

Community Grants Panel

Terms of Reference (2022-2026)

Purpose

The Community Grants Panel (Panel) aims to provide a transparent, equitable and accessible process in the application and assessment of Frankston City Council (Council)'s Annual Community Grants Program.

Objectives

- The Panel advises and makes granting recommendations to Council
- The Panel may in each year recommend to the Council that:
 - Council pay part or all of the Council approved funding pool to eligible community groups and organisations as the Panel in its discretion determines

Responsibilities and Decision Making

- Adhere to Council's Community Grants Policy in considering and marking recommendations to Council
- Complete any relevant mandatory training
- Review applications and make funding determinations for the annual community grants
- Examine each grant application using the established criteria and eligibility of each application, as outlined in the Annual Community Grant Guidelines
- Ensure funding pools are not exhausted beyond the allocated funding amount
- Recommend to Council (if appropriate) that no funds be allocated
- Agree on funding recommendations to be presented to Council for decision at a Council meeting

Members Code of Conduct

- Act in a respectful manner towards other Panel members when sharing views and opinions
- Treat all information through the assessment process with sensitivity and maintain confidentiality
- Work together with other Panel members to seek resolution of any differences
- Declare in advance any potential or perceived conflict of interests. During the Panel deliberations exit the room / video conference where a conflict of interest may occur
- Prepare for and be present during the Panel deliberation meetings

Panel Composition

That Council must establish and at all times maintain a panel of individuals that will be comprised of:

- 1) Four (4) Voluntary Community Members
- 2) Director of Communities (or nominated Council representative)

The following Council officers will attend the meeting but do not have voting rights

1. Community Grants Officer
2. Coordinator Community Programs and/or
3. Manager Community Strengthening

From time-to-time, internal subject-matter experts will be consulted around particular applicants prior to the assessment meeting.

Period of tenure

Unless otherwise resolved by Council, Volunteer Community Members are selected and invited to participate on an annual basis and are appointed for each round. If a resignation from the Panel occurs within the term, the remaining Panel will continue until the end of the term.

Appointments to the Panel is determined by the Terms of Reference and Council reserves the right to remove a member of the Panel at any time. Any such appointment shall be subject to the person signing a Council "Consent to Act" statement prior to taking their seat on Panel.

Financial delegations

As outlined in the Community Grants Policy, approval of recipients of the Annual Community Grants must be approved by Council unless it is in Caretaker period, in which case the Annual Community Grants is approved by the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegations.

Appointment of Voluntary members by Council to the Panel

The make-up of the voluntary members of the Panel will consist of a diversity of skills and knowledge from industries and the broader community.

The selection and appointment by Council of the Voluntary members to the Panel will be by:

- applications from public advertisement;
- response to key criteria; and
- interview process

An existing Panel Member may be reappointed by agreement of the Council at the completion of their term, for no more than three (3) consecutive terms, without the need to reapply, subject to satisfactory performance of that Panel Member.

Council reserves the right not to appoint a person in response to the advertisement process and to not reappoint a Panel Member at the completion of any term.

A Panel member may resign through advising Council in writing.

Selection Panel

When the appointment of members to the Panel is required and nominations are received, the selection panel will consist of:

- Coordinator Community Programs (or nominated officer)
- Community Grants Officer

All nominations will be assessed against the selection criteria.

The selection panel's recommendation about the membership of the Panel will be reported to Council at the next possible Council Meeting.

Selection Criteria

Nominees for membership on the Panel must be able to demonstrate:

- An ability to constructively participate in a panel capacity;
- A sound knowledge and understanding of Frankston community;
- A willingness to contribute positively to meetings in a fair and unbiased manner;
- Understanding of Conflict of Interest;
- A capacity to commit to the Panel for the required duration;
- A willingness to commit time and contribute to scoring applications outside meetings;
- Demonstrated computer literacy skills including the ability to use an internet web browser and video conferencing service; and
- Experience and expertise in not-for-profit community groups and organisations is highly regarded

Role of Director of Communities

Director of Communities is appointed to the Community Grants Panel, a substitute Council officer can be nominated by the Director of Communities to attend, should the Director of Communities be unavailable.

Director of communities will:

1. Act as a link between Council and the Panel and
2. Adhere to the Frankston City Council's Code of Conduct

Role of Council officers

Manager Community Strengthening will report to Council on:

- The panel's Annual Community Grant recommendations to Council for approval

Community Grants Officer will:

- Undertake initial eligibility assessment on applications received
- Contact internal subject-matter experts (as needed)
- To support the panel members, officer will score and weight applications according to criteria to be presented to the panel for deliberation
- Prepare agenda and record minutes for meetings
- Organise training and meetings for the panel (as needed)

Reporting requirements

Council Officers will report the number of applications received and granting decisions by the Panel, to the next possible Ordinary Meeting.

Structure

The assessment process will comprise of three stages:

- Preliminary assessment by the Grants Officer
- Panel deliberation meeting (Face-to-face / online via video conference)
- Panel recommendations to Council for decision

Panel Meetings

- 1) Assessment meeting will be held at least once a year, for approximately 2 hours (depending on the amount of rounds and applications received);
- 2) A quorum shall consist at least three (3) panel members;
- 3) A schedule of dates will be developed and agreed by the Panel annually. Under special circumstances, a meeting may be cancelled or rescheduled;
- 4) Each panel member is entitled to one vote. The Panel shall follow the general consensus principle when determining recommendations to Council; and
- 5) Each meeting will have an agenda and minutes will be recorded. Meetings will record attendees, apologies and actions

Support to Panel Members

Council will provide administrative support to the Panel throughout the duration of the assessment process.

The Community Grants Officer can provide support and background information on applications as requested by Panel members.

During the Panel deliberations, Council Officers will provide support in facilitating discussion and note taking.

The panel will be chaired by a Council Officer who is not a panel member.

Conflict of Interest

Panel members must comply with the conflict of interest provisions in Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1989, until the new provisions of the Local Government Act 2020, Sections 127 and 128, come into operation from 24 October 2020.

Panel members are required to declare all conflict of interests for each application, if appropriate, leave the meeting whilst the matter is discussed and or not participate in the decision making of a grant application.

Community member representatives

Any other Panel member who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at the Panel meeting, must

- disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered; and
- absent themselves from any discussion of the matter.

This will also be recorded in the minutes of the Panel Meeting.

Council officer representatives

A Council officer who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered during the assessment process and/or Panel meeting, must

- disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered;
- absent themselves from any discussion of the matter; and

- as soon as practicable prior to the meeting concludes provide to the Chief Executive Officer a written notice recording that the disclosure was made and accurately summarising the explanation given to those present at the meeting.

This will also be recorded in the minutes of the Panel Meeting.

Confidential information

Panel members must not release information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed in May 2026 or as required.

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.