

Committee report to Council	Agenda item 3.2
	Special Council
COVID-19 Business Support	25 March 2020

Committee Future Melbourne Committee

Presenter Justin Hanney, Chief Executive Officer

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider and endorse a range of business support options to provide assistance to the community impacted by COVID-19.

Consideration at Committee

2. Following consideration of an item of urgent business by the Future Melbourne Committee on 17 March 2020, the Committee resolved the following:

1. *That the Future Melbourne Committee:*

- 1.1. *Requests management (subject to any resolution required by Council):*

- 1.1.1. *Plan and host a virtual COVID-19 Business Support Summit in partnership with the Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services, relevant Federal Government representatives, Victoria's Chief Health officer and Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.*
- 1.1.2. *Develop a Rates Hardship Policy for consideration at the next Council meeting scheduled for 31 March 2020.*
- 1.1.3. *Implement a Business Concierge Service that will provide direct advice, support and process navigation to businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19.*
- 1.1.4. *Develop a proposal to support businesses to undertake training and development to increase and enhance worker capability and better prepare for return to business activities.*
- 1.1.5. *Allocates \$500,000 through the Small Business Grants Program and runs a special grant round as soon as practical to assist small businesses within the City of Melbourne to enhance their e-commerce delivery and online capacity.*
- 1.1.6. *Investigate one-off small capital grants for business improvement works or asset replacement/upgrades for consideration at the next Council meeting scheduled for 31 March 2020.*
- 1.1.7. *Suspend fees associated with Food Act registrations and street trading permits for a period of three months from April-June 2020 (Approximately \$700,000).*
- 1.1.8. *Working with the Arts and Entertainment Industry, identify opportunities for artists (focussing on small and/or sole trader arts and culture entertainers impacted by cancelations of lost opportunities) to be supported for online performances.*
- 1.1.9. *In preparation for recovery and at the appropriate time, bring to a future FMC meeting a retail marketing and events stimulus proposal.*

- 1.1.10. *Working with relevant agencies, trader representative groups, and peak bodies, prepare marketing, advertising and communications to ensure small business operators are fully aware of business concierge and support packages.*
 - 1.1.11. *Provide rent relief of 50 per cent for the period April-June 2020 for eligible tenants of City of Melbourne owned premises based on established criteria and advocate for other landowners within the municipality to provide rent relief or favourable rent terms to their tenants.*
 - 1.1.12. *Provide one-off cleaning support services for businesses as part of the initiative described below in 1.3.*
 - 1.2. *Requests the Board of the Queen Victoria Market PTY LTD to consider rent relief for affected tenants and stall-holders.*
 - 1.3. *Notes that as a result of immediate impacts of COVID-19 on part-time and casual employees, the Chief Executive Officer, in partnership with Spotless, has commenced offering alternate opportunities to affected staff to deliver services to improve city cleaning, presentation and amenity.*
3. Paragraphs 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.1.9, 1.1.10, 1.1.12, 1.2 and 1.3 of the resolution above will be dealt with under delegation.
 4. Paragraphs 1.1.2, 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 require a resolution of Council.
 5. Paragraphs 1.1.7 and 1.1.11 are addressed as part of the new General Financial Hardship Policy 2020.
 6. In addition, the recommendation below also addresses points 1.1.4 in relation to training and development and 1.1.8 in relation to the Arts and Entertainment Industry.

Recommendation

7. That Council:
 - 7.1 Adopts the Rates Financial Hardship Policy 2020 (refer Attachment 1) and the General Financial Hardship Policy 2020 (refer Attachment 2).
 - 7.2 Adopts the Quick Response Business Grants Program (refer Attachment 3), including allocation of \$5,000,000 to the Program, comprising three grant streams:
 - 7.2.1 \$2,000,000 for enhancement to e-commerce delivery and online capacity.
 - 7.2.2 \$1,000,000 for training and development to increase and enhance worker capability and prepare for return to business activities.
 - 7.2.3 \$2,000,000 for one-off small capital grants for business improvement works or asset replacement/upgrades.
 - 7.3 Adopts the Quick Response Arts Grants Program to support the Arts and Entertainment Industry (refer Attachment 4), including allocation of \$2,000,000 to the program.

