

Final Draft Brimbank Community Grants Policy

February 2026

FINAL DRAFT

Brimbank City Council respectfully acknowledges and recognises the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our municipality sits and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future.

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1 POLICY PURPOSE

The Brimbank Community Grants Policy (the Policy) provides a clear, fair and transparent framework for how Brimbank City Council (Council) administers the Brimbank Community Grants Program to provide financial assistance to eligible not-for-profit organisations, community groups and individuals to implement local initiatives that benefit the Brimbank community.

The Policy articulates the set of principles that guide decision making and is guided by Council's 'We are Brimbank' which incorporates the Council Plan 2025-2029, Community Vision 2040 and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The purpose of the Policy is to guide the governance, management, delivery and evaluation of the Brimbank Community Grants Program.

2 POLICY SCOPE

2.1 This policy covers

This Policy applies to grants offered under the Brimbank Community Grants Program. It applies to all aspects of management and delivery of the Brimbank Community Grants Program, including governance, planning, promotion, receipt of applications, eligibility, assessment and decision making, management and financial oversight.

It is the overarching document guiding decisions over other existing Brimbank Community Grants Program key documents such as the Community Grants Guidelines and Funding Agreements.

2.2 This policy applies to

All Council employees, Councillors and third parties (including Brimbank Community Grant applicants and recipients) involved in the Brimbank Community Grants Program.

2.3 This policy does not cover

This Policy does not cover other grants opportunities or programs run by Council which are not part of the Brimbank Community Grants Program.

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, Council adopts the following definitions:

Term	Definition
Applicant	An entity that applies for a grant.
Auspice	Auspice organisations help eligible individuals, groups or small organisations who may not be incorporated, do not have Public Liability Insurance or who do not have an ABN, to access grant funds. They accept legal and financial responsibility for the grant if successful. This will include taking responsibility to: • sign your grant agreement. • take legal and financial responsibility of the grant on your organisation's behalf. • receive and distribute grant funds under the grant agreement. • ensure all grant activities or events are completed. • submit acquittal and evaluation reports on your organisation's behalf.
Assessment Criteria	The key points that grant applications will be considered against. A grant

Term	Definition
	application must meet all assessment criteria to be successful.
Brimbank Community Grants Program	The Brimbank Community Grants Program provides financial assistance to eligible not-for-profit organisations, community groups and individuals, that align with the 'We Are Brimbank' key pillars People, Places, Prosperity and Leadership and Governance.
Brimbank Social Justice Framework	Sets out Council's commitment to the principles of access, equity, participation and human rights with the aim to create a more just society where difference does not lead to disadvantage.
Capacity building	Supporting individuals, groups or organisations to develop their skills and knowledge by building on their existing strengths and lived experience, so they can lead locally driven, place-based solutions that respond to community needs.
Collaboration	Organisations, groups of individuals working together to share information, knowledge, resources and responsibilities to achieve common goals. Collaborations may or may not include Council as a partner.
Community organisations	Not-for-profit groups managed by a volunteer board or committee of management that work to support, connect and improve the wellbeing of local communities. They may provide services, run programs, or advocate for community needs.
Conflict of Interest	A declaration prescribed under the Local Government Act 2020 and in the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 to ensure council officers' private interests are not affecting public duties for personal benefit.
Council	Brimbank City Council
Equity Lens	A decision-making approach that supports communities in overcoming inequities created by unequal access to economic, social and cultural resources by: • recognising and removing barriers to participation. • prioritising the voices and needs of communities facing systemic disadvantage. • applying targeted measures to achieve equity across communities.
Equal Opportunity Act	Aims to prevent discrimination and promote fairness and equal opportunity for everyone in Victoria.
Funding Agreement	Detailed plan between Council and the Grant recipient outlining the grants terms and conditions. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of both parties, how the funds will be used, promotion and reporting requirements, and mechanisms for accountability to ensure the funding is used effectively and in line with agreed upon objectives.
Governance	The systems and processes that guide how Council makes decisions, manages resources and ensures accountability and transparency to the community.
Grant	Money given by Council to an organisation for a specified purpose that is consistent with and helps achieve priority objectives and

