

Management report to Council

Agenda item 6.3

2019 – 20 Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants recommendations**Council****Presenter:** Dean Griggs, Manager Business and Tourism**30 July 2019****Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement for the 2019–20 Small Business Grants (SBG) and the Social Enterprise Grants (SEG) program. Both programs are being delivered simultaneously as a trial following the review of the Small Business Grants Program in 2018 as part of Annual Plan initiative 4.7.
2. The SBG program provides financial assistance to support market-ready products and services that enhance the City of Melbourne’s reputation for innovation and creativity, and contribute to a thriving, sustainable business culture.
3. The SEG program seeks to support diverse and inclusive organisations that combine trade with a social purpose. Details of the funding objectives are noted in the Guidelines in Attachment 7.

Key issues

4. The funding round opened for applications on 25 March and closed on the 30 April 2019. Public information sessions and funding workshop sessions were held to support potential applicants.
5. The 2019–20 funding round attracted a high number of applicants across both categories. The recommendations reflect diverse and engaging business concepts (Attachment 4). The following table provides an overview of both funding programs. A summary of recommended applicants is contained in Attachment 2 and the key findings and analysis are contained in Attachment 3:

Overview	Small Business Grants	Social Enterprise Grants
Total number of applications	97	31
Number of recommended applications	9	5
Number of reserve applications	3	4
Total available funding	\$500,000	\$200,000
Total recommended expenditure	\$200,000	\$100,000
Funds available for second funding round	\$300,000	\$100,000

6. The current funding guidelines state applications will not be disclosed to any other external party without the applicant’s consent, unless required or authorised by law. Therefore information regarding applications is presented in summary form to ensure full details of business concepts remain commercial in confidence.

Recommendation from management

7. That Council:
 - 7.1. Approves the 2019–20 Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants as detailed in Attachment 2.
 - 7.2. Authorises the Director City Economy and Activation to approve funding for all reserve applications to a total value of \$65,000 in the event one or more of the recommended businesses cannot proceed or declines funding.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 28)
2. Recommended applicants (Page 4 of 28)
3. Key findings and analysis (Page 7 of 28)
4. Highlights (Page 9 of 28)
5. External assessors (Page 11 of 28)
6. Communication strategy (Page 13 of 28)
7. Guidelines (Page 14 of 28)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct legal issues arising from the recommendations from management.
2. Successful applicants to the 2019 – 20 SBG and SEG programs will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Council and complete an acquittal report.

Finance

3. Councils 2019 – 20 budgets includes \$500,000 for the (SBG) program. This recommendation is for \$200,000 to be allocated to fund the nine recommended applicants, with the remaining \$300,000 available for the second round of 2019 – 20 funding.
4. The budget allocation for the (SEG) of \$100,000 is recommended to fund five applicants. A second round of SEG totalling \$100,000 will be funded from the 2019 – 20 budget later in the year. Please note there are two funding rounds in 2019 – 20 due to the funding round being held over in 2018 – 19 due to the review as part of API 4.7. There will only be one round in future years.
5. Should any of the recommended applicants decline their grant offer, and the funding be offered instead to one or more of the recommended alternative applicants, the total amount of recommended funding will not exceed the amount included in the budget.

Conflict of interest

6. All applications were assessed by an external panel the membership of which was endorsed by Council's Future Melbourne Committee on 26 April 2016. Information regarding assessors is contained in Attachment 5.
7. All Council staff and external assessment panel members were required to declare any direct or indirect interests they may have in relation to the applications.
8. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

9. As part of Council's funding agreements, all successful applicants will have to have insurance relevant to their business, comply with all legislative requirements and meet Occupational Health and Safety standards when delivering their outcomes.
10. All grant recipients will carry out obligations under the contract/agreement and include providing and maintaining a safe working environment.

Stakeholder consultation

11. A targeted communications plan was delivered using a mix of paid/unpaid and digital/non-digital channels to promote the current funding round. The campaign aimed to attract a diverse range of applicants and increase the number of new applicants.
12. The website received a total of 9,346 unique page views while social media sites attracted over 259,000 impressions.

Relation to Council policy

13. The recommendations are consistent with Council Plan 2017 – 21 A Prosperous City with the priority to provide 'support to Melbourne's start-ups and innovative businesses' and related Future Melbourne 2026's priority to be "attractive and supportive for new and existing businesses".

14. A number of recommended businesses support additional Council goals, including A City with an Aboriginal Focus, A Knowledge City, A City That Cares for its Environment, A Connected City, A Deliberative City and A City Planning for Growth.

