



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL



Grant Program Guidelines

**Festivals and Events Fund
2025 / 2026**



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Grant Program Guidelines





Festivals and Events Fund Guidelines 2025 / 2026

Festivals and Events Fund Overview

Warrnambool City Council (Council) supports, partners, facilitates and delivers some 150 events annually. Council acknowledges that events not only build community, they are important drivers of tourism and are a great way to promote a destination.

Events bring together young and old and disparate subcultures, enlarge social networks, and support social cohesion, whilst growing the visitor economy and driving economic outcomes.

The Events and Promotion branch seeks to support events which contribute to the local economy and build the profile of Warrnambool as a vibrant regional city through the Festivals and Events Fund.

Program objectives

The objectives of the program support events and festivals that align with the Warrnambool Events Strategy and Warrnambool Council Plan.

Preference will be given to applicants that:

- Generate a diverse, vibrant and inclusive annual calendar of events
- Attract overnight visitors outside of peak visitation times, particularly in winter
- Attract new revenue into the local economy, providing a boost to local businesses
- Create memorable experiences that are unique to Warrnambool's city lifestyle and unique natural environment
- Encourage and assist events to become financially sustainable and protect valuable annual events
- Inspire and empower environmental enhancements, and social benefits to improve liveability
- Occur in off-peak and shoulder seasons
- New events that have not been funded previously

Timeline

- Funding Round Open: 9:00am Tuesday 3 June 2025
- Funding Round Close: 11:59pm Sunday 29 June 2025
- Report submitted for endorsement to Council: Monday 4 August 2025
- Applicants notified of funding outcome: Tuesday 5 August 2025
- Projects completed: between Tuesday 5 August 2025 – Tuesday 30 June 2026
- Project acquitted and post event report due: Thursday 31 July 2026



Festivals and Events Funding Classifications

The total funding pool for 2025/2026 is \$200,000 for the four funding streams with varying criteria.

Applicants can apply for one stream.

Warrnambool City Council reserves the right to exercise judgement on the appropriateness of funding eligibility criteria in respect to contentious, topical or contemporary issues or where the event may be perceived to be in conflict with Council objectives, plans or the wellbeing of residents.

| Classification | Details | Funding Range |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Tourism Events | For high attendance events that attract significant visitation from outside Warrnambool and enhance the profile of the region as a destination to experience. Must provide an estimation of economic impact and yield, with events held over more than one day. Examples may include mass participation sporting events, large scale music events and food and wine festivals. | Up to \$10,000 |
| Community Events | Supports the development and implementation of community events that demonstrate a strong community focus and provide significant social and cultural benefits to the city. These events will predominantly involve local participation. 1. Small to medium community events: up to \$5,000 Less complex in operational delivery using existing venues and infrastructure. 2. Large community festivals and events: up to \$10,000 More complex events with elements of programming and will require a substantial amount of additional revenue to deliver. | Up to \$10,000 |
| Business Events and Conferences | For event organisers bringing new business events and conferences to Warrnambool. Majority of delegates and attendees are from outside of Warrnambool and will stay for a minimum of one night and may attract stay extension. | Up to \$5,000 (\$50 per delegate up to 100 delegates) |
| Partnership | Established recurring events that are considered part of the fabric of the Warrnambool event calendar. Must offer significant economic or socio-cultural benefit to Warrnambool. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusive to Warrnambool• Intra / interstate visitation• State and regional significance | On application |
| Community Christmas Carol Funding | Support for community Christmas Carol events held within Warrnambool City Council | Three levels of funding available (based on event capacity) 100 - 1000 = \$500 1000 - 2000 = \$1000 2000+ = \$1500 |



Eligibility

Who can apply for funding?

The following table outlines the three funding streams available and the types of organisations eligible for each stream:

| Organisation Type | Funding Stream | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | Tourism Events | Business Events & Conferences | Community Events |
| Commercial entities & businesses within Warrnambool | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Not for profit, incorporated bodies, co-operatives or associations | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Groups with an eligible auspice or unincorporated bodies with an eligible auspice | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Local commercial entities or businesses outside of Warrnambool | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Professional Conference Organisers | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |

Who cannot apply for funding?

