

CITY OF MARIBYRNONG

FESTIVAL CITY POLICY



Introduction

People love participating in Maribyrnong's festivals. A majority of residents agree that having access to festivals makes Maribyrnong a great place to live and builds pride in their City.

Council, acknowledges that the Festival City Program promotes and cultivates the City of Maribyrnong as a vibrant, cosmopolitan City. The Program brings together and celebrates local cultures that enhance our reputation as a vibrant and creative city celebrating both the diversity and shared experiences of our communities.

Since its adoption in 2010 the Festival City Program has significantly increased the size, value, number, profile and diversity of festivals in the City of Maribyrnong.

This growth of the Festival City Program was achieved by:

- Establishing annual and triennial funding schemes for festivals and increasing overall funding for festivals;
- Developing a brand and promotion strategy for the Festival City program;
- Providing for the strategic allocation of resources to professional development and support for festival organisers; and
- Developing strategic partnerships to attract some of Australia's best festivals to the City.

Festivals also attract visitors and stimulate the economy. Council's 2015 Economic Impact Study of the Program found that for every dollar invested, the City received a \$3.43 net economic benefit. An independent review of the Festival City Grants Program the same year found it to be a sound model which is original, comprehensive and ahead of current trends.

The Festival City Policy builds on the achievements of Council's previous festival policies, maintaining three distinctive streams for festival support, and a strengthened strategic direction.

Council will encourage new festivals to emerge in our fast-changing and growing communities, whilst remaining flexible to ensure existing festivals flourish and attract new audiences.

The Festival City Policy sets out a framework to attract, host and support the best of Australia's festivals for the benefit of residents, businesses and cultural tourists.

Council will assist festival organisers to meet their objectives, partner with businesses and institutions, become more sustainable and enhance their professionalism to festival industry standards.

The Festival City Policy is Maribyrnong's long-term commitment to supporting economically robust, socially inclusive and culturally rich festivals that will contribute to the growth of our ever changing City.

Vision

Maribyrnong will be the place that stages and hosts festivals that create great memories, inspire a sense of community belonging and pride, excite visitors and stimulate economic activity.

Through this Policy Council hopes that festivals will bring people together to celebrate the communities that make up our wonderful City, build a sense of place and belonging and profile the City invigorating the economy.

Purpose and Scope

This Policy explains why Council actively invests in and supports a wide range of dynamic festival activities in key locations across the City.

Council acknowledges a lively mix of festivals will:

- Play a strong role in building community harmony and connect people in a sense of community and inclusion;
- Develop understanding, appreciation and celebration of diverse cultures;
- Increase cultural vibrancy by increasing access to the arts and creative practice and to profile the work of artists and creative industries;
- Contribute to the liveability of the City, use public spaces in new and exciting ways, promote an identity for the City that creates local pride; and
- Attract visitors and contribute to building a robust local economy that forges connections with local educational institutions and businesses and builds capacity for local organisers.

Council is involved in Festivals in the following ways:

- Providing grants for festivals;
- Producing and delivering festivals;
- Coordinating and promoting a year-round calendar of festivals;
- Assisting with festival planning through Council process (M-Team Meetings);
- Monitoring permits, licences and regulatory compliance;
- Providing venues and public spaces for the delivery of festivals;
- Mentoring festival organisers in best practice in festival delivery, design and innovation; and
- Brokerage of new festival partnerships.

For the purposes of this policy, a festival is:

An organised multi-part, celebratory occasion or activity of limited duration that brings people together for the primary purpose of participating in an uplifting community, cultural, sport, art, entertainment, music or recreational experience.

A festival may be:

- Held every year and is not part of a regular scheduled program
- Free or have an entry fee
- Run on a commercial basis
- A major indoor or outdoor one-off show, depending on its purpose
- Festivals that Council organises

Excluded from this Policy are:

- Business events
- Indoor private functions
- Fundraising events
- Political events
- Park bookings for a social event (eg group picnic)

Objectives

The Festival City Program has grown in size and scope, economic viability and cultural and social value. The Program covers a broad range of scale, style and focus, from small community festivals to large-scale experiences of national significance.

Increase in attendances indicates the extent to which festivals have successfully engaged with residents and contributed to a sense of belonging, while attracting visitors from further afield, providing opportunities for cultural tourism and stimulation of the local economy.

Council acknowledges that in most instances communities are best placed to produce the ideas and to plan, organise and deliver festivals, however Council has a role to partner with key organisations to produce world-class memorable festival experiences that:

- Address a gap in the Festival City Program;
- Enhance festival offerings for the City; and/or
- Encourage cultural tourism.

The objectives of the Festival City Policy are to:

- Influence improved festival delivery, financial viability and programming;
- Deliver a balanced calendar of festivals across the year, encouraging festivals that can be staged outside the concentration of festivals held over the summer months;
- Provide or produce world-class memorable festival experiences that position Maribyrnong as a major festival destination;
- Facilitate geographic distribution of festivals to enable a fair distribution of festivals across the City;
- Continue to build the City's strong reputation as the Festival City;
- Showcase high level cultural experiences that acknowledge the diversity of our communities; and
- Ensure festivals comply with all regulatory requirements and are still easy to run.

