

APPENDIX 2

South Gippsland Shire Council
Community Grant Program Evaluation

Initial Observations from the Grants Management Framework Audit,
Environmental Scan, Collated Benchmarking Data and Focus Group Discussions

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Introduction

This appendix sits alongside the Final Evaluation Report (the Report) for South Gippsland Shire Council's (SGSC) Community Grant Program (CGP) and incorporates:

- Observations from the Grant Management Framework Audit and Environmental Scan
- Collated Benchmarking Data of Super 11 and other non-Super 11 LGAs
- Summary of Focus Group Discussions

Grants Management Framework Audit

An evaluation of the Program's Grant Management Framework's policy, its management, and operational processes as well as an assessment of the resources that grant seekers access when making an application to the Program.

Environmental Scan

An analysis of relevant documents and data to identify and understand the Program's role within the context of SGSC community needs, its strategic and policy context.

Benchmarking

A comparison of identified aspects of the Program (guidelines, eligibility criteria, assessment practices, program resources) against like Council community grant programs.

Target Audience:	Like LGAs (Super 11 LGAs) Other non-Super 11 LGAs^
Target Response Rate:	9 Super 11 LGAs 2 other non-Super 11 LGAs
Actual Response Rate:	6 Super 11 LGAs 4 other non-Super 11 LGAs

^ The evaluation team felt it necessary to include both Super 11 and non-Super 11 LGAs within the benchmarking group to ensure a more balanced sample, incorporating a greater diversity of like program practices and processes. The project's time constraints, which only allowed one week for Council's to respond to the questionnaire, contributed to the lower response rate for this method of inquiry.

Focus Group Discussions:

Two Focus Group discussions were held with previous successful and unsuccessful grant applicants:

Target Audience: Previous successful and unsuccessful grant seekers
Community organisations/volunteer groups who have engaged with the Program as a grant seeker or a potential grant seeker

Target Participation: 16 community organisations/volunteer groups

Actual Response Rate: 19 community organisations/volunteer groups

Online Survey*:

Target Audience: Previous successful and unsuccessful grant seekers
Community organisations/volunteer groups who have engaged with the Program as a grant seeker or a potential grant seeker

Distribution Channels: SmartyGrants (SGSC's 222 registered SmartyGrants users)

SGSC Facebook page

Council Officer Networks

Target Response Rate: 35% of SGSC's 222 registered SmartyGrants users

Actual Response Rate: 49.5%

* Appendix 3 contains raw data from the online (SurveyMonkey) survey

Observations from the Grants Management Framework Audit, Environmental Scan

The Evaluation Team reviewed key documents including:

Regional and State	Local Government Act 2020 (Vic), Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025
SGSC Plans and Strategies	Council Plan 2020-2024, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, Age-Friendly South Gippsland 2017-2021, Blueprint for Social Community Infrastructure, Community Strengthening Strategy 2018-2022, Art, Culture & Creative Industry Strategy 2017-2021, Community Engagement Strategy 2022-2024, Good Governance Framework 2019
SGSC Policies	Community Grants Program Policy (C47), Community Engagement Policy (C06), Disability Action Plan 2018-2022, Complaint Handling Policy (CE73), Human Rights Policy (C52), Information Privacy Policy (C22), Occupational Health and Safety Policy (CE78)
SGSC Grant Program Collateral	Grant Program Guidelines and Information, Information Pack for Successful Recipients, Application Form, Statement by Supplier
Assessment Collateral and Outputs	Application Summaries, Council Briefings, Information for ELT, SmartyGrants Reports and Data
Reviews	Internal Reviews – 2009, 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2019
Reports	Council Reports, Administrators Community Reports, Council Minutes

Initial Observations Grouped by Domain:

Suitability of the Program to its need & context (Appropriateness)	
<i>Program delivery is aligned with the internal regulatory and strategic context</i>	
Alignment with Council Plans and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures and reporting data (predominantly outputs as opposed to outcomes) are identified in Council strategies; however, these do meaningfully connect to the Community Grant Program. There is little evidence to suggest any reference to these in internal CGP reviews. • Available information does not indicate that the measures in the following documents are being collated or tracked to measure Program success. These measures are identified in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Plan - Health and Wellbeing Plan - Community Strengthening Strategy - Ageing Strategy - Youth Strategy <p>One other like LGA has clear measures and outcomes in place within their grants programs; however, more often than not like LGAs do not have these documented, and the measurement of outcomes is ad-hoc.</p>
Community Grants Program Policy	<p>The Policy complies with relevant legislation, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Act 2020 - although improvement could be made as it transitions to the principles-based Act – particularly around Public Participation, Transparency, Financial Responsibility • Incorporated Associations Reform Act - updated definition of Incorporated Body included as part of the 2019 review <p>Policy Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy provides minimal guidance for staff and the community in their decision making and conduct around the Program • The Policy does not seek to define issues and implement strategies to elicit a positive result with a measurable outcome for the SGSC community • Objectives are not specific and cannot be measured • Assessment processes and selection criteria are not comprehensively articulated within the Policy • Roles and responsibilities are included but are not well articulated

<i>Program delivery is aligned with the internal regulatory and strategic context</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key principles are not articulated in the Policy <p>There is evidence to support that the following actions contained in the Policy occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public report of successful and unsuccessful applicants • The provision of application forms, comprehensive guidelines and explanatory information on the Council website and identified in the Community and Consultation Strategy Tool Kit <p>There is no evidence to support that the following action occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Council will endeavour to arrange for the education of Councillors and relevant staff of their responsibilities, for the allocation of the Community Grants <p>All but one like LGA has a Policy for grant programs. This LGA refers applicants to Fact Sheets about the streams on offer and has detailed links to the Council Plan and strategies to identify and respond to community need.</p> <p>All LGAs have a policy review cycle in place; however, it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to explore how program reviews are conducted or how they are used to determine if the Program is meeting its policy objectives.</p>
Compliance	<p>The Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for monitoring the compliance of Council policies and procedures, particularly financial and performance reporting. A lack of appropriate systems and procedures to collect and analyse information makes it difficult to measure the performance of the service (grant making program), and it may be challenging for the Audit Committee to determine and receive assurance that the Program is compliant with the overarching principles of the LGA Act (2020).</p>

<i>Program provides opportunities to volunteer groups and organisations which would otherwise have limited access to funds</i>	
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria can be identified easily within the SGSC Guidelines <p>A wide variety of eligibility criteria and applicant requirements were observed among like LGAs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submissions for multiple applications each round and per category. - A requirement for Working with Children checks or Child Safe Standards. <p>SGSC is in line with like LGAs - includes criteria around what will not be funded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No outstanding debts with Council - No gaming, betting facilities - Retrospective projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community houses, kindergartens, and preschools can only apply if their project meets the broad community benefit requirement. However, there is no articulation of what broad community benefit is or how it is determined <p>Some like LGAs allow submissions from schools, non-auspiced community groups if, for example, the project is a collaboration/partnership or if funding for the project is outside the curriculum (i.e. Non-government funded activity or initiative).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of CLG and Social Enterprise has the potential to cause some confusion (CLG is a legal structure, Social Enterprise is not). The inclusion of these organisations did not arise from a formal needs assessment or community consultation, which would have provided a rationale and offset any negative community perception around including these structures <p>Like LGAs allow Social Enterprises, most would not restrict CLGs from applying as they support all types of NFP organisations. Depending on the grant stream/category, additional criteria may apply to these types of entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auspiced projects are eligible; however, little information is included to ensure that auspicing organisations are aware of their responsibilities <p>Clear expectation and requirements for the auspice organisation is evident in like LGAs with some specifying a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be submitted with the application for it to be deemed eligible.</p>

Program Resources (Efficiency)	
<i>Program resources are sufficient to meet internal (operational) and external (grant seeker) needs and are comparable to like programs</i>	
Staffing Resources	<p>The CGP is administered from within SGSC's Community Strengthening Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strengthening Officer (0.5 FTE) administers the day-to-day operations of the Program • 0.2 FTE of the Community Strengthening Coordinator's role is also allocated to the Program <p>Compared to most like Super 11 LGAs surveyed for the benchmarking, SGSC is above average with respect to staffing resources dedicated to the CGP.</p>
Administration Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program's administration budget is applied to SmartyGrants fees (cost shared equally between the CGP, Emergency and Small Grant programs) and grantee presentation events (two per annum) <p>Of the Super 11 LGAs surveyed, SGSC had the lowest administration budget. Some LGAs do not allocate a budget for administering their grant programs but allocate resources from other budget centres.</p>
Grant Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding allocated to grants has remained relatively static • Funds not distributed in a grant round are re-allocated to other program streams or rolled over to the following year <p>A similar approach to the above was taken by most like LGAs</p>
Funding Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program is consistently over-subscribed (grants requested exceed budget) • The maximum allocation for the Community Grant Program stream has only been met twice in the period under review.

Program Processes (Process)

The Program is aligned to the Grants Management Framework

<p>Grant Management Framework</p>	<p>A good-practice Grants Management Framework is partially in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some aspects of the CGP's Assessment Process lack transparency • Briefings and reports are provided to Senior Management and Council but are primarily output-focused and do not address Program outcomes • Limited internal reviews are undertaken periodically but do not significantly engage with the Program's target audience (grant-seekers) to identify potential improvements to Program processes (application, assessment, acquittal) • There is no evidence to support that the Australian Institute of Grants Management (AIGM), Best Practice Network for Government and Local Government Grant Managers and Grant Makers was used to inform grant making activities occurring following the recommendation of Council's 2016/17 review <p>Most like LGAs do not have a documented Grants Management Framework in place; however, an LGA included in the benchmarking confirmed that a Framework is in place, and it appears that the program is able to be reviewed and assessed with identifiable measures and outcomes and the success or non-success of the program established.</p> <p>Some LGAs refer to the Our Community (SmartyGrants Toolkit) as a resource to guide their grant making.</p>
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The Program's processes are in line with good practice principles in community grant making

<p>Procedures</p>	<p>There is a lack of a documented end-to-end operating procedure for staff to follow.</p> <p>Most like LGAs don't have this document. Two LGAs do have a procedure document.</p>
<p>Promotion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising/communication is accomplished via SmartyGrants user distribution and other established channels • There appears to be limited cross over to other council teams to promote grant rounds, although using the internal network to bring awareness to potential projects is well known and well utilised amongst officers
<p>Application Process – Application Form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited use of SmartyGrants capabilities to gather information and data, e.g. no use of the gender lens or social impact capabilities within the application form • There is no use of outcomes driven data questions/drop down options to assist seekers in identifying the community benefit of their projects

