



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL CREATIVE CITY GRANTS PROGRAM

2025/26 GUIDELINES

About this grant program

Creative City Grants Program offers individual artists, creatives, cultural practitioners, arts groups and community organisations to support creative projects, practice and new ideas. This grants program reflects Council's commitment to investing in our local creative sector and recognises not only the intrinsic cultural value of the arts, but also the role they play in building social connection, community wellbeing and economic vitality.

The objectives of these grants are to:

- Support local creative talent.
- Contribute to the diversity and vitality of creative activity across our region.
- Encourage active participation in the arts for all.
- Strengthen Greater Shepparton's identity as a Creative City.

For the 2025/2026 Financial Year there is a total funding pool of \$20,000 available. Round 2 has \$15,500 of funding available for eligible applicants. Individual grants of **\$1,000 up to \$5,000** are available for successful applicants to conduct activities during the timeframes below.

Council strongly advises you to make contact with the Riverlinks Administration Department **prior** to making an application to discuss your proposed activity and eligibility. You can contact them via telephone on (03) 5832 9865 or via email admin@riverlinksvenues.com.au.

Expected timing for this grant program

Applications will be accepted until 5:00pm on the closing date.

Applications open: Friday 9 January 2026

Applications close: Monday 2 March 2026 at 5.00pm

Notification of outcome: 31 March 2026

Activity timeframes: Activity cannot start **until after** 31 March 2026
Activity must be completed by 11 January 2027

Late submissions will **not** be accepted

How to Apply

Applications for this grant program must be submitted via Greater Shepparton City Council's SmartyGrants online portal. You can access this portal via the following link:

<https://greaterhepparton.smartygrants.com.au/>

Who can and can't apply?

Creative City Grants are for any of the following:

APPLICANT TYPE	YES	NO
Not-for-profits, incorporated bodies, co-operatives or associations	X	
Registered charitable organisations (refer to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission)	X	
Unincorporated bodies with an auspice	X	
Schools and learning institutions – only for activities that are not curriculum based and the primary benefit is for the wider community	X	
Applicants that have received funding from this grant in the current financial year that are applying for a separate activity	X	
Individuals without an ABN	X	
Individual / Sole Traders (entity type with Australian Business Register)	X	
Individual artists, creative or cultural practitioners, including sole traders, freelancers, producers and artworkers.	X	
Arts or cultural groups, collectives or organisations	X	
Artist, creative or cultural practitioners or groups working across any artform or creative discipline	X	
Community organisations or incorporated associations working with artists, creative or cultural practitioners	X	
Artists, creative or cultural practitioners or groups at all stages or practice including emerging, established, professional, hobby and amateur	X	
For profits, commercial entities, registered businesses	X	
Applicants with outstanding acquittals for grant funding from Greater Shepparton City Council (including auspices)		X
Applicants with outstanding debts or arrears to Greater Shepparton City Council or in legal proceedings with Council		X
An organisation involved in legal proceedings relating to winding up its operations, or experiencing insolvency or bankruptcy (this includes any legal bankruptcy – related actions against the organisations directors or officers).		X

All applicants projects or activities must be primarily based in Greater Shepparton.

Artforms and creative disciplines may include: literature, visual arts, performing arts, music; crafts, fashion, graphic, product design; community arts, traditional cultural practice; film, television, radio, podcast, photography; gaming and digital arts; architecture, interior design and landscape architecture; and museums, galleries and libraries.

What if you are NOT incorporated?

If you are a not-for-profit organisation, you can still make an application by using an auspice. An auspice is an organisation that meets our eligibility criteria and agrees to support your application.

If you're successful, the auspice receives the grant money on your behalf so you can undertake the project work.

If you are intending to make an application using an auspice you must obtain written approval from your proposed auspice before you submit your application, and attach this to your application form.

Insurance

Applicants must have Public Liability Insurance with a minimum amount of \$20 million. The Certificate of Currency for this insurance will be required as part of the application process.

Applicants using an auspice would include a certificate from the auspice organisation. A policy statement or receipt of payment is not an acceptable substitute for the certificate of currency.

[Duck for Cover](#) provides very affordable and easily accessible Public Liability Insurance for creative individuals and groups.

Permits and Approvals

Activities may require permits and approvals. These processes are separate to the grant application process and require additional time and budget in the project plan. You do not need to secure permits or approvals before applying for the grant, however obtaining these approvals will be a condition of the funding arrangement.

You must also be able to demonstrate that you are aware of the necessary permits and approvals in your application.

What if my activity does not proceed?