Roles and Responsibilities

Maribyrnong City Council has many different roles and responsibilities in the delivery of festivals. Many other organisations are also involved in delivering festivals. To position Maribyrnong as a world class presenter of festivals the Council and all organisations must work together.

Council supports festivals in the form of:

1. Funding for Community and Signature festivals and producing arrangements with Partner/Producer festivals;
2. Facilitating and providing access to Council resources, as appropriate;
3. Professional development to festival organisers;
4. Marketing and promotion of festivals;

5. Ensuring the regulation of festivals according to Council standards and compliance requirements, including traffic management, liquor licensing, environmental health, risk management are followed through.

In addition, Council will:

6. Produce, attract and encourage festivals that meet the aims of the Festival City Policy.
7. Mentor community groups initiating festivals that are new to the City of Maribyrnong.
8. Broker relationships between festival organisers and communities, between different community groups and between festival organisers and businesses.

The Festival City Policy identifies three categories of festivals: Community, Signature and Partner/Producer.

- Community festivals celebrate, strengthen and improve participants' understanding of the City of Maribyrnong's communities and build local capacity for participation.
- Signature festivals showcase the best of the City of Maribyrnong, its geography, local cultures or creative talents to audiences across Melbourne and Victoria.
- Partner/Producer festivals build relationships between communities in the City of Maribyrnong, commercial festival operators and festivals that are delivered in Melbourne or Australia wide.

Festival Advisory Panel

Maribyrnong City Council has established an independent Festival Advisory Panel. This Panel will be supported to ensure it can provide independent and leading industry advice and recommendations to Council. In particular the Panel will advise Council on the overall Festival City Program direction and the Festival City Grants Program.

Evaluation

There is a need to continually evaluate the Festival City Program to ensure it makes a real difference to Maribyrnong.

The Festival City Policy's success in meeting its vision will be measured in several ways:

Objective Annual measures and indications including:

- Scope and balance of the Program;
- Locations and dates of Festivals;
- Scale and Popularity of Festivals;
- Community funding and other contributions;
- Partnerships development; and
- Media metrics.

And subjective or anecdotal measures, such as feedback and public comment.

Festival Action Plan

The Action Plan outlines what Maribyrnong City Council will do to implement the Festival City Policy to improve delivery and scope of festivals across the City. The Action Plan:

- Articulates the key deliverables for presenting a festival
- Outlines the opportunities and challenges in delivering on the Policy
- Sets out the implementation of the Festival City Program
- Sets out the criteria for funding festivals

Principles for Festival Delivery

Council will role model excellent standards of festival planning and delivery and will encourage and assist festival organisers to use best practice principles set out below.

Planning

- Establish clear objectives for the festival, understanding who the festival is for, how the festival will be implemented and evaluated.
- Identify any planning restrictions that apply to the festival location or venue.
- Be aware of the City-wide calendar of festivals when deciding when and where to hold the festival.
- Develop a sustainability plan for the festival that outlines how the festival will continue in the future, and identify options to improve the financial viability of the festival.

Engagement and Communications

- Engage with local communities, businesses and residents when planning the festival to identify opportunities and any issues that may arise.
- Identify key stakeholders (resident or business) who could work with the festival to make the delivery in the neighbourhood as smooth as possible with regard to traffic disruption, noise and parking.
- Promote and market the festival through effective communication channels to reach both mainstream and minority sectors of the community locally and more broadly.

Risk

- Plan for the safety of people attending the festival.
- Provide for the responsible serving of alcohol to minimise any alcohol related matters during and post festival.
- Ensure the festival complies with relevant statutory legislation, permits and licences.

Accessibility

- Take into account how ALL people will access and engage with the festival.
- Identify how people will travel to and from the festival encouraging the use of public transport, walking or cycling.
- Provide adequate provision for people with a disability or limited mobility eg parking, toilets, stage viewing areas.
- Consider different ways of communicating with the community about the festival eg using plain English, translations where necessary, use of pictures, radio or large font size.

Environmental Sustainability

- Plan how to manage waste from the festival.

- Focus on the use of recycled products with food operators and minimise use of non-recyclable plastic.
- Consider the use of composting food waste for a local community garden.
- Identify how to minimise effects of noise to residents and businesses near the festival.
- Minimise the impact of the festival on local flora and fauna or sensitive ecological environments.

Opportunities and Challenges

Council faces a range of opportunities and challenges as it endeavours to use festivals to deliver and promote Maribyrnong as a City that excites visitors, stimulates robust economic activity and inspires community belonging and pride. It needs to:

- Coordinate the wide range of stakeholders requirements, including traffic, waste, health and safety, compliance, open space;
- Coordinate a clear and consistent process through the many areas of Council for external festival organisers;
- Ensure a fair geographical distribution of festivals across the City;
- Encourage festivals that can be staged outside of the concentration of the summer season of festivals;
- Maintain strong links with community and arts organisations;
- Work with differing views and expectations, levels of experience and approaches to festival delivery;
- Remain current and on trend with the festival landscape internationally and locally;
- Deliver festivals that are environmentally responsible;
- Deliver festivals that provide access for all people; and
- Help make festivals financially viable and sustainable.

