Community Grants Impact Report

2024-2025

Greater Dandenong



Acknowledgement

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges and pays respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters now named the City of Greater Dandenong.

We value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Greater Dandenong. Council pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions, and culture in our community.

Greater Dandenong City Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the land and waters where Greater Dandenong is situated.

Greater Dandenong is committed to:

- Respectfully engaging and being led by the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, via consultation and partnership
- Respecting Aboriginal sites, objects, places, and traditions
- Walking together in reconciliation and assisting with the education of the broader community about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture of the municipality and region



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Overview

Community Grants Programs are designed to support partnerships between the Council and the community by enabling locally led projects that address community needs, align with Council priorities, and build strong, resilient communities through collaboration, innovation, and long-term community benefit.

The Greater Dandenong City Council Community Grants Program provides funding to community groups, not-for-profit organisations, and individuals to deliver initiatives that benefit the local community and is tailored to address community outcomes in our Council Plan. Below is an overview of our programs in 2024-2025:

PROGRAM	STREAM	AMOUNTS Per annum
SMALL GRANTS Open all year round or until allocation is expended.	**Individual Achievement Grant**	Up to $500
	Community Group Activities Grants	Up to $1,500
	Entry Level Grants	Up to $1000
	Responsive Project Grants	Up to $1,500
MEDIUM GRANTS Open twice a year.	**Community Development**	Up to $10,000
	Climate Change	Up to $5,000
	Arts, Festivals and Events	Up to $10,000
	Individual Artists	Up to $5,000
LARGE GRANTS Open once every two years. (Next open 2027)	**Partnership Grants**	Up to $50,000
	Strategic Grants	Up to $80,000
	Sponsorships	Up to $40,000

Snapshot

Community Grants Program Snapshot - 2024-2025 Financial Year

$1.66 Million

Amount invested by Council through Large, Medium and Small Grants.

$2.19 Million

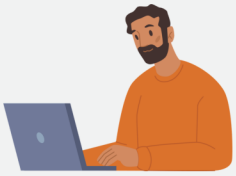
Amount invested across the Community Grants Portfolio including contracts.

Application Data

354
Total Number of Applications

54.2%
Grants Program Successful Application Rate

192
Number of Successful Applications

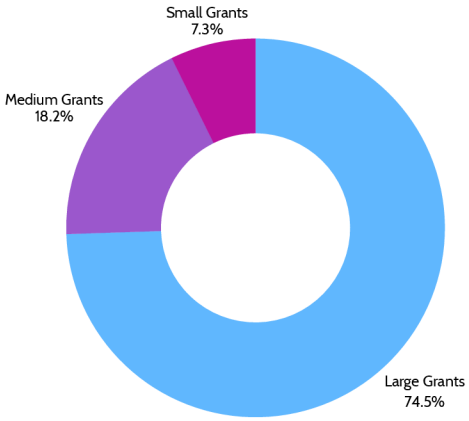


34%
New Applicants



11
Community panellists newly recruited (15 Community panelists' seats across 5 Panels)

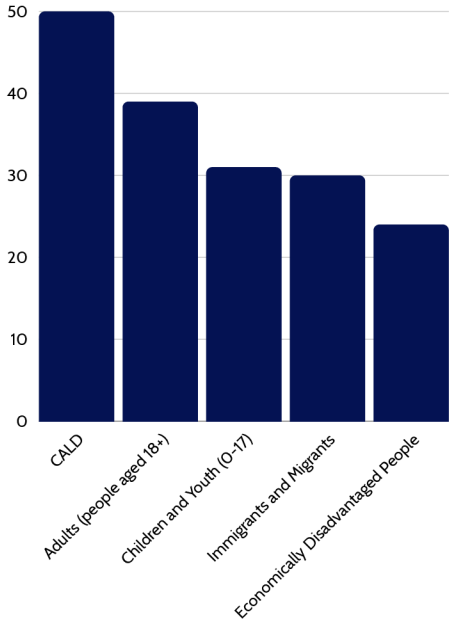
Graph shows percentage breakdown of allocated funds:



Top 5 Beneficiaries

Based on 88 responses

Note: CALD stands for Culturally and Liguistically Diverse People.