Attachments:

1. Rates Financial Hardship Policy 2020 (Page 3 of 21)
2. General Financial Hardship Policy 2020 (Page 9 of 21)
3. Quick Response Business Grants – Funding Guidelines (Page 16 of 21)
4. Quick Response Arts Grants – Funding Guidelines (Page 19 of 21)



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Rates Financial Hardship Policy 2020

Effective Date 26 March 2020

Version 1

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Policy statement

Municipal rates constitute the majority of Council's annual income. Municipal rates are raised in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and provide a number of options through which payments can be made.

Council recognises that managing financial hardship is a shared responsibility. Sections 170, 171 and 171A of the Act give Council the power to defer and / or waive in part or whole the payment of rates and charges if Council determines the enforcement of the requirement to pay would cause hardship to the ratepayer.

The purpose of this Policy is to enable a person liable for rates and charges, and experiencing hardship, to make application to Council for assistance relating to rates and charges levied on a property under the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act).

The Policy defines hardship and provides the framework and guidelines to Council, in accordance with the Act, relating to the possible granting of a deferral of the payment of levied rates or charges, or waiver of part or all of those levied rates and charges.

The difference between a deferral and waiver is that:

- a. A deferral suspends payment for a period of time
- b. A waiver permanently exempts payment of the fee or charge under discussion

Due to the Act, this Policy only provides assistance to the ratepayers who meet the following criteria:

- a. For waiver of rates – a ratepayer of a residential property who is also the owner occupier
- b. For deferment of rates – both residential and commercial ratepayers
- c. For suspension, reduction or waiving of interest charges – both residential and commercial ratepayers

1.0 Objectives of the hardship policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. To provide assistance to ratepayers experiencing financial hardship.
- b. To provide a mechanism that enables people to feel comfortable approaching Council about outstanding debts or current financial hardship circumstances.
- c. To provide ratepayers with assurance they will be treated in a consistent, equitable and confidential manner.
- d. To ensure the policy is fair to all ratepayers.
- e. To ensure Council's debt collection practices are sensitive and responsive to financial hardship issues.
- f. To demonstrate Council's constructive culture and core values.

2.0 Principles for hardship policy

- a. Early identification - successful financial hardship programs have good identification and communication strategies, including proactive material on council websites and rates notices.
- b. Support for our ratepayers - Council will encourage ratepayers to utilise financial counselling, legal and other supporting services.
- c. Equity - ensuring the extent of assistance does not have a unfair impact on other ratepayers.
- d. Fairness - legal action to recover debt should be a last resort.

3.0 Financial hardship criterion

For the purpose of this policy, financial hardship is considered a change in circumstances which will affect the long term ability of a ratepayer to pay rates and charges.

Council recognises that not all circumstances are alike, and that financial hardship may arise from a range of individual circumstances, including but not limited to, the following situations:

- a. unemployment
- b. sickness or injury
- c. family break down
- d. low income or loss of income

4.0 Rate Deferment

Section 170 of the Act provides for rate deferment.

Ratepayers may have rates deferred (although rates and charges will continue to be levied).

In all applications for rate deferrals, the applicant will be encouraged to continue to pay the portion of rates that is affordable given their individual circumstances. This will be mutually agreed on a case-by-case basis.

5.0 Payment arrangement

A payment arrangement is a schedule of payments that is established with Council of an agreed amount and frequency. These arrangements are made with the following in mind:

- a. a ratepayer has demonstrated a genuine effort to meet obligations in the past.
- b. a payment arrangement should be set with a known end date that clears the debt within an agreed timeframe.
- c. penalty interest will be charged on outstanding balances, but a waiver of interest charges (partial or whole) may be approved, or offered as an incentive for earlier settlement of the debt.
- d. repeated payment defaults may result in cancellation of the arrangement and initiation of recovery action for unpaid debt.
- e. it is the applicants responsibility to communicate with Council should further hardship barriers to payment be experienced.