Term	Definition
	outcomes of both Council and the organisation.
Brimbank Community Grant Guidelines (the Guidelines)	A structured document (or suite of documents) outlining how the Brimbank Community Grants are offered and operate. The guidelines are developed annually and will provide details about: • The Brimbank Community Grant program • Organisation or community group eligibility • Events or activities the program is looking to fund • How to apply for the Grant • What we fund and don't fund • Assessment criteria and process • Frequently Asked Questions.
Health and wellbeing outcomes	These are outcomes based on Council's 'We Are Brimbank'. There are six health priorities for the Brimbank community: • Improving mental wellbeing • Addressing food insecurity and healthy eating • Improving gender equality and preventing gender-based violence • Supporting social and economic inclusion • Supporting active and healthy living • Addressing health impacts of climate change.
Individual	The term "individual" refers to an artist, an accredited facilitator or a subject matter expert.
LGBTQIA+	People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual/aromantic. The '+' represents all other sexual orientations, gender identities and physiological sex characteristics.
Lived and living experience	An individual's personal experience of facing challenges like disability, racism, mental health, discrimination and sharing what they have been through to help shape better services and support systems.
Local Government Act 2020	The principal legislation that sets out how local councils in Victoria must operate, including their role, powers, functions and accountability.
Probity	Probity is related to good governance and can be defined as complete and confirmed integrity, uprightness and honesty in the grants process. Probity principles include: • ensuring processes and decisions are consistent, accountable and transparent. • keeping complete records and maintaining an audit trail. • communicating clearly and honestly. • keeping information secure and confidential. • identifying and managing conflicts of interest (actual, perceived or potential).
Public Liability Insurance	Public liability insurance protects your organisation or community group financially if someone attending your grant activity or event is injured.
Recipient	An entity that receives grant funding.
Systemic disadvantage	When people or communities face ongoing barriers to opportunities, services or resources due to unfair systems or structures in society

Term	Definition
	for example discrimination based on their background, abilities or race.
Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO)	VAGO is the office of the Auditor-General, who is an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament. They play a key role in promoting confidence in the public sector by conducting audits of public sector entities, including local councils, to ensure transparency and accountability to the Victorian Parliament and the Victorian community.
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006	The Charter requires Council to respect, protect and promote human rights when making decisions and delivering programs and services for the Brimbank community.
'We Are Brimbank'	The 'We Are Brimbank' Plan outlines Council's priorities and initiatives for a four-year period and includes the: • Community Vision 2040 outlining long-term aspirations • Council Plan 2025-2029, defining priorities and actions • Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, addressing key public health priorities and goals. The four Key Pillars identified in We Are Brimbank are: 1. People: Fostering inclusion, wellbeing, mental health, healthy lifestyles, gender equity, and cultural cohesion. 2. Places: Building sustainable, accessible spaces, protecting natural and cultural heritage, and responding to climate change. 3. Prosperity: Creating local jobs, supporting businesses, promoting education, and enabling affordable, diverse housing. 4. Leadership and Governance: Delivering transparent, inclusive, and accountable decision-making and continuous improvement in services.

4 STATEMENT OF POLICY PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the development of the Brimbank Community Grants Program. This set of principles have been developed to ensure that Council meets its commitments as articulated in 'We Are Brimbank', as well as meeting probity principles and the responsible use of public funds as articulated in the Victorian Auditor General's Office report on Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (2022).

4.1 Equity and Inclusion

Council promotes equity, inclusion and meaningful participation for the Brimbank community.

Council is committed to creating environments with opportunities for everyone to take part and feel included by removing barriers to participation and ensuring people are respected, valued and supported regardless of age, sex, ability, race, cultural background, gender identity, economic disadvantage or other personal circumstances.

Council will apply a social justice lens to the delivery and administration of the Brimbank Community Grants Program. This may mean that funding decisions will be informed by not only reach but also equity, recognising the importance of supporting initiatives that deliver meaningful outcomes for marginalised communities and individuals experiencing discrimination, not just the largest numbers of beneficiaries.

This principle is guided by 'We Are Brimbank', the Social Justice Framework and Council's obligations

under the *Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic).

4.2 Accessibility

Council ensures the grant application process is clear, easy to understand, simple to use, and accessible to people of all abilities.

Council is committed to removing barriers, improving accessibility and supporting the needs of all applicants to submit appropriate applications.

4.3 Community Benefit

Council funds initiatives that provide long-term benefits to the Brimbank Community.

This includes initiatives that provide value for money, are sustainable, and support outcomes that align with Council's priorities as articulated in 'We are Brimbank'.

4.4 Good Governance

Council manages public resources responsibly with open, ethical and transparent processes.

Council is committed to maintaining community confidence and strong fraud control measures across all aspects of the Brimbank Community Grants Program.

Processes used include:

- Ensuring decisions are made according to clear rules that are applied consistently and are independent from Councillor influence.
- Identifying and managing conflicts of interest.
- Upholding confidentiality.
- Assessing applications consistently against published assessment criteria.
- Monitoring the use of funds and evaluating program outcomes.
- Adhering to the findings and recommendations of the *Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) Report: Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants (2022)*.

