

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

CHRISTMAS GRANTS

2026-27 GUIDELINES

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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 Christmas 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

Christmas Grants support public Christmas-themed community events and activations that bring people together during the festive season in Greater Geelong.

The objectives of these grants are to:

- Complement the City's Christmas programming by supporting community-led activities that add to the festive season across Greater Geelong.
- Bring people together, strengthen local connection and foster a sense of belonging during the Christmas season.
- Support inclusive celebrations that are welcoming to Greater Geelong's diverse communities, including people who may be at risk of social isolation or financial hardship at this time of year.
- Activate local neighbourhoods, community venues and public spaces through Christmas celebrations that add to the festive season across Greater Geelong.

Funding is available to support a range of Christmas traditions, including Orthodox Christmas.

WHAT IS A CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY EVENT OR ACTIVATION?

A Christmas Event is an organised activity, open to the public and held on a specific date and time expected to attract 300 or more people.

A Christmas Activation is an something people experience or interact with and is designed to engage the community.

Events and activations must be

- held in Greater Geelong during 22 November 2026 to 7 January 2027
- open and welcoming to a wide range of people
- publicly advertised
- able to demonstrate a Christmas or festive season theme.

KEY DATES

Applications open:	27 June 2026
Applications close:	27 July 2026 by 5.00 pm (we do not accept late applications)
Notification to applicants:	Within 6-8 weeks of application closing
Event start date:	Event cannot start prior to the 2026 Christmas festive season (22 November 2026 to 7 January 2027) and you have a signed funding agreement with us.
Event end date:	You must complete your event by 7 January 2027.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE 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
- business
- individual operating as sole traders (with an active ABN).
- school or learning institution (only for non-curriculum-based activities that support participation by the wider community).

WHO CANNOT APPLY

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

- 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?

You may request up to \$10,000.

The total amount of funding available for Christmas Grants is \$50,000.

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 event.

We typically fund projects only once. However, we may consider funding an event again if there is a strong reason that aligns with the objectives of this grant or introduces a new element or approach.

What you can apply for

To help you work out whether your activity fits this grant, we have listed examples of the types of Christmas events and event costs we may support.

Yes - we will fund	No - we will not fund
<p>Types of events</p> <p>Events within Greater Geelong</p> <p><i>Here are examples of events we may fund. Other Christmas-themed event ideas may also be eligible. If you are unsure, please contact us for advice.</i></p> <p>Community carols and Christmas concerts</p> <p>Family-friendly Christmas celebrations with entertainment and children’s activities</p> <p>Neighbourhood or suburb-based Christmas events that bring local communities together</p> <p>Multicultural Christmas celebrations and festive events that reflect diverse traditions</p> <p>Christmas fairs</p> <p>Creative workshops (ornament making, wreath making) in public areas</p> <p>Festive activations in public space (e.g. roaming entertainment)</p> <p>Community festivals</p> <p>Pop-up music and street theatre performances</p> <p>Temporary immersive art installations</p> <p>Expenses</p> <p><i>These are examples of costs we may fund, but other costs may also be eligible. If you’re unsure, please contact us for advice.</i></p> <p>Contractors engaged to deliver event</p> <p>Equipment hire</p> <p>Event specific insurance</p> <p>Performers and artists</p> <p>Portable toilets and waste services</p> <p>Security and traffic management</p> <p>Stage, sound, lighting or production hire</p> <p>Staff wages where they relate to additional work required to deliver the event. Applicants must explain the role and why this work cannot be delivered within existing resources.</p> <p>Venue hire, including City of Greater Geelong venues</p>	<p>Types of events</p> <p>Events outside Greater Geelong</p> <p>Street decorations</p> <p>New Year celebrations</p> <p>Activities delivered as part of another organisation’s event</p> <p>Activities that are ongoing, regular activities of a venue – for example monthly markets</p> <p>Conferences, expos and business events</p> <p>Core business</p> <p>Events started before funding is approved</p> <p>End-of-year functions that are part of an organisation’s normal operations</p> <p>Events that due to their nature are unlikely to be supported by relevant stakeholders</p> <p>Fundraising events for charities or your own group</p> <p>Invite-only or members-only events. This includes VIP events/areas or events which exclude other event attendees.</p> <p>Political or gambling activities</p> <p>Expenses</p> <p>Cash vouchers</p> <p>General day-to-day operating costs of running your organisation or business (e.g. insurance, utilities, rent, administration)</p> <p>Own venue hire</p> <p>Prizes, gifts and awards (e.g. gift vouchers, medals, money, trophies)</p> <p>Payments to volunteers</p> <p>Taxes, levies, fines or penalties</p>