If you are successful in obtaining a grant and your activity does not proceed, you must contact the Riverlinks Administration Team at Greater Shepparton City Council in a timely manner to discuss the circumstances of the activity not proceeding, and organise returning the grant funds provided.

Failure to notify Greater Shepparton City Council of your activity not proceeding will deem future applications for all grants available ineligible.

Program Objectives

The objectives of these grants is to support local creative talent, contribute to the diversity and vitality of creative activity across our region, encourage active participation in the arts for all, and strengthens Greater Shepparton's identity as a Creative City

Funding is provided on a one-off basis. A minimum funding amount of \$1,000 to a maximum funding amount of \$5,000.00 per successful grant application is available. Funding is limited and not all applications that meet the guidelines may be funded. Funding is on a project or program basis only, and no recurrent grants or annual funding commitments are available from this fund.

Linkages to the Council Plan 2025-2029

This grant program aligns with the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2025-2029. The focus areas include:

Liveability:

- Facilitate diverse local, national, and international arts and entertainment experiences.
- Provide opportunities for the community to celebrate Greater Shepparton's diversity.
- Support the delivery of initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity, respect and inclusion.
- Continue to work with community to implement the Creative City Strategy 2022-2027.

While applicants are encouraged to consider these priorities in their project planning, they are not required to explicitly demonstrate how their proposed activities link to the Council Plan. The alignment of projects with these focus areas will be considered in the assessment process.

What will be funded:

- projects to develop new creative works, content, products or services.
- projects to present new creative works including productions, exhibitions, publications and performances, or a new arts component of an existing arts or cultural event.
- professional or skills development opportunities for local creatives.
- projects that creatively engage communities.
- start-up costs for a new creative idea, business or project.
- projects or activities that occur in Greater Shepparton between the timeframes stated above.
- projects that provide an inclusive, safe and accessible outcome for the community of Greater Shepparton.
- projects that demonstrate effective partnerships i.e. with other groups and/or across interest groups.
- projects that will deliver value for money, are well developed, and have reasonable indicators of success for the outcomes expected.

The following activities will NOT be funded:

- events and activities not held within the activity timeframes
- events and activities held outside the Greater Shepparton municipality
- applications received after the closing date
- projects that are clearly a duplication of an existing service.
- fundraising activities, competitions, eisteddfods, prize money, capital works, annual fees, charges and/or subscriptions.

- funding is NOT available for ongoing expenses or for projects which have already commenced or have been completed.
- projects and activities that are discriminatory or offensive in any way, or contravene any legislation or Council policy.
- political organisations or activities that have a party political nature.

Co-Funding

Council aims to work in partnership with groups to support their project. Although not essential, demonstrating contributions being made to the project by yourself or others may strengthen your application.

Applicants are encouraged to match the grant amount requested by providing a contribution.

This contribution can either be financial, or “in-kind” or a combination of both. An in-kind contribution is part of the project that would normally be paid for but is given to the project at no cost.

If your project requires a larger amount of funding outside the scope of this program, you could consider applying for other funding sources including:

- [Australia Council for the Arts](#)
- [Creative Victoria](#)
- [Regional Arts Victoria](#)
- [Australian Government Office for the Arts](#)

The ability to provide financial and in-kind support to a project by the applicant may be taken into account during the review process.

Budget

The budget must include details on all income (all sources of funding which will be used to deliver the project, including the requested amount from this grant) and all expenditure (costs involved in the project). Income and expenditure must be equal. Below is an example of the budget table within the application form.

Budget

*indicates a required field.

Grant Amount

Requested (Excluding GST) *

Must be a dollar amount and between 500 and 2500.

The amount you are requesting from Council. Ex GST

Total Project/Program

Cost (Excluding GST) *

What is the total budgeted cost (dollars) of your project - excluding GST?

Is your organisation registered for GST? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

[Clear](#)

[illegible]

Your income and expenditure should be equal, there should not be a loss or a profit for the project.

Total Income Amount

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Total Expenditure Amount

11/11/2016

Income - Expenditure











11/11/2019


This number/amount is calculated. Your income and expenditure should be equal, therefore this should be \$0.00.

It is also necessary to detail the in-kind contributions (if any), that will be made to the activity in the In-Kind section of the application form. Below is an example of this table within the application form.

- \$25 per hour for unskilled labour
- \$40 per hour for qualified trades person
- \$65 per hour for machinery hire, including driver

In kind contributions

What other inputs will you need in order to successfully carry out this project?	Value	Confirmed?
Non-financial inputs could include staff/volunteers^ time/expertise, equipment, facilities, pro bono or in-kind contributions, advocacy, and other types of support. ^If you have volunteers working on the project, include their contribution. \$25 per hour for unskilled labour. \$40 per hour qualified trades person. \$65 per hour machinery hire including driver.	Must be a dollar amount.	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>  
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>  
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>  
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>  
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>  
Total:		



In-kind contributions are those you would normally pay for, but will be received by the project at no charge

If your organisation is registered for GST the budget should be filled in GST exclusive. If your organisation is not registered for GST you should fill in the budget GST inclusive. Please refer to the www.ato.gov.au website for further details.

