

## GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP POLICY

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| <b>Approval Level:</b>                   | Council                              |
| <b>Policy Type:</b>                      | Council                              |
| <b>Approval Date:</b>                    |                                      |
| <b>Review Cycle:</b>                     | 4 years                              |
| <b>Review Date:</b>                      | 1 July 2030                          |
| <b>Responsible Officer:</b>              | Amy Holmes                           |
| <b>Owner:</b>                            | Community Partnerships               |
| <b>Responsible Director:</b>             | Healthy Communities and Environments |
| <b>Relevant Legislation / Authority:</b> | Local Government Act (2020)          |
| <b>DOCSETID:</b>                         |                                      |

### 1. PURPOSE

The City of Greater Bendigo, through grants, sponsorship and collaborative community partnerships, supports a broad range of individuals, organisations and businesses to help ensure that our community is healthy, happy, safe, sustainable, thriving and welcoming. The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent, equitable, and accountable framework for the administration of the City of Greater Bendigo's Grants and Sponsorship Programs. The policy aligns with the Council Plan and complies with the Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria). It is supported by additional documents including:

- Governance and Accountability Framework
- Grants and sponsorship guidelines
- Major Events Strategy (under development)
- Funding and service agreements
- Other relevant operational documents.

Grant programs and sponsorship provided by the City aim to:

- Support initiatives that strengthen community wellbeing, connection, liveability and inclusion and drive local prosperity.
- Enable the delivery of programs, services and events in the City.
- Create opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in community life and a range of experiences.
- Provide measurable and positive outcomes.

## 2. BACKGROUND

A report by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) in 2021 identified that Local Government's across Victoria "are not consistently identifying conflicts of interest, assessing applications against criteria, documenting their decisions, checking how funds are used or evaluating their grant programs' outcomes."

This policy has been developed in response to the VAGO report, the Local Government Act 2020, the Council Plan, other relevant plans and strategies, and to increased expectations by the broader community about the need for the City to show transparency, fairness, accountability, public reporting and risk management in relation to the administration of grants and sponsorship.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all City staff who administer grants and sponsorship on behalf of the City of Greater Bendigo and to Councillors who may approve grants and sponsorship budgets and contributions. It also applies to eligible organisations, businesses and individuals that may receive grants or sponsorship from the City.

The policy covers grants and sponsorship that are open competitive, non-competitive (e.g. through expressions of interest or partnerships), targeted, ad-hoc and demand-driven.

The City recognises that strategic investments and major events operate within a competitive, commercial environment and require a different approach to traditional grant programs.

The policy does not apply to:

- External grants received by the City
- Activities governed by the procurement policy of the City
- Funding included in the City's annual budget or part of its service delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2022) Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants

## 4. DEFINITIONS

**Accountability** – Being responsible for decisions, actions and the use of resources, and being able to explain and justify them.

**Acquittal** – A report provided after funding that shows how the money was spent and whether the agreed outcomes were achieved.

**City** – the City of Greater Bendigo and includes the Chief Executive Officer employed by the Council and all other staff employed by the Chief Executive Officer.

**Council** – the Greater Bendigo City Council and includes the nine (9) Councillors.

**Council Plan** – the current Council Plan, which at time of policy adoption is the Greater Bendigo Council Plan 2025-2029 Mir wimbul.

**Equity** – Ensuring people have fair access to opportunities, support and resources based on their different needs and circumstances.

**Governance** – The systems, rules and processes used to guide, manage and oversee an organisation's decisions and activities.

**Grant** – Money or support provided to an organisation, group or individual for a specific purpose or project, usually with conditions attached.

**Procurement** – The process of purchasing goods, services or works in a fair, transparent and value-for-money way.

**Sponsorship** – Financial or in-kind support provided in exchange for agreed benefits such as promotion, recognition, partnership opportunities or other outcomes specified in strategies which govern City sponsorship.

**Strategic investments and major events** - high-value initiatives, events or partnerships that deliver significant economic, visitation, reputational or strategic outcomes for Greater Bendigo.

**Sustainability** – Making sure that individuals, organisations and businesses that receive grants or sponsorship are supported to build the skills and resources they need to continue to run their activities, programs and events successfully in the future,

**Transparency** – Being open and clear about decisions, processes and the use of public resources.

## 5. PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the administration of grants and sponsorship and inform the City's broader approach to working in partnership with the community.

### 5.1 Transparency and fairness

The City will run grant and sponsorship programs in an open and fair way, with clear rules and consistent decision-making.

### 5.2 Community benefit

Funding will support projects and activities that demonstrate a positive impact to the local community.

### 5.3 Innovation

The City supports new and creative ideas that help meet community needs in better ways.

### 5.4 Equity and accessibility

Funding opportunities will be accessible to a wide range of community groups, individuals and businesses, including people who may face barriers to participation.

### 5.5 Strategic and needs-based

Funding will be provided to projects that align with the City's priorities and identify community need.

### 5.6 Accountability and good governance

The City will have clear processes in place around grants and sponsorship administration and risk management.

### 5.7 Sustainability

The City will support projects that create long-term benefits for the community and make good use of resources.

### 5.8 Value for money

The City aims to achieve the best community benefit for the money provided for grants and sponsorship.