6.0 Waiver of interest charges

Interest is charged on overdue rates and charges in accordance with Section 172 of the Act. Interest is calculated at the rate fixed under section 2 of the *Penalty Interest Rates Act* 1983 that applied on the first day of July immediately before the due date for the payment.

A ratepayer may request a suspension or waiver of interest accruals for financial hardship. This should be accompanied by sufficient written evidence to support the hardship claim.

Interest waiver /deferment primarily fall under three key categories:

Administrative waiver

Ratepayers may have interest waived in the event of an administrative issue, error or omission which has caused or significantly contributed to the failure to pay rates in a timely manner.

Waiver on compassionate grounds

Compassionate grounds include:

- a. serious illness
- b. recent accident or injury
- c. death of an immediate family member
- d. recent loss of employment

Financial hardship

Financial hardship arises in an array of circumstances and includes:

- a. unemployment
- b. sickness or injury
- c. family break down
- d. low income or loss of income

7.0 Exceptional circumstances – rate reduction or waiver

Sections 171 and 171A of the Act provide for a waiver of rates.

Council's preference is to not waive rates or charges on the basis it is considered inequitable for the majority of ratepayers to subsidise the property assets of hardship applicants. A more equitable solution for the entire community is to defer rates and charges.

However, Council will consider the waiving or reduction of rates for certain cohorts of ratepayers where exceptional circumstances are experienced, and where severe impact can be demonstrated.

Consideration of a waiver can only occur if all financial information has been disclosed to Council with supporting documentation as may be requested.

8.0 What is not financial hardship?

Council frequently enters into short term payment extensions with rate payers. Although scenarios in which this form of assistance is granted could be a precursor to financial hardship, Council would generally not categorise this as 'hardship assistance'. In these circumstances, Council would monitor progress towards clearing the debt within the specified time. If the debt is not cleared, further assistance may be considered. Interest is accrued on arrears after due dates.

9.0 Application procedure

In the case of hardship, a request of assistance from Council must be made in writing, including the details of the circumstances preventing the ratepayer from meeting their financial obligation to Council.

Council will consider the request for financial hardship and advise its decision in writing within 14 days of receiving an application for financial hardship consideration, subject to all relevant information being provided.

Depending on the number and complexity of applications received, Council may utilise external organisations that employ qualified financial counsellors to undertake financial hardship assessments.

A ratepayer may request a review of the Council decision by outlining the grounds for the review. This must be in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer.

10.0 Confidentiality

Applications for financial hardship will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.



CITY OF MELBOURNE

General Financial Hardship Policy 2020

Effective Date 26 March 2020

Version 1

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1.0 Policy statement

Permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges) constitute a significant portion of Council's annual income. Permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges) are raised in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and provide a number of options through which payments can be made.

Sections 113(3) and 142 of the Act give Council the power to defer and/or waive in part or whole the payment of permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges).

The purpose of this Policy is to enable a Person or a Body liable for permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges) and experiencing hardship to make application to Council for assistance relating to permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges) levied under the Act.

The Policy

- defines permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges)
- defines hardship, and
- provides the framework and guidelines to Council,

in accordance with the Act, relating to the possible granting of a deferral of the payment of levied fees or charges (including payment plans), and waiver of part or all of those levied fees and charges.

The difference between a deferral and waiver is that:

- a. A deferral suspends payment for a period of time
- b. A waiver permanently exempts payment of the permits, licenses, fees and charges (other than rates and charges) under discussion

Council recognises that managing hardship is a shared responsibility and offers flexible payment arrangements for Person or a Body experiencing hardship.

2.0 Definitions

In this policy –

Permits, licenses, fees, charges or rent means –

All other user fees and money owing to City of Melbourne that does not include

- rates and charges
- parking infringement

Financial Hardship means –

For a Person: Severe suffering or privation which could be brought on by unemployment, sickness, family breakdown, lower income, loss of income

For a Body: Severe financial suffering due to a Force Majeure Event which could be brought on by at least 25% decline in turnover compared to the same period last financial year

Person means –

An individual who has attained the age of 18 years but does not include a corporation or a Council or any other body incorporated or constituted by or under the Act or any public statutory corporation.