Community Development Projects

Note: Metrics reported for Medium and Large Grants Programs (Small Grants breakdown is not available).



42,231
Reported number of participants

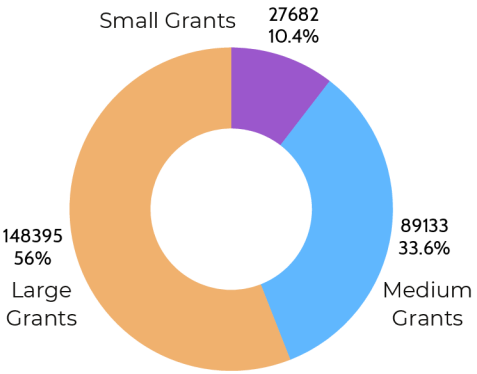
31,083
Total Number of participants from Greater Dandenong.

73,635
Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours

185
Number of Paid Staff Involved

802
Project Volunteers

Participants Per Program



Snapshot

Arts, Festivals and Events Projects

Most participants captured in the snapshot were engaged through arts, festivals, and events initiatives. These programs are designed to deliver economic benefits by attracting visitors and business activity from outside the Greater Dandenong City Council, while also contributing to social and environmental outcomes. They enhance the City's profile, provide clear economic value, and take place within the municipality while remaining open and accessible to the entire community.

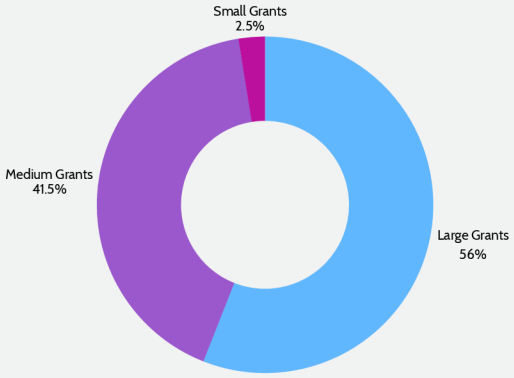
$383,416

Amount invested by Council into Arts, Festivals and Events Projects



195,297

Reported number of participants / project beneficiaries



The graph shows the percentage of the reported number of participants/project beneficiaries for arts, festivals and events projects funded through each program.

Measures for Arts, Festivals and Events Projects

Note: Metrics reported for all Arts, Festivals and Events Grants under Medium and Large Grants programs (includes individual artist grants data).

Total Number of Participants from CGD
116,868

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
18,743

Number of Paid Staff Involved
126

Project Volunteers
2257



The below metrics were pulled from individual artist grants only.

Total Number of Participants from CGD
37,605

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
50

Number of Paid Staff Involved
7

Project Volunteers
6



74,605

Reported number of participants/ project beneficiaries

Note: Reported numbers for individual artist grants has been separated as it includes number of people who have engaged with their works (project examples include street murals, etc.).

Outcomes Framework

In measuring the impact of funded community projects, Council has an Outcomes Framework to measure progress towards our Council Plan initiatives.

Council Vision for 2040

Greater Dandenong City Council is a home to all. It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity! We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual. Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative, and creative. Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability. Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.

Outcome Domains / Council Principles

In 2024-2025, the Outcome Domains for our Large Grants Program have changed to directly align with the new Council Plan Principles to ease alignment with Council Plan initiatives and priorities.

- Safe and peaceful community
- Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities
- Sustainable environment
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism
- Mind, Body and Spirit
- Art and Culture

Across these domains, there are 47 Outcomes. These were simplified from Council Strategic Objectives that applied to the Community Grants Program.

Measures

The measures against each outcome have been developed considering metrics across Government Agencies, SmartyGrants, and in discussion with fundees to reflect measures that indicate change against each outcome that are also feasible with funded program delivery.

