THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

2025-26 GUIDELINES

CITY OF GREATER
GEELONG

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

Welcome

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet contains information about the City of Greater Geelong's Environmental Sustainability Grants. Please read it carefully before you apply.

Important words are explained at the back of this booklet (page 15).

THE CITY OF GREATER GEELONG COMMUNITY GRANTS

A grant is money given to a person, organisation or group for a specific purpose.

Our Community Grants help turn your idea into reality. Whether you're looking to purchase new equipment, offer group activities, run a community event, create an inspired arts project or upgrade facilities, funding is available.

You can apply to multiple City of Greater Geelong Community Grants programs, but each application must be for a different project, event, or activity.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Contact the City

You must contact the City's Community Grants Unit before applying to discuss your eligibility, proposed activity and other grant matters.

E: communitygrants@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

P: 5272 5560

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment

National Relay Service (NRS)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, and you wish to contact us, you can do so through the National Relay Service (NRS) and ask for 03 5272 5272. Our call centre team will then connect you with the grants team.

Our business hours are Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5.00pm.

- TTY users – call 13 36 77
- Speak & Listen (voice relay) users – call 1300 555 727
- SMS relay users – message 0423 677 767

Note: Area code must be included for each call.

Further information and NRS call numbers can be found on the Access Hub website: www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-call-numbers-and-links

If you need an interpreter

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to call the City of Greater Geelong on 03 5272 5272. Our business hours are Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5.00pm.

About this grant

OBJECTIVES

The Environmental Sustainability Grants support minor capital works and the initiation, development and delivery of projects that enhance our natural environment and drive environmental sustainability actions across the Geelong region.

This grant responds to the key goals of the City's Environment Strategy 2020–30.

The objectives of the grant are to:

- Become a zero-emission, climate-ready city
- Create greener community spaces
- Protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity
- Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design

Our aim is to create greener community and urban spaces, connect people with nature and protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity to reduce urban heat and overland flooding.

KEY DATES

Applications open:	26 July 2025
Applications close:	8 September 2025 by 5.00 pm (we do not accept late applications).
Notification to applicants:	28 January 2026
Project start date:	You cannot commence your project until after the notification date (above) and you have a signed funding agreement with us.
Project end date:	You must complete your activity within 12 months of the notification date.

WHO IS ELIGBLE TO APPLY

Being eligible means, you can receive a grant, but it does not guarantee funding. To apply for this grant, you must be one of the following:

- incorporated not-for-profit organisation
- unincorporated group with an auspice
- registered charitable organisation
- school or learning institution (only for non-curriculum-based activities that primarily benefit the wider community).

WHO CANNOT APPLY

You are not eligible to apply if you are any of the following:

- businesses
- individuals operating as sole traders (with an active ABN)
- individual (without an ABN)
- previous applicant with an outstanding acquittal for grant funding from the city
- applicant who has not complied with the terms of a previous funding agreement
- entity involved in legal proceedings related to winding up its operations, experiencing insolvency or bankruptcy (includes any legal bankruptcy related actions against an entity's directors or officers)

- entity with outstanding debt to the City of Greater Geelong or in legal proceedings with the City.

HOW MUCH FUNDING CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

This grant has two categories, but you can only apply for one category per funding round. You may request

- up to $10,000 for a minor capital works grant, or
- up to $10,000 for a project grant.

The total amount of funding available for all Environmental Sustainability Grants is $70,000.

HOW WE ALLOCATE FUNDING

Our grants are competitive, so even if you meet the criteria, you may not get funding.

You cannot rely on the City's Community Grants for ongoing funding.

In some cases, we may offer partial funding for a smaller or modified project.

We typically fund projects only once. However, we may consider funding a project again if there is a strong reason that aligns with the objectives of this grant.

What you can apply for

To help you work out whether your project is the sort of thing we are looking to fund, we have developed the following list of example projects and costs we might cover.

Yes - we will fund

Types of projects

Projects within the City of Greater Geelong's municipal boundaries

Here are some examples of minor capital works or projects we may fund. Other project ideas may also be eligible. If you're unsure, please contact us for advice.

