Community Grants Program

Guidelines 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders past and present.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

The East Gippsland Shire Council is committed to supporting community initiatives through a transparent and equitable grants program. The program is divided into three categories:
1. Small Grants.
2. Impact Grants.
3. Partnerships.

There are one funding categories currently open for applications - Small Grants.

1.1.　Purpose

Through the Community Grants Program, Council aims to:

- Provide financial grants to support and enhance the East Gippsland community's social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.
- Align Impact Grants with Council's strategic priorities, as described within section 2.3 of these Guidelines, to maximise community benefit and impact.
- Support initiatives that build community capacity, foster social inclusion, and encourage active community participation.
- Encourage projects that promote environmental sustainability and contribute to the long-term wellbeing of our communities.
- Ensure fair and equitable access to grant opportunities for all eligible applicants, regardless of background or location within the Shire.
- Maintain a clear, transparent, and accountable process for grant allocation, assessment, and reporting.

1.2.　Other forms of funding

Separate to this Community Grants Program, Council provides a range of other types of financial support to our East Gippsland Shire communities, including:

- Pathways to Growth grant fund.
- One-off community grant programs funded by the State Government and administered by Council (e.g., Drought Communities Priorities Fund, Local Roads, and Community Infrastructure).
- Ongoing funding arrangements established through a Memorandum of Understanding or other formal agreements.
- Ongoing maintenance and upgrade initiatives for the provision of community land and facilities.
- Lease and Licence agreements for the use of community facilities.

1.3.   Current open grants

Category	Opens	Assessment cut-off	Notification	Funding received
Small Grants Up to $3,000	Monday 28 July 2025	Midnight 29 August 2025	September 2025	As soon as practical after the completed Funding Agreement is returned to Council.

1.4.   Timelines

The following table outlines the timeline for key dates from when grants open to when the acquittal report is due.

Timeline	Small grants	
Grants open	Monday 28 July 2025	
Grants support	• Contact Council Grants Officer communitygrants@egipps.vic.gov.au	
Council assesses submitted applications	Assessed by administration, acting under delegation from Council.	
Applicant notification – successful and unsuccessful	Written notification to applicants September .	
Applicants return signed Funding Agreement to Council	As soon as possible after notification, subject to any special conditions on the grant.	
Council pays grant and project is undertaken	As soon as practical after the completed Funding Agreement is returned to Council.	
Grant Acquittal report*	To be completed by one month after project completion.	

Note:

* Failure to submit an accurate Acquittal report will deem a group /organisation ineligible to make another Community Grant Program application until the completed Acquittal report is received and accepted.

1.5. Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants MUST:
- Be incorporated or have a letter of support from an incorporated organisation willing to support (auspice) the project under an auspice agreement. Exceptions to this requirement may be considered for individual artists.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted all previous Council grants.
- Be inclusive of the broad diversity of residents within our communities.
- Not be for activities that prioritise participants based on their religious beliefs.
- Not be for activities that prioritise participants based on their political affiliations or perspectives.
- Agree to protect, respect, and promote the human rights of all and comply with the Victorians Charter of Human Rights.[1]
- Have relevant and sufficient insurance provisions in place.

To be eligible, applications MUST:
- Complete all required supporting documentation.
- Be for projects or activities that will be conducted within the boundaries of the East Gippsland Shire.
- Be for a specific project or activity that does not require recurrent or ongoing funding. The exception is for applications under the Partnerships category of funding.
  - *Note:* Partnership category is not available for this current grant round.
- Not be for wages or salaries for staff not directly engaged in the project delivery, general operating expenses, commercial activities, regular maintenance, or start-up costs.
- Not be for retrospective funding requests (for monies that have already been spent or to cover shortfalls in the operational budget). This includes projects scheduled to occur before Council has made a final decision on the funding round.
- Not be for activities and projects that duplicate existing services.
- Not be for projects that are the responsibility of the State or Commonwealth Government.
- Not be for fireworks.
- Not be for projects primarily for fundraising and/or where Council's contribution will be specifically used to purchase trophies, prizes, or prize money.