Implementation

Three festival streams have been developed to enshrine diversity and equity in funding and to deliver on the Festival City Policy objectives:

1. Community Festivals

Community festivals celebrate, strengthen and improve participants' understanding of the City of Maribyrnong's communities and build local capacity for participation. Community Festivals:

- Tend to be small scale festivals, attracting audiences of up to 10,000 people
- Are often run by community organisations
- Frequently celebrate the unique cultures they represent, the suburbs and streets in which they belong, or special occasions
- Help build a shared sense of community and local identity
- Raise cultural awareness
- Are funded on an annual basis

2. Signature Festivals

Signature festivals showcase the best of the City of Maribyrnong, its geography, local cultures or creative talents and often attract audiences across Melbourne and Victoria. Signature Festivals:

- Tend to be larger scale festivals, attracting audiences in excess of 10,000 people
- Demonstrate innovation through programming and/or by building community collaborations and local capacity
- Attract state-wide media and public attention and have positive flow-on effects for our businesses and communities
- Showcase Maribyrnong's assets and what is special about our City
- Encourage cultural tourism and strong economic activity
- Are funded on a triennial basis

3. Partner/Producer festivals

Partner/Producer festivals build relationships between communities in the City of Maribyrnong, commercial festival operators and festivals that are delivered in Melbourne or Australia wide.

Partner/Producer festivals:

- Bring positive impacts of Australia's world-class festivals to Maribyrnong communities, build audiences, attract cultural tourists, and increase entertainment and other activity in the City
- Will foster economic prosperity of the City
- Fill a gap where council identifies that the festival will advance the City of Maribyrnong's exposure as the Festival City
- Seek to provide legacy benefits
- Activate our public spaces in innovative ways and utilise our commercial venues

Council will provide additional support to the three festival streams in the following ways, as appropriate:



Community festivals may require Council roles (A) to (F). Signature festivals are likely to require Council roles (B) to (F), and Partner/Producer festivals to require (C) to (F).

Eligibility Criteria

The following criteria guidelines apply to festivals which are funded by Council through the Festival City Grants Program. The criteria also guides Council in making decisions with regard to partnering or producing festivals.

Criteria	To be eligible for a Community festivals grant, the festival will:	To be eligible for a Signature festivals triennial grant, the festival will:	Partner/Producer festivals will:
Meets the definition of a Festival as outlined in the Festival City Policy	✓	✓	✓
Commitment to a professional and safe approach in planning and delivery in consultation with Council	✓	✓	✓
Demonstrates community buy-in and ownership	✓	✓	✓
Be economically sustainable and financially robust	✓	✓	✓
Engages local businesses in the production of the festival	✓	✓	✓
Includes activities provided for residents at no cost, in order to increase the accessibility of the festival	✓	✓	✓
Demonstrates accessibility for people with a disability, the elderly and the young	✓	✓	✓
Demonstrates clear, relevant and engaging program content or delivery	✓	✓	✓
Generates pride in and a sense of belonging to the City of Maribyrnong	✓	✓	✓
Involves diverse audiences and participants	✓	✓	✓
Be underpinned by a strong governance structure and managed by a properly constituted applicant organisation	✓	✓	✓
Demonstrate the festival can strengthen the economy, create job opportunities, encourage business investment and/or increase visitors to the City		✓	✓
Involve multiple community groups and have a record of or the potential to attract participants and audiences from across Melbourne and/or Victoria		✓	✓
Use the City's public venues and spaces in innovative ways			✓
Have acquitted all previous grants satisfactorily, and have a strong record of compliance and success in meeting key performance indicators (KPIs) (excludes new festivals)	✓	✓	Have a strong record of compliance and success
Triennially funded festivals will be required to submit annual		✓	

financial reports and updated annual budgets			
Promote environmental sustainability awareness and best practice	✓	✓	✓
Implements measures to minimise waste and emissions	✓	✓	✓
Can show other sources of support such as commercial or community partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Preference may be given to festivals that:			
Involve community groups within the City of Maribyrnong that are underrepresented in the Festival City Program			
Demonstrate collaboration with community, commercial and/or education partners such as Victoria University			
Include programming that addresses Council's aim to stimulate cultural growth in areas of identified cultural need			
Appropriately or imaginatively use public locations, including areas unique to the City			

* Additional eligibility criteria may be itemised in the Guidelines for the Festival City Grants Program

Related Documents

- Council Plan 2013 – 2017
- Festival City Policy 2014-2017
- Maribyrnong Festival City Program Economic Impact Study 2015
- Maribyrnong Festival City Grants Program Review 2015
- City of Maribyrnong Marketing Framework 2011 - 2016
- Festival City Grants Program Guidelines and Application Form 2016 – 2017
- Footscray Integrated Marketing Strategy 2011 - 2016
- Strategic Arts Framework and Plan 2012 - 2016

Review of Policy

The Festival City Policy will be reviewed as Council requires.