



Business Grants Policy DRAFT

(REM number)

REM REFERENCE		
POLICY TYPE	Council: adopted by Council resolution	
APPROVAL	Council	
DATE ADOPTED	Council Meeting Date	
DIRECTORATE	Communities	
POLICY OWNER	Manager City Futures	
NEXT REVIEW	June 2029	
REVISION RECORD	VERSION	REVISION DESCRIPTION
Date	1.0	Initial policy

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out the principles, administration, approval and reporting processes of the Frankston City Council Business Grants program. The policy provides guidelines for the consistent management of the Business Grants program and ensures the practice of good governance.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Business Grants funded by Frankston City Council and administered by the Economic Development team to support commercial business operators. This includes, but not limited to Small Business Grants, Façade Improvement Grants, Business to Business Grants and New Entrepreneur.

It outlines the role and responsibilities of Council Officers, Councillors, Grant applicants, Grant Assessment Panel members and Grant recipients in all facets of the Business Grants program.

This Policy does not apply to Grants programs funded or administered by other levels of government or other Frankston City Council Grants, such as Community Grants.

3. Governance Principles and Council Plan Alignment

3.1. Governance Principles

Principle (c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;

Principle (e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;

Principle (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

3.2. Council Plan Alignment

Outcome 5: Thriving economy - A thriving economy that has strengthened through recovery, created employment and opportunities to build a skilled and educated community that supports sustainable and diverse industries.

4. Policy

4.1. Principles

4.1.1. The principles of this policy will:

- Support new and existing Frankston City businesses to realise economic growth opportunities.
- Further the aims and objectives of Frankston City Council by supporting overall economic development and employment.
- Align with Council's values, policies, plans and strategies.
- Provide ethical practices and good governance in the management of business grants.

4.2 Administration

4.2.1 Budget and funding Pool

- The total business grant funding pool is determined as a part of the annual Council budget process as endorsed by Council.
- Allocated funding amounts for each grant stream, from the total annual Business Grant program funding pool, will be provided as a Council Briefing annually.
- Any grants awarded and subsequently forfeited by the Grant recipient may be re-allocated to an upcoming grant stream within the same financial year.

4.2.2 Development

- Business grants are designed to provide a range of funding opportunities to support new and existing businesses throughout the year.
- Grant programs are reviewed each year and adjusted as needed to address emerging priorities and ensure grants remain responsive to local needs.
- Each grant programme has clearly set out guidelines outlining:
 - Grant description and purpose
 - Grant recipient eligibility
 - Grant amounts (and total grant program funding)
 - Assessment Criteria
 - Timelines
 - Grant payment conditions (e.g. via reimbursement, \$ match, direct payment)
 - Terms and conditions

4.2.3 Promotion

- All Business grant programmes are promoted on the Frankston City Council website as well as to relevant stakeholders including via Council's Business eNewsletter, direct email, social media, Frankston City News (FCN) and other print media both locally and outside of the municipality as appropriate.

4.2.4 Application Process

- Grant applications will only be accepted within the timeframes as set out in the relevant Grant Guidelines. No late applications will be accepted unless council approval has been given.
- Grant applications and any supporting documents, as required, will only be accepted via submission to the SmartyGrants program.

4.2.5 Eligibility

- Must have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Must be located in or relocating to Frankston City municipality.
- Must hold a current public liability insurance.
- Be the owner or tenant named on existing or pending lease agreement. (This is applicable to Business Grants and Façade Improvement Grants only)
- Any works stipulated in the application must not be works that have been completed or have already been commenced.
- Must use a local supplier(s)/trades person to carry out their project or purchase. Exceptions may apply if local suppliers are not available or cost efficient.
- Any specific requirements as per relevant grant program.

4.2.6 Ineligibility

- Councillors, Council staff, current contractors and/or their immediate family members are not eligible to apply for a grant.
- Sporting clubs, Charity organisations, political organisations or any organisation that exclude or offend parts of the community.
- Grant recipients of the previous two rounds of the same grant stream (one previous round for B2B grants)
- Applicants with an outstanding business-related debt, infringement or compliance issue with Frankston City Council or have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with Frankston City Council.

