# Community grants applicant guidelines

For community grant applicants

Version 3.2
Prepared 27 August 2026

This guideline has been prepared to help you apply for our community grants.

Bendigo Bank

# Introduction

This community grants program is administered by Community Bank Gisborne & District.

Your community and not-for-profit organisation can apply for funding to support projects that offer clear community benefit, contributing to social outcomes, community welfare, environment, health, education, or cultural areas.

You should **read these guidelines before beginning your application**.

# Social purpose focus areas

Bendigo Bank's social purpose focus sets its agenda for 'feeding into prosperity, from its products and services through to its commitment to creating positive social change.

Projects may demonstrate outcomes in:

- Animal welfare
- Choice and empowerment
- Community resilience
- Digital
- Disaster recovery
- Environmental
- Financial
- Health
- Housing
- Learning, skills and development
- Safety
- Social cohesion

# Local impact areas

Community Bank Gisborne and district's vision is a connected, vibrant, sustainable, and caring Macedon Ranges community for all who live, work, and play here.

Community and not-for-profit organisations can apply for projects and activities that offer clear public benefit for the community and align with our **6 Key Impact Pillars**

***1. Strengthening volunteer-led community organisations***

- We help strengthen the capability, resilience and long-term sustainability of local community groups by supporting initiatives that improve governance, build skills and grow volunteer participation and retention.

***2. Social Connection and wellbeing***

- We invest in programs and initiatives which foster a sense of belonging, reduce social isolation and enhance overall wellbeing. We prioritise activities that bring people together, build trust and strengthen community cohesion.

***3. Youth and education***

- We enable access to education, particularly for the young or disadvantaged, through investment in educational programs and scholarships.

***4. Sports and recreation***

- We encourage active lifestyles, participation in sport and recreational opportunities for people

of all ages and abilities. This includes programs that build skills, promote teamwork, improve physical and mental health, and strengthen community spirit.

***5. Climate and environment***

- We support projects that protect, restore and enhance the natural environment while promoting sustainable practices in the community. This includes initiatives focused on conservation, climate resilience, waste reduction and biodiversity.

***6. Arts and culture***

- We support cultural and heritage organisations, festivals, events and community-led projects that celebrate our local identity and enrich the social and cultural fabric of our region.

## Eligibility

You must ideally:

- be a resident of Gisborne and surrounds (specifically of a town in the Macedon Ranges with one of the following postcodes: 3437, 3431, 3438, 3440, 3441 or 3442)
- be an incorporated community or not-for-profit organisation
- have a project partner if you are not an incorporated organisation. A project partner is an incorporated community or not-for-profit organisation that is willing to enter into the funding agreement on your behalf and help you to deliver the project
- have a valid Australian bank account
- actively bank at Community Bank Gisborne & District, or be willing to do so (schools and select government and large community support organisations are exempt)
- For sporting and cultural grants:
    - be amateur competitors.
- be a member of a Club or Organisation that will submit the application in conjunction with the applicant/s.
- political and religious organisations are requested to contact community@mrce.com.au to confirm their eligibility prior to applying.

## Who is ineligible?

- individuals or unincorporated organisations without an eligible project partner
- for-profit organisations
- applicant organisations (or partner organisations) with an unsatisfactory result to the Anti Money Laundering / Know Your Customer search.

## Use of grant funds

Grant funds can be used for projects which align with the program outcomes.

Supported initiatives must take place in and/or clearly benefit the residents of Gisborne and surrounds, defined as postcode 3437, 3431, 3438, 3440, 3441 and 3442.

We will not provide funding for projects that are illegal, commercial or confer private benefits.

We will also not fund projects which:

- take place outside our area
- break or attempt to change the law, or direct political donations
- claim retrospective funding – paying for costs already incurred
- involve gambling

- exclude or offend any part of the community
- encourage violence or involve the use of weapons
- mistreat, exploit, or harm animals
- create environmental hazards
- present a danger to public health or safety
- contribute to modern slavery
- take place solely outside of Australia.

## Assessment criteria

Your application will be competitively assessed against the following merit criteria:

### Criterion 1: Community Impact

- Does the project have a clear purpose that contributes to building a resilient, sustainable, and thriving community?
- Does the project address an identified gap in the community, either by MRCE or the applicant?
- To what extent does the project harness the skills and passions of volunteers in the community and / or promote volunteerism in the community?

### Criterion 2: Community support/stakeholder engagement

- Evidence of support from the broader community showing how your project will benefit local people or the local community.
- Evidence of support from other stakeholders who are critical to your project delivery.
- What is the proposed scale or reach for impact? (To what extent is the grant proportionate to the number of beneficiaries?