Environmental sustainability

15. As part of the administration process, applicants are required to address sustainability and environmental considerations and many of the recommended applicants address these themes effectively and most engage well with this requirement.

March 2019 Small Business and Social Enterprise Grants Programs: Summary of recommended applications

1. Programs rationale

Small Business Grants

The Small Business Grants (SBG) program aims to encourage and support new, creative and diverse business activities that will contribute to a thriving and competitive business environment within Melbourne. The program seeks to create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in the municipality.

Social Enterprise Grants

The Social Enterprise Grants (SEG) program supports the establishment and expansion on businesses and not-for-profit and for-profit organisations with a distinctly social purpose. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria, and indicate how they clearly demonstrate the social purpose of the enterprise and how it will be achieved. Up to \$30,000 is available to fund applications.

2. Assessment criteria

Each application is assessed by City of Melbourne officers and by an independent, external panel. Applications are scored against the programs' criteria.

For Small Business Grants applications:

- Innovation and creativity
- Financial viability
- Benefits to the City of Melbourne
- Ethical and other considerations

For Social Enterprise Grants applications:

- Social purpose
- Business viability and readiness
- Financial viability (including realistic budget)
- Benefits to the City of Melbourne
- Ethical and other considerations

3. Recommended applications

The following 14 applications (nine small businesses and five social enterprises) are recommended for funding due to their strong alignment to the assessment criteria.

Small Business Grants

The recommended applications represent a diverse range of small innovative businesses from nano biotechnology, a new recording studio in CBD, automated platform to improve on scientific data analysis, creative audio app, a new bar lab and dispensing technology to reduce waste.

Social Enterprise Grants

Both new and existing social enterprises from a range of sectors with strong alignment to Council's social priorities. The target social purposes ranged from providing employment and training opportunities to people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds including marginalised women, literacy program for children with reading disabilities and supporting services to help build capacity of social enterprises.

Collectively, these applications have anticipated outcomes of 47 full-time, 24 part-time and 79 casual positions, gross turnover of \$11.6 million and equity investment of \$1.8 million

List of recommended applications

Small Business Grants Recommended applications					
	Applicant Name	Category	Industry	Location	Grant amount
1	Audioplay	Start-Up	Creative	Southbank 3006	\$25,000
2	Mass Dynamics	Start-Up	Biotech	Melbourne 3000	\$30,000
3	Radetec Pty Ltd	Start-Up	Biotech	Parkville 3052	\$30,000
4	To Me Love Me Pty Ltd	Start-Up	Retail	To be confirmed	\$15,000
5	Unpackaged Eco	Start-Up	Sustainability	Melbourne 3000	\$25,000
6	Tempus Entertainment	Business Expansion	Creative	To be confirmed	\$20,000
7	UbiPark Pty Ltd	Business Expansion	Business services Logistics	Melbourne 3000	\$30,000
8	Walk Melbourne Tours	Export	Tourism	Melbourne 3000	\$10,000
9	Worksmith Coworking Pty Ltd	Business Expansion	Hospitality	To be confirmed	\$15,000
Total funding recommended					\$200,000

Social Enterprises Grants Recommended applications					
	Applicant Name & Location	Category	Industry	Social purpose	Grant amount
1	ChangemakHER Melbourne, 3000	Startup	Hospitality	Employment opportunities for marginalised women	\$20,000
2	Just Gold Digital Agency Pty Ltd Melbourne, 3000	Startup	Marketing	Provide digital communications services to support social enterprises	\$20,000
3	Bookbot Melbourne, 3000	Startup	Education	Literacy program for children with reading disabilities and from disadvantaged background	\$10,000
4	Free to Feed Southbank 3006	Expansion	Hospitality	Employment opportunities for refugees and migrants	\$25,000
5	Unison Property Corporation Pty Ltd Melbourne, 3000	Expansion	Business services	Employment opportunities for people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds	\$25,000
Total funding recommended					\$100,000

Reserve applications

6 applications (3 small businesses and 3 social enterprises) have been placed on a reserve list to be offered funding should any of the recommended applicants not proceed or decline their funding offer. These applications were highly supported by panel and were considered worthy of funding if the budget allows.

Non-recommended and ineligible applications

The non-recommended applications generally did not adequately meet all of the eligibility criteria or did not strongly address the program's key objectives and guidelines.

The five most common elements demonstrated in these applications were:

- poor quality and incomplete financials
- no evidence that proposal is market ready
- Limited benefits to the City of Melbourne
- no demonstrated strong point of difference
- not strongly aligned with Council's social priorities

Mentoring applications

Ten applications from both programs are recommended for mentoring from the Small Business Mentoring Service to address the areas of improvement identified in their proposals and to potentially reapply in a future funding round.

