Community Grants Advisory Committee

Background

The Community Grants Advisory Committee (Committee) is established to assess and provide objective advice and recommendations on the allocation of the Biannual and Partnership Grants streams of the Community Grants Program (excluding the Social Support category). They do this by:

- Assessing Biannual and Partnership grant applications
- Attending Biannual Grants assessment meetings

Purpose

The role of the Committee is to make recommendations to Council regarding Biannual Grants (excluding Social Support category) and Partnership Grants. Committee members will be required to:

- Consider adherence to relevant policy, grants guidelines, assessment criteria and specified deadlines;
- Review and assess all allocated applications electronically via SmartyGrants against predetermined selection criteria;
- Support assessment scores with clear, concise and transparent rationale and feedback for applicants; and
- Agree on a set of recommendations for funding allocations to be presented to Council for decision making at a Council Meeting.

Membership

The Committee shall comprise:

Up to twelve (12) Community Members.

- Community Members can nominate or be invited through an open Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Members will be selected and appointed based on merit, skills, connection to Moonee Valley and expertise, with consideration of diverse representation of views and backgrounds. Ideally, the Committee will consist of new and previous or existing members to ensure a transfer of knowledge and experience as well as creating new opportunities to participate.
- Community members draw upon their unique knowledge and experience of the Moonee Valley community to assess the Need, Benefit and Delivery criteria when considering grant applications.
- Community members perform an important role in ensuring that the grant assessment process incorporates the principles for community engagement through deliberative engagement practices (Local Govt. Act 2020 (s.55(2)(g)).
- Training will be provided in the lead up to each Biannual Grants Assessment period, or as required.

Up to twelve (12) Council Officers from a range of levels and departments.

- Council Officers will be provided time to complete their obligations to the Committee within their current work arrangements.
- Training/refresher training will be provided in the lead up to the assessment period each round.
- Council Officers that sit on the Committee will not assess applications where they have provided detailed 1:1 advice to the applicant.
- **Appointment period**

Committee members are selected on an annual basis and appointed for an 18-month period as specified in the appointment or EOI.

Community Panel members can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms on the Committee. They may reapply through the EOI process to either continue their appointment or re-join the Committee. However, preference will be given to new members where possible, to ensure that the opportunity to participate is shared.

Resignation of Committee Member

A Committee member may resign from the Committee at any time by advising the Council in writing. Council may appoint a replacement Community Member through an Expression of Interest process.

Governance

Meeting schedule: Committee members will be required to undertake up to two (2) days reading and assessment time to assess online applications and be available for up to two (2) meetings, per grant round dependent on the number of applications they are required to assess.

Quorum: To achieve a quorum, three (3) Council Officers and three (3) Community Members are required to attend the meeting.

An Assessment Framework (Appendix A) has been developed to assist the Committee with decision making and to assist the Committee to process the volumes of data contained within grant applications in any one round. The information will be provided to the Committee prior to the first grant assessment meeting.

1.1 Applications will be reviewed for eligibility prior to inclusion in the assessment process.

1.2 Where necessary, applications will be allocated to Council Officers who are not member of the Committee to provide Officer advice.

1.3 Committee members will be provided with a list of eligible applications including basic information to identify any conflicts of interest prior to assessment.

1.4 Applications will be allocated to assessors who have no conflicts within the category they are assessing. Each application will be allocated to at least four (4) assessors. Assessors will include both Community Members and Council Officers for each application.

1.5 Committee members will be notified when applications are ready to be assessed online through SmartyGrants with an assigned due date for completion.

1.6 Committee members are required to submit an assessment for every application assigned to them, to ensure that each application receives an equal number of assessments.

1.7 To ensure that all Committee members have a voice at the Committee meeting, two (2) spokespeople will be allocated to each application. Where possible one (1) spokesperson will be a Community Member; and one (1) spokesperson will be a Staff Member. Two spokespeople will share their comments and scores against the selection criteria to the Committee.

