



SIGNATURE FESTIVALS AND ACTIVATIONS GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

2025/2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Council is proud to represent a municipality filled with important and significant Aboriginal history. It acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and acknowledges the rich culture and considerable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have made and continue to make to this City.

INTRODUCTION

Maribyrnong City Council's Signature Festivals and Activations Grants Program 2025/2026 provides financial and in-kind support via a competitive grant round.

As an applicant you must meet the Eligibility Criteria and address the Funding Criteria. Proposed activities need to align with strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2021–2025 and the Festivals and Activation Framework 2022–2026.

These documents can be found on Council's website **maribyrnong.vic.gov.au**

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Signature Festivals and Activations Grants Program 2025/2026 aims to support a dynamic mix of festivals and activations that will:

- Creatively activate the city's spaces
- Encourage cultural tourism and strong economic activity
- Help strengthen precinct and neighbourhood identity
- Provide opportunity for inclusive local participation and capacity building
- Provide paid opportunities for local cultural and creative sectors
- Promote collaborations between local business and creatives

The Program aims to contribute to the Vision and Objectives of the Festivals and Activation Framework 2022-2026 and also directly links to the Council Plan 2021-2025 Strategic objectives of:

- Liveable neighbourhoods
Council will partner with its community to provide and advocate for integrated built and natural environments with access to open spaces that are well maintained, engaging, accessible and respectful of the community and neighbourhoods.
- A place for all
Council will provide well-planned neighbourhoods and a strong local economy, delivering services that are inclusive and accessible to the whole community, and that support wellbeing, healthy and safe living, connection to the community, and cultural interaction.

FUNDING STREAMS

Two funding streams are available as part of this Grants Program. Applicants may only submit **one** festival/activity per stream. Applications to both streams for the same festival/activity will not be accepted.

SIGNATURE FESTIVALS

This stream is for larger scale festivals (attracting audiences of 5,000+) that showcase the best of the City of Maribyrnong, its geography, local cultures or creative talents and attract audiences across Melbourne and Victoria.

- Grants of up to \$40,000 (per annum) are available
- Grants are awarded for two years, with second year funding subject to the satisfactory acquittal of the 2025/2026 festival and submission of an updated budget and overview of the 2026/2027 festival
- Not-for-profit incorporated* associations can apply
- Applications will be accepted until 4pm 11 June 2025
- Applications are assessed by Council's independent Festivals and Visitation Advisory Panel with funding recommendations made to Council for endorsement
- Festival must be delivered prior to 30 June 2026

PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES (ANNUAL)

This stream is for place-based activities that creatively activate public spaces, business precincts and local neighbourhoods.

- Grants of up to \$20,000 are available, awarded annually
- Not-for-profit incorporated* associations can apply
- Applications will be accepted until 4pm 11 June 2025
- Applications are assessed by Council's independent Festivals and Visitation Advisory Panel with funding recommendations made to Council for endorsement
- Activity must be delivered prior to 30 June 2026

**Unincorporated not-for-profit organisations or groups can apply through an auspice agreement (see page 6)*

ACTIVITIES THAT MAY BE FUNDED

Examples of what may be funded include but are not limited to:

SIGNATURE FESTIVALS

- A large scale neighbourhood-based festival of at least one day duration which includes a wide variety of offerings
- A festival with a particular theme or focus that offers high level cultural experiences
- A week-to-month long series of events delivered across a range of venues/locations within Maribyrnong and presented as a curated festival program
- A major Melbourne or Australian not-for-profit festival delivering a significant program of events in Maribyrnong as part of the broader festival program

PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES (ANNUAL)

- A significant free outdoor music concert or block party in an urban activity centre
- Weekly or monthly pop-up markets or outdoor movie screenings
- A series of temporary artworks, projections or creative lighting displays in public space running over an extended period
- A collection of themed neighbourhood tours
- A series of activations in empty shopfronts

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO BE MET

- The applicant is a not-for-profit incorporated* organisation
- The proposed activity must occur within the boundaries of the City of Maribyrnong
- The proposed activity is scheduled to take place prior to 30 June 2026
- The proposed activity must be free to attend or includes significant free programming
- The applicant must have acquitted ALL previous Council grants and have no outstanding debts to Maribyrnong City Council
- The applicant (or individuals, organisation or businesses involved in the activity) must not have any unresolved compliance matters with Maribyrnong City Council
- The applicant (or auspice if applicable) must provide evidence of Public Liability Insurance (PLI) to the value of \$20 million

**Unincorporated not-for-profit organisations or groups can apply through an auspice agreement (see page 6)*

APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT ELIGIBLE

- Activities that do not align with Council policies and values
- Multiple applications for the same activity
- More than one application from the same applicant per stream
- Activities that are sponsored by tobacco companies, gambling or fossil fuel companies, unless the company issued the funding through their community grants program (evidence must be provided)
- Activities with a primary purpose of promoting religion or politics or are for fundraising purposes
- Activities that have already received funding from Council in the same financial year. For example, Council will not fund the same, or part of the same activity, through its Community Grants Program, Business Improvement District Grants or Love Your West Grants Program in the same funding cycle.
- Activities already funded by Council through operational or Triennial Arts Grant funding
- Activities which have already started or have been completed

Image by Fiafia Art



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

CRITERIA

Eligible applications will be assessed by a panel who will consider:

