

Community Climate Action Grants

Adopted by Council
24 July 2024

Guidelines 2024/25



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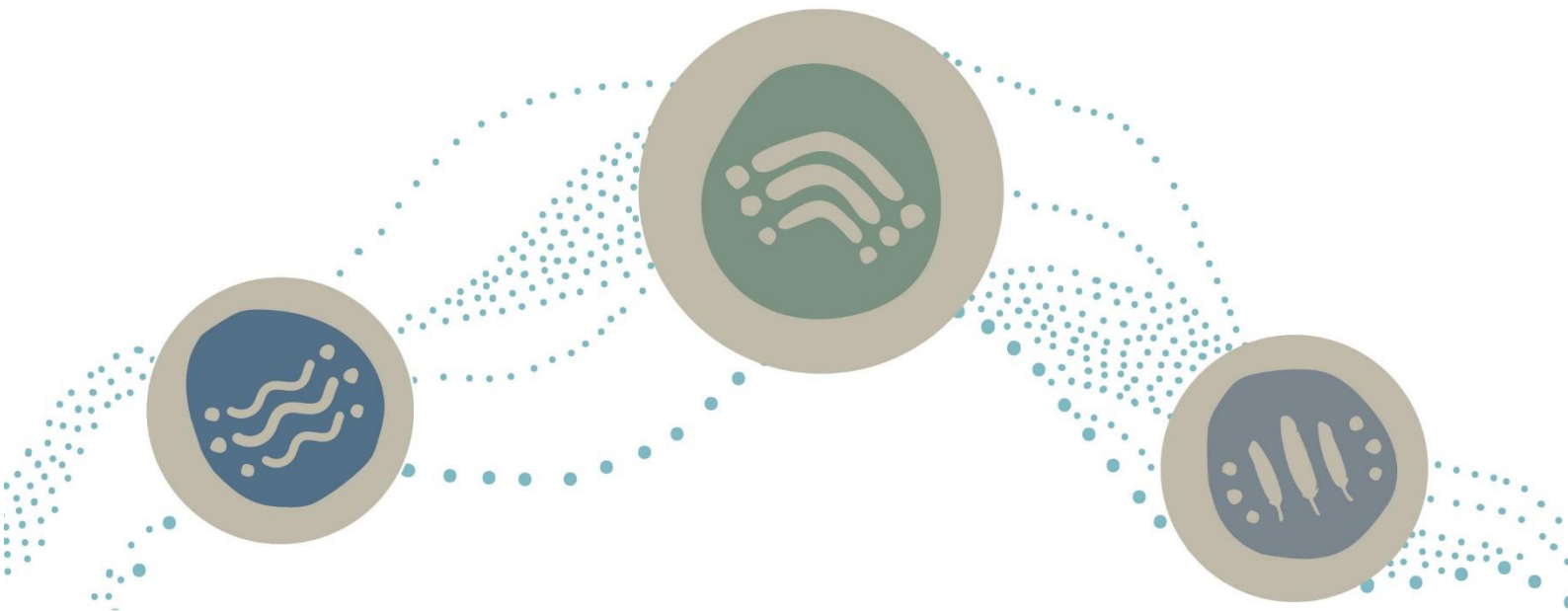
Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Artwork by Taungurung artist Maddi Moser

"Both artworks talk about our connection, connection to Country, connection to places and connection to each other. This is signified by the whimsical circles that form the 'rivers; that wrap around our lands and ourselves. It reminds us that we should look out for one another."



Overview

1. Aims, objectives and intended outcomes

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is excited to launch the new Community Climate Action Grants program in recognition of the significant contributions our community sustainability and environment groups. This program is implemented in partnership with Macedon Ranges Community Enterprises and Bendigo Bank and aims to support groups to development, implement and evaluate climate actions projects that work towards reducing community greenhouse gas emissions and/or work towards greater community resilience to adapt to climate change.

The **intended outcomes** of the program is to promote community mobilisation and participation in local climate action through:

1. Strengthening community groups knowledge, skills and capacity to enable actions and intentions in their township Community Climate Action Plan and 'community' allocated actions in the Climate Emergency Plan
2. Enact the *priorities* of the Climate Emergency Plan
 - a. Enable rapid reduction in fossil fuel use and protection of ecosystems
 - b. Enable transition to 'low carbon systems'
 - c. Build social awareness, skills and resilience to climate change
 - d. Enable nature-based solution and carbon drawdown
3. Enact the *principles* of the Climate Emergency Plan
 - a. Equity
 - b. Embed First Nations perspectives
 - c. Mobilisation
 - d. Collaboration and Partnerships
 - e. Regeneration
4. Enabling community groups to play an active role in driving climate solutions throughout the wider community
5. Enhance the wider community's resilience and ability to adapt to climate change through increased awareness, knowledge and skills.