<i>The Program's processes are in line with good practice principles in community grant making</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive questions throughout the Application Form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Plan and Project Management Framework - Community Need and Benefits are interchangeable in questions • There is an implied requirement that the applicant is informed and able to connect and link their project to Council Plan, Policy, or Strategy <p>There are some good examples of like LGAs making use of the application form to streamline the application process without over-engineering questions or making unrealistic demands on time-poor volunteers.</p>
Application Process – Support for Grant Seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant seekers are encouraged to contact the Grants Team, who may refer them to a relevant Council Officer depending on the project <p>Most like LGAs take a similar approach. The LGAs who do require compulsory Officer contact require applicants to nominate who they spoke to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGSC delivers at least one Information Session (online or in-person) per year, enabling potential grant seekers to access advice and support (eligibility requirements, grant categories, form completion, clarity on criteria and processes) <p>Like LGAs deliver information sessions and workshops either per round or at least once a year. Officers are available to assist grant seekers. Many LGAs are moving from in-person sessions/workshops to online presentations/tools, with some planning to offer a hybrid/blend of the two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a relatively high rate of unsubmitted applications
Community Grant Program Guidelines and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGSC Philosophy around the Program is not clearly stated in the Guidelines, i.e. no stated Principles. The policy objectives are vague, making it difficult for grant seekers to determine if a project will meet the said objective/s • At times there is a lack of clear, direct language, particularly concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program areas – categories - Reporting requirements - Types of organisations supported or not supported - Procedures for applying - Restrictions on funding • No exemplar application response provided in the Guidelines

<i>The Program's processes are in line with good practice principles in community grant making</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few like LGAs provide exemplar responses as assistance to seekers, whilst some provide a fact sheet or help tip sheet for seekers to prepare an application that has the best opportunity to be eligible for funding
Assessment - Due Diligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGSC undertakes due diligence to ensure applications meet Program eligibility requirements and have the required supporting documentation. However, there is no formalised due diligence protocol (e.g. checklist). The responsibility for Due Diligence has recently been transferred back to the Grants Team <p>Most LGAs screen for probity of applications before forwarding them to the assessment panel. Any that fail to demonstrate eligibility do not move forward, and seekers are advised early that this is the case.</p> <p>It is not the usual practice for Assessors to conduct due diligence (screening process to confirm eligibility) to determine if a project moves forward.</p> <p>Depending on the funding amount or the type of grant category, some like LGAs require additional probity to applications, for example; event management plans, risk assessment plans, event permits (or evidence of application for), building and/or planning permits.</p>
Assessment - Internal Review of Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGSC Officers may provide input prior to a submission moving forward to be assessed. There is no formal guidance, standardised criteria or proforma for this process • While Officer comments are recorded on SmartyGrants, there is a lack of clarity on how this process informs the formal assessment process <p>It is not the practice for Officers at like LGAs to have input once a round has closed.</p>
Assessment – Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment panel comprises three internal assessors (currently the Coordinator Community Strengthening, Coordinator Building & Recreation Assets, Coordinator Major Projects) and two external assessors from local grant making organisations. The two external assessors (including the Chair) were added to the panel following the 2019 internal review, which identified a risk that the assessment process could be too internally focused • All assessors are required to declare a conflict of interest and must not provide an assessment for the application for which they are indicating a conflict • There is an indication that the assessment panel receives limited guidance or information on the eligibility or ineligibility of applicants/applications (i.e. they are being asked to score applications ineligible for grant funding) <p>Only one like LGA used external assessors.</p>

<i>The Program's processes are in line with good practice principles in community grant making</i>	
Assessment – Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors score applications independently from one another. Scores are then aggregated, and the panel meet to jointly determine which applications will be recommended Scoring is against application form questions, with each question contributing a certain percentage to the overall score for that application The scoring matrix does not clearly differentiate between how the project will meet the grant seeker's organisational needs or the communities' needs or clearly differentiate between needs and outcomes Additional scoring criteria (identified in the guidelines) may also be used; however, it is unclear when these criteria may be employed or the level of weighting they may be given
Assessment – Recommendation and Approval of Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assessment panel's recommendation is reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and then provided, together with any suggestions for changes to the recommendation that the ELT may have, as a Briefing for discussion and review by Council before being developed into a final recommendation. The latter is formally put to a general Council meeting for approval at a later date Final grants approved by Council often differ from the Assessment Panel recommendation (further to recommendations made by the ELT and/or changes having been made at the Council Review or Meeting stage of the process) <p>Most LGAs surveyed as part of the Benchmarking reported that Council never or only rarely made changes to Assessment Panel recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no formalised process for providing unsuccessful applicants with feedback on their applications
Grant Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a condition of accepting a grant, Community Organisations/Groups must abide by the Companion Card Affiliate Terms and Conditions and must adhere to Equity and Diversity (e.g. Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth), which stipulate that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person who requires the assistance of a companion to access leisure and recreational opportunities. While this is a condition of the funding, it is not included as a specific check box item in the grant agreement Community organisations must ensure that any works undertaken are done in a manner that is, as far as practical, safe and without risk to health, and abide by any reasonable direction made by Council's authorised officers in this regard. While this is a condition of the funding, it is not included as a specific check box item in the grant agreement 'High-risk' projects may require a Job Safety Analysis Projects must adhere to all Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004) components, although this is not included as a check box item in the grant agreement

<i>The Program's processes are in line with good practice principles in community grant making</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to Human Rights Charter is a condition of funding in the Guidelines however is not a specific check box item in the grant agreement • Grant agreement pack includes instructions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to claim the grant monies from Council - Agreement to acknowledge Conditions of Funding (T&Cs) - An invoice template and an acquittal template • There are no conditions or processes identified for the termination, withdrawal, or repayment of funding; however, Council can determine and exercise if it deems it appropriate, as stated in the Conditions of Funding
Acquittal Process – Acquittal Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Acquittal Form is clear and concise but limited to establishing the grant has been expended appropriately. It does not include evaluating the project or require evidence to support that the project's benefits have been achieved <p>The majority of LGAs surveyed as part of the Benchmarking included at least some form of evaluation, including an assessment of the project's benefits and outcomes, as part of their acquittal process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to suggest that SGSC Officers inspect or monitor funded projects prior to their completion of acquittal

Achievement of Community Outcomes (Effectiveness)

The Program is guided by a set of community outcomes

Documented Community Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program lacks a documented set of community outcomes to guide its processes and practices Program aims and objectives are not supported by measures by which progress can be measured and tracked
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Program continuous improvement is responsive to community needs

Program Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal reviews of the Program do not employ a systematic approach, and data collection is limited mainly to SmartyGrants output data Limited evidence to support that Program data, especially trend data, is utilised to inform internal reviews. There is minimal evidence that the reviews are reporting or measuring against stated Policy objectives Apart from the Customer Satisfaction Survey (noted in the 2019 review that the Program consistently receives positive feedback), there is minimal evidence to suggest that public engagement occurs as part of the review process <p>Like LGAs report minimal engagement practices when reviewing grant programs; however, adhoc/informal feedback is welcomed.</p> <p>Most like LGAs do not have a documented Outcomes Measurement Framework or Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.</p>
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Continuity of Community Benefits and Outcomes (Sustainability)

The Program is responsive to evolving and future community need

Outcomes and Evaluation Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program does not have a documented Program Logic Model The Program does not have a Theory of Change Statement The Program does not have an Evaluation Framework
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection is primarily transactional

Benchmarking – Super 11 & non-Super 11 LGAs

GENERAL INFORMATION					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Is your Community Grant program an 'open competitive selection process' (grant rounds have open and closing dates, eligible applications assessed against set selection criteria) or 'open non-competitive process'?	Open competitive	Open competitive	Open competitive selection process	Open Competitive Selection Grants only	Open Competitive Selection Process
How many Community grant rounds does Council have each financial year? When are these?	2 Community Grants Rounds per Financial Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 for each stream except for Quick Response which are open all year. Community Grant Streams are open during April and May 	2 rounds - March and August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 1 round if all funds expended in July 2nd round for remaining funds Dec 	One per FY [Open May & Close June]

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
What categories does your Community grant program have available for communities to make a submission? What is the maximum project \$ amounts a submission can request for in each category?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Projects & Equip (min \$1K/max \$5K) Major Projects & Equip (Min \$5K/max \$10K) Planning & Dev Reports (Min \$5K/Max\$10K) Festivals & Events (Min \$1K/Max \$10K) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Grants (\$1000), Environment Support (\$2,500), Events and Festivals (\$15,000), Facility Grants (\$2000), Quick Response Grants (\$500) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Strengthening Grants (applications up to \$5,000) Community Arts and Culture Grants (applications up to \$3,000) Community Events Grants (applications up to \$3,000) Community Development Fund Grants (applications up to \$100,000) Sustainability and Environmental Engagement Grant (applications up to \$3000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor project = \$5,000 Major Projects = \$20,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Fund Up to \$5,000 per application Event Support Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Events (up to \$1,000) Minor Events (up to \$2,000) Major Events (up to \$5,000)
Does Council offer an Information Session and or workshop prior to submission date? Is this face to face or online? Are these compulsory for applicants?	Yes. Face to face workshop x 2 per year generally. Not compulsory. Not held in 2020 or 2021	Not regularly. Applicants can discuss grant options with officers	Yes. Between 2 - 4 grant writing workshops are held. Normally face to face but the last two rounds have been online. Moving forward a combination of both face to face and online will most likely occur.	Yes, face to face with individual applicants on appointment.	Workshops have been held in the past. Currently reviewing grant program and workshops will be included going forward. Delivery format still to be determined. Workshops would not be compulsory

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Do you have grant guidelines, available for applicants? Please attach a copy.	Yes Attached	Yes - each stream	Yes Attached. Guidelines and Application Guide	Yes	Guideline currently being revised. Copy can be provided once review complete
What due diligence practices do you apply to submissions?	Screen for eligibility according to guidelines. Association status, Budget, Financial documentation, quotes, letters of support etc. Bank Statements for all accounts.	Screening to meet Eligibility criteria for each stream - varies depending on the stream.	Eligibility screening. Individual panel assessment, assessment panel meeting. Applicants follow up after panel meeting where required.	Online application process that requires relevant documentation to be attached to proceed with submission.	Screening process to determine eligibility and ensure required documentation has been provided.
Does your council have a Grants Program reference/advisory group to provide input to the Community grant program? Is there community representation in this group?	No	No	No	No	No advisory group. Community Development Officer is part of the assessment panel as well as two Councillors

