



Community Share Grant Program Policy



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Community Share Grant Program Policy

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

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1 Objective

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework which will guide the Community Grants administration and assessment processes across Council.

Key objectives of this Policy are:

- a) To ensure that the administration and assessment of Council's Share Grant Program and schemes are transparent, equitable, inclusive, and understood by the community.
- b) To articulate Council's definition of a grant and outline the various grants programs offered; and
- c) To identify evaluation, awarding and acquittal requirements to ensure Council and funding recipients remain appropriately accountable.

2 Responsibility

The following service areas and designated officers will provide leadership in the delivery of the Community Share Grant programs administered by Council.

Lead service area	Community Strengthening Team
Management oversight	Manager Community Strengthening and Engagement
Officer oversight	Community Strengthening Coordinator or their delegate
Evaluation	Council Officers selected annually to participate in scoring and evaluation
Conflict of Interest Assessment	Chief Operating Officer

3 Policy Statement and Scope

3.1 Background and Context

Yarriambiack Shire Council is committed to working in partnership with the community to encourage, develop, support and sustain a wide range of local recreational, cultural, social, community support and business group initiatives that make:

- a) A positive contribution to the Yarriambiack Shire community; and
- b) Strengthen the development of local communities.

Each financial year, Council provides financial assistance to community groups and businesses to support the provision of events and services which respond to identified community need, contribute to the building of stronger communities and are in accordance with Council's strategic outcomes.

This Policy provides a framework for the following grant programs administered by Council:

- a) Community Share Grant - Community Events
(up to \$1,500 with no matching funding).
- b) Community Share Grant – Business and Streetscape
(Up to \$2,000 with 1:1 funding).
- c) Community Share Grant – Community Building - Minor
(up to \$3,000 with no matching funding).

- d) Community Share Grant – Community Building – Major
(up to \$10,00 requiring a minimum of a third of the requested amount in matched funding).
This stream is to be capped at 50% of the total funding pool unless other streams don't fully allocate the budget.

Council may at the Discretion of the Chief Executive Officer utilise the Community Share Grant Program framework to administer other grant programs, where funding becomes available from State and Federal Government departments and/or agencies.

In administering the Community Share Grants Program, Council will have regard to its social procurement objectives, including local benefit, inclusion, sustainability and contribution to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Yarriambiack community.

3.2 Timelines

The Community Share Grant Program has one round each year. The Timeline for the round is specified below:

Details	Annual Round
Applications Open	July
Applications Close	July
Applicants Notified	August
Funding Period	August - December
Evaluation and Acquittal	December (following year)

3.3 Policy Framework

This policy will be supported by a detailed set of guidelines for each grants program that are consistent with Council's broader aspirations for its community. Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan 2025-2029 and other Council strategic documents have guided the development of this policy to ensure that Council invests in projects that support Council's strategic direction and the aspirations of the Yarriambiack community.

The Community Share Grants Program is governed by Council's overarching governance frameworks, which comply with the governance principles outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*, supporting regulations and relevant best practice guidelines.

The Council is responsible for overseeing the approval process, establishing conditions, authorising the release of grant funding, and managing the acquittal process. It serves as the accountable authority for the expenditure of public funds.

The governance framework includes:

- Advice to the community about the opening and closing dates.
- Documented guidelines with clearly defined assessment criteria.
- Availability of an application form.
- Assessment forms and assessment process.
- Formal agreement form.
- Evaluation form.
- Internal accountability checks.
- Documented record of any communication between applicants and Council.

- i) Adherence to acknowledgement and publicity guidelines.

The key process associated with the Community Share Grants Program involves submission of required forms via online form, mail, email or hand delivered to Yarriambiack Shire Council's offices in Warracknabeal.

