



Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) Community Connection Grant Funding Guidelines

Program Guidelines

2025-2026



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Program Overview

Latrobe City Council supports everyone to achieve their best mental health and to build a connected community. Latrobe City's Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) furthers the priorities within the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan by increasing community led opportunities available within Latrobe City through community grants.

SIAG's Community Connection Grant will increase inclusion and connection through evidence-based initiatives that are supported by local knowledge. Applications will need to adhere to overarching funding principles that ensure that all submissions promote equity within Latrobe City, are working towards a shared impact and are sustainable.

The Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) will improve mental health by increasing opportunities for connection that work for all community members connected to Latrobe City.

The Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) Community Connection Grant provides contributions to local projects in Latrobe City. These grants allow us to collectively build a healthier and more connected Latrobe City.

A minimum of 20% of funding will be used to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives. These initiatives will be solely assessed by individuals who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to promote self-determination.

Council Objectives

The objective of SIAG is to further the collaboration between the community, organisations and groups by:

- Identifying community needs and current gaps for inclusion within Latrobe City.
- Using place-based coordination to support initiatives that reduce social exclusion and support community inclusion, involvement and connection.
- Promoting continuous improvement of connection and social inclusion within Latrobe City to prevent poor mental health outcomes.

Important Information to Consider Before Beginning

- Read the guidelines carefully. It is important to have a full understanding of the guidelines before you start completing the online application.
- Applicants are eligible to receive a maximum of one grant per SIAG's Community Connection Program round.
- A Certificate of Currency is required as proof of Public Liability Insurance (PLI).
- All previous grants from Latrobe City Council must be acquitted to a satisfactory standard. Unacquitted or insufficiently/unsatisfactorily acquitted grants, will deem the current application ineligible.
- Funding must not be regarded as a recurrent commitment from Latrobe City Council. There is no guarantee a recurring project will be funded in the future.
- Variations to projects and change of project dates must be sought in writing and permission received, prior to any changes commencing. This includes requests for extensions of time to acquit the project.
- If successful, representation from your organisation will attend the feedback session that aligns with that grant round.

SIAG's Community Connection Program

Community Connection Grant			
Description	The Community Connection Grant will be open to new and established community projects or programs of all sizes that support community connection, mental health and wellbeing.		
Examples of projects	Social activities, access, inclusion and equity initiatives, creative and cultural programs, support groups, mental health and wellbeing training or education programs.		
Maximum grant amount	\$5,000.		
Application dates	Round	Expression of Interest open	Final Application due
	Round 1	28 April – 25 July	15 August
	Round 2	28 July – 10 October	31 October
	Round 3	13 October – 6 February	27 February
	Round 4	9 February – 1 May	22 May
Application process	Online application via SmartyGrants.		
Reporting requirements	Signed acquittal, a summary of income and expenditure, including copies of invoices and photos of completed project.		

General Guidelines**Eligibility**

To be eligible for SIAG's Community Connection Program funds, applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit organisation that is an incorporated body holding a current Australia Business Number (ABN) and that is not within the categories of ineligible applicants below. An applicant that is not an incorporated body but is otherwise eligible may arrange an auspice agreement with an eligible organisation that is willing and able to accept legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- Have no outstanding debts to Latrobe City Council.
- Hold appropriate public liability insurance.
- Physically operate and/or be registered within the municipality of Latrobe City.
- Be able to provide a satisfactory budget, including one quote for projects under \$5,000 and two quotes for projects over \$5,000.

If you answered no to any of the above criteria, you are ineligible to receive funding.

Ineligibility

Meeting any of the following criteria will render an applicant or application ineligible, meaning that it will not progress to assessment.

Ineligible Applicants

- State and Federal Government departments, agencies and authorities.
- Applicants who have an open acquittal form from previous or concurrent Latrobe City Council grant streams.
- Community groups, organisations, or clubs that host or promote gambling.

- Any for-profit entity, applicant operating to support for-profit activity or entity that has any purpose that is not a charitable purpose for the public benefit. This includes but is not limited to any entity that is able to distribute profits, capital or income to members or beneficiaries under its governing documents, whether those documents also allow distribution for not-for-profit purposes.
- Companies limited by guarantee.
- Schools and educational institutions.
- Any organisation who has an existing, active SIAG's Community Connection Grant Program funding agreement in place.

If Latrobe City is made aware of disputes or legal proceedings pertaining to the applicant which may negatively impact the delivery of proposed project, or cause reputational risk or damage to Latrobe City, the application may be ruled ineligible with General Manager approval.