March 2019 Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants Key findings and analysis

Small Business Grants (SBG) | Overview

- 97 applications were received of which 25 were considered to be ineligible for assessment.
- 72 eligible applications were assessed.
- Nine applications recommended for funding by the panel.
- Three applicants were recommended for the reserve list.
- \$2,619,023 grant funding requested.

Social Enterprise Grants (SEG) | Overview

- 31 applications were received of which eight were considered to be ineligible for assessment.
- 24 eligible applications were assessed.
- Five applications recommended for funding by the panel.
- Three applicants were recommended for the reserve list.
- \$780,060 grant funding requested.

Table 1: Summary of applications

Small Business Grants			
	Applications received	Ineligible applications	Recommended applications
Start-up	62	18	5
Expansion	33	7	3
Export	2	0	1
Total	97	25	9
Social Enterprise Grants			
	Applications received	Ineligible applications	Recommended applications
Start-up	18	5	3
Expansion	13	3	2
Total	31	8	5

Table 2: Recommended applications

	Small Business Grants	Social Enterprise Grants
Anticipated gross turnover	\$7,176,700	\$4,435,641
Anticipated equity investment	\$1,543,600	\$322,000
Anticipated export earnings	\$227,041	-
Anticipated full time jobs	20	27
Anticipated part-time jobs	12	12
Anticipated casual jobs	20	59

Table 3: Recommended applications by industry

Industry	Number of applications
Business services	3
Entertainment	1
Education	1
Food & beverage	3
Health	2
Music	1
Retail	2
Tourism	1
Total	14

Table 4: Recommended applications by business location

Location	Number of applications
Melbourne CBD	8
Parkville	1
Southbank	2
Location yet to be determined	3
Total	14

March 2019 Small Business Grants Program | Highlights of recommended applications



BIOTECHNOLOGY

Radetec

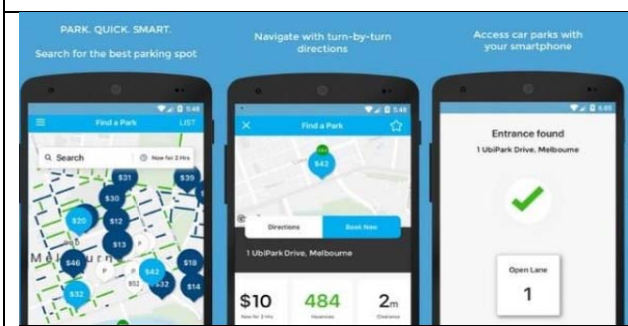
A biomedical start-up that specialises in the creation of quantum dots. Recommended funding \$30,000.



SUSTAINABILITY

Unpackaged ECO

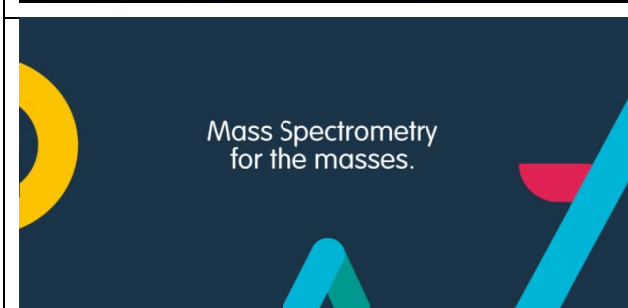
A start-up company tackling single-use packaging by offering everyday products without its packaging. Recommended funding \$30,000.



TRANSPORT

UbiPark

Building & delivering on-street payment solutions to an existing off street parking platform. Recommended funding \$30,000.



LIFE SCIENCE

Mass Dynamics

A research program that assists researchers to manage data analysis. Recommended funding \$30,000.



CREATIVE

Audioplay

An action-based audio app that supercharges kids' play. Kids can step into the story and become the characters. Recommended funding \$25,000.






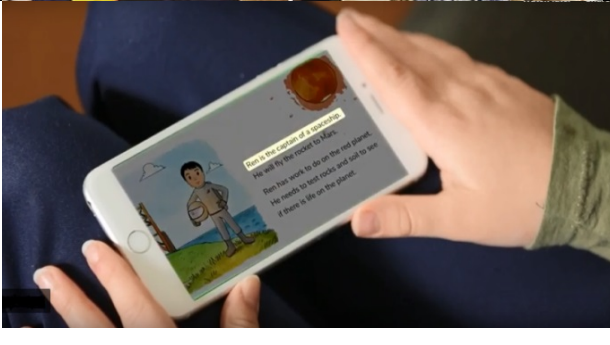


CREATIVE

Tempus Entertainment

A recording studio that will operate out of a heritage building – being the CBD's only music studio. Recommended funding \$20,000.

