COMMUNITY FUNDS PROGRAM POLICY

Date adopted	26 February 2024
Adopted by	Council
Review due	26 February 2025
Responsible officer	Manager Healthy Connected Communities
Records reference	9996886

1. PURPOSE

To provide a consistent leading practice approach in delivering Melton City Council's Community Funds Programs (CFP).

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals and community groups who wish to apply for Council support through the Council's CFP. Those responsible for the administration, assessment, and approval of received applications are also bound by this policy. Note that there are separate policies for:

- Community Funds Program (CFP)
- Community Grants Program (CGP)
- Community Requests for Council Budget Allocation

3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Melton City Council acknowledges its role in supporting, assisting, and partnering with individuals and community groups to enhance community wellbeing, and contribute to Council's strategic objectives.

This policy provides a clear administrative framework to inform the procedures and guidelines of the CFP. This policy observes statutory obligations pertaining to the distribution of public funds; incorporates community grants leading practice principles; and supports delivery of the CFP.

3.1. Community Fund Categories

Council support is provided and administered through the following community funding programs:

Funds	**New Group Fund**: Funding to assist the establishment of new groups. Applicants can apply for up to $1,500 for specified items. **Resident Achievement Fund**: Funding to assist individuals to participate in activities at a higher level. Applicants can apply for specified participation costs up to $500 (taking place within Victoria), $1000 (taking place interstate) or $2,000 (taking place overseas).

	• **FairGo 4 Youth Fund:** Funding to assist disadvantaged young people to participate in local extracurricular activities. Applicants can apply for up to $400 in a single claim per financial year ($600 for those living with a disability).

3.2. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Provide a standard approach and framework to assist our community to be culturally rich, active, healthy, safe, and connected.

- Distribute and acquit Council funds in a transparent and equitable manner under the principles of good governance.

- Administer a user-friendly process that responds to the diversity of the municipality while also ensuring good governance.

3.3. Policy Principles

The following principles underpin the policy:

Efficiency	Continuous improvement approaches that effectively respond to community and organisational need.
Transparency	Procedural integrity through public access to reporting of program outcomes, decision making and relevant documents.
Fairness	Ethical behaviour in program processes, adherence to conflict of interest and Codes of Conduct contained in procedures to eliminate unfair advantage.
Consistency	Accountability of applicant, participant, or administrator and reliable compliance with statutory, regulatory and program procedural obligations.
Inclusiveness	Promote equity, embrace diversity and provide accessibility to program information, officer support and associated tools.
Responsiveness	Addressing identified community need through alignment of CFP criteria to Council Plan Strategic Objectives.
Sustainability	Effective use of resources which increase the availability of service provision across the City and provides long term benefits to the community and best possible outcomes for resource expenditure.

3.4 Eligibility Criteria

Groups or individuals seeking funding will be subject to the eligibility criteria as provided in the relevant guidelines for the New Groups Fund, Resident Achievement Fund and FairGo 4 Youth Fund.

Council may only provide funding to groups or individuals when Council is satisfied that the request is aligned with the fund objectives and eligibility criteria is met.

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3.4.1   New Group Fund: Applicant Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- Have not previously received approval for a New Groups Fund payment

- Reside in the City of Melton

- Be either not incorporated yet, or have only been incorporated for less than 12 months prior to application

- Have 80% of its members from the City of Melton

- Have discussed the project application with the "New Groups" Council Officer (as described in the Council Project Officer Listing); and

- Obtain quotations from ABN registered suppliers who provide goods and services aligned with the primary purpose of their business;

    i.   one written quote for a single item of a good or service valued at over $250,
    ii. two written quotes for a single item of a good or service valued at over $1,000.

Applicants are ineligible for funding if they:

- Are not intending to be a not-for-profit group
- Focus on activities related to alcohol, tobacco,gambling, political activities or activities of a discriminatory, sexist, racist, disrespectful, illegal, or unsafe nature
- Relate to the delivery of core curriculum of education providers
- Have a purpose that is the responsibility of other levels of government

3.4.2   Resident Achievement Fund: Applicant Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:
- Be residents of the City of Melton
- Provide an invitation to attend or letter of qualification by a governing body
- Have fully acquitted previous funding applications

For sporting applications:

- The sporting event must have a set of rules and code of conduct, and be competitive in nature
- Sporting applicants must provide proof of selection in a State or National team; or proof of qualification to participate in a recognised national or international championship, event, or competition. This does not include representing other countries or states.

Individuals are ineligible for funding if they:

- Have previously received a Resident Achievement Fund in the current financial year, or more than two in a five-year financial period.
- Are seeking funding for goods or services already purchased, prior to submitting the funding application.