1.8 A ranked list of applications based on individual assessment scores will be presented to the Committee to guide the final recommendation. The final recommendation will be made based on a show of hands for full, partial or no funding with the majority being the decider.

1.9 An external facilitator who is an independent person, will be appointed by the responsible Council Officer to support the Committee to facilitate discussion and final recommendations.

1.10 The Community Grants Lead will provide administrative support to the Committee. Other Council staff may be deployed to assist with processing if demand requires additional support.

1.11 Committee members, both current and former, will not publicly comment on behalf of the group. Neither will any members seek to advocate on the needs of any individuals or organisations.

2. Assessment criteria

Criteria	Description	Assessors
Need: Why the project is needed, important and justified	• Responding to objectives and priorities of the relevant grant stream. • Demonstrated need through clear evidence of need and/or connections with the Moonee Valley community	• Community Members • MVCC Officers
Benefit: How the project will benefit the Moonee Valley community and intended participants	• Demonstrated and measurable impact for local Moonee Valley community and intended participants Benefit to one or more wards across Moonee Valley • Use of local suppliers and collaborators	• Community Members • MVCC Officers

Criteria	Description	Assessors
Delivery: Skills and experience to deliver the project and sound financial management	• Well planned project with demonstrated skills to deliver the project • Clear and accurate budget supported by quotes where necessary	• Community Members • MVCC Officers

3. Expectations and Requirements of Committee Members

Members are required to:

3.1 Understand and adhere to the principles of related Policy and Grants guidelines and assessment criteria.

3.2 Adhere to the Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement.

3.3 Treat information with sensitivity.

3.4 Keep informed of current developments, issues and concerns in the local community.

3.5 Provide written comments to justify assessment scores.

3.6 Adhere to the specified deadlines for submitting online assessments.

3.7 Declare any potential conflict of interest and refrain from assessing any application in which they have an interest.

3.8 Exit the room during the deliberation of any application in which they have an interest. Conflicts will be recorded in the minutes of the Committee meeting.

3.9 Prepare for and actively participate in meetings.

3.10 Act in a courteous manner, respecting others' views and opinions. All members should respect the decision of the consensus view as adjudicated by the Facilitator.

4. Support Provided to Committee Members

4.1 All Committee members will have access to the full application and supporting documentation of grant applications they will be assessing.

4.2 The Community Grants Lead can provide advice and background information on each of the applications to be reviewed by Committee members.

5. Reports

5.1 Committee recommendations are reported to Council for consideration for adoption at a Council meeting.

5.2 To avoid canvassing, membership of the panel is to remain anonymous, with only the structure to be made available to the general public.

6. Conflict of Interest

6.1 All Committee members are required to complete a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement prior to assessing any grant applications.

6.2 Council Officers must follow the MVCC Staff Conflict of Interest Guidelines.

6.3 Community Members must follow the Community Grants Advisory Committee - Conflict Of Interest Guidelines.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Community reference groups and committees	Groups and/or committees established by Council to provide advice on key issues and projects on a range of matters and time periods. They include a focus on city wide and population-based engagement with equity seeking groups (e.g. MV2040 communities of focus, such as First People, Culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) people, People who identify as LGBTIQA+,); as well as projects and programs (e.g. Community Grants Advisory Committee). Some (not all) groups may be established as Delegated Committees and Joint Delegated Committees of Council as described in s 63 and 64 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
Confidential information	Information that was confidential information for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 2020*, s 125.
Conflict of interest	A conflict of interest exists if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that a person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty, as per the *Local Government Act 2020*, Div. 2. A situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional interest. Please also see Community Member Conflict of Interest Guidelines in section 6.3
Consultation	The process of seeking input on a matter.
Council	When capitalised, Council refers to Moonee Valley City Council. When not capitalised, council refers to any/all councils.
Council meeting	Has the same meaning as in the *Local Government Act 2020*.
Council Officer	A staff member of Moonee Valley City Council
Expression of Interest (EoI)	An internal ad placed on Council's intranet to identify if there is interest from other work areas in a particular position / opportunity on a short-term basis.

