CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS 2003 – JULY 2026

#	Date	Item Title	Confidential Order Details	Item being kept confidential - Agenda/ Attachment/ Minutes	Reason regarding retention or recommend-action to release	Resolution Regarding Action	Last Review Date	Next Review Date	Date Released
311	7 April 2026	Recommendation from Community Funding Assessment Committee - 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Assessment Panel Independent Members and Revised Assessment Process	Pursuant to Section 90(3)(a) 1 .Pursuant to Section 90(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council orders that all members of the public except the Chief Executive Officer; General Manager Corporate Services; General Manager Planning and Community; General Manager Strategy; General Manager Infrastructure and Environment; and the Minute Secretary be excluded from attendance at the meeting for Agenda Item 18.2 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Independent Assessment Panel Members and Revised Assessment Process. The Council is satisfied that pursuant to Section 90(3)(a) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to this Agenda item includes information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of the applicants. Section 91(7) Order 6. Pursuant to Section 91(7) That having considered Agenda Item 12.1 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Assessment Panel Independent Members and Revised Assessment Process in confidence under 90(2) and 3(a) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Council pursuant to Section 91(7) of the Act orders that the documents and all minutes be retained in confidence until the 2025/26 Arts Grants have been awarded and all applicants advised of the outcome, or such lesser period as may be determined by the Chief Executive Officer and that this order be reviewed every 12 months.	Documents and all minutes	The Council is satisfied that pursuant to Section 90(3)(a) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to this Agenda item includes information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of the applicants.	Documents and all minutes be retained in confidence until the 2025/26 Arts Grants have been awarded and all applicants advised of the outcome, or such lesser period as may be determined by the Chief Executive Officer and that this order be reviewed every 12 months.		Within 12 months	*Report, Attachments and Minutes on website 6 November 2026*

RELEASED

18.2 REPORT TITLE: CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: COMMUNITY FUNDING ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – 31 MARCH 2026 2025/26 ARTS GRANTS APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSMENT PANEL INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND REVISED ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Purpose

A meeting of the Community Funding Assessment Committee was held on 31 March 2026. The agenda for that meeting is available on Council's website here.

The following items from the Community Funding Assessment Committee meeting held 31 March 2026 were considered in confidence and require a resolution of Council.

11.1.3 DATE OF MEETING: 31 MARCH 2026
FILE NUMBER: DOC/26/43365
ATTACHMENTS: 1. DOC/25/121546 ARTS GRANTS GUIDELINES
2. DOC/25/80495 COMMUNITY FUNDING ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
3.DOC/23/170787 COMMUNITY FUNDING REVIEW FINAL REPORT
Attachments provided separately on the Confidential Agenda and Minutes section of the Council Members' extranet – Community Funding Assessment Committee Minutes – 31 March 2026

Recommendation

1. Pursuant to Section 90(3)(a)

Pursuant to Section 90(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council orders that all members of the public except the Chief Executive Officer; General Manager Corporate Services; General Manager Planning and Community; General Manager Strategy; General Manager Infrastructure and Environment; and the Minute Secretary be excluded from attendance at the meeting for Agenda Item 18.2 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Independent Assessment Panel Members and Revised Assessment Process.

The Council is satisfied that pursuant to Section 90(3)(a) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to this Agenda item includes information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of the applicants.

CONFIDENTIAL

Recommendation

That Council:

2. **Appoint Tiffany Knight and Wen Dixon-Whiley as independent assessors for the 2025/26 Arts Grants program.**

3. **A delegate of the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to appoint a proxy independent assessor, if required.**

Recommendation

That Council:

4. **Note the high calibre skills and experience of the Subject Matter Experts that comprise the independent assessment panel established by Council at its 19 January 2026 Council Meeting, and from which Council will select independent assessors.**

5. **Resolves the Arts Grants be assessed by the Community Funding Assessment Committee as per the published Committee Terms of Reference and Arts Grants Guidelines, being four Council Members and two independent members at the Committee's 23 April 2026 Committee meeting with a recommendation report from the Committee presented to Council at the 4 May 2026 Council meeting.**

Recommendation

Section 91(7) Order

6. **Pursuant to Section 91(7)**

That having considered Agenda Item 12.1 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Assessment Panel Independent Members and Revised Assessment Process in confidence under 90(2) and 3(a) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Council pursuant to Section 91(7) of the Act orders that the documents and all minutes be retained in confidence until the 2025/26 Arts Grants have been awarded and all applicants advised of the outcome, or such lesser period as may be determined by the Chief Executive Officer and that this order be reviewed every 12 months.

CONFIDENTIAL

ATTACHMENT 1 to Item 12.1

make believe dream create

MOUNT BARKER DISTRICT COUNCIL

GUIDELINES: ARTS GRANTS

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with *Council's Community Funding and In – Kind Support Policy.*

Purpose

The Arts Grants aim to enhance the liveability of our District by providing funding for arts projects which contribute to the economic, cultural, environmental and social fabric of our district.

The Arts Grants contribute to the following goals in the Arts Plan 2022 – 2027:

- Arts and Cultural Tourism – arts activities and assets which attract visitors and/or enhance the visitor experience whilst encouraging local buy-in and promoting local character and identity.
- Creative Industries – the professionalisation of arts practice where individuals and organisations can enjoy commercial benefits from their artmaking.

The Arts Grants are available to artists, groups of artists and arts organisations active in the Mount Baker District. They are intended to support works of high artistic merit with professional artist involvement throughout the creative process and outcome of the project.

Grants of up to $5,000 are available.

Funding provided under Council's Arts Grants can be part of a mix of funding being utilised to develop a project. However, competitive applications will demonstrate the specific aspect/component(s) of the project for which funding is being sought.

Who can apply?

- Professional artists – An Individual or group of emerging, mid-career and/ or established artists
- Arts organisations

Ineligible applicants include:

- Community groups or organisations who are not involved in the creative industries as part of their core business.
- Non-professional artists.

CONFIDENTIAL

- Educational institutions.
- Religious institutions.
- Applicants with outstanding debts or acquittals.

Only one application per applicant will be accepted.

What is a professional artist?

We draw on Creative Australia's definition used in its Making Art Work study, which uses the tenets of 'professional, practicing, and serious' to define professional practice. This study proposes professional practice be defined by artists who satisfy one of the below criteria:

- In the last three to five years, have had a significant artistic achievement in their art form (such as a work published or professionally shown or performed);
- Have been engaged in the last five years in creating a serious and substantial body of work;
- Have undertaken full-time study in their art form; and/or
- Have received a grant to work in their art form from a public or private grant-giving agency."

What projects can be funded?

Projects with a strong artistic merit which are planned to commence on or after June 2025 and be delivered (at least in part) by June 2026. Projects must be:

- new, or a new, extended stage in a longer project, and
- Able to be engaged with by members of the public in some way.

Further, projects must have a clear link to the Mount Barker District, being:

- Based in the Mount Barker District Council area, or
- created by Mount Barker District Council resident/s with an arts outcome occurring outside of the District in the following circumstances:
    - where the arts outcome raises the profile of the District and/or the District's arts ecology at a state or national level, and/or
    - Where the arts outcome cannot occur in the District due to a lack of availability of venues or infrastructure e.g. theatres, galleries, etc .

Funding can be used for artist fees, materials, marketing, venue hire/ rehearsal space and any other project- specific costs as detailed in the applicant's submitted budget.

Applicants must have:

- An active ABN.
- Current public liability insurance or a quote for insurance and commitment to taking it out if successful.
- Letters of confirmation from project partners (e.g. participating artists, venue managers, landowners etc.)

CONFIDENTIAL

The following is a non-exhaustive list of artforms which may be funded:

- Public art (ephemeral, temporary or semi-permanent),
- Visual arts (ceramics, drawing, filmmaking, painting, photography & sculpting),
- Performing arts,
- Moving image,
- Literary arts,
- Interdisciplinary arts,
- Experimental arts, and
- Live music performances.

The following projects are ineligible:

- Repeated shows, projects or performances by the applicant.
- Business as usual activities, ongoing projects, and core business (new trial or temporary projects, different to core business will be considered).
- Projects that have already been completed or that started before the funding application was submitted. (If applying for a new stage of a project which has already commenced, you will need to specify the start date of the new stage.)
- Projects which do not pay artists minimum standard industry rates (as set by unions and guilds).
- Training or education, attendance at conferences, etc.
- General fundraising.
- Large capital expenditure.
- Interstate or overseas travel.
- Contingency costs, core business costs, debts or loans.
- To cover costs already covered by other state, Local or Federal governments or philanthropic funding.
- Projects which duplicate existing programs, events, activities or projects.

The Arts Grants are not intended to provide funding for public art on Council property or land. Public Art on Council property is typically commissioned by Council through a competitive procurement process.

How to apply?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project ideas with Council staff prior to submitting an application.

Activities defined as community and cultural development, where general community and/or hobbyists are involved in the creative process and outcome are most likely more suitable to Council's Community Grants program. Likewise, the same applies for projects being delivered by an organisation where community benefit is the main objective.

Applications are lodged online on Council's Smartygrants webpage. This can be accessed via Councils website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

CONFIDENTIAL

How are applications assessed?

Council staff will screen applications and may contact applicants to request any missing information if minor in nature. Applicants will have 5 business days to provide any additional information as requested. Extensions may be granted at Council's discretion.

Council staff will present applications deemed to be eligible in accordance with these guidelines, to Council's Community Funding Assessment Committee. For the purposes of assessing the Arts Grants, the Community Funding Assessment Committee is:

- Four Council Members
- Two independent members, drawn from a panel of six independent Arts Grants assessors.

The Committee will assess all applications and make recommendations to Council for approval. Council can supplement the total funding allocation to the Arts Grants program with underspent funds from other Community Funding programs. Conversely, in the instance the Arts Grants are undersubscribed, underspent funds from the Arts Grants program can supplement other Community Funding programs. The Committee will assess all applications against the following criteria (overleaf).

CONFIDENTIAL

Artistic merit (40%)	Is this a new work, or a new stage in a work? Is the proposal innovative? Is it meaningful? Is the work exceptionally creative, inspirational and/or unique? Does the project contribute to or advance the artform(s) in which it is working?
Benefit to the artist/ applicant (20%)	To what extent will the project benefit from the funding? To what extent will the funding progress the careers of the artists involved? To what extent will the funding benefit the sustainability and/or reputation of any arts organisations involved?
Benefit to the Mount Barker District (20%)	Will the work occur in the district? Does the work respond to the district in any way? Are there opportunities for residents of the district to engage with the work? Will local businesses, venues or economies benefit from the work? Is the artist and/or arts organisation based in the district? Does the work respond to the natural and/or cultural heritage of the district? Will the work raise the profile of the District and/or the District's arts ecology?
Capacity to deliver (10%)	Does the applicant have relevant experience delivering projects of a similar scale? If not, is it a reasonable stretch of their experience? Is the application well scoped and timed? Are any artists involved being paid industry standard rates (as set by unions and guilds)? Is there consideration of any permits or consents required? Is there a marketing strategy? Is the budget feasible?
Contributes to the delivery of Council's Strategic and Plans (10%)	To what extent does the project respond to the vision and/or guiding principles in Council's Arts Plan? Does the work champion Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture? Does the work lead and educate our community on a climate resilient future? Does it promote our unique natural environment? Does the work promote access to the arts for all ages and abilities?

CONFIDENTIAL

More information

Alyssa Hill
Community Grants Officer
08 8393 6426
ahill@mountbarker.sa.gov.au

Community Information Session
Check Council's website for information on the scheduled community information session/s about this grant program.

REFERENCE NUMBER:	DOC/25/121546
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT:	Community Grants Officer
APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:	Local Government Act 1999
COMMUNITY PLAN 2044 REFERENCE:	People • Goal 10 – Community Connectedness and Diversity Place • Goal 16 – Community Facilities • Goal 17 – Growth and Development • Goal 18 – Heritage • Goal 22 – Tourism • Goal 23 – City centre and township vibrancy Leadership • Goal 26 – Transparent and Inclusive Decision Making • Goal 27 – Efficient Public Services • Goal 28 – Collaboration and Partnerships
RELATED POLICIES / CORPORATE POLICY / PROCEDURE	• Community Funding and In – Kind Support Policy • Employee Behaviour and Conduct Policy • Council Members Behaviour Management Policy.
COUNCIL ADOPTION DATE	7 October 2025
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	October 2026
DOCUMENT LOCATION	Available for downloading or printing from our website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

CONFIDENTIAL

ATTACHMENT 2 to Item 12.1

Community Funding Assessment Committee Terms of Reference

Established pursuant to S41 of the Local Government Act 1999

Adopted by Council at its meeting on 2 June 2025 – OM20250602.22

CONFIDENTIAL

1. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee, having regard to the Local Government Act 1999 and other relevant legislation, will:

1.1. Provide advice and recommendations to Council for the approval of applications for Council's community funding programs, in accordance with program guidelines.

1.2. Having regard to recommendations from the Team Leader Revenue, recommend to Council who should receive a discretionary rate rebate.

2. REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Committee does not have power, authority or delegated financial responsibility.

3. MEETING FREQUENCY

3.1. The Committee shall meet at least once each year.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer is delegated the authority to vary the meeting schedule after liaison with the Chairperson.

3.3. The Chief Executive Officer is delegated the authority to not call a meeting of the Committee within the meeting schedule should the Committee have no matter for consideration.

3.4. Special meetings of the Committee may be called in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999.*

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. Members of the Committee are appointed by the Council.

4.2. The Committee shall consist of up to four (4) Council members appointed by Council.

4.2.1. A member of Council is to be appointed as a proxy member, solely for the member of Council appointed to the Community Funding Assessment Committee.