March 2019 Social Enterprise Program | Highlights of recommended applications

	<p>EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <h2>ChangemakHER</h2> <p>A social enterprise that works at providing job opportunities and training to women from ethnic backgrounds. Recommended funding \$20,000.</p>
	<p>EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <h2>Free to Feed</h2> <p>A catering company and cooking school that employs migrants and ethnic groups to share and educate communities on their cuisine. Recommended funding \$25,000.</p>
 	<p>DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE</p> <h2>Just Gold Digital Agency</h2> <p>A marketing agency that assists social enterprise businesses to develop robust marketing strategies. Recommended funding \$20,000.</p>
	<p>EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <h2>Unison Property Corporation</h2> <p>Providing jobs, training and housing to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recommended funding \$25,000.</p>
	<p>LITERACY PROGRAM</p> <h2>Bookbot</h2> <p>An app that provides children with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recommended funding \$10,000.</p>

March 2019 Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants programs | external panel members

The following external panel experts were endorsed by Council's Future Melbourne Committee on 26 April for a term of four years, until April 2020. They represent a wide and diverse range of skills in the local, national and international business community.

	Name	Background, expertise and current position
1	Dr Marcus Powe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder and Managing Director of a consulting business with extensive experience in starting and growing small businesses. • Currently owns three small businesses. • Entrepreneur in Residence at RMIT University. • Fellow at Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship, Ormond College, University of Melbourne. • Co-author of four handbooks. • Associate, Melbourne Business School, the University of Melbourne. • Member, Educator Network, Thunderbird School of Global Management. • Start Up Champion, Start up Victoria.
2	Katya Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events director of Novinka International Pty Ltd and business mentor with Small Business Mentoring Service. • Operated three small businesses, a wholesale agency, fashion brand, and a fashion-marketing agency with a retail boutique. • Previous work has included roles as a purchasing analyst for Ford Motor Company, Director of Business Development, Melbourne Textiles Agencies and as an Outreach Manager (Government and Industry liaison) for National Information Communications Technologies Australia.
3	Joss Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, INNOVIC (Victorian Innovation Centre Ltd). • Manage and run a small NFP social enterprise, INNOVIC. • Has thorough knowledge and experience of the commercialisation process. • Broad experience in innovation, business development and commercialisation, covering diverse industry sectors, and has worked with entrepreneurs, start-ups, social enterprises and SMEs. • Judge for a number of business awards and an assessor for several tertiary business planning competitions.
4	Chris Langdon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive of Langdon Ingredients, a food ingredients supplier with 170 staff and annual turnover of over \$130 million. • Non-executive director of two ASX list companies and head of audit committee, and also a private tertiary college. • Extensive business acumen and an excellent understanding of local, national and international business.
5	Ian Dennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive director of Centre for Innovative Industries Economic Research Inc • Chairman of Pearcey Foundation, which promotes and encourages Australian ICT achievement and previous chair for Australian Computer Society. • Founder and owner of Whitehorse Strategic Group which provides specialised consulting services in information and communication technology sector. • Extensive experience and knowledge in the information and communication sector.
6	Yan-Li Wang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner at HWL Ebsworth Lawyers and has more than 25 years' experience in working with business enterprises in a variety of industries. • Leads HWL Ebsworth's China Practice and regularly advises on foreign investment regulatory issues • Member of the Leadership Council (Melbourne) of Social Ventures Australia. • Advisory member of private foundations and works with many NGOs on an ongoing basis.

	Name	Background, expertise and current position
7	Sophie Krantz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Strategy and Internationalisation providing services on international trade and investment to ASX 100 companies. • Director of Global Growth which provides advisory services on social design and innovation, abundance-based internationalisation, and global partnerships, plus start-ups and SMEs. • International Trade Strategy Manager at BlueScope with extensive experience in trade and investment. • Extensive work in the field of growth strategy and international market development and expansion.
8	Martin Bailey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder of a marketing company to educate business owners how to grow their businesses and business mentor with the Small Business Mentoring Service • Trained more than 1000 business owners and organised over 4500 events helping to generate approximately \$270 million of new business. • Executive director of Business Network International, a franchised professional business networking organisation. • Trainer and lecturer for delivering the Institute of Management Services Certificate.

