



**2026/2027  
ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER**

**COMMUNITY  
GRANT PROGRAM**



**the place  
to live**

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and affirms that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practicing their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council acknowledges that Elders past, present and future leaders are central to the cohesion, intergenerational wellbeing and ongoing self-determination of Aboriginal communities. They have played and continue to play a pivotal role in maintaining and transmitting culture, history and language.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination. Council also recognises the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value for our city and Australian society more broadly.<sup>1</sup>

### Overview Of This Grant Program

Council grants are a vital asset for our community. The Council Plan 2025-2029 has a Strategic Direction: A City that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values, knowledge and traditions, respects the right for self-determination and takes deliberate action toward Truth-telling. This aligns with Council's Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This grant program aims to support projects and activities for all ages, genders, abilities and backgrounds to get active, socially connect and participate in community and cultural activities.

Key actions	Date
Grant applications open	Monday March 9, 2026
Grant applications close	Monday May 4 (midnight) 2026
Grant outcomes announced to all grant applicants & payments made to successful applicants	May 30, 2026
Project to be completed	June 30, 2027

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from Darebin City Council's Statement of commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2019.

## How much grant funding can I apply for?

This is a competitive grants program with grants of up to \$10,000 for your project/activity.

## Who Can Apply?

This grant program is only for applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups/organisations that are either:

Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (that are not Aboriginal Community-Controlled) provided they meet the following eligibility criteria<sup>2</sup>:

### *Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations*

Under clause 44 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation is an organisation that delivers services, including land and resource management, which builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:

- incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit.
- controlled and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services.
- governed by a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governing body.

### *Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations (not an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation)*

Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that are not Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations must be:

- incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit.
- majority (51%) controlled and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services.
- able to demonstrate how the grant activities will be community-led and endorsed.

Applicants for this grant program can also be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community groups that are:

- A not-for profit group/organisation. (Groups must be incorporated if applying for more than \$2,000.) Not incorporated organisations/groups can apply for up to \$2,000.
- A school. (Schools are also encouraged to partner with community groups in activities that benefit the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities.)
- Applicants must be either based in Darebin or be able to deliver activities within the City of Darebin area.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Social Services guidelines for the Community-led Prevention Services, Programs and Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children grants.18.12.2023

## **What if I don't have a bank account/ Incorporation or Public Liability Insurance?**

You can still apply but you will need to find a not-for-profit organisation to auspice<sup>3</sup> your project. Auspice organisations receive and manage funds on your behalf. If you need to find an organisation to be your auspice, contact the Partnership & Grants Officer on 8470 8504.

## **Who Can't Apply?**

- Individuals
- Political organisations
- Religious organisations, applying with the purpose of promoting religion or proselytizing.
- Businesses or for-profit organisations.
- Applicants who have not completed previous Council grants (including submitting acquittal reports) and/or have outstanding debts with Council.
- Applicants that own or operate Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) or hold events/activities/meetings in venues that have EGMs and/or receive sponsorship or support (in-kind or cash) from EGM revenue.

## **What Can Be Funded**

Projects and activities that could be funded under the Grants program include:

- Materials and other items essential to the project.
- Transport costs for project participants
- Activity entry fees for participants.
- Significant events – (e.g., but not limited to NAIDOC week, National Sorry Day, etc.)
- Fees for temporary staff to deliver the project.
- Printing, advertising, publicity and promotional costs.
- Translations and interpreting costs.
- One off non-council venue hire (not including the applicant 's permanent venue).
- Public Liability Insurance costs.
- Activity entry fees for participants.
- Volunteers 'out of pocket' expenses.
- Costs to support participation of people with a disability or house bound elderly people.

## **What Can't Be Funded**

Projects that won't be funded under this grants program include:

- Projects and don't relate to the grant focus areas.
- Projects that are the responsibility of other levels of government (e.g., State, Federal)
- New building projects, capital works and facility maintenance projects.

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<sup>3</sup> In this context, the auspice organisation would receive the grant funding and have responsibility for ensuring that the activity is completed on time. A letter from the au spicing organisation that confirms this arrangement must be submitted with the grant application form.

## What Can't Be Funded

- Capital equipment purchases (i.e. telephone lines, computers, computers, printers, power tools, audio-visual equipment, building maintenance or capital improvements such as heating or cooling systems, shade sails, solar panels etc.<sup>4</sup>)
- A religious or political purpose which seeks to promote core beliefs & Religious functions.
- Activities already funded through other Council programs or activities, including grant and sponsorship programs.
- Outstanding loans and debts.
- Projects that have already commenced or where the organisation has committed expenditure prior to June 2026 (activities cannot be funded retrospectively.)
- Core school curriculum activities (kindergarten, primary or secondary school.) Only applications that demonstrate a broader community partnership will be considered.
- Gift vouchers, prizes and trophies.
- Recurrent rent of private venues.
- Utilities (gas, electricity, water.)

