



COMMUNITY GRANTS.

Program Guidelines

Version 3.4 January 2026



IMAGE: Warranor Basketball Club – New basketball training equipment.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their ongoing connection to the land and waters that make up Baw Baw Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders; past, present and emerging. We thank the Traditional Custodians for caring for Country and continuing the customs that maintain the longest practised culture in the world.

Baw Baw Shire Council's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to providing and actively promoting a safe environment for children. Council has zero tolerance towards child abuse, and is committed to protecting the physical, emotional, cultural and social wellbeing of all children. Council has policies and systems to protect children, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously.

Council acknowledges that children's safety is a whole of community responsibility and is everyone's business.



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1. Background

Baw Baw Shire Council has a proud history of working with community groups and volunteers to meet local needs. One of the ways the Council supports these groups is through the Baw Baw Shire Community Grants Program.

This document provides guidance to groups interested in applying for a grant through the program.

Throughout this document, all grant types, including programs, events, equipment purchases, and projects, are referred to as 'projects.'

2. Program objectives

The Community Grants Program aims to support the community to be sustainable, healthy, and thriving. To achieve this, the program will:

- Deliver projects that align with Baw Baw Shire's Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Support and partner with the community to deliver community priorities that improve participation, inclusion, and accessibility.



IMAGE: Warragul Municipal Band – “Training Band” for musical instruments, film favourites music booklets.

3. Funding categories

Category	Overview	Grant funding
Community Projects	<p>Funding to support the delivery of community events, projects, programs, environmental initiatives, and/or the purchase of equipment.</p> <p>Examples of Community Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Initiatives – e.g. nest box installation, garden beds, advocacy. • Event delivery – costs incurred in hiring a venue or equipment, promotion of event, traffic management. • Programs – facilitator, promotion of program, advertising, translations. • Projects – community garden path, design plans, paint a wall. • Equipment purchases – e.g. – portable audio equipment, technology, safety equipment, and freight costs. <p>Two funding rounds are available per year, commencing in February and July.</p> <p>Projects must be completed within six months of the funding agreement being signed unless otherwise negotiated.</p>	<p>\$1- \$5,000</p> <p>(total inclusive of GST if applicable)</p>
Minor Capital Work	<p>Minor Capital Work grants are subject to a two-stage application process, where applicants must complete an Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work Grant application, in May.</p> <p>In June, Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work applications are assessed and applicants with Successful Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work applications are invited to submit a Minor Capital Work grant application in July with consideration of advice received during the Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work process.</p> <p>Examples of Minor Capital Work projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netting behind goal posts. • Goal post installation. • Fencing. • Lighting upgrades. • Playing surface upgrades. • Kitchen upgrades. • Electronic scoreboards, painting a hall, and • Fixed public seating. <p>The Applicant cash contribution must be 25% of the total grant amount and supported by an accepted motion allocating Committee funds to the project in Committee Meeting minutes.</p> <p>Funding for Minor Capital Work projects where the project value does not exceed \$50,000 in total.</p> <p>Projects must be completed within six months of the funding agreement being signed.</p>	<p>\$1- \$10,000</p> <p>(total inclusive of GST if applicable)</p>



4. Program timeframes

4.1 Overview of timelines

Community Project grants

Round One

APPLICATIONS OPEN: First Monday in July.	APPLICATIONS CLOSE: Last Friday in July.
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Round Two

APPLICATIONS OPEN: First Monday in February.	APPLICATIONS CLOSE: Last Friday in February.
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Minor Capital Works grants

Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST MINOR CAPITAL WORK OPEN: First Monday in May.	EXPRESSION OF INTEREST MINOR CAPITAL WORK CLOSE: Last Friday in May.
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Minor Capital Work (by invitation only)

APPLICATIONS OPEN (INVITATION ONLY): First Monday in July.	APPLICATIONS CLOSE (INVITATION ONLY): Last Friday in July.
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Consider carefully the round you will apply in, it may need to be well in advance of your project including event as grant money cannot be spent until the funding agreement is acknowledged and signing and conditions having been met.



