

Business and Trader Group Led Recovery Grant

Background

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact and continues to have an impact on the Yarra Ranges economy on a scale not experienced before. The commercial, financial, and mental health effects will be felt well into the future.

Businesses have experienced unprecedented changes to trading conditions due to social lockdown policies, modifications to ways of operating, snap lockdowns, and major weather events. Unfortunately, this has resulted in numerous businesses having to close operations increasing commercial/retail vacancy rates in Yarra Ranges townships and Mainstreets.

Key Purpose

The key purpose of the funding is to assist Business & Trader Groups (B&TGs) with economic and social recovery following the Pandemic and Storm events over the past 2 years, with the objective of encouraging and reviving local businesses, organisations, and industries to operate and trade in line with broader new economic trends, whilst improving robustness to future shocks.

Program Objectives

YRC would like to promote a business community led and inclusive process, which encourages B&TGs to develop and deliver funded initiatives that helps adaption of local businesses to the new normal, supports long term resilience building, and delivers sustainable economic prosperity.

The objectives of the program are as follows:

- Supports the creation of new as well as capacity building of existing B&TGs, to deliver economic outcomes for the business zone, town or region
- Increased participation of local businesses in B&TGs, leading to strengthened collaboration and economic stimulus activity
- Promotes and fosters locally led B&TG initiatives and events encouraging economic participation
- Promotes and fosters the commercial, retail, tourism and placemaking interests of the business zone ,town or region and their community
- Improved access by businesses to information and programs that support business growth, sustainability and good governance
- Supports activation/regeneration for Yarra Ranges business zone, town or region
- Informs Council placemaking and infrastructure initiatives

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Business and Trader Groups (B&TGs) are eligible for funding if they:

- Are based in Yarra Ranges
- Are a not for profit, membership-based organisation (with a membership of businesses and traders) that services a specific geographic area (e.g., business zone, suburb/town, or region)
- Are an organisation founded by and led by business owners and operators who represent the broad collective interests of the business community
- Have the core purpose of acting for its members and promoting commerce in a specific geographic area within Yarra Ranges Local Government Area
- Are incorporated, hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN), or be auspiced by an incorporated community organisation that holds an ABN and can show letter of support
- Do not already have an established partnership agreement with Council for the delivery of economic and tourism outcomes.
- B&TGs that have other existing YRC grant funding may apply but will need to be for a totally separate project, not linked or related to other already funded projects.
- Have support for their proposed project from the majority of the B&TG membership, or in the case of an informal auspiced group, by the majority of the traders in that geographical area.
- Have suitable public liability insurance coverage for the duration of the project. If the B&TG does not have public liability insurance at the time of application, a funding condition will be added that they or their auspisor must provide evidence of insurance cover before the grant is paid
- Follow child safety practices guided by [CCYP - The seven Standards and the Child Safe Principles](#) (for applications proposing to hold public events)

Eligible Project categories for funding include:

- Upgrading B&TGs' digital channels to better support members
- Supporting and encouraging local business collaboration activities which help members to adapt their businesses to the new COVID operating environment
- Events (business related) e.g., local expos, network events, keynote speakers
- Business zone, town or region promotion via social media marketing and "Buy Local" Campaigns
- Township activation/regeneration inc. festivals, markets, promotional events
- Small infrastructure projects to enhance the local shopping strip e.g. signage
- Local marketing and materials for shop local campaigns
- Upskilling members (e.g., business coach)
- Other projects that are aligned with the program objectives

What projects are ineligible for funding?

Applications will be ineligible if funding is intended for:

- A program that is the responsibility of State or Federal Governments
- Activities that take place outside Yarra Ranges
- New building, capital works or facility maintenance works
- Ongoing staff salaries or administration cost
- Retrospective funding of projects. Applicants need to submit their application before the event or activity occurs. Please note that the activity or event must not take place prior to grant round closing or the assessment timeline
- Subsidising ongoing or regular use of Council's halls or facilities

Funding availability

- Funding of up to \$15k per B&TG per round
- Subject to above, funding could be applied to more than one project category under the initiative, and YRC reserves the right to determine the allocation of the grant value
- Funding for projects that are for the sole purpose of purchasing Equipment and Materials will be capped at \$5000.
- The value of the grant to an eligible B&TG will be determined as part of the assessment process

How to Apply

Grants will be allocated via a single-stage grant process:

B&TGs are invited to lodge an application on [YRC Website](#) before or on 13 June 2022

Where more than one project category is presented for funding, a separate application has to be completed for each project but limited in total value to the maximum limit per B&TG.

