

## Community Planning Program

### Frequently asked questions

**A Community Planning Reference Group is a committee that agrees to participate in the Community Planning Program.**

**A Community Planning Reference Group may be an independent Incorporated entity or may choose to remain an informal committee.**

#### **What is a Community Planning Reference Group Charter?**

A Community Planning Reference Group Charter is an agreement that is made between an informal Community Planning Reference Group and Strathbogie Shire Council.

The Charter guides their roles and responsibilities of both parties under the Community Planning Program. It is read in conjunction with the Community Planning Guidelines.

Incorporated Entities do not need to sign the Charter as they will have their own constitution, however they do need to abide by the Community Planning Program Guidelines.

#### **What are the Community Planning Program Guidelines?**

The Community Planning Program Guidelines is a document which outlines the operations of the Community Planning Program. It highlights:

- Role of the community and Council
- Planning including the creation of a Community Plan and Annual Action Plan
- Funding requirements including allocation and application and
- Reporting including the provision of an Acquittal Report with evidence.

#### **When do we know how much will be allocated each year?**

Community Planning Reference Groups will be advised of the budget allocation once the draft Council budget has been finalised.

Once the budget has been approved and adopted, Council will formally advise groups of the allocation.

#### **When must we submit our applications?**

Council will advise Community Planning Reference Groups when the SmartyGrants Portal is open for submissions and the date that submissions will close.

If your application is not received by the due date your Community Planning Reference Group may not receive funding in that year.

#### **What is SmartyGrants?**

Strathbogie Shire Council uses SmartyGrants for all Community Funding applications. Using Smartygrants for our Community Funding Programs builds the knowledge and capacity of our community.

SmartyGrants is the most-used grant-making system in Australia. The system manages the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars in grants annually and handles more than 350,000 forms per year (a figure that's growing all the time).

#### **When will we receive our grant?**

Community planning Reference Groups will receive their grant as soon as Community Planning Program Terms & Conditions are signed and a Tax Invoice issued to Council.

Funds are normally paid at the end of each month

#### **How do we acquit the funds?**

Use the Acquittal form which can be found on the SmartyGrants portal.

Acquittals are due by 30th June of the financial year after funds are received.

Receipts for purchases and photos of projects must be attached.

## **Do we have to return unspent allocations to Council?**

Yes. You may seek approval from Council to expend unspent funds on another project if time permits

## **Can allocations be retained into the next financial year?**

It is not the accepted practice except when acquittal of projects has been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Council will consider the retaining of funds in instances where those funds are to be leveraged for further funding e.g. State Government grant application.

Groups must apply in writing to retain funds into the next financial year.

If retention of funds is approved, these funds can only be carried over for a maximum of two years.

## **What are the accounting records, auditing and GST issues to be considered?**

Like any other public use of dollars, groups must have records of income and expenditure.

Unexpended funds should be returned at acquittal time (where there is no previous approval to use the funds for another purpose).

Groups should consult the Australian Taxation Office to determine if they should be registered for GST purposes.

Auditing will be undertaken within Council.

## **Can a recipient of Community Planning Program Grant Funding apply for any other Council grants?**

No. If you are an incorporated body though you may be able to source funding from other opportunities.

## **Do organisations we deal with require an ABN?**

Yes. It is good practice for Action Groups to insist on ABN's when paying monies to organisations.

## **Who do I contact if the project is an event, deals with a council asset, or involves building?**

Phone the Coordinator Community Services & Inclusion on 5795 0000 or email [info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au) for information about other council department contacts.