IMAGE: Ellinbank Junior Football Netball Club – Goal barrier net.
bawbawshire.vic.gov.au

4.2 Detailed timelines



COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS **ROUND ONE**

Timing	Activity
June – July	<p>Application by appointment open.</p> <p>An application by appointment meeting for a Community Project is a mandatory step in the Community Grants process.</p> <p>All appointments can be done in person, via telephone or online.</p>
First Monday in July	Applications for Community Project grants open.
Last Friday in July	Applications for Community Project grants close.
August – September	Community Project Applications are assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria by an Assessment panel.
September–October	Review and approval of Assessment panel recommendations.
September–October	Notification of successful and unsuccessful applications.
September–October	Funding agreements executed between successful groups and Council, and funds issued upon signing and conditions having been met

COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS **ROUND TWO**

Timing	Activity
January – February	<p>Application by appointment open.</p> <p>An application by appointment meeting for a Community Project is a mandatory step in the Community Grants process.</p> <p>All appointments can be done in person, via telephone or online.</p>
First Monday in February	Applications for Community Project grants open.
Last Friday in February	Applications for Community Project grants close.
March – April	Community Project Applications are assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria by an Assessment panel.
April – May	Review and approval of Assessment panel recommendations.
End of May	Notification of successful and unsuccessful applications.
May – June	Funding agreements executed between successful groups and Council, and funds issued upon signing and conditions having been met.

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST MINOR CAPITAL WORK AND
MINOR CAPITAL WORK GRANTS (BY INVITATION ONLY)**



Timing	Activity
April – May	Application by appointment open. An application by appointment meeting for an Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work is a mandatory step in the Community Grants process. All appointments can be done in person, via telephone or online.
First Monday in May	Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work grant open.
Last Friday in May	Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work grant close.
June	Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work applications are assessed by an Assessment panel. Groups are contacted by Council to discuss the details of the Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work application.
End of June	Groups are advised of the outcome of their Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work application.
First Monday in July	Groups with successful Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work are invited to submit a Minor Capital Work grant application and may be provided with recommended approaches for inclusion in their application.
Last Friday in July	Applications for Minor Capital Work grants close.
August	Applications are assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria by an Assessment panel.
September – October	Review and approval of Assessment panel recommendations.
November – December	Notification of successful and unsuccessful applications.
November – December	Funding agreements executed between successful groups and Council, and funds issued upon signing and conditions having been met.

5. Eligibility

Community organisations can have one open grant application or project at any one time.

In addition, a community organisation could have one open application or project in partnership with another organisation for whom they are acting as an auspice.

5.1 Who can apply for funding?

To be eligible for Community Grants Program funding, applicants must:

- Propose a project located or delivered within the Baw Baw Shire.
- Be a not-for-profit community group, organisation, or club.
- Be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Reforms Act 2012 or supported by another incorporated organisation that will accept legal and financial responsibility for the project (See auspice arrangements section 7.4 for more information.)
- Have public liability insurance with a minimum of \$20 million cover or supported by an auspice organisation with \$20 million cover.
- Comply with Child Safety standards.
- Have complied with all terms and conditions (including a completed project acquittal report), for all previous grants from the Community Grants Program, including the auspice organisation.
- Have no outstanding debts at Baw Baw Shire Council.
- Have written approval in writing from the owner of the land (State or Federal government owned land only) where a community project or a minor capital work project will take place, noting works on privately owned land will not be funded.

5.2 Who cannot apply for funding?

- For-profit applicants or applicants applying for projects or funding to support for-profit activity.
- Community groups, organisations, or clubs that host or promote gambling.
- Schools, kindergartens, and their associated parent groups.
- Health services.
- Government departments, agencies, authorities, and organisations.
- Individuals.

5.3 What can be funded?

- Events, projects, programs, environmental initiatives, and/or equipment purchases that align with the strategic direction of Baw Baw Shire Council's Council Plan and/or Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Costs incurred in hiring a venue, excluding costs associated with renting business premises.
- Materials, printing, advertising, translations, promotional, and freight costs associated with the project.
- Minor Capital Work projects where the total project value is less than \$50,000, e.g., netting behind goal posts, goal post installation, fencing, lighting upgrades, playing surface upgrades, kitchen upgrades, electronic scoreboards, painting a hall, and fixed public seating.

5.4 What will not be funded?

- Items that are part of an organisation's core business or normal operations expenses, e.g., insurance, utilities, rental, staff salaries, or the payment of debts or loans.
- Projects or items that have already been purchased, started or have been completed.
- Purchase of land.
- Projects where the primary focus is to advocate for religion or faith.
- Projects that promote political views.
- Catering, alcohol, fireworks, or firearms.
- Projects that duplicate existing services and programs.
- Baw Baw Shire Council owned or run activities, projects, programs, and events.
- The purchase or repair of used goods or equipment.
- Projects that create a capital improvement for privately owned or rented properties.
- State-wide projects.
- Minor Capital Work projects where applicant cash contributions equal less than 25 percent of the total grant amount. (Note: Projects not involving Minor Capital Work do not require financial contributions).
- Minor Capital Work or equipment for parts of facilities or venues where alcohol is sold, e.g., Club bar areas.