- Output Measures (Activity Impact)
- Outcomes Measures (Participant Impact)

Impact

Council reviews acquittal reports that evaluate individual project impact in alignment with Grants Principles outlined in our Community Grants Program Policy.

- Project Impact
- Impact against Council Outcomes
- Grants Program Improvement
- Advocacy and Trends

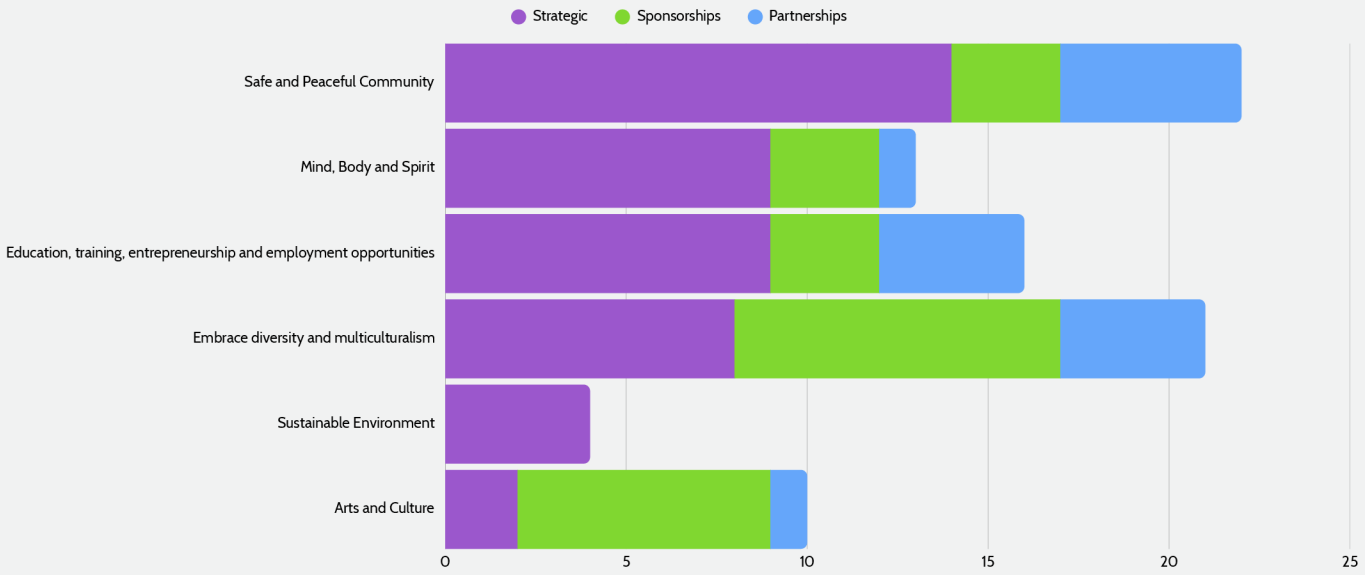
Domains

In 2023, an Outcomes Framework was developed to assess the impact of the Strategic Grants program against Council Plan outcomes. The framework has since continued to evolve, reflecting updated community priorities identified through the Council Plan and being progressively applied across other programs within the Community Funding Portfolio.

Image 1 shows the number of applications that address Outcomes under each Domain, which are based on Council Plan Principles. This image also includes a breakdown of the number of projects in each Large Grants Category that were delivering outcomes under each domain.

Note: Numbers have been pulled from the submitted reports of the Large Grants program only, which was the pilot for the outcomes framework and funded 35 projects. Each project addresses between one to five different Council outcomes under each Domain.

Image 1: Number of Large Grants Projects Addressing Council Domain Areas





Outcomes

Under each Council Plan Domain, key outcomes measured across all funded community projects are highlighted. An example project is included in each Domain to demonstrate how these outcomes were achieved.

