

Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grants Program

January 2026

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Disclaimer: these Guidelines are updated on a regular basis. Please ensure your application aligns with the latest Guidelines which are available on Council's Community Grants webpage.

January 2026 V7

Overview

The Community Grants Program provides funding to support not-for-profit groups and organisations based in Bass Coast to deliver projects that benefit the Bass Coast community.

The objectives of the grant program align with the strategies in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030.

The overall grant funding pool is \$294,000 and will be shared across two grant streams:

1. Community Grants funding stream offers funding twice a year and closes in March and August. Funding is from \$2,001 to \$5,000 with an opportunity to apply for one of three major projects, up to \$10,000, per round.
2. Quick Response Grant funding stream opens each month (except June) and provides funding up to \$2,000. It may close earlier if all funding is allocated. To apply for quick response funding please refer to the Quick Response Grant Guidelines.

Council have also included an additional \$40,000 to support Climate Action Grants with \$20,000 applied to each round in March and August offering funding from \$1,000 to \$5,000 with one major project up to \$10,000 per round.

Objectives

The objectives of the Bass Coast Shire Council Grants Program listed below, are outlined in the Bass Coast Shire Council's Community Grants Program Policy.

- Assist and encourage community groups in providing services or facilities that are of benefit to their community and the general community
- Assist and encourage community groups in organising and conducting community events that are of benefit to their community, and the general community, and spread across the municipality throughout the year
- Assist community groups to improve their capability to fundraise and to improve their financial sustainability
- Achieve community generated outcomes that are consistent with the Council Plan and adopted Strategies.

Council Plans

Groups seeking funding should ensure their projects align with the [Council Plan 2025-2029](#) and/or the [Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030](#).

Council Plan 2025-2029

Community Grants provide funding for projects that align with any of the key objectives of the Council Plan 2025-2029:

- Naturally Beautiful
- Thriving Places
- Vibrant Communities
- Visionary Leadership

Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030

Council has allocated funding for projects that support the community to take climate change action. Applicants must identify how the project will contribute to the climate emergency response and the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030.

Grant Rounds

Council offers two grant rounds a year - March (Round 1) and August (Round 2), however applications can be submitted, via SmartyGrants, at any time throughout the year.

Applicants are advised of an outcome in May (Round 1) and October (Round 2). If successful, a Payment Form will be uploaded to the application and payment is made following submission of it via SmartyGrants.

Grant Acquittals are required as soon as the project has been completed.

** Failure to submit an Acquittal report for any successful grant whether a Community Grant or Quick Response Grant, may result in applicants being ineligible to apply for further funding through the Community Grants Program.*

Grant categories

General Community Grant – Equipment	
Description	To purchase non fixed/fitted equipment. Example moveable office equipment, furniture, portable seating.
Grant funding	\$2,001 to \$5,000
Contact	Grants Officer

Major Project Funding

Council offers up to \$10,000 for three major projects per round. Only projects in the following categories are eligible to request Major Project funding.

Groups / organisations applying for major project funding are required to complete and attach a [project plan](#) to their application form.

General Community Grant - Other Project	
Description	To provide funding to assist with a broad range of community development programs and activities. For example one-off seeding grants to support new groups, professional advice / architectural drawings to support planning for a major building project, business and/or masterplans.
Grant funding	\$2,001 to \$5,000
Contact	Grants Officer

Festivals, Celebrations and Events	
Description	Funding to support creative, sporting, social events, festivals and celebrations that allow everyone in our community to participate. For example, venue hire, public liability insurance (for groups being auspiced), promotional material, entertainment.
Grant funding	\$2,001 to \$5,000
Contact	Economy and Events Officer
Additional information	Funding approval is only considered prior to an event taking place.
Note: Applications for new and emerging events may be considered for community grant funding for two successive years. Subsequent events may be eligible for Annual Event Grant funding. Please contact Council's Events team for further information about these grants.	

Minor Capital Works	
Description	Funding assistance to support improvements, renovations, renewal and fitted or fixed equipment purchases for community facilities. For example, electrical upgrades, kitchen renovation, fixed air conditioners, physical accessibility improvements.
Grant funding	\$2,001 to \$5,000
Contact: Non-Council owned land: Council owned/managed land:	Grants Officer Assets Officer - Building and Open Space
Community Asset Committees (CAC)	CACs must obtain consent prior to submitting an application from Cemeteries and Council Committees Officer
Additional Information	Applicants need to provide: - evidence of approval by relevant landowner and/or lease where the project is located on land not owned by the applicant. - investigate any relevant permits – planning, building, environmental health etc. - advice re ongoing lifecycle costs if the project is on Council land or a Council owned building.
Note: capital works projects must comply with all relevant Australian Standards including Disability Legislation Standards and Codes.	