1.6. Information and assistance

Prior to submitting your application, applicants are encouraged to contact the Community Grants Officer, via email communitygrants@egipps.vic.gov.au

---

[1] At its meeting on Tuesday 13 July 2021, Council endorsed the following statement against family and gender-based violence: *'East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the prevalence and impact of violence against women in our community and regards all forms of violence against women as unacceptable. Council will lead by example as an employer, service provider, advocate, funder and key stakeholder by acting in a manner that demonstrates relationships built on respect and by providing opportunities that are gender-equitable and non-discriminatory'.*

2. Categories and funding

2.1. Funding overview- please note only Small Grants are currently open.

Amount	Rounds	Types of Projects	Alignment
1. Small Grants			
Up to $3,000 Not mandatory, however, preference is given, and considered in scoring, for applications that include a financial or in-kind 50% contribution.	1 round annually	Community strengthening activities, governance enhancements, training and development, promotions, and small equipment purchases.	Address the 'Purpose' (section 1.1), 'Eligibility' (section 1.5) and 'Types of Projects' (section 2.1) requirements described within these Guidelines. No requirement for strategic alignment with Council priorities.
2. Impact Projects			
$3,001-$20,000 Not mandatory, however, preference is given, and considered in scoring, for applications that include a financial or in-kind 50% contribution. **Note** Not available for this Grant Round	1 round annually.	Stream A. Community and Cultural Development. Community development: New or expanded community initiatives, activities that support equity, health and wellbeing, ageing, young people, heritage, reconciliation, and memorials. Cultural development: professional development, community events, public art, activation, emerging producers.	Address the 'Purpose' (section 1.1), 'Eligibility' (section 1.5) and 'Types of Projects' (section 2.1) requirements described within these Guidelines. Must demonstrate strategic alignment with one or more Council priorities as described within section 3.2 (Funding Priorities).
		Stream B: Environmental Sustainability. Reduce emissions and climate change threat, conserve natural environment and biodiversity, reduce waste to landfill and undertake educational awareness activities.	Address the 'Purpose' (section 1.1), 'Eligibility' (section 1.5) and 'Types of Projects' (section 2.1) requirements described within these Guidelines.

			Must demonstrate strategic alignment with <u>one or more</u> Council priorities as described within section 3.2 (Funding Priorities).
		Stream C: Facilities and Place. Aspects of open space/streetscape, minor facility enhancements, accessibility, signage, masterplans, and feasibility studies.	Address the 'Purpose' (section 1.1), 'Eligibility' (section 1.5) and 'Types of Projects' (section 2.1) requirements described within these Guidelines. Must demonstrate strategic alignment with <u>one or more</u> Council priorities as described within section 3.2 (Funding Priorities).
3 Partnerships			
Up to $50,000 year, to $200,000 over 4 years **<u>Note:</u>** Not available for this Grant Round.	Every 4 years	Longer term outcomes through strategic partnerships that respond to our priorities and directions.	Address the 'Purpose' (section 1.1), 'Eligibility' (section 1.5) and 'Types of Projects' (section 2.1) requirements described within these Guidelines. Must demonstrate strategic alignment with <u>one or more</u> Council priorities as described within section 3.2 (Funding Priorities).

Note:
- Community events can be funded through Category 1 (Small Grants) and Category 2 (Impact Projects).
- Visitor events and major events are supported through Council's Pathway to Growth program (separate from the Community Grants Program).
- Category 3 (Partnerships) are not available for this Grant round.

2.2. Small Grants

Small Grants are offered annually under the Community Grants Program.

Category	Opens	Assessment cut-off	Notification	Funding received
Small Grants	28 July 2025	29 August 2025	September 2025	As soon as practical after the completed Funding Agreement is returned to Council.

2.3. Impact Grants

The Impact Grants comprise of three separate streams:
    A. Community and Cultural Development.
    B. Environmental Sustainability.
    C. Facilities and Place.

The streams of impact grants may vary in line with Council priorities.

Rounds

Impact Grants are offered once a year under the Community Grants Program.