- Minor Capital Work which is not a fixed item.
- Minor Capital Work or Community Projects may be deemed an unacceptable risk by Council if they involve:
 - Inadequate project planning or insufficient risk mitigation measures;
 - Complex project types, including but not limited to footpaths, building entrances, or other public access infrastructure and
 - Construction or renovation of existing building structures.
- All associated club uniforms unless it can be demonstrated their purchase is linked to a project that seeks to increase participation from: people experiencing social and economic disadvantage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living with disability and/or the LGBTQI+ community.

Please note:

- Incomplete applications or late applications will not be considered.



6. Assessment

A confirmation email will be sent to the applicant once the Community Project application or Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work application or Minor Capital Work application has been received.

All Community Projects, Expression of Interest Minor Capital Work, and Minor Capital Work applications undergo an initial check against the eligibility requirements.

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not progress to the next stage of assessment.

Eligible applications are assessed by a panel convened by Baw Baw Shire Council Officers (Assessment Panel). The panel recommends which projects should receive funding to the Council or the Executive Leadership Team at Baw Baw Shire Council who make the final decision.



6.1 Assessment criteria

All applications are assessed and scored against the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Percentage of score
Council priorities	Considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Extent that the project aligns with the strategies and goals in Baw Baw Shire Council's Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (see section 10 for priorities).Has the applicant considered how to make the project inclusive and accessible to meet the diverse needs of the Baw Baw Shire community?	35%
Community benefit	Considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Has the need for the project been clearly demonstrated in the application, or is there evidence available at Council to illustrate the need?Extent that the project will benefit the Baw Baw Shire community.	30%
Planning and management	Considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Does the project provide value for money?Demonstrated evidence of planning, e.g., resources, safety, permits etc.Can the project be completed within the required timeframe?Will the project provide outcomes that are ongoing or can be sustained?Does the applicant organisation have the necessary resources and experience to successfully deliver the project?The level of risk and complexity involved in minor capital work projects.The level of project risk to Council, Community, or environment.	30%
Volunteer driven	Considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Extent to which volunteers are involved in the project. Volunteer involvement is considered positively.The extent to which volunteers of the organisation contribute to the management of the organisation outside of the project.	5%

7. Support documentation required

7.1 Quotations

Quotations from a registered business are required to be submitted with the grant application for all items that are proposed to be purchased with Council funds.

If Items are to be purchased from overseas suppliers, you must

provide the original quotation in the overseas currency (e.g.. USD) and include a Currency Conversion in your application by converting the overseas amount into Australian Dollars using the Reserve Bank of Australia website; <https://www.rba.gov.au/statistics/frequency/exchange-rates.html>

You are required to note the date and rate of conversion in your application.

At the project acquittal report stage, you will be required to attach both the overseas quotation and the conversion evidence (screenshot or bank statement showing the rate).

Individual items listed on the application but unsupported by a quotation at time of application will not be considered for funding.

Please note: – Council will not accept price lists or rate summary sheets as a quotation.

If a quotation item is valued over \$5,000, it still requires a second quotation regardless if the applicant is contributing to the cost of item.

A minimum of one quotation must be from a business based in Baw Baw Shire unless it can be reasonably demonstrated that local suppliers and/or services are unavailable.

- For any item of expenditure up to \$5,000, applicants must provide one written quotation per purchase.
- For any item of expenditure valued between \$5,000 and \$25,000, applicants must provide two written quotations.
- For any item of expenditure valued over \$25,000, applicants must provide three written quotations.

7.2 Incorporation

Applicants must provide evidence of their incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act. The evidence takes the form of a registration number which can be found on the Consumer Affairs website.

Unincorporated applicants can enter into an auspice arrangement to qualify for the grants. Please see section 7.4 auspice arrangements for further information.

7.3 Public liability insurance

Applicants must hold current public liability insurance to the value of \$20 million to protect themselves against legal liability for third-party injury, death and/or damage to property caused by the project.

Evidence of this insurance should be provided with the application through the provision of a valid Certificate of Currency.

Applications may be submitted without current public liability insurance on the condition that it is purchased, and a Certificate of Currency is provided before the funds are issued. The cost of public liability insurance cannot form part of the grant budget.

Applicants may enter into an auspice arrangement if your group does not wish to purchase public liability insurance. Please see section 7.4 on Auspice arrangements for further information.

7.4 Auspice arrangements

Community groups that are not incorporated or do not hold adequate public liability insurance (an Auspicee) can partner with an eligible organisation to auspice their project (an Auspisor organisation).

The Auspisor organisation must provide an accepted motion on behalf of the organisation approving the auspice arrangement in Committee Meeting Minutes.