### Criterion 3: Capacity to deliver

To what extent is the project feasible (are the project goals and objectives clear and realistic)?

- To what extent will the project / program generate long term benefit?
- Does the organisation have sufficient resources to deliver the project / program?
- To what extent have you planned for how you will evaluate / demonstrate impact on completion of project?

### Criterion 4: Brand Awareness

- To what extent is there potential for the grant to deliver increased brand awareness / recognition? (Note: consider number of members, potential advocates or gatekeepers, other sponsors and funders)

Please see our Partnership Matrix with obligations of community groups with relation to the amount funded, if their grant application is successful.

## How to apply

We invite applicants to submit at most one application for funding for grants program and generally request that groups apply for funding at most once per year (unless urgent needs have arisen).

We will only accept one application per project.

Use our application hub to complete and submit your online application:

https://communitybankgisborne.smartygrants.com.au/

We will send you a confirmation email to your registered email address once your application has been submitted.

To ensure a fair process, we will not accept late applications or provide extensions.

We may contact you during the assessment process to request more information, evidence or to clarify information provided in your grant application.

If we refer to this application to Bendigo Bank Community Foundation to assess and administer, you will be notified and provided with relevant information

## Supporting documentation

You must provide the following supporting documentation for a small grant (less than $5,000):

- Current bank statement for your organisation.
- Project budget which clearly shows how you will spend the funds, and quotes for all budget items greater than $5,000.
- Letters of support to demonstrate community need and benefit (optional).
- Applications involving a project partner must include a letter of their support and a copy of their financials.
- Proof of other approved funding or your own funds to put towards the project. (including in-kind support).
- Evidence of all necessary licenses permits and insurances which will enable you to run your project (e.g. public liability insurance, local council permits).
- For projects involving children, evidence that relevant personnel have Working with Children Checks.

You must provide additional supporting documentation for large grants (greater than $5,000):

- Current signed audited financial statements for the applicant organisation or project partner (where applicable).
- Organisations not required to audit financials must provide a profit and loss statement as a minimum, and a balance sheet if available.
- Quotes for all budget items greater than $5,000 (at least two local itemized quotes where possible). If you are applying for funding for wages, please attach a position description and a copy of the relevant award.
- If you have conducted this project/program before (e.g. annual events), copies of receipts/invoices that substantiate this request from previous expenditure plus a detailed budget.
- Plans/designs for projects that involve building or refurbishment.
- Letters of support to demonstrate community need and benefit, particularly for large projects or initiatives that have a sporting or recreational element and need to show wide community benefit.

## Bendigo Bank Community Foundation

The Bendigo Bank Community Foundation (BBCF) is proud to facilitate the work of a wide range of very generous donors. However, all funding distributed by the trusts concerned is always at the discretion of the trustee - Sandhurst Trustees Limited - whilst considering donor wishes and advice.

All grants and scholarships are made from the relevant trust administered by CEF on behalf of Sandhurst Trustees Limited, as trustee. Sandhurst Trustees Limited ABN 16 004 030 737 a subsidiary of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited ABN 11 068 049 178.

Grants and appeals outlined are administered by BBCF and allocated from the following trusts: Community Enterprise Foundation (DGR) ABN 69 694 230 518 Community Enterprise Charitable Fund (TCC) ABN 12 102 649 968 Community Enterprise Foundation Disaster Relief Fund ABN 71 589 381 152

## Decisions on applications

Timing of notifications will vary; however, applicants are usually notified by email within 4 – 8 weeks of the program closing date.

## Managing your grant

### Keep us informed

You must notify us about anything which is likely to impact on your organisation and its ability to deliver your project. This may include, but is not limited to, changes to your organisation's name, address, financial situation, senior staffing arrangements, or significant changes to the project budget.

### Grant agreement variations

We understand that circumstances change, and things don't always go according to plan. If there has been a change that will impact your project, you can request a variation to your grant agreement by contacting us.

We will consider your request, and if we decide to accept your proposed changes, we will issue a deed of variation.

### Reporting requirements

You will be required to complete a Project Completion Report within 60 days of your nominated project end date. The Project Completion Report will be submitted electronically through the application portal. The report includes information about how the grant was spent, the outcomes, achievements of the project, and any lessons learned.

### Privacy information

View our privacy policy.

## Enquiries

**Application queries**

Jo Irwin
Community Bank Gisborne & District
Email: ceo@macedonrangescommunityenterprises.com.au

**For technical support with application hub**

SmartyGrants–Our Community
Phone: 03 9320 6888
Email: service@smartygrants.com.au