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Is your Community Grant program an 'open competitive selection process' (grant rounds have open and closing dates, eligible applications assessed against set selection criteria) or 'open non-competitive process'?	Open competitive	Open Competitive Selection Grants only	Open Competitive Selection Grants	open competitive selection process.	Our community grant program is an 'open competitive selection process'. As long as you meet the program eligibility criteria, you can apply for a community grant or sponsorship.	Open competitive
How many Community grant rounds does Council have each financial year? When are these?	x2 Community Grants Rounds per Financial Year	x2 August & March	x 2 March and August	x4 Dates changed in response to COVID, in 2020/21. Three rounds Community Sponsorship (two categories), One Round Community Development (3 categories).	x2 July & February Community Sponsorship Minor - Is the only program listed below that is open all year. All other programs fall within the two rounds	x9 Annual Grants in June Small Grants all year round Several other programs on a yearly or three-yearly basis.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What categories does your Community grant program have available for communities to make a submission? What is the maximum project \$ amounts a submission can request for in each category?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Projects & Equip (min \$1K/max \$5K) Major Projects & Equip (Min \$5K/max \$10K) Planning & Dev Reports (Min \$5K/Max\$10K) Festivals & Events (Min \$1K/Max \$10K) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAG - Events, Projects & Facilities = \$5,000 QRG - Events, Projects & Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment, Other projects (e.g. architect design, seeding grant), Minor Capital Works Events, festivals, celebrations - all up to \$5,000 One major project funding up to \$10,000 per round (equipment excluded) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Sponsorship Events, \$5000, Community Ambassador, \$500-\$1000, Equipment \$5000, Environment \$5000, Minor Capital \$10000 (\$1:\$1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Capital Works - \$7,000 Minor Equipment - \$2,000 Community Wellbeing - \$2,000 Community Events - Minor - \$5,000 Community Events -Significant - \$10,000 Community Sponsorship Minor - \$2,500 Community Sponsorship - Major - \$20,0000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Grants has several category - some up to \$4k Others up to \$50k. Festival Grants to \$35k. Small Grants - \$1k.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does Council offer an Information Session and or workshop prior to submission date? Is this face to face or online? Are these compulsory for applicants?	Yes. Face to face workshop x 2 per year generally. Not compulsory. Not held in 2020 or 2021	Yes. Since Covid this is offered face to face in person or over the phone.	Information sessions x 2 about 6 weeks out from each closing date. Currently online due to COVID restrictions. Pre-COVID I also worked at other locations at least once a month promoting where I am for grant information e.g. Inverloch library, Cowes, Grantville, Bass Community House. These are not compulsory.	online applicant information session for Community Development Grants. Info sessions and officer contact is not mandatory or measured. It is required with Community Sponsorship that events contact the Community Events Officer, but this engagement is low	Yes. Previous years we have ran information sessions face to face prior to the rounds opening. Last year they were online due to COVID. The information sessions really only go over the funding categories, how to apply, how much you can apply for, the do's and don'ts etc. This year we are looking to combine this with a grant writing information session. We will use an external facilitator for this. Sessions will be offered face to face and online. These sessions are not compulsory	Yes. Both. Online in 2020 but face to face previously. Not compulsory.
Do you have grant guidelines, available for applicants? Please attach a copy.	Yes Attached	Yes Attached	Yes Attached. These are currently being reviewed.	Factsheets for Applicant Information, attached	Yes Pease see attached.	Yes Attached.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What due diligence practices do you apply to submissions?	Screen for eligibility according to guidelines. Association status, Budget, Financial documentation, quotes, letters of support etc. Bank Statements for all accounts.	Pre-eligibility check, legal status, ABN/ACN, landowner permission if required, grant ratio met, budget total, public liability insurance certificate appropriate for project/event	Screening process to confirm eligibility criteria has been met, legal status, ABN/ACN, landowner permission if required, acceptable financial statements, quotes etc. Clear requirements of financial documentation/evidence are available in the guidelines e.g.) bank statement with Account details clearly shown. Check with Finance if any debts	Eligibility assessment, ABN check, GST status, Incorporation search	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Applications are checked against the eligibility criteria All mandatory documents are attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two written quotes for projects over \$4,000 & one written quote for projects under \$4,000 (Minor Capital Works & Minor Equipment only) Quotes must be from a registered business, screen shots are not accepted. Current Certificate of Currency Land owner permission Applicant has no outstanding acquittals 	Screening process to confirm eligibility criteria has been met, legal status, ABN/ACN, landowner permission if required, acceptable financial statements etc. Clear requirements of financial documentation/evidence are available in the guidelines e.g.) only AGM minutes with financial statements are acceptable, bank statement with Account details clearly shown. All of the above.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does your council have a Grants Program reference/advisory group to provide input to the Community grant program? Is there community representation in this group?	No.	No.	No. The assessment panel, made up of Council officers are asked to provide input into the program.	No.	No.	No.

FINANCE					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
What happens to Overspends and underspends from each grant round?	Underspend in Community Program can be used for Small / Emergency Grants. Underspend overall is rolled into following year. Overspend would have less in future round, or reallocation from small or emergency funding depending on their capacity	Only one round per year - allocations can be moved between streams if there is under application in one stream compared to another	Rollover of round 1 underspend to round 2.	1. if enough underspend for a second round this will be held in Dec 2. If the amount is too small for a second round, it is carried forward into the next financial year.	Given only one round a year, all funds are generally allocated.
What are the total grant monies budgeted for each year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21? (The money available for distribution to grant seekers).	18/19 \$260K for Community Grants, 19/20 \$260K for Community Grants, 20/21 \$260 K for Community Grants. We also have a small and emergency grants program, which are allocated \$25k and \$20K respectively. Any underspend in Community Grants can be used to top up these programs if required.	2020/21 \$120,000 (Community Grant Streams) \$17,500 Quick Response (same budget for previous years)	2018/2019 = \$270,400 2019/2020 = \$270,400 2020/2021 = \$270,400	2020/21 = \$230,000 2019/20 = \$230,000 2018/19 = \$230,000	2018/19 = \$176,000 2019/20 = \$145,000 2020/21 = \$202,000

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
What is the administration budget (excluding staff) for your grant program each year (e.g. online software, presentation/catering, evaluation, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21)	Each year as noted - \$12K software, \$3K for administration	No software and we do not hold presentation - all budget is staff time.	Roughly \$14,000	No operations budget for admin. This is absorbed in officer duties	No specific budget is divulged to the Grants program, but resources are sourced as need from the Economic Development Initiatives budget.
Please advise the eft (staff) needed to administer the grants program (or a proportion of an officer's role) if the responsible officer wears many hats...	Community Strengthening Officer - .5 / Community Strengthening Coordinator - 0.2	Sport and Rec Office - 0.2 each of a team of 3	Connected Communities Officer .4 EFT Manager.1 EFT	Community dev Officer .2eft Project support .2eft	Event Support staff .5 EFT Community Development staff .2 EFT Coordinator .1 EFT
Please advise the total number of grant submissions submitted per year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21	18/19=52 19/20=57 20/21= 43	2018 = 87 2019 = 112 2020 = 107	2018/2019 = 58 2019/2020 = 37 2020/2021 = 27	2018/19 round 1 = 27 2018/19 round 2 = 17 2019/20 = round 1 = 28 2019/20 round 2 = 4 2020/21 = 21	2018/19 = 82 2019/20 = 86 2020/21 = 61
Please advise the number of funded grant submissions per year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21	18/19=37 19/20=38 20/21=33	2018 = 67 2019 = 106 2020 = 92	2018/2019 = 36 2019/2020 = 25 2020/2021 = 22	2018/19 round 1 = 21 2018/19 round 2 = 11 2019/20 = round 1 = 28 2019/20 round 2 = 2 2020/21 = 21	2018/19 = 57 2019/20 = 57 2020/21 = 39

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Please advise the minimum funding contribution (cash or in-kind) required from applicants for each category	1:1 - except for Planning & Dev Reports which can be 75% Grant/25% contribution)	1:1 all streams	Applicants must match their grant request with a 1:1 contribution in cash or in kind	5,000 1:1 20,000 2:1	Up to 50% of total funds being requested. Can be cash or in-kind or combination of both
Does your acquittal process include a requirement for the applicant to report on the outcomes as well as the expenditure of funds provided? Please attach a copy of the acquittal form.	Acquittal of funds only	No - acquittal of funds requested only	The acquittal process includes both expenditure of funds and an evaluation of outcomes.	Acquits funds for the entire project not only funds granted. Does not include an evaluation of the project in the acquittal.	Yes, acquittal and evaluation must be completed including budget and proof of expenditure

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What happens to Overspends and underspends from each grant round?	Underspend in Community Program can be used for Small / Emergency Grants. Underspend overall is rolled into following year. Overspend would have less in future round, or reallocation from small or emergency funding depending on their capacity	Overspend in Round 1 then less available in round 2, Underspend in round 1, more available in round 2, Over at end of both rounds returned to surplus	We don't do overspends. If a round is underspent in the first half of the financial year (August) it is carried across into the next round. If it is underspent in the second round (March) it is not carried over. We have only ever had one underspent round.	No threshold for underspend. Funds returned if not spent or less than expected spent. Overspends are the responsibility of the Applicant.	Overspend in round 1 results in less funding provided to round 2. Underspend funds in round 1 means more funding for round 2. Any funding left over after both rounds have been finalised is returned to surplus.	We don't have overspends. Underspends are subsumed into other grant rounds.
What are the total grant monies budgeted for each year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21? (The money available for distribution to grant seekers).	18/19 - \$260K for Community Grants, 19/20 - \$260K for Community Grants, 20/21 \$260 K for Community Grants. We also have a small and emergency grants program, which are allocated \$25k and \$20K respectively. Any underspend in Community Grants can be used to top up these programs if required.	2020/21 = \$353,500 2019/20 = \$345,000 2018/19 = \$345,000	\$254,000. There has been no change to the budget since 2015	\$300,000 for last three years approx.	2020/21 - \$496,000 2019/20 - \$431,000 2018/19 - \$431,000	18/19 - \$2.3m 19/20 - \$3m 20/21 \$3.4m

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What is the administration budget (excluding staff) for your grant program each year (e.g. online software, presentation/catering, evaluation, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21)	Each year as noted - \$12K software, \$3K for administration	SmartyGrants \$20,000	Subscription to SmartyGrants \$12,500pa Catering approximately \$200 per year if person to person workshops	software, community grant reception less than \$30,000	2020/21 - \$20,000 2019/20 - \$22,000 2018/19 - \$20,000	18/19 = \$40,000 19/20 = \$40,000 20/21 = \$40,000
Please advise the eft (staff) needed to administer the grants program (or a proportion of an officer's role) if the responsible officer wears many hats...	Community Strengthening Officer - 0.5 Community Strengthening Coordinator - 0.2	Grants Officer .5 eft	Grants officer .5eft	approx. 1.6 EFT, combined across three positions	Grants Officer - Fulltime Grants Administration officer - 0.6	Team Leader 1 eft Grants administrator .8 eft
Please advise the total number of grant submissions submitted per year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21	18/19=52 19/20=57 20/21= 43	2018/19 = 158 2019/20 = 159 2020/21 = 86	18/19 = 132 19/20 = 138 20/21 = 112	Community Development Grants 2020/21 - 53 applications, 2019/20 - 41 applications, 2018/19 - 69 applications Community Sponsorship - 2020/21 - 13 applications 2019/20 - 32 applications	Grants 2020/21 - 292 (two rounds) 2019/20 - 174 2018/19 - 150 Sponsorship - Minor & Major 2020/21 - 14 2019/20 - N/A 2018/19 - N/A	Generally we get between 400 and 500 applications each year but in the 2020 colander year we had an extra 1500 applications because of our COVID grants.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Please advise the number of funded grant submissions per year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21	18/19=37 19/20=38 20/21=33	2018/19 = 139 2019/20 = 144 2020/21 = 69	18/19 = 95 19/20 = 86 20/21 = 43 (round 1)	Community Development Grants 2020/21, funded 35 to \$182,502; 2019/20 funded 25 to \$94,565.91; 2018/19 funded 47 to \$204,486, Community Sponsorship 2019/20 18 funded to \$46,692.91, 2020-21 YTD 7 funded to \$31,500	Grants 2020/21 - 205 2019/20 - 145 2018/19 - 122 Sponsorship - Minor & Major 2020/21 - 5 (3 are currently being assessed) 2019/20 - N/A 2018/19 - N/A	Application approval rate is 55% 3,444 approved of 6,171 decided
Please advise the minimum funding contribution (cash or in-kind) required from applicants for each category	1:1 - except for Planning & Dev Reports which can be 75% Grant (25% contribution)	25% of total funds being requested	Minimum 30% of total project costs. If a project demonstrates a lot of volunteer support, we will fund 100% of money requested e.g. Boomerang Bags make free bags that are available all-around bass coast request funding for an industrial sewing machine, we will fund 100% cost of the sewing machine	1 category requires applicant contribution - Minor Capital requires 50% applicant contribution. Applicant contribution must be minimum 50% cash. Where other grants are for purchases in excess of grant value, applicant must demonstrate how they will meet cost.	We do not request any contribution from Community groups.	