Sustainable Environment



Case Study: Our Village (formerly St Kilda Mums Inc) - Providing Essentials for Vulnerable Babies and Children

This project supports families in Greater Dandenong by redistributing essential items such as prams, car seats, cots, and clothing through social workers and Maternal and Child Health nurses. In its first year, the program supported around 2,200 babies and children (a 15% increase on the previous year), diverted over 12 tonnes of goods from landfill, and mobilised 110 volunteers contributing nearly 2,000 hours, delivering strong social, wellbeing, and environmental benefits for vulnerable families.



400

Participants reported an increase in awareness of the impact of climate change.



26.5 Tonnes

Total waste diverted from landfill and repurposed through funded projects.

Arts and Culture



198

Participants reported an increase in creative and cultural learning and expression.



Art Access Victoria - Makers Space, Dandenong

The Maker Space, Dandenong project by Arts Access Victoria delivers inclusive creative workshops for young people aged 18–25 who are living with a disability, supporting creative expression and social connection in an accessible environment. In its first year, 64 participants from Greater Dandenong took part in artist-led workshops at Walker Street Gallery, with early evidence showing increased confidence, creative exploration, and comfort using public cultural spaces, setting strong foundations for deeper engagement and a public exhibition in year two.

Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities



369
Participants reported employment outcomes.

922
Participants reported increased resilience and capability in the workforce.



1040
Participants reported an increase in skill development.



Case Study: Dandenong North Neighbourhood House - Building Community Resilience in North Dandenong

This project was funded through the Strategic Projects Grant (2024–2026) to reduce barriers to financial security, education, employment, and social inclusion. In its first year, the project delivered a wide range of activities including food relief and community lunches, financial counselling and "Bring Your Bills" days, English language and employment skills training, and social connection programs, reaching over 1,600 participants and showing strong positive outcomes in wellbeing, belonging, learning engagement, and employment pathways.

Mind, Body and Spirit



10,875
Participants reported increased food security.



1176
Participants reported improved mental health.

2050
Participants reported increased social connection.





Case Study: Afri-Aus Care Inc - The UBUNTU Women's Project

This project supports African and CALD women from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds by providing a culturally safe, women-only space that combines peer support with access to counselling, health services, and community programs. The project has had a strong positive impact on mental wellbeing, with participants reporting improved mental health, reduced social isolation, and increased confidence through regular connection and culturally responsive support. Qualitative evidence highlights reduced social isolation (91% of surveyed participants), increased confidence and self-esteem (82%), and the value of culturally safe, women-only spaces and culturally responsive counselling in supporting emotional healing and resilience.

Embrace diversity and multiculturalism



1798

Participants reported increased pride in cultural diversity.



716

Participants reported increased feelings of respect and inclusiveness.



9128

Reported increased feelings of social cohesion.



Case Study: Springvale Neighbourhood House - Springvale Harmony Festival

This event is a large-scale multicultural celebration that transforms the Springvale Community Hub precinct into an inclusive cultural space through performances, workshops, food stalls, and the parade of many cultures. The 2025 festival attracted around 3,400 attendees and demonstrated strong social impact, with participant feedback showing that approximately 97% of surveyed respondents felt they made new community connections, 97% felt more respected and included, and nearly 89% felt more connected to their community. These outcomes highlight the festival's effectiveness in strengthening social connection, cultural pride, and inclusion across Greater Dandenong's diverse communities.

Safe and Peaceful Community



1285

Participants reported improved participation in the community.

380

Participants reported a reduction in family violence.



490

Participants reported an increase in feelings of safety.

Springvale Monash Legal Service - Mothers Legal Help (MLH)

The Mothers Legal Help (MLH) project, delivered by South-East Monash Legal Service, provides trauma-informed, integrated legal assistance to mothers experiencing family violence by embedding specialist lawyers within Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services across Greater Dandenong. The program supports women with family violence, family law, and migration issues while also offering legal education and referrals through a holistic service model.