March 2019 Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants Program

Communication strategy and public information sessions for the 2019-20

Public Briefing

1. The 2019-20 Business and Tourism Funding Program, including Social Enterprise Grants (SEG) and Small Business Grants (SBG) Program opened on 25 March and closed on 30 April 2019.
2. The two funding programs held its first public information session on 2 May 2019 at the Multicultural Hub and attracted 80 people. In addition, staff held two targeted funding workshops for SBG and one for SEG, these attracted 83 people in total.
3. The public information session and workshop has resulted in a high calibre of applications that have contributed to a very competitive funding round. In addition the program has attracted a large number of new businesses to the funding round.

Communications plan

4. A targeted communications plan was delivered using a mix of paid and unpaid, digital and non-digital channels. The campaign aimed to attract a diverse range of applicants and increase the number of new applicants.
5. The plan included the dissemination on a newly produced business funding video boosted through paid social media, directly targeting potential applicants.
6. The new website landing page was developed and included all Business and Tourism funding programs. The website received a total of 9,346 unique page views, while the combined social media sites: Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat and Twitter attracted over 259,000 impressions.
7. The program was also promoted in Melbourne Magazine, three e-newsletters (over \$4000 subscribers) and internal communications including Yammer with an average open rate of over 45 per cent.
8. Organisations that shared the program details include our Business Precincts, Eco City social, Victorian Tourism Industry Council, Destination Melbourne and Melbourne Convention Bureau.

Business and Tourism Funding Program 2019-20 Guidelines

Timeline

	ROUND ONE	ROUND TWO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Event Sponsorship • Small Business Grants • Social Enterprise Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Grants • Social Enterprise Grants
Applications open	Monday 25 March 2019, 9am	Monday 5 August 2019, 9am
Information and workshop sessions	See website for details	See website for details
Applications close	Tuesday 30 April 2019, 11:59pm	Monday 9 September 2019, 11:59pm
Assessment period	May to June 2019	October to November 2019
Council meeting	End June 2019 - Business Event Sponsorship End July 2019 - Small Business Grants - Social Enterprise Grants	End November 2019
Notification to applicants	July 2019 - Business Event Sponsorship August 2019 - Small Business Grants - Social Enterprise Grants	December 2019

Council Contact Officer: 03 9658 8710

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Introduction

The City of Melbourne acknowledges and embraces the transformative role that business and tourism plays in building all aspects of a bold, innovative and sustainable city.

An estimated 14,000 small businesses currently operate in the City of Melbourne, representing over 80 per cent of all businesses within the municipality. While our business event delegates stimulate the visitor economy and delegates experience all the city has to offer.

Council's vision is to consolidate Melbourne's strengths as a 'prosperous city': a place that is regarded as the destination of choice amongst international and local business and enterprise by excelling in its ability to nurture a vibrant economy for those who work, live, study, visit and invest.

The City of Melbourne [Council Plan 2017-21](#) establishes a framework for this vision through commitments including:

- Support to Melbourne's start-ups and innovative businesses.
- Opportunities for increased economic participation through social enterprise.
- Support to local, national and global events that stimulate the economy and contribute to a vibrant city life.
- Attraction of conferences and conventions to Melbourne.
- Affordable business accommodation.

The key objective of the Business and Tourism funding programs is to support small businesses and business events that will enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for innovation, and contribute to a thriving, sustainable business culture.

Through a range of funding opportunities, the annual Business and Tourism funding program contributes to Melbourne's reputation as a city which can support existing and emerging businesses to thrive as an anchor for Melbourne's continued prosperity. The program also assists in raising Melbourne's reputation as a 'knowledge city', promoting Council's role in key industry sectors through sponsorship of business events.

Funding categories and key dates

The following grants and sponsorships are available in 2019:

Program Category	Grants	Key information	Key dates
Small Business Grant	Start-up	Up to \$30,000	Open to new small businesses that will increase the diversity of the city's business community and boost Melbourne's capability in diverse business sectors.
	Expansion	Up to \$30,000	Open to existing small businesses that are introducing a new, innovative activity, product or service as part of their expansion phase, <u>or</u> Open to existing innovative small businesses relocating to/within the municipality as part of their business expansion process
	Export	Up to \$10,000 Offered on a dollar for dollar basis	Open to existing small businesses wishing to enter into overseas markets for the first time, or Businesses with demonstrated export experience to explore export opportunities in a new market or launch a new product/service in an existing market.
Social Enterprise Grant	Start-up	Up to \$30,000	Open to existing social enterprises to assist in accelerating the establishment of their business
	Expansion	Up to \$30,000	Open to existing social enterprises to assist with growth of their business
Business Event Sponsorship	Up to \$10,000	Open to business events held in the City of Melbourne municipality that promote Melbourne as a destination and align with council goals .	