3.4.3   FairGo 4 Youth Fund: Applicant Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:
- Be residents of the City of Melton

- Be between the age of 8-16 years at time of application
- Demonstrate financial need through health care card, pension card or referral.

Individuals are ineligible for funding if they:

- Have previously received one contribution in the current financial year
- Are seeking funding for activities already committed to, prior to submitting a request for funding.

3.4.4 FairGo 4 Youth Fund: Activity Provider Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Activity Providers must have:
- A pre-existing lease or licence agreement with the City of Melton to hold activities at a City of Melton owned facility;
- Public Liability of at least $20 million.

3.5 Application assessment and feedback

Decisions regarding the allocation of funds within the CFP will be managed through formal eligibility and assessment processes completed by the Community Grants team.

- Applications are reviewed by a Community Grants Officer against predetermined eligibility criteria and co-signed by a second Officer
- Applicants will be notified in writing of Council's decision.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback from the Community Grants team and offered advice and assistance for future funding applications. This process will provide reasoning as to why their application was not successful.

The Community Funds will be open year-round.

3.6 General Funding Conditions - Resident Achievement & New Group Funds

The following conditions apply to the Resident Achievement and New Group Funds:

- Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding agreement before funding is provided.
- Where funds are contingent upon a specific condition, evidence of the condition must be provided before Council funds are released.
- Funding is exclusive of GST. If the payee is registered for GST the payment will have the GST component added.

3.7 General Funding Conditions – FairGo 4 Youth Fund

The following conditions apply to the FairGo 4 Youth Fund:

- Applicants must formally register with an Activity Provider before funding can be provided to that Activity Provider.
- Funding is exclusive of GST. If the Activity Provider is registered for GST the payment will have the GST component added.

3.8   Variation Conditions - New Group Fund

The following conditions apply to the New Group Fund:

- Any changes to the funding outcomes, dates, costs, or location must be disclosed to Council through a Variation Form. This form must be requested by the applicant to the Community Grants team.
- All variations must be approved by Manager, Healthy Connected Communities, with evidence that the project outcomes will be similar in nature.

3.9   Acquittal Conditions - Resident Achievement & New Group Funds

The following conditions apply to the Resident Achievement and New Group Funds:

- Organisations and individuals must submit an acquittal (final report) describing the outcomes and providing evidence on how the funds were spent. This must be submitted within 1 month of completion of project or event.
- Successful applicants through the New Group Fund must complete the approved project or event within twelve months from date of success letter from Council.
- Any unspent funds at the conclusion of the project or event must be returned to Council within one month of project or event conclusion.
- Time extensions for acquittals and return of funds can be requested for extenuating circumstances.
- Information contained in fund acquittal documentation may be used in Council produced promotional and advertising material.

3.10   Budgeting

The budget for the CGP and CFP will be allocated by Council on an annual basis. Once this budget is completed, the program will close for the year.

3.11   Reporting

A bi-monthly report, detailing the status of funding applications, outcomes and improvement initiatives will be presented to the CEO for sharing with Council.

FairGo 4 Youth and Resident Achievement Fund reporting will include the number of applications processed and funding allocated but will not include details that disclose the identity of applicants.

Community Funds Program outcomes are reported publicly in Council's Annual Report.

4   DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Acquittal	End of project reporting on funded activities, used to confirm that the terms of the funding agreement have been met.
Community Funding	A conditional sum of funds provided to a recipient for an agreed specified purpose in a formal agreement between parties with the understanding that there will be a defined outcome that directly or indirectly benefits the individual or community.
Community Funds Program (CFP)	The program that administers funds to individuals, groups or organisations to support community led initiatives that derive community benefit.
Community Funds Program Guidelines	The practice notes outlining the delivery of the CFP. Guidelines are a document outlining leading practice processes that are strongly recommended. Guidelines are written to provide information and advice on a particular subject for the benefit of applicant and assessor.
Community Group	An organisation that is a not-for-profit, incorporated group or association that is accessible and accountable to members of the community. A community group provides the broader community and/or its members with opportunities to engage in local community, cultural, leisure and/or educational activities.
Community Project	A planned project hosted by a Community Group which responds to local challenges and opportunities.
Eligible	Satisfying the appropriate conditions.
Ineligible	Not satisfying the appropriate conditions.

5   RELATED DOCUMENTS

Name	Location
Local Government Act 2020	https://www.austlii.edu.au//lga2020
City of Melton Community Funds Guidelines	https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Services/Grants-Awards-and-Training/Community-Grants
Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (2022)	www.audit.vic.gov.au/
Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025	www.melton.vic.gov.au

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