At Baw Baw Shire Council, where an Auspice arrangement is proposed, the Auspisor organisation must participate in an Application by Appointment with Council, as per 8.1 Application by appointment below.

The Auspice organisation arrangements must be in place before the Application by Appointment meeting.

The Auspisor organisation must meet the eligibility requirements of the grants program.

A Community Grants Auspicee Application form must be completed by the Auspicee and provided to the Auspisor organisation, who will then submit it with the Community Grant application.

The funding agreement will be between Baw Baw Shire Council and the Auspisor organisation, and the funds will be transferred directly to the Auspisor organisation for their management and oversight of project delivery.

If the project fails to meet the terms and conditions of the funding agreement or the project is delivered inappropriately, the Auspisor organisation is financially and legally responsible and liable.

The Auspicee is responsible for delivering the project in partnership with the Auspisor organisation.

7.5 Application contributions

Only projects involving Minor Capital Work are required to demonstrate financial contributions.

Minor Capital Work applications must have an applicant cash contribution of 25 percent of the total grant amount or more.

Proof of the 25 percent of total grant amount applicant contribution is to be in the form of an accepted motion in Committee Meeting minutes. The accepted motion must state the dollar amount of contribution.

The Committee Meeting minutes must be submitted with the Minor Capital Work application form.

7.6 Using donated skills of qualified tradespeople

If qualified trade skills are being donated to the project (e.g., plumber, electrician, carpenter, and others), a letter of commitment must be provided from the relevant business or organisation that demonstrates the tradesperson's qualification or accreditation, and their commitment to the project.

7.7 Written support

A letter of support from the land manager/owner of a facility must be submitted with the application if your Community Project or Minor Capital Work project will take place on land that is not owned or managed by your organisation.

This excludes Councils owned or operated facilities (including Community Asset Committees).

7.8 Child safety

The applicant should consider their responsibility to meet the requirements of the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards and the requirements outlined in the Child, Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 where working with children and younger people.





IMAGE: The Hallora Marathon Festival.



IMAGE: Neerim-Neerim South Football and Netball Club – “Netball & Tennis Court Fence Renewal Project” to replace the existing Netball and Tennis court fence on the North, South and East sides of the courts at the Neerim South Recreation Reserve.

8. Support

8.1 Application by appointment

The Connected Communities team are available to help you prepare your application.

The team will:

- Provide grant information and one-on-one support and advice prior to releasing an application form.
- If required, connect you with an alternative contact at Baw Baw Shire for specific advice relating to your project.

To make an application by appointment meeting, simply phone the Connected Communities team at Council on 1300 229 229 or email grants@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au with your contact details for us to secure a time with you.

All application by appointment meetings can be done in person, via telephone or online.

An application by appointment meeting is a mandatory step in the Community Grants process.

8.2 Grant information sessions

An online grant information session will be scheduled and advertised for each grant round. This will be recorded and will be available in the future on Council's webpage.

8.3 Example applications

Examples of completed grant applications will be available in the future on Council's webpage.

8.4 Other support and resources

- Smartygrants help guide for applicants <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

9. Successful applications

9.1 Notification of Outcome

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application in SmartyGrants.

Successful applicants will receive instructions to complete an Acceptance of Offer of Funding Application in SmartyGrants.

Please ensure that the person/s engaging with Baw Baw Shire Council regarding the application, are members of the Applicant or Auspicor organisation and are authorised to act on its behalf. Should the Primary or Secondary contact nominated in the original application change, please advise Council as soon as possible.

The email address should be relevant to the organisation and not a personal email address where possible. This email address will be used:

- As the primary contact to receive project correspondence.
- As the first point of contact for Council in relation to the grant.
- Used for the SmartyGrants user log in.

This information requested must be received in full and deemed complete by Baw Baw Shire Council before the grant funding allocation will be paid.

9.2 Funding Agreement

Applicants must accept or decline the offer of funding by the specified due date in the Funding Agreement of it being issued to them unless a prior agreement is made with Council, or the offer of funding may be rescinded.

Additional conditions may be added in the Funding Agreement dependant on your project. These conditions must be met at the Acceptance of Offer of Funding stage or demonstrated in the project acquittal report where relevant.

9.3 Promotions and branding

All grant recipients are required to acknowledge Council's contribution to their project in all public documents, signage, media, or announcement about their project.

The Recipient may use **#bawbawshire** in any social media promotions.

Grant recipients may be required to meet with Council or media representatives at a convenient time to enable the promotion of the project.