Round 1:

Applications open
25 March 2019

Applications close
30 April 2019

Notification:
July & August
2019

[See website for details on information sessions](#)

Round 2:

Applications open
5 August 2019

Applications close
9 September 2019

Notification:
November 2019

Applications close
9 September 2019

Notification:
November 2019

[See website for details on information sessions](#)

General eligibility

The applicant must:

- locate within the City of Melbourne [municipality](#) (for Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants)
- be a business event to occur within the City of Melbourne municipality (for Business Event Sponsorship)
- have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).
- have documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure, such as a sole trader, an Australian registered company, business cooperative or partnership.
- demonstrate how the City of Melbourne will benefit from its proposal (please refer to the City of Melbourne [Council Plan 2017–21](#)).
- demonstrate sustainable business practices in line with the [Australian ethical charter](#)
- provide evidence of current public liability and professional indemnity insurance policies when requested
- have no outstanding acquittals or debts to the City of Melbourne.

Applicants must meet the above eligibility plus all category eligibility specific to the grant they are applying for.

Applicants who do not meet these eligibility requirements or do not provide the relevant documentation will not be considered.

General ineligibility

The program will not support applicants:

- located outside the City of Melbourne municipality (Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants)
- that are requesting funding for a business event that occur outside the City of Melbourne municipality (for Business Event Sponsorship)
- already funded by another City of Melbourne grant, sponsorship or expression of interest program
- that are political organisations or that have a political purpose
- that are is government departments of agencies, foundations or grant making bodies
- that have a primary focus on fundraising
- that are in contract or other formal agreement with another City of Melbourne business and tourism program for the same project
- that are current City of Melbourne employees, immediate families and contractors
- that denigrate, exclude or offend parts of the community.

Application process

1. Read the guidelines.
2. Attend an [information session](#).

3. Plan, research and gather information required for your application.
4. Complete and submit an online [application](#) (with required attachments) through SmartyGrants.
 - allow ample time to complete and submit your application before the closing date and time (note: late applications will not be accepted)
 - submit only one application in each funding round.
5. Receive a confirmation email from City of Melbourne.

Funding

Requested funding must be directly related to the set-up/presentation costs of the proposal. Please note only expenditure items that have been incurred from the day after lodging your application will be eligible.

Operational expenses that are considered as ongoing costs to run the business or event, such as rent, utilities, wages and personal expenses are not funded.

Export grants are offered on a dollar-for-dollar basis and claimed after the event or visit has occurred.

Business Event Sponsorship must contribute directly to delegate boosting initiatives, program enhancement, public programming, marketing and additional event enhancing activities that are additional to the core program.

Environmental sustainability

Applicants are encouraged to use resources wisely in the creation and delivery of their business or event. Applicants will be required to describe their environmental sustainability practices in their application. Further information and ideas can be found in the environmental sustainability practices [fact sheet](#).

Support material

Support material is a critical part of your application and reviewed as part of the assessment process.

Support material requirements will vary depending on which grant you are applying for. Applicants should consider quality of support material over quantity, only including material that is relevant and strengthens their proposal.

Support material may include:

- proof of the business or event being located in City of Melbourne municipality
- certificates of currency
- certificate of incorporation or registration of business name
- skills and qualifications of key business personnel
- marketing strategy and SWOT analysis
- financial statements (including P&L, Cash Flow and Balance sheets)
- examples of marketing, PR or other evidence to support your application
- evidence of diversity of participants

Assessment process

- Applications are assessed against the criteria in each grant category in a competitive process.
- Staff from City of Melbourne check applications to establish that all eligibility criteria are met.
- Applications are evaluated by an assessment panel consisting of external peers and senior staff from City of Melbourne. The full list of current assessment panel members is published [online](#).
- Applications are confidential. The contents will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process. A short summary of the project concept will be utilised in reports to Council.
- The City of Melbourne does not seek to correct errors in applications or supporting material. Applications are assessed as they have been submitted.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to request further information in considering any application, as well as the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the grant category criteria.
- Assessment panels may recommend part funding.
- Assessment panels make recommendations to Council who approve final funding.
- All funding decisions are final. Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply in future funding rounds in accordance with the grant guidelines.
- All applicants will be notified of the result of their application.
- The applicant names, project names and funding amounts of recommended/ successful applicants will be made publicly available, including publication on Council's website and in Council media releases.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying of Councillors, employees of the City of Melbourne or assessment panel members in relation to any grant application is prohibited. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant who has canvassed or lobbied City of Melbourne staff, Councillors or assessors in relation to their application.