4.3. Where required by the relevant community funding program guidelines, the Committee shall also consist of an additional two (2) independent members who will provide specialist knowledge and advice. These

independent members will be drawn from an expert panel appointed by Council.

4.4. Independent members will receive a sitting fee, determined by Council that will increase by the Adelaide CPI each year unless determined by Council.

4.5. Council member appointments to the Committee will hold office for the term of office of the Council.

4.6. Independent expert panel appointments to the Committee will be for a maximum period of 8 years (i.e. two x four year terms, or four x two year terms).

Committee Member	Nomination Process	Term of Office
Council Members	Appointed by Council Resolution	Four years – until the conclusion of the next periodic Council Election
Proxy Member	Appointed by Council Resolution	Four years – until the conclusion of the next periodic Council Election
Independent Members	Public notice will request application, followed by an interview process then reported to Council and appointed via Council Resolution.	Four years

CONFIDENTIAL
REDACTED

4.7. A member of the Committee may resign from the Committee by giving written notice to that effect to the Chief Executive Officer.

4.8. A member of the Committee may be removed by Council resolution at any time.

4.9. Only members of the Committee are entitled to vote in Committee meetings. If the member of Council who is a Committee member is unable to participate in a Committee meeting, then the appointed proxy member is able to participate in the Committee meeting and is entitled to vote.

4.10. One member of the Committee (other than the Chairperson) can participate in the meeting via electronic means provided advance notice has been provided to the Chairperson and the Minute Secretary. If the member of Council who is a Committee member is unable to participate in a Committee meeting, then the appointed proxy member is able to participate in the Committee meeting and may do so via electronic

means provided advance notice has been provided to the Chairperson and Minute Secretary.

4.11. If a vacancy occurs on the Committee or for the proxy Council Member then Council shall appoint a replacement Member or proxy Council Member (whichever is the case) to the Committee.

5. CHAIRPERSON

5.1 The appointment of the Chairperson will be made by the Council for the term of the Committee.

5.2 If the Chairperson appointed is a Councillor (i.e. not a Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member, or Presiding Member of a Prescribed Committee) they will receive a sitting fee in accordance with the determination of the Remuneration Tribunal.

5.3 An Acting Chairperson will be appointed by a vote of the Committee at the commencement of the Meeting, where required.

6. QUORUM

6.1 The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be determined by dividing the number of members in half, ignoring the fraction and adding one.

6.2 A duly convened meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Committee.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

7.1. The Committee shall conducts its meetings in the Council Chambers, Level 1, Local Government Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker unless otherwise indicated on the Notice of Meeting.

7.2. Notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date, together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee and observers, no later than three (3) clear days before the date of the meetings. Supporting papers shall be sent to Committee Members (and to other attendees as appropriate) at the same time.

7.3. Notice of meeting, agenda and supporting information will be placed on public display at the Customer Service Centre and the Council's website.

8. ACCESS TO MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTS

8.1. In accordance with the principles of open, transparent and informed decision making, Committee Meetings must be conducted in a place open to the public. Members of the public are able to attend all meetings of the Committee unless prohibited by resolution of the Committee under

CONFIDENTIAL

the confidentiality provisions of Section 90 of the Local Government Act 1999.

8.2. Members of the public have access to all documents relating to the Committee unless prohibited by resolution of the Committee under the confidentiality provisions of Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1999.

9. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

9.1. The Chief Executive Officer shall ensure that the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Committee, including recording the names of those present and in attendance, are minuted and that the minutes otherwise comply with the requirements of the *Local Government (Procedure at Meetings) Regulations 2013.*

9.2. Minutes of Committee meetings shall be circulated within five (5) clear days after a meeting to all members of the Committee and to all members of the Council.

9.3. Minutes of the Committee meeting will be placed on public display at the Customer Service Centre within five (5) clear days of the meeting and kept on display from the beginning of the previous year. The minutes will also be placed on Council's website.

10. MEETING ATTENDANCE

10.1. Council staff will prepare meeting papers, attend and provide advice and assistance to this group in a non-voting capacity. The meetings of the Committee will be facilitated by Council staff.

10.2. All members must attend the meeting and where unable to do so, must provide an apology prior to the meeting.

11. MEETING PROCEDURE

11.1. The Committee shall conduct meetings observing the provisions Part 1 – Preliminary, Part 2 – Meetings of Councils and Key Committees and Part 4 – Miscellaneous of the Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013; and Council's Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures; and Code of Practice (Access to Council and Committee Meeting and Documents).

11.2. Conflict of Interest declarations are required pursuant to S 73-75B of the Local Government Act 1999.

12. OTHER MATTERS

12.1. The Committee shall give due consideration to laws and regulations of the *Local Government Act 1999.*

12.2. The Committee shall have access to reasonable resources in order to carry out its duties.

CONFIDENTIAL

12.3. The Committee shall advise the Council's insurers of any civil liability or risk management issue.

13. REVIEW

The Committee may review its Terms of Reference to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness and recommend changes it considers necessary to the Council for approval.

The Council will review the Terms of Reference following the general election.

14. ACCESS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Community Grants Assessment Committee Terms of Reference is available for public inspection at the Customer Service Centre, at the Local Government Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker, South Australia on the Council's website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au.

15. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this Terms of Reference or the operations of the Committee, please contact:

Name:	Ben Footner
Title:	Manager Customer Experience
Address:	Mount Barker District Council
	PO Box 54, Mount Barker, SA, 5251
Telephone:	8391 7200
Email:	bfootner@mountbarker.sa.gov.au

CONFIDENTIAL

ATTACHMENT 3 to Item 12.1

Community Funding Review

Prepared for the Mount Barker District Council

November 2023

Final Report

CONFIDENTIAL

BUSINESS • RESOURCE • MANAGEMENT

CONFIDENTIAL
RELEASED

Disclaimer: This document is for the exclusive use of the person named on the front of this document (**'Recipient'**). This document must not be relied upon by any person who is not the Recipient. BRM Advisory does not take responsibility for any loss, damage or injury caused by use, misuse or misinterpretation of the information in this document by any person who is not the Recipient. This document may not be reproduced in whole or in part without permission.

BRM ADVISORY
BUSINESS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Level 8, 420 King William Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel 08 8168 8400 Fax: 08 8168 8499
ABN: 65 067 721 797

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY I

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 MBDC Community Funding Program – Scope 1
1.1.1 Community Grants Program 1
1.1.2 Environmental Grants Program 2
1.1.3 Community Events Support Program 3
1.1.4 Rates Rebate Scheme 3
1.1.5 Ward Donations 3
1.1.6 Fee waivers and reductions 3
1.1.7 Community initiated projects 4
1.1.8 Community Development Partnership Agreements 4
1.1.9 Strategic Community Partnership Agreements 4
1.1.10 Building and Turf Contributions 4
1.2 Local Government Community Funding – Best Practice Principles 4

2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 6

2.1 Community Survey 6
2.1.1 Survey Participation 6
2.1.2 Awareness of Community Funding Programs 7
2.1.3 Levels of Satisfaction 8
2.1.4 What MBDC is doing well 9
2.1.5 What MBDC should change or improve 10
2.1.6 Important funding themes / outcomes 10
2.1.7 Summary of Community Observations 11
2.2 Stakeholder Interviews 12
2.3 Council Staff Workshop 15
2.4 Council Member Workshop 17

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDIES 19

3.1 City of Onkaparinga 20
3.2 City of Holdfast Bay 24
3.3 Alexandrina Council 26
3.4 City of Mount Gambier 29
3.5 Rural City of Murray Bridge 31
3.6 Summary of observations – case studies 33

4. REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 36

4.1 Accessibility 36
4.2 Transparency 37
4.3 Community Engagement 39
4.4 Alignment 40
4.5 Sustainability 41
4.6 Value for Money 42
4.7 General 44

DRAFT
CONFIDENTIAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councils establish community funding programs to support and enhance the wellbeing of their residents by addressing specific community needs and promoting social cohesion. By providing financial and in-kind assistance to community groups, Councils empower grassroots efforts that contribute to community growth, cultural enrichment, and improved quality of life. When managed well, community funding programs can foster a sense of civic engagement and collaboration.

The Mount Barker District Council (MBDC) provides opportunities for community groups to access community funding through grant, donation, contribution, and partnership programs. MBDC also offers financial assistance in the form or fee waivers or reductions and rate rebates. The combination of all community funding streams represents a significant investment each year in supporting and empowering the community to meet local needs and aspirations aligned to MBDC's strategic goals.

MBDC community funding programs are valued by those who benefit from them and are generally found to be accessible and enabling good outcomes by supporting a range of small-scale community-led projects, events, programs and initiatives. The impact of Council's investment can be enhanced by increasing awareness and visibility of community funding options, how to apply, where the funding is going, and the outcomes being achieved.

Some community groups have the capacity and skills to make a larger contribution by partnering with MBDC to plan and manage more substantial township projects and programs aligned to Council's priorities. Implementing a more structured way for community groups to participate in business planning processes will support a stronger partnership approach. Funding streams specifically for arts projects and programs and providing support to local businesses have also been identified as current areas where there is an unmet community funding need.

There is continued demand for quick response grants or sponsorships for small amounts of funding to meet an immediate need. While this support is available through a ward donations program, there is limited community awareness of this opportunity. A refreshed 'quick wins' grant program with clear parameters, processes and promotion can better meet this need.

MBDC typically has different governance arrangements in place for each community funding stream, with variations in the level of documentation and reporting required and how decisions are made. Greater consistency can be achieved by adopting an overarching policy to inform program criteria, guide consistent and open decision making and document how risks will be managed. Consideration should also be given to appointing community members to grant assessment panel to bring independence and additional expertise to decision making.

Implementing practice improvements will be greatly enhanced by centralising responsibility for key operational and administrative within a dedicated grants officer role. This will create internal efficiencies, provide the community with a nominated point of contact for grants, and enhance accountability for the effective administration of community funding programs.

Overall, MBDC's community funding programs and practices have a strong foundation and in many respects are aligned to good practice within the local government sector. Opportunities for improvement has been identified which will build on these good practices as assist MBDC to manage risks, meet community needs and expectations and build partnerships to deliver on strategic objectives.

DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL

1. INTRODUCTION

Local government plays an important role in building the capacity of the community to develop and grow and achieve their aspirations through grants, donations, sponsorships, rebates and in-kind support. It is good practice for councils, and all public authorities, to review and evaluate their funding and community support practices from time to time.

Mount Barker District Council (MBDC) engaged BRM Advisory to undertake a strategic review of its community funding programs with the objective of assisting them to identify a program of changes that will:

- Help define what they do, how and why
- Optimise alignment of community funding programs and funding criteria with Council's strategic plans and goals
- Improve community funding processes
- Document policies and procedures and define roles and responsibilities
- Improve accountability and transparency
- Increase communication with community groups around community funding.

The review has been informed by a high-level analysis of current community funding guidelines and program criteria, a desktop review of research on best practice in local government grant management and stakeholder engagement. As this is a strategic review of MBDC community funding programs as a whole, a detailed operational review of each individual funding stream and in-depth analysis of the proposals that have or have not been funded does not form part of the project scope.

This report documents the approach taken to review, summarises the outcomes of stakeholder engagement and research and makes a series of observations and recommendations aimed at assisting MBDC to improve its approaches to the delivery of community funding.

CONFIDENTIAL

1.1 MBDC Community Funding Program – Scope

The scope of MBDC's community funding activities includes grant programs, partnerships, donations, rebates, waivers, and fee reductions that are available to eligible community groups to undertake worthwhile projects or activities that benefit the community.

There is a significant number of community, not for profit, charitable, volunteer, sporting, special interest and other groups and organisations that are eligible for community funding. The term 'community groups' has been used throughout this report to be inclusive of all.

Key elements of the MBDC community funding program are summarised below.

1.1.1 Community Grants Program

The Community Grants Program offers not for profit community groups financial assistance to support high quality activities and projects that provide benefit for the community of the

Mount Barker district. Eligibility and assessment guidelines are provided in the Community Grants Program Criteria[1], which require that proposals demonstrate alignment to MBDC's Community Wellbeing theme in the Community Plan and evidence of community need and support for the proposal.

The average maximum grant amount is approximately $2,500; however, this figure is provided in the Program criteria as a guide and requests for larger amounts can be considered. Applications must be able to demonstrate financial or in-kind support from the community group or other sources. Community groups are only permitted to submit one application in each grant round.

The annual budget for the Community Grants Program is approximately $75,000, which is allocated across two funding rounds held each year (excluding Council election years where a caretaker period applied). A summary of the projects funded in the previous financial year is published on Council's website[2].

Applications to the program are reviewed by Council staff and reported to a Community Grants Assessment Panel to assess each proposal against the criteria and provide advice and recommendations to Council in accordance with its Terms of Reference[3]. Council retains all decision-making powers and responsibilities.

The Community Grants Assessment Panel comprises four Council Members appointed to the Committee by Council for the term of office of the Council (four years).

1.1.2 Environmental Grants Program

The Environmental Grants Program offers financial assistance to eligible community, environmental, service groups and associations that provide benefit to the local and regional environment. Eligibility and assessment guidelines are provided in the Environmental Grants Program Criteria[4], which require proposals to demonstrate alignment with Ecological Sustainability Theme in the Community Plan and the MBDC Environment Strategy.

The available grant amount is typically up to $5,000 and one round of Environmental Grants is offered each financial year. Applications must demonstrate a financial or in-kind contribution from the community group or other sources.

A total budget of up to $10,000 is available for the program annually, however surplus funding from the Community Grants Program has been used on occasion to provide additional support for proposals that achieve positive environmental outcomes.

