

Event Grants & Sponsorship

Grants & Funding

Designing your Project

Before you start to search and apply for grants determine what your event is going to be and what resources you will need to make it happen. From here you can develop your event budget, it is important to know before you start chasing money how much you need and why. A budget template can be downloaded [here](#).

Once you have designed your idea it is time to determine if it will strategically fit into your community and the overall region. Funding bodies won't fund projects that don't fit within their strategic plan, for an example please read the [Indigo Destination Game Changer 2023](#), this outlines Indigo Shire Council's Tourism strategy for the next four years including events.

Don't forget to talk to others about your idea. Generating support early will allow you to develop a support network willing to write letters and market your event by the time grants become available.

Starting your search

Start your search by looking for grant programs that are applicable to your event. Depending on your event, you may be eligible for grants outside of the traditional events funding programs. For example, if you are running an event with a health and fitness element you might be eligible for grants from sporting or health bodies.

Consider whether your event truly fits the objectives and guidelines of the grant you are applying for. A significant amount of time can be spent writing grant applications, and if your event doesn't align with the objectives of the grant program, it may be for nothing.

Don't fundamentally change your event to suit a grant and its objectives. If your event doesn't satisfy the objectives, it probably isn't a good fit for your event and you shouldn't alter your event so that you can chase inappropriate funding.

The most important part of writing a grant application is reading and understanding the guidelines or objectives of the grant. The guidelines will tell you exactly what the funding body is looking for and guide your application. Event funding is becoming increasingly competitive and successful applications are those that can strongly show that they satisfy the objectives of the grant.

TIP:

You should follow the grant guidelines to the letter. Think of it like an assignment. What question are they asking? How can you best demonstrate the answer to the question and can you provide real evidence or data to back it up? Remember, anyone can say they know their event attendees and behaviours, but an application with real data will carry significantly more weight than hearsay from the event organiser

Before you apply

Read the grant guidelines carefully:

- You should ensure that your event is eligible and that it satisfies the selection criteria.
- Check deadlines and allow sufficient time to write your application and obtain any supporting material.
- Do you need the support of another body, such as Council or the regional tourism body?

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If you aren't sure whether your event is eligible, call the funding body and discuss your event and application. They will be able to provide advice as to whether your event is eligible.

TIP:

If the grant has been offered before, look at previous events that have successfully received funding. It may give you an idea of what the grant provider is looking for, and things you can highlight in your application.

Preparing your application

- Complete all the required paperwork, and ensure you have attached all the supporting documents. Supporting documents are often an essential requirement, and applications that do not provide the requested documents will often be assessed as incomplete and ineligible.
- Make sure you have answered all the selection criteria. Keep in mind that different people often read different criteria, and take every opportunity to reiterate your cause.
- Be concise and stick to any specified word or page limits. Avoid jargon or in-house terminology.
- Ensure you leave plenty of time to submit your application. A number of online submission systems close automatically at the deadline and you don't want to miss out on a grant because your computer crashed.
- Many grant applications are submitted online, create your account early and check the type of formatting required, this includes what file type attachments need to be and word counts.
- Answer any questions as comprehensively as possible. The better you can quantify your answers, or provide real data to back up your statements, the stronger your application will be. Below are some brief examples of how questions are answered and how you could better structure your answers.

Q: What are the objectives of the event?

Weak Answer: To be bigger than last year.

Improved Answer: To be bigger than last year by;

- Increasing competitors from 100 to 150
- Increasing number of attendees from 2000 to 2500.

Q: What is the expected origin of event attendees?

Weak Answer: Visitors come from the North East region.

Improved Answer: We capture our attendees' postcode through our online ticketing system. This has shown that our audience of 2000 are primarily from Indigo Shire (30%), Wangaratta (20%), Albury (30%), Wagga (5%), Bendigo (5%) and other (10%). This year we are marketing the event in Melbourne and expect a subsequent increase in attendees from there.

Q: What is the economic impact of the event?

Weak Answer: All of our competitors eat in town and shop at the local shops. Visitors to the event stay overnight in accommodation in town.

Improved Answer: Visitor survey data at last year's event showed event attendees spent an average of \$30 per day in town. The 150 visitors who stayed overnight spent an average of \$110 per night in accommodation. From these figures we anticipate 2000 attendees will spend \$60,000 in town, with a further \$16,500 on accommodation.

TIP:

Consider what material will help your application and what will be accepted as supporting material (e.g. letters of support, budgets, quotes and images). Leave plenty of time to collect this material before putting your application together.

Reporting and Acquittals

If you are successful in obtaining funding through a grant, allow the funding body to announce the achievement. This is often a part of your obligations as a recipient. Many grants require that you provide a report or acquittal after your event. This may require you to collect data during your event, survey attendees or keep receipts. It is important that you are aware of all your obligations and are prepared to do this during the event. Events that fail to properly address their acquittal responsibilities will be unlikely to receive funding in subsequent rounds from that funding body.

If your grant application was unsuccessful, it doesn't necessarily mean your event was unworthy. Where possible, you should always seek feedback to learn why you were unsuccessful. It may have been highly competitive, or your application may have needed more depth.