The **objective** of the program is to support projects and activities that align with the priorities of the Climate Emergency Plan 2023-30 and actions outlined in township Community Climate Action Plans created throughout the Cool Changes program.

The program will place priority of projects and programs that enable one or more of the following objectives:

- Enables rapid reductions in community greenhouse gas emissions on both large and small scale.



- Improve the community’s general understanding of the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change.
- Assist with increasing the community’s support networks and resilience and support the communities most vulnerable to respond to climate change risks (such as extreme heat, bushfires, floods and storms).
- Assists the community to employ resource recovery solutions and promote circular economy principles.
- Foster sustainable transport behaviours
- Encourage connection to nature, particularly in urban areas and support nature-based climate adaption and mitigation solutions
- Strengthen local food systems and connection to local growers.

2. Timeline

Applications open	1 September 2024 at 9am
Applications close	30 September 2024 at 5pm
Applications assessed by panel	October 2024
Recommendations to Council	27 November 2024
Grant recipients advised	December 2024
Grant acquitted	30 September 2025

3. How much is available?

Council’s Community Climate Action Grant budget for 2024/2025 is a total of \$40,000.

The Macedon Ranges Community Enterprises Limited (MRCE) will match council’s funding to the amount of \$20,000, boosting the funding available for the program to \$40,000.

Categories include:

Funding categories	Maximum funding/project	Council funding available	Matched funding by MRCE	Total available
Category 1				
Community Climate Action	Up to \$5,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000

Eligibility

4. Who can apply?

Applicants eligible for funding include:



- Community groups
- Not-for-profit organisation or agency
- Environmental groups (i.e Landcare, Friends, Networks)
- Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group action groups
- Unincorporated community groups (only with auspice agreement with one of the above)
- Schools
- Other groups

Entity	Definition
Community Groups	An incorporated not-for-profit association.
Not-for-profit organisation or agency	Neighbourhood and Community Houses, community health organisations, faith-based groups, Rotary, Scouts etc.
Landcare Groups	A not-for-profit organisation with a membership with Landcare Victoria.
Environment Friends Group	A group that works to protect and enhance the conservation values of a specific site or area through on-ground works and community education.
Network	Comprises of three Landcare Networks and the Biolinks Alliance.
Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group Action Group	An action group working under the umbrella of the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group
Unincorporated community group	A unofficial group with a common purpose and/or vision
Schools	Public and private schools located in the shire boundary
Other groups	May be entitled to apply for this funding if they can demonstrate that their primary focus aligns to the Climate Emergency Plan and is at the discretion of Council's Environment Unit.

The following are ineligible to apply to the Community Climate Action Grants

- Individuals.
- For profit/commercial organisations.
- Government agencies/organisations.
- Groups that are in debt to Council.
- Groups that have not completed acquittal reporting requirements of previous Council grants.
- Groups auspiced by Council.



5. Joint applications

To enable to principle of 'collaboration and partnership' outlined in the Climate Emergency Plan, we welcome organisations partnering as a consortium to deliver a grant activity.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with Council.

The lead organisation must also be an eligible entity type as outlined in Section 4 above.

The application must identify all other members of the consortium.

The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a Letter of Support from each of the partners.

6. Eligibility requirements

To be eligible, applicants must meet the below criteria.

1. Project/programs must be undertaken within the Shire of Macedon Ranges.
2. Groups (or auspice organisations) must have their own current public liability and accident insurance.
3. Groups that are not incorporated are welcome to apply if they are auspiced by another incorporated entity.
4. Receipts or other documents for activities may be requested at the discretion of Council to verify submitted acquittals.
5. A copy of the group's most recent meeting minutes and/or treasurer's report supporting the application must also accompany the grant application.

There is no limit of approved applications that one group may submit - applications will be assessed on merit according to assessment criteria below.

7. Eligible activities

From the objective outlined above, example activities may include:

- Education, skills and capacity building workshops (including venue hire)
- Open days
- Feasibility or scoping studies
- Educational resources (factsheets, flyers, brochures, website design, graphic design, printing)
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Train the trainer program
- Nature connection for wellbeing activities
- Behaviour change programs
- Resilience building activities
- Rural landholder focused events



- First Nations knowledge sharing
- Project management / coordination
- Storytelling activities
- Project/program evaluation
- Community-led planning projects
- Kitchen table conversations (marketing and promotion)
- Materials and supplies to establish waste and circular economy solutions

8. What will not be funded?

- Projects and programs operating outside the Macedon Ranges Shire
- Infrastructure assets to privately owned buildings
- Are defined as facility maintenance on community and Council-owned buildings
- Are not well supported by evidence of need and where alternative solutions have not been adequately considered
- Do not have appropriate heritage sign-off, including Aboriginal cultural management (where required)
- Proposals considered to be awarding monetary prizes

Core business/operational costs such as:

- salaries for ongoing positions
- rent, insurance, utility costs, debts

Assessment criteria

9. Criteria and weighting

You must address all the following assessment criteria in the application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion detailed below.