4.5 Responsiveness

Council responds to changing community needs, priorities and demographics of our community.

This involves:

- Adopting a Brimbank Community Grants model which has inbuilt flexibility and variability requirements.
- A strong focus on continuous improvement.
- Involvement of subject matter experts in program design and assessment of grant applications.
- Remaining informed of local community and demographic data and trends.

4.6 Compliance

Council is committed to complying with federal, state and local government laws and expectations as related to running a community grants program.

Council commits to:

- Meeting the standards set by VAGO.
- Adhering to Victoria's Child Safe Standards and Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Protecting personal information in line with Council's Information Privacy and Health Records Policy and relevant legislation.
- Ensuring grants support, and do not contravene, other Council policies, commitments or

obligations.

4.7 Capacity Building and Collaboration

Council ensures the grant process helps to build skills, resilience and leadership in the Brimbank community.

As part of this commitment, Council will:

- Facilitate connections between organisations and within Council, encourage collaboration and strengthen networks.
- Provide successful applicants access to training and networking opportunities to foster connection and collaboration.
- Provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback, guidance, and connection opportunities to improve future grant seeking efforts.

4.8 Respect and safety of staff

Council commits to a safe and respectful working environment, with zero tolerance for abuse towards Council staff.

Abuse, aggression or harassment directed towards Council staff is not acceptable. Applicants or recipients who breach this principle may be deemed ineligible to apply for current or future grant funding.

5 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Eligibility

- Grant funding is only available for eligible not-for-profit organisations and incorporated community groups. Unincorporated eligible individuals, groups and organisations can apply through an auspice arrangement.
- Applicants must hold Public Liability Insurance (PLI) throughout the funding period.
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Grant-funded projects or events must be primarily delivered within Brimbank and demonstrate a clear benefit to Brimbank residents. In limited case to case basis, components of a project may take place outside of Brimbank where there is a clear and direct benefit to Brimbank residents.
- Be compliant with acquittal obligations for other grants funded under the Brimbank Community Grants Program.
- Plan to deliver and complete the funded project within the agreed period.
- Where applicable, speak to a Subject Matter Expert Council Officer before applying.
- Where applicable, demonstrate a level of partnership with other organisations or community groups.
- Eligible organisations or groups are limited to one application per year. Applicants who are unsuccessful may submit a further application within the same year.

5.2 Application

- The application process will be reviewed and made publicly available on an annual basis. This will include eligibility, assessment criteria, timelines, applicant support and funding conditions.
- An online grants administration system will be used to manage grant applications.
- Late applications or new information relating to incomplete applications received after the closing date and time notified in the published Guidelines will not be considered. Council may request clarification on an application should it deem necessary.

5.3 Use of Funds

- The annual budget for the Brimbank Community Grants Program will be determined annually in accordance with Council's budgetary processes through development of Council's Annual Action Plan and Budget.
- Successful grant applicants must enter into a contractual funding agreement with Council, formalising them as a grant recipient and outlining the terms and conditions that apply to the use of approved grant funding.
- Grant funding will not be paid to a grant recipient until their contractual funding agreement is in place.
- Funds must be used in accordance with contractual funding agreements and only for the purposes stated in the grant application and approved by Council before the change or variation is exercised.
- Any changes or variations to the agreed use of funds must be approved and documented by Council.
- Unused funds must be returned to Council.
- Misuse or unauthorised use of grant funds, as determined by Council and in line with this Policy, is not permitted and must be returned to Council.
- Council reserves the right to request financial statements, receipts or progress reports to ensure funds are used appropriately.

5.4 Assessment and Decision-Making

- All Brimbank Community Grants applications are assessed against the published assessment criteria. Assessment criteria are reviewed and published annually in the Guidelines.
- Assessment criteria will be aligned with 'We Are Brimbank', the principles outlined in this Policy, and other relevant Council strategies.
- Applications go through different levels of assessment and scrutiny in line with the type of grant and amount requested as outlined in the published Guidelines.
- Ineligible applicants, activities or itemised costs will not be considered for grant funding.
- Council does not support the ongoing funding of the same project unless it demonstrates new components, as this does not demonstrate value for money. An exemption applies to festivals and events.
- Council reserves the right to assess applications and allocate funding that may differ from the amount requested.
- Decisions must be free of outside influence from Councillors, Council staff, applicants or other third parties.
- The Director, Community Wellbeing is responsible for making final funding decisions, under delegation by Council. The Director, Community Wellbeing will seek:
 - Input from a range of subject matter experts as appropriate.
 - Advice from an external Probity Advisor to ensure fairness and integrity.
- An annual funding report will be tabled at council for noting.

