Image: Noble Park Community Centre's accessible garden was supported by the Stronger Communities Programme. Team leader Frank talked us through all the plants.

Clare O'Neil MP

Applying for Government Grants

Each year, the Federal Government announces a range of grants and funding programs. To ensure you're across the latest grants and application rounds, check here (www.grants.gov.au/Go/List).

What are government grants?

Community organisations, such as non-profits, often have limited funding streams. So government grants can turn great and important ideas or plans into reality - strengthening communities, supporting volunteers and improving schools, clubs, causes and infrastructure.

Grants have a ripple effect. I love visiting recipients down the track and seeing their lasting and real impact - a kitchen installation feeding thousands, lights providing safety or funding that takes an idea global.

My office runs Stronger Communities and Volunteer grants annually. Funding is limited and competitive, so grants aren't guaranteed, but these tips can help you stand out.

To keep things fair, I work with a local panel (often council reps) to review applications too.

Please keep me posted on your news and needs, and update my office on any changes so we can share relevant grant info with the right people.

Good luck!

[signature]

— Clare
Federal Member for Hotham

Quick tips at a glance

- Read eligibility criteria carefully. Not every project fits every grant.
- Check the related project or program is located in Hotham.
- Be specific and accurate with the funding amount required. Break it down if possible.
- Allow time to submit your application.
- It's a competitive process so put your best foot forward!

Labor

A quick grants checklist

This quick guide will help your organisation get grant ready. Grants can be competitive, so a bit of prep really helps. Also, keep an eye out for free grant writing workshops from local councils and community groups, they're a great help. For Stronger Communities and Volunteer Grants, the first step is an Expression of Interest (EOI), where my office invites groups to apply. We also hear about other grants from time to time. To stay informed, please keep your contact details up to date with us (clare.oneil.mp@aph.gov.au).

✔️ Step 1: Get your organisation or group grant-ready

Before you apply, make sure your group is set up with the basics and you have your important information handy in one spot. Things like:

- Have a short summary of your organisation: Who you are, what you do, your purpose.
- Make sure you know your:
- Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Legal status (ie incorporated association, not-for-profit).
- GST registration status.
- Charitable or DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) status (if relevant).
- Contact details (including postal address).

- You may also need to be able to produce the following documents:
- Insurance certificates.
- Financial statements.
- Committee approvals or meeting minutes.
- Letters of support.

- Check who in your group is allowed to apply for grants and sign agreements.
- Give yourself plenty of time to collate info. Leaving it until the last minute might mean you don't have all the documents ready before the deadline.

Moorabbin Area Toy Library!

Moorabbin Area Toy Library was a recipient of a Volunteer Grant. Greta and I popped down to borrow some toys.

St Peter's Primary School

St Peter's Primary School received a grant through the Planting Trees for the Queen's Jubilee program, celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

✔️ Step 2: Plan your project or program

It's great to have well-scoped projects ready. This helps you move quickly when grants open. But not every project will suit every grant. Some, like Stronger Communities, have specific criteria your project may not meet. Keep an eye out for other opportunities too (More on eligibility below).

- Make a list of project ideas you'd like funding for, including:
- A clear description of each project.
- The benefits for your community.
- A budget, with quotes. List what you need funding for and break it down clearly. You might not receive the full amount requested, so explain which parts of the project could still go ahead with partial funding.
- A timeline (start and finish dates).

- Make sure your project is realistic – can you deliver it on time and within budget? This may impact your ability to apply for a grant.

✔️ Step 3: Check your eligibility

Not every grant will suit your group or project, so check the details and criteria carefully. Always read the guidelines from start to finish before you apply.

- Is your project in Hotham? It's not just about your organisation's registered address - your project may need to be in Hotham too. Check your electorate and MP here: (https://electorate.aec.gov.au)

- Also check the following:
- Who can apply in your organisation.
- What types of projects are eligible under the grant's criteria.
- Funding amount limits (min/max).
- If your group needs to contribute money, time or resources.
- When the project will start (some grants won't fund projects that have already started).

✔️ Step 4: Write a clear application

Make your application easy to understand for someone who doesn't know your group.

- Answer all the questions clearly – keep it simple and specific.
- Use plain English – avoid technical words and assumed knowledge.
- Tailor your answers to the specific grant.
- Use a Word document first, so you can check spelling and word limits before pasting into the online form. This helps with record keeping too.
- Don't leave it to the last day to submit - systems can crash!

✔️ Step 5: If you're successful at the first stage

If your Expression of Interest is successful, my office will contact you with details on how to move to the next stage. You'll then need to provide more information to the relevant Department that manages the grant program, who will review your full application. Let us know ASAP if you're not progressing - another group may be able to benefit from the funds.

If your expression of interest isn't successful, my office will let you know as well.

✔️ Step 6: Reporting

If successful, it is important to keep records on spending, achievements, volunteer hours and the project's impact. Keep photos, receipts and feedback too - also include in any newsletters and social media. I'm always keen to hear how a project is going, so please keep me posted on your news and events!

Helpful links

Grants hubs

Federal
www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants

State
www.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs

Grants writing

Grants hub fact sheets
- www.communitygrants.gov.au/information/information-applicants

The Victorian Government guide
- www.communitygrants.gov.au/information/information-applicants

Translation services
- www.tisnational.gov.au

Workshops
- Local councils often host grant writing workshops and have templates and useful links.

Clare O'Neil MP

Federal Member for Hotham

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My office is always happy to answer any questions you may have!