Ineligible Expenditure

Ineligible expenditure items include:

- Items that are part of an organisation's core business or regular operational expenses.
- General maintenance expenses. This includes the ongoing care of an existing asset.
- Sponsorship signage and sponsorship agreements.
- Requests for the purpose of raising funds.
- Trophies, awards, scholarships, subscriptions, prizes and honorariums.
- Projects or events at venues where there are gaming machines, gambling and betting; unless there is no appropriate alternative venue, and the applicant has considered the potential impact to participants.
- Projects, events, or works that exclusively benefit applicant members and do not benefit the broader community.
- Repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire, or other natural disasters where the incident will be covered by insurance. Expenses not covered by insurance will be considered eligible for funding where documentation demonstrating that insurance will not cover the costs, such as a letter from insurer is supplied, and the project aligns with the funding stream.
- Projects, events, or works that engage in activities or items which promote discrimination, violence or anti-social behaviour.
- Projects or items that have already been purchased, started or completed.
- Purchase of land.
- Projects or events where the primary focus is to advocate for religion or faith.
- Projects or events that promote political views.
- Catering, alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, firearms and fireworks.
- Projects that duplicate existing services and programs.
- Latrobe City Council owned or run activities, projects, programs and events.
- The repair of used goods or equipment.

Ineligible Applications

- Multiple applications for the same project. Only individual organisations may apply for funding.
- Incomplete applications.
- Applications submitted by Councillors or Council Officers. Councillors and Council Officers may assist applicants in the application process.

Mandatory Documents

Applications will be rendered ineligible if the following documents are not submitted by round closure date:

- One written quote for projects up to \$5,000 and two written quotes for projects over \$5,000 from a registered tradesperson or business using a consistent specification. Screenshots of catalogues or online advertising will be accepted as sufficient quotes, provided they are an Australian company.
- One written quote for expenses over \$500 for event stream applications. Screenshots of catalogues or online advertising will be accepted as sufficient quotes, provided they are an Australian company.
- Current Certificate of Public Liability.
- Letter from auspice organisation (if applicable) confirming their commitment to assume full legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- Written approval from other user applicants who share the existing facilities associated with the project.
- Written permission from the asset owner to complete the project.
- For applicants completing works on Latrobe City Council buildings, written approval, or acceptance of the project in full is required from Latrobe City Council's Building Maintenance Team.
- For Sport and Recreation Clubs, written approval from Latrobe City Council's Coordinator Recreation and Open Space. This evidence must clearly show that permission has been requested and granted for the entirety of the project.

Requirements of Successful Applicants

- Enter into a Funding Agreement and adhere to the conditions of the agreement. Additional funding conditions may be applied to your project during assessment.
- Spend the grant money only as stated in the original application. Variations to projects and change of project dates must be sought in writing and permission received, prior to any changes commencing. This includes requests for extensions of time to acquit the project.
- Acquit funds within two months of identified project completion, unless written approval has been given for an extension.
- Return any underspent and excess funding to Latrobe City Council when submitting the Acquittal form.
- Liaise with Latrobe City Council's Senior Events Officer to ensure that the relevant Event Permit Conditions have been met a minimum of thirty days prior to your event. Approval of funding does not constitute permission to deliver your event. It remains your responsibility to seek the appropriate permissions and approvals to deliver the event. (Event applications only).
- Acknowledge Latrobe City Council's contribution to your project. This acknowledgement, depending on the amount of funding received, may include logo presence on supporting publications, displays or signage. You will be provided with copies of the Latrobe City Council, 'Supported by' logo and guidelines on its correct use when you receive your outcome notification.

Cancellation of an Event

If your event is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, you are required to advise Council's Social Inclusion Project Officer and Senior Events Officer immediately. Any unspent funds are to be returned.

In the instance that your event can be postponed to a later date (within the same financial year) contact Council's Senior Events Officer to confirm the date change and request transfer of grant funds.

Variation to an Event or Project

Variation requests for projects and change of project dates must be sought in writing and permission received, prior to any changes commencing. This includes requests for extensions of time to acquit the project.

All variation requests must be sent in writing to Latrobe City Council's Social Inclusion Project Officer at SIAG@latrobe.vic.gov.au

You will be notified in writing the outcome of your variation request. You must not proceed with any variations to your project or event until you have received your outcome notification email.

Applicants who fail to comply with the process mentioned above will be required to return the funding to Latrobe City Council.

Assessment Criteria

All applications will be assessed in accordance with Latrobe City Council’s Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) Community Connection Program Guidelines and program objectives and weighted out of 100 against the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Alignment with Latrobe City Council’s Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Latrobe’s SIAG Priorities.	20
Demonstrated ability of project to address local needs, improve equity and address barriers to participation.	20
Demonstrated level of community engagement undertaken or planned as part of the project.	20
Evidence supporting the effectiveness and impact of the project to support social connection and mental health.	20
Demonstrated organisational capacity to deliver the project, including plan for long-term sustainability.	20

Assessment Process – General

Once an application is received, Officers will:

- Complete an eligibility check against the Policy and Program Guidelines.
- Confirm that outstanding acquittals or money owed to Latrobe City Council have been received where funding may have been provided previously.
- Manage any Conflicts of Interest between the assessors and the application/applicants.
- The SIAG will note their feedback.

Assessment Process – SIAG Panel

- All eligible applications will then be assessed by the Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG).
- All personal details will be omitted from the application.
- The SIAG will then make a recommendation to the General Manager Community Health and Wellbeing.
- Latrobe City Council will then release funds to successful applicants.