GRANT STREAMS

	Signature Festivals	Place-based Initiatives
Commitment to a professional and safe approach in planning and delivery in consultation with Council	✓	✓
Evidence of local need and/or community support for the activity	✓	✓
Demonstrates relevant and engaging content or delivery	✓	✓
Evidence of direct benefit to local businesses, cultural and creative industries &/or artists	✓	✓
Strengthen local precinct and neighbourhood identity	✓	✓
Provide opportunities for local participation and capacity building	✓	✓
Includes measures to promote gender equity, inclusion and accessibility in the planning and delivery	✓	✓
Commitment to good environmental sustainability practices and minimising environmental impact	✓	✓
Evidence of a realistic budget with appropriate resourcing	✓	✓

PREFERENCE MAY BE GIVEN TO ACTIVITIES THAT:

- are First Nations led
- are developed in partnership with CALD communities, LGBTIQA+ people, young people, older people and/or people living with disability
- involve community groups within the City of Maribyrnong that are underrepresented in the City's annual events program
- align with key objectives of Council's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2025
- address a geographic gap to enable a fair distribution of activity across the Municipality
- are staged in the (typically quieter) winter months to help ensure a balanced calendar of activities across the year
- activate underutilised space in either the public or private realm
- imaginatively utilise public locations that help showcase Maribyrnong's assets
- are staged in the City's key activity centres and will increase economic activity to businesses
- include programming that addresses Council's aim to stimulate cultural interaction and connection to the community

BUDGET

When preparing your budget and funding request, please take into account the following:

- Successful applicants may not receive all the funding requested
- Ensure you provide a detailed budget noting all items including in-kind and cash amounts
- Note other sources of funding and sponsorship (these must be itemised not a lump sum), including whether these are confirmed or unconfirmed and indicate if your organisation has been successful with this funding in the past

LOBBYING

Lobbying of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors, employees of the City of Maribyrnong or assessment panel members in relation to a funding application is strictly prohibited. No consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant where such lobbying has been proven to have taken place.

ASSESSMENT

Applications are assessed on a competitive basis. After your application has been submitted:

- Applications are first assessed that they meet the eligibility criteria
- Eligible applications are then considered and assessed by Council's external Festivals and Visitation Advisory Panel
- The Panel's recommendations for funding will be presented to Council for endorsement
- While an application may meet eligibility and funding criteria, this does not guarantee a grant
- You will receive written advice on the outcome of your application
- The decision on funding is final

FUNDING OBLIGATIONS

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement with Council containing standard terms and conditions for the recipient's administration of grant funds
- Provide Council with copies of required documentation pertaining to the funded activity
- Secure and meet the requirements of any relevant permits and permissions for the activity
- Submit a written acquittal (including a financial reconciliation) through SmartyGrants to acquit the grant funds

PAYMENTS

Council will issue grants by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and banking details will be requested when completing paperwork related to successful grants.

Your organisation (or your Auspice Body) will need to provide a tax invoice to Maribyrnong City Council, showing the grant amount, plus GST if applicable.

Council will pay 50% of the grant payment on signing of the Funding Agreement. The final 50% grant payment will be only made once all relevant documentation associated to your activity is received by Council.

ABN & GST INFORMATION

ABN REQUIREMENTS

All grant applicants will be required to have a registered ABN. Your organisation can get an ABN by completing the appropriate forms that are available from Australia Post and the Australian Tax Office.

ABOUT GST

GST will only apply to your grant if your organisation or Auspice body is registered for GST with the Australian tax office (ATO). In these cases Council will add 10% for the GST to the grant. For information and advice on GST and the implications for your grant, call the ATO on 13 28 66 or visit the website www.ato.gov.au

Grants are considered taxable income by the ATO. It is illegal to claim GST if you are not registered.

AUSPICE ORGANISATIONS

Unincorporated community groups can apply through an auspice agreement with an Australian incorporated not-for-profit organisation. An auspice is responsible for:

- Signing the funding agreement
- All legal and financial responsibility of the grant on the applicant's behalf
- Receiving and distributing grant funds under the funding agreement
- Ensuring all funded activities are complete
- Submitting an acquittal (including financial reconciliation) on the applicant's behalf

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION & PROCESS

READ

Maribyrnong City Council Signature Festivals and
Activations Grants Program Guidelines 2025/2026
.....
Council Plan 2021–2025
.....
Festivals and Activation Framework 2022–2026

These documents can be found
on the Grants page of Council's
festivalcity.com.au website

DISCUSS

New applicants are required to contact Council's City
Experience and Visitation Unit prior to applying to discuss
their application and eligibility for a grant

CITY EXPERIENCE AND VISITATION UNIT

PH 03 9688 0200 or email dsfgs.festival.city@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

EXPLORE

Explore such things as venue availability, obtain
quotes, reserve parks/venues if applicable etc

SUBMISSIONS

Submit an application online via SmartyGrants prior
to 4pm, 11 June 2025, including attaching all
required supporting material

APPLY NOW
festivalcity.com.au

ASSESSMENTS

Eligible applications assessed by Council's external Festivals
and Visitation Advisory Panel with recommendations for
funding presented to Council for endorsement

KEY DATES

SUBMIT APPLICATION
prior to 4pm, 11 June 2025

OUTCOMES NOTIFIED
20 August 2025

DELIVER ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO 30
June 2026

IF SUCCESSFUL

Sign and return Funding Agreement
.....
Meet any permits/permissions, conditions, monitoring
and reporting requirements
.....
Deliver activity prior to 30 June 2026
.....
Funding acquittal due within 4 weeks of activity being
completed

QUERIES

Contact the City Experience and
Visitation Unit for any queries or
additional information

PH 03 9688 0200 or email
dsfgs.festival.city@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

IF UNSUCCESSFUL

Feedback provided to applicant on request