## Focus Areas

The focus areas of this grants program are:

- Promote active participation and wellbeing of Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents especially women, young people, older adults, people with disability, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, low-income earners, people from LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Build new and/or enhance inter-generational and intercultural partnerships and collaborations.
- Participation and social connection through art & cultural diversity

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<sup>4</sup> If you are not sure if an item for which you are seeking support is "Capital Equipment" or "Material", please call the Partnerships & Grants Officer to discuss (8470 8504).

## What Focus Area Would Match Your Project?

Focus Area	Examples might include - but not limited to:
<p>Promote active participation and wellbeing of Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents especially women, young people, older adults, people with disability, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, low-income earners, people from LGBTIQ+ communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come and try sessions, introductory workshops for wellbeing &amp; physical activity.</li> <li>• Training courses such as <a href="#">mental health first aid</a> for volunteers and program staff.</li> <li>• Sporting uniforms, sports equipment, sport club membership fees and sport venue hire.</li> </ul>
<p>Build new and/or enhance inter-generational and intercultural partnerships and collaborations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a safe space for Elders to come together and for sharing stories, traditions and build stronger bonds with young people.</li> <li>• Engage residents in climate change and/or the circular economy (Regenerate, enhance and protect natural ecosystems, waterways and biodiversity, sustainable food, etc)</li> <li>• Training courses for going digital -learn how to use smart phones, iPad, Tik-Tok, Zoom, etc</li> </ul>
<p>Participation and social connection through art &amp; cultural diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops for arts and crafts (possum cloak making, murals, etc)</li> <li>• Cultural or community awareness events/programs – (e.g. NAIDOC week, National Sorry Day, etc.)</li> </ul>

## What Should Be Clear in Your Application?

When writing your grant application, think about these key questions:

<b>Who</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is this project for? (Young people, older adults, women, people with disability, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, people from LGBTIQ+ communities)</li></ul>
<b>What</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you want to do?</li><li>• Which focus area does your project align with?</li><li>• What benefits will your participants get from your project?</li></ul>
<b>Where</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where in Darebin will this project happen?</li><li>• If it is outside of Darebin -where will it be?</li></ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is your project needed?</li><li>• What issue is your project wanting to address?</li><li>• Is this issue supported by any local data and information?</li></ul>
<b>When</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When will this project start?</li><li>• When will the project end?</li></ul>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will you deliver this project?</li><li>• How will you reach the community members this project is for?</li><li>• How much will it cost?</li></ul>

## How Will Council Assess Applications and What Is the Criteria?

### Community need (25%)

Does the application support the priority groups?  
Does the project address the community need?

### Community benefit (25%)

Does the project benefit residents of Darebin?  
Is there a clear link between the community need, the activities and the community benefit?

### Equity and Inclusion (30%)

Does the project focus on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander communities?  
Does the project address issues of social exclusion or barriers to participation?

### Budget and planning (20%)

Is the application well planned and achievable within the timeframe?  
Does the budget reflect what is planned and what can be achieved?

## The Fine Print

- A maximum of one application (per applicant) each financial year will be considered. You can include more than one activity within that application.
- If your activities involve contact with children, your group or organisation may be required to obtain a [Working with Children \(WWC\) Check](#). To find out if you need a WWC Check or are exempt, visit the [Working With Children website](#)
- The grants program is highly competitive. Council may provide funding less than the amount requested and make special conditions for the funding to be provided.
- Projects or programs will not be funded retrospectively - they must be for activities starting from **June 2026**.
- Successful applicants must provide a brief (acquittal) report to Council at the end of the project. This is to report on the project, the use of funds and the success of the activities.

## How To Apply

1. Watch [an information video](#) on the Darebin Grants page.
2. Review this grant guideline document.
3. Check if your community group/ organisation is eligible to apply and your project is something that might be funded.
4. Start collecting your key pieces of information (quotes and letters of support as required.)
5. The application is online at <https://darebin.smartygrants.com.au/> . If you need help applying, contact [darebingrants@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:darebingrants@darebin.vic.gov.au) or call or +613 84708504

## Application Checklist

- ✓ Your community or organisation is eligible to apply.
- ✓ Identify an idea, program or initiative that links to projects that 'might be funded.' Don't apply for something on the list of 'what won't be funded'.
- ✓ Explore partnerships to help your project delivery. This will enhance the success of your project if your need an organisation to auspice you.
- ✓ Plan your project/program to achieve with a budget and timeline.
- ✓ Complete all questions in online application with clear answers.
- ✓ Attach any letters of support from community groups, project partners or your Auspice organisation.
- ✓ Include quotes for expenses over \$1,000.

## **What If I Still Need Advice or Support?**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your grant idea further, please contact Uncle Stuart McFarlane Senior Aboriginal Partnerships Officer by email: [stuart.mcfarlane@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:stuart.mcfarlane@darebin.vic.gov.au)

Or

Jennifer Worthington – Partnerships & Grants Officer by email: [darebingrants@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:darebingrants@darebin.vic.gov.au) or +6x13 84708504