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does your acquittal process include a requirement for the applicant to report on the outcomes as well as the expenditure of funds provided? Please attach a copy of the acquittal form.	Acquittal of funds only	Acquittal requires funds for the entire project not only funds granted	Acquits funds only for the grant funding spent and provide a limited evaluation plus evidence of media promotion and photos	Yes, see attached	Our acquittal forms ask applicants to provide the following evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short description of the completed project • Project start and finish dates • Outcomes • Learnings of undertaking the project • Income & Expenditure • What was LCC's funding used for • Proof of purchase invoice/receipts • Photo evidence that showcases a completed project • Evidence of how LCC's support for the project was recognised 	Yes

ADMINISTRATION					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Are you using an online platform to administer the grant program? Which program do you use?	Smarty Grants	No	Yes, we use SmartyGrants	no - excel	No. But we are currently investigating options
Have you made use of training available by the online platform provider?	Yes - not as much as we should	NA	No training has been used. Learn as we go and need.	n/a	n/a
If using SmartyGrants, do you make use of CLASSIE in the application form structure? If not, why?	No, unsure of this	NA	Not yet. New staff and lack of time.	n/a	n/a
If using SmartyGrants, do you make use of the Gender Lens in the application form build? If not, why?	No	NA	Not yet. New staff and lack of time.	n/a	n/a

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
If using SmartyGrants what reporting functions do you make use of?	Funding allocation, acquittal, assessment scores - we don't use the full functionality	NA	We download snapshot reports during assessment and run other reports on an ad hoc basis.	n/a	n/a

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Are you using an online platform to administer the grant program? Which program do you use?	Smarty Grants	SmartyGrants	Yes, SmartyGrants	Yes, SmartyGrants	Yes. We use SmartyGrants	Yes, We use SmartyGrants
Have you made use of training available by the online platform provider?	Yes - not as much as we should	yes - the training is fabulous	Yes, initial users attend the training offered in the city and then use tutorials	Yes, SmartyGrants	We haven't attended training nor tutorials. Learn as we go and need	Yes
If using SmartyGrants, do you make use of CLASSIE in the application form structure? If not, why?	No, unsure of this	No	No, unsure why not	No. Grants program not linked to achievement of CLASSIE criteria as evaluation and reporting not part of activity at this time. CLASSIE not included in program framework for program delivery.	No, I am not sure what this is.	Yes

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
If using SmartyGrants, do you make use of the Gender Lens in the application form build? If not, why?	No	No	No. Issues with the actual question at it is very specific and unable to be changed.	No. Grants program not linked to achievement of Gender Lens criteria as evaluation and reporting not part of activity at this time. Gender Lens not included in in program framework for program delivery.	No, unaware of this function	Yes
If using SmartyGrants what reporting functions do you make use of?	Funding allocation, acquittal, assessment scores - we don't use the full functionality	try to use as much reporting functions available	Reports are used to compile the funding recommendation report provided to Council, has been used to provide letters but not anymore, replaced with emails. Also used to provide a detailed breakdown of where funding is going e.g. per ward; how much to each category; how much in specific areas e.g. art, sport, youth	Reporting to support program management	We use the reporting function to run information for our panel assessment meetings. We have created reports in the system to assist us to do this.	Council reports

FRAMEWORK					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Does your Council have a documented Grants Framework? If yes, please provide a copy.	No. Guidelines only	Guidelines for each stream, no framework	No. We have guidelines, an application guide and a Community Grants Policy.	No. We have Guidelines not a documented framework.	We have a Policy and Procedure document
Does your Council refer to any best practice framework model or resource to inform the management and administration of your community grant making? If yes, which framework/resource do you use?	Not at this stage.	No	No	No - will be interested to hear your outcomes	No
How does the regional strategic context influence your community grant program's program and how do you ensure it does?	Encourage communities to consider, but do not ensure this occurs.	Broad categories reflect the community need - do not consider regional context outside of categories,	It does not really influence the program except when program reviews occur.	Broadly influences the grants program in the categories funded but does not fund broad community need identified in regional plans and we don't ensure it does	Our Economic Development Strategy identifies the importance of event-based tourism which is reflected in criteria for the ESF favouring tourism and visitation-based events. One of the criteria of the Community Grants

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
					Program is to align with Council's Community Plans
Does Council have a Grants Program Policy and documented end-to-end internal procedure? Please attach copies.	Grants Policy. No documented procedure. Officers know the procedure	Grants Policy - procedure is known not written	A policy is attached but no documented internal end-to-end procedure, but it is a priority.	A policy attached but no documented procedure, officers know the internal procedure	Yes, currently being reviewed
Do you have a documented outcomes measurement framework for your community grants program?	No	No	No	Yes	No
Do you have a documented monitoring and evaluation framework in place for your community grants program?	No	No	Not documented	Yes	Yes

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
How often do you evaluate or review your community grants program? When was the last grants program reviewed?	Internally every year, but very informal. Never externally reviewed	Annually	Every 3 years. The last review was in 2017	Annually	The policy and procedure are periodically reviewed. But the program has recently had a full review with implementation of amendments currently underway. Recommendation for an annual review for the short term whilst changes are implemented.
As community needs emerge does the Community grants Program adapt? (Is the program flexible and responsive to community need)	It can adapt, but isn't planned in a strategic way	Adhoc - depending on review outcomes, and push from community	No	Somewhat. This is done on an adhoc basis and dependent on strategic direction from Council	Yes, as part of the review of guidelines and procedures, particular needs identified by the community are taken into account.
Are community grant program priorities identified through any community engagement processes? E.g.) mental health focus in Health and Wellbeing Plan or as a result of	No	Not as a formal process	We have recently developed two Council plans and the role played by Community Grants has been referred to in both. Currently we have not incorporated strategic actions into the Grants Program but that is something that could evolve.	Yes, identified in community capital requests as part of council budget	As part of the evaluation process, the observations and findings of the recipients are taken into account and reflected in future guidelines.

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
feedback from a review translating to become focus area of grants program.					
Apart from the LGA Community Satisfaction Survey, what feedback mechanisms are in place to ensure you know that Community Grants are valued by the community?	Feedback requested on an adhoc basis. Nothing formal conducted	Request feedback during the annual review, but nothing formal	We gather feedback on the application form regarding the application process and project evaluation via the acquittal process. Nothing formal is in place.	informal feedback	Feedback is requested as part of the acquittal and evaluation process as well as comments from the community to councillors or on social media pages.
In your latest review what have you seen as a trend/s?	Fewer applicants, asking for larger amounts. Better applications. Facility based applications, not program based.	more applicants in 2020 - reflective of COVID need	A review hasn't been undertaken since 2017. But general observations include: - Covid still impacting the number of applications received (lower than prior to 2020) - The quality of applications has improved since transitioning to SmartyGrants - Other locally available funding programs require less rigour, requirements and information	Building maintenance and capital improvements	Slight decrease in submission numbers but majority of applicants requesting larger amounts of funding. 20/21 year saw larger number of upgrade/structural improvement requests as no sports due to Covid allowed them the downtime to address these issues

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does your Council have a documented Grants Framework? If yes, please provide a copy.	No, Guidelines only	Guidelines and Assessment Criteria	No. Guidelines	No Framework. See attached.	Yes. We do but it is due for review this year (yay another review)	Yes
Does your Council refer to any best practice framework model or resource to inform the management and administration of your community grant making? If yes, which framework/resource do you use?	Not at this stage.	Yes - Our Community - Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration	No	No.	Yes, we refer to the Grants Governance Policy and Framework throughout our documents.	Our Community's Grantmaking Guide
How does the regional strategic context influence your community grant program's program and how do you ensure it does?	Encourage communities to consider, but do not ensure this occurs.	Possibly considered when developing grant scheme but not regularly referred to		No, programs have been in place for some years.		The Council's Strategic Plan guides and informs our grant program.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does Council have a Grants Program Policy and documented end-to-end internal procedure? Please attach copies.	Grants Policy. No documented procedure. Officers know the procedure	Yes - have a policy but not an intensive procedure.	Policy attached. Guidelines for assessors	No	Yes. The Policy is due for review this year. We have also created a draft document for the review process when applications are received.	Policy attached.
Do you have a documented outcomes measurement framework for your community grants program?	No	No	No	No		No.
Do you have a documented monitoring and evaluation framework in place for your community grants program?	No	No	No	No	No. We have documents in place, but they are not referred to as framework	No.
How often do you evaluate or review your community grants program? When was the last grants program reviewed?	Internally every year, but very informal. Never externally reviewed	minor changes due to application process - no major review	2016 was a benchmarking review. 2018 discussed with Council for any potential changes. Currently	No	Last review was completed in 2020. I think we will do another review when the Council Plan & Health and wellbeing plan is endorsed.	Every four years. 2018

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
			undertaking a more thorough review - categories, frequency, assessment			
As community needs emerge does the Community grants Program adapt? (Is the program flexible and responsive to community need)	It can adapt, but isn't planned in a strategic way	No	Ad hoc in 2018 - a need was felt for a quick response grant. It wasn't supported by Council. COVID has shown a quick response could now be warranted, hence the review	No	Yes and no. All major changes need to be endorsed by Council which makes it a difficult process.	Yes, e.g. establishing COVID response grants
Are community grant program priorities identified through any community engagement processes? E.g.) mental health focus in Health and Wellbeing Plan or as a result of feedback from a review translating to become focus area of grants program.	No	No	We are also currently exploring how to include priorities from Council plans and strategies into the grants program, hence the review	No	Yes	Yes, we're always seeking feedback and tweaking the criteria to best reflect community needs.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Apart from the LGA Community Satisfaction Survey, what feedback mechanisms are in place to ensure you know that Community Grants are valued by the community?	Feedback requested on an adhoc basis. Nothing formal conducted	Request feedback in grant acquittal	Same	Nothing in place.	N/A	Continual feedback.
In your latest review what have you seen as a trend/s?	Fewer applicants, asking for larger amounts. Better applications. Facility based applications, not program based.		2018 - majority of applicants are return groups each round. How to identify and target other groups?	N/A	More applications and more money being requested.	The grant program is performing well and highly valued.