The minimum requirements for each process are listed below:

3.4 Guidelines and Criteria

The Criteria to guide applicants to complete an application will include the following information at a minimum:

- Description of the grant program.
- Who is eligible for the funding.
- Who is ineligible for the funding.
- Outline of assessment criteria.
- Conditions of funding.
- Supporting Information required as part of the funding application.
- Acknowledgement of Council as the funding body.
- Timeline of when submissions are to be received and dates for when an outcome is to be decided and applicants notified.
- A Step-by-step guide to the application process.

3.5 Application Form

The application form is to be completed as part of the Community Share Grant Program application process and is to include at a minimum:

- Applicant details including name, address and contact details.
- Nomination of Community Share Grant category the applicant is applying for.
- Details of project to be delivered.
- Evidence of public liability insurance.
- ABN and/or ACN number (if applicable).
- Questions relating to assessment criteria, that will enable a transparent scoring and decision-making process.
- Project Budget.
- Signature and details of applicant applying for the grant.
- Link to outline of the grant application assessment process.

3.6 Assessment Process

The Community Share Grant Program assessment process is to include:

- All assessors are required to complete Conflict of Interest forms before performing assessments. These forms will be reviewed and approved by the Chief Operating Officer.
- A clearly defined assessment criteria with a matrix to guide independent scoring.
- Details of how each application was assessed against the criteria.
- An Evaluation Report completed outlining the assessment process, conflict of interest forms, and recommendation of successful projects to be funded; and
- Evaluation report to be signed by nominated Leadership Team officers and the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

3.7 Conflict of Interest Provisions

To ensure an accountable and transparent assessment process is maintained, Council Officers assessing grant applications are required to declare any material or general conflicts of interest. This may include but is not limited to personal connections with any applicant. Anyone with a conflict of interest should not participate in debates, discussions, or decisions related to the applicant. Council staff are required to refer to their applicable Code of Conduct documents for further information. Declarations of Conflict of Interest are completed by all Council Officers who administer the Share Grant Program and are completed prior to scoring applicants. If a conflict of interest arises, it needs to be documented, and the Council Officer must step back from involvement in the process. After completing the conflict of interest forms, the Chief Operating Officer reviews and if applicable, approves them. These declarations are then stored in the Council's information management system for proper record keeping.

3.8 Conflict of Interest - Councilors

Due to their involvement in the community, Councilors are excluded from the decision-making process to avoid any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

Additionally, since conflicts of interest may arise, Councilors might have to abstain from endorsing a decision paper, which could prevent a quorum from being reached. To mitigate this risk, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to approve the Share Grants, ensuring compliance with the Governance framework. A Council report will then be submitted at an ordinary meeting for noting, including the Evaluation Report as an attachment to demonstrate adherence to good governance practices.

3.9 Outcome Notifications

Applicants are to be provided with the outcome of their application in writing via email and post. In the outcome notification, applicants are informed:

- If their application was successful or unsuccessful,
- If unsuccessful, a statement outlining the reason, including, if appropriate, reference to the funding guidelines,
- If successful, outline any conditions required to be met by the applicant prior to proceeding with payment of their funding,
- An invitation to discuss their application further with a member of the Community Strengthening Team,
- If successful, outline next steps required to receive their funding, including an attached Funding Agreement to be completed.

3.10 Accountability Requirements

Once the Community Share Grant application is approved, an agreement is to be provided to the applicable party that outlines the following at a minimum:

- Amount successfully funded for.
- The funding period in which the grant relates to.
- The requirement for the party to raise an invoice and an outline of the GST requirements.
- An outline of the requirement to submit a copy of the current public liability insurance.
- If applicable, any conditions required by the applicant that must be met prior to receiving funding
- The conditions of the grant program, including project delivery deadline.
- Outline and acknowledgement of Council's reporting requirements, including the acquittal process.

All decisions relating to the approval, variation or payment of grant funding must be made in accordance with Council's governance frameworks.

3.11 Use of Grant Funds

- Grant funding must be used solely for the purposes approved in the funding agreement.
- Grant recipients remain responsible for ensuring value for money is achieved and appropriate financial controls when expending grant funds are administered.

