



Greater  
Shepparton  
CITY COUNCIL

# Small Town Festive Event Grants Program

2026/27 GUIDELINES

## About this grant program

The purpose of the Small Town Festive Event Grants program is to support and strengthen the community with the capacity to attract the whole community to come together and celebrate and share festive occasions. The objectives of these grants are to:

- Support community festive celebrations
- Encourage participation across all sectors of the community
- Enhance social connections and community spirit
- Activate public spaces
- Support the local economy

## Linkages to the Council Plan 2025-2029

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

- **Economy:** Supporting tourism, events, and cultural initiatives that promote community vibrancy and economic growth.
- **Liveability:** Enhancing community health, wellbeing, social connection, diversity, respect, and inclusion.

## Funding available

For the 2026/2027 Financial Year there is a total funding pool of \$15,000 available. Individual grants of **\$500 up to \$3,500** are available for successful applicants to conduct activities during the timeframes below. Only one application per small town will be accepted for a Small Town Festive Event Grant.

Council strongly advises you to make contact with the Major Events Department **prior** to making an application to discuss your proposed activity and eligibility. You can contact Council's Team Leader – Major Events via telephone on (03) 5832 9795 or via email [sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au)

Events funded through this program need to be an organised gathering open to the whole community for a common purpose which is conducted as a one-off, or annual event, open to members of the public. The event needs to be publicly announced and advertised and may require permits to proceed.

This grant program is competitive and based on the outcome of the assessment process, projects may not receive funding or may not receive funding for the full amount requested, from the Greater Shepparton City Council. There are parameters around the funding available relating to the event type, community size and projected attendee numbers.

<b>Festive Community Carols by Candlelight Event</b>  Funding of up to \$3,500 is available for Carols by Candlelight events that include a music production of festive Carol singing and relevant production requirements.	<b>Festive Community Gathering</b>  Provides funding from \$500 to \$1,250 for smaller scale events that attract a minimum of 50 attendees for a festive gathering.
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## Expected timing for this grant program

Applications will be accepted until 5.00pm on the closing date.

Applications open:	Monday, 6 July 2026 at 9.00am
Applications close:	Monday, 10 August 2026 at 5.00pm
Notification of outcome:	September 2026
Activity timeframes:	21 November 2026 to 31 December 2026

## How to Apply

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

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

## Who can and can't apply?

The following table describes who is eligible and isn't eligible to apply for funding through this grant program. All applicants' activities must be primarily based in Greater Shepparton.

APPLICANT TYPE	YES	NO
Not-for-profits, incorporated bodies, co-operatives or associations	X	
Registered charitable organisations (refer to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission)	X	
Unincorporated bodies with an auspice	X	
Schools and learning institutions – only for activities that are not curriculum based and the primary benefit is for the wider community	X	
Individuals without an ABN		X
Individual / Sole Traders (entity type with Australian Business Register)		X
For profits, commercial entities, registered businesses		X
Applicants with outstanding acquittals for grant funding from Greater Shepparton City Council (including auspices)		X
Applicants with outstanding debts or arrears to Greater Shepparton City Council or in legal proceedings with Council		X
An organisation involved in legal proceedings relating to winding up its operations or experiencing insolvency or bankruptcy (this includes any legal bankruptcy – related actions against the organisations directors or officers).		X

## What if you are NOT incorporated?

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

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

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

### **Insurance**

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

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

### **Permits and Approvals**

Events may require permits and approvals.

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

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

### **What if my event does not proceed?**

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

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

### **Program Objectives**

These grants aim to support and strengthen the community with the capacity to attract the whole community to come together and celebrate and share festive occasions. Funding is provided on a one-off basis.

A minimum funding amount of \$500 to a maximum funding amount of \$3,500 per successful grant application is available. Funding is limited and not all applications that meet the guidelines may be funded. Funding is on a project basis only, and no recurrent grants or annual funding commitments are available from this fund.

The capacity of an organisation or individual to manage the project will be assessed and preference will be given to organisations that can demonstrate the required skills and organisational structure and/or planning to see the project through.

Greater Shepparton City Council aims to support local Small Town Festive Events and Celebrations by way of financial support, in kind support, event equipment, marketing and promotion assistance. Providing funding to community groups for these events/celebrations gives Council the opportunity to enhance community festive spirit and encourage participation across all sectors of the community.

The purpose of the funding is to assist with facilitation of an event/celebration which achieves some, or all of the following objectives:

- Celebrate the festive season with an appropriate community event.
- Build new social connections and partnerships within communities, or reinforce those that already exist.
- Encourage community participation in festive celebrations and/or activities.
- A welcoming and inclusive celebration/event for the whole community.
- Event/celebration to be held in an accessible community space.
- Showcase local talent or provide artistic and/or cultural activity within your event/celebration.
- Adequate marketing and promotion of your event/celebration.
- Enable community members to acquire or develop a new skill.