- Committees of the Council including Advisory Committees, Committees of management or Sub-Committees
- A club, organisation or business that occupies Council owned or managed land without a current seasonal tenancy, license or lease agreement with Council
- Organisations who have not completed an Acquittal (Financial Reporting Form) for any previous Council grants
- Entities with outstanding debt/account with Council or is already receiving substantial financial support from Council
- Organisations that have access to substantive levels of current funding not generally available to local clubs, organisations or businesses
- Charitable organisations
- Schools and kindergartens
- Individuals with an ABN
- Groups that have already received Council support through other grant programs in the same financial year



Eligibility

What types of festival and events can apply for funding?

The following table outlines the types events eligible for each stream:

| Festival or Event | Funding Stream | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | Tourism Events | Business Events & Conferences | Community Events |
| Festivals or events occurring within the Warrnambool City Council locality | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Events held in the peak holiday season (24 Dec – 31 January & March Labour Day Weekend) | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Tradeshows, conferences, meetings and workshops with delegates from outside the Warrnambool City Council locality | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Fundraising events where fundraising is the secondary purpose and the fundraising will directly benefit Warrnambool residents and community | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Festivals or events that align with the Warrnambool Council and Events Strategic Plan | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

What types of festivals and events cannot apply for funding

- Festivals or events outside of Warrnambool Local Government Area
- Festivals or events considered the responsibility of the State or Federal Government
- Private events that are not broadly accessible to the local community
- Festivals or events that denigrate, exclude or may cause offence to parts of the community
- Applicants that have failed to acquit previous funding agreements
- Applications that are incomplete or fail to meet criteria
- Fundraising events where the primary purpose is fund raising for a third party organisation, agency or charity
- Festivals or events that have already commenced or have already occurred
- University open days, theatre productions and markets
- Events or activations that are a typical or regular business occurrence
- Projects or activities which:
 - Are discriminatory, sexist or disrespectful
 - Are the responsibility of other agencies (e.g. charities, government bodies)
 - Do not support responsible serving of alcohol
- Recreational excursions, e.g. camps, holidays, tours

Event expenses that will be funded:

- Marketing and advertising campaigns and collateral, including professional photography
- Event planning reports
- Venue hire
- Event operation equipment hire
- Group travel and transfers
- Traffic management plans and implementation
- Delegate accommodation (Business Events Only)
- Event public liability insurance
- Event specific security

Event expenses that will not be funded:

- Capital or maintenance work on a building or facility
- General administration, wages or contracts, insurance premiums or debt payments
- Projects that have already commenced or events and activities that have already occurred
- Fundraising activities, prize money, trophy/medal production, awards
- Personal expenses such as petrol, utility bills, phone bills, travel and accommodation
- Activities, projects, programs and events that are owned, managed or already funded by Council
- Attendance at tradeshows, conferences, teaching programs/lectures, university open days, commercial theatre, recurring markets
- General business insurance
- Ongoing operational costs (core business) such as
 - Salaries (except for contract work)
 - Rent
 - Annual general meetings
 - Utility costs



Application requirements:

Prior to submitting an application, please ensure you:

- Read and understand the guidelines
 - Discuss your event with a member of the events team prior to lodging an application
 - Ensure your event is eligible and what event funding stream it is eligible for
 - Check your event falls within the project timeline
-

Application process:

- You may choose to prepare a draft application on the downloadable copy of the application form from the Grants Page **www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/community-funding-programs**
 - Gather all required documentation to support your application including event management plan, event budget and supporting quotations. Financial statements and quotations are compulsory
 - Set up a SmartyGrants login and password
 - Ensure answers to application questions address the Assessment Criteria
 - Applications must be made via the online electronic application form. If an applicant has difficulty accessing the form, please contact the Events Team who will be able to arrange online access. In the spirit of fairness and transparency, late applications will not be considered
 - NB – Partnership applicants must make contact with the Events and Promotions team to discuss suitability of the event for partnership consideration
-

Funding requirements:

- Deliver the event within the Warrnambool City boundaries within the 2025/26 financial year
 - Proactively market the event, including maintaining an event listing for a minimum of three months prior to the event
 - Ensure their project is accessible and inclusive for all participants
 - Demonstrate plans to become self-sustaining and less reliant on financial support from Council
 - Comply with Council policies in regards to all aspects of event management
 - Survey participants and attendees post event regarding visitation, length of stay and accommodation type
 - Funded events are required to meet all statutory requirements determined by Council and other relevant authorities including but not limited to:
 - Completing an Event Application Form
 - Register event with Council via the online event registration form
 - Create an Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listing for their event
 - Submit a post event evaluation report on the event delivery including any identified improvements and key event outcomes
 - Provide evidence of the impact/success of the event including survey data, photos and media exposure
 - Provide evidence of funding expenditure as part of acquittal process
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The Application Form and Budget Information

