



TOOLKIT FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

A practical guide to grant writing for community organisations and sporting clubs.

WHAT ARE GRANTS?

Grants are funds received from voluntary, philanthropic or statutory agencies that have been established with the purpose of giving grants. Either to meet their own objectives and strategies, such as government policy, community development, or the needs of the community.

The biggest providers of grants are the different levels of government:

- **Federal Government** - Federal Government funding is often focused on elite sport and facility development.
- **State Government** – tends to fund facility development. State Government also offer grants to community groups which compliment government priorities (for example, women and girls, diversity and inclusion), and supporting programs, projects and events within the State (especially in rural areas and to build capacity of volunteers at grassroots levels).
- **Local Government (Council/Shires)** – LGAs offer grants for a variety of purposes, such as allocating amounts to improving community facilities, and smaller grants aimed at community groups and local organisations, building community/activation activities.

Other entities offer grants to community organisations:

- **Statutory Bodies** – statutory bodies, such as FRRR, VicHealth, will offer grants often focused on participation.
- **Philanthropic Trusts & Foundations** – trusts and foundations are established for funding programs and projects that serve a particular purpose. Donors contribute to the trust to fund projects and receive a tax deduction for their donation.
- **Commercial Organisations** – as part of their intent to connect with community, commercial organisations offer, grants funding for clubs to support growth and sustainability.



- **Local organisations** – such as Into our Hands, Give Wangaratta, Gary Nash, Inland Rail, Glenrowan Solar Farm offer community grants

Grants are not the same as sponsorship or fundraising; there are a strict set of criteria that an organisation must meet to qualify for a grant. It's important to complete all application forms thoroughly with as much detail as asked for.

UNDERSTANDING GRANT TERMINOLOGY AND CRITERIA

This section is designed to give you some clues about common terminology used in grant guidelines and some suggestions on how you might respond to key questions:

Eligibility / Who Can Apply – Usually very clear cut. If you're not eligible, do not proceed without a partner or auspice that is eligible. Common inclusions in eligibility statements are 'incorporated body', 'not for profit', 'rural' or 'regional', or a 'Deductible Gift Recipient' (DGR) in the case of philanthropic funds/grants.

Philanthropic Funds – Are derived via donations or bequests to a charitable fund and distributed to specific projects/organisations usually with DGR status i.e. those that can receive donations and offer tax deductions. Sporting clubs don't usually have DGR but could partner with a group that does e.g. church.

Funding Objectives – This defines what the grant is for and your project needs to line up with and contribute to this objective.

Target Group – This refers to the group the funding is trying to support e.g. people with a disability, older adults. Your project must engage or support the nominated group if specified.

Project Reach – This refers to how many people, how far and wide your project will impact. Your project does not have to be widespread to have broad reach though e.g. you can increase the reach by sharing any resources developed or learning with other like agencies.

Disadvantage – When grants give preference to areas of disadvantage, find out what that refers to. To evidence your area as disadvantaged, you can use:

- **SEIFA Index** (Socio Economic Index for Areas) – you can access this from [SEIFA](#).
- **Local Demographics** – Australian Bureau of Statistics, local government to determine prevalence of target group in the area. [Search Census data | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- **Rurally Isolated** - indicate distance to major centres and services.

Sustainability – Refers to your project's ability to demonstrate how it could continue after the funding is over. For example, this could be achieved by charging a fee to use next time, being able to



re-use materials or attracting other fund sources. Some things can be sustainable without money – e.g. resources developed, relationships, infrastructure, learning, environment.

Plan - Your project plan should include the steps you will take to implement your project include timelines, benchmarks, who will undertake the tasks. This can be provided in a table or Excel format

Evaluation - Refers to how you identify whether the project has been successful or not against the objectives set by the grant provider. It can use measures such as the number of participants, participant feedback, visual displays etc. Note it is a good idea to include your evaluation measures in your project plan.

Partnerships - Real partnerships are more than just a sign off. In your grant application you should demonstrate the strength of your partnership (for example) joint planning, roles and responsibilities of each and how the partners will communicate e.g. meet monthly.

PREPARING A GRANT APPLICATION

To be successful, applications need to be well-prepared and written clearly. Grant applications must usually demonstrate that the project in question is feasible, and meets the appropriate policy goals or priorities of the particular grant agency.

Although specific criteria may vary with each grant scheme, most grant applications require similar types of information:

- Contact information.
- Program/project description.
- Brief description of the organisation applying.
- Program/project budget.
- Amount of assistance requested.
- All other sources of funding for the project.
- How the applicant organisation meets the grant criteria.
- Guarantee that the program will proceed, and monies received will be spent on the purpose for which the money was given.
- Copies of the latest annual report and a copy of the audited financial statements.

What do funders want to see?