Assessments are undertaken by the Community Grants Assessment Panel, which makes recommendations to Council for a decision on the distribution of funding.

CONFIDENTIAL

[1] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/118356/Community-Grants-Criteria-2020.pdf
[2] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/1457474/Successful-Applicants-Community-Grant-Program-2022-23.pdf
[3] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/112601/Terms-of-Reference-Community-Grants-Assessment-Committee-2022-endorsed-6-March-2023.pdf
[4] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/112689/Environmental-Grants-Criteria-2020.pdf

1.1.3 Community Events Support Program

Through the annual Community Event Support Program, MBDC provides assistance to community groups to deliver regional and local community events within the district.

Eligible organisations can apply for up to $5,000 for a regional event (attracting more than 3,500 visitors from outside the region) and up to $2,500 for a local event. The Program Guidelines contain weighted criteria to support the assessment of proposals and prioritise events that can demonstrate strong alignment with MBDC's strategic plans.

One round of funding is offered each year and in 2023/24, 38 local community and regional events were provided with funding support totalling $71,100. In addition to grant funding, applicants may also seek in-kind support from Council such as event equipment, traffic management and grounds preparation.

Applications made to the Community Events Support Program are assessed by a panel for four staff members which makes recommendations to Council for a decision on the distribution of funding.

1.1.4 Rates Rebate Scheme

The *Local Government Act 1999* enables councils to grant a discretionary rebate on rates or services charges to landowners in limited circumstances, such as when the land is being used by an organisation that provides a benefit or service to the local community. Applications for discretionary rate rebates are assessed against the criteria set out in the Act and Council's Rate Rebate Policy[5].

Council's administration assesses each application and makes a recommendation to the Community Grants Assessment Panel. The Community Grants Assessment Panel then makes a recommendation to Council as the decision maker.

As at May 2023, MBDC provided discretionary rebates for 37 community groups providing a total of approximately $60,000 of rate relief in 2023/24.

1.1.5 Ward Donations

Ward donations provide another avenue for individuals and groups to seek small amounts of funding support for initiatives of community interest of benefit throughout the year. Each Council Member is provided with an annual Ward Allowance (set at $1,492 in 2022/23).

At each Council Meeting, Council Members may nominate members of the community or community groups to receive a small donation from their Ward Allowance. These donations are reported in the Council Minutes published on Council's website.

1.1.6 Fee waivers and reductions

Council has adopted a Register of Fees and Charges for the services it provides on a fee-for-service basis. Where applicable, community groups can request that some fees be waived or reduced to support community projects or activities. Examples include providing vouchers

[5] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/118061/Rate-Rebate-Policy-05-08-19.doc.pdf

CONFIDENTIAL

for dumping fees, providing mulch at low or no cost and waiving stall holder fees for community groups and charities that conduct trade on council land.

1.1.7 Community initiated projects

Sometimes community groups want to undertake larger community projects that require more funding than the amounts available through Council's grant programs. This includes things like the construction and renewal of community buildings or assets or other projects that have been identified in Council's Strategic Plans and Township Plans[6].

To seek funding for these projects and initiatives, community groups can submit a proposal or business case to be considered as part of Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget processes. There is no documented application process with each proposal currently considered on a case-by-case basis.

1.1.8 Community Development Partnership Agreements

Mount Barker District Council places a strong emphasis on working with partners and collaborators across the district to progress the actions outlined in its Community Development Lead Strategy[7]. Under the Community Development Partnership Program, Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with eligible community groups to deliver programs and initiatives that build community capacity and create opportunities for people to actively participate in their community within in the district.

Community groups can apply at any time to be considered for a partnership agreement and each application is considered by Council staff on a case-by-case basis against the partnership guidelines.

1.1.9 Strategic Community Partnership Agreements

Council currently provides funding to the Mount Barker Community Centre and Hahndorf Academy to support the delivery of programs and services to the community, and progress Council's strategic objectives.

1.1.10 Building and Turf Contributions

Sporting and other community groups that manage a publicly accessible council-owned building or recreation ground may receive a financial contribution from MBDC for the maintenance of the facilities to a minimum standard. This contribution is subject to an agreement and is paid as a reimbursement.

1.2 Local Government Community Funding – Best Practice Principles

In order to determine whether MBDC's community funding practices are aligned to best practice, desktop research has been undertaken to develop a series of guiding principles.

The six principles outlined in Figure One were developed with regard to a range of research inputs including:

[6] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/plans/township-plans
[7] www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/plans/community-development-lead-strategy

CONFIDENTIAL

- Local Government Best Practice Grant Management Guide[8]
- the Victorian Auditor General Fraud Control over Local Government Grants Review[9]
- review of practices used by other South Australian Councils.

These six principles have been used in project and stakeholder communications and have guided the review observations and recommendations.

Figure One: Local Government Community Funding – Best Practice Principles

Topic	Description
Accessibility	Community funding should be accessible to all members/groups of the community, regardless of their background, experience, or circumstances. This means that application and reporting process should be simple, with clear guidelines and criteria that are easy to understand. Capacity-building opportunities and support should be offered to grant applicants and recipients.
Transparency	Community funding programs should be delivered with clear information about the funding process, criteria, and outcomes. This includes being transparent about the funding available, selection criteria used, and the decision-making process. Probity risks must be managed to ensure decisions are free from bias or favouritism and prevent the misuse of funds.
Community Engagement	Effective funding programs are informed by community engagement processes to ensure that the funding is meeting needs and supporting the community's aspirations. Diverse funding streams are available to reduce competition between environmental, social and economic outcomes. The community is provided with opportunities to participate in grant making processes and is kept informed of the outcomes being delivered.
Alignment	Community funding programs should focus on delivering meaningful outcomes and impact for the community. This means prioritising projects and initiatives that can demonstrate clear benefits aligned to community and strategic plans.
Sustainability	Community funding programs should be directed to initiatives that are carefully planned and have considered all associated costs, including responsibility for ongoing costs. Funding partners must be selected carefully to ensure they are financially sustainable without ongoing funding assistance and have the skills and capacity to deliver the agreed project outcomes.
Value for money	Community funds should be directed towards local organisations and projects that are well managed and create lasting benefits for the community (environmental, social, and economic). There is sufficient due diligence and regular evaluation to ensure funds are delivering a positive return to the broader community.

CONFIDENTIAL

[8] www.lga.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/1146595/2020-67-Best-Practice-Guide-for-Grants-Management-for-Local-Government-in-South-Australia.pdf
[9] www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/fraud-control-over-local-government-grants?section

2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During the review, internal and external stakeholders were provided with opportunities to share feedback about what is important and valued in MBDC's community funding practices and where there are opportunities to improve.

The primary objective stakeholder engagement activities was to provide interested parties with opportunities to share their experiences and contribute to achieving best practice in community funding. The engagement also created an opportunity to build awareness of the funding support available from MBDC.

The stakeholder engagement approach was documented in a project engagement plan, and included the following activities:

- A short community survey hosted on MBDC's YourSay page to measure awareness of and satisfaction with community funding programs and seek feedback on opportunities to improve practice
- Interviews with selected successful and unsuccessful applicants to hear about their experiences, what they value and what they would like to see changed
- A workshop with Council staff involved in the design, delivery, or management of community funding programs to identify strategic and operational challenges and solutions
- A workshop with Council Members to gather insights about what is working well and what could change with respect to the key elements of the community funding program that have direct Council Member involvement.

The outcomes of these engagement activities are summarised in this section of the report.

2.1 Community Survey

An online survey hosted on MBDC's YourSay page was available for anyone with an interest in the review to share their views on what MBDC is doing well in community grants, and where there are opportunities to improve. The survey was open for a four-week period and promoted to community groups by Council staff.

A briefing paper was published on the YourSay page to provide an overview of the purpose and approach to the review, summary of MBDC's community funding programs and the best practice community funding principles guiding the review.

A copy of the survey questions is provided at Attachment 1.

This section of the report provides a summary of the survey results.

2.1.1 Survey Participation

Fifty-two (52) surveys were fully or partially completed. A snapshot of who completed the survey is provided in Figure Two.

CONFIDENTIAL

Figure Two: Survey Respondent Snapshot

Relationship to District	46% ratepayers 20% residents 32% work, study or volunteer 2% visitor	**Work or volunteer for a community group**	98% yes 2% don't know / unsure
Gender	58% female 38% male 4% not specified	**Applied for MBDC community funding**	79% yes 14% no 7% not sure
Age	65+ - 42% 55-64 - 24% 45-54 – 16% 35-44 - 12% 25-34 - 6% <25 – 0%	**Postcode**	5153 - 22% 5251 - 18% 5252 - 10% 5201 - 10% 5245 - 10% 5250 - 8%

CONFIDENTIAL

The survey results are not a representative sample of the Mount Barker district community and cannot be relied upon to make informed assumptions about the broader public views on community funding. However, as outlined in Figure Two, the survey respondents include a good cross-section of people who are involved with community groups and have experience with MBDC community funding programs. As such, the survey is a valuable input to the review to inform observations and recommendations about MBDC's community funding practices.

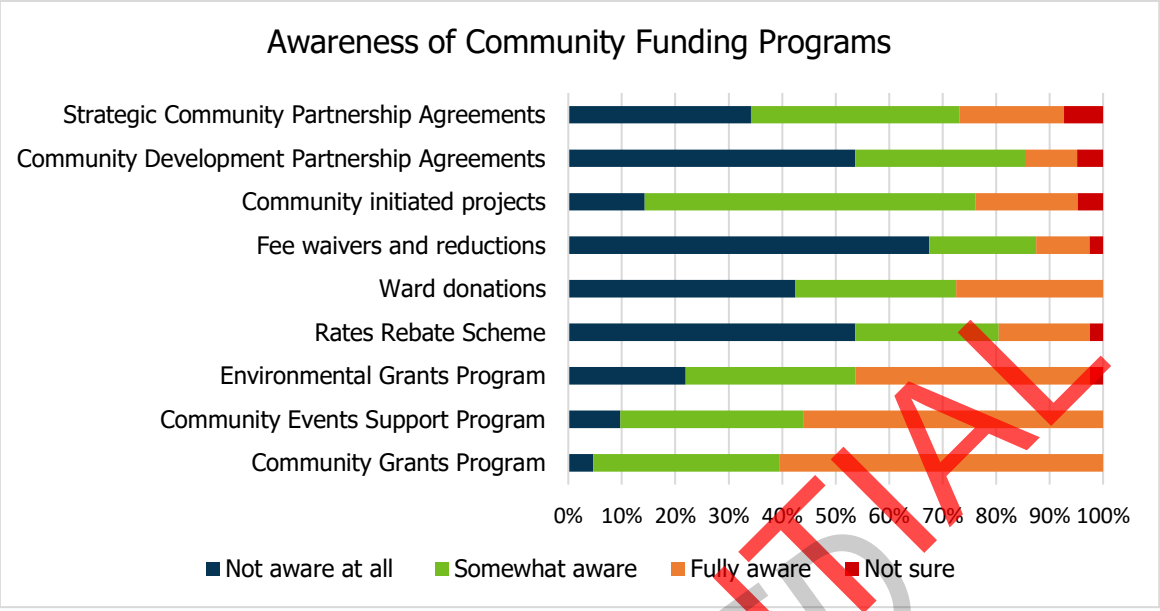
2.1.2 Awareness of Community Funding Programs

To assess the level of public awareness of community funding offered by MBDC, survey participants were asked to nominate whether they were fully aware, somewhat aware or not aware at all of the funding streams listed. Respondents could also say that they were not sure.

The responses are summarised in Figure Three, which shows higher levels of awareness of the Community Grants Program, Community Events Support Program and Environmental Support Program. This is not a surprising result, noting that 98% of respondents are involved in a community group and 79% have previously applied for MBDC community funding.

There were lower levels of awareness (more people not aware than fully or partially aware) recorded for fee reductions and waivers, community development partnership agreements, rate rebates and ward donations. This indicates an opportunity to improve the accessibility and promotion of these community funding streams.

Figure Three: Awareness of Community Funding Programs

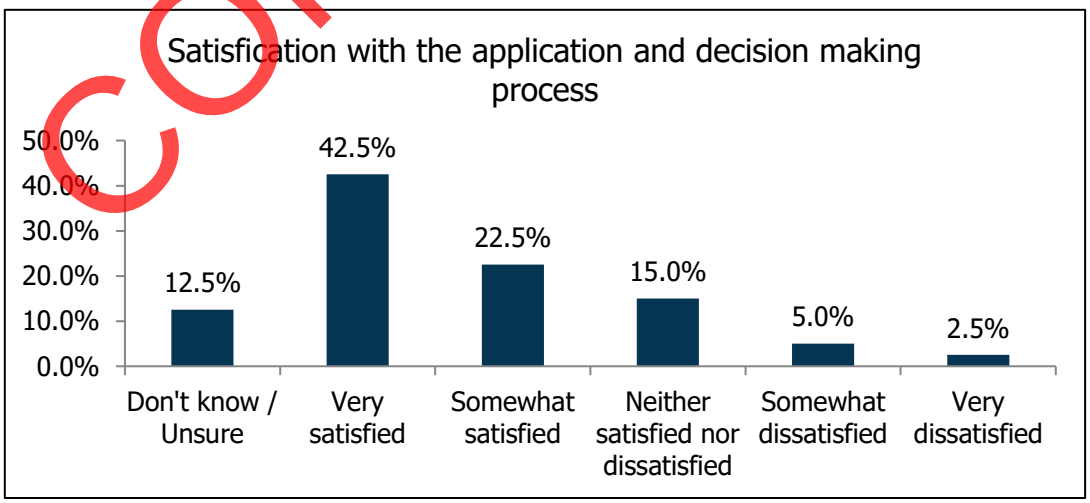


2.1.3 Levels of Satisfaction

Levels of community satisfaction were assessed in two ways. Firstly, respondents who had previously applied for funding were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the application and decision-making process. Secondly, all participants were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with community funding programs delivered by MBDC.