3.12 Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plans

The application process is to include an assessment of how the project aligns with the Council Plan objectives and/or the applicable Community Action Plan endorsed projects or outcomes.

3.13 Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for each Community Share Grant category are outlined in the applicable Community Share Grant Guidelines.

3.14 Ineligibility

The ineligibility criteria for each Community Share Grant category are outlined in the Community Share Grant Program Guidelines.

3.15 Grievance Process

All applicants must be informed of the outcome of their application in writing and offered the opportunity to discuss the application process with the Manager Community Strengthening and Engagement or their delegate.

Applicants can request, in writing, a review of the decision by Council Officers if not satisfied with the grant assessment process and outcome. A request is to be made to the Council's Chief Executive Officer either in writing or via email as outlined below:

Att: Chief Executive Officer

PO Box 243

Warracknabeal VIC 3393

Email: info@yarriambiack.vic.gov.au

3.16 Acquittal Process

Successful applicants must provide a financial acquittal of funds including receipts relating to the grant and complete a Completion Report by the date specified in the funding agreement.

Completion Report templates are sent out to successful applicants as an attachment to their Funding Agreement. If appropriate, photographs of the project outcome are also to be provided as part of the report, and Council may use these photographs to promote the project or the Community Share Grant Program.

Incomplete or non-submitted completion reports, including required attachments, will result in an organisation being ineligible from participating in the Community Share Grant Program until an acquittal has been completed to the satisfaction of Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Council reserves the right to seek reimbursement of grant funding from a funded organisation if the required Completion Report is not provided in a timely manner, or if Council is not satisfied that funds were used for the intended purpose as outlined in the original application.

3.17 Approved Variations

Any material variation to an approved grant project, including changes to project scope, timing or use of funds, must be approved by Council officers prior to implementation.

Council reserves the right to reassess the grant against program objectives, value for money and accountability requirements where a material variation is proposed.

3.18 Future Community Grants Funding Activities

All new Council community grant funding programs must adhere to the minimum procedures as outlined in this policy. If the funding program does not meet all requirements identified in this Policy, then the funding shall not be termed a 'grant' and will need to refer to the definitions in this policy to determine whether it is a donation or sponsorship. If considered a donation or sponsorship activity, then the relevant Council guidelines should be used to govern the donation or sponsorship process.

3.19 Privacy

Yarriambiack Shire Council is committed to the privacy principles as prescribed by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*. Relevant information is collected to ensure that each application can be assessed, and a determination made on it. Personal and identifying information will not be disclosed except as required by law. Any access to information provided, amendments that may be required, or any privacy related enquiries may be directed to Council's Chief People and Culture Officer on (03) 5398 0104.

3.20 Insurance

Applicants must demonstrate that all relevant insurances are in place and that public liability insurance is held to the minimum cover outlined in the funding guidelines. A copy of the Certificate of Currency covering the funding period must be included with an application. If successful, an applicant should, wherever possible, ensure that Council is named as an interested party on the public liability policy for the funded organisation.

3.21 Acknowledgement of Council

Wherever possible acknowledgment of Council funding should be given in any public relations opportunities undertaken by the funded applicant, relating to the request. Copies of any examples must be included in the funding evaluation report.

A copy of Council's corporate logo can be provided for promotional purposes, however, grant recipients wishing to use Council's logo must first discuss their requirements with Council's Chief Operating Officer as per Council's Corporate Style Guide. Use of Council's corporate logo will only be approved under these circumstances.

4 Definitions

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Donations	Donations are considered gifts given in cash or in-kind without return consideration.
Governance Framework	Is Council's Policies, Procedures, Plans, Guidelines, Strategies and legislative provisions such as Acts, Regulations and Legislative Guidelines.

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Grant	A sum of money or in-kind contribution given 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 a formal agreement with Council that outlines accountability requirements. <i>Adapted from www.treasury.act.gov.au</i>
Sponsorship	A formal, reciprocal arrangement between individuals, groups and Council, which is documented. The arrangement is clearly understood by both parties, with clear outcomes and timelines, and articulates the rights and responsibilities on both sides. These outcomes are deliverable and measurable and align with the goals and aspirations of Council.