The project has had a strong positive impact, supporting 115 mothers, the majority of whom are Greater Dandenong residents. Among those surveyed, over 80% reported a better understanding of their legal rights and how to seek legal help, around three-quarters felt more empowered to participate in their community, and many reported increased safety and confidence in navigating complex legal systems. The integration of migration advice has been described as life-saving for women on temporary visas, helping reduce fear, improve stability, and support safer long-term outcomes for families.

Small Grants Program

The Small Grants Program provides accessible funding to support individuals and community groups to deliver initiatives that benefit the local community. The program aims to encourage participation, build local capacity, recognise achievement, and respond to emerging community needs through flexible, short-term funding opportunities.

The Small Grants Program includes four funding categories designed to support a range of community needs and capacities. Individual Achievement Grants assist individuals in pursuing representation opportunities, while Community Group Activity Grants support not-for-profit organisations and community groups in delivering local activities or events that bring people together. Entry Level Grants provide small amounts of funding for new or emerging groups, or first-time applicants, helping them build experience and test ideas. Responsive Project Grants offer flexible funding for projects that address emerging priorities, unexpected opportunities, or identified community needs, enabling timely community benefit.

Program Statistics

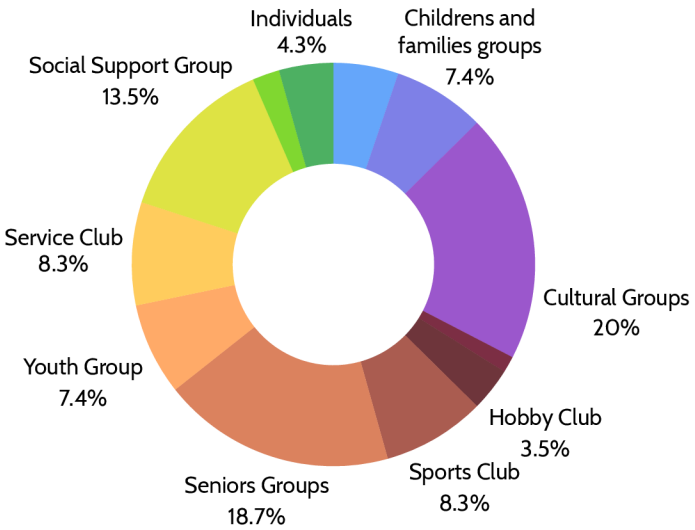
Total Funding Provided by Council
$121,366

Number of Successful Applications
105

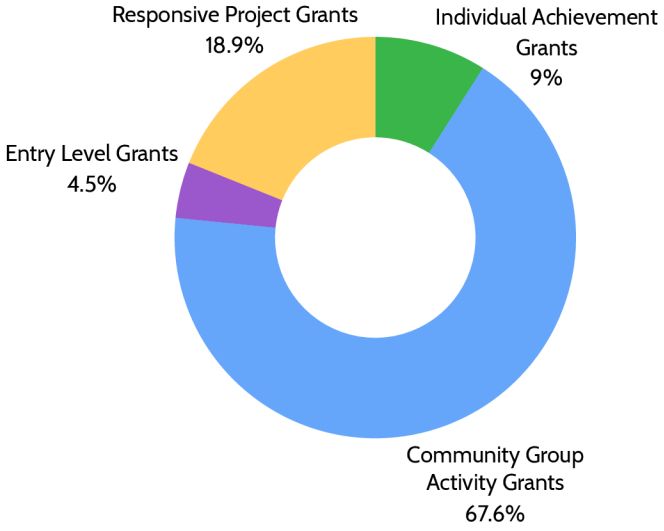
Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries
27,682

Applicant Success Rate
67%

Types of Applicants



Percentage of Category Approved Applications



Program Case Studies

Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc

The Fijian Community Association of Victoria Inc received a Small Grant to support the delivery of the Fiji Independence Day celebration that was held on 19 October 2024 at Dandenong Park, attracting around 800 attendees. The event featured speeches and vibrant cultural performances from Fiji, Cook Islands, China, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Afghanistan. Food and craft stalls, plus roving performers, created a lively atmosphere that delighted families and vendors.