As shown in Figure Four, 65% of participants were either very or somewhat satisfied with the application and decision-making process compared to 7.5% who were either very or somewhat dissatisfied.

Figure Four: Satisfaction with Application and Decision-Making Processes



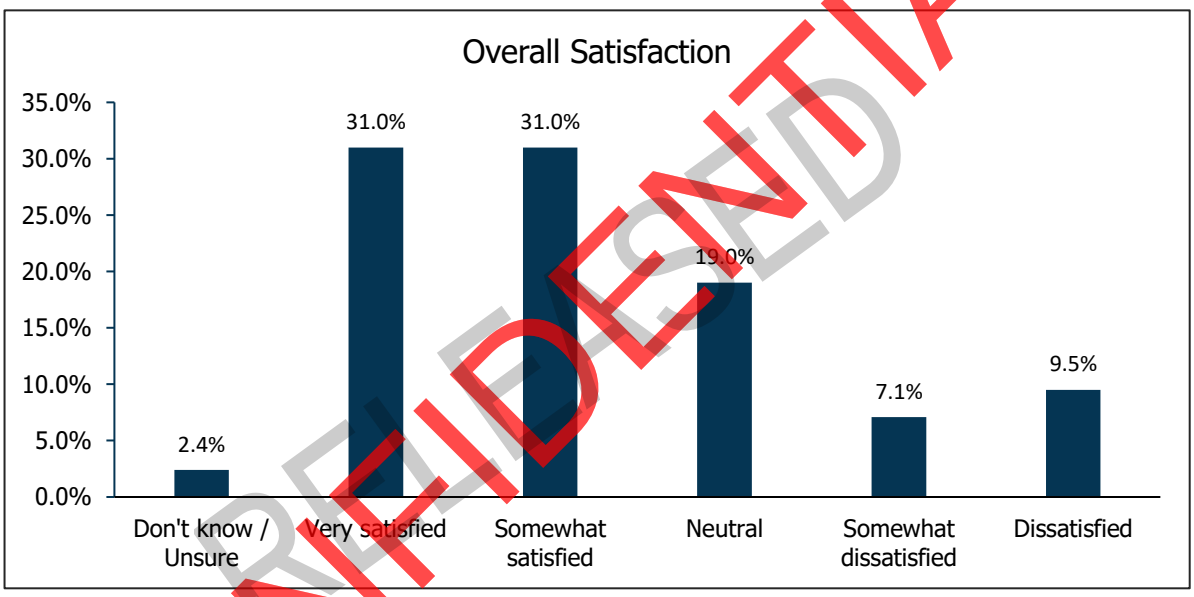
CONFIDENTIAL

Positive comments noted the relative ease of using the SmartyGrants platform to submit their application, helpfulness of Council staff before and during the application process, good communication of status and outcomes, and the fairness of the assessment.

Other comments indicated that there is ambiguity in the funding criteria and how it is applied in the assessment, lack of consistency in decision making and communication, and sometimes poor communication and feedback on why proposals that meet identified community needs are unsuccessful.

Figure Five shows that while there continues to be a high level of satisfaction, the percentage of people who are at reporting some level of dissatisfaction rises to 16.6% when community funding programs are considered overall.

Figure Five: Overall Satisfaction with Community Funding Programs



CONFIDENTIAL

2.1.4 What MBDC is doing well

When asked to identify the things MBDC is doing well in delivering community funding, 33 examples were provided, which have been grouped into themes in Table One.

Table One: Response Summary – Delivering well

Response Theme	Number of Responses
Support from staff and Council members	10
Good community outcomes being supported	7
Access to information and communication	7
Straightforward / simple systems and processes	5
Equitable support for different groups, towns and priority areas	4

2.1.5 What MBDC should change or improve

Survey respondents provided practical feedback on how MBDC can change or improve how it delivers its community funding programs. Responses have been grouped into themes in Table Two.

Table Two: Response Summary – Opportunity to change or improve

Response Theme	Number of Responses
Better promotion and awareness of the support available – More timely information provided to the community	9
More transparency and consistency in decision making – better feedback on why applications were not successful	5
Provide more assistance to applicants	5
Better align funding streams and amounts to community needs (disability, housing stress, environment and sports/recreation identified)	4
More funding available – provide a stream for larger grants	4
More funding should go to smaller towns / groups – inequitable distribution of funds	4
Provide assistance to community groups with the cost of insurance	2
More funding rounds. More quick response grants throughout the year	2
Processes need to be more flexible – not one size fits all	2

CONFIDENTIAL

2.1.6 Important funding themes / outcomes

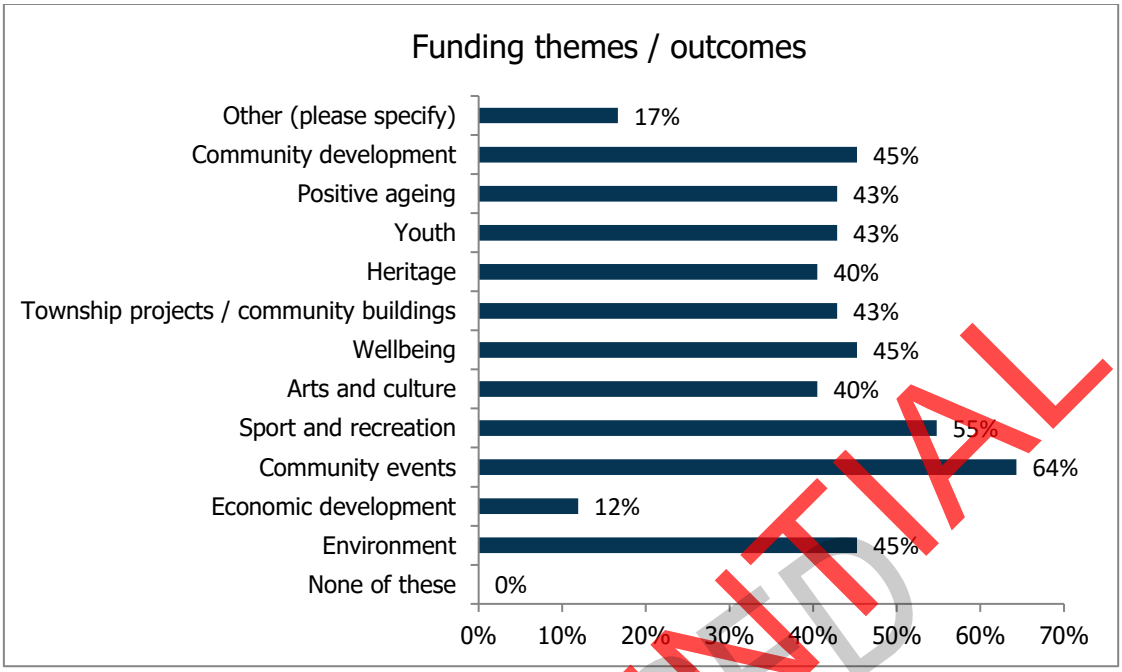
Respondents were asked to identify the themes / outcomes they would most like to see MBDC support through grants or other funding support for community driven projects. Respondents could choose from the provided list of themes / outcomes or add their own using the 'other' label.

The self-identified themes / outcomes added under 'other' include:

- Disaster resilience (1 response)
- Homelessness (1 response)
- Disability and inclusion (3 responses)
- Community services (1 response)
- Women in golf (1 response).

Figure Six shows the responses received in all categories. Strong support was received for funding support to community events and sport and recreation projects and consistent support for all other identified areas except for economic development, which was identified by 12% of respondents as a preferred theme /outcome of community funding.

Figure Six: Funding themes / outcomes identified as important



2.1.7 Summary of Community Observations

Survey participants shared a number of different perspectives on community funding, with some emphasising positive experiences and others identifying opportunities for improved practices. These perspectives and observations have been summarised below.

What is MBDC doing well in how it delivers community funding programs?

- Community groups broadly appreciate the support available from Council for worthwhile local projects, events, groups and initiatives that benefit the community.
- Most people have found the Smarty Grants application process easy to use and have appreciated the support available from Council staff to assist where needed.
- Some respondents have found decision making processes for community funding to be fair and transparent.
- The in-kind support available for community events (use of council equipment etc) is appreciated by those who have received it.

What should MBDC change or improve in how it delivers community funding programs?

- There is generally a low level of awareness within the community of the various avenues for receiving community funding support from MBDC. There are opportunities to improve communication and promotion and some calls for a centralised portal / point of reference for all community funding programs.
- Some respondents have found it difficult to find the right staff member to talk to about their community funding issue due to staff movements or uncertainty about where

CONFIDENTIAL

responsibility sits for different programs. There were some calls for a central point of contact for all community funding programs.

- There is currently no clear / documented process for requesting funding support for larger community-led projects (such as through the Annual Business Plan and Budget process) or project / initiatives that do not meet the criteria of established grant programs.

- Some respondents have found the application process and supporting documentation required to be too cumbersome and complex for the relatively low value of funding available (eg grants of up to $2,500).

- Some funding agreements are now expired or out of date, creating uncertainty about funding, roles and responsibilities between Council and community groups.

- The amount of funding available for community projects has not kept pace with the increasing cost of delivering community projects / events. Some respondents said that the total pool of grant funding and the maximum amount per application should be increased.

- There is some sentiment that smaller towns, groups and interest areas tend to miss out on funding. Respondents emphasised the importance of clear criteria that is applied fairly and consistently, and good documentation and communication of decision making to support transparency and accountability.

2.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews with previous funding applicants were undertaken to provide a deeper exploration of key matters raised in the survey and gain practical perspectives from groups and individuals with previous experiences with MBDC community funding programs.

The following stakeholder interviews were held in June / July 2023. Participants were either selected by MBDC or requested the opportunity for an interview.

Grant Stream	Organisation	Contact	Grant Application Outcome
Strategic Community Development partnership	Hahndorf Academy	Rachel McElwee	Approved
Community Grants	Brukunga Community Association	Kelly Northey	Partially approved
Community Grants and Strategic Community Development partnership	Mount Barker Community Centre	Nicki van Hooff / Sean Hames	The Group has submitted successful and unsuccessful applications.
Events	Mt Barker Christmas Carols	Karen Redman	Successful
Community, Events and Environmental Grants Program	Macclesfield Community Association	Penny Worland	Successful and unsuccessful applications.
Community Grants	Friends of Mt Barker Library	Nathan Rogers	Successful and unsuccessful applications.

CONFIDENTIAL

Many observations were shared during these interviews that relate to specific experiences and MBDC community funding more generally. These observations were captured during the interviews and have been used to inform the review recommendations.

Key themes from the stakeholder interviews are summarised below:

- In the main, community groups are a willing and able partner to assist MBDC to achieve its strategic goals for the community, and appreciate the funding and in-kind support that has been provided.

- Community groups would welcome a closer relationship with MBDC that is built on common goals, mutual trust and track record. There is some sentiment that MBDC's approach to community funding is transactional and that community groups are seen as a 'cost' to Council rather than a partner and co-investor in community building. Community groups are offering to play a bigger role and use the efficiency of community effort to manage the challenges of growth.

- Conversely, some expressed the view that MBDC should provide funding to community groups to progress their ideas regardless of whether they demonstrate alignment with MBDC's strategic goals and budget priorities.

- Greater promotion of grant opportunities and the outcomes that are delivered by community groups with funding support from Council would be beneficial. MBDC community funding is a good story that is currently not being told.

- Refreshed funding agreements are required for Strategic Community Development Partnerships to provide longer-term certainty, and provide clear and measurable KPIs to be measured and reported across the life of the agreement.

- It was felt that more township projects (beyond sporting facilities) could be community-led, but there is no clear pathway for community groups to participate in MBDC's Annual Business Plan and Budget setting process for larger projects that don't fit within established funding categories. Clear guidelines and criteria would create a level playing field for community groups, and reduce wasted effort for community groups and council staff.

- The purpose of Community Development Partnerships, and which groups are eligible to apply for multi-year funding to deliver programs on behalf of MDBC, needs clarification and promotion to a wider range of community groups.

- Some participants noted that multi-year funding agreements can provide important seed funding that enables access to local services that advantage the community and Council to grow.

- The limitation of one application per grant round makes it hard for groups that are very active within their community across multiple areas (environment, arts, youth, open space, history etc).

- Most participants accepted that community funding is not intended to cover 'operational' costs for community groups, but some noted that there is no clear or consistently applied definition of what constitutes an operational cost. There is also

CONFIDENTIAL

no clear or consistently applied definition of what constitutes 'in-kind' contributions to a project or initiative.

- Some participants noted that community groups, especially those that are in the formation stage, require support and advice with operational matters such as being incorporated and appropriate insurance coverage. It was also noted that community groups would benefit from increased assistance with identifying and applying for alternative funding opportunities or avenues of support.

- While the application process through the SmartyGrants system is seen as straightforward, it is time consuming for volunteer-based groups to prepare comprehensive submissions, including quotes for each individual item, for small grants of relatively low value.

- Practices should be based on a principle that small grants only require submission of a simple form and basic information, with accountability implemented through an acquittal process. There is a view that MBDC's requirements are becoming more onerous than other grant programs of similar value.

- Examples were provided of applications that were not supported, or altered, due to a misunderstanding of the proposal, incorrect information or personal preference. The solutions put forwarded included staff engaging with applicants in a preliminary assessment phase to seek any clarifications and providing applicants with the ability to appear before the committee or Council to speak briefly in support of their proposal and answer any questions.

