



Merri-bek
City Council

Flourish Arts Grants

2024/2025 Grant Program Guidelines



Photo: Glenroy Festival 2024. Photo by Jacinta Keefe.

Access: If you require any access assistance with this document, or with the application process please contact the Arts Development Officer at artsgrants@merri-bek.vic.gov.au Phone: 03 9240 2486

Purpose

Merri-bek City Council is committed to strengthening and investing in the creative community of Merri-bek and recognises the importance of continual support for the sector.

Objectives:

- To support local artists and arts organisations to flourish and be sustainable.
- To strengthen the capacity of local artists and arts organisations.
- To support local artists and arts organisations to navigate new models of engagement.
- To build connection and engagement through community led arts and cultural activities.
- To support and encourage more people to be involved with arts and culture in Merri-bek.

Grant Categories:

- Individual Artists (up to \$5,000)
- Arts Organisations (up to \$10,000)

Funding Preferences:

We will give preference to applications which:

- Showcase Merri-bek as a vibrant arts location.
- Encourage and champion diversity and First Nations culture.
- Show respectful partnerships with other artists, community groups and/or organisations.
- Clearly show how the initiative will impact and/or grow Merri-bek's arts sector.
- Encourage environmental sustainability in line with Council's [Zero-Carbon 2040 Framework](#)
- Align with identified priority groups from the Merri-bek [Human Rights Policy 2016 – 2026](#).

Merri-Bek Human Rights Policy Priority groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
- People with Disability
- LGBTIQ+ Communities
- Migrant and Refugee Communities
- Women

Eligibility Requirements

This program is only open to applicants whose primary business is in the arts sector. This includes literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, circus, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, community arts, experimental arts and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts. Applicants can apply for one grant in either of the following categories.

Individual Artists (up to \$5,000)

All applications must meet the following criteria:

- Be Merri-bek residents.
- Have appropriate Public Liability Insurance or guarantee that it will be obtained upon notification of successful funding. See information about Public Liability Insurance below.
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or outstanding debts owing to Council.
- Must address one or more of the objectives of the Flourish Arts Grants program.

- Ensure the proposed activity is consistent with all Local, State and Federal laws.
- For projects that involve children ensure this complies with Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Have other sources of income to support the project (this can include in-kind support, i.e. volunteers, free or reduced rate venue, catering etc)
- Note, auspicing is no longer required for individual artist grants.

Arts Organisations (up to \$10,000)

All applications must meet the following criteria:

- Be Merri-bek based.
- Groups or organisations possess the legal framework to show they operate as such.
- Unincorporated groups and organisations must be auspiced by an incorporated entity. See information about auspicing below.
- Have appropriate Public Liability Insurance or guarantee that it will be obtained upon notification of successful funding. See information about Public Liability Insurance below
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or outstanding debts owing to Council.
- Must address one or more of the objectives of the Flourish: Arts Grants program.
- Ensure the proposed activity is consistent with all Local, State and Federal laws.
- For projects that involve children ensure this complies with Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Have other sources of income to support the project (this can include in-kind support, i.e. volunteers, free or reduced rate venue, catering etc).

What we will fund:

- Events, activities, and projects that provide an opportunity for community renewal.
- Events, activities, and projects that support the generation of new or existing income streams.
- Events, activities, and projects that explore new ways of engaging audiences.
- Events, activities, and projects taking place between January 2025 and December 2025.
- Organisational costs including rent, utilities, wages etc. that will support the organisation's survival.

What we will not fund:

- Events, activities, and projects held outside of Merri-bek.
- Competitions, awards, fundraising activities, fetes, reunions, amateur or hobby pursuits.
- Tertiary education qualifications, including projects or work that will be used for the purposes of academic assessment.
- The entire cost of an initiative/project/program. You must have other sources of income to support your project, this can include in-kind support.
- Reimbursement for events, activities and projects that have already occurred, or will be complete before the funding period. No retrospective funding.
- Initiatives that will need ongoing funding from Council to be sustained.
- Applicants seeking funding to cover outstanding loans or debts.
- Events, activities, and projects already partially or wholly funded by Council via other funding streams for the same activity in the same financial year.
- Applicants who have lobbied or canvassed Councillors or Council Officers.
- Applicants that have an outstanding Merri-bek City Council acquittal.
- Applications where the recipient organisation/s promote and/or benefit directly from electronic gaming machines or from any form of gambling including sports betting and lotteries.

Timeline:

Grant Type	Grants Advertised	Applications Due	Expected Notification
Individual Artists <\$5,000	29 July	11.59pm 3 September	November for projects undertaken between January 2025 and December 2025
Arts Organisations <\$10,000	29 July	11.59pm 3 September	November for projects undertaken between January 2025 and December 2025

Applications

Please submit applications online via Merri-bek City Council's SmartyGrants program.

Alternative Submission Formats:

Council can accept video applications through SmartyGrants. Please check with the Arts Development Officer for details on how to submit your video application.

The online application form will include the questions outlined below:

General Information

- Artist / Organisation name and address / Website
- Title of Event / Activity / Project.
- Date(s) and location of Event / Activity / Project.