The funding is available to a population centre in Greater Shepparton with less than 10,000 people. Towns are only eligible for one Small Town Festive Event Grant per year, the application with the highest score will be selected if multiple applications are received. This includes the following small towns (other localities may also apply).

Congupna	Dookie	Merrigum
Katandra West	Mooroopna	Murchison
Tallygaroopna	Tatura	Toolamba
Undera		

**Funded activities will:**

- occur within a small town of the Greater Shepparton municipality and held between the timeframes stated.
- provide an inclusive, safe and accessible outcome for the community of Greater Shepparton.
- celebrate the festive season with activations reflecting this.
- demonstrate effective partnerships i.e. with other groups and/or across interest groups.
- deliver value for money.
- be well developed and have reasonable indicators of success for the outcomes expected.
- acknowledge Greater Shepparton City Council sponsors of the project receiving funding.

**The following activities will NOT be funded:**

- events and activities not held within the event timeframes.
- events and activities held outside the Greater Shepparton municipality.
- applications received after the closing date.
- applicants who have previously been funded by Council and have failed to comply with the financial, project monitoring and/or reporting requirements.
- projects that are clearly a duplication of an existing service.
- funding is NOT available for ongoing expenses or for projects which have already commenced or have been completed.
- projects and activities that are discriminatory in any way or contravene any legislation.
- cost of Council services where fees are normally charged i.e. municipal rates, waste removal, rent, event permits, parking etc.

- Fundraising activities, prizes, gifts, awards or sponsorship costs, such as trophies, medals, money or vouchers.
- Political, gaming or gambling activities.
- Expenditure that can be considered core business i.e. utilities, insurances, administration fees.

### **Budget**

The budget must include details on all income (all sources of funding which will be used to deliver the project, including the requested amount from this grant) and all expenditure (costs involved in the project).

**Failure to include the grant amount requested in the income will deem your application ineligible.** Income and expenditure must be equal.

Below is an example of the budget table within the application form. **You must provide a copy of quotes with your application for expenses of \$1,000 and over.**

### **Budget Example**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
Council Event Grant	\$3,500	Audio / Lighting / Production	\$2,800
Sponsorships	\$1,000	Kids entertainment	\$350
Club contribution	\$500	Promotion flyers	\$200
Sale of food and drinks from BBQ	\$1,500	Food / BBQ / drink supplies	\$700
		Artists (singers / musicians)	\$800
		Decorations	\$200
		Lollies from Santa	\$200
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$5,250</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,250</b>

Please ensure that the total income and expenditure are equal. Failure to present a balanced budget will impact the scoring of your application.

### **Demonstrating in-kind contributions**

In-kind contributions are those contributions that you would usually pay for but are being received at no cost to the project.

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

<b>In-kind contributions</b>	<b>\$</b>
Committee volunteers unskilled at \$25 per hour for 20 hours	\$500
Qualified trades persons at \$40 per hour for 10 hours	\$400
Machinery hire, including driver at \$60 per hour for 3 hours	\$90
Loan of equipment (i.e. tables, chairs)	\$200
<b>Total in-kind contributions</b>	<b>\$1,190</b>

If you have volunteers working on the project, include their contribution at the following values:

- \$25.00 per hour for unskilled labour
- \$40.00 per hour for qualified trades person
- \$65.00 per hour for machinery hire, including driver

## **GST**

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

## **How will applications be assessed?**

All applications received will go through the following assessment process:

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

The Assessment Panel will consider the following:

- does the event meet the objectives and activities of the program.
- does the event have a broad community benefit.
- is the event well planned and feasible within the timeframes provided.
- evidence that the event will be well supported by the community.
- does the event provide a positive economic impact for the region (i.e. engagement of local contractors, local musicians, activations).
- evidence that the event will be inclusive and accessible for the whole community.
- Is there a matching component (i.e. is the applicant contributing to the event financially to go towards catering etc).
- does the intended activity align with the following strategic documents:
  - Greater Shepparton City Councils Plan
  - Small town community plans.
  - Other Master Plans or other Council Strategies.

The Council Plan and other Strategies can be accessed at [www.greatershepparton.com.au](http://www.greatershepparton.com.au).

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

Grant amounts offered to successful applicants are based on outcomes determined during the assessment process and in line with budget limitations. It is important to note that in some cases, applicants may also be offered partial funding to run a reduced or modified event.

## Assessment weighting

Applications for the grants will be assessed using a weighted scoring system. Each application will be evaluated against the following key criteria. The percentage weighting indicates the relative importance of each criterion in the overall assessment.