- Several participants noted the potential for the personal views or preferences of Council staff and Council Members to influence community funding outcomes. It was noted that many Councils have managed this risk by appointing independent community or industry representatives with specialist knowledge and expertise to grant assessment panels.

- Removing the need to provide a local quote for widely available lower value goods or specialist equipment was consistently identified as a practical change that would save time and money for community groups.

- A dedicated funding stream for arts or creative grants was consistently raised as opportunity for MDBC. Participants were mixed on whether grants should be run in parallel with other competitive grant rounds or offered as 'quick response' grants that are available year-round.

- Generally, it was felt that having two funding grant rounds per year works well, provided there are opportunities to apply for small amounts of discretionary funding throughout the year through a quick response program (such as varied Ward Donations program). It was suggested that the Events funding stream should be increased to two rounds per year to align with community and environment grants.

- Some participants noted that costs have significantly increased to deliver projects and run events, but the value of MBDC grants has remained the same. It was suggested that funding quantum should be more regularly reviewed to keep pace with rising costs.

CONFIDENTIAL

- The in-kind support of use of MBDC equipment and dump vouchers for community events was consistently raised as a valued aspect of community funding support outside of grant programs. Providing vouchers to community groups for free use of community spaces to hold meetings and events was identified as a further in-kind support that could be provided.

2.3 Council Staff Workshop

Approximately 15 MBDC staff attended a workshop in June 2023 to provide feedback on how well MBDC is meeting the best practice community funding principles and where there are opportunities to improve. Staff shared their observations on strategic and operational matters, which are summarised under the best practice headings below.

Accessibility

- Limited community awareness of all funding programs means that some groups may be missing out on opportunities to partner with MBDC to deliver community outcomes. Better promotion and outreach to community groups that don't have an established relationship with Council or haven't previously applied could help to distribute support more equitably. Given this, it was felt that different engagement and promotion tools should be looked at.

- Ward donations provide an avenue for community groups with a more immediate need for small amounts of funding support, but not enough people know that this support is available. Ward donations are not well advertised and not well understood, and could be rolled in a more visible 'small grant' program with clear criteria and processes.

- A single point of contact within MBDC for grant programs would be of benefit. Better definition of roles and responsibilities between teams (for example, the community development and property teams) will provide greater clarity for the community and reduce overlap, duplication and role confusion.

Transparency

- There is currently no clear line of sight to the total value (financial and non-financial) of the community funding provided. Better reporting would help provide a whole of organisation view of who is receiving what, and help to promote the positive community outcomes being achieved.

- There is a risk that Ward Donations could be used as a 'backdoor' to fund proposals that are not supported because they don't meet the criteria for other programs. All community funding programs need clear guidelines to support good decision making.

- All funding criteria should be clear and measurable, so the assessments are linked to criteria and not personal views of preferences. If the criteria is not clear and consistent, there is a high risk of perceived or actual bias and favouritism in the assessment and decision making processes.

- Decisions on rate rebate applications should be consistently applied across property and organisation types. As applications either do or do not meet the criteria , decisions could be delegated to administration based on an impartial assessment.

CONFIDENTIAL

Community Engagement

- MBDC's strategic plans are developed with input from the community. Community funding should reflect the feedback that is received through these community engagement processes.
- Other councils involve the community in assessment processes, which brings in new ideas and expertise.
- Council officers that have existing relationships with community groups through their work can play a bigger role in connecting these groups with community funding opportunities. All staff with a public facing role should be across the avenues of support available and know where to direct community groups for more information or assistance.
- It should be easier for the community to bring new ideas to Council. This is hindered either through lack of clear processes or existing processes being too inflexible.

Alignment

- When projects are funded that don't align with criteria or strategic plans, it creates inconsistencies that can undermine grant processes and the achievement of strategic outcomes.
- Aligning community funding to the priorities identified by the community in the Community Plan demonstrates that MBDC is listening to the community and closes the loop on community engagement.
- Some proposals tick multiple boxes (environment, events, community development etc) and it is sometimes not clear which funding stream to apply to. There should be flexibility to move applications between programs based on demand, and this can be best achieved when there is alignment of grant processes.
- There is an opportunity to introduce a new stream of funding that creates pro-active opportunities for arts / creative projects linked to strategic objectives in terms of environment, youth and wellbeing.

Sustainability

- The lifecycle costs of projects that create a new or upgraded Council asset need to be better considered in the grant assessment process. Consideration should be given to Asset Management Plans before providing funding to a community facility that will require ongoing maintenance or renewal. More work is needed to develop a clear process for funding larger capital works projects.
- Work carried out by Maintenance and Operations teams as part of in-kind community funding support creates operational challenges and uncertainty. All jobs require a work order and a budget line for accounting purpose and some requests come through to assist community groups with no budget attached. Better internal processes are required to ensure that all in-kind support can be properly accounted.

CONFIDENTIAL

- Community funding can become a financial crutch for some community groups to carry out their core activities, which makes it difficult for Council to withdraw or reduce funding when priorities change. Criteria should seek to avoid creating relationships of financial dependence, including not providing funding for operational activities and ensuring that community groups are financially self-sustainable before accessing funding.

- Specific issues were raised relating to turf maintenance contributions provided to sporting clubs to assist with maintaining the playing surface of Council ovals. Funding agreements have expired and there is a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of Council and the clubs. Work is currently underway to resolve these issues through new agreements and practice improvements.

Value for Money

- It was considered that current grant funding amounts may not be sufficient given that costs are rising, and some grant amounts have not been regularly reviewed or indexed.

- The amount of effort to apply for funding needs to be commensurate with the amount of funding being sought. Processes should not be onerous to apply for a small grant.

- Return on investment is difficult to quantify for community projects, but more could be done to promote the benefits and outcomes being achieved through community funding programs.

2.4 Council Member Workshop

A workshop with Council Members was held in July 2023 with a specific focus on seeking feedback on the key aspects of community funding that Members directly interact with. Feedback from the workshop is summarised below.

Ward Donations

- Ward donations allow flexibility for council to respond to direct approaches from the community and act quickly in responding to community needs.

- Decisions are reported publicly, which creates a level of transparency around how funds are used.

- There is an opportunity to apply some more rigour to the process, but it needs to be a sensible and efficient approach given the very low value of the donations. A simple form and acquittal process should be sufficient.

- An overarching policy would add an extra layer of certainty about how ward donations are to be used and who can request financial support.

Decision Making

- It was noted that a number of applications for funding support do not meet the criteria. While it was noted that staff provide training and assistance, there may be a need for more communication about the need for proposals to be linked to Council's strategic

CONFIDENTIAL

objectives. Staff can also work more closely with applicants to help get good ideas over the line.

- Members have received feedback from the community that MBDC's processes are more onerous than other councils for small grants. While some Council Members want to see applicants putting more effort into their applications, others are conscious of not creating barriers and want processes to be simple and straightforward (noting that most applications are prepared by volunteers).

- Some applicants have found the questions on application forms to be repetitive or confusing. A review of forms should be undertaken to ensure that questions are being asked in the most clear and straightforward way.

Strategic Projects

- Council Members feel some tension in the community with some looking for community funding to be shared in smaller amounts by a larger number of community groups, and others looking for a smaller number of larger projects with a larger impact.

- There is an opportunity to develop new processes for Council and community groups to partner and work together to deliver bigger projects. Council Members recognised that community groups are great at leveraging support and can deliver more efficiently than council.

- There is some tension between community groups and council when they work together to co-design larger townships projects (open space, recreation, community infrastructure etc). While council does not want to discourage or stifle community effort, there is a need to provide project oversight of standards, safety, maintenance requirements etc.

- Council Members recognised that the total value of the community funding programs (specifically community grant and events programs) and maximum grant amounts should be reviewed due to inflation and rising costs.

Other funding opportunities

- Members were provided with the community survey responses in relation to priority funding themes / outcomes and made the following observations:
    - There has been strong community feedback about the need for arts funding.
    - Council could provide more support to community groups to build their capacity and assist with developing websites, insurance and governance.
    - More support could be provided to help maintain heritage buildings as current funding opportunities are inadequate.
    - Business grants – many/most other councils seem to offer these.
    - Participation in sporting competitions – many/most other councils seem to offer support to young people competing in state, national or international events.

CONFIDENTIAL

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDIES

To provide an external point of reference, the review has included high level examination of a sample of community funding programs offered by selected councils, including the City of Onkaparinga, City of Holdfast Bay, Alexandrina Council, City of Mount Gambier and Rural City of Murray Bridge.

Each selected council provides a range of community funding support. As each community is different, and has different and dynamic needs and priorities, it can be reasonably expected that the types and financial value of community funding programs provided be each council would be varied. In that sense, the following case studies should not be seen as a 'like for like' comparison or benchmark of community funding across the councils.

The selected councils also vary in terms of size and resourcing, which must be considered when observing the different community funding approaches used by each council. A comparative snapshot of the geographic size, population and budget of each council is provided in Table Three

Table Three: Overview of case study councils

Council	Geographic Size (km^2)	Population (2021 ABS Census)	Expected Total Rates Revenue (2023/24 Budget)
City of Onkaparinga	518	175,204	$160,686,208
Mount Barker District Council	595	39,217	$53,719,924
City of Holdfast Bay	13.7	37,543	$43,470,000
Alexandrina Council	1,827	28,730	$50,311,665
City of Mount Gambier	308	26,878	$24,976,610
Rural City of Murray Bridge	1,832	21,644	$33,130,000

CONFIDENTIAL

The following case studies are not an exhaustive list of the community funding provided by the selected councils and do not provide an in-depth examination of the detail of each individual grant stream. They are illustrative of the different policies, practices, programs and criteria used by a cross-section of councils and have been used to inform observations and recommendations about MBDC's community funding practices.

3.1 City of Onkaparinga

Overview

The City of Onkaparinga (CoO) offers sixteen grant programs under six categories, which range from $500 contributions for worthy individual endeavours up to $25,000 grants for major and economically significant events. CoO provides an online Grants Selector tool to assist the community to determine which program is the best match for their project / initiative.

Each funding stream has detailed criteria which establishes the objectives of the funding, eligibility and examples of what will and will not be funded. The majority of funding streams are offered through one annual competitive round, with smaller grants available throughout the year through a quick response process.

The total value of grants provided is included in the CoO Annual Report and in 2022/23 was $543,200.

Policy

The City of Onkaparinga (CoO) has adopted a Community Grants Policy that is referenced as a best practice example in the recent Local Government Best Practice Guide for Grants[10]. Core elements of the Policy are:

- Extensive definitions that provide certainty to the meaning of key terms relating to community grants.
- The probity measures that are applied to safeguard grant programs from potential fraud and corruption.
- The purpose of and key information to be included in grant program guidelines.
- Core criteria and requirements regarding application forms, auspicing, eligibility, acquittals and conditions of funding.
- Reference to Council's complaints and dispute resolution processes.
- Guidelines for the payment of funds, return of unspent funds and multi-year payments.

Decision Making

Funding applications are assessed by Grants Assessment Panels consisting of at least three people. It is preferred that each Panel includes at least one Council Member and also include members of the community acting under Council's Volunteers Code of Conduct. Grant Assessment Panels are not formally constituted committees under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

CONFIDENTIAL

[10]https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/1146595/2020-67-Best-Practice-Guide-for-Grants-Management-for-Local-Government-in-South-Australia.pdf

In some instances, the grant guidelines include weighted assessment criteria to support a transparent rating system. Example of weighted criteria for building grants and events grants are provided in Figure seven.

Figure Seven: CoO weighted assessment examples

Criteria	Weighting
Community and social benefits, including: • addresses one or more of the objectives outlined on page two of these guidelines • the overall benefits for our communities, including the number of individuals that will benefit	60%
Project management and relationship building including: • demonstrated experience in managing community projects • project location and accessibility for the community	30%
Fully detailed, costed and balanced budget, with quotes and realistic pricing	10%

Criteria	Weighting
Community and social benefits, such as: • encouraging community participation • bringing together different age groups and cultures • low cost attendance • addressing an identified community need Alignment with our Community Plan 2030 and other strategies.	50%
Building partnerships and relationships, including working in partnerships with local community groups, businesses, volunteer organisations, schools, etc.	30%
Event promotion and recognition of council's support.	10%
Fully detailed, costed and balanced budget, with quotes and realistic pricing.	10%

CONFIDENTIAL

Unless otherwise delegated via a resolution of the Council, funding decisions are made by Council or a Committee of Council (in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference) with a recommendation provided by the Grant Assessment Panel.

A summary of community grants provided by CoO is summarised in Table Four.