## 6. POLICY

Specific components of the policy are as follows:

### 6.1 Strategic alignment with Council plans and strategies

6.1.1 Projects will be considered for funding support if they align with Council plans and strategies.

### 6.2 Conflict of Interest

6.2.1 All City staff and assessment panels involved in the administration, assessment and decision making of grants and sponsorship must declare

any material or general conflicts of interest in line with the City of Greater Bendigo's Governance Rules, staff Code of Conduct and in line with conflict-of-interest obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria).

- 6.2.2 Individuals with a conflict of interest will not participate in the assessment process and will have no impact on the decision-making process.
- 6.2.3 The details of the conflict will be recorded on the City's Conflict of Interest register and in the required quarterly reports.
- 6.2.4 The City acknowledges that strategic investments and major event negotiations may involve commercially sensitive information

## 6.3 Eligibility

- 6.3.1 Eligible applicants and activities will be determined by the grant or sponsorship category or program and associated criteria to be found within the funding guidelines or associated strategies.

## 6.4 Application

- 6.4.1 The City will provide clear grant and sponsorship guidelines and will publicly advertise grant rounds and sponsorship opportunities (where applicable).
- 6.4.2 The City will maintain an online grants management program and City staff will manage their grants and sponsorship program/s through this program.

## 6.5 Assessment

- 6.5.1 Potential grant recipients will be screened for eligibility and assessed against specific criteria by assessment panels or those authorised to undertake assessments.
- 6.5.2 Authorised City officers may directly negotiate strategic investments and major events with businesses and organisations
- 6.5.3 All recommendations for grant and sponsorship funding will be clearly documented and final decisions will be made within delegated authority.

## 6.6 Funding agreements

- 6.6.1 All successful recipients must enter into a funding agreement outlining the scope of the project, deliverables, payment conditions, reporting obligations, acknowledgement requirements and termination / cancellation clauses.

## 6.7 Risk management

- 6.7.1 The City will conduct Risk Assessments to identify risks involved in the management of the grant process. Appropriate controls and mitigating actions will also be developed and maintained.
- 6.7.2 Fraud and Corruption risks and Operational risks with their associated mitigation actions will be recorded in the City's risk register.

- 6.7.3 All identified risks, associated controls and mitigating actions will be recorded in the City's risk registers and in the required quarterly reports.
- 6.8 Monitoring and reporting
  - 6.8.1 Grant recipients must submit required reports detailing outputs and expenditure as per funding agreements.
  - 6.8.2 Reporting and evaluation for strategic investments and major events will focus on strategic outcomes, economic impact, visitation and brand positioning, in line with the Major Events Strategy.
  - 6.8.3 Failure by organisations, businesses or individuals to complete required reporting may result in ineligibility for future funding rounds or non-payment of future amounts / instalments where applicable.
- 6.9 Transparency and public reporting
  - 6.9.1 The City will publish details of funded grants and sponsorship on the City website, unless commercial in confidence.
- 6.10 Complaints and feedback
  - 6.10.1 Feedback will be provided on request to unsuccessful grant applications and complaints about the grants program will be managed in accordance with the City's Complaints Handling Policy.
- 6.11 Outcome review
  - 6.11.1 City staff will undertake a periodic review of program outcomes to determine future need and opportunities across grants and sponsorships.
  - 6.11.2 An internal review of grant and sponsorship policy operations will be undertaken in 2028.
  - 6.11.3 An annual report will be provided to Councillors on the allocation of grants and sponsorship provided by the City.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All elected officials and City officers will act with integrity, honesty, trust and respect. Their roles and responsibilities are as follows:

### **Elected Councillors:**

- Approve the Grants and Sponsorship Policy
- Approve the annual budget which includes funding allocations to grants programs and sponsorship
- Provide oversight of reporting on Grants and Sponsorship programs

### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):**

- Ensure compliance of the grants program and sponsorship

- Provide oversight of the grants program and sponsorship

**City Officers:**

- Administer grant programs and sponsorship through the City's online grant management program
- Develop and maintain grant and sponsorship procedures
- Undertake grant and sponsorship eligibility assessments
- Report on how the funds were spent and what was achieved.
- Undertake continuous improvement of grant and sponsorship programs.

**Assessment Panel:**

- Evaluate and provide recommendations for grants and sponsorship procedures.

**Delegated Authority:**

- Approve grants and sponsorship within delegated level of authority.

## 8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Readers are encouraged to access relevant documents and/or resources which are available as per the below.

These include:

- [Council Plan Mir wimbul 2025-29](#)
- [Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework 2022](#)
- [Social Justice Framework](#)
- [Community Engagement Policy](#)
- [Complaint Handling Policy](#)
- [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- [Healthy Facilities Policy](#)
- [Inclusive Greater Bendigo Strategy 2026-2032](#)
- [Fair Access Policy](#)

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to Community Partnerships.

## 9. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

## 10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a City unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of ELT or where required, resolution of Council.

## 11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

| <b>Date Approved</b> | <b>Responsible Officer</b> | <b>Unit</b>          | <b>Change Type</b>                                                    | <b>Version</b>                                                             | <b>Next Review Date</b> |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Month, year</i>   | <i>Insert initials</i>     | <i>Business unit</i> | <i>Develop, Review (significant), Review (administrative), Update</i> | <i>Increase version number each time the document is updated / changed</i> | <i>Month, year</i>      |
|                      |                            |                      |                                                                       |                                                                            |                         |