The application form has one budget table to fill out, which requires information about income and expenditure. The income table shows the income sources that will be used to deliver your project. Items to list in the Income Table include:

- The grant amount you are requesting
- The cash contribution of your group or organisation (if applicable)
- Funds from other sources such as bank loans, other grants or sponsorship (please indicate whether the amount is confirmed or not)
- Income expected from the project e.g. *entry fees, food and beverage sales etc*





Expenditure Table

The expenditure table includes itemised project expenses. These are the materials, equipment or services that you are proposing to purchase or pay for to complete the project. Project expenses listed must be the total costs including any GST that is included in a quotation.

Written Quotations

One written quote is required for each individual item or service being funded. Quotes for professional services should indicate the qualification or certification of the professional being engaged. Quotes must be for expenses that are eligible for funding. Applicants are encouraged to seek local quotes and spend funding locally wherever possible.

ABN and GST

GST registration status can be checked by looking up an ABN at www.abr.gov.au. Organisations that do not have an ABN must supply a completed Australian Taxation Office Statement by a Supplier form, and attach it to their application. Council will fund the allocated amount and will not include GST.



Assessment Criteria

Applications that are eligible will fall under one of the following categories, and will be assessed based on the criteria rank, if applicable, within that category. Please refer to the table below.

Applications are ranked according to project merit, equity and balance of funds available. In some situations, Council may provide grant funding to a lesser amount than requested. (eg: when parts of an application do not meet funding eligibility).

In these cases, Council officers will liaise with applicants prior to final recommendation to Council.

Levels of funding may be proportionally reduced to provide support based on;

1. The applicants ability to proceed with the proposed project if offered less support, or
2. Applicants that have received funding in the past two (2) years. If the funding for each category is not fully allocated, it will be redistributed to other categories as required.

| Criteria | Funding Stream | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | Tourism Events | Business Events & Conferences | Community Events |
| Community, social and culture Demonstrate how the event will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate social wellbeing by bringing people and communities together and giving them a sense of identity and belonging • Link participants and attendees to culturally significant aspects of the community • Create social gathering opportunities • Be inclusive and accessible for all, as per the "Welcoming events" guidance | 10% | 10% | 70% |
| Economic development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected expenditure generated by event visitation (can be based on previous expenditure) • Participation and attendee demographic profile • Opportunities for business involvement and participation (use local business as first priority) • How the event will increase spend in Warrnambool in off-peak season | 45% | 70% | 15% |
| Tourism and profile Describe how the event will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive off peak visitation, extended stays and local expenditure from attendees outside Warrnambool • Create a regional, state or national profile • Promote Warrnambool as a destination, including marketing channels and reach • Generate opportunities for repeat visitation to Warrnambool post event | 45% | 20% | 15% |
| Environment and sustainability Demonstrate how the event will plan for and contribute to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with single use plastic ban by eliminating all single use plastics • Reduce waste to landfill • Event management practices outlining waste management excellence • Create positive environmental outcomes at the event and long term into the future | PASS / FAIL | PASS / FAIL | PASS / FAIL |
| Alignment and project management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application aligns with Council's Events and Promotions Strategy • The applicant is able to successfully manage the described project, and meet its proposed outcomes and details how the fund will assist in the development or sustainability of the group • The application demonstrates how the funding will be used to grow the event and make continuous improvements year on year | PASS / FAIL | PASS / FAIL | PASS / FAIL |



Information, should you be successful in your application for funding:

Approvals, Permits and Licences

You may need to apply for specific approvals, permits and licenses to run an event or project. Applicants should discuss their project with the responsible agency e.g. Council or a Victorian Government Department, prior to submitting their application.

Successful applications will be made conditional that they obtain regulatory approvals. Council's Events and Promotions Branch can assist applicants with the process of gaining approvals. Refer to <https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/events>.

Assessment, Notification and Receiving Funds

Submitted grant applications are assessed by a panel of Council Officers representing expertise in each of the categories.

The first assessment may also be referred to external advisory bodies for consultation at the discretion of the Assessment Panel.

Recommendations will be provided for Council endorsement.

The decision to award grants is made by the Warrnambool City Council and decisions will be final.

Applicants will be advised in writing according to the grant round dates.

Council requires all persons involved in grant assessments to disclose any conflict of interest, real or apparent.

