

PARTNERSHIPS AND GRANTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Partnerships and Grants Policy is to ensure City of Ballarat delivers a consistent, fair and transparent grants and partnerships process, and ensure recipients can deliver quality programs, events, products and services that benefit the Ballarat community in alignment with the delivery of the Council Plan 2025-2029.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to the administration of partnership and grant programs provided by City of Ballarat. The policy applies to all Councillors and members of City of Ballarat staff involved in administering, assessing or decision-making in relation to these programs. This policy does not apply to agreements, sponsorships or contributions (whether one off or repeated) which are not considered to form part of an established grant or partnership program.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 Principles

3.1.1 Transparency and accountability

Decisions relating to the approval of grants or partnerships must be clearly documented. Eligibility requirements and assessment criteria are established for all grant or partnership programs and are made available to prospective applicants prior to the commencement of each application round. Assessment panels must apply and document their evaluation of applications against the relevant eligibility requirements assessment criteria. This documentation must include:

- Whether applicants met the eligibility requirements;
- How the assessment panel scored applicants against the assessment criteria; and
- The factors considered by the assessment panel to determine the recommended grant or partnership recipients.

Members of Delegated Committee are responsible for ensuring due diligence by reviewing in detail the assessment panel recommendations prior to making a decision.

All successful grant or partnership recipients are required to enter into a funding agreement with City of Ballarat prior to payment of funds. All successful grant or partnership recipients must meet all formal acquittal requirements associated with the relevant grant or partnership program. Failure to do so may disqualify the recipient from eligibility for future programs and City of Ballarat may require funding to be returned.

Grant and partnership programs and the relevant assessment process and criteria is reviewed after each round to ensure each program continues to achieve its purpose and deliver benefits to the Ballarat community. An annual partnership and grants report is provided to Council at the conclusion of each financial year which includes the findings and recommendations from evaluations undertaken as part of the ongoing improvement reviews.

3.1.2 Fraud control

City of Ballarat is committed to ensuring that its grant and partnership programs are protected from fraud or misuse, by ensuring the following measures are in place:

- a. All grant and partnership applications must be evaluated by a panel which consists of City of Ballarat staff.
- b. Prior to evaluating grant applications, assessment panel members must declare any conflicts of interest. Should an assessment panel member declare a conflict of interest in relation to an application, they must exclude themselves from evaluating or discussing the application.
- c. Following evaluation, a recommendation is provided by the panel to the Council for decision on funding. This may include to a delegated committee established by Council for the purpose of making funding decisions on grant or partnership programs.
- d. Councillors and members of delegated committees making funding decisions must declare any conflicts of interest in accordance with City of Ballarat's Governance Rules.
- e. If a funding decision does not align with the recommendation, the reason for the funding decision and the deviation from the recommendation must be clearly documented.
- f. Grants and partnerships are not intended for ongoing, continuous funding, and limits apply to the funding term for each program. Recipients are encouraged to ensure projects are independently sustainable beyond the funding period.
- g. City of Ballarat staff, Councillors and members of delegated committees are not eligible to apply for or receive grant or partnership funding through this program.

3.2 Partnership and Grant Programs

3.2.1 City Partnerships Program

This program directly aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029 by providing funds to organisations and businesses to deliver Council-identified priorities. Projects may span multiple financial years up to a maximum of 3 years.

All funding agreements issued on behalf of the 2024-2028 Council are to be acquitted by 30 June 2030.

2026/27 Program	Maximum funding term is 3 years concluding 30 June 2029
2027/28 Program	Maximum funding term is 3 years concluding 30 June 2030
2028/29 Program	Maximum funding term is 2 years concluding 30 June 2030

There are two streams:

- a) Community stream:
 - For not-for-profit and charitable organisations based in Ballarat
 - Funding range: \$20,000 - \$100,000 per applicant per financial year.

b) Commercial Stream:

- For business and not-for-profit charitable organisations based in Ballarat
- Funding range: Applications greater than \$20,000.

3.2.2 Community Impact Grants Program

The program directly aligns to Council's Ballarat's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031 by providing grants to local community organisations to encourage community activity, participation and resilience.

Applications from not-for-profit organisations will be considered for up to \$20,000, including a small grants option for applications under \$2,000. The program provides annual grants with applicants being required to acquit grants within a twelve-month period.

3.2.3 Tourism Events Grants Program

The program directly aligns to the Ballarat Events Strategy 2018-2028 by providing funding for festivals, events and activities that enhance tourism and promote Ballarat as a destination. Applications are considered up to \$20,000. The program provides annual grants with applicants being required to acquit grants within a twelve-month period.

3.2.4 Creative Inspiration Grants Program

The program directly aligns to Council's Creative City Strategy 2019 by providing grants to support creative projects by visual artists, performers, musicians, filmmakers, writers, designers, makers and creative businesses that live, work or study in Ballarat. Applications are considered for \$5,000. The program provides annual grants with applicants being required to acquit grants within a twelve-month period.

3.2.5 Heritage Grants Program

The program directly aligns to Council's Heritage Plan 2017-2030 by providing grants to the owners of heritage properties to undertake conservation and restoration works. Applications are usually considered for up to \$15,000. The program provides a one-off grant with applicants required to acquit grants within a two-year period.

3.3 Other Grant Programs

Where City of Ballarat has a role in administering externally funded grant programs, those grant programs will not be included in the City of Ballarat policy process due to the guidelines and reporting requirements of the external funder.

3.4 Ensuring community capacity to apply for grants

Council will promote grants through various communication channels and offer support to those needing assistance with the online grants platform. Regular communications and updates to the City of Ballarat webpage will be made to assist organisations seeking further information.

4.0 Supporting documents and references

4.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

4.2 Associated Documents

- Council Plan 2025 – 2029
- Ballarat's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031
- Ballarat Events Strategy 2018-2028
- Creative City Strategy 2019
- Heritage Plan 2017-2030

4.3 Definitions

Staff A Staff member includes employees, labour hire agency staff, volunteers and work experience students engaged by the City of Ballarat.

5.0 Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

6.0 Policy owner

Executive Manager Engaged Communities.

7.0 Authorisation

Adopted by Ballarat City Council 30 April 2025 (R70/25).