal, social, and economic levels.

## Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:

1. **Creativity** – we will support creative, innovative, dynamic and contemporary projects that enhance the cultural, community and economic outcomes of our city.
2. **Quality** – we will provide support for artists and organisations to present high-quality, arts-based projects that reflect the diverse communities of our municipality.
3. **Access** – the grant program will provide accessible opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in the arts.
4. **Attraction** – the grants program will bring new artistic and cultural programs and events across a variety of art forms to our community and supporting artists to develop and execute new, sustainable and financially viable ideas.

## Policy

### Guidelines and Eligibility

The Annual Arts and Cultural Grants program is open to all eligible individuals, organisations, and community groups individuals from across Australia. Applicants can be located outside of the City of Stonnington, however their project must be delivered within our boundaries.

Eligibility is based on the conditions below:

- Organisations must be incorporated, not-for-profit and have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Individuals or community groups that are not incorporated must be formally auspiced by the type of organisation listed above.
- Auspice bodies can assist more than one applicant to apply for grants.
- Applicants must be over the age of 18 years.

- Applications can be made up of a partnership of incorporated not-for-profit organisations.
- Applications can be made by schools, TAFEs or Universities, provided they have not-for-profit status.
- Applicants must propose delivery of a project within the City of Stonnington boundaries within the period outlined in the grant guidelines (e.g. 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026).
- Applications for financial grant categories must not exceed the maximum for the that category (i.e. \$20,000 for the Up to \$20,000 category or \$60,000 for Triennial and Over \$20,000 category).
- Applicants can only apply for one financial grant category, plus one in-kind category. This does not apply to the Triennial Grant category.
- Applicants must have no pending acquittals or debts with the City of Stonnington.
- Applicants must provide proof of current Public Liability Insurance of no less than \$20,000,000 (\$20 million dollars), which may be offered by the auspicing organisation.
- City of Stonnington cannot fund grants if the applicant is not able to contribute to the overall cost of the project. This contribution may include in-kind, financial and/or a combination of both.
- Applicants that have previously received a grant from the City of Stonnington for a project can re-apply if it can be demonstrated that further funding will enable ongoing development, innovation and/or scalability of the existing project.

Applicants may not be eligible for a grant for a variety of reasons, as outlined in the conditions below:

- Projects taking place outside the [City of Stonnington boundaries](#)
- Projects that have a party-political purpose or applications made by political organisations
- Projects that do not occur within the grant period (either before or after)
- Projects that rely solely on the City of Stonnington for funding (i.e. applicants cannot apply for 100% of total project costs)
- Capital purchase of an asset (e.g. furniture, IT equipment) over the value of \$1,000.
- Projects that have secured sponsorship from gaming, tobacco or alcoholic beverage companies
- Activities of political, sexist, violent or religious nature
- An organisation's recurring operational costs, such as salaries, rent, and utilities or administrative project costs, such as salaries (excluding artist wages), rent and insurance
- Projects which include fundraising, as grants for fundraising activities can be applied for within the City of Stonnington's community grants area
- Funding for individuals to attend conferences, training or workshops
- Funding for prizes, donations, awards, scholarships, or gifts.

## Grant Round and Application Process

One grant round will occur annually and be open for applications for no less than 10 weeks.

Applications must be submitted via Council's grant management system by the closing date for that round.

Grant rounds are advertised on Councils website and promoted on digital and social platforms along with being promoted to previous recipients and sector partners.

Council officers may decide to offer opportunities for out-of-round applications to be received and assessed if there are significant unallocated funds remaining after the assessment and endorsement period. Out-of-round applications are not guaranteed.

## Assessment Process

All applications go through the following assessment process:

- **Pre-eligibility assessment** - Council officers review all applications against the eligibility criteria, and those that don't meet eligibility requirements will not progress to the next stage.
- **Assessment** - A panel made up of Council staff from various units, and external subject matter expert/s assess eligible applications and then make recommendations to the Council.
- **Council endorsement** - Council reviews recommendations made by the Assessment Panel and makes the final decision on funding provided to successful applicants.
- **Notification** – following Council endorsement all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.
- **Agreement** - Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement the grant(s) they have been endorsed for.
- **Acquittal** – all grant recipients are required to provide an acquittal form following the completion of their project. Triennial Grant recipients must submit an acquittal report for each year of funding.

