



Cardinia

Cardinia Shire Council Festivals and Events Grant Program 2025-2026

Cardinia Shire Council (Council) is committed to enhancing the annual calendar of events and programs which celebrate our local identity, diverse communities and the broader arts and culture appeal. Through the Festivals and Events Grant Program we are growing our dynamic arts and culture environment by supporting the ongoing development and sustainability of festivals and events (events) to ensure longevity, economic impact and social and community connections.

The 2025-2026 grant program is for events which will be held between July 2025 and June 2026.

Program Objectives:

The Festivals and Events Grant Program has the following objectives:

- Strengthen the events calendar with new and existing events whilst encouraging the growth, viability, sustainability and longevity of events.
- Deliver high calibre events, which attract new audiences to the Cardinia Shire community, increasing visitation to the region.
- Increase community and social connections and sense of belonging to increase participation and progress equity and inclusion.
- Encourage and increase opportunities for all sections of the community to access, participate and appreciate arts and culture.

Funding Categories

The Festival and Event Grant Program is split into three tiers of funding, with grant amounts determined by the scope and capacity of the event.

Please note, funding requests should only make up a portion of your overall event budget, it is not viable to rely on Council to fully fund your event.

Tier 1

Commercial festivals and events attracting significant impact and visitation

Estimated attendance	Minimum 5,000
Funding available	\$10,000 - \$80,000
Visitation	Minimum 50% out of region visitation
Other revenue required	100% of funding requested by the applicant must be able to be matched via other revenue streams (ticket sales, sponsorship, other grants, applicant contribution etc.)
Business and community engagement	Must partner with local community groups and businesses in some way (i.e. using them as suppliers, marketing support, event day activations or involvement)
Benefits available to Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent placement of Council's logo on all promotional material preceded by the text "proudly presented by" • Opportunity for Mayor and/or Councillor involvement must be scheduled where appropriate • Opportunity for Council to provide signage and branding • Opportunity for tickets to be used as part of competitions and giveaways, if a ticketed event

Tier 2

Community run events attracting moderate impact and visitation

Estimated attendance	Minimum 3,000
Funding available	\$2,500 - \$15,000
Visitation	Minimum 20% out of region visitation
Other revenue required	Minimum 80% of funding requested by the applicant must be able to be matched via other revenue streams (ticket sales, sponsorship, other grants, applicant contribution etc.)
Business and community engagement	Encouraged to partner with local community groups and businesses in some way (i.e. using them as suppliers, marketing support, event day activations or involvement)
Benefits available to Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent placement of Council's logo on all promotional material preceded by the text "proudly supported by" • Opportunity for Mayor and/or Councillor involvement must be scheduled where appropriate • Opportunity for Council to provide signage and branding • Opportunity for tickets to be used as part of competitions and giveaways, if a ticketed event

Tier 3

Significant days of celebration attracting moderate impact and Civic pride

Estimated attendance	Minimum 500
Funding available	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Visitation	Local attendees
Other revenue required	Minimum 50% of funding requested by the applicant must be able to be matched via other revenue streams (ticket sales, sponsorship, other grants, in-kind volunteer hours, applicant contribution etc.)
Business and community engagement	Desirable to partner with local community groups and businesses in some way (i.e. using them as suppliers, marketing support, event day activations or involvement)
Benefits available to Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's logo on promotional material preceded by the text "proudly supported by" • Opportunity for Mayor or Councillor involvement where appropriate • Opportunity for Council to provide signage and branding

Assessment criteria

The assessment panel will consult the below criteria when assessing applications:

Program objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have demonstrated how their event meets the objectives of the program and supports the growth and expansion of Council's events calendar. • Applicants have shown how their attendance figures will meet the criteria specific to the tier they are applying for.
Capacity and capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have shown evidence of their expertise and capacity to successfully manage the proposed event (minimum two years), comply with Council and other authorities requirements and permits, provide a sufficient lead time to plan, deliver and promote the proposed event. • Applicants have a positive track record of delivering similar types of events successfully. There is a clear measure of what success looks like within the application.
Economic impact, social and community connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have demonstrated how their proposed event will engage with local businesses and community groups. • Applicants have demonstrated how the event will celebrate, attract, and engage the local community and wider community in attracting visitation to the region. • Applicants have demonstrated how they will build ongoing beneficial partnerships within the community.
Demand and relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have demonstrated the long-term sustainability and viability of the event, including the levels of innovation, creativity and change within the event to ensure longevity. • The proposed event aligns with demand in the events calendar and has an appropriate fit within the community.
Funding requirements and budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have shown the viability of their proposed event and have provided a realistic budget reflective of the scope and scale of the event, including required revenue streams in relation to the requested funding, to ensure the success of the event is not solely dependent on Council. • Applicants have demonstrated how the requested grant amount will enhance their event offering and attract a wider audience. • For events who have received funding in the past, applicants have demonstrated how the current proposed funding will increase the benefit. • A full itemised budget for expenditure and income must be attached to your application.