Dodgeball Athlete representing Australia in World's Dodgeball Championships in Austria

A Small Grant helped a local resident to compete in the World Dodgeball Championship held in Graz, Austria, in August 2024, where the athlete represented Australia and competed against some of the world's best teams. The team achieved an impressive 3rd place in the Foam Mixed category, strengthening Australia's presence internationally and building global connections.

Dandenong and District Orchid Club Inc.

The Annual Orchid Show, held at the Paddy O'Donoghue Centre from 26–28 September, was a remarkable success with 350 community members attending. The new committee and members created stunning displays that impressed judges and visitors, earning praise as the best show yet. Members provided expert orchid care and cultural advice throughout the event, answering questions and sharing tips. Grants played a vital role in covering expenses such as venue hire for shows and meetings, enabling the club to continue offering demonstrations and guidance. Visitors expressed excitement to return next year, and the club looks forward to what 2026 will bring.



Medium Grants Program

The Medium Grants Program offers not-for-profit community groups, organisations, and individual artists the opportunity to apply for one-off grants to support the delivery of projects, programs, and events that benefit the Greater Dandenong community.

The Medium Grants Program includes four streams that support community benefit in different ways: Community Development funds projects that build inclusion, well-being, and community capacity; Climate Change Action supports local initiatives that address climate impacts and promote sustainability; Arts, Festivals, and Events fund creative activities that strengthen connection and celebrate diversity; and Individual Artist grants support artists in delivering community-based projects with strong artistic and engagement outcomes.

Program Statistics

Total Funding Provided by Council

$302,928

Total Number of Successful Applications

52

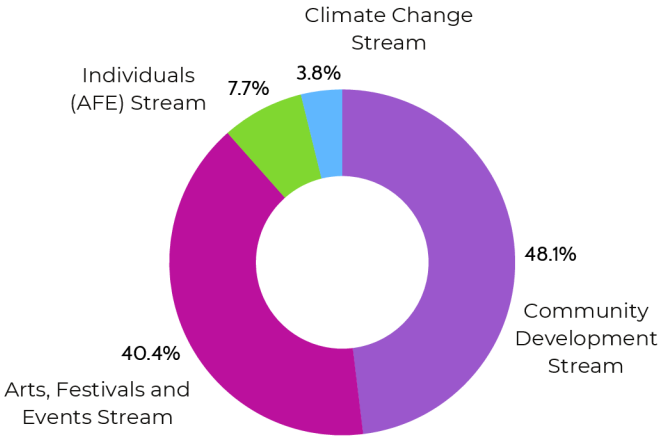
New Applicants to the Program

43%

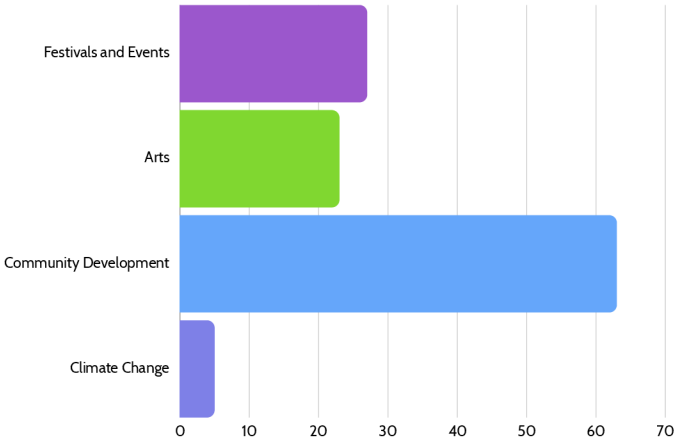
Applicant Success Rate

43%

Percentage of Category Approved Applications



Number of Projects Addressing Program Outcomes



Funded Project Metrics

Projects funded under Medium Grants are required to report on the following:

Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries

89,133

Number of Volunteers from CGD

1193

Total Number of Participants from CGD

57,265

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours

12K

Number of Volunteers involved in the Project

1532

Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects

173

Program Case Studies

Rite Mentoring Inc - Group Mentoring Program for Young Men

This project was funded under the Medium Grants Program to support youth wellbeing, learning engagement, and community cohesion through a partnership between public secondary schools in Greater Dandenong and Rite, delivering weekly in-school group mentoring programs across three locations. Using workshops, sports, reflection, and group activities, the program builds trust, leadership, and social skills while reducing stigma around help-seeking for vulnerable young people. In 2025, three culturally diverse boys' programs achieved strong outcomes, with participants reporting increased confidence, stronger peer relationships, and a sense of belonging, while delivery insights are shaping more flexible and impactful future programs.



Greater Dandenong Environment Group Inc - Verges for Nature Project

The Verges for Nature project united the Greater Dandenong community to create native verge gardens that improve neighbourhood appearance, build social connections, and support biodiversity. Volunteers found the work rewarding and cost-effective, enabling plans to expand from five to seven verges next year with a $5,000 grant. Inclusive participation, flexible work times, and strong community outreach helped spread interest in native verge gardening across Greater Dandenong.



Australian Society of Graduate Tamils Inc - Tamil Youth Cultural Night

The Tamil Youth Cultural Night brought together 700 young people aged 4 to 25, along with their families, from diverse backgrounds including Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, and Singapore. The event celebrated Tamil heritage through cultural performances, authentic cuisine, and activities for all age groups, while fostering social cohesion and inclusivity. It provided a platform for youth to showcase talents, build confidence, and strengthen interpersonal bonds, promoting values of multiculturalism and community harmony. The night was a powerful display of unity, inspiring pride in Tamil identity and encouraging cross-cultural understanding.



Greater Dandenong Football Club - Soccer for All

The Soccer for All project increased participation of newly arrived Afghan young people, particularly girls and women, in soccer through pathways into State League teams and weekly social sessions. The program successfully engaged families, led to the formation of a girls-only under-9 team in 2025, and supported many first-time players to join Miniroos. The project strengthened community connection, inclusion, and gender equity through culturally sensitive delivery and local home games.



Large Grants Program

The Large Grants Program provides up to two years of funding to not-for-profit organisations delivering initiatives that create lasting community benefit in Greater Dandenong. It supports projects that build community capacity, reduce disadvantage, encourage participation, and align with Council priorities.

Funding is available through three categories: Partnership Grants, which support the ongoing operations of established organisations delivering essential services; Strategic Project Grants, which fund time-limited projects aligned with Council objectives and wellbeing outcomes; and Festivals and Events Sponsorship Grants, which support large-scale, inclusive events that deliver social, environmental, and local economic benefits.

Program Statistics

Total Funding Provided by Council
$1.24 Million

Total Number of Successful Applications
35

New Applicants to the Program
26%

Applicant Success Rate
54%

Funded Project Metrics

Projects funded under Large Grants are required to report on the following:

Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries
148,395

Number of Volunteers from CGD
757

Total Number of Participants from CGD
90,686

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
77,285

Number of Volunteers involved in the Project
1527

Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects
138

Sisterworks - Journey to Employment: Dandenong's Migrant and Refugee Women Initiative

Project Summary

The Journey to Employment initiative delivered SisterWorks' Employment Pathways Program to support migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeker women in Greater Dandenong to overcome barriers to work through culturally safe training, job-ready skills, and employment support. During the reporting period, 189 women graduated, and 88 secured employment, with most reporting increased confidence, skills, and work readiness. The program exceeded expectations, with strong participant satisfaction, improved English and workplace readiness, and a positive influence on more inclusive recruitment practices among employer partners.