The following are presented as a list of key details a funder is looking to see in a grant application:

Alignment - The funder wants to see alignment between the objective of the particular grant, and the club's submission.



Defined Problem with Solutions - The funder is looking for a clearly set out list of:

- The problem.
- The impact.
- Solutions.
- Benefits.
- Performance measures.

Evidence - The funder will always require some form of evidence in relation to the program/idea to support the solutions presented to the problem. These could include local data (current Membership growth, bureau of statistics, LGA demographics), growth predictions or letters of support.

Partnerships - The grant application will need to identify whether the applicant has secured any partnerships to assist in the delivery of the program/idea. Most funders like to see strong community partnership. This not only shows that you have done your research, it also maximises the chances of a successful project.

Impact - The funder wants to see the impact the program/idea will have if delivered – what are the needs it is addressing, what is its reach, and who are the target groups that will be impacted and benefit from the program/idea?

Demonstrating Low Risk - Funders want to ensure that the program/idea is going to be a low risk investment, and to do this, want to see the club is capable, has the requisite skills, and has clear lines of responsibility drawn up for all aspects of management of the initiative.

Value for Money - All funders want to see a solid budget proposal! Many grant applications fail due to poor budget, lack of detail and inconsistency. Itemised project needs assist in demonstrating to the funder that the various components have been considered, and if the grant money is only going to cover part of your project costs, you need to show how you will cover the gap.

Clear Benefits and Value - Finally, the funder wants to clearly see the benefits and value of the program/idea. They want to see how good the benefits will be, and what the value will be to the community. Most organisations offering funding have moved to online applications. If they indicate this is preferable give it a go. The key to successful online applications is to be succinct, and get as much relevant information across within the word limits.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY GRANT WRITING

The following are presented as key tips to consider for successfully applying for grants:

- The most important part of any application is **READING THE GUIDELINES**, following them to the letter, and ensuring that you do actually meet the criteria for the grant – some grant makers receive up to 30% of applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria.
- Determine what purpose the funds are being raised for.
- Identify potential grant sources.
- Write the grant application.
- Ensure the acquired funds are being used for the designated purpose.
- Complete all reporting and acquittal requirements.
- Maintain relationships with grant agencies.
- Be honest, open and realistic.
- You need to understand the grant provider – such as their priorities, vision, mission, values, policies, plans, past initiatives, past successful grant applications. A good starting point for these details is their websites and annual reports. This information may not always be readily available, but the more you can find out, the better you can match your application to their objectives.
- You must tailor your grant applications specifically to meet the objectives of the grant provider. If you can't meet the objectives of the grant provider, STOP. Don't waste your time applying for that grant. Be clear about why you need the money (for example, to run a community event, a short-term project or buy equipment). It is also beneficial to use the words and language adopted by the funding body. For example, if the funder wants to see community engagement strategies, then call your activities community engagement instead of consultation or community conversations. It may seem obvious, but don't assume the person assessing your application can easily identify the connection. Make it easy and obvious for them to see how you are meeting their objectives.
- Keep your answers succinct and within the word limit: Grants Programs receive hundreds of applications each year, and the panel of judges are tasked with reading each one of them. Your application should be straight to the point and clear and concise, so the panel do not miss vital information. To keep track of word limits when applying online, use a separate platform to display word count. To keep track of word limits when filling out a hard copy, draft your responses first before writing on the form.
- Be specific, what are you working on. Detail how the grant will directly benefit your



community: Use the form to discuss your projects while highlighting the long-term impact. Be as specific as you can when discussing what funding will be used towards, as funding bodies want to know it's going to be put to good use.

- Save a copy of your application: Applications cannot always be saved in draft form. Make sure to
- save a copy of your submission elsewhere for future reference and in case of technical difficulties.
- Provide all necessary information within the answer sections: Unfortunately, additional material such as websites or linked information packs may not be considered. Be sure to include all information you want reviewed within the word limit.
- Write persuasively: We want to hear why you need a grant, so the application should be persuasive and give us a good understanding of your group or organisation, the need for funding and why the project or work is worthy of a share of the funding.
- If there are percentages associated with the answers, take note and answer accordingly. For example, don't put a lot of time or detail into an answer that only scores at 5%.
- Consider appointing a dedicated person or establish a committee to run the particular grant application process for the club. The role of such person or committee would be to:
- Have someone else look over your application: Editing and reviewing are important to make sure your points are cohesive and clear. It is also an effective way to check hyperlinks and remove duplicate information. Review all available information

You may need an auspice?

Check to make sure your organisation has the right structure to receive grant money. If necessary, identify other groups or organisations who may be able to contribute to your idea. (for example, venue, promotion and publicity, food, administration).