Body means –

A business that meets City of Melbourne definition of Small Business or Medium Business for the purpose of this policy.

Force Majeure Event means –

Any circumstances not within the reasonable control of the Body affected, but only if and to the extent that:

- i. such circumstance, despite the exercise of reasonable diligence and the observance of good business conduct, cannot be or be caused to be, prevented, avoided or removed by such Body, and
- ii. such circumstance, materially and adversely affects the ability of the Body to perform business as usual, and such Body has taken all reasonable precautions, due care and reasonable alternative measures in order to avoid the Financial Hardship effect of such event, and to mitigate the consequences thereof.

Instances of Force Majeure includes:

- i. Natural Force Majeure events
 - o Fire, chemical or radioactive contamination, earthquake, lightning, cyclones, hurricanes, floods, droughts or such other extreme weather or environmental conditions, unanticipated geological or ground conditions
 - o Epidemic, pandemic, famine, plague or other natural calamities
- ii. Government Direction Force Majeure events
 - o Declaration of state of emergency in Victoria
 - o Any ban or prohibition adversely impacting the business
- iii. Other Force Majeure events
 - o Explosion, accident, breakage of a plant or equipment, structural collapse, or chemical contamination not caused by the Body or one of its contractors or subcontractors or any of their respective employees or agents
 - o Strikes, lockouts, work stoppage, labour disputes and such other industrial action by workers not caused by the workers of the Body
 - o Acts of terrorists, blockade, embargo, riot, public disorder, violent demonstrations, rebellion, and sabotage

That takes place within the City of Melbourne

Small Business means a registered business (ABN/ACN) that meets all the following criteria –

- i. a business that employs between 0 and 19 employees,
- ii. a business that has aggregated turnover of less than \$1 million per annum,
- iii. a business that is not a subsidiary or associate of a medium or large business, and
- iv. a business that is not a superannuation or trust fund

Medium Business means a registered business (ABN/ACN) that meets all the following criteria –

- i. a business that employs between 20 and 199 employees,
- ii. a business that has aggregated turnover of less than \$5 million per annum,
- iii. a business that is not a subsidiary or associate of a large business, and
- iv. a business that is not a superannuation or trust fund

3.0 Objectives of the hardship policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Provide assistance to Persons and Bodies experiencing financial hardship.
- b) Provide a mechanism that enables Persons and Bodies to feel comfortable approaching Council about current hardship circumstances.
- c) Provide Persons and Bodies with assurance they will be treated in a consistent, equitable and confidential manner.
- d) Provide Persons and Bodies with clearly defined options when applying for a deferment or waiver of fees and charges.
- e) Provide a transparent decision making framework for Council officers when assessing hardship claims.

- f) Ensure the policy is fair to all Persons and Bodies.
- g) Ensure Council's debt collection practices are sensitive and responsive to financial hardship issues.
- h) Demonstrate Council's constructive culture and core values.

4.0 Principles for hardship policy

Financial hardship may arise for a range of reasons, as not all circumstances are alike, and is often where the Person or Body would like to pay, but is unable to due to one or a combination of those reasons. To accept a claim for hardship, it is important to adopt the following principles:

- a) early identification - successful hardship programs have good identification and communication strategies, including proactive material on Council websites
- b) support for Persons - Council will encourage Persons or Bodies to utilise financial counselling, legal and other supporting services
- c) payment plan/extensions – Council are able to offer payment plans and/or extensions in order to assist the Person to clear the amount outstanding.
- d) fairness

5.0 Payment reduction, waiver, refund or deferral

Section 113(3) of the Act provided for a reduction, waiver or refund of payment of fees that are raised in accordance with a local law for a Person or Body and Section 142 gives power to defer or waive payments by a Person which may cause hardship.