Climate Action	
Minor grant description	Funding is provided to assist with project management, promotion, on-ground works and education or capacity building activities as well as any minor infrastructure, equipment or permanent fixtures. Minor infrastructure includes solar, battery or building improvements for energy efficiency.
Grant funding	up to \$5,000
Major grant description	Funding to support more substantial community projects or actions that accelerate community-led climate action such as any of the above plus climate change action, community education and awareness programs, feasibility study* for community energy project. For example: study into a neighbourhood solar garden, smart grid technology, behavior change program in climate space.
Major Project funding	Up to \$10,000 (one funded per round)
Contact	Climate Emergency Project Officer
* Note: Feasibility Study final report to be provided to Council on completion of the study	

Funding Contributions

An applicant must make a minimum contribution of 30% to the overall project cost. This contribution may be in cash, in-kind or a combination of both. Council may award funding up to 70% of the overall project costs.

Assessment of grant funding includes consideration of how the applicant proposes to fund the project and the capacity of a group to contribute volunteer support and funding.

Other grants secured for the project are not recognised as part of the applicant's 30% contribution.

Who is eligible to apply?

Organisation Eligibility

An applicant must:

- Be based in Bass Coast or the project must be based in Bass Coast
- Be registered as a not-for-profit legal entity, for example an incorporated association, registered charity; or
- Be a not-for-profit unincorporated group that is auspiced by a registered not-for-profit legal entity and have at least \$10 million Public Liability Insurance to cover all aspects of the project. Exceptions may be made for applications requesting low risk equipment purchases.
- Government funded agencies such as emergency services, schools and other groups may be funded for projects that are of benefit to the broader community and outside the scope of their usual funding.
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or attach an Australian Taxation Office Statement by a Supplier form to the application.
- Have acquitted any previous Council grants and have no outstanding debts to Bass Coast Shire Council.

Unincorporated Organisations

An unincorporated organisation must have their application auspiced by an eligible incorporated organisation. Information on the auspicing body is required in the application including their ABN details, copy of current public liability insurance and a completed [Auspice Agreement](#).

If the applicant is successful, the auspicing body is legally responsible for the funds and grant payment is made into their bank account.

Further information on auspicing can be found at [Not for Profit Law – Auspicing](#).

The Project

What can be funded?

1. Materials, equipment and other items essential to a new or improved program/activity. Costs associated with an ongoing annual program that your club runs are considered a recurrent cost.
2. Printing, advertising, translations and promotional costs.
3. Costs incurred in hiring a venue (excluding costs associated with business premises rental).
4. Costs associated with encouraging participation.
5. Seeding grants for new groups formed in the 12 months prior to an application. A seeding grant allows for one off funding of materials, equipment and other items essential to setting up a new organisation (excluding normal business and operating expenses).
6. Training that provides a direct, lasting benefit to the community, such as accredited first aid or disability awareness, with skills that can be used across different community groups and settings (number limits apply). Training that mainly develops internal or trainer skills is not eligible. Council will contribute no more than half the cost of training. A group cannot apply for funding of the same training in a future application.
7. Defibrillators will only be considered if there are no other external grants (eg State Government) available. If successful, applicants will be required to mount the defibrillator externally and register it with Ambulance Victoria.
8. Council encourages joint grant submissions and supports strong partnership projects that respond to broad community needs.
9. Applicants can utilise community grant funding to support eligible larger grant applications.

What can't be funded?

1. Projects/programs based outside of Bass Coast.
2. Items or activities that are part of an organisation's core business or their normal day-to-day operating expenses e.g. wages, insurances, utilities, rental of business premises etc.
3. General maintenance expenses. This includes the ongoing care of an existing asset eg painting, new roof, fence / driveway repairs etc.
4. Minor capital works on private land or privately owned assets.
5. Office consumables and software, subscriptions, website hosting fees, materials or advertising that is fundamental to the running of the group, or activities such as bookkeeping, project management (potential exception for a 'seeding grant' – see number 5 above).
6. Awards, trophies or prizes, beverages and catering.

7. Attendance at sporting or cultural events or activities, such as contests.
8. Sporting uniforms. Grants are available via Sport and Recreation Victoria.
9. Scholarships to individuals / organisations.
10. Weapons / firearms of any sort.
11. Private profit-making organisations.
12. Individuals.
13. Projects or events that have commenced or been held, or equipment that has been purchased prior to the grant round closing date.
14. Projects that are currently receiving any other Bass Coast Shire Council support or funding. This includes projects / programs that have received grant funding previously.
15. Projects and/or programs where Council considers the purpose is to advance an organisations religious or political position, irrespective of what those beliefs or positions might be.
16. Activities that are the core business of other Government programs or duplicate other local services.
17. Applications that have not provided full financial or other disclosure.
18. Projects or events that could be funded from other sources e.g. fees, sponsorships etc.

Multiple Applications

Applicants will only be approved funding for one application per round.

