

## **Cardinia Shire Council Arts Grant Program 2026-27**

Cardinia Arts Grants provide financial assistance to local artists for initiatives that utilise, expand, and promote the arts within Cardinia Shire.

Council offers this grant opportunity to encourage creatives to connect their artistic practice with local communities in new ways.

The 2026-27 grant program is for events which will be held between 1 July 2026 and 30 June 2027.

All applicants are required to:

- contact the Cultural Development and Grants officer prior to submitting an application.
- Read the resources on the grant website
- Complete the pre-application checklist

### **Program Objectives:**

The Arts Grant Program has the following objectives:

- support new ideas and high-quality initiatives that contribute to the development and promotion of the local arts sector,
- support the growth of creative enterprises and individual arts practices,
- provide opportunities for the community to experience and participate in the arts, and
- foster partnerships and collaborations between local artists, residents, and local community groups.

Artists and arts groups can apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 from a pool of \$31,000 for initiatives that utilise, expand, and promote the arts in Cardinia Shire. Applicants are required to contact one of our arts project officers to discuss their project idea prior to submitting.

### **Selection criteria**

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

- Artistic merit (innovation, individuality, track record and/or proven ability);
- Proposed project (outcome, approach, plan);
- Relevance to community (ability to connect with locals and/or promote interest in the arts); and
- Feasibility (budget, timeline, risk, scale).

## Eligibility Criteria

### **For an applicant to be eligible for funding, the applicant must:**

- have a demonstrated connection to Cardinia Shire (such as resident, work, study, family, community group, creative organisation, etc.);
- be aged 18 years or above;
- be focused on growing arts engagement in Cardinia Shire;
- have the time and ability to deliver the project successfully within the financial year;
- have demonstrated experience, or proven ability, in a specific artform or artforms;
- have a current Working with Children Check (if applicable to the project);
- if the project involves Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, artwork or significant cultural reference you must provide evidence of permissions via letter of support and ensure payment is included in budget; and
- provide public liability insurance to the value of \$20 million.

### **Successful projects will:**

- show innovation in form and/or content;
- demonstrate a need at this particular time for the proposed project;
- have a connection with local communities either during the project development or as part of the project outcome;
- be a feasible proposal that is financially viable whilst ensuring participating artists are being paid appropriately (see NAVA and MEAA for reference);
- have adequate project planning and risk management; and
- be well documented (e.g., an actual work or photos/videos) with the content available at the completion of the project for Council to promote;

### **Ineligible projects - we will not fund:**

- projects which require recurrent funding (ie. projects which replicate previously funded projects without innovation);
- Projects which cannot be delivered within the 2026-27 financial year;
- projects which receive funding from other Council grants/funding programs;
- professional development for individual artists;
- projects that require retrospective funding;
- general administration costs, routine or cyclical maintenance;
- cash prizes or commercial gifts;
- Projects that conflict in any way with a Cardinia Shire Council Policy, including (but not limited to) Cardinia Shires Council's Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy; and
- any proposals deemed not to comply with the overall intent of the program.



## Funding Information

Per grant round, grants of up to \$5,000 (GST inclusive) will be provided on a one-off basis to each artist whose application is successful.

Please note that Council generally receives more applications for financial assistance than funds available, and therefore not all applications can be supported. Priority will be given to new projects, and applications from diverse communities are encouraged. Artists from all career stages are welcome to apply.

Applicants are also welcome to demonstrate partnership with other artists e.g. local, interstate and/or international. Applicants may consider the use of one of Cardinia Shire’s creative venues for all or part of their project (such as Cardinia Cultural Centre or Hills Hub). All Cardinia shire creative venue usage must be discussed with the Council Cultural Development and Grants Officer prior to application and is not guaranteed. Funding decisions are at the discretion of Cardinia Shire Council. Fulfilling the assessment criteria does not guarantee funding.

## Procedural guidelines

Once the Cardinia Arts Grants 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, and then reviewed by the Cardinia Shire Council Arts and Culture Reference Group.

Successful applicants will be required to complete and sign a funding agreement, which will outline responsibilities of both parties and reporting requirements.

## Key Dates

Applications open	20 May 2026
Applications close	23 June 2026
Recommendations considered by Council	July 2026
Applicants notified of outcome	21 July 2026

## How to apply

Applications can be made via the [Smarty Grants online application](#) and must be submitted by the advertised closing date and time.

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

## Arts Grant Program Checklist

1. Read through the objectives and priorities of the grant program and check your group/organisation is eligible for funding.
2. Attend or watch the grants budget information session
3. Speak to the Cultural Development and Grants Officer
4. Ensure you have provided all the relevant support material and that all links are live and permissions provided
5. Complete and submit the application via SmartyGrants before closing date.

## **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 project 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, including images and/or video documentation (where possible), in addition to providing evidence of expenditure as detailed in the funding agreement.
- Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback from the Cultural Development and Grants Officer regarding why their application was not successful and how they can improve any future applications. Feedback would be available for one month after the date of the announcement.
- 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 individual/group 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.
- Should the project include a launch event (or similar), provision is to be made for the Mayor or their proxy to attend and speak as part of the proceedings.

## **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](mailto: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 or accessibility requirements, please contact the Cultural Development and Grants Officer on 03 5943 4936 or email [arts@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:arts@cardinia.vic.gov.au).



**Cardinia**

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, [arts@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:arts@cardinia.vic.gov.au) or by calling 1300 787 624 and we will discuss how we can assist you to complete the forms.