

7.2.2 2023/24 MONASH QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS - DECEMBER

Responsible Manager:	Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening
Responsible Director:	Russell Hopkins, Director Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the successful applications that have been funded through the Quick Response Grant program during the period 26 October to 12 December 2023 to a total of \$7,419.44.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of successful applications to the Quick Response Grant program (QRG).

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Inclusive Services

Community development and advocacy to support the Monash community.

Deliver high performing services.

Fostering an equitable, just and inclusive Monash.

Good Governance

Ensure a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable organisation.

BACKGROUND

Monash Council has one of the largest community grant programs in Victoria and is proud of its commitment in supporting and valuing the dedicated community groups and organisations within our municipality.

At its meeting in June 2020 Council endorsed the establishment of a Quick Response Grant program (QRG). The basis for this grant program was to enable the Monash community and Council to remain adaptive and agile in response to COVID and ensure that groups could continue to meet and bring the community together. This program was proven to be extremely successful.

Council, at its meeting in May 2021, endorsed the QRG as a permanent open grant program, utilising the allocated funds each year.

The continuation of the Quick Response Grant Program has enabled Council to continue to support the local community groups and artists to remain agile and innovative.

As per the Guidelines that were endorsed at Council on 30 May 2023 the process is as follows:

- Applications will be submitted via SmartyGrants from 1 June 2023 until 10 May 2024, or until the allocation has been exhausted.
- Applications will be assessed by an internal Council Officer Panel.
- Applicants will receive a response from Council within six weeks of the application being received.
- After receiving notification of a successful application, applicants must commence the project within four weeks and complete by 30 June 2024.
- All successful applications will be formally acknowledged at the next applicable Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

The QRG provides an opportunity for groups or individual artists whose idea, program, or issue falls outside of the normal grant round and previously had no opportunity to apply for funding through Council. By providing this source of funding it ensures that Council is continuing to remain adaptive and agile to community needs. Community groups and artists can apply for up to \$5,000 in cash and/or in-kind hall hire, with the total budget allocation of \$115,042.

It is important to note that Quick Response Grants were developed for the community to provide innovative projects and are not to be a duplicate of an existing program, whether funded through MCGP or other avenues.

The QRG have been promoted through multiple Monash platforms, including:

- Monash Bulletin
- Monash social media – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- As part of a mail out to current grant recipients

The grants opened on 1 June 2023 and will remain open until 10 May 2024 or until the allocations are exhausted.

Four grants have been awarded for the period of 26 October to 12 December 2023.

The assessment criteria consists of the following:

1. Addresses an evidence-based community need or opportunity
2. Relevance to Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
3. The number of Monash residents that will benefit
4. The capacity of the organisation/community/individual to undertake the project
5. Budget expenditure

An evaluation matrix was developed, taking into consideration the guidelines, to ensure the applications were considered and assessed in an equitable and transparent way. The matrix provides the assessment process with rigour and consistency.

A total of **\$7,419.44** has been awarded to four successful applications, outlined in the table below. The amount awarded was determined by the project, amount and specific items requested in the application budget.

Applicant	Project Title	Amount Awarded
Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia	Makara Sankranthi 2024	\$498.80
Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble	Concordia Mandolin & Guitar Ensemble concert performance	\$370.64
African Women's and Families Network (AWAFN)	Young Carers Support project	\$2,350.00
Friends of the Children Foundation	Community Awakening Day	\$4,200.00
TOTAL		\$7,419.44

Details of the projects as provided by the applicants are as follows:

Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia (2324QRG056) - \$498.80

The Indian/Hindu festival of 'Makara Sankranti' is a global one and is considered as one of the important festivals of India. Unlike other festivals, this is a social festival to appreciate the creativity of women/youth and build bonds with rest of the community. We plan to celebrate of Makara Sankranti festival in January 2024, with an art & craft exhibition and workshop. This festival traditionally celebrates the bond between mother earth and humans. In today's multi-cultural society this traditional concept is used to create bonds with much wider community to build good relationships. The same concept is also used to demonstrate the relationship between nature and society and to care for our fragile environment.