Category	Opens	Closes	Notification	Funding received
Impact Grants	TBC 2025	TBC 2025	TBC 2025	As soon as practical after the completed Funding Agreement is returned to Council.

Funding Priorities

- Council's Strategic Priorities are identified within:
    - Council Plan
    - Community Health and Wellbeing Plan
    - Economic Development Strategy
    - Environmental Sustainability Strategy
    - Culture and Creativity Strategy

- The East Gippsland (Municipal) Sporting Facilities Plan and the Bairnsdale (and District) Sporting Facilities Plan
    - Community Plan: Municipal Plans
    - Community Plan: Bairnsdale and District

Drawing from elements of the above Strategic Priorities, the following types of projects and activities will be prioritised for this round of Grant funding.

Our Inclusive Community

1. Equitable access to community facilities.
    Suggested activities:
    - Inclusive Policies
    - Affordability
    - Accessibility Features

2. Support communities and individuals to engage in active living, sport, leisure, creative arts, and recreation activities through:
    a. provision of programs, events and activities that are inclusive, accessible, and affordable.

3. Building a proud, inclusive, tolerant, and connected community.
    a. Deliver initiatives that promote awareness, understanding and celebrate cultural diversity in East Gippsland.

4. The creation of culturally safe places for Aboriginal people.
    Suggested activities:
    - Cultural Competence and Education
    - Inclusive Practices
    - Respectful Communication
    - Creating Physical Spaces
    - Policies and Protocols
    - Support and Resources
    - Building Relationships
    - Addressing Historical Injustices

5. Build a culture of volunteerism across East Gippsland.
    Suggested activities:
    - Leadership Commitment
    - Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation
    - Comprehensive Training and Support
    - Effective Communication
    - Partnerships and Collaborations

Our Sustainable Community

6. Conservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity
    a. Improved biodiversity outcomes across the shire.
    b. Native vegetation conservation will be encouraged.
    c. Engagement with the natural environment will support appreciation and enhancement of these values.
    d. Undertake community education to promote the need to protect the natural environment and actions community members can undertake to support this.

7. Sustainable management of natural resources (climate mitigation)

a. East Gippsland will use water sustainably.
b. East Gippsland will use energy more sustainably.
c. East Gippsland will use sustainable transport in preference to fossil fuels.

8. Community Participation in the Climate Change Response.
    a. East Gippsland community members will be supported to reduce their environmental footprint and emissions.
    b. Encourage organisations across the shire to manage and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.
    c. Coordinate and support community events that support people and community to take leadership on sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

9. Respect and alignment with the rights of Traditional Owner Groups.
    a. Work with Traditional Owners to develop and implement relevant natural resource agreements and practices.
    b. Collaborate with Traditional Owners to support environmental and sustainable initiatives and outcomes.
    c. Engage with Traditional Owners to ensure the impacts of climate change are identified and addressed through the delivery of joint projects and programs.

10. Growth in the Circular Economy
    a. The volume of waste going to landfill is reduced.
    b. Develop and implement waste education programs and events to focus on key areas of waste reduction, increase re-use and recycling and reduce litter across East Gippsland Shire.
    c. Support community and not-for-profit groups to deliver programs that support reusing items, including the Repair Café at the HUB Bairnsdale and 'Tip Shop' at the Bairnsdale Regional Landfill.

Our Creative Community

11. Foster the growth of our cultural and creative communities
    a. Identify pathways for professional development
    b. Create new presentation opportunities

12. Support communities to undertake their own initiatives
    a. Foster a new generation of organisers and producers
    b. Explore ways to provide access to required resources

13. Champion the region's diverse cultures and creative activities
    a. Engage with the cultural life of the region and make it visible
    b. Capture, preserve and share our diverse cultures.

2.4.   Partnerships

Rounds

The Partnership category is offered once every four years, in line with the Council term.

Partnership Grants are not currently available for this grant round

- Available from early next calendar year.

Community Groups will be notified of the availability of this grant type in a timely manner, allowing ample time for the development of partnerships and the creation of well-considered applications.