APPLICATION PROCESS					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Please describe the process/flow for a submission? Attach if there is a documented process for this (e.g. flow chart).	No documented process. Officers and communities know the process (not necessarily understand it)	Can be either online as a form application or paper based. Applications received, screened, input from internal staff, sent to assessment, discussion, briefing to Council, recommendations made	No documented process- applications received in SmartyGrants, pre-eligibility is assessed, follow up with applicants undertaken, if necessary, assessors provided access to SmartyGrants to make assessments, group meeting of assessors to discuss applications, Council Officer undertakes follow up of supporting evidence, scores are finalised, recommendations made, and report submitted to Council	Online application process, screened by officers for eligibility, contact made to modify applications, assessment, council workshop, further assessment, grant endorsement at council meeting, communication to all grant applicants, funding agreement completed, acquittal process	Online application submitted, screened by officers for eligibility, compiled ready for assessment panel review, formal assessment panel meeting for discussion and ranking of submissions, recommendation made, recommendations ratified in July Scheduled Meeting of Council
Is council officer contact mandatory prior to submitting an application?	It is required, but is not often done	Recommended but not mandatory	Yes	Yes	Recommended depending on complexity of project/event but not mandatory
Do you provide an exemplar or sample responses to questions for applicants?	No - hints are provided in the form information	Yes - each stream	No	Yes	No

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Are Companies Limited By Guarantee eligible to make a submission?	Yes	Other community-based organisations deemed eligible. They could apply, would depend on what was being requested	No	No	Yes
Are Social Enterprise entities eligible to make a submission?	Yes	Other community-based organisations deemed eligible. They could apply, would depend on what was being requested	We don't exclude any groups who are not-for-profit entities	Yes	Yes
Are Auspice arrangements eligible for the program?	Yes	Yes - each stream	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are projects eligible for funding that are for maintenance (not capital improvement, upgrade or new) of council building, asset?	No, ongoing maintenance is not eligible for funding.	No	No, the eligibility criteria refers to projects not being considered routine/cyclical maintenance work	Yes	No, maintenance for council assets is funded elsewhere from Council
Are projects eligible for funding that are for maintenance (not capital improvement, upgrade or new) of non-council assets?	No, ongoing maintenance is not eligible for funding.	Not for ongoing maintenance	No	Yes	Yes

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Are projects eligible for funding that are for capital improvement, upgrade or new of council building, asset.	Yes, CAC are able to apply for funding - discussion and approvals required	No	This can be a grey area that would better be explained over the phone	Yes	Yes
Are projects eligible for funding that are for capital improvement, upgrade or new of non-council assets?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do council officers provide advice to grant seekers to identify suitability to need and context before an application is submitted?	Yes - all applicants are offered the opportunity to discuss their application.	Yes	Yes, advice is available to all applicants throughout the grants round and also throughout the year in preparation for the grants opening	Yes	Yes, officers support applicants to understand the strategic and planning context of council to determine if their project fits

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Please describe the process/flow for a submission? Attach if there is a documented process for this (e.g. flow chart).	No documented process. Officers and communities know the process (not necessarily understand it)	Applications undergo an initial eligibility check to determine whether they meet the funding guidelines and will then be scored against the criteria. Based on the score received against the assessment criteria, applications are prioritised by a panel from the Wellington Shire Council leadership team. This panel provides advice and recommendations.	Same	No process flow in place.	We have a draft document, once finalised I can send it through. Current process: - Applications received through SmartyGrants - Screened for eligibility - Information compiled and provided to panels for assessment - Applications assessed by panel - Recommendations provided for Councillors - Councillors review applications and provide final recommendations - Report prepared for Council meeting for endorsement	in procedures manual
Is council officer contact mandatory prior to submitting an application?	It is required, but is not often done	No - highly recommended	Same	Only for Community Sponsorship, this requirement is often considered a suggestion and not met and not included in assessment criteria.	No, we suggest to applicants that they should contact us prior to submitting an application but many do not.	Recommended but not mandatory

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Do you provide an exemplar or sample responses to questions for applicants?	No - hints are provided in the form information	Not really	No	No	No, currently we don't but this is something we are looking to create for the next round.	No
Are Companies Limited By Guarantee eligible to make a submission?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	In some categories
Are Social Enterprise entities eligible to make a submission?	Yes	Possibly	Yes	No position specific to social enterprise	Yes. As long as they are not-for-profit	Yes
Are Auspice arrangements eligible for the program?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, Auspice must complete application and auspice provide supporting doc/form from BBSC	Yes	Yes
Are projects eligible for funding that are for maintenance (not capital improvement, upgrade or new) of council building, asset?	No, ongoing maintenance is not eligible for funding.	Yes - if the maintenance item is not covered elsewhere	No, maintenance is not eligible	Program for building improvement is defined as "repair or improvement of built form fixed asset projects in/on eligible community facilities and places. The kinds of	No, these projects are funded elsewhere	No.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
				<p>projects that this grant is suitable for include upgrade of buildings, paths, lighting, clubrooms, fencing, playing surfaces, shade and public space infrastructure, and may include the purchase and installation of items such as cabinetry, floor coverings, and electrical or gas equipment. Minor Capital Works projects do not exceed \$50,000 in value".</p> <p>Maintenance is funded elsewhere, but not particularly addressed as an exclusion in the program objective</p>		
Are projects eligible for funding that are for maintenance (not capital improvement, upgrade or new)	No, ongoing maintenance is not eligible for funding.	Yes - if the maintenance item is not covered elsewhere	No, maintenance is not eligible	Not defined in grants program information	No, maintenance projects are not supported but applicants can apply for funding for accessibility improvements,	No

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
of non-council assets?					renovations, repairs etc.	
Are projects eligible for funding that are for capital improvement, upgrade or new of council building, asset.	Yes, CAC are able to apply for funding - discussion and approvals required		Yes, only if relevant approvals from internal officers- Building maintenance team, assets and property - are received	Not defined in grants program information	Yes, only if appropriate approvals have been sought.	No
Are projects eligible for funding that are for capital improvement, upgrade or new of non-council assets?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Do council officers provide advice to grant seekers to identify suitability to need and context before an application is submitted?	Yes - all applicants are offered the opportunity to discuss their application.	Yes	Same	Not grants team. Other officers may support applicants	Yes, officers provide support to applicants.	Sometimes

ASSESSMENT PROCESS					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
What are the assessment criteria and how are they weighted? Please attach a copy of the application form and assessment scoring matrix/rubric.	Yes - Committees can apply assessment criteria.	Vary depending on the stream - see guidelines for more information	We have no assessment scoring matrix/rubric. Assessment criteria include: Please describe your project and why you want to do this project. (10%) What will this project achieve? (20%) Why is this project needed in your community? (20%) Who will be involved in the project? (15%) How will you carry out your project? (15%) Please provide a project budget and explain how you arrived at the costs (20%)	See attached guidelines	We are currently reviewing our assessment process and criteria
How are submissions ranked, scored to make a recommendation to Council to fund? Do you have a documented procedure for this? Please provide a copy.	Assessment is done via Smarty Grants individually using a ranking for each question. Total is tallied and weighted scores determined. Mediation with panel to determine all comfortable with ranked list. No written procedure for this process	Assessment panel scores depending on the assessment criteria. Weighting is applied. No documented procedure	Each assessor scores the criteria response out of 10. When scoring, they consider the extent to which the application demonstrates broad community benefit, the budget is accurate, and the risk management is appropriate. Predetermined weighting	Each assessor scores out of 10 each of the selection criteria. A predetermined weighting is applied. Total score tallied. Applications not ranked. No documented procedure for this we do use an excel formatted document to assist with this	Each assessor scores project out of 10 against selection criteria which provides an overall average score for each submission. These are input into a master scoresheet from each panel member and ranked

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
			is applied and then the total score is tallied.		
How do you discourage dependency of organisations on the community grant program?	Competitive process - grants are given depending on assessment.	We don't.	Applicants can only apply once per year, the eligibility criteria states that projects must not require ongoing commitment of funds from Council. New projects and those that promote broader community participation are encouraged	Consider the grant application. If funded the previous year, may not be eligible if insufficient funds	As part of the criteria groups must come up with new or innovative aspects to an existing event
Does the Assessment Panel include external assessors (community members) to assess submissions? If using external assessors, how are they selected?	Yes. Invitation to philanthropic, other community grant givers to participate	Internal assessment only	No, we only use internal Council staff from across departments	No	No
What is the mix of the Assessment Panel? E.g.) number of Internal officers/departments and external parties,	1/2 external, 3 internal, one moderator	Internal assessment x4 assessors generally depending on the stream	Between 8-12 internal Council Officers from various departments (e.g. Libraries, Assets, Youth, Environment, Health, Eco Dev, Governance, Com Dev, Diversity)	N/A	2 senior Council officers, CEO and 2 Councillors

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Does council approve grants recommendations from the assessment panel? If yes, does Council make changes to the recommendation i.e.)never, occasionally, frequently (every grant round)	Yes, Council approves recommendations. Yes, Council may make alternative recommendations and often do.	Report - then seniors, then council briefing then recommendations - sometimes	Council usually accepts the recommendations as provided after the assessment panel has given their scores. Council can make changes but the frequency of this is generally rare	N/A	Yes, never but have requested additional information at times

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What are the assessment criteria and how are they weighted? Please attach a copy of the application form and assessment scoring matrix/rubric.	Yes - Committees can apply assessment criteria.	Planning & capacity 25% Community Outcomes 75%	Assessment criteria attached. Community need/benefit 30% Applicant can manage project 30% Alignment with Council plan 25% Demonstrates contribution 15%	No weighting attached.	Assessment Criteria Weighting The applicant's capacity of delivering the project - This includes any quotes, budget information and plans in support of the application - 30% The application address a community need and describes how the community will benefit from the project/activity - 30% The application demonstrates other	Depends on the grant

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
					contributions e.g. monetary, voluntary services or in-kind support as part of the proposal - 25% The application is consistent with the Council Plan, Municipal Health & Wellbeing plan and other strategic documents - 15%	
How are submissions ranked, scored to make a recommendation to Council to fund? Do you have a documented procedure for this? Please provide a copy.	Assessment is done via Smarty Grants individually using a ranking for each question. Total is tallied and weighted scores determined. Mediation with panel to determine all comfortable with ranked list. No written procedure for this process.	Yes - attached Guidelines & Assessment Criteria	Each assessor selects relevant scoring e.g. 0 no response, 10 poor, 20 good, 30 excellent. Total score tallied and applications ranked according to scoring. No documented procedure.	Scored against assessment criteria.	Yes, applications are ranked but we do not have a procedure in writing for this.	Depends on the grant. Generally a score out of 5.
How do you discourage dependency of organisations on the community grant program?	Competitive process - grants are given depending on assessment.	We don't discourage	We don't through the grants program - each application is funded or not on its merits. Whilst we accept multiple	Previously the program supported ineligible item, three successful applications in a row, but program	No	We don't.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
			applications per round, if the round is oversubscribed only one application per group is assessed. Groups are asked to prioritise multiple applications. when meeting with groups they are encouraged to be financially sustainable and have alternative sources of income aside from grants funding.	was not designed to capture/manage this, and it has been removed. Otherwise no statement related to access		
Does the Assessment Panel include external assessors (community members) to assess submissions? If using external assessors, how are they selected?	Yes. Invitation to philanthropic, other community grant givers to participate	No	No	No.	No	Yes. Hand selected.
What is the mix of the Assessment Panel? E.g.) number of Internal officers/departme	1/2 external, 3 internal, one moderator	CAG 4 x Managers & Coordinators / QRG 2 x Managers & Coordinators	Up to 10 assessors per round depending on number of applications. All external facing	No framework guides this activity. No externals are engaged.	Minor Capital Works & Minor Equipment Team Leader Building Maintenance Coordinator Recreation Liaison &	All external community members. Numbers vary depending on grant program or stream

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
nts and external parties,			teams across Council are encouraged to participate.		Sporting Reserves Maintenance Coordinator Infrastructure & Planning Coordinator Recreation & Open Space Manager City Assets Community Wellbeing Coordinator Active & Liveable Communities Coordinator Organisational Development Manager Active Communities & Partnerships Community Events - Minor Senior Events Officer Coordinator Events & Tourism, Creative Venues Events And Tourism Manager Family Services Community Events - Significant Senior Events Officer Coordinator Events & Tourism, Creative Venues Events And	and number of grants to assess.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
					Tourism Executive Assistant CEO Manager Family Services Community Sponsorship - Major Senior Events Officer Coordinator Latrobe Performing Arts & Venues, Creative Venues Events And Tourism Executive Assistant Major Recreation Projects Manager Active Communities & Partnerships	
Does council approve grants recommendations from the assessment panel? If yes, does Council make changes to the recommendation i.e.)never, occasionally, frequently (every grant round)	Yes, Council approves recommendations. Yes, Council may make alternative recommendations and often do.	Yes - Council very rarely make changes	Very rarely	Council considers Officer Recommendation for Community Development Grants. Community Sponsorship outcomes are based on an officer assessment panel and recommendation made to and authorised by manager/director.	Yes, frequently. They make changes each grant round but do not make many of them.	Yes. Rarely changes the recommendations.