Your Proposal

- Brief description of the event/activity/project including:
 - the purpose
 - outcome
 - medium
 - when/where it will take place
- how it will promote/benefit your creative practice/arts career
- Describe how your project aligns with one or more of the grant objectives.
- Describe who will engage with, and benefit from, your event / activity / project:
 - Describe if and how you will engage members of Merri-bek Human Rights priority groups in your project.
 - Describe if and how will you provide access and access information to participants.
 - Identify any Merri-bek venues, creatives or businesses that may benefit from your project.
- Who is in your project team and what are their roles:
 - List any artists you are hoping to work with or have confirmed.
 - Outline any collaborations or partnerships with other groups or organisations.
 - Identify any members of Merri-Bek human rights priority groups in your project team.

Budget

- Please submit a full project budget using the SmartyGrants template provided. Your income and expenditure must total the same amount for your budget to be accepted as part of your application.

- The budget needs to be realistic and balanced, show other income sources (including in-kind support) and prove why you need the grant.
- If you wish to include a more detailed budget, please submit as an attachment under Additional Support Material.

Support Documents

- Please submit a maximum of three (3) letters of support from partner organisations, community groups, artists or anyone else who supports your proposal.
- Current Public Liability Certificate (or a quote for a new policy). See information about insurance below.
- A relevant URL / website.
- If your project includes people under the age of 18, then a copy of you or your organisation's Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.
- Additional Support Material as required.

Contact the Arts Development Officer to discuss your project if you are unsure what support material is required.

Assessment Process:

Council is committed to ensuring that the assessment of all grant applications is coordinated in a fair and transparent manner. The assessment process will be as follows.

1. An Officer from the Arts and Culture Unit will assess each application to confirm whether it is eligible. This Officer will be the main contact for questions and assistance while applications are open. Eligible applications will be shortlisted and submitted to a decision-making panel. This Officer will not be on the decision-making panel.
2. A panel of at least two (2) officers from across Council and two (2) external representatives will assess the eligible applications against the assessment criteria. The panel will be chaired by the Unit Manager Arts and Culture.
3. A report from the panel with recommendations for funding will be made to the Director Community for endorsement.

Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Score	%
<u>Impact</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application shows significant benefit to the applicant's own professional creative practice • The application shows potential to support the quality and strength of the arts sector in Merri-bek 	Score out of 10	Equal
<u>Alignment</u> The application aligns with one or more Flourish Arts Grant objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support local artists and arts organisations to recover and be sustainable. • To strengthen the capacity of local artists and arts organisations. 	Score out of 10	Equal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support local artists and arts organisations to navigate new models of engagement. • To build connection and engagement through community led arts and cultural activities. • To support and encourage more people to be involved with arts and culture in Merri-Bek. 		
<u>Capacity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application outlines roles and responsibilities of a project team that is suitable and capable to manage and deliver the project • The application demonstrates a collaborative approach with a range of partners 	Score out of 10	Equal
<u>Need</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget demonstrates the need for funding support • The budget is balanced, realistic, shows other income sources, including in-kind support • Community support for the application is demonstrated (e.g. support letters) 	Score out of 10	Equal
Total	Score out of 40	100%

Conflict of Interest

All those involved in the assessment of applications must declare any conflict of interest that exists, including but not limited to, personal or business connections with any applicant. The assessment panel member is required to step down from participating in any vote or decision-making process undertaken regarding the specific applicant.

Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants are required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement with Council which sets out the conditions and reporting requirements.
- Use the grant funding for the project outlined in the application only and in line with the budget submitted in the application.
- Be covered by an appropriate Public Liability Insurance policy.
- Acknowledge Arts Merri-bek and Merri-bek City Council by using logos on all promotional material relating to the activity with the accompanying text 'This event has been proudly supported by Merri-bek City Council through the Flourish: Arts Recovery Grant program'.
- Obtain any relevant legal permissions with regards to copyright and intellectual property rights.
- Submit an Acquittal Report including a financial report (a true statement of actual income and expenditure after the activity is completed, including receipts upon request); and a brief written report via SmartyGrants.
- Networking and professional development opportunities with other artists and arts organisations will be programmed during 2025. Your details will be used to invite you to these events.

- Obtain an event permit for events held on Council owned open space. The event permit cost is waived for successful grant applications however each event permit also requires a bond which cannot be waived.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Where an activity will use copyright material, or another entity's intellectual property, it is the applicant's responsibility to seek and obtain all the necessary permissions. All intellectual property rights within the application and delivery of the event / activity / project will be held exclusively by the applicant/s.

Lobbying

Lobbying or canvassing Councillors or Council Officers in relation to any grant application is prohibited. This includes asking Councillors or Council Officers to recommend your project to assessment panel members or to discuss the application with assessment panel members on your behalf. Any application submitted where the applicant, or applicant's representative, has canvassed or lobbied a Councillor or Council Officer will be deemed ineligible.

Feedback

Please Note: Due to the large volume of applications we expect to receive, feedback may not be provided for this program unless requested.