Section 113 and 142 of the Act:

113 Permits, licences, fees and charges:

- (3) *If a local law provides for a reduction, waiver or refund, in whole or in part, of a fee, the reduction, waiver or refund may be expressed to apply—*
 - (a) *subject to specified conditions or in the discretion of any specified person or body; and*
 - (b) *either generally or specifically—*
 - (i) *in respect of certain matters or transactions or classes of matters or transactions; or*
 - (ii) *in respect of certain documents or classes of documents; or*
 - (iii) *when an event happens; or*
 - (iv) *in respect of certain persons or classes of persons; or*
 - (v) *in respect of any combination of matters, transactions, documents, events or persons.*

142 Power to defer or waive payments

- (1) *A Council may waive the payment by a person of the whole or part of any money payable by the person to the Council for a particular purpose or as a condition of any agreement or arrangement which has not been performed or which has been only partly performed whether by that person or the Council.*
- (2) *Subsection (3) applies—*
 - (a) *to a person who owes any money (other than rates and charges) to a Council for any act, matter or thing done by the Council or for a particular purpose or as a condition of any agreement or arrangement; and*
 - (b) *if the Council considers that the payment of the money would cause hardship to the person.*
- (3) *The Council may—*
 - (a) *defer the payment of the whole or any part of the money and the interest or any part of the interest payable on that money for the period and subject to any conditions determined by the Council; or*
 - (b) *waive the payment of the whole or any part of the money and the interest or any part of the interest payable on that money; or*
 - (c) *waive the payment of the whole or any part of the interest payable on the money.*

In all applications for fees and monies owing deferral/waiver, the applicant will be encouraged to continue to pay the portion of the fees and charges that is affordable given their individual circumstances. This will be mutually agreed on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a deferral, if approved, the balance of fees and charges owing will be deferred for a period of up to 6 months at which time a review will be carried out with the Person to determine the Person's circumstances.

Payment reduction, waiver, refund or deferral of fees or rent raised outside of local laws: Council will consider a payment reduction, waiver, refund or deferral of fees or rent raised outside of local laws for a Person or a Body.

For a Person:

- A Person must demonstrate a case of Financial Hardship
- Council can waive, reduce or defer the payment of the whole or in part and the interest that may be applicable

For a Body:

- A Body must demonstrate a case of Financial Hardship
- To apply for a reduction, waiver or refund of the relevant fees raised in accordance with a local law, the Body must meet City of Melbourne's definition of Small Business as defined in this policy
- To apply for a reduction, waiver, deferral or refund of the relevant fees or rent raised outside of local law (e.g. a lease in accordance to Section 190 of the Act), the Body must meet City of Melbourne's definition of Small Business or Medium Business as defined in this policy
- Council can reduce, waive, defer or refund, in whole or in part, the relevant fees or rent

6.0 Payment arrangement

A payment arrangement is a schedule of payments that is negotiated with Council to establish an agreed amount and a payment frequency. These arrangements are made with the following in mind:

- a. A Person has demonstrated a genuine effort to meet obligations in the past.
- b. A payment arrangement should be set with a known end date that clears the debt within an agreed timeframe.
- c. Repeated payment defaults may result in cancellation of the arrangement and initiation of recovery action for unpaid debt.

Payment arrangement for infringement notices (other than parking infringement that is not covered in this Policy) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

7.0 Application procedure

In the case of hardship, a request for assistance from Council must be made in writing, including the details of the circumstances preventing the Person or Body from meeting their financial obligation to Council.

A fully completed *Financial Hardship Consideration Application Form* and supporting documentation must be submitted to Council.

Council will consider the request for financial hardship and advise its decision in writing within 14 days (for a Person) or within 21 days (for a Body) of receiving an application for financial hardship consideration, subject to all relevant information being provided.

Depending on the number and complexity of applications received, Council may utilise external organisations that employ qualified financial counsellors to undertake financial hardship assessments.

A Person or Body may request a review of the Council decision by outlining the grounds for the review. This must be in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer.

