



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek Arts Projects Grant Guidelines

2027



Image by Simon Fazio. *Gulan* by Leon Rodgers, Next Wave, Brunswick Music Festival 2026.

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Purpose

Merri-bek City Council is proud to support a thriving arts community. The Arts Projects Grant enables artists, groups and organisations to develop and deliver innovative projects that benefit the wider Merri-bek community and strengthen the municipality's reputation as a leading centre for the arts.

Arts projects can include the development or presentation of creative outcomes across all artforms.

Objectives

Sustainable Practice

- To empower local artists, groups and organisations to thrive and sustain their creative practice.

Impact & Cultural Participation

- To support and encourage artist-led creative projects that foster cultural enrichment and participation in Merri-bek.

Artistic Merit

- To support local artists, groups and organisations to explore new ideas and bring bold, innovative projects to life.

Grant Categories

- Individual Artists (up to \$6,000)
- Arts Groups and Organisations (up to \$12,000)

Funding Preferences

- Applications from First Peoples (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) artists, groups and organisations.
- Alignment with Merri-bek Human Rights Priority Groups.

Merri-bek Human Rights Priority Groups

- First Peoples (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities)
- People with Disability
- LGBTIQ+ Communities
- Migrant, Refugee and Faith Communities
- Women, Girls and Gender Diverse Communities

Eligibility Requirements

This program is only open to Merri-bek based artists, groups and organisations whose primary business is in the arts sector. This grant is for project funding only. Applicants may apply to one category only within this program: Individual Artists or Arts Groups and Organisations.

Individual Artists (up to \$6,000)

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Live in Merri-bek
- Hold appropriate Public Liability Insurance (\$10M)
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or debts with Council
- Address all grant objectives
- Comply with all relevant local, state and federal laws
- Meet Victorian Child Safe Standards (if the project involves children)
- Follow Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property principles (if the project involves First Peoples)
- Have additional income or funding to support the project.

Arts Groups and Organisations (up to \$12,000)

To be eligible, organisations must:

- Be based in Merri-bek
- Be one of the following:
 - a not-for-profit arts group or organisation, or
 - a First Peoples business or arts organisation (at least 51% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated)
- Be incorporated or be auspiced by an incorporated organisation
- Hold appropriate Public Liability Insurance (\$20M)
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or debts with Council
- Address all grant objectives
- Comply with all relevant local, state and federal laws
- Meet Victorian Child Safe Standards (if the project involves children)
- Follow Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property principles (if the project involves First Peoples)
- Have additional income or funding to support the project.

What we fund

- Projects delivered between January and December 2027. All eligible project costs such as artist fees, marketing, audience development, access costs, studio hire, materials etc.

What we don't fund

- Projects delivered outside Merri-bek
- Requests to fund the full cost of a project
- Projects already partially or fully funded by other Merri-bek City Council grants for the same activity in the same financial year.
- Competitions, awards, fundraising events, fetes, reunions or hobby activities
- Tertiary education qualifications
- Any applicant who lobbies or canvasses Councillors or Council Officers
- Applicants with overdue Merri-bek City Council grant acquittals

- Projects that promote or directly benefit from electronic gaming machines, gambling, sports betting or lotteries.

Timeline

Grant Category	Grants Advertised	Applications Due	Expected Notification
Individual Artists Up to \$6,000	Monday 4 August	Tuesday 2 September	November

Applications

Advice and support

The Arts Development Officer can assist you with questions relating to your grant application and can offer detailed advice. They are not part of the grant assessment panel.

For quick questions, you can email artsgrants@merri-bek.vic.gov.au. Alternatively, you can book a time to meet with the Arts Development Officer to discuss your grant application in detail. These sessions are 30-minute online meetings conducted via Microsoft Teams. Please book via the link below to schedule a 30-minute online meeting via [Calendly](#).

Access and Alternative Submission Formats

We accept written and video grant submissions through SmartyGrants and offer translation services if you would prefer to apply in your preferred language.

If you require any access assistance with this document or with the application process, please contact the Arts Development Officer on artsgrants@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

General Information

Please submit applications online via Merri-bek City Council's SmartyGrants web page.

Application form and process

The online application form will include the questions outlined below:

- What is your name / organisation name?
- What is your address? (Must be a Merri-bek address to be eligible)
- What is the title of your project?
- What is your project date(s)?
- Which Merri-bek suburb will your project take place in? Select one.
- Does your project contain any Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property? *If so, please provide evidence of your proposed activities, consultation or engagement with First Peoples (e.g. support letters, stakeholder engagement plan)

Question 1: (max 300 words)

Provide a brief description of your practice that includes:

- A short bio and a brief history of your practice

Question 2: (max 300 words)

Provide a brief description of your project that includes:

- Project concept

- Project outcomes
- Confirmed artists and collaborators if relevant

Question 3: (max 300 words)

Explain how this grant will support your project now and benefit your creative practice or organisation into the future?