ACCESSIBILITY						
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d	
Are all public facing collateral (application forms, guidelines etc) accessible and/or follow specific inclusive guidelines	Yes, all available on Council's website and can be printed if required. Guidelines and other collateral are designed by Comms department who have a style guide to adhere to.	Yes	Yes, our guide and criteria are on our Website. We encourage applicants to link their responses to the Council Plan and any other relevant plans	Yes, adhere to Council's strategies in the Access and Inclusion Plan for communications	They are accessible from Council's website	
Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Are all public facing collateral (application forms, guidelines etc) accessible and/or follow specific inclusive guidelines	Yes, all available on Council's website and can be printed if required. Guidelines and other collateral are designed by Comms department who have a style guide to adhere to.		No. This is currently being addressed.	No, this is not used as a benchmark/guide to content	Yes	Yes.

EVALUATION					
Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
Does your council use a formal process to identify or validate the community benefits generated by the Community grants program? Briefly explain how the mechanism works. Is community voice sought in the process?	No	No	Applicants are required to formally acquit their projects and associated community benefit which are reviewed.	No	No, but it is noted informally
In the evaluation process does your council determine whether the community grants program has improved economic outcomes for community?	No	No	No	Yes, look at the value the grant has generated	Yes

Questions	SGSC	S11 a	S11 b	S11 c	S11 d
In the evaluation process does your council determine whether the community grants program has improved social outcomes for community?	No	No	Not broadly and formally	No	Yes
How does your council measure its community grants program benefits and outcomes (data)?	No	We don't do this in a structured way	Informally, through the acquittal process	We don't do this in a structured way	Not measured
Is your community grants program guided by 1. full program logic; or 2. Theory of Change; and 3. a data plan?	No	No	None	No not really	No answer
What outcomes related data do you require applicants to provide that will contribute to the overall evaluation of the community grants program? If not requested, why?	None	Benefit to the community and support by the community for the project.	Through the acquittal process we gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding project outcomes	All applicants are required to identify the total number of community members that will benefit from their project	Data is required on the number of participants, quantitative and qualitative outcomes, club capacities, and economic and social to the municipality

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
Does your council use a formal process to identify or validate the community benefits generated by the Community grants program? Briefly explain how the mechanism works. Is community voice sought in the process?	No	No	No	No. Applicants advise during Project Acquittal community benefit with regard to Community Development Grant (Equipment, Minor Capital, Environment)		No,
In the evaluation process does your council determine whether the community grants program has improved economic outcomes for community?	No	No	No, this is currently being reviewed	No, economic outcomes are not specifically measured at evaluation. Applicants are required at Application to advise of if they sought suppliers from the municipality and if they will use these local suppliers, quotes are required to demonstrate this. The Assessment		No.

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
				Criteria includes Budget, and these items are considered/scored.		
In the evaluation process does your council determine whether the community grants program has improved social outcomes for community?	No	No	as above	No, evaluation is not developed in the program.		No.
How does your council measure its community grants program benefits and outcomes (data)?	No	No measure	No structured format	Evaluation is not developed into the programs		We don't
Is your community grants program guided by 1. full program logic; or 2. Theory of Change; and 3. a data plan	No	No	No	No		No

Questions	SGSC	S11 e	non-S11 LGA f	non-S11 LGA g	non-S11 LGA h	non-S11 LGA i
What outcomes related data do you require applicants to provide that will contribute to the overall evaluation of the community grants program? If not requested, why?	None	No data required that contributes to the overall evaluation of the grants program	None	Did project meet need as identified in application. Financial expenditure		The acquittal information could be used in a formal evaluation.

Focus Group Discussions

SGSC Community Grant Program Review Focus Groups	
Target Audience:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous successful and unsuccessful grant seekers • Community organisations/volunteer groups who have engaged with the Program as a grant seeker or a potential grant seeker 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees at SGS Council Chambers (Leongatha) • Attendees via Zoom 	
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 [6.00pm – 7.30pm]	19 community organisations / volunteer groups attended
Thursday, 13 May 2021 [10.00am – 11.30am]	

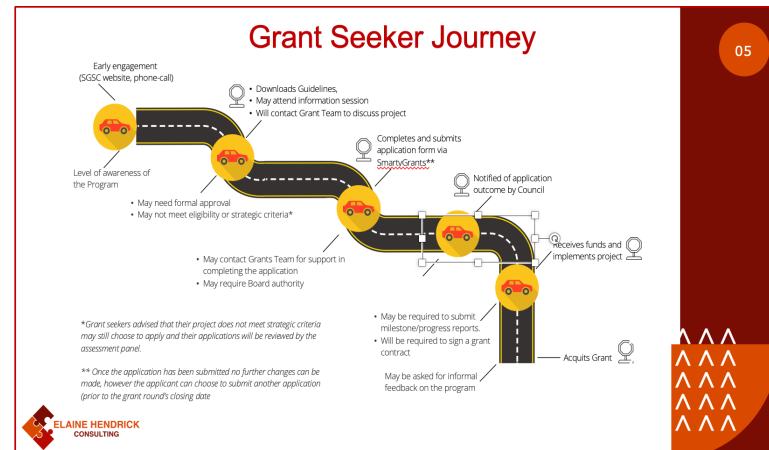
Focus Group Session Structure

At the start of each session, attendees were asked to reflect on the following and describe the outcomes/benefits/impact in one word.

- What does the Grants Program mean to your project?
- What does outcomes/benefits/impact mean to your organisation?

Attendees 'One' Word descriptors			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Validation > Connection > Augmentation / essential cog > Community gathering > Holistic community engagement > Community (targeting grants program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Community/ Targeting > Social/Connection > Equitable > Restoring/Dignity > Survival (operating cost) > Bringing community together > Survival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Validation to project > Essential to everything > Equitable access > Successful > Community, aims for grant more apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Social > Safety > Enabling > Enabling/ Environment > Essential/ Sustainable > Community > Understanding > Connection > Equitable access

Slide 5 – Grant Seeker Journey

**Where did you hear about the Program?**

- Local newspaper
- Website
- Generally know about grant program availability and check specifics on website
- Knew all councils have grant programs so went to the website when I moved to the area
- Through the Gardiner Foundation capacity building grant (Grants Only Group)
- Through the Council (Mirboo North Lions)
- Notifications through SmartyGrants
- Council officer
- Emails from supporters of clubs
- Went to website because of emails or newspaper notifications
- Word of mouth
- Used to be newspapers but now on website and 'In the Know' which sends email reminders.

Program Guidelines: (generally positive)

- More than adequate
- Straightforward
- Very useful, not too long, easy to share with others on a committee and means others can brainstorm and know what's going on
- A bit lengthy and question duplicated when using the guidelines when filling in application
- Too much information
- Too long to work through
- Can't remember the guidelines
- Could be summarised and shortened; streamlined or edited
- Good to share with the committee and quite comprehensive
- Find that they are good but a bit lengthy and a bit of duplication (particularly with respect to application questions which are incorporated into the Guidelines).
- Where can things go. It tends to be 'you tell me and we'll say yes or no' rather than a guideline about what is possible for projects. Specific project info and details. Not always available
- Covid Guidelines/restrictions – more support needed in relation to events especially large events. Provide detailed info and support to orgs.
- Covid hotline not much help. Similar to how it is set out in the Events Guidelines

Information Session:

- May have been helpful for people doing a grant application the first time but not worth going again. Guidelines cover everything
- Majority of attendees have not attended a session
 - Geographical barrier tends to discourage going more than once
 - Not considered to attend
- Having access to someone who can help – grants officer helped with journey
- Sessions generic and high level
- Roadblock can be specific and having someone to help is useful
- Handy to be able to make contact when needed
- Speaking with someone was really helpful – information sessions are generic and high level but having access to someone that can help overcome a roadblock is very valuable (*e.g. attendee wanted to know if needed to get more than one external organisation to quote but couldn't find that sort of info in the documentation*).
- Always handy to be able to contact the grants officer – have always done this.
- Wrote a couple of applications before realising there was access to help from a grants officer (*attendee suggestion: a bit more promotion that help is available would be good*).

- One person didn't get response via email and so was worried that their inquiry had not been received (*note: this was mentioned outside of session to evaluation team by an applicant who had been awarded an emergency grant*).
- Our group is all 'granted out'. It takes a lot of work. But as new people come onto the committee need to have access to information sessions for them (*several agreed that committee turnover meant providing information to applicants was an ongoing need*).
- I can't go if it is at night
- No. I didn't know it was on
- Haven't yet but I am going to the grant writing workshop (in late May)
- No. I don't know really
- Time and distance restrictive
- What has been helpful is having someone to refer to or ask questions of (grants officer) to get better direction that the information sessions don't give and is not covered by other resources
- When specific to your own application - very important to have access to someone to ask.
- Sessions on how to write grant would be good to have to understand/read strategies/plans and how community project fits into the strategies.
- Difficult that success or other parts of a project has to land on skill in English language and writing grant applications. There should be a secondary way to do this to make it friendly instead of bureaucratic process.
- Takes time to apply for grants – fortunate there are 3 or 4 grants
- Process does not allow applicant to get feedback from internal staff before submission – good to be able to copy and paste in draft for internal discussion form before submission
- Info-sharing by Council with community of how other community issues to grant application process enquiries would be helpful. Perhaps present as a step-by-step solution.

Speaking to Council (Grants Team and other Officers in relation to the grant application)

- Grant officers really helpful – problem is getting hold of them.
- Next level or access to rationalisation of what/how/why/when operation level is what is difficult. Switchboard should take message and make appointments for availability rather than put through to music. Music on hold is terrible.
- To access key people, especially in operational areas is challenging. It is difficult to get in touch with them.
- Council is often compliance/strategy driven not solution driven. And if your project isn't aligned with council's priorities then will get sent a link to a national or state regulatory authority is the answer. It is very impersonal and not the answer to personal or community need for funding. Not getting alternative suggestions.
- Council saying no is cold and experience shows it is unprofessional. Disappointing.
- Difficult to align between council strategy and the grant program for community organisations and to get access to information on this.
- Grant officers really helpful - the problem is getting on to them (they are so busy)

- Sophie and her team are very helpful and responsive and get back to you via email if not available
- Needed to know whether needed to get 1 or multiple quotes and this wasn't clear in the written documentation
- Need to talk to people and not say just 'NO' behind regulatory reasons - unprofessional
- Often impersonal and no avenue for discussions
- Getting feedback from key people can be challenging and requires multiple efforts.
- All about compliance and response felt it was all too hard
- Sophie and team have always been very responsive and helpful. Found emailing means a response is obtained when not available that day.
- Would be good if they could offer ideas on other providers of services e.g. audio-visual support when speaking to council.
- Need to engage more at an operational level
- Someone on Council team may say it doesn't fit but give another avenue for possible funding
- Get in contact to see if things we are planning on applying to see if it still fits to clarify rather than spending time for nothing. Council then should say 'this doesn't fit but perhaps try x'
- Bureaucratic process – it should be a helpful process

Would it help to have input in guidelines re events and festivals and covid?