This festival is celebrated for cultural understanding, diversity, multiculturalism and to strengthen bond among communities. This event will have participants from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds and attendees will be encouraged to participate in:

1. A cultural showcase with performances of classical, folk dances, vocal & instrumental music, chanting, and choir singing of community's rich cultural heritage.
2. A display of hand-crafted items of heritage value to view in a relaxed setting.
3. An art workshop on Indian traditional line drawings
4. A children story telling session and drawing activity around the significance of the festival, especially in terms of environment protection as per ancient texts.

Concordia Mandolin & Guitar Ensemble (2324QRG062) – \$370.64

An afternoon concert recital in the Clayton Community Centre Theatre.

The Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble is a chamber orchestra of dedicated plucked string musicians. The ensemble comprises first mandolins, second mandolins, mandola, mandocello, guitars and double bass.

The group plays classical and modern classical music and boasts a resident composer whose music is often included in our programs.

Concordia has recorded six albums and receives regular air play on ABC Classic and the MBS Classic networks.

Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble is a Registered Not for Profit Organisation which has been operating for 45 years. Our aim is to promote the mandolin with a view to encouraging new members, particularly younger members but not limited to any age demographic. Our training orchestra provides coaching and direct entry into the orchestra for the opportunity to play in an already established group. We run regular come-and-try evenings for both beginners and more experienced players

African Women's & Families Network (2324QRG063) – \$2,350.00

The African Young Carers Support Project will enable AWFN to use our access to carers from our small state funded carers project to focus on providing support and respite for disadvantaged African-Australian young people who are principal carers for family members. We do not want to dissuade them from their caring role but as carers they are often missing out on school, unable to find employment or are losing jobs or lack social connection opportunities. Our project will provide opportunities for isolated young carers to experience positive social interaction, increase their community engagement, return to school or begin employment.

Friends of the Children Foundation (2324QRG067) – \$4,200.00

"Community Awakening Day" of the "Friends of the Children Foundation" has a very clear objective and purpose in celebrating and promoting this event. FOTCF was created 25 years ago by a group of like-minded individuals to give something back to the community here on this land, as the appreciation and gratitude for giving them successful life, plenty of respect, abundance of love, best lifestyle and along with all the dreams coming true in this adopted land.

We had a very clear objective to do something for Children - Our Future, The Environment and "to bring everyone together and spread the message of Unity, Humanity, Togetherness and the feeling and sense of Belonging to this Land and Planet and help create a better tomorrow for our coming generations.

On this day we have worked on different themes like; 1. Together we can. 2. Unity is Strength. 3. We live in Lucky Country. 4. Environmental Care and responsibilities and 5. How to keep this Lucky Country Lucky?

This year after observing and seeing the changing situations and conditions on this Planet Earth on every measurable parameters, we have decided to pick the theme this 2024 "Community Awakening Day" as "What keeping us apart and how to work together".

As previous occasions and years all different community groups will come together and share their cultural strengths, dances, food and values to lay the road map of this initiative for future years for this never-ending journey. We will be again supported by "Oakleigh Brass Band".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Quick Response Grants program is funded from the existing 2023/24 Monash Community Grants Program budget.

The Quick Response Grant program has an allocation of \$115,042, of which \$7,419.44 has been allocated in this period with a remaining budget for the program of \$58,722.01.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Quick Response Grants program is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program Policy that has been implemented with the intention of supporting the Council Plan as well as Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan and other relevant strategic documents. The Program encourages community connectivity and participation, as well as focusing Council's support on community groups most in need. The MCGP Policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the changing needs of both Council and the community.

CONSULTATION

Community consultation was not required.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash community sector has a rich history of innovation and promoting community participation. The QRG program enables Council to be adaptive to the community's needs and for many community groups to respond effectively and innovatively for their members and local community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The 2023/24 Quick Response Grants Program is consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In particular, the program supports -

- freedom of expression;
- peaceful assembly and freedom of association;
- taking part in public life; and
- cultural rights

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The QRG is a subset of the Monash Community Grants Program (MCGP). As these programs are both focused on having a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a gender impact assessment (GIA) was undertaken in April 2023. This was included in the MCGP Allocations Report that was tabled at the May 2023 Council meeting.

As per the previous GIA we are continuing to collect data on how projects address gender inequality, how inclusive/accessible they are and the anticipated reach of the projects by gender.

CONCLUSION

The Quick Response Grants successful recipients for the period 26 October to 12 December 2023 are presented to Council within the available budget.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil