

## **City of Yarra's Activity Centre Heritage Facade Conservation Grants**

City of Yarra (CoY) is proud of its heritage which includes some of the oldest suburbs of Melbourne. More than 500 places are protected under CoY heritage overlays including historic shopping strips such as Brunswick Street, Smith Street, Bridge Road, Swan Street, Johnston Street, Gertrude Street, and Rathdowne Street – to name just a few. These streets have been the hub of activities for the local and broader communities for well over a century.

Since 2010, Yarra City Council (YCC) has been contributing to the Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund (VHRF) to support restoration of properties within the CoY. In past years, many residents in Yarra have benefited through the VHRF program, however, it is noted that the utilisation of the funds for restoration of properties in activity centres has been negligible.

As in other parts of the world, Covid19 has affected businesses in the CoY. YCC is committed to revitalise its strip shopping centres and has provided significant support for outdoor dining and place making in various precincts since 2020. To complement the Covid19 recovery and placemaking efforts of YCC in activity centres, Yarra's Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund (YHRF) guidelines have been revised. The focus is on revitalisation of shopping strips through conservation works rather than restoration alone. It is anticipated that conservation and maintenance of heritage facades in CoY's historic strip shopping precincts would help maintain heritage characteristics of the streetscapes and would contribute to improving look and feel of the place so that these precincts remain attractive places for existing and new businesses, visitors and residents. Works such as repairs and repainting are also now a part of the grant program. Further, the new guidelines also support a grant component towards offsetting fees and charges for council permits and approvals. These changes would provide better support and an easy access to the grant funding to the owners and occupiers of heritage places within the activity centres.

### **Eligible works**

Following works to a heritage place (protected under a heritage overlay) within an activity centre in the CoY can be funded under the YHRF:

- Professional advice and documentation for a landmark building or for strategic works that protect features of significant value of a streetscape (e.g. shop verandahs, landmark heritage signs). This would include works such as conservation specialist's advice, other technical advice, drawings, service proving and preparation of schedules of works required to complement proposed conservation works.
- Painting of heritage facades where the colour scheme is in keeping with the heritage streetscape or brings the property back to its original colour scheme.
- Removal of paint to expose the original brick/stonework and works such as tuck-pointing, lime wash etc. to bring the building to its original state (cleaning must not include sandblasting).

- Repairs and maintenance works (including rendering) and replacement of brick/masonry/stonework/timber cladding, repair of projected window sill, arch-heads, parapets, balustrades, cornices etc. that do not change the appearance of a heritage place or are undertaken to the same details or restore it to bring it to its original state and contribute to an overall improvement of the heritage façade.
- Re-pointing of brick/stone and/or brick restoration.
- Heritage restoration/repairs and maintenance of awnings and shop verandahs or verandah features (undertaken to the same details, specifications and materials).
- Replacement of doors and/or windows (if the replacement is like-for-like and undertaken to the same details, specifications and materials).
- External/focus lighting that can enhance the heritage façade/features.
- Heritage plaques where the plaque design for a heritage place has been approved by the City of Yarra with significant social, cultural, and historical heritage significance.

Note:

- Only those works stated above that are visible from a public place will be considered for funding.
- Proposed works must have relevant planning / building permit or exemption and other work permits such as for footpath/road occupation, asset protection (as the case may be) before works can commence. In case of permit exemption, written exemptions would be required from YCC rather than the verbal exemptions.
- Where no permit is required the colour scheme and conservation works will require an approval from VHRF, as part of the grant application process.
- The VHRF Committee may also use their discretion for approval of conservation works where the proposed works do not exactly fit into the above categories.

Following works would not be eligible for funding

- Works to areas of the heritage place that are not publicly visible;
- Works to interiors;
- Works required due to a repair order issued by the City of Yarra;
- Works required under a condition of a permit issued by the Executive Director under the Heritage Act 1995;
- Works that have already commenced or have been completed;
- Additions or extensions to a heritage place, new additions or extensions (unless the reconstruction is of an original element);
- Speculative reconstruction works where there is no evidence of the early appearance of the place;
- General maintenance items (e.g. roof plumbing);
- Painting of strong colours that are not in keeping with the heritage character of the precinct or the period;
- Works that do not comply with Council planning and building controls and permits, traffic and transport permit requirements, local laws, public safety standards and access to premises standards.

## **Funding amounts**

Yarra City Council provides contributions to VHRF to facilitate conservation of properties in the activity centre through a grants programme, as stated above.

This grant can provide funds for

- a) Cost of professional advice and documentation to a maximum up to \$10,000 for special projects (e.g., landmark building within a precinct, heritage sign restoration, restoration of shop verandah etc.).
- b) Maximum 50% of cost of works not exceeding \$15,000. Any amount over and above will have to be paid by the applicant. For high impact works 50% criteria may be waived off by the VHRF Committee and a higher amount of grant of up to \$25,000 may be provided.

In addition to costs at "b" above, additional funds to offset Council's fees and charges related to above works such as for planning permit, footpath/road occupation permit and asset protection permits etc. and other charges for inspections and certifications (based on actuals but not exceeding \$2,000). Any of Council's fees and charges over and above the total of \$ 2,000 will have to be paid by the applicant.

Note: Through a separate program Council also supports property owners in the removal of graffiti. Details can be found at the weblink provided at the end of this document.

## **Applicant eligibility criteria**

1. Up to one application per property by an owner/occupier

2. Applicants must:

- Be a property owner or occupier

*Owners need to provide:*

- Rates notice
- Written permission from the occupier

*Occupiers/tenants need to provide:*

- Rates notice and written permission from the owner
- Business registration

*Owner-occupiers need to provide:*

- Rates notice
- Be prepared to spend 50% of the amount (unless for a high impact/ landmark project) and Council fees and charges beyond \$2,000.
- Have an appropriate business registration or equivalent.

- Have public liability insurance (and provide a copy as part the application).
- In cases where the works do not require a permit the applicant needs to obtain and written permit exemption from the council which should be submitted as a part of the documentation.
- Submit their application prior to purchasing goods, fabrication and/or installation of any proposed works associated with this application.
- Provide at least two quotes for works to be undertaken.
- Be willing to submit a public release for photos to be used.
- Apply for occupancy of Council Controlled Land and Road/Footpath Occupancy permits required to undertake the works
- Submit building and planning permits and proof of other fee and charges by the Council.

3. The following will not be eligible for this grant:

- Employees of the City of Yarra who own the property or the business.
- Australian and local government agencies and bodies.
- Businesses that have an adverse effect on public health, safety, environment or heritage.

### **Grant administration, assessment and management**

The grant will be administered and managed by VHRF.

### **How the funding will be provided**

Successful applicants will receive 50% of the approved amount when the funding agreement has been signed by all parties and all necessary permits/exemptions and other application formalities have been completed. The remaining 50% will be provided on completion of works and acquittal of the grant. Please note where applicable the costs towards the council fees and charges will also be paid upon completion of the works based on actuals (up to a maximum of \$2,000).

### **Useful Links**

[How to apply for a planning permit | Yarra City Council](#)

[Permits and Consents | Yarra City Council](#)

[Removing graffiti | Yarra City Council](#)