



# Room to Create Charitable Fund Grant Guidelines 2026

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## About the City of Yarra and the Room to Create Fund

**Arts and culture are core to the identity and experience of Yarra.** The municipality is home to galleries, artist runs spaces, iconic music venues and the base of nationally and internationally recognised arts organisations. Over the past years the pressures of increased land value and diminishing availability of affordable space is threatening arts activity. The 2025-2029 Council Plan recognises as a priority that Artists are essential to a thriving Yarra and that we must continue to nurture and grow our creative community, with flow on benefits for community engagement, health and wellbeing, community pride and economic benefit.

**The City of Yarra Room to Create Fund is a charitable fund account in partnership with the Greater Melbourne Fund (formerly Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation).** The Fund is a separate legal entity to the City of Yarra. The Fund was launched in 2014 with the specific purpose of supporting creative infrastructure in the City of Yarra. Grants from this fund directly support the creative sector by investing in more affordable spaces and ensuring Yarra remains a key place for the arts.

## What is the Grant from the Room to Create Charitable Fund?

Council is seeking applications for up to \$13,000 for creative infrastructure related projects that would make a significant impact to their venue or place of making.

## Who can apply?

Organisations with joint Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status and Tax Concession Charity (TCC) status can only apply.

### Timelines:

|                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Applications open              | <b>12noon Monday 13 April 2026</b> |
| Applications close             | <b>12noon Monday 11 May 2026</b>   |
| Applications announced         | <b>Late June 2026</b>              |
| Agreements signed and payments | <b>Mid July 2026</b>               |

## Funding Priorities:

The funds may be used for goods and/or services that will assist the creative space to operate in Yarra. The funding priorities for this grant are:

- Creation of or improvement to a creative space in Yarra
- Sustaining creative activity for artists or organisations in Yarra
- Increased opportunity for the community to participate or benefit from creative space activation or activity
- Practical and financially viable implementation of projects that create space for arts activity

## What can the grant be used for?

Examples of what the funds can be used for include: infrastructure works, studio building works, purchase of built-in equipment, lighting, data projectors, built-in speakers, acoustic treatment related works, works associated with enhancing accessibility of the space. For example previous recipients have used the funds to buy LED lighting rigs and build custom made community library furniture.

## Assessment Criteria:

- How the proposal will be of benefit to the Yarra community
- The capacity for the organisation to deliver arts and culture projects
- The viability of the project: *i.e. Is the budget realistic? What other confirmed support is there for the project (direct funding or in-kind/pro-bono)? Does the organisation have capacity to deliver this project?*
- The impact of this grant to contribute to the creation/development of a creative space. *i.e. Who and how many people will benefit from this project? What will be the cultural, social, economic benefits? What will be the medium to long term benefits?*

## Eligible Applicants:

- Projects to commence and be completed between July 2026 and June 2027
- Must be managing and/or occupying a creative space (eg. gallery, performance venue, artist studio, live music venue) that is located in the City of Yarra;
- Eligible applicants must be endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient as covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (DGR1) and endorsed as a Tax Concession Charity (TCC);
- Applicants must have an active ABN;
- Be an incorporated organisation or business entity;
- Have adequate public liability insurance, working with children checks, WorkCover and superannuation coverage;
- Live music venue applicants must agree to adopt the Best Practice Guidelines for Live Music Venues developed by the Live Music Roundtable with the Victorian Government. View the guidelines: <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/resource/best-practice-guidelines-for-live-music-venues-summary/>
- Applications cannot be submitted for the same project from multiple tenants/organisations;
- Only one application per organisation will be accepted, however the project may include works being undertaken at multiple locations within Yarra.

## Applicants that are not eligible:

- Individuals (including sole-traders) and auspiced organisations;
- Organisations without DGR1 and TCC status;
- Previous grant recipients with overdue acquittals.
- Organisations that have received a Room to Create Charitable Fund grant in the previous grant cycle.

**Projects that are not eligible:**

- Activities or works taking place at venues outside of the City of Yarra;
- The purchase of movable equipment and artistic supplies;
- Activities that are part of the creative output of the applicant such as exhibitions, performances, workshops, events or other creative projects;
- Applications to fund projects retrospectively, for works that have already been completed;
- A studio space in a private dwelling/home;
- Expenses that are clearly related to the daily operations of the business including rent, ongoing staff salaries, or administration costs not specific to the project;
- Works that would be the responsibility of the property owner if the space/building is leased;
- A program that is considered the responsibility of State or Federal Government;
- Activities that are sponsored by gambling businesses or take place at inappropriate venues;
- Individual training, study or academic research in Australia or overseas;
- Applications that are solely for attending forums, workshops and conferences.

**Application assessment:**

Applications will undergo an eligibility check. Eligible applications will then be assessed by Council's Room to Create Panel. Once the Panel recommendations are endorsed by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation in early July 2026, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. Successful applicants will be informed of the payment process at this point.

**How to apply:**

Applications can be made online through Council's website, at [cityofyarra.smartygrants.com.au](https://cityofyarra.smartygrants.com.au)

Please note that applications are not submitted online until you hit the submit button. After submitting your application you will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application which will include a PDF copy for your records. This will be sent to the email address you used to register on SmartyGrants. If you do not receive this email your application has not been submitted successfully. City of Yarra staff cannot view applications that have not been submitted, so please make sure you hit the submit button at the end of the application process.

**Attachments and support materials:**

Applicants are required to include a quote/s for the proposed works in this application.

All applicants must upload a copy of the organisation's most recent annual financial statement to their application. This could be the 2024/25 Financial Statement that all incorporated organisations are required to send to Consumer Affairs Victoria, or the organisation's most recent profit and loss statement. Please do not send your full Annual Report.

Applicants are encouraged to include any other material to support their application and how it meets the funding priorities.

Please note, the maximum attachment size in SmartyGrants is 25MB. To avoid technical difficulties which may prevent you being able to submit your application, we recommend keeping files to a maximum of 5MB. Files can only be uploaded one at a time and upload speeds will vary depending on your computer's specifications, your internet connection and the amount of traffic on the SmartyGrants server. If you do have concerns or encounter any issues, consider providing links to specific website pages or online/cloud file transfer service in the space provided instead.

**Public Liability Insurance:**

Applicants are not required to include a copy of their public liability insurance with their application. However, if the application is successful, the grant recipient will be required to provide evidence of Public Liability Insurance, with an adequate coverage level, to be eligible to receive payment. In most cases this will be a copy of your public liability Insurance Certificate of Currency.

**Agreement:**

Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding agreement with the City of Yarra.

**Acquittal:**

Each grant recipient is required to submit an Acquittal Form and financial report within two months of completion of the project. Throughout the project funds must be spent in accordance with the budget submitted. You are required to keep accurate, up-to-date records in relation to the project including, but not limited to, itemised receipts issued when funding is spent and relevant account records to submit as part of the acquittal.

The required acquittal form will be linked to your application. When you are ready to submit the acquittal form, please log onto [cityofyarra.smartygrants.com.au](http://cityofyarra.smartygrants.com.au) and submit it in the same way you submitted your grant application.

Please keep receipts for expenditure items over \$200 to upload into your online acquittal.

**For more information:**

Contact Arts Development Officer, Room to Create [rafaella.mcdonald@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:rafaella.mcdonald@yarracity.vic.gov.au) or (03) 9205 5232.

For issues with the application form, or administrative questions, you can also contact the grants team on 9205 5170 or 9205 5146.