Eligibility Criteria

For an applicant to be eligible for funding:

- The event must take place within the Cardinia Shire Council Local Government Area.
- The event must be open to the general community, without discrimination or restriction and be socially, economically and physically accessible.
- Applicants must be able to provide a level of financial contribution in addition to the requested grant funding to ensure ongoing viability and longevity of the event. A detailed breakdown of funding requirements can be found in the funding categories section of this document. It is not Council's intention to fully fund events.
- Funding must go towards enhancing your event or offering.
- Applicants must have, or be willing to obtain, public liability insurance to the value of \$20 million dollars and be willing to list Cardinia Shire Council as an interested party.
- Applications must be submitted within the program dates, be complete and include all required information.
- Applicants must have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) or be a registered Not-For-Profit, community group, community asset committee or organisation (Tier 2 and 3 only).

An applicant will not be eligible for funding if:

- The event is a private event or function, or the proposed event will be held for members of a business, club, or group exclusively.
- The costs are related to ongoing business or operations, including staff salaries, administration and project management costs.
- The funding request is for fundraising contributions, catering, prize money or competitions.
- The funding request is for retrospective funding, where an event has already been held, or is scheduled to be held before or after the annual funding period.
- The funding request is for capital works or facility maintenance costs, including for the purchase of event infrastructure.
- The event is an educational event, school fete or school event.
- The applicant is in financial debt with Council or has not previously complied with grant conditions.
- The applicant is already receiving funding from Council for the same event or part thereof in the proposed financial year.
- The applicant is unable to meet the compliance and safety requirements of running the event.
- The applicant is a staff member, Councillor or contractor of Cardinia Shire Council.

Funding timeline

Successful applicants will receive the funding in three stages:

1. 30% upon signing agreement
2. 40% six weeks prior to the event date, provided an event application has been submitted
3. 30% upon completion of event and all reporting requirements

Successful applicants must invoice Council for payment in the stages as outlined.

Procedural guidelines

Once the Festivals and Events Grant Program applications have closed, applications will be reviewed initially to determine if they are eligible or ineligible for funding. Eligible applications will then be reviewed by an assessment panel who will score applications against the selection criteria.

Successful applicants will be required to complete an event application form in addition to signing a funding agreement, which will outline responsibilities of both parties and reporting requirements.

In preparation for understanding elements to consider when holding an event in the Cardinia Shire community, please read the [event planning guide](#) and other [supporting resources](#) to ensure all aspects are considered as part of this application.

Key Dates

Applications open	Now
Applications close	Once all remaining funds are expended or 30 June 2026
Recommendations considered by Council	Applications are assessed weekly and recommended to Council for approval
Applicants notified of outcome	On a rolling basis, approximately 2 weeks after assessment

How to apply

Applications can be made via the SmartyGrants Portal and will be assessed on a rolling basis. The assessment panel meets weekly on a Friday.

Please ensure you attach all requested supporting documentation for your application. Applications without all required supporting documentation will be deemed ineligible.

Festivals and Events Grant Program Checklist

1. Read through the objectives and priorities of the grant program and check your group/organisation is eligible for funding.
2. Create a proposed event budget and consider viability of your event.
3. Read the [event planning guide](#) and other [supporting resources](#) to ensure you have thought of all costs and requirements in running your event and included them as part of your application.
4. Complete and submit the application via SmartyGrants Portal.

Terms and Conditions

- Applications must be received before the closing period. Applications received after this date will not be eligible for consideration as there is a no appeals process for late applications.
- Successful applicants will need to enter into a formal funding agreement with Council and will be expected to spend and acquit their funding by the agreed date in their funding agreement.
- If the event or festival does not proceed, all funds received by the applicant must be returned to Council.
- Successful applicants will be required to provide a post-event report detailing key performance indicators specific to their event, in addition to providing evidence of expenditure as detailed in the funding agreement.
- Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback from Council Officers regarding why their application was not successful and how they can improve any future applications.
- The number of applications supported and the level of funding provided will be at Council's discretion and will reflect the available budget, the quality of applications, the outcomes achievable and the needs of the community.
- Allocation of funds to an applicant for any purpose in any year must not be taken as a commitment by Council for funding in any subsequent years.
- Only one application per organisation will be accepted.
- Council will not be responsible for any under-estimated costs and Council's only contribution will be that outlined in the funding agreement. All other costs will be the responsibility of the applicant.
- Council may make funding conditional on particular elements, as outlined in an offer to the applicant.
- If the applicant has not spent all of the funding, all remaining funds must be returned to Council.
- Council's decision is final and will not be reviewed. No further correspondence will be entered into.
- Council reserves the right to extend the application period or open subsequent rounds of funding if no suitable submissions are received and/or the funding pool is not fully exhausted.

Important contacts

Smarty Grants technical assistance

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact Smarty Grants directly via email service@smartygrants.com.au or by calling 03 9320 6888 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).

General enquiries

If you have any questions in relation to the grant program please contact the **Cultural Development and Grants Officer** on 1300 887 624 or email events@cardinia.vic.gov.au.

If you are unable to complete the application form online due to access issues or you have difficulty using technology, please contact us via email, events@cardinia.vic.gov.au or by calling 1300 787 624 and we will discuss how we can assist you to complete the forms.