Table Four: CoO Community Funding Summary

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Community Grants			
Community Development Programs	$4,000 maximum grant	One round annually	Funding provided to support initiatives that strengthen community connection, promote physical activity, reduce social isolation and celebrate diversity.
Small Equipment Purchases	$2,000 maximum grant	One round annually	Funding provided to assist community groups and organisations to fund minor equipment purchases, upgrades or replacement to assist with continuation of their core business
Community Land and Facility Improvements	$10,000 maximum	One round annually	Grants that activate community public spaces and facilities.
Community Training and Development Grant	$1,500 maximum Matching funds not required	Open all year round	Supporting community volunteers to participate in training and development to build the capacity of local community groups.
Community Events	$8,000 maximum (depending on event category and visitor numbers. Event categories: • General ($5k) • ANZAC ($8k) • Christmas ($5k) • Cultural ($5k) • Positive Ageing ($5k) • Youth ($5k)	One round annually – closing in August	Funding support to a broad range of new and existing events that support Council's community development objectives.
Fund Your Dreams Grant	Up to $1000 for an organisation Up to $500 for an individual Matching funds not required	Open all year round (until total program funds have been exhausted)	Support young people (aged 8-25) to access opportunities that will build their capacity and foster their passions.
Sport and Active Recreation Grant	Up to $1,500 for an organisation Up to $500 for an individual	Open all year round (until total program funds have	Grants to recognise and support individuals and groups who reside in CoO and who have been selected to compete in

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
	Matching funds not required	been exhausted)	sporting and active recreation events more than 250km away.
Community Open Round Grants	$2,000 maximum $20,000 total Matching funds not required	One round annually	This is an example of participatory grant making where shortlisted proposals are presented in a four minute 'pitch' to other shortlisted groups. The projects that are awarded the most peer votes are funded.
Arts Grant			
Supporting Local Artists Grant	$3,000 maximum	Open all year round Local Artist Grants Assessment Panel meets twice per year to consider applications (unless funds have been exhausted)	Funding to support local artists/creatives to further develop skills and capacity to exhibit, perform, present and/or sell their work.
Environment and Sustainability			
Environment and Sustainability Grants	$5,000 maximum for community building energy efficiency upgrades $3,000 maximum for all other environmental programs $1,000 maximum for environment projects for schools	One round annually	Funding is available for a broad range of community-led projects and initiatives that contribute to CoO's sustainability goals.
Built Heritage			
Heritage Grants	$5000 for projects costing less than $20,000 $7500 for projects costing $20,000 or more	Open all year round	The Built Heritage Grant support the owners of local heritage listed places and representative places to maintain, preserve, restore and/or reconstruct the heritage features of their property to ensure its heritage values are retained.

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Major Festivals and Events			
Major Festivals and Events Grants	Grants between $5,000 and $25,000 are available	One round annually	Major Festivals and Events Grant supports a range of events that encourage visitors and have a strong focus on economic and tourism outcomes.
Business Grant			
Onkaparinga Business Grant	$5,000 maximum	One round annually	The Onkaparinga Business Grant was created to unlock new business growth opportunities, facilitate employment and build a resilient, innovative local economy.

3.2 City of Holdfast Bay

Overview

The City of Holdfast Bay (CHB) provides annual financial support through the Community Donations Program to support local clubs, groups, individuals and organisations in a range of areas including sport, recreation, environment, events, community development, arts and culture. Grants and donations of up to $5,000 are typically available on a matched funding basis.

The total annual funding provided for grant programs is $50,000 for community grants/donations, $20,000 for environment grants and $50,000 for heritage grants.

Policy

CHB has not adopted an overarching grants or community funding policy. The Local Heritage Grants Policy is the only funding stream that is guided by a Council Policy.

Details of each funding stream are published on the CHB website with eligibility criteria and funding conditions.

Decision Making

CHB has established Grant Assessment Panels to oversee the Community Donations Program. Panels have been established for the assessment of the Community Recreation and Wellbeing Donations, Events and Festivals Donations and Arts and Cultural Donations, Greening Our Communities Grants, and Small Business Grants. The panels typically consist of Council employees, interested stakeholders with a level of expertise in a grant category and one Council Member. Panels are not formally constituted committees of Council.

A summary of CHB's community funding programs is provided in Table Five.

CONFIDENTIAL

Table Five: CHB community funding summary

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Arts and Cultural Development Project Donations	$3,500 maximum	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Funding is for exhibitions, performances, multi-media projects, multicultural projects or programs, and arts initiatives that celebrate and contribute to a vibrant cultural, artistic, and multicultural city
Public Art Project Donations	$2,000 maximum	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Funding is for emerging or established artists to create temporary or permanent public artworks within public spaces.
Community Chest Donations	$1,000 maximum	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Small 'one-off' payments to assist individuals and organisations with community development initiatives and small community events.
Community Recreation and Wellbeing Donations	$5,000 maximum	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	The program aims to support organisations and clubs to increase participation in physical activity, healthy eating, and general well-being in accordance with CHB's Strategic Plan.
Events and Festivals Donations	$5,000 maximum	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Funding to support opportunities for 'not for profit' organisations, clubs, and groups to deliver innovative creative events and festivals.
Greening our Communities Grants	$5,000 maximum $20,000 total annual budget	One round annually – closing in July	Grants available to community groups and schools to undertake environmentally themed projects.
Heritage Fund Grants	$4,000 maximum $50,000 total annual budget	Open all year round	Funding to assist owners of local heritage places with the cost of conservation works.
Youth Achievement Sponsorship Program	Up to $125 for State competitions	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Sponsorship for young people 21 years and under, who have been selected to represent South Australia or

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
	Up to $250 for National competitions		Australia in their chosen sport, art or cultural activity
Small Business Development Grant	Up to $5,000	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Funding for small businesses to support innovative, creative and sustainable business initiatives.
Holdfast Bay Shopfront Grants	Up to $5,000	Open all year round until funds are exhausted	Funding to assist owners and/or tenants of buildings to enhance their exterior appearances.

3.3 Alexandrina Council

Overview

Alexandrina Council offers a range of community funding programs across events, arts, heritage, youth, business, environment, and wellbeing. A review of the program was undertaken, which resulted in the implementation of new funding categories and management practices in 2022. The majority of funding programs offer a quick response pathway, with applications open throughout the year and considered on a monthly basis.

The funding awarded through each funding stream is detailed in Alexandrina's Annual Report. A total of $138,892 was awarded to the community 2021/2022.

Policy

Council has not adopted an overarching Community Funding Policy.

A Community Donation Policy is in place to guide requests from community groups for once-off funding in small amounts (similar to Ward Donations) and this program is currently under review. The Community Donation Policy sets the parameters for Council Members to assess solicitations from community groups for small donations ($1,000) for charitable purposes, including the importance of managing conflicts of interest and making clear and consistent decisions.

Decision Making

An Assessment Panel has been established for each grant category, comprising a minimum of three members including a staff member with expertise in the relevant field, one Council Member and an invited representative from a community or industry group relevant to the grant (such as a member of a Council Advisory Group or an organisation that Council has a partnership or association with).

For competitive grants that have one round annually, Assessment Panels make recommendations to Council for a decision on the distribution of funding. For grants that are open for all or most of the year, decisions are delegated to the Assessment Panel for

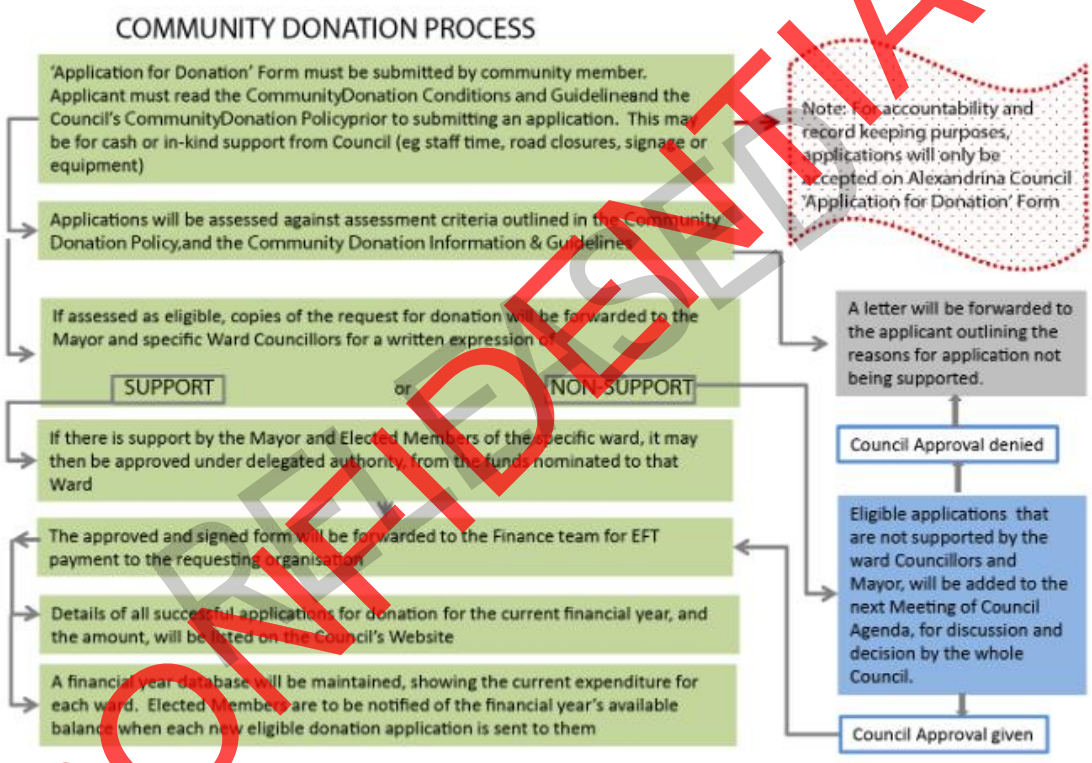
CONFIDENTIAL

applications that achieve a minimum score against the relevant criteria. In some cases, decision making on funding requests less than $1,000 have been delegated to staff.

The decision-making process for all grant streams has been documented, along with the relevant assessment criteria and scoring framework, in the detailed guidelines published on Alexandrina's website. A weighted scoring system, similar to the City of Onkaparinga examples provided in section 4.1, has been introduced for some grant streams.

The decision-making process for the Community Donation Program is documented in Figure Eight.

Figure Eight: Alexandrina Community Donation Program process



CONFIDENTIAL

A summary of Alexandrina's Community Funding Programs is provided in Table Six

Table Six: Alexandrina community funding summary

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Community Events Grants	$2,500 maximum for events with 500+ visitors $1,000 maximum for local events $10,000 total annual budget	Open from August to April or until funds are exhausted	In-kind and financial support for event organisers to deliver community events.
Creative Communities Grants	$500 minimum $3,000 maximum $20,000 annual budget	Open from August to April or until funds are exhausted	Funding for creative arts and culture projects that contribute towards Council's strategic goals.
Heritage Grants	$500 minimum $2,000 maximum $14,000 annual budget	Open from August to April or until funds are exhausted	Funding for a range of heritage related projects.
Community Donations	$1,000 maximum $38,000 annual budget	Open all year round until funding is exhausted.	Funding that enables once-off requests from community groups for a small donation to be granted.
Youth Sponsorship Program	Intrastate event - $100 ($400 group) Interstate - $300 ($1,200 group) International - $400 ($1,600 group) $7,000 annual budget	Open from August to April or until funds are exhausted	Funding to support people aged 12-25 to participate in personal development opportunities
Christmas Event Contributions	$500 minimum $2,500 maximum (500+ visitors) $1,000 small events $10,000 annual budget	One round annually – closing in October	Funding to support community groups to hold Christmas celebrations across the region.

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Business Initiative Grants	$3,000 maximum $18,000 annual budget	One round annually – closing in August	Assisting businesses increase their online presence and build their digital capability.
Community Environment Grant	$4,000 maximum $18,000 annual budget	One round annually – closing in August	Community-led projects which foster environmental and/or sustainable stewardship
Christmas Event Contributions	$500 minimum $2,500 maximum (500+ visitors) $1,000 small events $10,000 annual budget	One round annually – closing in October	Funding to support community groups to hold Christmas celebrations across the region.
Community Wellbeing Grant	$2,500 maximum $25,000 annual budget	One round annually – closing in August	Funding to assist the community in delivering projects that benefit all sectors of the community and enhance the social, physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing of its members.

CONFIDENTIAL

3.4 City of Mount Gambier

Overview

The City of Mount Gambier (CMG) has established a range of community funding programs which range from quick response small donations of $200 for individuals to compete in junior sports to rigorous processes for up to $50,000 contributions for sport and recreation capital works projects.

The outcomes of community funding programs are reported in the CMG Annual Report as the total value of the grants provided, the recipients and case studies that demonstrate the community benefits achieved.

Policy

CMG has not adopted an overarching grants or community funding policy. Each funding stream has its own criteria and assessment guidelines, which are based on the principle that small grants (up to $2,000) should generally require a simple form and basic level of supporting information.

Decision Making

A Donations Authority to Approve Requests Policy[11] has been adopted by Council, which provides authority for the CEO or General Managers to approve funding applications that comply the published criteria and maximum amounts for established funding streams. Applications must be referred to Council for a decision if the amount sought exceeds to guidelines or the applicant has received $5,000 or more in any given financial year (unless already approved through Council's budget process).

For larger projects, applicants are expected to discuss their draft nomination with the relevant contact officer before making a final submission. Staff will then shortlist applications and prepare a recommendation report to Council to determine the distribution of funding.

A Section 41 Committee has been established to administer the Junior Sports Assistance Fund, which is a partnership between the City of Mount Gambier, District Council of Grant and local sporting and community groups. The Committee comprises council and community representatives and has the delegated authority to make decisions on the distribution of the Funds.

A summary of CMG's Community Funding Programs is provided in Table Seven.

Table Seven: CMG community funding summary

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Community Strengthening Program	$1,500 maximum	Open all year round	Grants available for community groups for the development of community services. Priority is given to projects where the applicant is contributing matching funds.
Creative Arts Fund	$3,000 minimum grant (not set maximum) $50,000 annual budget	One round annually.	Grants for events, programs, services and public art that support a broad range of arts and cultural activities.
Sport and Recreation Major Capital Works Program	Grants from $10,000 - $50,000 Annual allocations have typically ranged from $80-110,000.	One round annually – closing in September	Grants that foster and assist in the development and/or capital renewal of sport and recreation infrastructure
Event Sponsorship Program	Tier 1 – Local Event – $2,000 maximum Tier 2 – Major event – over	Open all year round.	Sponsorship for local and major events. Different criteria and application requirements are applied for each Tier.