8.0 Confidentiality

Applications for financial hardship will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

QUICK RESPONSE BUSINESS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Objectives

The quick response business grants provide financial assistance to eligible businesses affected by COVID-19. Three programs are available to support businesses to:

1. invest in **capital works** during this challenging time and position their business to strongly benefit from the economic recovery when it happens.
2. develop their **online and e-commerce** capabilities;
3. undertake **training and professional development** to better prepare for return to business activities.

What we fund

Program	What we fund	Funding available
1. Capital works grants	Costs associated with capital works used to produce income, including in any of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equipment, including major catering, processing and production equipment; • business fittings, including retail, wholesale, and hospitality shopfittings; • physical alterations, including remodeling of premises; • IT and software; 	Up to \$10,000 (excluding GST) on a matching dollar for dollar basis.
2. Online and e-commerce grants	Costs associated with online and e-commerce activities, including the purchase of hardware, software and services in any of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website design and development; • e-commerce platforms (selling online and receiving payments); • online content development (web pages, mobile apps, audio and visual media); • digital marketing and promotion; • mentoring and training in online and e-commerce activities. 	Up to \$5,000 (excluding GST).
3. Training and professional development	Costs associated with increasing and enhancing worker capability to better prepare for return to business activities. Suitable professional development activities can include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online learning, webinars; • attendance at training courses, seminars, workshops, forums or conferences; • in-house courses delivered by an external provider or other training. 	Up to \$2,000 (excluding GST).

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding applications must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- employ fewer than 50 FTE employees at the time of application, in exceptional circumstances applications above this number of employees will be considered in the hospitality and tourism sectors;
- be located within the City of Melbourne municipality; and
- demonstrate how the grant will help support business in response to the impact of COVID-19.

Applicants that will be procuring from local suppliers in the City of Melbourne for their proposal will be favourably considered. It is expected the proposed activity will be completed within eight months and preference will be given to those that can be completed in shorter time frame.

QUICK RESPONSE BUSINESS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

General ineligibility

The program will not support:

- businesses located outside the City of Melbourne municipality
- organisations that are political organisations or that have a political purpose, government departments of agencies, foundations or grant making bodies, or have a primary focus on fundraising;
- Activity or organisations that denigrate, exclude or offend parts of the community;
- organisations that have an outstanding debt to the City of Melbourne or that have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with City of Melbourne;
- current City of Melbourne employees, immediate families and their contractors.

In addition, canvassing or lobbying of Councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne in relation to any grant application is prohibited during the application process. The City of Melbourne reserves the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the eligibility criteria.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Key dates

- Applications open – 26 March 2020, 9.00am.
- Assessment - applications will be assessed on an ongoing basis and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable.

How to apply

1. Register online at [SmartyGrants](#)
2. Complete and submit your application online via SmartyGrants. Submit one application only.
3. On submission, you will receive a submission acknowledgement receipt from SmartyGrants.

Assessment process

- Applications are assessed by City of Melbourne staff and peer reviewed. The City of Melbourne reserves the right to request further information in considering any application.
- Applications are kept confidential and the application details will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process, however a short summary of the application activity will be utilised in briefings to Council and the list of successful applicants will be published on the City of Melbourne's website.
- All funding decisions are final.

Terms and conditions for successful applicants

Successful applicants are required to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- sign a letter of agreement detailing the grant obligations;
- submit an acquittal report evidencing the invoices and receipts for the funding approved and demonstrate how the grant helped support the business in response to the impact of COVID-19.

QUICK RESPONSE BUSINESS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

Support and assistance

- **Immediate support for businesses:** for immediate assistance please contact our business concierge service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for Business Concierge) or visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/business for more information on our economic activation package.
- **Contact us about the grant program:** Businesses are encouraged to contact a Council Officer to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit a grant application. Email businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au and an Officer will call you.
- **Technical support:** Refer to the Help Guide or contact the SmartyGrants support desk 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au
- **Translation services:** Our multilingual information telephone service provides access to translators and information in different languages.
- **Accessibility for applicants with disability:** Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to contact the grants team to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application. If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, contact us via the National Relay Service 133 677.