Privacy and Information Statement

Merri-bek City Council is committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

The personal information requested on this form is being collected by Merri-bek City Council for Flourish Arts Funding applications and may also be used to update your personal information otherwise held by Council (for example, contact details including email address, phone number). The personal information will be disclosed with any auspicing body or project funders and may also be used by Council for related purposes (e.g. to contact you about the grant or use of your images). It will not be disclosed to any other external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. If the personal information is not provided, then your grant application will be deemed ineligible.

You can gain access to your personal information you have provided to Merri-bek City Council, and/or alter it, by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9240 1111 or e-mail at Privacyofficer@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to be incorporated?

Incorporation gives your group its own legal identity (the group becomes a 'separate legal entity' separate from its members). The incorporated group can enter into contracts, sign a lease, employ people, and sue and be sued.

Activities occur in the group's name, rather than in the names of individual members. Incorporated groups follow a particular structure, with group rules (or constitution), members, and a governing

body (often called a board or committee).

Many grants are unavailable to unincorporated groups, and this is why auspicing is suggested in these situations.

For more information on incorporation, refer to the following helpful guides:

- Justice Connect's Not-for-profit-Law website: [Starting a not-for-profit organisation](#)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria's guide for clubs and community groups: [Should your club incorporate?](#)

What is Auspicing?

The 'auspice organisation' takes responsibility (legal and financial) of the grant on yours or your group's behalf. They will sign your grant agreement, receive and distribute grant funds under the grant agreement, ensure activities or events are completed, and submit accountability and evaluation reports with you, and on your behalf. Your group/organisation will still be known as the 'grant recipient'.

Important information on auspice organisations:

- The auspice organisation you choose must be incorporated and have an ABN.
- The auspice organisation accepts legal and financial responsibility for the grant and will need to meet all eligibility criteria and provide Public Liability Insurance coverage for the project(s).
- Grant money will be paid to the auspice organisation, not the applicant.
- Most auspice organisations will charge a percentage of the grant for this service.
- Auspiced applicants will need to provide the auspice organisation's contact details, ABN, their most recent financial report, and evidence outlining your agreement with them.
- You may apply through an auspice organisation if your group does not wish to purchase insurance.
- Or you may be covered under Liability insurance of the venue you are holding your project if your activity is entirely held at that venue.

Who could auspice me?

- You can approach a larger organisation to partner with your community group/organisation to fund a grant.
- Local neighbourhood houses: [Merri-Bek Neighbourhood Houses](#)
- A community organisation you have worked or partnered with.
- A peak body or governing association of your field (e.g. [Arts Access Victoria](#), [Multicultural Arts Victoria](#)).
- Organisations with a similar mission and purpose.
- **Auspicious Arts** (designed to support grant applicants) – for more info visit the [Auspicious Arts website](#).

Why do you need Public Liability Insurance coverage?

Understandably Public Liability Insurance (PLI) may cost a significant amount to a group, however the risks of not having PLI could cost a group much more.

Artists, arts groups/organisations will most likely interact with the public as part of running its activities or projects. PLI protects individuals, groups and organisation against the liability to pay

damages for a bodily injury, death, or for property damage that may occur as a result of an activity by the organisation. Because of the enormous potential costs your group could face if something went wrong and you didn't have PLI, we only fund groups who manage the risk by having PLI. You can obtain Public Liability Insurance through some auspicing organisations (e.g. Auspicious Arts), or through membership of arts organisations, like [NAVA](#) or [MEAA](#), or Australian Society for Authors. **Important note on Public Liability Insurance:** PLI doesn't cover everything you may expect it to. You may need separate insurance when required, such as Volunteers Insurance to cover volunteers in the event of an injury claim, or Building and Contents insurance, to cover damage to a property in your organisation's control (if you're renting a space).

Taxation – do I or my group need an ABN?

You or your group may need to supply an ABN as part of your application. An ABN refers to an Australian Business Number issued by the Australian Taxation Office. If your organisation has an ABN, it must be included in your application.

Your ABN will indicate if you are registered for GST or not registered for GST. To find this information go to www.abr.business.gov.au.

If you or your group is not registered for GST, then no GST is paid on the funded amount. If you or your group is registered for GST, then the GST amount must be added to your funded amount.

Read more at: www.ato.gov.au/business/registration.

Do I need other income sources for the project (apart from Flourish) to apply?

Yes. The project budget needs to show other income sources (such as in-kind support, personal contributions, sales estimates or other grants) and prove why you need the grant.

What is in-kind support?

In-kind support refers to any non-cash support that covers some costs e.g. donated catering or equipment. Volunteer hours can be included and should be calculated at a rate of \$25 per hour.

What is Child Safe Standards?

Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children (anyone under 18 years old) are required by law to implement Child Safe Standards to protect children from harm. Therefore, if your project/program will engage children as either participants or audience members, you will be required to demonstrate that you are complying with the Child Safe Standards by uploading a copy of your organisation's Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. For further information on the Child Safe Standards see: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/>