Category	Opens	Closes	Notification	Funding received
Partnerships (1 round every 4 years)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Funding
Larger grant amounts, annually for up to four years

Types of projects funded
Longer term outcomes through strategic partnerships that respond to our priorities and directions.

3. Application, assessment, notification and receiving funds

3.1. Guidelines and application form

You can view the grant guidelines and application form:
- Online via the East Gippsland Shire Council website eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/grant
- All applications must be submitted via the SmartyGrants online platform.
- There is a Help Guide for Applicants available which outlines how to use the Smartygrants system. Email communitygrants@egipps.vic.gov.au and we will email you a copy.

3.2. Submit your application

- **Online via the SmartyGrants platform**. A link will be available from the East Gippsland Shire Council website when the grant round opens eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/grants
- Please contact the Community Grants Officer.
  - communitygrants@egipps.vic.gov.au

3.3. Assessment details

Assessment criteria
The table outlines the scoring for each criterion, dependent on which category and stream you applying for. Use these weighting as a guide, along with the 'What we're looking for' (See overpage).

Criteria	Grant category/ stream			
	1. Small grants.	*2. Impact grants*		*3. P'ships*
		Stream A + B	*Stream C*	
Eligibility criteria				
Applicants must meet eligibility criteria to advance to assessment. (Yes/No)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment criterion and weighting				
Project detailing	25%	*20%*	*20%*	*40%*
Strategic alignment	-	*20%*	*20%*	*20%*
Co-contribution (in-kind or cash contribution)	5%	-	-	-
Project planning	20%	*25%*	*25%*	*25%*
Realistic budget	40%	*15%*	*25%*	*15%*
Risk consideration	10%	*10%*	*10%*	-
Disadvantage	-	*10%*	-	-
Total	**100%**	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*

What we're looking for in the applications

The table below outlines each criterion, what we mean by each and what we are looking for. Using this and the details contained in the scoring matrix at the end of this document will help you develop a strong application.

Criteria	What we're looking for
Eligibility	This will be marked as a Yes or No. You must pass all the eligibility criteria to receive a Yes. If you have not demonstrated eligibility, your application will not be considered and will not be scored.
Project detailing	Include project name, project start and end dates, brief description, benefits (health, wellbeing, inclusion, accessibility), target beneficiaries, fairness, community support, impact assessment, and consultation.
Strategic alignment	Alignment with Council's 'Funding Priorities' described within Section 2.3.
Project planning	Ensure your project is well-described within the Grant Application Form, cover all activities, logical sequence, realistic timeframes, task delivery, compliance, required skills, and community collaboration.

Criteria	What we're looking for
Realistic budget	Applicant contributions, other funding sources, financially viable project, budgeted expenditure, current and reasonable costs, in-kind contributions (general $40/hour, specialist $80/hour, materials, others), future costs, current quotes, and funding history.
Risk consideration	Identify permits, permissions, risks, and risk management plans, including approvals, delays, community involvement, stakeholder resistance, and backup plans.
Disadvantage	Refer to the East Gippsland Shire SEIFA profile to understand the comparative disadvantage of the area relevant to your Grant Application. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics. It's meant to give a broad indication of where an area sits within the whole nation. A higher number indicates a higher socio-economic status. For instance, a percentile of 72 indicates that approximately 72% of Australia's suburbs have a SEIFA index lower than this area (more disadvantaged), while 28% are higher. For example – • Metung Percentile is 59 (Relatively low level of disadvantage in the Shire) • Cann River Percentile is 6 (Relatively high level of disadvantage in the Shire).

3.4.   Assessment and approval process

Eligible applications are assessed based on responses provided in the application form within each application section. Responses are scored, and the weighting is applied to create an overall score. Eligibility does not guarantee funding.
The process for the different categories is slightly different:
- Small Grants: Applications are assessed by an internal assessment panel. Approved by CEO or delegate.
- Impact Grants: Applications are assessed by an internal assessment panel. Funding recommendations are presented to a Council for consideration at scheduled Council Meeting. Scheduled Council meetings are open to the public and streamed live.