5.5 Governance and Accountability

- All grant recipients must meet the acquittal requirements specified in their funding agreement.
- Successful applicants are expected to keep accurate records and proof of grant expenditure.
- All persons involved in assessment and decision-making must declare any actual, potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest and always adhere to information confidentiality.

- Council must maintain and securely store accurate records of applications, decisions, funding agreements, and payments and key grant applicant/recipient correspondence.
- An external probity advisor is invited as an observer for the final assessment of medium and large Brimbank Community Grants to provide advice in accordance with probity principles to ensure a fair, consistent, unbiased and transparent assessment process.
- Applicants who have previously been awarded a Brimbank Community Grant must be compliant with their acquittal obligations before receiving a new Brimbank Community Grant payment.

5.6 Communication

- Prospective applicants will be notified of available Brimbank Community Grants on Council's website.
- All grant applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing and offered the opportunity to discuss the application process.
- Personal information collected during the grant application process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy and Health Policy.
- Council will notify the community of successful grant recipients through annual publishing on the Council website.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Councillors

Councillors are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Model Councillor Code of Conduct as prescribed by the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Maintaining impartiality and preventing conflicts of interest by not participating in the application or assessment process and directing any community enquiries through the proper internal processes.
- Noting funding recommendations provided by the Director, Community Wellbeing.
- Providing strategic direction for the Brimbank Community Grants Program through the adoption of the 'We Are Brimbank' and the Brimbank Community Grants Policy.

6.2 Director, Community Wellbeing

The Director, Community Wellbeing is responsible for:

- Providing leadership, strategic directions and overall management of the Brimbank Community Grants Program.
- Making final Brimbank Community Grants funding decisions and notifying Councillors of decisions, under delegation by Council.
- Declaring any conflict of interest and operating within Brimbank's staff code of conduct.

6.3 Brimbank Community Grants Program team

The Brimbank Community Grants Program team is responsible for:

- Declaring any conflict of interest and operating within Council's staff code of conduct.
- Acting as first point of contact for the public in managing and administering the grants.

6.4 Brimbank Community Grants Assessors

Staff who participate as assessors in the Brimbank Community Grants assessment process are responsible for:

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- Declaring any conflict of interest and operating within Council's staff code of conduct.
 - Providing impartial and expert advice and recommendations in assessing grant applications against published assessment criteria.
 - Adhering to the assessment and decision-making requirements as outlined in this Policy, the Guidelines, plus any applicable Terms of Reference or assessor guidance materials.

6.5 External Probity Advisor

External Probity Advisor is responsible for:

- Providing advice in accordance with probity principles to support a fair, consistent, unbiased and transparent assessment process.
- Attending assessment meeting(s) and providing probity advice where necessary.
- Producing a probity report with recommendations as relevant following their involvement in the assessment process.

7 POLICY OWNERSHIP

Responsible Director: Director, Community Wellbeing

Responsible Officer: Manager Community Strengthening and Social Planning

Directorate: Community Wellbeing

Unit: Connected Communities

8 APPROVAL

Approved by:

Date:

9 RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

COUNCIL POLICIES / PLANS

- [Annual Action Plan and Budget \(public\)](#)
- [Asset Plan](#) (public)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- [Climate Emergency Plan](#) (public)
- [Community Engagement Policy](#) (public)
- [Complaints Policy](#) (public)
- [Disability Action Plan](#) (public)
- Employee Code of Conduct
- [Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy](#) (public)
- [Financial Plan](#)
- Fraud Prevention Policy
- [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (public)
- [LGBTQIA+Action Plan](#) (public)
- [Model Councillor Code of Conduct](#) (public)
- [Privacy and Health Information Policy](#) (public)
- [Safe and Inclusive Brimbank](#) (public)
- [Social Justice Framework](#)
- 'We are Brimbank' incorporating integrated Community Vision, Council Plan 2025 - 2029 and Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 - 2029
- Life Stage Strategy (Under development) (public)

LEGISLATION

- Victorian Local Government Act 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 including *Victorian Child Safe Standards* and *Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Disability Act 2006

INTERNAL USE ONLY

Version	Version notes	Approval date	Next review
1			
2			
3			

FINAL DRAFT

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- Speak & Listen 1300 555 727
- www.relayservice.gov.au, then enter 03 9249 4000



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