Applicants will be advised in writing via the contact email provided of the outcome of their application.

Receiving Funds

Successful applicants will be sent an email, an official letter and the Terms and Conditions of receiving funding. Funds are preferably sent by electronic funds transfer to your nominated bank account.

Funding Conditions

The letter will highlight the general conditions of funding and, if applicable, Special Conditions required to be met before funds can be forwarded to your group. Successful applicants must read, understand and comply with the Terms and Conditions sent to them which will include any special funding conditions.

Acquittal and Activity Completion Report

Council reserves the right to conduct financial and performance audits for funding it has provided. Consequently, funded recipients are required to maintain full records of receipts of activity expenditure and performance outputs/outcomes for the relevant period. These records are to be made available to Council and its officers/agents upon request.

Funded recipients are required to complete a Financial Acquittal Report (acquittal) by 31 July 2026. This report certifies that the activity and funding was carried out in accordance with the Agreement. It should include a completed proof of expenditure of Council funds (receipts and invoices) and copies of marketing material used to promote the funded activity.

Failure to provide a satisfactory acquittal may result in a funded group or organisation being deemed ineligible to receive any further funding from Council. Council's reporting is directly linked to its requirement to report on how public funds are spent and whether funded groups and organisations have achieved the desired end result. While Council is committed to minimising administrative processes, it is also committed to the collection of high quality information that may be communicated across Council and the community.

At the conclusion of a funded project your group is required to prepare and send an acquittal report to Council. Organisations are required to provide details of how the funding has benefited the event and submit evidence of how the funding was spent (receipts, photos and media promotion).

Contact Information

For grant information and online applications:

Website: <https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/events>

Events and Promotion Team events@warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Phone: 03 5559 4618



Terms and conditions

In accepting a Festivals and Events Grant, you must be willing to adhere to and agree to the following grant conditions:

1. Funds made available through the Festivals and Events Grant are to be spent on the activities described in the application by the required time. Any significant change to the activity must be made in writing and approved by the Events & Promotions Branch.
2. Allocated funds are to be expended by 30 June 2026, unless otherwise agreed to by the Events & Promotions Branch. Accurate financial records of the recipient organisation must be maintained and made available to Council staff in the event of any further audit by Council into the use of the Grant.
3. Funded parties will need to complete a NAR form and grant acquittal report. Council will provide the templates. The NAR form needs to be submitted before any payment can be made. The acquittal report must be completed before 31 July 2026. The group will be ineligible for any further grants if this report is incomplete, unless approval has been provided for an extension.
4. It is the responsibility of all applicants to supply the relevant taxation and insurance documentation in the application form.
5. Activities arising from the grant allocation must take place within the City of Warrnambool and benefit Warrnambool residents.
6. Funded recipients are required to acknowledge receipt of financial assistance from Council in any promotion, publication or advertising of the activities. This includes the use of Council's logo and giving Councillors and officers the opportunity to attend relevant promotional events.
7. Council officers may request meetings with the applicant to check progress during the period of the activity, or undertake an independent audit of the books and records of the Applicant.
8. Council is not responsible for meeting any shortfall should the project run over budget.
9. Any Council funds that are not expended on the project are to be returned to the Council.
10. Funded projects are required to obtain any necessary Council permits or other permits for the event/program to take place. Any event/program/project that is to be held on Council property (this includes Council owned buildings, parks and all other open space areas) is required to have the written approval of Council.
11. Funded events are required to meet all statutory requirements determined by Council and other relevant authorities and submit a completed
 - Event Application Form
 - Register their event with Council via the online event registration form
 - Create an Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listing for their event
 - Submit a post event evaluation report on the event delivery including any identified improvements and key event outcomes.
 - Provide evidence of the impact/success of the event including survey data, photos and media exposure.
12. Council will publicly report all grants awarded.
13. Any marketing, publicity or media releases produced regarding your project should acknowledge the support received from Council and use Warrnambool City Council logo which has been provided.
14. The Council, its servants, agents and employees shall not be responsible at any time for any liabilities incurred or entered into by the recipient organisation as a result of, or arising out of that organisation's responsibilities under the Grant Agreement.
15. The recipient shall release and indemnify the Council, its servants and employees against any claim, demand, liability, costs, expenses, actions arising out of or in any way connected with the activities of the recipient, or the recipient's agents in consequence of the authorisation/funding agreement except where the claim, demand, liability, costs or action are caused by the Council, its servants or agents.