Term	Definition
Framework	A Framework gives information on how a policy is implemented in the operation of the organisation. It does not provide a step by step description of an activity, this is done in a procedure or work instruction.
Grants and funding opportunities	Non-repayable funding sought from an external party (government or other) for a specific project.
Transparency	A lack of hidden agendas or conditions, and the availability of all information needed in order to collaborate, cooperate and make decisions effectively. Transparency is also human rights issue: the right to have the opportunity, without discrimination, to participate in public affairs as per the *Local Government Act 2020* s.58.

Amendment, modification or variation

These Terms of Reference were adopted by Community Grants Advisory Committee in February 2023. They may be amended, varied or modified after consultation and agreement by the Community Grants team.

Document Type	Terms of Reference	**Classification**	External	**Status**	Approved
Owner	Manager Advocacy Communications and Engagement			**Version**	1.1
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Major Changes	Nil				

Document control disclaimer

Minor amendments to this document may be required from time to time. Where amendments don't materially alter a document, they will be made administratively, without a requirement for formal approval. Printed copies of this document are considered uncontrolled.

Acknowledgement of Country
Moonee Valley City Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners of this land – the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, their spirits, ancestors, elders and community members past and present.

APPENDIX A:

Community Grants Assessment Framework

Purpose

This Assessment Framework outlines the principles for assessing and awarding funding applications to the Community Grants Program, including the Biannual Grants (excluding the Social Support stream) and Partnership Grants.

Please refer to the Community Grants Guidelines for more information about the program and funding streams.

Assessment Process

For each round of funding, the Community Grants Advisory Committee (Committee) will assess allocated applications online and convene a meeting to agree on recommendations for funding. These recommendations will be presented to Council for endorsement at an Ordinary Meeting.

Timeframes for the steps below will be communicated to the Committee prior to assessment commencing.

Applications will be assessed through the following steps:

Steps	Responsible
1. Eligibility check – applications are checked against the eligibility criteria; only eligible applications will proceed to assessment	Grants Officers
2. Conflict of Interest declaration – all Committee members will be provided with a list of eligible applications including basic information to identify any conflicts of interest, in accordance with Conflict of Interest Guidelines.	Committee
3. Assessment – the Committee will be alerted via email when applications are ready for assessment in SmartyGrants.	Committee
4. Meeting – the Committee will meet following completion of assessments to agree on the funding recommendation in line with the Assessment Framework below.	Committee
5. Decision – the Committee's recommendations will be reported to Council for endorsement at an Ordinary meeting.	Council
6. A Outcomes Announced– funding agreements **will be** sent to successful recipients, and all applicants are advised of outcomes.	Grants Officers

To ensure responsiveness and equal assessments, a contingency plan will be followed to obtain a minimum of four (4) assessments:

- If fewer than four (4) assessments are completed in the required timeframe, a Council Officer who is not a member of the Committee, has not provided advice to the applicant, and does not have a conflict of interest will, provide an assessment.

Assessment Framework

- The assessments received for each application are collated and the application is given a total score reflected as a percentage.
- Applications will be ranked, per stream of funding, and presented to the Committee at its meeting to be considered accordingly as follows:

Applications that have scored:		
Above 80%	High quality	Priority consideration for funding
80% - 60%	Moderate quality	May consider for funding
Below 60%	Poor quality	Not recommended for funding

- To ensure balanced allocation, the spread of funding across the following areas must also be considered:
    - Funding Priorities – the funding themes outlined in the Biannual Community Grants Guidelines
    - Locations across the municipality – all areas are proportionally represented
    - Notional funding pool allocations per stream – priority should be given to the highest quality applications, however if the proportion of high-quality applications significantly differs from the stream's notional allocation, a reallocation of the pool may be considered.
- For each application, the Committee will agree on recommendations in relation to the following:
    - whether funding is recommended, and if so, whether in full or in part
    - where partial funding is recommended, the proposed funding amount;
    - whether any special conditions should be applied to the grant; and
    - where a high or moderate scoring application is not recommended for funding, the reason for this decision.