Answers should be kept to approximately 700 words per criterion.

Criterion 1: Evidence of need

Criterion 2: Linkage to the grants purpose and objectives

Criterion 3: Ability to deliver

Weighting	Criteria	Applications should include
25%	Evidence of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of proposed project or activity



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue the project or program is working to solve • The broader public benefits that will be achieved by the proposed activities
50%	Linkage to the grant purpose and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on how the proposed project or activity enacts one or more of the grant intended purpose and objectives • Expand on how your proposed project or activity enacts one or more of the Climate Emergency Plan principles (equity, embed First Nations perspectives, mobilisation, collaboration and partnerships and regeneration). • Demonstrate how you plan to measure success
25%	Ability to deliver project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the grant amount requested is appropriate to the outcomes that the proposed activities will achieve (i.e. quotes) • Any financial or in-kind contributions that your group, or others you have partnered with, will make to enhance the value of your proposed activities • Demonstrate good risk management • A copy of the most recent AGM minutes and treasurer's report (if applicable) • Acquittal reporting from any previous Council grant funding

What will strengthen your application?

- Applications that support the implementation of the Climate Emergency Plan.
- Applications that support the implementation of the Community Climate Action Plans (i.e. community plans developed in Council's Cool Changes program).
- Applications that have clearly addressed the criteria above.
- Applications that advance community partnerships.
- Applications that consider gender equity and accessibility for diverse community groups will score more highly than those that do not.
- Applications that advance reconciliation and/or advance First Nations self-determination.
- Applications that outline and detail in-kind contributions.



10. Scoring matrix

Categories	Low (0-3)	Medium (4-6)	High (7-10)
Evidence of need (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No community support or endorsement from local community provided No engagement or collaboration with local community detailed No statement of need included Solution/activity proposed has no evidence-based impact Other funding sources very possible Limited wider community benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some degree of community support and/or endorsement included Some engagement or collaboration with local community Some evidence provided of evidence-based impact Other funding sources slightly possible Some wider community benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of need included as evidence Multiple letters of support/endorsement from community Strong engagement/collaboration with other community groups demonstrated Strong evidence-based alignment to proven impact Other funding sources very unlikely High level of wider community benefit
Linkage to the grant purpose and objectives (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little to no detail explaining alignment to the Climate Emergency Plan and/or Community Climate Action Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some alignment to Climate Emergency Plan and/or Community Climate Action Plans, however little detail given Some evidence of understanding of Climate Emergency Plan and/or Community Climate Action Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear alignment to Climate Emergency Plan priority and principles with reasons strongly articulated Clear alignment to the programs intended outcomes Supports one or more of the program objectives
Ability to deliver project (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate project planning - aims are unclear or appear unachievable, project description lacks clarity and tasks list incomplete or has little attention to detail Inadequate budget - unclear/incomplete, no funds or in-kind contribution, no additional funding sources sought, project costs exceed project value or will require ongoing funding Potential risks or strategies to mitigate these not adequately considered No supporting documentation provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate project planning - clear and achievable aims and project timeline Adequate budget - most costs or income sources identified, some funds or in-kind contribution included, additional funding sources may have been sought and project costs equal project value Some relevant risks considered with strategies to mitigate these Some supporting documentation provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent project planning - clear articulation of all tasks in a logical order with realistic timelines Sound budget - all costs and income sources clearly identified, significant funds or in-kind contribution included, additional funding sources may have been confirmed and project value exceeds project cost Relevant risks carefully considered with strategies to mitigate these All supporting documentation provided

In-kind support

This covers contributions by volunteers and suppliers in terms of time, goods or professional services donated to the project and should be clearly identified in your project budget. The value of in-kind contribution should be reflected in both your income and expenditure.

Estimating the amount of volunteer work will help you determine the level of community contribution required and helps to demonstrate the true value of your project.

It is good practice to also supply a breakdown of estimated in-kind support to show how the figure in your budget total was reached. i.e.:

- General committee/community member contribution (e.g. planning, coordination, etc.) @ \$40 per hour.
- Specialist/expert contribution (e.g. tradesperson, professional service) @\$80/hr.

