Connection Grant Fact Sheet

Funding amount

Up to $3,000

What is this grant for?

This grant provides funding to support projects that **strengthen social connection, encourage participation and foster inclusion** within the Whitehorse community. It aims to bring people together in meaningful ways, reduce isolation and build a stronger, more connected local community.

Who can apply?

- Not-for-profit and incorporated organisations, clubs and groups who are actively engaged in the local Whitehorse City Council community.
- An auspice of an appropriate organisation including a not-for profit and incorporated organisation.

Who should not apply?

Applicants seeking funding for projects that are:

- Activities that are one-off celebrations or events with no follow-up
- Information-only sessions with no interaction
- Activities that don't build relationships between participants
- Primarily organisational or administrative projects
- Short-term programs with no plan for ongoing connection

Important things to note

- If the funding you are seeking is for catering or equipment required for a connection event, consider applying for a Micro Fund instead

Conditions of funding

If your application is successful, you must:

- Provide written acknowledgement of Whitehorse City Council's funding support in promotional material, publications and annual reports for the duration of the grant
- Agree to take part in occasional checks by Council to make sure the funding is being used as approved
- Meet any additional conditions outlined in your funding agreement
- Meet additional key requirements outlined in your application, including your commitment to Whitehorse City Council's environmental sustainability goals and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights.

Examples of eligible projects

Focus area	Project examples	Why they are eligible
Social Connection & Wellbeing Projects that build ongoing relationships and skills	• Weekly neighbourhood meet-ups for older adults or new residents • Ongoing community cafés or conversation groups • Walking groups or hobby clubs	Creates regular opportunities for people to build relationships and reduce social isolation. Encourages shared interests and peer support networks within the community.
Cultural Connection & Inclusion Projects that build understanding across cultures	• Multicultural community activities with follow-up programs and leadership groups • Storytelling or language exchange programs between different cultural communities • Community ambassadors or champions programs	Builds cross-cultural understanding and trust. Strengthens relationships between diverse community groups and fosters belonging across the community.
Intergenerational & Family Connection Projects that link different age groups	• Youth visiting aged care facilities for creative or digital skills sessions • Grandparent playgroups or family learning hubs • School community partnerships for shared activities	Encourages meaningful interaction between generations. Builds shared understanding, mutual support and stronger community bonds.

Examples of eligible projects (continued)

Focus area	Project examples	Why they are eligible
Connection for People Facing Barriers Projects that reduce isolation	• Programs for people with disability that link participants into mainstream community activities • Social groups for carers or people experiencing loneliness • Accessible, transport-supported participation programs	Reduces isolation and increases confidence to participate in community life. Supports greater inclusion by removing barriers to connection.
Place-Based Connection Projects focused on neighbourhoods or precincts	• Street-based community events that evolve into regular gatherings • Community gardens or shared spaces that activate underused areas • Local networks formed around a specific suburb or housing estate	Strengthens neighbourhood identity and pride in place. Creates opportunities for residents to build relationships within their local area.
Arts, Sport & Recreation Projects using shared activities to build relationships	• Community choirs, dance groups, creative workshops or theatre projects • Inclusive sports and recreation programs	Brings people together through shared interests and regular participation.

Assessment criteria

Criteria A: Community need or emerging priority	Criteria B: Achievement of community outcomes	Criteria C: Project sustainability	Criteria D: Capacity to deliver
Application demonstrates a clear community need for the proposed project/ initiative and is supported by relevant data, case studies and/or, local knowledge.	Application clearly articulates how their proposed project or initiative will achieve strategic community outcomes and how this will be measured.	Application demonstrates that the success of the project/ initiative will not rely on ongoing funding from Council.	Application demonstrates that the organisation has genuine capacity to deliver the project/ initiative and clearly shows how funding from Council will be used.
20%	35%	30%	15%

What assessors look for

Strong applications usually show:

✓ Focus on relationships and belonging (not just attendance numbers)

✓ Target groups who experience isolation or barriers

✓ Safe, welcoming and inclusive environments

✓ Measurable outcomes (e.g. increased participation, reduced isolation, stronger networks)

How funding levels are determined

Each application receives a weighted score based on the assessment criteria. This score helps determine how much funding may be offered, subject to available funds.