Council's decisions are final, applicants who wish to discuss the outcome of their application are encouraged to contact the Community Grants Officer.

3.5.   Notification process

Council will contact all applicants by email once the assessment and approval process has been completed. More details are available in section 1.4.

3.6.   Funding conditions

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a formal agreement with the East Gippsland Shire Council.
- Spend grant money as stated in the original application. You must apply for any variation in writing for approval to spend grant money differently.
- Return grant funding if the funding agreement conditions are not met.
- Acknowledge East Gippsland Shire Council on any project promotional material. East Gippsland Shire Council will provide an electronic logo and conditions of use to successful applicants.
- Return grant funding if the project does not go ahead.
- Applicant is responsible for any regulatory and statutory requirements associated with the project.

3.7. Acquittal report

If successful, on completion of the project you will be required to fill out a final acquittal report, also through the Smartygrants system. The acquittal report includes financial reconciliation and a project evaluation. This is where you will be asked to provide:
- A description of your project and how it met your objectives.
- An evaluation of the impact of your project, including things like attendance figures, community impact and outcomes.
- A financial reconciliation showing your actual finances compared with the budget you submitted in the application.
- Supporting documentation, including receipts, proof of Council acknowledgement on all promotional material, photographs of the project outcomes and feedback on the program.

The acquittal report will be due after the project end date. You can fill it out and save it as you deliver the project.

You are required to acquit the grant

To account for your use of public funds, demonstrating that the funding has been used for the purpose provided for and in accordance with your Funding Agreement.

To assist the Council in assessing how successful the programs are and to provide you with an opportunity to make suggestions regarding improvements to the funding programs.

Failure to submit your Acquittal Report will render your organisation ineligible for future funding.

3.8. Applicant responsibilities and legal requirements

For the East Gippsland Shire Council Community Grants Program:

Incorporation status:

Applicants must be incorporated or have an auspice arrangement with a not-for-profit organisation. The Council does not act as an auspice. For more details on auspice arrangements, visit the Not-for-profit Law Information Hub.

Child Safe Standards:

Applicants providing services to children must complete the Child Wellbeing and Safety Declaration in the application form. Organisations must comply with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005, which includes implementing child safe standards. More information is available at the Commission for Children and Young People website.

Public Liability Insurance:

Applicants must have at least $20million Public Liability Insurance for activities in public spaces or using Council facilities. It's the applicant's responsibility to arrange appropriate insurance. For affordable options, groups can visit www.localcommunityinsurance.com.au.

Auspiced grant projects:

Grant funds are only paid to a legally incorporated group. Groups and organisations based in East Gippsland Shire that are not legally incorporated may apply for a grant if their project is for the benefit of the East Gippsland community and they are auspiced by a legally incorporated not-for-profit group or organisation.

Auspiced Community Grant applicants are required to:

- Ensure you have a written agreement with your Auspicing Organisation indicating their responsibility for your project or initiative. The written agreement needs to be attached to the application under the section 'additional supporting information'.

For more information about auspicing go to Justice Connect Not-for-profit Law online information hub http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing

Privacy

The collection and handling of personal information is in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy, which is displayed on Council's website and available for inspection at, or collection from, Council's customer service centre/s.

4. Preparation checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need to apply:

- ☐ Read the Community Grant Program Guidelines.
- ☐ Confirm eligibility for your group and project.
- ☐ Identify the grant category and stream you are applying for.
- ☐ Check grant deadlines and align them with your project timeline.
- ☐ Prepare a draft application and budget.
- ☐ Gather required documents, including ABN, Public Liability Insurance, bank details, and quotes.
- ☐ Contact the Community Grants Officer for assistance if needed.
- ☐ Create a SmartyGrants account for online submission.
- ☐ Attach supporting documentation such as letters of support and financial information.
- ☐ Submit completed applications and supporting documentation by the deadline.
- ☐ Save a copy of your application for future reference.
- ☐ Ensure information provided is true and correct.
- ☐ Demonstrate financial viability and matching funding for your project.
- ☐ Adhere to Child Safety Standards if your project involves children.