Key Criteria	Weighting	What we look for
<b>Alignment with Objectives</b>	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well the event aligns with the goals of celebrating the festive season</li><li>• Evidence that the event strengthens community connection and participation</li><li>• Involvement of local community members / groups (eg. Artists, service clubs, schools, businesses, contractors)</li></ul>
<b>Community Impact</b>	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How the event fosters local community pride and inclusion</li><li>• Level of community involvement in planning and delivery</li><li>• Accessibility and inclusivity for diverse community members</li></ul>
<b>Planning and Feasibility</b>	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear event plan, timelines, and risk management</li><li>• Consideration of required permits or approvals</li></ul>
<b>Budget</b>	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Realistic and balanced budget</li><li>• Quotes or estimates to support expenditure</li></ul>
<b>Environmental Impact</b>	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration of the event's impact on the environment, including the use of single use plastics, balloons etc.</li></ul>

## Notification of outcome

All applicants will be notified as to the outcome of their application via the email address provided in the application by September 2026.

Multiple applications from one organisation will not be funded under this program.

## If your application is successful

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement and adhere to the conditions of the agreement.
- Spend the grant money in accordance with the conditions stated in the funding agreement and provided for in the application.
- Return any unspent funds at the completion of the activity, or at the end of the agreement unless prior written approval has been obtained to expend the funds in another way.
- Complete in full detail an acquittal form to the satisfaction of Council.

### **If your application is NOT successful**

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

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

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

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

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Council acknowledges, celebrates and supports the diversity of the Greater Shepparton community, as a tool to ensure activities and programs are inclusive of all. It is therefore important that applicants demonstrate a range of diversity strategies within their application.

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

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

Council Officers are available to support you with identifying, capturing and reflecting diversity within your application. Please contact the Major Events team or the Community team to discuss your proposed event and application and how you can be more inclusive.

Alternatively you can contact the relevant Officer via [council@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@shepparton.vic.gov.au).

Greater Shepparton City Council will consider the equitable reach of this funding program during the assessment and final decision-making processes. Projects should support diverse communities including:

## **Gender Equality**

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

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

## **Sustainability and Environment**

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

## **Events Assistance**

In addition to providing grants the following assistance and advice is available from Council's Major Events Team to event organisers who deliver an event in Greater Shepparton:

- Specialised event advice (site planning, risk management, OH&S).
- Assistance with promotion, marketing and advertising strategies.
- Assistance with selection of event and function venues and facilities for entertainment options.
- Assistance with obtaining appropriate event permits required in the region.
- Equipment assistance such as bollards, witches hats, event signage, branded signage, tear drops and hydration trailer.

## **Advertising and Promotion**

Successful grant applicants must acknowledge Greater Shepparton City Council as a sponsor of the event.

This will include providing logo recognition for Greater Shepparton City Council and the current Shepparton destination brand Shepparton & Goulburn Valley, on all your promotional material relating to the event including, but not limited to posters, apparel, event programs, social media and any other reasonably requested intellectual property.

To access the current logos and branding guidelines, please contact the Major Events team on (03) 5832 9795.

Council also require the opportunity to provide signage to be displayed at high profile locations at the event. This could include fence banners and/or tear drop flags. Event organisers will be responsible for the collection of items from Council, installation at the event and then return to Council. As a condition of the grant, successful recipients are required to extend an invitation to Councillors for their respective events.

Event organisers are required to promote their events on our Calendar of Events pages (both Greater Shepparton City Council and Shepparton and GV) by logging into: <https://greatershepparton.com.au/whats-happening/suggest-event> Scroll to the bottom and click on List your Event. Please ensure you provide as much information as possible as this is a major promotional tool for you at no charge.

## **Final Acquittal**

You must report back to Council when your project is completed. The acquittal process is important because it enables Council to continuously evaluate the success of the program and your event.

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

Council officers may request meetings with you to check the progress or undertake an independent audit of the records of the applicant as they relate directly to the grant. Council may also request additional information in order to finalise the acquittal process.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to maintain accurate financial records for the grant and make them available in the event of an audit by the Council into the use of the grant funds.

Evidence of your marketing collateral, websites / social media pages and images of the event taking place must be included in your acquittal.

An organisation which fails to submit their acquittal documents is deemed ineligible to apply for any future funding from Council, until their acquittal is completed and approved by Council. Acquittals must be received by the due date to ensure equity across the program.

Failure to complete the acquittal will also require the applicant to return the funding received to the Greater Shepparton City Council.

## **Contact Details**

Greater Shepparton City Council  
Economic Development Department  
Phone: (03) 5832 9795  
Email: [sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [greater-shepparton.com.au](http://greater-shepparton.com.au)

## CONTACT US

**Business hours:** 8.15am to 5pm weekdays

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**Web:** [www.greatershepparton.com.au](http://www.greatershepparton.com.au)

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