



# Innovation Grant Fact Sheet

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## Funding amount

Up to \$3,000

## What is this grant for?

This grant provides initial support to activate new ideas, pilot programs or novel services that are expected to bring positive outcomes for the local Whitehorse City Council community.

An innovation idea could be one that:

- Is new for the community in the City of Whitehorse that has been proven successful elsewhere
- Embeds a new technology or tool
- Implements a new way of delivering an existing service

It does not have to be high-tech, just genuinely different and expected to be better.

## Who can apply?

- Not-for-profit and incorporated organisations, clubs and community groups who are actively engaged in the Whitehorse community.
- Organisations that are auspiced by an appropriate not-for-profit incorporated organisation.

## Who should not apply?

- Standard service delivery with no new approach
- Business-as-usual programs or continuation of existing activities
- One-off events without learning, evaluation or legacy
- Projects with no clear plan for what happens after the trial period

## Important things to note

- If the funding you are seeking is solely for equipment required for a for an innovative idea, 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
<p><b>New Service Models</b> Projects that trial new ways of delivering support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mobile community hub bringing services to isolated neighbourhoods</li> <li>• A digital platform that connects residents to local services and activities</li> <li>• Hybrid (online and in-person) programs for people who cannot attend face-to-face sessions</li> </ul>	<p>Successful pilots can be refined and embedded as permanent services.</p>
<p><b>Technology &amp; Digital Innovation</b> Projects that use technology to solve community problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apps or online tools for volunteering, food relief or mental health support</li> <li>• Virtual reality or digital learning tools for inclusion and training</li> <li>• AI or data tools to better identify community needs and service gaps</li> </ul>	<p>Digital tools can be reused, scaled and adapted across the community.</p>
<p><b>Innovative Approaches to Inclusion</b> Projects that do things differently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-design projects led by people with lived experience (disability, youth, migrants)</li> <li>• New engagement methods for hard-to-reach groups (gamified engagement, arts-based approaches)</li> <li>• Culturally tailored service models not previously trialled locally</li> </ul>	<p>Builds trust and models new inclusive practice that can be replicated.</p>

## Examples of eligible projects (continued)

Focus area	Project examples	Why they are eligible
<p><b>Environmental &amp; Social Innovation</b> Projects tackling complex challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban farming or micro-forest trials in new settings</li> <li>• Climate resilience projects (cooling hubs, community energy sharing)</li> <li>• Circular economy pilots (tool libraries, swap shops, reuse hubs)</li> </ul>	<p>Behaviour change and systems innovation continue beyond the trial period.</p>
<p><b>Systems &amp; Process Innovation</b> Projects that improve how services work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New referral pathways between organisations using shared platforms</li> </ul>	<p>Structural improvements strengthen long-term service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Research, Learning &amp; Testing</b> Projects that generate new knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot programs with built-in evaluation and learning frameworks</li> <li>• Action research projects to test solutions to local issues</li> <li>• Prototypes that can be refined and expanded</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence generated supports future investment and scale-up.</p>
<p><b>Youth &amp; Future-Focused Innovation</b> Projects preparing communities for future challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth-led innovation labs to solve local problems</li> <li>• Digital skills incubators</li> </ul>	<p>Builds long-term community capability and leadership.</p>

## 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.
<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>

## What assessors look for

Strong applications usually show:

- ✓ A new idea or approach not currently used locally
- ✓ Clear problem statement and why existing approaches don't work
- ✓ Testing and learning focus (pilot or prototype)
- ✓ Potential to scale or embed if successful

## 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
<p><b>Requirements per policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the need or issue your project is responding to</li> <li>Provide evidence that the need exists in the Whitehorse community</li> <li>Explain why the project is important now</li> </ul>	<p>No evidence provided.</p> <p>Need described is vague, generic, or unrelated to the proposed project.</p> <p>Does not identify a specific issue or gap.</p> <p>No reference to Whitehorse or the local community.</p> <p>No explanation of why the project is needed now.</p>	<p>Limited or generic evidence.</p> <p>Assertions made without data or examples.</p> <p>The “why now” explanation is weak and generic.</p>	<p>Clear and relevant evidence provided.</p> <p>Clearly describes a community gap.</p> <p>Provides local context and informal evidence.</p> <p>Explains why the project is relevant at this point in time.</p>	<p>Clear and relevant evidence provided with multiple, high-quality evidence sources cited.</p> <p>Clearly defines the issue and who it affects.</p> <p>Provides strong, place-based evidence linked to Whitehorse.</p>

## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the outcomes your project will achieve</li> <li>Show how these outcomes align with Council's strategic priorities</li> <li>Explain how your project activities will lead to these outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes are unclear, vague, or listed as activities only (e.g. "run cooking classes").</p> <p>No link between activities and change for participants.</p> <p>Does not explain <i>what will change</i> for participants or how success will be measured.</p>	<p>Some outcomes described but not measurable or time-bound. Weak connection between activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Identifies change but lacks clarity on <i>how much, by when, or how it will be measured</i>.</p>	<p>Clear outcomes described with basic measures. Logical connection between activities and outcomes is evident.</p> <p>Shows a reasonable outcomes framework but limited detail or evidence of measurement.</p>	<p>Outcomes are clearly articulated across a change pathway (awareness → knowledge → skills → behaviour change), with timeframes, indicators, measures and data sources clearly identified.</p> <p>Demonstrates strong outcomes thinking, clear causality, and practical evaluation methods aligned to Council priorities.</p>

## 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
<p>Outline how your project can continue or have lasting impact beyond the funding period</p> <p>Demonstrate how the project will be maintained, supported or embedded over time</p>	<p>No consideration of what happens after funding ends.</p> <p>Treats the project as one-off.</p>	<p>Sustainability mentioned but relies on ongoing Council funding.</p> <p>Sustainability is aspirational rather than planned.</p>	<p>Some elements of lasting impact identified, but limited detail.</p> <p>Identifies ongoing benefits but not embedded.</p>	<p>Clear plan showing lasting impact without further Council funding.</p> <p>Shows skills, relationships and behaviours will continue independently.</p>

## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline how you will deliver the project as proposed</li> <li>Outline how you will manage the funding responsibly</li> <li>Demonstrate relevant experience, skills or partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>No evidence of experience, partnerships, or risk management.</p> <p>Does not show capacity to deliver responsibly.</p>	<p>Limited experience or vague delivery approach.</p> <p>Section completed partially.</p> <p>Experience is implied rather than evidenced.</p>	<p>Relevant experience and basic risk management identified.</p> <p>Shows competence but limited detail.</p>	<p>Strong track record, partnerships, and proactive risk management.</p> <p>Demonstrates readiness, credibility, and risk awareness.</p>