Feedback can give you an indication of whether you should try again next year, and what information you need to strengthen future applications. For example, feedback may indicate that you did not demonstrate your current event audience. You should then make an effort to gain attendee data at your next event to strengthen your application for the next funding round.

Grant Opportunities

Indigo Shire Tourism Festival and Events Grant

Indigo Shire Council funds a number of events (subject to budget allocation) through the Indigo Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (IEDTAC). The objective of this allocated funding is to maximise economic outcomes for Indigo Shire through the attraction and support of new and innovative events.

This is achieved by supporting events that;

- Grow the visitor economy through any of the following:
 - Increasing overnight stays;
 - Increasing midweek visitation;
 - Increasing off-peak visitation;
- Attract new audiences to Indigo Shire through any of the following:
 - Developing an event that shows significant innovation from events that have been delivered in Indigo Shire before.
 - Developing a new experience within an existing event to attract a new audience.
 - Adding an element of creative appeal that has the potential to build the Indigo Shire brand through social and traditional media take up.

Applications close in July for funding for events in that current financial year.

Organisations can apply for a maximum of \$4,000. Applicants need to show that their event satisfies the objectives above through a comprehensive marketing plan.

External Grant Funding Sources

There are a number of bodies that provide grant funding for events. The below list indicates a number of bodies that provide funding, that may align with your event. You should always research online grants specific to your event, as the list below is not regularly updated, and other opportunities can be found online.

Funding opportunities can be incredibly competitive, so it is important that you can show that your event strongly aligns with the requirements of the grants you apply for, and your event satisfies the objectives of

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their grant.

- Regional Events Fund
- Australian Government: GrantsLink
- Festivals Australia
- Tourism Victoria
- Australian Council for the Arts
- Victorian Multicultural Commission Grants Program
- Regional Development Victoria
- Vic Health
- Arts Victoria
- Regional Arts Victoria
- Department of Sport and Recreation

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Sponsorship

Sponsorship can be a valuable way to assist with raising additional revenue or reducing cost for your event. However the effectiveness of sponsorship as an element of marketing is being closely considered by many businesses. Businesses are seeking tangible value in return for their investment resulting in event organisers now being able to show a business “what’s in it for them”

By creating a sponsorship plan and proposal you can determine what you need and how you will obtain it.

The Sponsorship Plan

Sponsorship is a partnership where both the sponsor and the event receive some level of benefit. Download the [Event Sponsorship Manager](#) and list all the possible sponsors for your event. Then answer the following questions to develop a sponsorship plan that will allow you to critically assess the details of your partnership.

What do you need?

Eg. Marketing assistance, free hall hire, loan of equipment, funds for tables, chairs, stages, sound etc.

What can you offer your sponsors?

What can you give your sponsors in return for their sponsorship, keeping in mind you still need to make a profit from this deal.

Eg. Joint radio advertising, Facebook mentions, program mentions, signage around event, Naming rights to event or part of, official beverage.

Can you deliver?

How will you do the above and what is the timeline?

Can you report back?

Can you tell the business what their money was used for, what were the positive outcomes of this for the event and the community?

How many people attended the event?

Identifying Potential Sponsors

Once you have developed a list take the time to consider the following:

- Are there other businesses that would find these benefits appealing?
- Do the businesses listed have the capacity to offer the kind of sponsorship you need?
- Are your potential sponsors compatible with your event and its goals? Will there be a conflict of interest?
- Could there be a conflict of interest between sponsors if you have multiple sponsors? Eg. Two different breweries.
- For annual events, can you get a business to commit to a multi-year sponsorship deal?

Now you are ready to create and distribute your proposal, don't forget to address your proposal directly to the individual who will make the decision.

The Sponsorship Proposal

The sponsorship proposal should be a well presented document that provides information about the event. Assume that the reader of the proposal knows nothing about your event, follow this checklist to provide a comprehensive and motivating proposal.

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- Sponsorship contact name, email and phone number.
- Past event information if applicable, including any media coverage or newspaper clippings.
- What you are requesting in sponsorship, i.e. in kind support and/or funding.
- How the sponsorship benefit the event.
- What benefits the sponsor will receive in return e.g. signage, naming rights, special benefits, or tickets.
- Information on how you compare to other festivals within the region, ticket and visitation.

The appearance of the proposal should be in line with the events branding, this will assist the business in identifying what the event is and if they can fit in with its brand. You may also consider including an endorsement of the festival, consideration should be taken as to who the best person to write this with, it could be a past sponsor, performer, Mayor or president of the local Chamber of Commerce.

Sponsorship Post Event

Help to create a relationship between the event and its sponsors by providing them with post event reporting. This should include whether the event met its objectives, how the sponsorship was used and how you presented the sponsor at the event. When presenting this you are selling your sponsorship deal for the next event, detail how many times the sponsors name was mentioned and the actual dollar value of this media exposure. You may also choose to give them a certificate of appreciate to display or images from the festival they can use in their own marketing activities.