How well you score will directly impact how much funding you receive based on the below thresholds:

More than 85% — 100% of the requested funding

Over 75% to 85% — 85% of the requested funding

Over 65% to 75% — 75% of the requested funding

Less than 65% — funding may be considered subject to available funds

Meeting the assessment criteria does not guarantee funding. Final funding decisions are subject to Council approval and available budget.

Example of how the assessment criteria will be applied to your application – Criteria A

Criteria A - Evidence of community need or emerging priority	Assessment applied and examples of why			
	Not demonstrated	**Minimally demonstrated**	**Adequately demonstrated**	**Strongly demonstrated**
Requirements per policy: • Describe the need or issue your project is responding to • Provide evidence that the need exists in the Whitehorse community • Explain why the project is important now	No evidence provided. Need described is vague, generic, or unrelated to the proposed project. Does not identify a specific issue or gap. No reference to Whitehorse or the local community. No explanation of why the project is needed now.	Limited or generic evidence. Assertions made without data or examples. The "why now" explanation is weak and generic.	Clear and relevant evidence provided. Clearly describes a community gap. Provides local context and informal evidence. Explains why the project is relevant at this point in time.	Clear and relevant evidence provided with multiple, high-quality evidence sources cited. Clearly defines the issue and who it affects. Provides strong, place-based evidence linked to Whitehorse.

Example of how the assessment criteria will be applied to your application – Criteria B

Criteria B - Achievement of community outcomes	Assessment applied and examples of why			
	Not demonstrated	**Minimally demonstrated**	**Adequately demonstrated**	**Strongly demonstrated**
• Describe the outcomes your project will achieve • Show how these outcomes align with Council's strategic priorities • Explain how your project activities will lead to these outcomes	Outcomes are unclear, vague, or listed as activities only (e.g. "run cooking classes"). No link between activities and change for participants. Does not explain *what will change* for participants or how success will be measured.	Some outcomes described but not measurable or time-bound. Weak connection between activities and outcomes. Identifies change but lacks clarity on *how much*, *by when*, or *how it will be measured*.	Clear outcomes described with basic measures. Logical connection between activities and outcomes is evident. Shows a reasonable outcomes framework but limited detail or evidence of measurement.	Outcomes are clearly articulated across a change pathway (awareness → knowledge → skills → behaviour change), with timeframes, indicators, measures and data sources clearly identified. Demonstrates strong outcomes thinking, clear causality, and practical evaluation methods aligned to Council priorities.

Example of how the assessment criteria will be applied to your application – Criteria C

Criteria C - Project sustainability	Assessment applied and examples of why			
	Not demonstrated	Minimally demonstrated	Adequately demonstrated	Strongly demonstrated
• Outline how your project can continue or have lasting impact beyond the funding period • Demonstrate how the project will be maintained, supported or embedded over time	No consideration of what happens after funding ends. Treats the project as one-off.	Sustainability mentioned but relies on ongoing Council funding. Sustainability is aspirational rather than planned.	Some elements of lasting impact identified, but limited detail. Identifies ongoing benefits but not embedded.	Clear plan showing lasting impact without further Council funding. Shows skills, relationships and behaviours will continue independently.

Example of how the assessment criteria will be applied to your application – Criteria D

Criteria D - Experience and capacity to deliver	Assessment applied and examples of why			
	Not demonstrated	**Minimally demonstrated**	**Adequately demonstrated**	**Strongly demonstrated**
• Outline how you will deliver the project as proposed • Outline how you will manage the funding responsibly • Demonstrate relevant experience, skills or partnerships	No evidence of experience, partnerships, or risk management. Does not show capacity to deliver responsibly.	Limited experience or vague delivery approach. Section completed partially. Experience is implied rather than evidenced.	Relevant experience and basic risk management identified. Shows competence but limited detail.	Strong track record, partnerships, and proactive risk management. Demonstrates readiness, credibility, and risk awareness.