All assessment panel members must complete a declaration of confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest (perceived or actual) for each application, as part of the assessment process.

All applications are treated with the utmost of confidentiality and, due to privacy restrictions, will not be disclosed to any person outside the grants team and assessment panel.

All funding decisions made by the Council and are final. There is no review or appeal process.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Acquittal	Final reporting requirements for a funded project that demonstrate how the funds have been used in accordance with the funding agreement. These requirements can include financial reports and non-financial items, such as detailing project outcomes and participation and photographs.

Assessment	The steps that are followed to judge the merit of an application. These will normally include eligibility, evaluation against criteria and ranking applications for merit. Applicants need to address the assessment criteria as part of their application for a grant.
Auspice	An agreement where an incorporated organisation agrees to assist an individual or community group to apply for a grant and then manage/ oversee elements of it if successful.
Funding agreement	<p>A legally-binding contract established with a funding recipient, which is used as the primary legal instrument to monitor the implementation of the funded activity through to its completion.</p> <p>The funding agreement states the purpose of the funding, the financial amount, and the conditions of the grant, including key deliverables. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of the parties. Once signed, parties are under a legal obligation to comply with the stated terms and conditions.</p>
Grant	A defined period of funding provided for a specified purpose, directed at achieving goals and deliverables where the recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria.
Grant Administration	The end-to-end grant management process that comprises planning and design, assessment and decision-making, grant establishment, including the funding agreement and relationship management, monitoring, acquittal and review, and evaluation
Grant Program	Pool of grant funding designated to be dispersed to successful recipients on a merit basis to achieve stated objectives through a grant application process.
Incorporated organisation	An incorporated organisation, or incorporated association, is incorporated in a state or territory under that jurisdiction's laws. Incorporation establishes it as a not-for-profit legal entity separate from its individual members. You can recognise an incorporated association by the word 'Incorporated' or the abbreviation 'Inc' after its name. An incorporated association should also appear on the ACNC Charity Register.
In-Kind	Contribution of a good or a service other than money. Council offers in-kind grants for the use of Council venues.

## Responsibilities

Party/parties	Roles and responsibilities
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Councillors	<p>Approve annual budget allocation as part of the budgetary process.</p> <p>Endorse and approve recommended grant recipients.</p>
Executive Team	<p>Provide guidance on likely issues of interest from Council meetings or briefings.</p>
Director Community and Wellbeing	<p>Ensure transparent and effective grants management systems, procedures and decision-making processes are in place.</p> <p>After rigorous assessment process is completed, review and approve all recommended grantees and projects to be presented to Council for endorsement.</p> <p>Approve annual pool of grant funds as per Council budgetary processes.</p>
Arts and Cultural Grant Program Administrator(s)	<p>Advocate for budgetary requirements for the annual pool of funds.</p> <p>Coordinate the grant round guidelines application and assessment forms ahead of each round opening for submissions.</p> <p>Oversee the promotion and advertising of the grant round.</p> <p>Conduct a minimum of one (1) Grants Information Session.</p> <p>Respond to application enquires and questions while the grant round is open.</p> <p>Oversee the funding agreements, acquittals and disbursement of funds as per Council finance processes.</p>
Assessment Panel (Council officers and external contractors)	<p>Review and assess grant applications on their merit against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Attend grant assessment panel meeting(s) and make recommendations for applications and projects to be endorsed by Council.</p> <p>Act in accordance with the City of Stonnington Code of Conduct and all relevant legislation.</p>

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Council commits to monitoring processes, information sharing and decision making to understand the overall level of success in the Policy's implementation.

A periodic review of this policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made.

Officers are authorised to make minor editorial amendments as needed for administrative or updated information purposes (for example, but not limited to: changes to position and roles, references to legislation, definitions etc). Officers may also make amendments to the list of related documents at such times where reference material or guidelines require updating.

## Related Legislation and Policies

There are a range of legislation, codes and Council documents that inform and support this Policy. These include, but are not limited to:

Legislation	Council documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.</li> <li>• Local Government Act 2020</li> <li>• Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Cultural Grant Guidelines</li> <li>• Creative Stonnington: Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-2026</li> <li>• Council Plan 2021-20245</li> <li>• Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2026</li> <li>• Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025</li> </ul>