MINOR CAPITAL WORKS

Solar installations

Water tanks

High-efficiency water irrigation

PROJECTS

Re-vegetation program with indigenous (locally native) plants

Pest plant and/or animal control measures

Works designed to support healthy waterways

Projects that will green urban spaces, support sustainable food production, connect people to nature or reduce urban heat Community events that engage on environmental or sustainability themes

Development of educational or capacity building materials and resources

Development of a strategic or business plan, or land management plans for a community group

Initiatives that build capacity and promote best practice in managing the natural environment or promoting environmental sustainability – for example, workshops, networking events, training, skill development

Types of expenses

These are examples of costs we may fund, but other costs may also be eligible. If you're unsure, please contact us for advice.

Venue hire, (including City of Greater Geelong venues)

Contractors engaged to deliver a project

Materials and equipment

No - we will not fund

Types of projects

Projects outside Geelong

Projects on designated private land will be excluded for consideration unless there is a broader environmental and community benefit, e.g., creating a biodiversity corridor across private lands

Political or gambling activities

Projects started before funding is approved

Fundraising events for charities or your own group

Core business

Projects better suited to the City's other grants

Types of expenses

Cost of Council services (e.g. rates, waste disposal, parking fees, fines)

Overheads (e.g. insurance, utilities, administration costs)

Prizes, gifts, awards or sponsorship costs, such as trophies, medals, money and vouchers

Staff salaries

Volunteers

Own venue hire

What you need for your application

You will need to provide certain documents and information with your application. This helps us confirm you can legally receive funding and practically deliver your proposed project.

CHECKLIST

Before you start your application, use this checklist as a guide – some items may not apply to your application:

- full and correct applicant name
- address and contact details of applicant
- name and contact details of the person authorised to apply for this grant
- certificate of incorporation
- auspice agreement letter (if your organisation is not incorporated)
- Australian Business Number (A.B.N.) details registered to the grant applicant name
- bank account details (account name, BSB and account number) which must match the applicant's name and A.B.N. details
- letters of support from project partners and/or stakeholders
- evidence of land ownership for capital works application on privately owned land/building (Certificate of Title)
- copies of required permits or approvals
- confirmation of venue booking
- a budget showing all income, expense and how the grant funds will be used.
- quotes or cost estimates for grant related expenses.

How we assess applications

We carefully check all applications to make sure they meet the guideline rules and are a good use of the City's grant funding.

ASSESSMENT

The complete list of checks we do on each grant application include:

Eligibility checks – we check if the applicant and project are eligible (see pages 4 to 6).

Officer panel assessment – if eligible, our officers review the application using the grant assessment criteria and funding priorities on pages 8 and 9.

Community panel review – a group of independent community members review the officer assessments and recommend funding to Council.

Council endorsement –Council reviews and endorses funding recommendations.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessment criteria are used to evaluate your application. You must answer questions in the application form to explain how your proposal meets these criteria. Your responses to these questions help us compare all applications fairly, rank them and make funding decisions.

We use a weighted scoring system, which means the criteria each have a set percentage based on how important they are. The higher the percentage, the more it affects your overall score.

The following table lists the assessment criteria and explains what we are looking for when assessing your application.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria 1: Environmental Outcomes – 60%

We assess this based on:

- How clearly you explain the outcomes your project will achieve.
- How your outcomes align with the City's outcomes, which are based on the objectives of the grant:
  - become a zero-emission, climate-ready city
  - create greener community spaces
  - protect, enhance and restore our region's biodiversity
  - achieve better integrated water management through planning and design.

  You do not need to align with all the City's outcomes, just those relevant to your project.
- The need for the project or capital works.
- A list of activities and timelines, identified evaluation measures, targets and data collection methods.

Criteria 2: Community Benefit - 25 %

We assess this based on:

- An explanation of the changes that will occur for the community because of your project.