Acquittal

Grant acquittal reporting is required on completion of your project and/or activity in SmartyGrants. In order to apply for future Category 1 funding, grant acquittal must be received on or before **30 September, 2025**.

Applications

11. Legal requirements

a. Incorporation status

Applicants must be registered as an incorporated body or arrange for a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation to manage (auspice) the funds.

Council does not auspice applicants unless they are already auspiced.

For more information on auspice arrangements visit the [Not-for-profit Law Information Hub](#).

b. Child safe standards

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is committed to a zero tolerance approach to child abuse, through actively promoting child safety and ensuring compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required, under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005, to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

As a Child Safe organisation, Council requires that all grant applicants demonstrate their compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and read/understand Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct, available from [Council's website](#). Within the application form, applicants will be required to identify whether their project involves direct or incidental contact with children and young people and complete either a Child Safe Statement of Commitment or submit their Child Safe Policy and a Child Safe Direct Contact Checklist. These questions are contained within the eligibility section of the application form and must be completed by all applicants.

Please note: If your organisation is being auspiced for the purpose of this grant, the auspicing organisation will also need to meet the Child Safe Standards.

More details on the Child Safe Standards can be found on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](#).

c. Public liability insurance

Public liability insurance covers incidents that occur during an activity being conducted by a group. All groups must be covered by public liability insurance and be able to provide a valid certificate of currency if they are involved in activities in public open space or using Council facilities. Other activities may also require public liability insurance.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or recipient to arrange appropriate insurance, including collecting appropriate insurance from a contractor or tradesperson. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their insurance requirements with their insurance company or a professional advisor.

12. Budget

The budget you submit needs to include proposed expenditure related to the project or activity for which you are requesting funding. The application form on SmartyGrants provides applicants with guidance on the information and level of detail required in your budget.

a. GST

For groups who are registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must exclude GST. (GST will be added to the amount requested).

For groups who are not registered for GST - all pricing in your budget must include GST. (Grants will be made exclusive of GST).

For information about GST and ABNs contact the Australian Taxation Office.

13. Assessment

a. How are applications assessed?

Eligible applications are assessed by an evaluation panel of officers from within Council. The assessment is based on responses provided in the application form within each of the sections of the application using the **scoring matrix**. Responses are scored and the weighting is then applied to create an overall score. Eligibility does not guarantee funding.

Funding recommendations are presented to Council for consideration at a Scheduled Council Meeting. Scheduled Council Meetings are open to the public and streamed live online.

Council decisions are final, applicants who wish to discuss the outcome of their application are encouraged to contact the Environment team for advice as soon as possible on (03) 5422 0333 or via environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au.

Conditions of funding

14. Project variations/extensions

Funds must be spent on the project or activity described in the application. Any variation, including extensions to a project or activity, must be applied through SmartyGrants and be approved by Council.



If you are encountering unexpected challenges in your project delivery, please contact the Environment team for advice as soon as possible on (03) 5422 0333 or via environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au.

15. Reporting/acquittals

Successful applicants are required to submit an acquittal report. Acquittal reports are due 30 September, 2025

This report relating to funding from Council must include:

- confirmation that objectives for the project were achieved
- a financial statement, detailing expenditure signed and authorised by the treasurer
- Photographs which may be used for promotional purposes (where applicable)

Groups who do not submit an acquittal will not be eligible to receive future funding from Council until the project or activity has been acquitted.

16. Incomplete projects and unspent funds

If a project is unable to be completed, the grant recipient must contact the Environment team for advice as soon as possible on (03) 5422 0333 or via environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au.

Any unspent funds are to be returned to Council.

17. Permits, insurance and authorisations

The applicant is responsible for any regulatory and statutory requirements associated with the project, such as planning and building permits and public liability insurance.

18. Auditing of funded projects

Council reserves the right to undertake a spot financial and programmatic audit of a funded project. This may include a detailed examination of all financial records pertaining to the project.

19. Privacy

The collection and handling of personal information is in accordance with [Council's Privacy Policy](#), which is displayed on Council's website and available for inspection at, or collection from, Council's customer service centres.

Key contacts

Contact	Title	Phone	Email
Justin Walsh	Sustainability Officer	0419 906 898	juwalsh@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Kimberley Cook	Environmental Programs and Engagement Officer	0436 654 301	kimcook@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Silvana Predebon	Environmental Policy and Sustainability Officer	5421 9659	spredebon@mrsc.vic.gov.au

If you are unable to reach one of the above contacts in relation to your application, please call Customer Service on (03) 5422 0333.