[11] https://cdn.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/general-images/D230-Donations-Authority-to-Approve-Requests.pdf

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant Stream	Amount	Timeframe	Information
	$2,000 (no maximum)		
Junior Sports Assistance Fund	Funds allocated typically between $200 - $1000 per individual. City of Mt Gamber contributes $12,000 per annum.	Open all year round	Financial support for junior sports people who have achieved state selection or better. Funding for member sporting organisations to run specialist junior coaching clinics.
Tertiary Health Education Grants	$2,000 maximum	One round annually – closing in March	Grants provide financial assistance to local residents who need to leave the district to access education in health services that address local skills shortages. The Grant program is a partnership between local governments, community groups, health organisations and Universities.

CONFIDENTIAL

3.5 Rural City of Murray Bridge

Overview

The Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB) has a range of traditional and quick response grants available to the community. The 'Community Grants' category offered by RCMB encompasses community development, arts and culture and events.

RCMB reports on community funding in its annual report and uses case studies to demonstrate how they are working with community groups to deliver positive outcomes.

Approximately $321,000 of council grants were available in 2022/23.

Policy

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has adopted an overarching Grants Management Guideline[12] to provide a common purpose, objectives and definitions across all of its community grant streams. The Guidelines provide a clear outline of the objectives, eligibility, criteria and conditions of each funding program.

The Guidelines provide Council with the flexibility to grant exemptions to the stated criteria due to the merits of an individual funding application.

[12] https://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/1133914/Council-Grants-Management-Guideline.pdf

Decision making

Council has established a Community Action Committee (CAC) comprising Council Members and a majority of independent community members with responsibility for, among other things, providing advice to Council on the distribution of community funding. The CAC has established a sub-committee to review funding applications and provide advice to CAC prior to making a recommendation to Council as the final decision maker.

A summary of the community funding streams provided by the RCMB is provided in Table Eight.

Table Eight: RCMB community funding summary

Community Funding	Amount	Timeframe	Information
Community Grants	$5,000 maximum $81,000 annual budget	Two rounds annually – March and September	Grants available for community group projects, programs and events, which contribute to the empowerment and development of the community
Sport & Recreation Facility Grants	No fixed maximum $60,000 annual budget	Open all year round	Grant for sporting facility infrastructure. Assessed on merit on a case-by-case basis.
Environmental & Climate Change Grants	$5,000 maximum $20,000 annual budget	Two rounds annually – March and September	Grants available for community group environmental projects
Youth at Risk Grants (Zsolt Telkesi Trust Fund)	Up to $5,000 annually	Two rounds annually – March and September	This category is targeted specifically to individuals & groups for events & projects relating to Youth at Risk. This funding opportunity aims to provide training and educational opportunities for young people in Murray Bridge who may be at risk of becoming offenders.
Quick Wins (mid-round) Funding	$500 maximum (individual) $2,000 maximum (groups) $35,000 annual budget	Open all year round (until funding has been exhausted)	General all-purpose funding for applications that demonstrate immediate need and do not fit into other community funding categories. Council aims to process these requests monthly.
Quick Wins (Major)	Funding of up to $65,000 is available.	Open all year round (until funding has been exhausted)	This category is targeted specifically at larger community projects, events & activities that

CONFIDENTIAL

Community Funding	Amount	Timeframe	Information
	This may be contributed towards a single project or multiple smaller projects.		demonstrate an economic/tourist benefit or meet with a specific community need.
Riverfront Activation	Up to $50,000 annually	Open all year round (until funding has been exhausted)	This category is specifically for community group Riverfront activation activities (eg events).
Building Enhancement Grants Program & Window Wrap	Up to $5,000 annually	Open all year round	This category is targeted at buildings (including vacant buildings) that will provide an improvement in visual amenity.

3.6 Summary of observations – case studies

The five case studies demonstrate that councils use a variety of community funding programs to activate and support community groups to deliver worthwhile projects and initiatives and generate public value and social capital.

As previously noted, it is difficult to directly compare the types and value of the programs offered by individual councils as they differ in scope and eligibility. For example, some councils offer a dedicated arts and culture funding stream with a limited budget while others encompass arts and culture projects within a more general 'community' funding stream with a larger budget. Where councils offer funding streams with some common scope and purpose, and sufficient information is available, the average maximum grants in Table Nine have been prepared for illustrative purposes.

Table Nine: Average Maximum Grants

Funding Stream	Average Max. Grant	Typical Max. Grant MBDC
Arts and Culture	$3, 125	N/A
Environment / Sustainability	$4,400	$5,000
Heritage	$4,625	N/A
Events – Small Community	$2,800	$2,500
Events – Larger Community[13]	$4,500	$5,000
Community and Wellbeing	$3,600	$2,500

While the scope and value of programs delivered by each Council varies, there are some common elements in their programs and practices that have provided insights for this review.

[13] Does not include events of major economic significance which some councils have established as a separate funding category.

CONFIDENTIAL

- A well-developed Community Funding Policy (or similar) establishes a clear and consistent framework for the how funding programs will be planned, delivered and evaluated.

- The participation of the community in assessing requests for community funding support has become a mainstream practice and supports transparent, evidence-based and unbiased decision making. Community representatives bring both political independence and specialist subject matter expertise to decision making. In the recent review undertaken by the Victorian Auditor General, it was recommended that Council Members be excluded from grant assessment panels due to potential probity issues with being both a recommender and a decision maker. While no such recommendation has been made in South Australia, a similar legislative scheme applies, and assessment panel comprised only of Council Members are becoming a far less common practice.

- Establishing informal grant assessment panels (in place of formal Section 41 committees) provides a more flexible and agile approach to grant assessment as meetings do not need to be formally constituted under the Local Government Act 1999. This should not, however, reduce transparency of decision making or opportunities for public participation and scrutiny.

- Publishing the total annual allocation or budget for each funding stream, in additional to the maximum or minimum grant funding available, adds to transparency and assists applicants to understand the competitive nature of the assessment process.

- While all councils publish information about the grant criteria and guidelines, not all publish complete details about how the applications will be assessed (such as weighted criteria and prioritisation etc), who will undertake the assessment (staff member or assessment panel etc), and who the ultimate decision maker will be (Council or a delegate). For completeness, information should be available about what happens at all stages of the assessment process.

- It is common practice for 'quick response' grants to be offered to provide groups (and individuals where appropriate) with an avenue to seek funding for worthy proposals outside of established grant rounds. Quick response grants retain the rigour of eligibility and assessment criteria but allow for simpler processing and quicker decision making. Where quick response grants are offered in additional to a traditional grant making process, applicants need to demonstrate why they require 'out of session' consideration of their proposal.

- It is common for councils to give higher priority to applications that demonstrate more self-sufficiency, such as a higher percentage of cash (from own or third-party sources) or in-kind support (volunteer hours etc).

- Many council funding programs are consistently oversubscribed, and it is common practice for a lower amount than requested to be offered. However, it is good practice for this to be made clear in the application process and for organisations to be asked if their project / initiative can still proceed with a lower level of funding.

- Grant policies and funding criteria are consistently linked to a Council's Strategic Plan and/or other plans and strategies, with the expectation that applicants will need to demonstrate strong strategic alignment.

CONFIDENTIAL

- Reporting on the support provided to community groups in the Annual Report is a good practice. It improves transparency of how the funds have been spend and helps to build awareness of the availability of funding and the outcomes achieved for the community.

- The use of weighted criteria allows for a transparent scoring system to be used in the assessment of community funding proposals. Councils retain the flexibility to fund worthy proposals that achieve a lower ranking, but the reasons must be recorded and clearly communicated.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this strategic examination of MBDC's community funding programs, some examples of good practice in MBDC's community funding practices have been highlighted. The following are examples of practices that are achieving high standards and are valued by the community.

- There are multiple and flexible opportunities for community groups to access community funding through a range of grant, donation, contribution and partnership programs.
- Information published on MBDC's website about Community, Environment and Community Events Grants Programs provides a comprehensive understanding of what is available, eligibility and assessment criteria, decision making processes, timeframes and how to apply.
- Using an online platform such as SmartyGrants streamlines processes and is more efficient than a paper-based system.
- Publishing information on the website about previous grant recipients improves transparency about how funds are used and provides a helpful guide to future applicants about the types of initiatives council is looking to support.
- Supporting community groups to access funding through recorded information sessions and advice makes programs more accessible.
- Providing links to the regional grant finder service and information about other relevant grants of likely interest to the community.

The review has also highlighted opportunities for enhanced practice via a range of bigger structural changes to community funding programs through to smaller practice changes.

The findings of the review and recommended actions have been grouped, where practical, within the six best practice principles developed for this review.

4.1 Accessibility

Best Practice Principle 1 – Accessibility *Community funding should be accessible to all members/groups of the community, regardless of their background, experience, or circumstances. This means that application and reporting process should be simple, with clear guidelines and criteria that are easy to understand. Capacity-building opportunities and support should be offered to grant applicants and recipients.*	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• Limited awareness of community funding programs suggests that the programs offered by Council require further promotion to a wider audience. • While there is some visibility of grant programs, there is limited awareness of or information about rate rebates, fee waivers and reductions and community development partnerships. As such the benefits and value of these community funding avenues are not being fully realised or appreciated.	1. Develop a community funding communications strategy that concentrates on engaging with harder to reach community groups and groups that have not recently applied for community funding. 2. Produce a digital community funding booklet that summarises all avenues for community groups seeking financial and in-kind support, how to access it and provide at least one case study example for each community funding

CONFIDENTIAL

• In addition to being kept informed of opportunities to access funding, the broader community also has interest in being kept informed of the outcomes being delivered through community funding programs.	stream to showcase how a community group has benefited. 3. Provide briefing sessions to all staff with a community facing role to ensure they are aware of and can promote community funding opportunities to the groups they interact with. 4. Include a summary of community funding program outcomes in the MBDC Annual Report.
• There is a perception of inequity in funding across MBDC's centres and towns, with a view that projects, programs and activities in smaller towns are often 'left out'. Currently there is no way of centrally tracking the distribution of community funding across the district to monitor potential inequity.	5. Establish an internal community funding dashboard to consistently record, track and monitor where grants and other forms of community funding are being distributed. Monitor the data for trends that show particular groups or locations may be missing out or receiving a disproportionate share, and report this information periodically to Council.
• The community is seeking better access to quick response, small grants or donations. At the same time, there is extremely limited public awareness of the opportunity for groups to seek small amounts of funding through Ward Donations. This indicates that while there is a clear need in the community, Ward Donations in their current form lack clarity of purpose and are not adequately or equitably accessible to community groups.	6. Repurpose 'Ward Donations' as 'Quick Wins' Community Grants to assist with better promotion of this funding to the community to meet the demand for small quick response grants. Note: Refer to Recommendation 20 for more details.
• The training, briefing and advice provided by Council staff on how to access community funding is greatly valued by the community. Some groups would benefit from additional upskilling opportunities.	7. Expand the briefings and training provided to grant applicants / recipients to include grant recipients on project management skills and reporting and acquittal processes to reduce the risk of funds being used inappropriately. 8. Monitor community queries or common errors being made in application or acquittal processes and publish a series of fact sheets or FAQs to build community capacity to participate in community funding programs.

CONFIDENTIAL

4.2 Transparency

Best Practice Principle 2 – Transparency *Community funding programs should be delivered with clear information about the funding process, criteria, and outcomes. This includes being transparent about the funding available, selection criteria used, and the decision-making process. Probity risks must be managed to ensure decisions are free from bias or favouritism and prevent the misuse of funds.*	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• MBDC does not currently have an overarching community funding policy outlining what it wants to achieve and the principles and practices	9. Adopt a Community Funding Policy to guide the way MBDC provides funding to the community.

it will implement to meet its objective. This creates the risk of a disjointed or ad-hoc community funding decisions that are not aligned to Council strategy. • Managing community funding programs – whether for large or small amounts – creates some inherent probity and financial risks. The specific risks arising from MBDC's community funding practices and how they will be managed should be documented.	The Policy should set out the overarching principles and objectives for all community funding streams (see note), which will be reflected in the guidelines/criteria/agreements for each individual community funding program. The Policy should include: ○ overarching principles outlining when and why council used community funding to achieve its strategy ○ definitions of common terms used across funding programs to ensure consistency ○ detail on administration of community funding programs across their life cycle ○ processes for how community funded programs will be evaluated and reviewed ○ financial delegations ○ identified risks and how they will be managed ○ staff and Council Member's roles in managing grants and relevant policies and procedures for managing conflicts of interest ○ provisions related to Council's caretaker period ○ complaints and grievances processes. Note: Turf Maintenance Contributions and financial contributions related to buildings and sport/recreational outcomes are recognised in a separate policy more specific to these funding programs
• Feedback from community groups suggest that community funding decisions are not always communicated in a consistent manner or the reasons for an unsuccessful application are not clear. Good communication is important in achieving transparency.	10. Introduce weighted criteria in all grant guidelines to establish a transparent ranking system for assessment processes. 11. Develop an assessment template with a scoring system and commentary fields to ensure that there is a clear record of assessments that can be used to communicate feedback to applicants.
• There are examples of poorly worded or executed funding agreements causing confusion and conflict between Council and community groups. These issues are exacerbated when staff leave the organisation and there is no corporate memory of the original intent of the agreement.	12. Review the templates for all funding agreements (or other instruments relating to community funding) to ensure they are clear in terms of roles and responsibilities, the quantum of funding to be provided, acquittal and reporting requirements and access to information.

CONFIDENTIAL

• Lack of clarity in funding agreement is also exacerbated when the funding recipient is liaising with different Council staff across multiple teams and information management becomes a challenge.	13. Nominate one point of contact for all types of funding agreements and implement workflow procedures to ensure all requests and correspondence relating to that agreement are referred to the nominated contact for the relevant type of agreement.