4.2.7 Assessment

- Grant applications are assessed in accordance with the assessment criteria as outlined in the Grant Guidelines for each respective grant programme.
- Grant applications and any supporting documents, as required, are assessed via the SmartyGrants program.

- Council Officers and assessment panel members, involved in the assessment process are required to declare any conflicts of interest for each application and adhere to Council's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Councillors will not be involved in the Grant assessment and/or recommendation process.

4.3 Approval Process

4.3.1 Grant programs offering amounts of \$5,000 or greater:

- Council endorsement will be sought for Council Officer and/or assessment panel recommendations for grant programs awarding \$5,000 or greater per applicant.
- Assessor recommendations for each grant program will remain confidential until endorsed by Council.
- Both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants will be notified of the outcome (only) after Council endorsement of the recommendations.

4.3.2 Grant programs offering amounts up to, but not greater than, \$5,000:

- Council Officer and/or assessment panel recommendations for grant programs awarding less than \$5,000 per applicant will be approved by the Manager City Futures.
- Councillors will be informed of the outcomes via Councillor Memo.
- Both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants will be notified of the outcome as soon as practicable.

4.4 Funding Terms and Conditions

The following conditions are applicable to Grant recipients of business grants program (where applicable, their product/service provider):

- Use of the Grant to pay general business expenses is strictly prohibited (i.e. rent/lease/mortgage, utilities, inventory, telecommunications, wages, insurance, legal disputes, Council costs etc).
- Grants are non-transferable.
- A maximum of one grant may be awarded.
- A quotation and/or invoice from a business/company which the applicant(s) own, operate or are in any way related will not be accepted.
- The awarding and disbursement of all grants and grant payments are at Council's discretion.
- Council reserves the right to withdraw successful grant applications in the event that the Grant Recipient Agreement conditions are not met.
- Grant recipients must expend all grant funds within timeframe as outlined in the guidelines.

- An application for extension to the due date must be made in writing - the maximum extension period will not be more than six months (not applicable to the program offering grant amount up to, but not greater than \$5,000).
- Any grant monies not expended within the allocated timeframe, post one request for a 6-month extension, will be forfeited.
- All conditions noted in the grant recipient agreement must be addressed.
- Any special conditions noted in the grant recipient agreement must be fulfilled and prior to claiming any grant funding amount.
- Successful grant applicants must provide a progress report upon request and a final report upon completion of their project or once awarded funds are utilised, whichever occurs first (for grant programs offering amount of \$5,000 or greater).
- Successful grant recipients must provide trading and employment data annually for two consecutive financial years following the awarding of the grant (for grant programs offering amounts of \$5,000 or greater).
- Successful grant applicant must agree to be included (at no cost) in future Frankston City Council and Frankston promotional material, advertising, and other marketing collateral such as social media, newsletters, eNewsletters, internal and external publications.
- Any application that does not align with the core intent of the grant program will not be considered for funding.
- An applicant may withdraw their application at any stage prior to claiming grant funding amount. An application or grant agreement once withdrawn, cannot be reinstated.
- Any specific terms and conditions as per relevant grant program.

4.5 Variations to Grant Recipient Agreements

- Requests from Grant Recipients for a variation to the project scope/deliverables, and/or reduction in the allocated grant amount awarded to a Grant recipient will be assessed by, and subsequently approved in writing, by the Co-ordinator, Economic Development.
- Any minor variation such as a change in supplier or product will be approved in writing by the Grants and Administration Officer.

4.5 Documentation

- The assessment process, including assessor names, comments and rationale for supporting, or not supporting, a grant application and the amount awarded, is recorded and retained in the SmartyGrants program.
- Administration documents including signed Grant Recipient Agreements and signed Assessment Panel Terms of Reference and internal assessment documents are saved in Councils Record Management System.