How will applications be assessed?

All applications received will go through the following assessment process:

- Eligibility checks against criteria for the funding of this program
- Panel Assessment with broad representation from Council Departments

The Assessment Panel will consider the following:

- Does the activity meet the objectives and activities of the program.
- Is the activity well planned and feasible within the timeframes provided.
- Does the activity support local creative talent.
- Does the activity contribute to the diversity and vitality of creative activity across our region.
- Encourages active participation in the arts for all.
- Strengthens Greater Shepparton's identity as a Creative City.
- Evidence that the activity will be inclusive and accessible for the whole community.
- Does the intended activity align with the Council's Creative City Strategy.

Applications will also be assessed against the following three criteria. *(The bullet points listed under each criterion indicate what may be considered during assessment of your application. You do not have to address every bullet point listed but please address all that are relevant to your project.)*

Assessment Criteria

All applications received will go through the following assessment process:

- Eligibility checks against criteria for the funding of this program
- Panel Assessment with broad representation from Council Departments

Applications will be assessed on a weighted average scoring system, as shown below:

Weighting	Criteria	Measure/ Key Considerations
10%	Quality of the proposed creative, artistic and/or cultural activity	<p>A clear concept, vision and rationale for the activity.</p> <p>Quality of previous work -recognition of previous work from peers, public or media.</p> <p>Level of innovation and experimentation.</p> <p>Timing and relevance of the activity.</p> <p>Diversity of cultural expression.</p>
20%	Potential Impact of the proposed creative, artistic and/or cultural activity	<p>Contribute to the sustainability of your arts, cultural or creative practice.</p> <p>Encourage community participation in the arts.</p> <p>Contribute to the diversity and vitality of our local creative sector.</p> <p>Strengthen our region's identity as a Creative City.</p>
10%	Viability of the proposed creative, artistic and/or cultural activity	<p>Skills, abilities and roles of the creatives, personnel and partners including confirmation of involvement.</p> <p>Equitable, realistic and achievable processes, timeline and budget.</p> <p>Consideration of safety, wellbeing and accessibility issues.</p>
40%	Alignment with Creative City Grants program aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local creative talent • Contribute to the diversity and vitality of creative activity across our region • Encourage active participation in the arts for all • Strengthen Greater Shepparton's identity as a Creative City
10%	Capacity to undertake all aspects of the project	<p>The project plan is well outlined</p> <p>Evidence of resources available and capability to undertake project - Evidence of permits and approvals considered (if required)</p>
10%	Budget	<p>Quotes match the budget ask. Include any matched funding and/or in-kind.</p> <p>Clear and concise budget, inclusion of all costs including supporting quotes for items costing \$1000 and over. How well you meet the requirements of funding based on the value requested.</p>

The Council Plan and other Strategies can be accessed at www.greatershepparton.com.au

Once applications have been assessed by the panel, a recommendation of funding will be presented to the relevant Department Director to provide final award of the grant funding under delegated authority.

Notification of outcome

All applicants will be notified as to the outcome of their application via the email address provided in the application.

Please refer to the activity timeframes above to confirm the date we aim to notify you of the outcome of your application.

If your application is successful

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement and adhere to the conditions of the agreement.
- Spend the grant money in accordance with the conditions stated in the funding agreement and provided for in the application.
- If your project requires any approvals/permits you will need to provide evidence of any regulatory approvals within 6 weeks of your offer of funding or an extension negotiated and approved. Council officers can assist applicants with the process of gaining approvals.
- You will be required to acknowledge the support provided by Greater Shepparton City Council on promotional material for the project, through the use of the Council logo and/or to recognise Council support through media coverage
- Return any unspent funds at the completion of the activity, or at the end of the agreement unless prior written approval has been obtained to expend the funds in another way.
- Complete in full detail an acquittal form to the satisfaction of Council within the timeframe provided for in the funding agreement.

If your application is NOT successful

If your application is not successful you will be notified in writing and provided with an opportunity to discuss the outcome with the Program Coordinator and Grants Coordinator.

In some cases, the assessment panel may consider your application more suited to one of Council's other grant programs. If your application is more aligned with another funding program, Council will contact you and let you know.

If an application is made to an alternative funding stream within Council, only one funding application may be considered per financial year for the same activity.