Project Outcomes

- Increase skill development
- Increase employment pathways
- Increase Employment

Image: Two Sisters (who were program participants) were placed at the Holiday Inn Dandenong



Project Case Study

Shakila arrived in Australia from Afghanistan in 2017 and faced barriers to employment due to limited English, lack of experience, and low confidence, which were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. After joining SisterWorks' Warehousing Program in 2024, she built skills and confidence and is now employed at API, with a permanent role offered. Her story highlights the positive impact of targeted employment support for migrant women.

Cambodian Association of Victoria Inc - Promoting integration and resilience of the Cambodian Community in Victoria

Project Outcomes

- Increase access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate services.
- Increase resilience of the Greater Dandenong Community
- Increase engagement in learning
- Increase knowledge and appreciation of our First Nations culture and history



The Promoting Integration and Resilience of the Cambodian Community in Victoria project, delivered by the Cambodian Association of Victoria, provides culturally appropriate support to Cambodian migrants and seniors in Greater Dandenong. Services include assistance with documents, referrals, translation, access to health and government systems, and community education in Khmer. During the reporting period, over 1,600 people were supported, exceeding targets and demonstrating strong demand. The project has reduced language barriers and social isolation, responded effectively to crisis needs, and aligns strongly with Council priorities for multicultural inclusion and equitable access to services.

Sponsorships Metrics 2022-2024 (Major Festivals and Events)

31
Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
11,316

Total Number of Participants from CGD
65,243

112,160
Total Number of participants/beneficiaries



Number of Council-owned venues or parks utilised as part of event
20



990
Number of reported stallholders that participated in funded events



3,937
Number of CGD residents that took part in the events as artists

Springvale Asian Business Association - 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival

The funded project supported the successful delivery of the 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival, held on 26 January in Greater Dandenong, celebrating the Year of the Snake and bringing the community together. The event attracted around 70,000 attendees and delivered strong social, cultural, and economic benefits for local residents and businesses.



Event Case Study

A local food stallholder participated in the 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival, joining more than 60 traders at the one-day event in Springvale. With an estimated 70,000 attendees throughout the day, the stallholder experienced strong customer demand and reported a profitable trading outcome. The stallholder noted that the festival not only generated immediate income but also helped raise the business's profile within the community. This experience reflects the broader economic and community impact of the festival.



Community Feedback

Council provides opportunities for our Community to provide feedback on our program through a number of ways, including our online forms, training programs, and our annual Community Grants program Improvement Survey.



Strengths

- Grants perceived as accessible (4.33/5) and aligned with Council objectives (4.18/5).
- Strong sense of partnership (4.24/5) and contribution to community outcomes (4.19/5).
- Clear guidelines and acknowledgment processes rated highly.



Areas for Improvement

- Transparency of funding decisions and reporting (3.67/5).
- Timeliness of decisions and communications (3.69/5).
- Feedback on unsuccessful applications (3.22/5).
- Simplification of the application process and enhanced support during the application.



Opportunities

- Expand training in grant writing, fundraising, marketing, and volunteer management.
- Improve communication and feedback loops for unsuccessful applicants.
- Enhance transparency through public reporting of funded outcomes.

The Community Funding Team plays a key role in the administration of grants and community development. This includes identifying opportunities for improvement and training, which the team plans to expand. The Council also supports learning and improvement by offering unsuccessful applicants clear feedback against the assessment criteria, along with guidance on funding approaches and areas to strengthen future applications.

While funding outcomes are reported in the Council's Annual Report, the team plans to provide annual updates on the overall impact of the Community Funding Program and highlight new opportunities for community engagement.

To stay up to date with Community Funding and development opportunities, subscribe to the Community Funding Newsletter and visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/grants. For inquiries, contact the Community Funding Team at commgrants@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone 8571 1432. Together, we can continue working towards the Council's vision for Greater Dandenong as a home to all.



Street Mural on the corner Thomas Street and Halpin Way, Dandenong by artist Marta Oktaba was funded under the Medium Grants Program 2024-2025.

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