Criteria 3: Well-planned project - 25%

We assess this based on:

- Your understanding of required permits and approvals.
- Evidence the proposed venue or location is suitable and available (e.g. a venue booking form).
- Demonstrated skills and knowledge within your team to successfully deliver the project.
- A balanced budget where total income equals total expenditure, detailing all project costs and any other funding sources.
- Evidence of cost: you must provide any of the following:
  - supplier quotes – must include the supplier's business name, ABN/ACN, and contact details
  - screenshots from online stores – must show the item description, price, and supplier name
  - contractor costs – quotes from contractor based on industry rates or standards.

Note: applications submitted without quotes or estimate may not be funded.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

If the total funding requested by all applicants exceeds the available funding, we may prioritise:

- applicants who did not receive money from this grant in the previous year
- applications from organisations that do not receive money from electronic gaming machines or gambling.

How to apply

CONTACT THE GRANTS UNIT

Please contact the City's Grants Unit before applying to discuss your eligibility, proposed activity and other grant matters.

E: communitygrants@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

P: 5272 5560

APPLY ONLINE

All applications must be submitted online via SmartyGrants. You must log in or create an account before you begin. You can access the application form in two ways:

- Visit the Community Grants section of the Geelong Australia website and navigate to the specific grant page. Click the **Apply Now** button and log in or create an account to access the form.
- Visit SmartyGrants directly, log in or create an account, and select the grant you wish to apply for.

Paper or email applications will not be accepted.

WITHDRAWING OR CHANGING YOUR APPLICATION

If you have not yet submitted your application, you can log in to SmartyGrants at any time to make edits.

If you have already submitted your application and need to make changes, contact us before the closing date. We can reopen your application to allow edits.

Changes cannot be made after the closing date.

If you need to withdraw your application after submission, please notify the Community Grants Unit in writing.

ABOUT APPLICANT TYPES

To determine eligibility for a grant, please read all applicant types carefully. If you are unsure what sort of applicant you are, please check your details online.

- incorporated associations – go to www.consumer.vic.gov.au
- companies – go to https://connectonline.asic.gov.au
- individuals or sole traders with an ABN – go to https://abr.business.gov.au
- charities – go to www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities

IF YOUR ORGANISATION IS NOT INCORPORATED

If your organisation or group is not incorporated, you can still apply for a grant by working with an auspice organisation.

An auspice is an organisation that meets our eligibility criteria and agrees to support and manage your grant. They take legal and financial responsibility for the funding.

Your auspice organisation will:

- sign the grant funding agreement
- receive the grant money and pass it on to you
- make sure all grant activities are completed
- submit the final evaluation and financial report on your behalf.

How to apply with an Auspice

If you want to apply with an auspice organisation, you must:

- get their approval before you submit your application
- ask them to sign the application form and the funding agreement
- submit a copy of a signed agreement with your auspice.

By using an auspice, your group can still access funding even if you are not legally incorporated.

What happens next

Once we have decided who is going to receive a grant, we will let you know of the outcome of your application, even if it was unsuccessful.

NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME

The City of Greater Geelong will notify all applicants of their outcome by email by the date listed on page 4 of this booklet.

Successful Applications

If your application is successful, this does not guarantee funding. You must complete additional steps before receiving a grant payment.

- You will receive an email with a link to a funding agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the grant (see **Funding Agreements** section below).
- You must sign and return the agreement, upload a tax invoice and your public liability insurance certificate of currency before any payment is made.
- Do not start your project until you have received a signed funding agreement.

Unsuccessful Applications

If your application is unsuccessful, we will notify you by email.

You are strongly encouraged to contact us for feedback which may help if you plan to apply again in future rounds.

PAYMENTS

If your application is successful, the City will transfer the approved funding amount to your nominated bank account after the funding agreement is signed.

We will only pay grant money to the applicant (or auspice).

A tax invoice is required before we pay any grant funds. Our team will contact successful grant applicants to arrange this.

If you do not provide either an ABN or a ‘Statement by a Supplier’ form, we may have to withhold tax from the grant payment at the top marginal rate of 45%.

FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement. The agreement will include:

- the terms and conditions of funding
- the details of the activity
- what you are expected to deliver
- your reporting requirements.

General Information

The following information applies to all City of Greater Geelong grants.