Applicants will only be awarded Major Project funding once per financial year.

Budget

In-kind Contributions

In-kind contributions refer to goods, services and transactions not involving money, and help to demonstrate community support and volunteer commitment to the project.

Examples can include volunteers labour, borrowed equipment, donated materials or free use of facilities. A discount offered by a business / service may considered as long as it aligns with the project eg a swimming retailer offers a discount to swim clubs to support their project. The difference between the retail value and the discounted price can be counted as in-kind.

The In-kind table in SmartyGrants requires you to list the person or supplier making the in-kind contribution, describe the activity being undertaken and allocate the amount of hours and dollar value being donated. For example:

Example project: Kitchen renewal

In-kind supplier - Who?	Description eg. goods supplied, task being undertaken	Total
Members x 4	Put together flat pack kitchen cupboards and install - 6 hours each	\$720.00
Harvey Norman	Discount on oven and stove top (\$1,000 x x 20% - quote attached)	\$200.00
J Smith - electrician	Wire in oven/stove - 2 hrs @ \$80p/h - no charge (quote attached)	\$160.00
Member who is a painter	Paint kitchen walls - 3 hrs @ \$50p/h (inkind at professional service rate)	\$150.00
	Total in-kind	\$1,230.00

For consistency across applications, rates for general labour are calculated at \$30.00 per hour and specialist/trade/professional contributions calculated at \$50.00 per hour.

If the in-kind support is other than volunteer labour, written evidence must be provided in the application.

*Note: The time taken to research and apply for a grant will **not** be considered as in-kind contribution.*

Project Budget

Project budget and GST

The application form contains two income / expense tables. Only one budget table will be available to you depending on if your group is registered for GST or not.

- If your group **is registered for GST** - the quotes you submit to support the items you will purchase with the grant funding will **exclude GST**.
- your group **is not registered for GST** - the quotes you submit will **include GST** (if applicable).

Please ensure the correct budget table is selected, as this will determine the grant payment should your application be successful. Taking the time to get this right now will help avoid any issues later, as inaccurate information may result in a request for the funds to be returned to Council.

Please refer to the ABN section of the application form if you are unsure of your group's GST status.

Income:

The income column should show all income sources that will be used to deliver your project. Items to list in the Income Table include:

- the community grant amount you are requesting
- the cash contribution from your group or organisation
- any funds from other sources such as bank loans, other grants or sponsorship (please indicate whether the amount is confirmed or otherwise)
- income expected from the project eg. entry fees, DVD sales.

Expenses:

The expenses column should list **all** project expenses – materials, equipment, services - actual cost (do not round amounts up) and should include GST. Please indicate in brackets the items that have quotes attached to the application as this indicates the items you are seeking funding for.

For example: Kitchen Renewal

Note: the total income and total expenditure columns should be the same figure

INCOME - money from who?	Total (inc GST if applicable)	EXPENDITURE - please list all purchases relevant to project	Total (inc GST if applicable)
Community Grant requested	\$5,000.00	Ikea flat pack kitchen units (quote attached)	\$3,000.00
Our contribution	\$1,500.00	Harvey Norman - oven and stove (quote attached)	\$800.00
Aus Post grant	\$1,920.00	Harvey Norman - dishwasher (quote attached)	\$1,200.00
		Harvey Norman - rangehood	\$1,000.00
		Paintworks - 2 x 10L Dulux washable paint	\$420.00
		Floorworld - vinyl floorboards and installation	\$2,000.00
Total Income:	\$8,420.00	Overall Project Expenses:	\$8,420.00

Add ↑

Must be at least !

Section 4

Budget Summary

How much grant funding are you requesting? * \$5,000.00

Check the Community Grants Guidelines for maximum funding limits and the funding ratio.

Note: the Income / Expense amounts will automatically calculate in SmartyGrants so the asterixed amounts won't be included in your income/expense table.

When completed correctly, the income and expense columns will be the same amount.

Supporting Documents

The following documents are required with your application:

- A current bank statement showing date, name of account and bank balance for all bank accounts held by the group.
- Quotes:
 - One written quote is required for each individual item or service up to the value of \$2,000
 - Two written quotes are preferred for each item or service over the value of \$2,000 (including GST if applicable). If providing two quotes, indicate in the expense table which is the preferred quote. If unable to provide two quotes, please advise why.

Quotes should clearly show the service or company where the item is being purchased, what is being purchased and how much each item is. A screenshot is sufficient so long as all the above are included. **Preference should be given to local suppliers.**

- Current certificate of public liability insurance that covers your group and project.
- If your group is being auspiced, please complete and attach an Auspice Agreement along with a copy of the Auspicor's public liability insurance certificate if it can cover your event/project. If it doesn't, you may apply for grant funding to cover insurance for the project only
- An Australian Tax Office Statement by Supplier if you do not have an ABN.
- Permission from the asset owner to undertake the project (if applicable).
- Evidence of required permits and/or approvals (if applicable).