4.5 Reporting

- An annual review of all Business Grants will be completed at the end of each financial year and a report provided to Council. This report will be made publicly available and will include:
 - Name and purpose of Grant Streams delivered during that financial year, and total funding offered for each.
 - Number of information sessions delivered and number of attendees.
 - Number of grant applications received for each stream, including number of applications assessed as eligible for Stage 2 application (for Grant programs offering amounts of \$5,000 or greater).
 - The names of grant recipients awarded funding, project details and respective amounts awarded.
 - Before and after photos where applicable.
 - The number of, and names of, suppliers benefitting from grants (to date)
 - Number of awarded grants withdrawn and total funding amount forfeited.
 - Total awarded grant funding acquitted to date and total awarded grant funding not yet acquitted.
 - Economic benefits and employment outcomes resulting from grant funding (for two consecutive financial years following the awarding of the grant).
 - Grant recipient feedback ratings for each stream.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Manager City Futures and Coordinator Economic Development	Responsible for • ensuring that this policy is adhered to. • ensuring all Council Officers are informed of and follow the principle of this Policy in all Business Grant activities and processes. • the review of this policy.
Chief Executive Officer	Responsible for • ensuring that this policy is adhered to.
Director Communities	Responsible for • ensuring that this policy is adhered to.

	- ensuring all Council Officers are informed of and follow the principle of this Policy in all Business Grant activities and processes. - the review of this policy.
Council Officers	Responsible for - reviewing applications fairly and consistently as per the program guidelines. - carrying out due diligence, ensuring transparency and record keeping. - adhering to privacy and confidentiality throughout the program delivery.
Councillors	Responsible for Endorsing assessment panel recommendations.
Grant Applicants	Responsible for - understanding the grant requirements and preparing and submitting grant applications within specified timeframes. - informing Council Officers of any changes to their grant application and/or grant agreement and responding to any enquiries from Council Officers.
Grant Assessment Panel Members	Responsible for - assessing applications fairly and as per the relevant program assessment criteria. - maintaining privacy and confidentiality of the applicant, any information gained during the process and application outcomes. - Ageing to and signing the “Terms of Reference” document prior to assessment and adherence to it. - providing constructive feedback.
Grant Recipients	Responsible for - ensuring Grant Recipient Agreement is adhered to. - ensuring funds are utilised for approved activities only. - providing reports in a timely manner when requested. - communicating any changes to an approved project or anything that may impact the funding.

6. Policy non-compliance

Failure to comply with this Policy has the potential to result in ineligible businesses being funded, reputational damage to Council or fraudulent activities.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Acquittal</i>	Means evidence submitted by the grant recipient that accurately details the expenditure incurred related to funded activity and submission of invoice to claim grant funding.
<i>Charity</i>	Means organisations that raises funds and operates for a community need or benefit to achieve non-profit goals
<i>Commercial Business Operator</i>	means an organisation or individual responsible for the general operations of a business.
<i>Conflict of Interest</i>	A general conflict of interest is a situation that an impartial, fair-minded person would consider the person's private interests could result in that person acting in manner that is contrary to their public duty. A material conflict of interest is a situation that an affected person would gain a direct or indirect benefit or suffer a loss, depending on the outcome of the matter.
<i>Council</i>	means Frankston City Council.
<i>Councillor</i>	means a person elected by eligible residents and ratepayers in a local government election or by-election.
<i>Council contractor</i>	means an organisation or individual hired to perform specific role for a fixed period of time.
<i>Council employee</i>	means current Frankston City Council staff, contractors, and volunteers.
<i>Grant</i>	means an amount offered to a business to utilise it for an agreed upon and purpose that supports specific council goals.
<i>Grant Recipient Agreement</i>	means a legal document that outlines the terms, conditions and obligations of funding for both between grantor and grantee outlining the terms of agreement.
<i>Grant Stream</i>	means a grant round with defined objectives, criteria and allocated funding amount.
<i>Guidelines</i>	Means a document containing important information related to a grant program.

<i>Not for Profit organisation</i>	Means an organisation that does operates exclusively for charitable, civil, sporting or other social purposes and does not share profit with the owners, shareholders or organisation.
<i>Property owner</i>	means a person or entity that owns commercial property.
<i>SmartyGrants</i>	means the online grant management/administration system.

8. Related documents

8.1. Legislation

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy Act 1988*

8.2. Documents and resources

- Frankston City Council Economic Development and Skilled Community Strategy
- Frankston City Council Records Management Policy
- Frankston City Council Conflict of Interest Policy
- Victorian Auditor-General's Office Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants Report 2022

9. Implementation of the Policy

Following adoption of this Policy (in conjunction with other related documents) it will be implemented and monitored.

This Policy is overseen by the Director Communities.