9.4 Project variations

Projects are approved and funded based on the information provided in the application and outlined in the funding agreement. Changes in price, the scope of works, delivery timeframes, or other variables are sometimes unavoidable, following the acceptance of the grant funds.

Project variations must be approved by Council prior to any changes being made to the project outside of the original grant application content.

Please contact the Connected Communities team to discuss these changes.

A written request via a project variation form in SmartyGrants may be required to approve the requested change.

Project variations that require an increase in grant funding will not be approved.

9.5 Project acquittals and return of unspent funds

A project acquittal report is the final stage in the grant process.

All Community Grant Round 1 Applications (Community Projects and Minor Capital Work) require a project acquittal report to be completed no later than 31 May or a project variation will be required.

All Community Grant Round 2 (Community Projects) require a project acquittal report to be completed no later than 30 November or a project variation will be required.


As part of the project acquittal, you will need to:

- Complete a report and provide attachments highlighting the completed project.
- Provide a financial report, including reporting on actual income, expenditure, and in-kind contributions (**this must include paid invoices with zero balance remaining**).
- All documents must be uploaded into SmartyGrants as proof of project completion.

Any unacquitted grant funds held by the recipient or Auspicor organisation greater than \$100 at the completion of the project will be required to be returned to Council.

If the Recipient or Auspicor failed to acquit or deliver the project in accordance with the grant terms and conditions will be required to return part of or all grant funds to Council.

Should funds not be returned on request, Baw Baw Shire Council may take action to recover funds or agree to preclude the applicant (including Auspicor organisation and Auspicee) from being eligible to apply for Baw Baw Shire Council Community Grants for the remainder of the current financial year and the whole financial year directly following. Decisions will be notified in writing.



Project acquittals must be uploaded to SmartyGrants and include paid invoices with zero balance remaining.

10. Council priorities

The assessment criteria for the Community Grants Program considers the extent that the application aligns with the strategies and goals of the Council Plan and/or Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

These strategies and goals are outlined below to assist you in your application.

10.1 Baw Baw Shire Council Plan 2025 – 2029

Council has nine priorities strategies in the Council Plan; these include:

A Sustainable Shire

Sustainable towns and villages that continue to benefit from our beautiful rural and natural environment.

Balancing natural and built environments that protect nature; contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment; and ensure liveable, productive and inspiring landscapes.

A sustainable region where we value our rural and natural environment.

A Healthy Community

Healthy and well people, living in safe, connected communities and healthy environments.

Being an inclusive, caring, safe and supportive community that promotes wellbeing and belonging.

A healthy region we are proud to call home.

A Thriving Community

Thriving, diverse and resilient communities.

Valuing our heritage, promoting and supporting local, investing in our future.

A thriving region to visit, live, learn, work, and discover.

10.2 Baw Baw Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Baw Baw Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan has four goals. These include:

1. Active Living

To increase participation in active and passive recreation and sport.

2. Healthy Eating

Promote Healthy Food Environments by improving access and sustainability.

3. Mental wellbeing

With the goal to enhance mental wellbeing by creating resilient, connected, and socially inclusive communities.

4. Gender Equity and Prevention of Family Violence

To create a more gender equitable and respectful community that is free from violence.

11. Definitions

Application refers to the application received by Baw Baw Shire Council for the Community Grants Program.

Auspicee refers to the group carrying out the grant project under the auspice of another incorporated organisation – the auspice organisation.

Auspice organisation is the incorporated organisation supporting the delivery of a Community Grant, recognised as the Recipient.

Budget means the budget for the Project provided in the application or funding agreement.

Council means Baw Baw Shire Council.

Conflict of interest could occur if somebody involved in the grant assessment or approval process, or their family or close friends have something to personally gain from the grant application.

Grant is money awarded to a group or organisation for a specific purpose.

Not for profit is an organisation or group that directs its profits back into the organisation and its activities. No profits are distributed to individuals, members, or shareholders.

Project means the activity proposed to be funded by the grant application; it could include an event, program, environmental initiative, equipment purchase, or minor capital work project.

Project acquittal report –provide details and evidence of project delivery in relation to planning, community benefits, council priorities, volunteerism and a financial report that demonstrates how the grant funds have been spent in line with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement.

Recipient is the organisation (including the Auspice organisation) receiving the funds from Baw Baw Shire Council through the Community Grants Program.

SmartyGrants is the cloud-based grants administration software licenced by Baw Baw Shire Council.

Tax invoice is a document meeting the definition and requirements as currently described by the Australian Tax Office.





IMAGE: Warragul Leisure Centre – “Warragul Swim Club Shade Covers”

Contact us

For more information, please contact
Council’s Connected Communities team on
1300 229 229 or by email at
grants@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.