The funding program will be managed using the SmartyGrants Platform which means applicants will need to register to create a SmartyGrants account to enable them to save and return to their applications. Instructions for using SmartyGrants can also be found on the [website](#)

Applicants will be required to provide the following information in their application for funding:

- An ABN for your organisation, or if unincorporated the ABN of an auspicing organisation. Auspiced organisations must provide a letter of support from their auspicing organisation.
- A description of the project and or projects to be funded
- The background and history to the request for funding
- A description of why the project needs YRC financial support to proceed
- A time frame for the project
- A description of how the project supports the objectives of the program
- Evidence of majority B&TG members' support e.g., minutes/survey/letters/other
- Evidence of your capacity to deliver the project, including measurement of project outcomes

- Provide evidence that the core purpose of the project promotes commerce in a specific geographic area within Yarra Ranges Local Government Area

All questions in the application need to be completed to ensure timely assessment and grant payment. Incomplete applications will be contacted for clarity and additional information, however as this may cause considerable delay please ensure applications are completed fully prior to submitting. You may contact us via business@yarraranges.vic.gov.au with any further enquiries

Assessment Process

An assessment panel will assess all applications including Business and Marketing Plans against the following assessment criteria:

- a) How well the project supports the objectives of the program
- b) How well the project supports the applicant's members through economic recovery and adaptation.
- c) How well the project supports long-term resilience building to prepare businesses for future shocks.
- d) The capacity or capability of the applicant to successfully implement the project.
- e) Why the project needs YRC support to proceed.

The recommended grant amount will be determined by the Assessment Panel and may take into consideration factors such as membership size, the strategic importance of the organisation to the local economy, the scale and complexity of the proposal, the financial capacity and delivery capability and the services already provided by the organisation to member businesses.

Conditions of Funding

1. Applicants must enter into a grant agreement with the YRC (which may be in the form of online terms and conditions which must be agreed by the applicant). The grant agreement outlines the commitments and obligations under the grant, as well as the general funding terms and conditions.
2. Grant funds will be released when the grant agreement has been entered into.
3. Successful applicants will be required to report on the outcomes of their project and contribute information and data about the funded project to the YRC for the evaluation of the program. For example, in the case of events there would be additional requirements to provide a breakdown of timeframe, participants, demographics of attendees, method of counting (estimate/actual), etc.
4. Successful applicants will be required to deliver the project and report on the outcomes in full by 30 June 2023
5. Applicants will be subject to audit by the YRC or its representatives and will be required to produce supporting evidence at the request of the YRC for a period of four years after the grant has been provided.

6. If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes of the program in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines, application and the grant agreement, the grant will be repayable on demand.
7. Applicants must commit to obtaining all necessary permits related to the funded activity, particularly for events and installations.

Acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge YRC support of the project through, for instance, activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material as outlined in their grant agreement.

Privacy and Information Management

Yarra Ranges Council (Council) is committed to protecting your privacy. In compliance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* Council will use the Personal Information (name, address, phone number, email) collected in this form for the primary purpose of processing your grant application. Information is held securely and used solely by Council for this specific purpose and/or a limited directly related purpose and will not be otherwise disclosed without your consent or as required or permitted by law. Your personal information is only accessed by authorised persons and may be stored in Yarra Ranges Council records management database, used for statistical research, information provision, promotion, or evaluation of Council's grant programs. If your application is incomplete, Council will not be able to process your grant application.

By submitting an application you consent to Yarra Ranges Council publishing the Group/Individual name, project description and amount funded on Council's public website.

You may access your privacy information by contacting the Grants Team on 1300 368 333 or grants@yarraranges.vic.gov.au. For more information, see Council's [Privacy Policy](#).

Other information about this Program

Council reserves the right to amend these guidelines and the application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.