- An auspice is an organisation that is financially set up to receive funds. It could be a not for profit organisation or a local government body.
- The auspice will receive the grant money and will provide you with the funds.
- The funding agreement will be between the auspice and the funding body.
- Sometimes the auspice will take a portion of the funds to manage the funding on your
- behalf. Discuss this with them right at the beginning to be clear!
- If you want an organisation to auspice you, you must obtain their consent cooperation.



- Make sure you have a written agreement with the auspice and be clear about terms and conditions, roles and responsibilities.

A grant application is generally viewed far more favourably if the club is able to contribute their own funds, or source funds, in some way.

- Be aware of word limits.
- Make sure a solid governance/management framework is in place to manage the project.
- Include any relevant MOUs, signed letters of agreement, Council leases as attachments with your application. Make it clear that the documented framework is in place already.
- Have a clear understanding of timeframes – decide on when you want your project to commence, and ensuring grant timelines align with your project commencement date (remember, grant applications are not processed straight away – allow time).
- Outline a risk management plan. Address the various risks that are relevant for the particular project, and how the club will address these should they arise.
- Ensure you provide a realistic and detailed budget with contingencies.
- What are your plans once the grant money is used up? Grants are usually for short term projects. Funders want to know how you will make sure that the project is sustainable.
- Don't leave submission of the grant application until the last minute and allow for IT errors. Save word copies just in case!
- Attend workshops to enhance/refresh your project management skills. Some Councils run workshops when the grants are released to explain certain elements they are looking for. Additionally, if you have a budget, you can invite a training provider to come to your organisation or group to assist with the grant writing process.
- If you are applying for a Council grant, discuss your project or idea with the relevant area (for example, arts & culture, environment or healthy communities etc) and tap into their
- skills. They won't be able to write the application for you, but can give you invaluable information and support.
- Access free online resources. There are plenty on the internet!



Beyond the above, the following may also be useful for clubs to be on the ball when it comes to grants:

- To have a detailed budget including any forecasted expenditure increases so that membership fees can be set in line with club costs.
- Make a 'wish list' of all the new developments, equipment, resources, program offerings or facility improvements the club would like to achieve throughout a given year if the club could get hold of some funding. Identify from the 'wish list' the items that are grant worthy, what could be sponsored and the types of things that need fundraising.
- Talk around the club and publish in the newsletter the sorts of things the Committee would like to achieve in a given season - it may be that there is a potential sponsor within the club who may just be stimulated to come out of the woodwork.
- Identify a few people who have some know how to keep an eye out for any grants that would support an item on the 'wish list'. Their role is to alert the Committee and support the submission write up.
- Keep a calendar of grants - any number of grants re-occur at the same time each year so you can predict in some cases and get your case ready in good time.
- If you see other clubs that have undertaken things that you would like to achieve, ask a representative how they went about it.
- If there are things on your 'wish list' that you could see benefiting another group or club, start building the relationship and discuss partnerships.
- Keep electronic copies of the grant applications you submit to cut and paste from.
- If you are unsuccessful at getting a particular grant, seek some feedback from the funding agency.
- Request application forms well before the closing date.
- Prepare the application in advance.
- Submit applications before the closing date.



It's very rare for clubs to be successful with ALL of their club grant applications. It is not uncommon for many clubs' success rates to be as low as 1 in 4. It's a very competitive process!

For all clubs, it is important to keep persisting – seek feedback from grant organisations if you are not successful – find out why and where you can improve. You can also seek feedback and support from your critical friends, local government, other clubs, and local associations, to better your application.

Ultimately, it is important to create a story – who your club is and what is your purpose.

We have prepared the resource, 'Key Considerations for Grant Application', that contains a list of questions that your club should be able to answer prior to commencing the process of compiling the formal grant application. This resource is designed as an exercise for clubs to work through to identify the key components of the application.

FURTHER HELP

There are a number of ways to keep in touch with the grants available:

- Google organisations and associated grants (*for example, multi-cultural grants programs*).
- Google associated Philanthropic Trusts & Foundations (*for example, arts funding*).
- Contact Rural City of Wangaratta - communitygrants@wangaratta.vic.gov.au
- Contact state or federal departments - google websites for available grants

National websites

[Grants and funding | ASC](#)

[GrantConnect Homepage: GrantConnect](#)

[Homepage - ourcommunity.com.au](#)

[Funding Centre | Sample EasyGrants newsletter](#)

Victoria

[Funding | VicHealth](#)

[Funding | Sport and Recreation Victoria](#)

[Grants/Opportunities - Vicsport](#)

[Grants and programs | vic.gov.au](#)

[Results - Environment, Land, Water, and Planning](#)

[Community Grants -](#)

[Community Sponsorship Grants - NOW CLOSED Rural City of Wangaratta](#)

[Club Help | Connecting clubs and volunteers](#)