Assessment and Notification

Assessment

The following criteria are used by assessors to assess applications and must be addressed in the grant application. The more an application responds to the assessment criteria, the higher it will score. This is important as applications that do not score well will not be funded.

Community Grants Assessment Criteria	Weighting
The application addresses a community need and describes how the community will benefit from the project/activity	30%
The applicant can successfully manage the described project, and meet its proposed outcomes	20%
The applicant details how the funding will assist in the development and or/viability of the group	20%
The applicant demonstrates that consideration has been given to sustainability principles and recognizes the role community can play in mitigating risks caused by climate change	15%
The application aligns with Council's Plan and/or other strategic Documents	15%

Submitted applications are assessed by an internal panel of Council officers. Grant funding recommendations from the panel are reviewed by Councillors and approved by the CEO.

Council reserves the right to approve partial funding or refuse funding.

Notification

Successful grant applicants are notified by email. The Grants Officer will call non-successful applicants to advise them why the application was not successful in this instance. The applicant will be supported to apply for the next round of grants if the project was eligible.

Payment

Following successful notification, a Tax Invoice/Payment Form will be uploaded in SmartyGrants for completion by the applicant. Once completed and submitted via SmartyGrants the grant funding will be paid via electronic funds transfer into your group/organisations' bank account.

Grants and GST

If your group is registered for GST, the approved funding will include an additional 10% to allow for GST.

If your group is not registered for GST the approved funding will not include GST.

If your group is a Community Asset Committee of Council, the funding amount will not include GST.

Funding Conditions

The Tax Invoice/Funding Agreement lists general conditions of funding. Additional funding conditions may be applied to your project during assessment.

By completing and submitting the Tax Invoice/Funding Agreement agree to abide by all funding condition and the requirement to complete an Acquittal Report.

Applicants who change the scope or budget of the project without written Council consent and/or fail to comply with the funding conditions will be required to return the funding to Council.

Grant Acquittal

The project should be completed within six months of receiving funds. If your project is likely to be delayed, please contact the Grants Officer as soon as possible to discuss your specific circumstances.

A grant acquittal, with all receipts attached for approved funding, is required to be completed via SmartyGrants as soon as possible after the project has been completed. You are also required to submit photos and copies of any media promotion related to your project.

Please note that you are required to acknowledge Council's funding contribution within any media associated with the project.

Applicant Responsibilities

Funded organisations are required to comply with:

- Fair Work Act 2009 www.fwc.gov.au
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides>
- Victorian Disability Act 2006 <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability-act-2006>

- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rarta2001265/
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria)
- OH&S Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice www.workcover.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Workcover Scheme requirements www.workcover.vic.gov.au
- Public Liability Insurance www.communityinsurance.com.au
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights www.humanrights.vic.gov.au

Preparation Checklist

Applications are made online and submitted through SmartyGrants.

If this is your first application, you will need to Register with SmartyGrants. You are encouraged to use your group/organization generic email address as all applications will sit against this email address. For future applications Log on and go to My Submissions where you will find your application and any other relevant forms such as payment form and acquittal report.

We suggest you work through the following list and tick each item as you complete it.

- ☐ Are you applying for less than \$2,000? If yes, please consider applying for a [Quick Response Grant](#)
- ☐ Have you discussed your project with the Community Grants Officer, or other relevant Council officer?
- ☐ Have you read the Community Grant Guidelines?
- ☐ Is your group eligible to apply?
- ☐ Is your project eligible for funding?
- ☐ Do you know what category you are applying to?
Note: if your project requires equipment to be installed/fixed eg air-conditioner, dishwasher – you should select the Minor Capital Work category, **NOT** Equipment category.
- ☐ Are you applying for a Climate Action Grant? If yes, you must speak to the Climate Emergency Project Officer before commencing your application.
- ☐ Have you checked that the grant closing and notification dates fit with your project timelines?
- ☐ You may choose to prepare a draft application on the downloadable copy of the application form. However, you will still need to complete and submit the actual application form online through SmartyGrants.
- ☐ Do your responses to the application questions address the Community Grants Assessment Criteria on page 10 of this guide?
- ☐ Have you prepared a draft budget and included any relevant in-kind support?
- ☐ Have you obtained **all** the required documentation to support your application? For example, financial statements, current public liability insurance, quotes.
- ☐ For a capital works project – have you investigated the requirement for permits and landowners consent? If your project is on Council land you need to speak to a relevant Council officer before making an application and obtained Service Manager approval?
- ☐ Are you applying for major project funding? If yes, you **must** complete and attach a Project Plan template.

If you have issues accessing a computer or scanner to make an online application or attach supporting documentation, contact the Grants Officer for assistance.