QUICK RESPONSE ARTS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Objectives

The key objective of the quick response grants is to provide financial assistance to eligible artists affected by COVID-19 in the Arts and Entertainment Industry, who are sole artists or a small arts organisation who are impacted by cancellations and lost opportunities. The grants are to support online performances or activities that can be shared with the public in a quick and accessible manner, or to support the development of new work.

The two grant types are referred to hereafter as “online presentation” and “development”.

What we fund

Council will provide one off grants up to \$4,000 (excluding GST) to eligible individual artists or small arts organisation across all art forms for costs associated with online presentation of newly created activities that would have been presented in the City of Melbourne, or for the development of new work. These may include costs associated with:

- Artist fees
- Digital and on line materials or tools to create the new broadcast or streamed activity
- Promotion of the activity
- Materials required to deliver the activity or development

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding applications must:

- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- Be an artist or artists practicing (which could be a small arts organisation), working and regularly presenting in the City of Melbourne, this includes emerging, mid-career or established creatives;
- Express creative excellence and experimentation or creative collaborations;

Additionally, to be eligible for an “online presentation” grant type, applications must:

- Upload the work or activity presentation within one to six weeks;
- Describe how the on line presentation of your work or activity will help support your practice.

Or, to be eligible for a “development” grant type, applications must:

- Provide a description of the proposed work to be undertaken and the aspiration for how the artist envisages the work might be presented within the City of Melbourne if the opportunity arises.

QUICK RESPONSE ARTS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

General ineligibility

The program will not support:

- artists or arts organisations that are party-political or that whose purpose is primarily political, government departments of agencies, foundations or grant making bodies, or have a primary focus on fundraising;
- artists or arts organisations or applications that seek to exclude or offend parts of the community;
- artists or arts organisations that have an outstanding debt to the City of Melbourne or that have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with City of Melbourne;
- current City of Melbourne employees, immediate families and their contractors; and
- artists who are currently supported by the City of Melbourne through a funding program for the same concept and/or activity; and

In addition canvassing or lobbying of Councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne is prohibited. The City of Melbourne reserves the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the eligibility criteria.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

Key dates 2020

Applications open – 26 March 9.00am

Applications cycle will continue until all the funding pool is utilised

Assessment will occur as applications are lodged by administration and external expert(s)

Notification of outcomes will occur weekly

How to apply

- Register online at [SmartyGrants](#)
- Complete and submit your application online via SmartyGrants. Submit one application only.
- On submission, you will receive an application acknowledgement receipt from SmartyGrants.

Assessment process

On line applications will be assessed in priority of the experienced disruption to the artist who planned to present their work in the City of Melbourne. Administration and external experts will assess applications.

- Applications are assessed by City of Melbourne staff and external expert(s) and reserves the right to request further information if required.
- Applications are assessed as they have been submitted.
- Applications are kept confidential and the application details will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process.
- All funding decisions are final.
- Unsuccessful applicants can make additional submissions after an assessment cycle

QUICK RESPONSE ARTS GRANTS - FUNDING GUIDELINES

Terms and conditions for successful applicants

Successful applicants are required to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- Sign a letter of agreement detailing the grant obligations;
- For “online presentation” grants type: Upload the new broadcast or streamed activity to an agreed City of Melbourne site/portal;
- For “development” grants type: Present a report demonstrating the work undertaken, and any efforts taken to program or plan for the presentation or performance of the work at an appropriate time.

Grant payment terms are subject to receipt of a signed letter of agreement and tax invoice with an Australian Business Number (ABN). The City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet project costs.

Support and assistance

- Contact us about the grant program: Contact a Council Officer via email [Micdev@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:micdev@melbourne.vic.gov.au)
- Technical support: Refer to the Help Guide or contact the SmartyGrants support desk 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au
- Translation services: Our multilingual information telephone service provides access to translators and information in different languages.
- Accessibility for applicants with disability: Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to contact the grants team to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application. If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, contact us via the National Relay Service 133 677.