If there are funds remaining in the grant pool, we may choose to offer a second round of funding. Whilst unsuccessful applicants are eligible to reapply, we would recommend revising the application prior to ensure it fits the objectives of the program and assessment criteria before doing so.

Diversity and Inclusion

Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to providing dignified, equitable access for all and will welcome applications that:

- Enhance, strengthen, and celebrate community and social connections.
- Address barriers to active creative participation.
- Reflect the diversity of our community.
- Support young people, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to actively participate in the arts.
- Support First Nations people's artistic and cultural expression.

It is therefore important applicants demonstrate a range of diversity strategies within their application.

Below are examples of ways in which you may demonstrate inclusion of all in your program/activities. Please note, these are examples ONLY and we encourage your group to develop a range of inclusion practices unique to your application.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- migrant and refugee communities
- people with a disability
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual communities (LGBTIQA+)
- Women, young people and seniors
- provision of accessible facilities such as parking, toilets, ramp access and accessible seating
- gender inclusion
- information available in accessible formats, such as large print, alternative language, plain English, the use of interpreters, such as Auslan for people who are Deaf
- availability of a broad range of foods
- ensuring all published materials avoids acronyms and jargon
- take religious and cultural occasions into consideration when planning events.

Council Officers are available to support you with identifying, capturing and reflecting diversity within your application through the following contacts:

- Access and Positive Ageing Officer
- Multicultural Development Officer
- Youth Development Officer
- Social Equity and Safety Coordinator.

Please contact Customer Service on (03) 5832 9700 and ask to speak to the relevant Officer/s. Alternatively, you can contact the relevant Officer via council@shepparton.vic.gov.au.

Gender Equality

Council has a duty to promote gender equality through the Gender Equality Act 2020.

Applicants to Council's grant programs are encouraged to demonstrate evidence of how your organisation considers and promotes gender equality within their policies, programs and services.

Working with young people/working with vulnerable persons

A Working with Children's Check is compulsory for people who carry out child-related work in Victoria. If your project involves any children or young people, you need to ensure that all personnel involved in your project have current Working with Children Checks and Police Clearances. For more information: <http://dhhs.vic.gov.au/children-and-families>

Projects also need to comply with applicable state, territory and Commonwealth laws before commencing any activity that involves vulnerable people.

Working with First Peoples cultural content and communities

Any project reflecting or working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or community should be supported by the relevant authority from that community. Applicants need to show how they will acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and intellectual property.

If your project contains cultural material or activity and you are a non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant, you must demonstrate you are working in partnership and provide appropriate letter/s of support for your application to be eligible.

For further details on the protocols and appropriate acknowledgements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture please visit [Australia Council for the Arts Protocols for working with Indigenous Artists](#)

Access and Inclusion

It is important that applications are inclusive of people living with a disability and their carers. This may include considerations to the following:

- Accessible parking at the venue
- Provision of accessible facilities such as toilets, ramp access and accessible seating
- Consideration for assistance animals
- Acceptance of Carer Cards and/or Companion Cards for carers
- Information available in accessible format, such as large print and signage
- If required, use of interpreters, such as Auslan for people who are Deaf

For further information, please contact Council's Access and Inclusion Officer on (03) 5832 9592.

Sustainability and Environment

Applicants to Council's grant programs are encouraged to consider sustainability outcomes and the impact of their project on carbon emissions and minimise carbon emissions i.e. by using recycled products, reducing or eliminating waste, using local products or using renewable energy.

Applications that support communities to thrive under a changing climate will be highly regarded.

You are encouraged to visit the Greater Shepparton City Council website for more information on Council's commitment to the environment:

<https://greater-shepparton.com.au/animals-environment-and-waste/environment>

Final Acquittal

You will be required to report back to Council when your project is completed. The Acquittal process is important because it enables Council to continuously evaluate the success of the program.

You must report back to Council within the timeframe provided in your funding agreement. The financial acquittal is an income and expenditure statement for the grant confirming that funding has been spent on the activity in accordance with the funding agreement.

Council officers may request meetings with you to check the progress or undertake an independent audit of the records of the applicant as they relate directly to the grant.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to maintain accurate financial records for the grant and make them available in the event of an audit by the Council into the use of the grant. An organisation which fails to submit their acquittal documents is deemed ineligible to apply for any future funding from Council, until their acquittal is completed and approved by Council.

Contact Details

Greater Shepparton City Council
Riverlinks Venues
Phone: (03) 5832 9865
Email: admin@riverlinksvenues.com.au
Website: greater-shepparton.com.au



CONTACT US

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Join the conversation:    