Terms and conditions

Applicants are required to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- Applicants must comply with any additional conditions associated with the grant category for which they are applying.
- Eligible applicants for Small Business and Social Enterprise grants can only receive one grant per calendar year.
- Successful applicants must sign a funding agreement or letter of agreement detailing the funding obligations.
- Payment terms are 30 days from the date of invoice, subject to the receipt of a signed funding agreement, tax invoice and other requested information. This may include revised budgets, project details, venue confirmation and auspice details where relevant.
- The City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet project costs.

- Successful applicants must provide a final acquittal. For Small Business and Social Enterprise grants recipients, they will be required to provide 6 and 12-month progress reports.

Assistance available

Telephone and email enquiries

Businesses are encouraged to contact a Council Officer to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application.

Call 03 9658 8710 or email businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Information sessions

New applicants are encouraged to attend an information session prior to submitting their application. A number of sessions are available to applicants in each grant category. Visit [website](#) for details and bookings.

Please contact us if a language or Auslan interpreter is required.

Technical assistance

Refer to the [SmartyGrants help guide](#) for technical assistance related to submitting your application.

The [SmartyGrants](#) support desk is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au.

Interpreter and translation services

If you need an interpreter when calling the City of Melbourne, please call the following relevant translation services:

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, please call us via the [National Relay Service](#):

Teletypewriter (TTY) users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874
Speak & Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874

Our multilingual information telephone service offers assistance to people from a non-English speaking background. Visit [Translation services](#).

Small Business Grants

Overview

The Small Business Grants program provides financial assistance to support market-ready products and services that enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for innovation and creativity, and contribute to a thriving, sustainable business culture.

Grants are open to forward-thinking small businesses currently located or intending to locate within the City of Melbourne.

Start-ups and established businesses from any sector are welcome to apply as long as you have a great idea and a sound business proposal that will proceed **regardless** of grant funding.

Grant Objectives

- Encourage and support new, creative and diverse business activities that will contribute to a thriving and competitive business environment within the city.
- Create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in the municipality.
- Support businesses that demonstrate solid market potential and a sound business model, including financial viability.
- Increase the overall value and volume of exports from the City of Melbourne municipality.

Grant categories and funding available

Small Business Grant category	Funding available
Business Start-up	Up to \$30,000
Business Expansion	
Business Export – new exporter	Up to \$10,000
Business Export – current export	

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business and Tourism Funding Program general eligibility.

in addition, they must:

1. have 20 or fewer employees
2. create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in the City of Melbourne
3. demonstrate solid market potential and ready to launch
4. be prepared to relocate to the City of Melbourne within three months of receiving a grant (if not already in the municipality)
5. introduce a completely new product/service into their company portfolio (**business expansion only**)
6. Increase the overall value and volume of exports from the City of Melbourne (**export only**).

Additional ineligibility

The program will not support:

1. franchisees
2. subsidiaries of larger companies
3. unincorporated associations
4. branches of foreign companies that are not registered as an Australian company
5. individuals or organisations providing trade facilitation services to businesses.

Assessment criteria – Small Business Start-Up and Business Expansion

Applicants will be assessed against the following:

1. Innovation and Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly demonstrate a strong and original business proposition via market analysis and market strategy. • Confirm that the proposition has a strong point of difference and does not duplicate existing products or services available in the City of Melbourne. • Demonstrate intellectual property through a unique and hard to copy idea or have extensive intellectual capital. • Business Expansion applicants must demonstrate that the proposed business expansion activity is a new product or service, not just organic growth of the existing suite of products or services.
2. Business Readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the product or service is well-researched, that there is a viable business plan and able to proceed without the grant.
3. Financial Viability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management.
4. Benefits to the City of Melbourne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver measurable economic benefits to the City of Melbourne in areas such as job creation, investment, revenue generation and capability building.
5. Ethical and other considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council’s policies.

Assessment criteria – Small Business Export

Applicants will be assessed against the following:

1. Export Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the potential demand for the product or service in an overseas market and deliver direct export outcomes. • Demonstrate the products or services for export are manufactured or produced in Australia.
2. Export Readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate 'export readiness' in that the proposed export product or service is well-researched, planned and financially viable.
3. Financial Viability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management. • Ability to match approved funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis. • Export expansion applicants must also demonstrate a level of existing business success, supported by financial documentation.
4. Benefits to the City of Melbourne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver measurable economic benefits to the City of Melbourne in areas of export earnings, investment and job creation.
5. Ethical and other considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

Social Enterprise Grants

Overview

The Social Enterprise Grants program provides financial assistance to support the establishment and expansion of businesses and organisations with a distinctly social purpose. It aims to enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness and contribute further to the city's thriving economy and community.