4.3 Community Engagement

Best Practice Principle 3 – Community Engagement *Effective funding programs are informed by community engagement processes to ensure that the funding is meeting needs and supporting the community's aspirations. Diverse funding streams are available to reduce competition between environmental, social and economic outcomes. The community is provided with opportunities to participate in grant making processes and is kept informed of the outcomes being delivered.*	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• Community funding programs need to work for Council in terms of being an effective approach for delivering on strategy. They also need to work for the community in terms of providing the funding opportunities that support their needs and aspirations. • Changes to community funding programs should be informed by community engagement before being implemented to ensure that better alignment is achieved.	14. Undertake community engagement on a draft Community Funding Policy to seek feedback from the community before implementing significant structural changes to the community funding program.
• Community groups have a desire and capacity to undertake larger community projects with and on behalf of Council as a contributing partner. To determine the demand for this opportunity and develop an appropriately scaled community funding pathway, more targeted community engagement is required.	15. As a community engagement approach only, undertake a general Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify community groups that would like to partner with council on larger township projects that exceed the current levels of grant funding available. 16. Through the EOI, ask community groups to identify the categories of township projects they are interested in delivering and what type of assistance they would require from council (funding and in-kind) 17. Use the outcomes of the EOI process to establish the parameters for future project funding partnerships and 'pre-qualify' community groups that have the skills and capacity to plan, manage and deliver larger projects.
• Involving community members with specialist skills and knowledge in grant assessment processes is a recommended practice that has now been widely adopted across local government.	18. Review the membership of the Community Grants Assessment Committee to include members of the community. This will also assist with the assessment of funding applications where specialist knowledge of a field would be advantageous, such as arts and culture.

CONFIDENTIAL

• Including independent members on panels and committees is a contemporary governance standard that brings in relevant expertise and reduces potential for actual or perceive bias or favouritism. • The Victorian Auditor General's finding that Council Members playing a role in the assessment of proposals and then making decisions on proposals is an unacceptable probity risk is noted.	19. In the longer term, investigate the potential advantages and disadvantages of appointing specialist 'Grant Assessment Panels' for each community funding stream to increase the role of independent community members in assessment processes.

4.4 Alignment

Best Practice Principle 4 – Alignment *Community funding programs should focus on delivering meaningful outcomes and impact for the community. This means prioritising projects and initiatives that can demonstrate clear benefits aligned to community and strategic plans.*	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• While there is limited awareness within the broader community of Ward Donations, this funding stream was of strong interest to internal stakeholders. It was recognised that Ward Donations can be used effectively to meet immediate community needs, but require some clearer parameters and processes to meet contemporary standards of governance. • When not used effectively, there is a risk that Ward Donations can result in 'double dipping' by community groups by supplementing grants with additional donations. There is also a risk that groups by-pass a competitive grants process. • A more contemporary approach to Ward Donations would maintain the benefits of a quick and flexible funding mechanisms while improving strategic alignment and governance standards.	20. Repurpose 'Ward Donations' as a quick response 'Quick Wins' community grant program for initiatives and activities that demonstrate immediate need and do not fit within other established grant programs. This repurposed funding would, subject to meeting clear eligibility criteria, provide small grants of $50 - $500 for: ○ Participation by local youth in formally recognised State, National or International sporting, arts or cultural events or programs. ○ Delivering 'quick wins' to the community for worthy programs, projects or events that are time sensitive. ○ Purchase of small equipment to support community groups to achieve their core purpose. ○ Training and development programs for local volunteers to build the capacity of the community groups they are associated with. 21. 'Quick Win' Community Grants should be open all year round (or until all funds have been exhausted) and be approved by Council staff under delegation where proposals meet the criteria established by Council Members. 22. Develop a simple assessment form and acquittal process to ensure that there is a record of 'Quick Win' funding requests and how grants have been used by recipients.

CONFIDENTIAL

• There is demand for a dedicated grant funding stream for 'Arts' to be offered in addition to established programs for 'Community', 'Environment' and 'Community Events. • It is common practice by other providers for arts and creative grants to be offered as 'quick response' grants that are open all year round rather than a traditional competitive grant making process.	23. Establish guidelines, criteria, application, assessment and evaluation processes for a Community Arts Grant Program to provide funding assistance to community groups and local artists for creative projects that progress the themes and goals of MBDC's Arts Plan.
• There is currently no dedicated funding program to support local businesses or activation within business precincts, which are common forms of grants in other Councils.	24. Engage with the Mount Barker district business community to determine demand for funding support linked to the objectives of the MBDC Economic Development Strategy 2022 – 2027.

4.5 Sustainability

Best Practice Principle 5 – Sustainability

Community funding programs should be directed to initiatives that are carefully planned and have considered all associated costs, including responsibility for ongoing costs. Funding partners must be selected carefully to ensure they are financially sustainable without ongoing funding assistance and have the skills and capacity to deliver the agreed project outcomes.

Findings	Recommendations
• There is currently no clear pathway or protocols for Council and community groups working in partnership to deliver larger projects such as open space, recreation facilities and community infrastructure. Each proposal is considered on an ad-hoc basis. • While there is a desire from both Council and community groups to facilitate these partnerships, there needs to be a clearer pathway for bringing ideas forward for consideration in Annual Business Plan and Budget processes. • There are also opportunities to improve protocols relating to the project design, management and oversight to ensure that council's requirements are clearly communicated from the outset. • The Community Development Partnerships Program provides a framework for community groups to deliver initiatives on behalf of Council that could be modified for the delivery of projects that have been identified in Township Plans.	25. Include a clause in the recommended Community Funding Policy that it will seek to partner with the community to deliver programs and projects on behalf of council where there is an economic and strategic benefit to doing so. 26. In each Annual Business Plan and Budget process, clearly define specific priorities and objectives aligned to its strategic plans that it is seeking Council partners to deliver on its behalf in the following financial year. 27. Invite pre-qualified community groups (see recommendation 15) to nominate projects that achieve the defined objectives and consider those submissions as part of the budget setting process. 28. Implement a Townships Plans Partnership Agreement (based on the Community Development Partnership Programs approach) for selected projects.

CONFIDENTIAL

• Contemporary accounting practices require that a cost must be assigned to all work performed by Council staff. This creates challenges for traditional models of in-kind support provided by Council such as performing services without a work request at no charge. • Council staff are eager to maintain its good relationships with community groups and provide appropriate assistance where they can, but this is limited when all work performed requires a work order and a budget line. • It is noted that the City of Onkaparinga has prepared a schedule of rates for in-kind support provided by Council staff and asks community groups to incorporate these costs within their grant proposal.	29. Establish a small, short-term, working group comprising the community development, maintenance and operations and finance team to develop a solution that allows the in-kind services provided by Council staff to be accounted for in the most practical way.

4.6 Value for Money

Best Practice Principle 6 – Value for Money *Community funds should be directed towards local organisations and projects that are well managed and create lasting benefits for the community (environmental, social, and economic). There is sufficient due diligence and regular evaluation to ensure funds are delivering a positive return to the broader community.*	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• Several multi-year funding agreements with strategic partners and community groups have now expired. Examples include the Strategic Community Partnership Agreements with the Hahndorf Academy and Mount Barker Community Centre (for program funding, not the management agreements for the Council properties). • Funding continues to be provided based on the strength of good relationships and historical practices, but this is not best practice and does not comply with auditing standards. • All community funding should be accompanied by an agreement that specifies the purpose for which the funding is to be used, the obligations on both parties, performance metrics to be achieved and dispute resolution processes.	30. Establish a new agreement where the previous agreement has expired but funding continues to be provided. If there are complex matters to be resolved before a long-term agreement, prepare an interim agreement. 31. Work with funding partners to develop agreed performance targets or key performance indictors to be specified in the agreement (or associated policy document) and reported on an annual basis.
• The budget allocated for community funding programs and the maximum amount of grant funding that can be applied for in each grant stream are due for periodic review. • Rising costs and inflation have reduced the value of MBDC grants relative to the rising costs of materials, goods and services.	32. Undertake a review of community funding program budget allocations and the maximum grant in each funding stream, having regard to: ○ MBDC's strategic objectives ○ Community needs - recent trends in grant applications where larger amounts have been sought ○ Similar grants offered by other councils

CONFIDENTIAL

• The case studies provide a guide to the funding currently offered by other councils. However, there is some caution in relying on this data alone as it is a small sample and other councils may also be in the process of reviewing their grant funding programs.
• Based only on the local government data examined for this review, maximum grants for MBDC could indicatively be considered at:
  ○ Community Grants - $4,000
  ○ Environment - $5,000
  ○ Events – Small - $3,000
  ○ Events – Large - $5,000
• The Environment Grants Program budget of $10,000 is deemed to be insufficient compared to local government standards. The case studies indicate that a minimum budget of $20,000 should be considered.
	○ Budget impacts

CONFIDENTIAL

General

General Recommendations	
Findings	**Recommendations**
• Responsibility for operational aspects of community funding programs is currently spread across multiple teams which creates role confusion and inefficiency. • Centralising key operational and administrative aspects within a new Community Grants Officer role will reduce points of contact and enhance accountability. • Implementing changes to community funding programs will require a dedicated focus and there is sufficient resourcing demand to warrant the creation of an officer position.	33. Appoint a Community Grants Officer to oversee a centralised community funding administration process. Proposed responsibilities of the Community Grants Officer role to include: ○ Administration of all council grant programs (subject matter experts - such as Arts, Community Development and Environmental Officers - would retain responsibility for advising on the strategic directions of community funding programs) ○ Development of and compliance with a Community Funding Policy ○ Regular review of community funding program criteria in collaboration with relevant Council teams ○ Promotion of Council community funding opportunities ○ Identification and promotion of third-party grant programs that provide assistance to local community groups ○ Maintenance of a single webpage / portal with all relevant information relating to community grants ○ Administration and compliance with grant funding agreements (including reporting and acquittal processes) ○ Act as the single point of contact for internal and external queries and requests for assistance ○ Provide an initial assessment of community funding applications and liaise with applicants in relation to the provision of additional information, clarifications of scope or non-compliance with criteria etc ○ Administer the provision of training and grants capacity building to local community groups ○ Provide support to grant assessment committees / panels

CONFIDENTIAL

• Applications for discretionary rate rebates are currently considered by the Community Grants Assessment Panel, with recommendations made to Council for a decision. Unlike a grants program where applications are competing for a pool of funds based on merit, discretionary rate rebates are assessed in accordance with the Act based on whether they meet the criteria outlined in Council policy. As is it is a criteria based assessment rather than a merit based assessment, it has become common practice for granting of discretionary rate rebates to be delegated to the administration via the CEO to create a more efficient process for Council and the applicant.	34. Amend delegations to enable Administration to assess and determine applications for discretionary rate rebates based on the clear policy and criteria adopted by Council.

CONFIDENTIAL

18.2 REPORT TITLE: **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: 2025/26 ARTS GRANTS APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSMENT PANEL INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND REVISED ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

MEETING DATE: **7 APRIL 2026**

FILE NUMBER: **DOC/26/43365**

ATTACHMENTS: **1. DOC/25/121546 ARTS GRANTS GUIDELINES**
2. DOC/25/80495 COMMUNITY FUNDING ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
3.DOC/23/170787 COMMUNITY FUNDING REVIEW FINAL REPORT
Attachments provided separately on the Confidential Agenda and Minutes section of the Council Members' extranet – Community Funding Assessment Committee Minutes – 31 March 2026

Moved Councillor Jones that Council:

1. Pursuant to Section 90(3)(a)
Pursuant to Section 90(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council orders that all members of the public except the Chief Executive Officer; General Manager Corporate Services; General Manager Planning and Community; General Manager Strategy; General Manager Infrastructure and Environment; and the Minute Secretary be excluded from attendance at the meeting for Agenda Item 18.2 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Independent Assessment Panel Members and Revised Assessment Process.

The Council is satisfied that pursuant to Section 90(3)(a) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to this Agenda item includes information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of the applicants.

Seconded Councillor Szilassy CARRIED
OM20260407.30

Moved Councillor Jones that Council:

2. Appoint Tiffany Knight and Wen Dixon-Whiley as independent assessors for the 2025/26 Arts Grants program.

3. A delegate of the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to appoint a proxy independent assessor, if required.

RELEASED

Seconded Councillor Szilassy CARRIED
OM20260407.31

Moved Councillor Westwood that Council:

4. Note the high calibre skills and experience of the Subject Matter Experts that comprise the independent assessment panel established by Council at its 19 January 2026 Council Meeting, and from which Council will select independent assessors.

5. Resolves the Arts Grants be assessed by the Community Funding Assessment Committee as per the published Committee Terms of Reference and Arts Grants Guidelines, being four Council Members and two independent members at the Committee's 23 April 2026 Committee meeting with a recommendation report from the Committee presented to Council at the 4 May 2026 Council meeting.

Seconded Councillor Jones CARRIED
OM20260407.32

Moved Councillor Seager that Council:

Section 91(7) Order

6. Pursuant to Section 91(7)

That having considered Agenda Item 12.1 Confidential Item 2025/26 Arts Grants Appointment of Assessment Panel Independent Members and Revised Assessment Process in confidence under 90(2) and 3(a) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Council pursuant to Section 91(7) of the Act orders that the documents and all minutes be retained in confidence until the 2025/26 Arts Grants have been awarded and all applicants advised of the outcome, or such lesser period as may be determined by the Chief Executive Officer and that this order be reviewed every 12 months.

Seconded Councillor Size CARRIED
OM20260407.33

RELEASED