- Ringing covid hotline not helpful so perhaps just something to navigate in coming years.
- Partnered with Council for big/small hall events – received info to help with this which made it much easier to navigate everything.
- Perhaps that could be on offer on website. Events guide is fantastic.
- Interested going forward with covid guidance and restrictions that council can provide re events. Dilemma as to whether to proceed with events in 2022. Council don't give specific answers about anything.
- What support will council be providing with respect to Covid restrictions wants, particularly for events - they are not sure if they can go ahead next year due to the uncertainty
- We ran a big event and found state government helpful but might be good to put more information to SGSC program guidelines

What do you ask the Grant team about?

- Less of the conversation and more informing council about the project and then giving you a yes/no. I would prefer it be more collaborative
- Often have them to speak to operations and this can be difficult path to navigate (*lots of nods in the room to this*)
- To ask about other providers of services {e.g. audio-visual support}
- To get a sense of whether the project will fit and then to explore other options if it doesn't

SmartyGrants:

- All attendees completing online
- Question about whether IT help is available from Council, but attendee noted this could be a potential barrier for some
- Don't get access to draft application that could be printed or downloaded or shared as a soft copy for review by committee (*were concerned that giving committee access to online document could result in undesired changes to the application*)
- There is no way to get a copy of the completed application for records or to learn from (*others said you could do this could be an easy fix to guidelines or added to the application form itself*).
- Great that you can save a draft and go back and amend it. I do prep work on a Word document and then copy and paste (lots of nods in the room to this approach)
- The application form is really cumbersome for large events – requires lots of attachments and takes a long time
- The questions are repetitive – some responses require too many words. It's too long.
- With SmartyGrants you can do prep work and save and go back later to complete. Much better than others which you need to complete in one go. We do it in Word – cut and paste when completed.

Are you able to communicate community benefits in the application? or Do you need to?

- Sometimes trying to explain benefit of the community is pointless – they are obvious

Would it help if there were drop down boxes that identified broad community benefits?

- Yes, but still need an opportunity to put in some sort of relevant statement
- Drop down boxes to help categorise the benefit would be good but also needs a contextual statement
- Be good to have the opportunity to measure your project against council strategies as sometimes people don't know about them or are very intimidated in this space
- Would be good to include a segment in the information sessions on council strategies so that people can see how their project aligns
- Still need ability to put in causal descriptive sentence
- Tried to link back to Council aims and objectives. Maybe dropdown containing the aims and you could put in sentence about how your project meets the aims.
- Dropdown for Council aim/objectives/strategies would be useful (e.g. health, safety, community connection will help people to think through)
- Dropdowns to help describe plus contextual description. Opportunity to measure against Council aims and strategies. Sometimes these can be overwhelming and intimidating, and application could guide through this to help complete.
- Dropdown box (*e.g. for thematic area or community benefit*) could be helpful as long it includes 'other' as you don't always fit into a box.
- Issue of not fitting into a box with respect to categories – *they are a brass band and don't seem to fit anywhere.*

Questions in Application Form:

- No one communicated that they had trouble answering the questions, but one participant noted it was very hard to put things into words.
- Some people are very good at grant writing others not (*the range of capabilities came up a couple of times*)
- 'Good grant writers can end up working on grants for multiple applications.
- Council can assist with the process
- It shouldn't be about how good your English is but how good your project is (*again this came up a couple of times*).
- Very cumbersome form for large events, with lots of attachments. Takes a long time to complete, questions are repetitive, some questions give several 100 words for response. Think it is too long and answers should be more concise with less repetitive questions.
- Concise form of application submission would be good.
- No access to question and submissions (whole package)
- Can't learn from what had been submitted
- Good to be able to have 2 copies of the proposal
- Not sure if I can download the submission
- Good to have copies of submission emailed back - concise and formatted

General Comment:

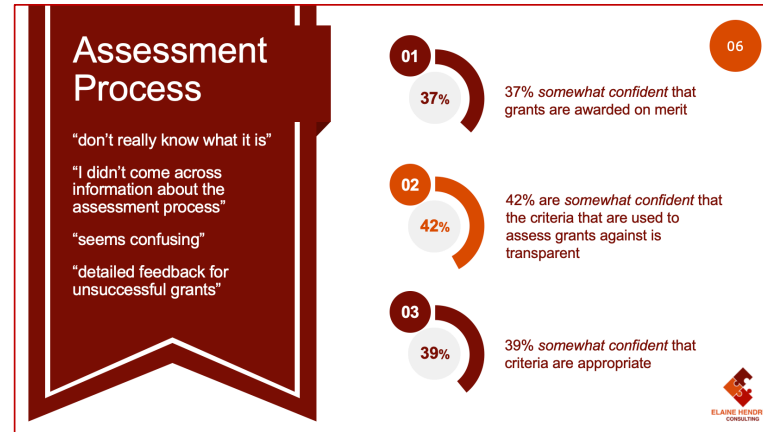
- Car metaphor on the Grant Seeker journey is misleading (too positive) as it implies that it is a straightforward journey with definite results
- Graphics great but probably more grants fail than succeed – shouldn't be expectation that you will reach the desired destination. Graphics sets up expectation you'll get the grant.
- We start a journey which may not see us reaching the destination
- Application form – it would be good to include 2 email addresses rather than just one to be notified and for 2 people to receive copies of the proposal
- Not sure, if possible, to download the finished application
- Would be good if application process indicated when the outcome will be advised – sometimes we are held in limbo
- Time lag between applying and hearing outcome can be too long particularly for events – this has put our group off applying for grants (events)
- Delays in the process are a real issue particularly if applying to multiple grantmakers
- Will always be useful to have session on writing to cover new people in an organisation
- Wrote a couple of applications before realising help available but didn't see anywhere that it was there. Perhaps more promotion of availability
- Category of grant not clear. Emailed for support but didn't get response but did once called and spoke to Sophie.
- Variety of grant applications given lots of issues, but geographic locations seem to have a bit weighting on the distribution of the grants
- For community to understand how selection is done would be great.

- Uncertainty could be diminished by applications getting some feedback on what was wrong with their applications and how to do it better next time. Positive spin on this.
- Often skill of application writer than that the project which is important for the benefit to the community
- Need a pathway of IT skills for those with minimal skills – to increase accessibility

Evaluation team's observations : Generally,

- Everyone knew what the guidelines are
- All found guidelines helpful and useful resource
- If first time ever making an application for the grant didn't find guidelines too much
- No one responded to the question : Have you had to use in large print or other language, another way/format?

Slide 6 – Assessment Process



- Not clear what that is?
- I am concerned over logic of community grants and how they reflect true community need (*example given of community garden in a rural community where this access to great space*)*
- I am concerned over decisions being made only by council officers.
- I would like a lot more information on how the grants is being awarded
- Some communities are getting more (because they have better grant writers)
- Distribution seems to be disproportionate geographically (i.e. Some communities are getting more than their fair share).
- Who is making the decision and what are they basing it on?
- Getting more feedback on grant application could really be helpful (currently we get nothing)
- 3-4 years ago applied for a grant. Didn't get a copy of the final submission and how questions were answered. No record of how the whole submission was answered and put in for further applications.
- Successful & unsuccessful applications – feedback is vital – currently receive email with no comment – enables better decision-making processes on both sides
- Can login and see and print SmartyGrants applications once done. More guidance and learning on the use of system
- Accessibility – does council offer pathway for those with minimal computer skills – if not, should be. Can sit with Grants Officer but that could potentially be barrier

- Could end up with the same person always having to do the grant applications or be SmartyGrants expert. If they leave an organisation, it is a problem
- When submitted thought a copy was emailed back. Frustrating that we wanted to share progress going through application without giving editable access. Would be good to get printable version before submitting final version, for team collaboration
- Don't really know what the assessment process is about and so how to improve
- More information about the assessment process and council alignment strategy and how it is weighted.
- Require a lot more transparency – some geographical areas get a significantly higher proportion of grants.
- Good to know what grants are going to be supported
- Uncertainty about how grant application will be assessed – who is making the decision and what are they basing it on. How does one project get approved against another other than assessed on the skill of the writer.
- Don't know what happened to submissions. What is the rationale/logic behind sorts of grants – What are the things that are deemed to be most needed in a community that are going to give best bang for buck.
- Also disquiet about money being given to projects on land owned by churches rather than council which is more sensible for infrastructure projects
- The assessment process is a perception
- Difficult to know when you just get a Yes/No email
- For those who write for others, after the grant application is submitted the organisation gets notified but the grant writer doesn't have authority to follow up.
- If you have numbers like this which are not terribly good, perhaps there is a lack of clarity and transparency about what grants are more likely to be supported than others, to reduce confusion.
- Difficult that grant success depends on grant writing experience rather than the project merit
- a lack of transparency or a lack of clarity around what is going to be supported. More information is needed to reduce confusion
- Difficult to comment when the onus is on you, and you only get an email with no feedback

On the question of whether an EOI process would help:

- An observation : several attendees nodded. They said having an opportunity to present an idea through an EOI so that they can get an indication if their project is something that the council/program might support would be good.
- EOI would be great to present concept or idea and could have many many hours of unnecessary grant writing
- An EOI to start with might be worth looking at and give an opportunity to see if worth progressing and how to help applicant who might not have the skills to apply through grant process
- Positive response to putting forward an idea or concept
- First give opportunity to find out if project fits

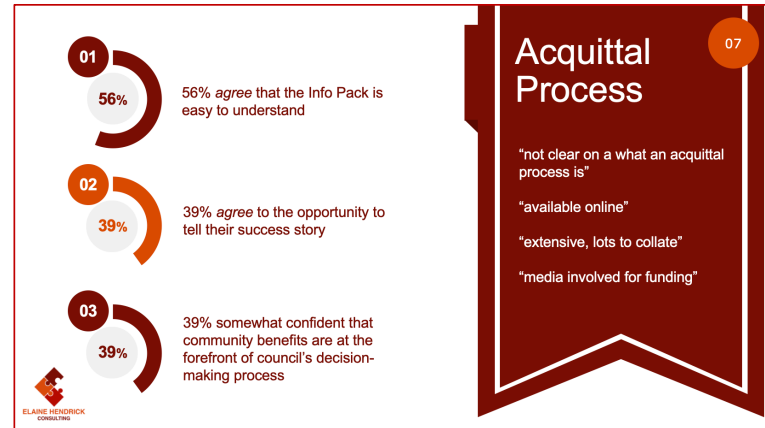
General Comments:

- General agreement from most in the room (*judging by the nods of heads to comments*) that they don't really know what the assessment process is or how it is used
- In response to the question on a grant assessment matrix on the application form would be help - yes (as it would give insight into how the application is being assessed).