Application Funding

Applicants will be advised of their assessment outcome in writing. The following payment process will be followed for successful applications:

- **No Funding Conditions:** Payment will be processed once outcome notification letter has been sent to the applicant.
- **Funding Conditions:** Applications with funding conditions applied during assessment will be required to complete a funding agreement which outlines the funding conditions. Applicants will need to agree

to the funding conditions and attach any documents requested by the Grants Officer or assessment panel. Payment will be processed following signing and receipt of the funding agreement.

All funding agreements will include an offer expiration date after which Latrobe City Council may refuse to grant funds.

All payments are made electronically, direct to the applicant's bank account in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

NOTE: The outcome notification email does not mean that your funds have been paid. If you are required to complete a funding agreement, you must do this prior to funds being paid into your nominated bank account. No grant funds should be spent until you have completed all relevant documentation and you have received your funding.

Applicants who fail to comply with the terms and conditions listed in the funding guidelines and supplementary agreements will be required to return the funding to Latrobe City Council.

Auspice

If a community applicant is not a legal entity, they can approach an organisation to auspice the project.

The auspice organisation will:

- Work with the applicant on the funding application, although the application will still be in the applicant's name.
- Work with the applicant to agree to funding agreements.
- Receive any funding that may be granted to the applicant.
- Partner with the applicant to deliver the project.

The auspice organisation must meet the SIAG's Community Connection Program eligibility criteria and provide a letter indicating that they accept full financial accountability for the project.

The auspice organisation is not considered to be the applicant and may apply for their own funding.

Acquittal

The Acquittal report will be a reconciled statement of expenditure and income associated with the grant and will ask the applicants to provide detail on the outcomes of the project that were achieved because of the funding.

Applicants will also be required to attach:

- Evidence of how Council's support for the project was recognised.
- An actual income and expenditure budget for their project.
- Photo evidence that demonstrates the completed project and community participation.

The applicant must acquit their project within two (2) months of the identified project completion date, unless otherwise agreed. Acquittals will be considered overdue if they are not completed within these two (2) months of the specified project completion date.

Applicants can only have one acquittal form open at a time. Acquittals will only be closed after being reviewed and accepted by a Latrobe City Council Officer.

By submitting the acquittal, the applicant provides permission to Latrobe City Council for the use and publication of the information provided.

Further Information and Assistance

Grant enquiries, including assistance and support available to help you submit your application, please contact the Social Inclusion Project Officer:

Hannah Burley

Phone: 1300 367 700

Email: SIAG@latrobe.vic.gov.au

Glossary

Auspice	An auspice agreement means that an organisation with a legal not-for-profit status takes responsibility for ensuring grant funds are used as specified in the grant allocation. Auspice agreements are commonly undertaken for community organisations or applicants that are not legally constituted as a not-for-profit entity.
Auspicee	The group or person requiring support is known as the 'auspicee' and the entity (usually an incorporated organisation) that auspices the group or person is known as the 'auspisor'.
Acquittal	Acquitting a grant means accurately reporting on the funded activities and the expenditure of the funding. Acquittals are required upon completion of the project, within the period specified within two months of the specified project completion date.
Equity	Making sure everyone has what they need to be successful, no matter their background or circumstances. In equity, people are given the support and resources they require to have equal opportunities and access to a good quality of life.
Lived Experience	A person who is currently or has previously experienced low levels of social inclusion or a person who has supported or cared for someone with low levels of social inclusion. In regard to SIAG, this includes priority groups who have been identified as experiencing higher levels of social exclusion.
Place-Based	Tailoring approaches to the unique characteristics, needs, assets and strengths of that place.
Charity	An organisation set up to provide help and raise money for those in need.
For Profit company	An organisation which aims to earn profit through its operations and is concerned with its own interests, unlike those of the public.
Grant	A payment provided to a recipient for a specific purpose or project, as part of an approved Council program, with the understanding that there will be a defined outcome that directly or indirectly benefits the public, but with no expectation of commercial return to Council.
Incorporated Body	A legal entity (Organisation) whose status is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria under

	the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (the Act).
In-kind contribution	An applicant in-kind contribution is a product or service provided in lieu of cash, valued at actual cost or calculated at specified volunteer rate.
Not-for-profit	An organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people.
Project	The word 'project' refers to the project, activity, proposal or event that will be delivered if your application is successful.
Social Inclusion	The act of making all groups of people within a society, regardless of their background, feel valued, important and that they belong. The capability, resources, opportunities to learn, work, engage and be heard within a community.
Social Exclusion	When people feel that they do not have a connection to a community or a space where they belong.
Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)	The members of the SIAG are community members with lived experience of social exclusion and have a passion for mental health and connection. The understanding of the SIAG is that the people who have been disconnected from the community, know best what they need to feel connected. By using their grassroots knowledge about Latrobe City and what people in the community need, they will be assessing the Community Connection Grant applications and making a recommendation to Latrobe City Council.