5 References

- a) *Local Government Act 2020*
- b) Yarriambiack Shire Council Employee Code of Conduct
- c) Yarriambiack Shire Council Procurement Policy
- d) Yarriambiack Shire Council – Council Plan 2025-2029
- e) Community Share Grant Guidelines – Community Building Major
- f) Community Share Grant Guidelines – Community Building Minor
- g) Community Share Grant Guidelines – Events and Sponsorship
- h) Community Share Grant Guidelines – Business and Streetscape
- i) How Council Supports Community
- j) Community Assistance and Fee Waiver Policy

6 Consistency with Governance Principles *Local Government Act 2020*

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
(a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	Section 3.3 – Policy Framework Section 3.12 – Conflict of Interest Provisions Section 3.15 – Privacy
(b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;	Section 3.1 – Background and Context Section 3.3 – Policy Framework and reference to the Council Plan Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan.
(c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and	Section 3.1 – Background and Context Section 3.3 – Policy Framework and reference to the Council Plan

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan. Supporting Guidelines
(d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan.
(e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan. Supporting Guidelines
(f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan.
(g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	Section 3.1 – Background and Context Section 3.3 – Policy Framework and reference to the Council Plan Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan. Supporting Guidelines
(h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	Section 3.1 – Background and Context Section 3.3 – Policy Framework and reference to the Council Plan Section 3.8 – Relationship to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plan. Supporting Guidelines
(i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	The context of the entire policy outlines the process for transparent decision making and an accountability framework.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

Community Engagement Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope. Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation. Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.
Comment:	The Community Share Grant Program supports community engagement by providing clear program objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria, and multiple accessible submission pathways (online, email, post and in-person). Applicants are offered support and an opportunity to discuss outcomes with Council officers to ensure informed participation and feedback.
Public Transparency Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act. Council information must be publicly available unless— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest. Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community. Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.
Comment:	This policy sets out a transparent, documented process for applications, assessment, decision-making, funding agreements and acquittal, including notification of outcomes and reasons for unsuccessful applications. Information is made available through published guidelines and forms, while privacy and confidentiality are managed in accordance with applicable legislation.
Strategic Planning Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted. Strategic planning must address the Community Vision. Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation. Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation. Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
Comment:	The grant program is aligned to Council’s strategic direction through explicit links to the Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan and Community Action Plans, and by assessing applications against those objectives. The policy establishes annual timelines, governance roles, assessment and reporting requirements to support consistent monitoring, review and continuous improvement of program delivery.

Financial Management Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans. Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances. Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.
Comment:	Financial management is supported through defined delegations, documented assessment and approval processes, and formal funding agreements that set conditions for payment and use of funds. Acquittal requirements (including receipts and completion reporting) and record-keeping obligations provide accountability, manage financial risk and help ensure value for money and ongoing financial viability.
Service Performance Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community. Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended. Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community. A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring. Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.
Comment:	The program is designed to deliver equitable and accessible support to community groups and businesses through clear eligibility criteria, consistent assessment and multiple application lodgement methods. Performance is monitored through evaluation and acquittal reporting, and applicants can request a review and discuss outcomes to support fair, responsive service delivery and continuous improvement.

7 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with its associated procedures every three (3) years.

From time to time, circumstances may require minor administrative changes to be made to this Policy. Where an update does not materially alter this Policy, such a change may be made administratively and need not be considered and adopted by Council.

Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, or the legal responsibilities of any member of the community, it must be considered and adopted by Council, or by the Chief Executive Officer in reliance on delegated authority.

8 Legislative Context

The requirement for a Council Plan, 10-year Community Vision, 10-year Long Term Financial Plan are set out at Part 4, Division 1 Planning and Financial Management of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This Policy supports the implementation of the Council Plan and the 10 Year Community Vision.

Council Approved Policy

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