FIRST NATIONS

For any proposals with a First Nations theme you are strongly encouraged to contact the Community Grants Unit to ensure you have engaged with First Nations Communities and understand any requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006)*.

PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Some projects or events may need a permit or approval. These processes are separate to the grant application process and require additional time and budget in your project plan.

While you do not need to secure permits or approvals before applying, securing them will be a condition of the grant if your application is successful. As such, we may choose not to pay you any money until the relevant permits and approvals are secured.

You must demonstrate that you are aware of the necessary permits and approvals in your application. We will consider this information when assessing your application under the 'well-planned project' criteria on page 9.

INSURANCE

You must arrange public liability insurance (PLI) to cover the activity detailed in your application and provide the PLI certificate of currency if your application is successful.

Applicants using an auspice would include a PLI certificate from the auspice organisation.

A policy statement or receipt of payment is not an acceptable substitute for the certificate of currency.

REPORTING

If you receive a grant, you must submit an evaluation of your activity and a financial report within one month of your project finishing.

The evaluation report tells us about your project and the financial report includes all income and expenses for the grant. It demonstrates you have spent the money how you said you would.

We may request meetings with you to check your progress or ask for an audit of your financial records to prove you have spent the grant as you said you would. As such, you must keep accurate financial records and make them available to us if requested.

MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR FUNDED ACTIVITY

Projects are funded for delivery as described in your funding agreement.

If you need to change something about your grant, you must seek our approval in writing. This includes:

- changes to your proposed completion date
- changes to the nature of your activity
- changes to how you want to spend the money.

We reserve the right to withdraw funding if:

- we do not support your request for changes
- your request is not made within a reasonable time
- you make changes without our knowledge.

If a project stops or the grant funds are no longer required, you must repay the funding to the City of Greater Geelong.

WITHDRAWING FUNDING

We reserve the right to withdraw funding if we do not receive a tax invoice within the financial year in which the grant was awarded, or by the due date/s included in the agreement.

We can also withdraw funding if you are in breach of your funding agreement.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SUPPORT

You must acknowledge the City of Greater Geelong on your promotional materials if you receive a grant. We will provide a guide with detailed instructions on how to do this.

Definitions

Following are definitions of some of the words we use in this document. If you find other words that you are not familiar with, please contact us for help.

Word	Explanation
ABN	Australian Business Number is a unique number that identifies a business in Australia
Application	A form you fill out to ask for grant money
Assess	How we review and consider your application
Auspice	An organisation that applies for a grant on your behalf if your group is not legally registered
Budget	A plan that shows how much money you have and how you will spend it
Categories	Different types of funding available within one grant
Community panel	A group of community members who review applications and recommend which projects should get funding
Eligibility	The rules that decide if you or your project can receive grant funding
Evaluation and financial report	A report you must complete after your project ends, explaining what you did and how you spent the grant money
Expenditure	The things you spend money on for your project
Funding agreement	A document that explains why we are giving you the grant money and the rules you must follow when using it
Grant	Money given to a person or organisation for a specific purpose
Group	Two or more people who meet regularly and run projects or activities that other people participate in (e.g., youth group, seniors group, cultural group)
Income	Money that you have or expect to receive for your project. This can include grant money from the City, fundraising, sponsorship, ticket sales or other grant funding.
Incorporated	A group or organisation that has legally registered to become a formal entity
Insurance	A contract you have with an insurance company that helps protect from financial loss if something goes wrong
Log in	Your email and password used to access SmartyGrants
Not-for-profit	An organisation that does not does not distribute profits to owners or shareholders
Officer panel	A group of City officers who review applications and recommend which projects should get funding
Online	Available on the internet
Organisation	A legally constituted organisation that is registered or created by law. For example, incorporated associations, companies limited by guarantee or registered charities are all defined as organisations
Quote	A written estimate of how much something will cost
SmartyGrants	An online system we use to manage grant applications
Submitted	When you finish your application in SmartyGrants and press the submit button
The City	The City of Greater Geelong
Unincorporated Group	A group that is not legally registered as an organisation
Weighted average scoring	A method of scoring applications where some parts of the decision are more important than others