

Policy number	Policy 117
Policy title	Business grants D23/43920
Strategic outcomes supported	CL1 – Effectively managing resources and performance EC1 – Facilitating a strong local economy

Policy objective:

To establish transparent and effective guidelines for the administration of grants to local businesses and business groups that support vibrancy, innovation and economic development.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to any party seeking funding from the Town of Victoria Park for a Business Grant.

Policy definitions:

Advertised closing date – the date by which the Town of Victoria Park requires complete applications to be received for an advertised funding round.

Match-Funding – is a requirement for the applicant to provide a specified percentage of the total amount needed to deliver the project, activity or program.

Regulatory Approval – an approval, licence or permit required by a government body, statutory authority or similar for the carrying out of works or activities, including but not limited to Development Approvals, Building Licences, Liquor Licences, Food Business Registration and Free Trade Area Permits.

Standard Operating Expenses – are expenses that are core to the basic operation of a business and not directly related to delivering a unique project, activity or program.

Policy statement:

Administration of Business Grants

1. The Town of Victoria Park may administer Business Grants to support economic development objectives provided in the Economic Development Strategy.
2. Business Grants are subject to a regular budget review process and availability of funding. The Town of Victoria Park reserves the right to suspend the administration or availability of Business Grants at any time.
3. The Town of Victoria Park will advertise when it is accepting applications for Business Grants on its website and such other appropriate mediums. Applications may be accepted during set funding rounds or on an ongoing basis.
4. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for the operational management of Business Grants.
5. All funding provided under this policy is to be reported on in the Annual Report.
6. The Town must ensure that all documentation relating to the Business Grants, including executed agreements, is recorded, as required under the *State Records Act 2000*.

Conflicts of Interest

7. In the administration and awarding of Business Grants any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest are to be managed in keeping with the *Local Government Act 1995*, the code of conduct and the Town's values.
8. In order to achieve this, in keeping with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995*, *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021* and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* employees and elected members with any involvement in Business Grants shall declare:
 - a. any financial, indirect financial, proximity or gift interests that they have with any applicant for a Business Grant; and
 - b. any impartiality interests they have with any applicant for a Business Grant.
9. As is required under the Act, where any employee or elected member discloses a financial, indirect financial, proximity or gift related interest they must not be involved in that particular Business Grants application. If:
 - a. this is as a member of a panel, they must not participate in the panel and the CEO should appoint another person as a member of the panel;
 - b. as an employee who awards or assesses applications for a grant, the application must be referred to another appropriate employee who can award or undertake the assessment for the grant; and
 - c. the application is referred to a committee or Council, in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
10. Where an impartiality interest by an employee is disclosed, the interest should be referred to the CEO to establish if it continues to be appropriate for that employee to be involved in the assessment process.

Eligibility

11. Any party wishing to apply for a Business Grant must:
 - a. hold Public Liability insurance of \$10 million; and
 - b. own or hold the appropriate permission to use any intellectual property associated with the proposed project, activity or program; and
 - c. meet any additional eligibility criteria for the Business Grant category being applied for.
12. The following ineligibility criteria apply to all Business Grants administered under this Policy:
 - a. The applicant has an outstanding debt to the Town of Victoria Park;
 - b. The applicant has failed to submit a satisfactory acquittal for a previous Business Grant (including COVID-19 Business Grants) or Community Grants Program;
 - c. The applicant has failed to comply with the operational Terms and Conditions of the Business Grant being applied for;
 - d. The applicant has previously received any type of grant from the Town of Victoria for the same project; or
 - e. The applicant is a Town employee or Elected Member.
13. The Business Grants will not support recurrent operational funding, including but not limited to, wages, salaries or administrative overheads.
14. Applicants must not lobby, seek to influence or canvass the decision-making of elected members or employees, in relation to their applications other than by way of an authorised presentation and/or deputation at a Council meeting. Any applicant who does so will have their application rejected.