Question 4 (max 300 words)

Explain how you and/or your creative project are connected to the Merri-bek municipality. Responses can include:

- Key target audiences
- Accessibility methods and removal of participation barriers
- Details of partnerships and collaborations if relevant

Budget

Please submit a full project budget using the SmartyGrants template provided. For your budget to be accepted as part of your application it must:

- Be realistic and balanced
- Show other income sources
- Include artist fees

Support Documents

Please submit the following support documents as attachments to your SmartyGrants application:

- A maximum of three (3) letters of support from partner organisations, community groups, artists, or anyone else who supports your proposal and those involved with your project.
- Current Public Liability Certificate
- A relevant URL / website that demonstrates prior work
- A copy of your Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Evidence of your proposed activities, consultation or engagement with First Peoples if applicable (e.g. support letters, stakeholder engagement plan)

Assessment Process

Council is committed to ensuring that the assessment of all grant applications is equitable and transparent. The assessment process will be as follows:

1. The Arts Development Officer will assess each application to confirm its eligibility. This Officer will be the main contact for questions and assistance while applications are open. Eligible applications will be submitted to a decision-making panel. This Officer will not be on the decision-making panel.
2. A panel of at least two (2) Officers from across Council and one (1) external representative will assess the eligible applications against the assessment criteria outlined below. The panel will be

chaired by the Unit Manager Arts and Culture. All applications from First Peoples will be assessed by a First Peoples assessor.

3. A report from the panel with recommendations for funding will be made to the Director Community for endorsement.

Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Score /10	Application Question/s
Artistic Merit Panel will assess: • Quality and innovation of the artistic project • Contribution to the municipality's arts ecology • Previous history of delivering artistic outcomes	High scoring applications will show: • A clear project summary • Confirmed artists and collaborators • High quality support material that demonstrates ongoing creative practice	Questions 1 & 2
Sustainable Practice Panel will assess: • How funding strengthens the artist's career or the sustainability of the group/organisation • Realistic use of funds that builds resilience • Sufficient capacity to deliver the project	High scoring applications will show: • An outline of your project team and roles • How the grant will benefit you and your project team • A realistic and justified budget	Question 3
Impact and Cultural Participation Panel will assess: • Clearly defined target audiences • Evidence of culturally safe and inclusive practices • A clear demonstration of the personal impact and cultural enrichment for the artist, group or organisation	High scoring applications will show: • Strategies to engage key target audiences • Accessibility considerations • Engagement with Merri-bek Human Rights Priority Groups • Clear community benefits • Evidence of confirmed partnerships or collaborations if relevant	Question 4

Conflict of Interest

All those involved in the assessment of applications must declare any conflict of interest that exists, including, but not limited to, personal or business connections with any applicant. Any assessment

panel member with a conflict is required to step down from participating in any vote or decision-making process undertaken regarding the specific applicant.

Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants are required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement with Council which sets out the conditions and reporting requirements.
- Use the grant funding for the project outlined in the application only and in line with the budget submitted in the application.
- Be covered by an appropriate Public Liability Insurance policy.
- Acknowledge Arts Merri-bek and Merri-bek City Council by using logos on all promotional material relating to the activity with the accompanying text:
'This event has been proudly supported by Merri-bek City Council through the Merri-bek Arts Projects Grant'.
- Obtain any relevant legal permissions with regards to copyright and intellectual property rights.
- Submit an Acquittal Report including a financial report and a brief written report via SmartyGrants.
- Obtain an event permit for events held on Council owned open space. The event permit cost is waived for successful grant applications; however, each event permit also requires a bond which cannot be waived.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Where an activity will use copyright material, or another entity's intellectual property, it is the applicant's responsibility to seek and obtain all the necessary permissions. All intellectual property rights within the application and delivery of the event / activity / project will be held exclusively by the applicant(s).

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

Any activity that involves First Peoples (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) must comply with cultural protocol, including [Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property](#) principles. These protocols affirm the self-determined ability of First Peoples to maintain control over their artistic work and heritages. You **must** provide evidence of your proposed activity's consultation or engagement with First Peoples, such as support letters or stakeholder engagement plans.

Lobbying

Lobbying or canvassing Councillors or Council Officers in relation to any grant application is prohibited. This includes asking Councillors or Council Officers to recommend your project to assessment panel members, to submit a letter of support for a grant or to discuss the application with assessment panel members on your behalf. Any application submitted where the applicant, or applicant's representative, has canvassed or lobbied a Councillor or Council Officer will be deemed ineligible.

Feedback

Please Note: Due to the large volume of applications that we expect to receive, feedback may not be provided for this program.

Privacy and Information Statement

Merri-bek City Council is committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

The personal information requested on this form is being collected by Merri-bek City Council for Arts Grants applications and may also be used to update your personal information otherwise held by Council (for example, contact details including email address, phone number).

The personal information will be disclosed to any auspicing body or project funders and may also be used by Council for related purposes (e.g. to contact you about the grant or use of your images).

It will not be disclosed to any other external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. If the personal information is not provided, then your grant application will be deemed ineligible.

You can gain access to the personal information you have provided to Merri-bek City Council, and/or alter it, by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9240 1111 or email at Privacyofficer@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.