For the purpose of these grants, a 'social enterprise' is defined as an organisation that combines trade with a social purpose where this purpose is a defining part of the business. Applicants may include a social enterprise, charities and other philanthropic organisations. Applications will be accepted from both not-for-profit and for profit businesses.

Grant Objectives

- Encourage the establishment and expansion of sustainable social enterprises that enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness.
- Support social enterprises that demonstrate a point-of-difference, solid market potential and a sound business model, including long-term financial viability.
- Increase the level of business and social investment in the City of Melbourne, which will contribute to a thriving economic and community environment.

Grant categories and funding available

Social Enterprise Grant category	Description	Funding available
Start-up	To assist social enterprises in accelerating the establishment of their business. Applicants will be expected to have the majority of their funding from other sources, in addition to the social enterprise grant.	Grants of up to \$30,000.
Expansion	To assist an existing social enterprise operating in the City of Melbourne municipality that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will introduce a new or additional activity, product or service or; • intends to relocate to or within the municipality as part of its expansion 	

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business and Tourism Funding Program general eligibility.

In addition, they must:

1. have 20 or fewer employees
2. be prepared to relocate to the City of Melbourne within 3 months of receiving the grants (if not already in the municipality)
3. be able to commence the proposed activity promptly upon receiving the grant
4. be able to demonstrate financial viability as evidenced by a basic business plan including projected financial statements.

Assessment criteria – Social Enterprise Start Up and Expansion

Applicants will be assessed against the following:

1. Social purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly demonstrate the social purpose of the enterprise, how it will be achieved and reported.
2. Business viability and readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ‘business readiness’ that the social enterprise is well researched, planned and financially viable.
3. Financial viability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management.
4. Benefits to the City of Melbourne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver measurable strong economic, social and/or environmental benefits to the City of Melbourne.
5. Ethical and other considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council’s policies. Priority will also be given to applications helping to address Council’s social priorities.

Business Event Sponsorship

Overview

The Business Event Sponsorship program provides funding to support businesses hosting conferences, conventions, exhibitions and other business events.

Funding is open to businesses and organisations planning to hold business events within the City of Melbourne municipality. One funding round is available for business events sponsorship per financial year.

As well as helping to facilitate business networking opportunities and assisting delegates to experience all that the city has to offer, the program aims to attract visitors to the city and enhance Melbourne's reputation as a 'knowledge city' and an international destination.

Key Objectives

The program provides support to organisations delivering business events in line with the City of Melbourne's objectives. The business event must:

- Increase economic impact for the city by attracting more visitors to Melbourne and promoting the city as a destination
- Foster a cohesive, smart community through events that encourage knowledge exchange, education and diversity
- Enhance the profile and reputation of Melbourne as a 'knowledge city' through media exposure and strategic association with excellent and innovative events
- Support businesses within the municipality through financial and in-kind investment in events that enhance their networks, income and profile

Funding available

Up to \$10,000 is available.

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business and Tourism Funding Program general eligibility.

In addition, they must:

- be a business event (conference, convention, exhibition or meeting).

Additional ineligibility

The program will not support:

- individuals
- religious organisations (charities run by religious groups are eligible)
- international aid appeals
- foundations that are themselves grant making bodies.

- Events that are already receiving financial support from Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB)

Additional Information

The City of Melbourne owns a variety of venues that may be of interest for your business event. More information on the City of Melbourne owned venues can be found [here](#).

Additional benefits (non-funding)

Subject to agreement, successful applicants may use the following materials and services from the City of Melbourne at their event:

- welcome letter from the Lord Mayor
- maps and brochures, including multilingual information
- Lord Mayor or Councillor speech
- City of Melbourne staff involvement with workshops or panels
- [WhatsOn](#) and other marketing materials.

Assessment criteria – Business Event Sponsorship

Applicants will be assessed against the following:

1. Quality of the event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the merit of the event by describing the concept, rationale and benefits. • Demonstrate how the event will activate the city in interesting and engaging ways and contribute something different to Melbourne’s business event calendar. • Ability to meet City of Melbourne’s objectives and align with Council Goals.
2. Access and participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the opportunities delegates/attendees will have to explore the city and surrounds in free time or planned activities. • Outline the value of event to the community. • Demonstrate the ways in which people can participate in the event through public programming. • Outline opportunities for business networking.
3. Financial Viability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a realistic budget, timeline and program to deliver the event.
4. Benefits to the City of Melbourne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver significant visitation and economic outcomes for the City of Melbourne. • Outline the sponsorship benefits the event will provide to the City of Melbourne by promoting Council, for example through speaking opportunities, logo placement and signage.
5. Ethical and other considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council’s policies.