Business Grants Categories and Assessment Criteria

15. Business Grants categories and assessment criteria will be subject to review at each evaluation date. At each review, it will be determined:
 - a. The category or categories of Business Grants that will operate for that financial year, having regard for the objectives of the Economic Development Strategy or economic development objectives of any other adopted strategic plan; and
 - b. For each category of Business Grants:
 - i. The category objective;
 - ii. Assessment criteria;
 - iii. Any additional eligibility or ineligibility criteria;
 - iv. Maximum value;
 - v. Whether match-funding will be required; and
 - vi. Whether applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis or in set funding rounds.
16. The parameters in clause 15 will be published on the Town's website and within an information pack for applicants prior to the opening of any Business Grant round.
17. In addition to the specific assessment criteria for each Business Grant category determined in accordance with clause 15, the following assessment criteria will apply to all Business Grants:
 - a. The proposed project, activity or program occurs within, or substantially benefits economic development outcomes within, the Town of Victoria Park local government area;
 - b. The applicant can demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed project, activity or program and their capability to successfully deliver the proposed project, activity or program; and
 - c. The proposed project, activity or program is a discrete piece of work and is not, in the opinion of the Town of the Victoria Park, a standard operational expense.

Approval Process

18. The Town of Victoria Park will only assess applications that are:
 - a. Received from applicants meeting the eligibility requirements laid out in this policy; and
 - b. Received by any advertised closing date.
19. The Town will convene a panel to assess all applications received, which will:
 - a. Consist of at least three suitably qualified and experienced people, none of whom shall be elected members, appointed by the Chief Executive Officer;
 - b. Assess grant applications against the requirements and Assessment Criteria set out in this policy; and
 - c. Provide recommendations of which grant applications should be accepted or rejected to the Council.
20. It is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate in their application how the proposed project, activity or program meets the Assessment Criteria for the category of Business Grant being applied for.
21. The Town of Victoria Park reserves the right to:
 - a. Refuse a grant application, having regard for availability of funds and/or which applications best satisfy the Assessment Criteria;
 - b. Offer partial-funding of a grant application, having regard for availability of funds, match-funding, which applications best satisfy the Assessment Criteria, and ability of the applicant to deliver the proposal with partial-funding; and
 - c. Not award any Business Grants where no applications received are considered to adequately satisfy the Assessment Criteria.

22. The Town of Victoria Park reserves the right to deny funding to any party should the proposed program or initiative or party conflict with the Town of Victoria Park’s Vision, Mission or Values, or bring the Town of Victoria Park’s brand or reputation into disrepute, at its discretion.
23. Where a proposed project, activity or program requires a regulatory approval to commence, the Town of Victoria Park may, at its discretion, award a Business Grant subject to the required regulatory approvals being obtained prior to the commencement of the proposed project, activity or program, and within a timeframe to be specified by the Town of Victoria Park.
24. The Town of Victoria Park will notify applicants of its decision within 60 business days of the advertised closing date or receipt of a complete application, whichever is the later.
25. The final decision whether a grant application is to be approved or rejected will be made by Council following receipt of a recommendation from the assessment panel.

Acquittal Terms

26. Recipients will be required to acquit the funds within six weeks of the completion of the project, activity or program.
27. Recipients may be required to provide photographs and/or written testimonials for use by the Town of Victoria Park to promote the Business Grants program and local economy.

Related documents

Nil.

Responsible officers	Place Leader – Economic Development
Policy manager	Manager Place Planning
Approval authority	Council
Next evaluation date	February 2026

Revision history

Version	Action	Date	Authority	Resolution number	Report number
1	Adopted	31/08/2021	Council	198/2021	Item 13.1
2	Administratively amended	24/08/2023	Delegation		
3	Administratively amended	27/09/2023	Delegation		
4	Reviewed and amended	20/02/2024	Council	7/2024	Item 11.3