Evaluation team's observations:

**some of the concerns around unfairness of assessment process were expressed by one of the attendees (a former councillor) who shared with the evaluation team after the session – to reiterate that they felt it was a much fairer process (more evenly distributed across the Shire) when Councillors made the decision as they were 'fighting' for their community.*

Slide 7 – Acquittal Process



- What would be the point in communicating benefits (*qualified with 'communicating to who'*)
- What is not evident is the acquittal process is a place to identify unforeseen benefits or something that wasn't evident at the start of the process – something that we could all learn from. I feel that there should be a bit more emphasis on this.
- The MN Arts Council often apply for funds from Creative Victoria, their process is all online and it is easy to add stories and supporting documents.
- Would be great to be able to share what has gone well but the point is that Council needs to take this up as well. Perhaps a short statement on the acquittal with permission for Council to share via social media.
- Acquittal of partially funded projects can be challenging as we have to acquit all funds not just Community Grant funds
- Acquittal is not an online process – it would be better if that could be done online
- Not enough understanding of this process
- Community benefits are important
- No response from Shire as to having received acquittal, etc. which would be good to know that it's all ok.
- Acquittal process is evidence of whole grant application being successful or otherwise. Perhaps what's not evident is if the project produced things that would give benefit that were unforeseen, something that could be learned from, then the acquittal process doesn't show this. More emphasis should be placed on a learning piece
- Has not been online – download, complete and send back. Would be great if could be done online and a prompt or reminder for this to be done.

- Whether successful or unsuccessful feedback critical. Need to know how you have done, why successful or not and what you could do better in future.
- Notification process – if application had date when you would hear of success. Assessors could benchmark as well. Held in limbo not knowing when grant is announced.
- For bigger grants there is a time lag between submission and delivery is sometimes too long. Puts people off applying for bigger grants because time is too long not knowing.
- Would be good if available online
- Opportunity to provide newspaper or publicity received would be good as part of acquittal
- Some other grants do provide online acquittal. Finance, etc. quite simple with bonus of storyline.
- Great opportunity to boast about the benefits if went well. Council should also take it up and promote rather than just ticking boxes. If Shire maybe has a box saying, would you like this shared on Social media so council can spread word about successful story/event of a community. Becomes something for whole community to share and learn from.
- Sometimes group gets grant that is crucial but part of bigger budget for a bigger project. Need to show acquittal on whole project. Perhaps 2 streams of acquittal – for the smaller part and whole.
- (Attendee shared example of Arts Council) Creative Victoria grant : acquittal is all online – easy to scan – story telling is bonus at both ends

Would you like an opportunity to show the outcomes of your projects?

- To Whom? Media release or picture for the local paper, etc is ok
- Applications requires you to state in several places and several ways already.
- Not really necessary if you have successfully applied for and received the grant and given acquittal, so not needed to do too much description after.
- Sometimes trying to explain benefit to community and it is so obvious it's hard to put into words. The rest of applications shows the benefits anyway.
- Straight out accounting exercise and how money is spent
- To whom? Officers at Council? (*didn't see any point*)
- Council should know because lots have been said in application process
- Not evident if project produce things that benefit community/Council that were unforeseen. No place to identify unforeseen benefits or something we can all learn from – unintended outcomes not captured

General Comments:

- Several in the room noted they had issues with uploading supporting documents for the acquittal.
- Several noted that the acquittal form is just to prove they have expended the funds and didn't see the point in communicating benefits/outcomes or adding to acquittal process as this would add more work and they are busy enough.

Slide 8 – Going Deeper

Going Deeper 08

QUESTION 1
 Why is the Community Grant Program important to your community?
 > 100% chose **YES** when asked if grants were important

QUESTION 2
 How does your Organisation value the Community Grant Program?
 > "support for volunteers"
 > "offers an opportunity learn/share with other groups"
 > "inclusive"

QUESTION 3
 What are the needs in your community? Does the Community Grant Program help to meet your community's needs?
 > 53% indicated that the grant program had a *great deal of impact on the community*
 > "skills" "increased participation" "clarity of direction"
 "awareness of issues"

ELAINE HENDRICK
CONSULTING

Question One : Why is the Community Grant Program important to your community?

- The reality is that without the money a lot of those programs and infrastructure just wouldn't happen
- Brings communities together, accessing grants has made a huge difference.
- Keeping communities alive
- A little goes a long way in our Shire – lots of volunteers – everybody benefits. It's a way of holding communities together
- Grants are an amplification of effort and enable a much greater impact
- Great encouragement for people to do it themselves and you get much wider engagement with community
- Everyone is working in voluntary capacity – without this financial support many groups would just collapse
- In a rural community you are asking the same people over and over again for fundraising, sponsorship and donations. It is critical that there is a grant program
- Gives the community a sense of purpose. Validation was a word used earlier. The program recognises and energises the community
- Covid has created an opportunity for the community to come together. Sandy Point has really grown and there is a real opportunity to leverage this to continue to grow our communities. Grants are a critical element of the council's remit.

- Volunteers are the most efficient way of getting something done. If council does something it costs 10 times as much. Grants are a far more efficient use of money than paying for 'shiny bums on seats'.
- Important that council sees its responsibility in this way – it is their social responsibility to work, engage and resource communities. Vital that it *[the Program]* is there.
- One of the great benefits is it encourages communities to take responsibility for themselves – makes wider community active and pro-active.
- Most volunteer on committees and writing grants/doing quotes/events etc. Think without some of the grant financial support many groups would collapse, especially small towns, always the same people putting hands in pockets so sponsor or donate as well as volunteering. Grant program helps with that.
- Absolutely critical to give community a sense of purpose. Validates community's value and gives them a unique profile for township. Energises. Gives Councillors opportunity to engage with community and their needs.
- Projects completed through grants give lift to community and even encourages people to move to smaller areas.
- Recognises community value
- Allows community to create a unique profile for itself
- Worth noting that volunteers most efficient way to get things done – more efficient use of council and govt money to give to volunteers to do things rather than give to council and administrators who spend 3x the amount of the project just on planning.
- Important local government sees responsibility to communities in this way. Social responsibility to resource, engage and finance communities. Lucky that Vic holds this social responsibility through grants program.
- Require as vital but not the only source we look to. Other groups take subscription to grants group and portal so they get notification to get grants from various state departments. Shire often has niche not met by other grants.
- Don't rely entirely on shire grants and perhaps council could advise about taking out these subscriptions (Easy Grants) so that they are not just reliant on one type. Grants program one cog in the wheel and sometimes only one to meet a need.
- Also important for Council to be seen to be supporting and providing for own community projects and needs. Geographical and diversity of projects. Validation and pride to be associated with project/event etc.
- Extremely frustrating to put so much time into getting the grant and more than actually completing the project itself. Volunteers keen to go but have to wait to start because of delays in grant applications.
- Local government must see their responsibility to community
- Local government must be socially responsible - to engage and resource its community
- Can bring other community members together
- Gives a place to meet
- Improves health and wellbeing of communities
- Great benefit – encourages community to take control for their destiny – get wider community to participate

Question Two: How does your Organisation value the Community Grant Program?

- It's a lifeline for our organisation.
- Hit hard by Covid with volunteers and are really struggling (*there were quite a few nods to this*)
- Money is going to where it is needed
- Band does not fit in the box of the criteria
- We haven't been successful but value the opportunity and know that other groups are benefitting from the program (*couple of people expressed agreement with this noting it was great to see others are successful*).
- Allows community groups to have a say in how rates are spent
- Opportunity to direct funds into the community
- We regard it is vital – it is not only source of funds we look to. We look outside, not sure if other community groups subscribe to Our Community and The Grants Hub. If we rely entirely on Shire grants, then we are impoverishing ourselves. It might be that council could advise or support people in this are better.
- Important that council supports across the community. Important they support in multiple ways.
- Survival – applied for 3 community grants to pay running cost this year. Coaching kids in music since 1982. Program supplies instruments so they can learn. Lost 1/3 to ½ band members during covid. Not enough band members to fundraise through concerts, have to start again to build bank so grant needed to keep head over water till can rebuild and help ourselves
- It is not the only grants source – we also look outside – various state government depts. Shire has a niche that is not covered by other govt. depts. 'Smorgasbord'
- Rely entirely on Council grants
- Council should be able to adv. people on other available funding sources – EASY GRANTS
- Enabling community to keep going
- Council grants are essential, but they are not the only ones – but it is a vital piece of the bigger picture for communities
- Council needs to be seen to be supporting projects across the community – not just road and rubbish
- When grants are advertised, they are listed in criteria and if you don't fit in it – it is quite difficult to apply so miss out because you don't fit
- Glad to see others in the Shire are able to keep going and do their thing by being successful.

Question Three: What are the needs in your community? Does the Community Grant Program help to meet your community needs?

- In previous years councillors have a 'ding dong' fight and there was more even distribution. Nowadays its council officers.
- Creating a vision, getting it in front of the community and planning really important
- Letters of support are an indicator of buy-in
- After Covid some of the need have changed e.g. mental health
- How does council know what community needs and how does it apply that knowledge in the program? Might be good to be clearer in this area.
- Being clearer or surfacing community needs and addressing it through the grant program e.g. mental health would be interesting to look at.
- Really struggling with impact of Covid maybe a short-term category which could support operating or core costs would be good.
- Survival of small towns, businesses disappearing because of Covid
- Infrastructure is a consideration
- Difficult to deal with really big issues through a local program (e.g. Mental health is an issue everywhere)
- Comes down to individual groups in the community and what they perceive is important for their group.
- Officers are making assessments and decisions but in past councillors made the decisions. That made for bigger distribution and larger number of grants.
- Having plans are important for community. If council wished to encourage community plan, then questions could include plan.
- After covid, there are probably a lot of needs that have changed and what is required now. Much in the mental health space and needs to be lots of support to communities around this. Over next year or two would be helpful to have categories in the grant process that focus on this area.
- Council may choose to support particular grants on rotating basis.
- Mental Health maybe should be considered sub-regionally and in a bigger picture. If we all apply for a small bit, it might be better to apply under another umbrella for a bigger piece. Saying that there are ways through schools etc as communities that we can lend assistance for MH. Bigger projects need solid support from government as well as local small projects.
- It's what they perceive is important for their groups
- Officers making decisions and not Councillors making decisions
- Plan comes before the grant. Plans are important and get community inputs
- Getting community inputs and opportunities - Council has township strategic plans
- Encourage people to have plans. Plans need to be clearer
- Letters of support from other community orgs. supporting the project
- Basic operating cost – additional category
- Community connection needs to be the focus of the Grants Program
- Survival of small towns/businesses – closing and disappearing
- Survival to Thriving
- Influx of people to revitalise Ridgeway had a huge impact on business/towns

- Bigger issues to be considered by Council
- Mental health is a big issue and needs to work across the Shire – some things can be done at local level – opportunity to look sub-regionally on bigger issues
- If we all apply for our little bits this may be more effective if application is put in together
- Bigger issues need a bigger project & solid support from local government

General Comment:

- One attendee expressed appreciation of the way the session had been managed and thanked the Evaluation team.