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 (ABN) details registered to the grant applicant name
- a completed Statement by Supplier form (if you don't have an ABN)
- bank account details (account name, BSB and account number) which must match the applicant's name and ABN details
- redacted bank statement
- letters of support from project partners and/or stakeholders
- copies of required permits or approvals
- evidence of venue booking
- a budget showing all income, expenses and how the grant funds will be used.
- evidence for expenses to be funded by the grant. Evidence we will accept includes:
 - supplier or contractor quotes with the supplier's business name, ABN/ACN and contact details.
 - screenshots from online stores with the item description, price and supplier's business name.
- a letter explaining any staff wage costs. The letter must outline the role, the additional work required to deliver the project, and why this work cannot be delivered using existing resources.
- event plan – an example can be found [here](#).
- risk assessment - an example can be found [here](#).

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](#) through [6](#)).

Officer panel assessment – if eligible, our officers review the application using the grant assessment criteria and funding priorities on pages [9](#) and [10](#).

Executive review and endorsement – A City Executive reviews and endorses funding recommendations.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

We use assessment criteria to score each application. In the application form, you will be asked questions about these criteria. Your answers help us compare applications fairly and decide which projects we can fund.

Each criterion has a weighting (a percentage). A higher percentage means that criterion has more impact on your total score.

The table below shows the assessment criteria and what we look for.

We will score your application based on the information you provide and how you answer the questions.

CHRISTMAS GRANTS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria 1: Community, access and inclusion 50%

- How many people will attend your event or activity?
- How will you make your event inclusive and accessible? E.g. for people of all abilities and genders, and social, economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Outline your marketing plan that shows how the event will be advertised to attract a wide range of people from the community.
- Does your event include any activities that are free or low cost?

Criteria 2: Well-planned 50%

- Provide a draft project plan that includes a site plan showing all items that will be set up, as well as the set-up and pack-down schedule.
- Provide a draft risk assessment that identifies the main risks and explains how you will manage them to keep everyone safe.
- Do you require any permits or approvals?
- Have you booked a venue or location for your event?
- What skills, knowledge and experience does your team have to deliver the event successfully?
- What is the total cost of your event?
- How much grant money do you need?
- Do you have income from other sources (e.g. your own cash contribution, sponsorship)? Is it confirmed?

-
- What expenses will you have? (e.g. venue hire, sound equipment hire)
 - Have you provided evidence for expenses to be funded by the grant? Evidence we will accept includes:
 - supplier or contractor quotes with the supplier's business name, ABN/ACN and contact details,
 - screenshots from online stores with the item description, price and supplier's business name.
- If you do not provide supporting evidence for requested costs, you may receive a lower score for this criterion, or the cost may be removed from the grant request.
-

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
- events that improve the spread of funded Christmas events across Greater Geelong, so funding is not concentrated in one area or precinct

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 City's 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 submitted your application, you can log in to SmartyGrants at any time to make edits.

If you have 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.

If your application is successful, 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
- upload a signed letter confirming your auspice arrangement.

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.

You cannot commence your event until after the notification date and you have a signed funding agreement with us.

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' 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.

GRANT VARIATIONS - 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 AND MEDIA

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.

When you sign your funding agreement, you will be asked to provide a short-written statement as the grant recipient, telling us how you feel about being a successful applicant, and how this project will benefit the community.

We may use your statement for promotion on social media or in other media outlets.

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.
Community panel	A group of community members who review applications and make funding recommendations.
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.
Christmas community event	An organised public event held during November or December in Greater Geelong that has a clear Christmas or festive season focus and is open to the public.
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.