



Winning Grants Funding in Australia

The Step by Step Guide

Funding Centre

www.fundingcentre.com.au

Winning Grants Funding in Australia - The Step by Step Guide

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Foreword

How many times have you read an advertisement in the newspaper calling for grants submissions, and thought about applying? And how many times have you read the list of successful applicants months later and found that groups like yours actually did get funded, and realised that you would have been in with a chance?

It's like so many things in life. People sometimes lack the confidence to have a go only to find out when the results are announced that their project was just as worthy of support as the projects that won.

You have to be in it to win it. You do have to have a go. You have to be assertive in pushing the case for your own group, you need to show that your own community thinks what you're doing is important, and you need to have confidence, passion, and organisation. If you believe strongly enough in your project, then grantmakers will often agree.

Grants aren't just for big organisations, or medical researchers, or professional fundraisers. Anybody can play. This guide gives you an advantage in putting together a quality submission for a grant.

Our Community offers other helpful tools, too. Our *Funding Centre Scoop* newsletter lists many grants that your group would never have known existed, and we have many free helpsheets on our website at www.fundingcentre.com.au.

In many ways grantseeking is the most time-efficient form of fundraising. While it takes time and effort to set up the process and to regularly apply, it doesn't exhaust the available time, resources and money in your own local community; mostly it brings money in from outside your normal circle of support.

And don't under-estimate the morale-boosting difference a successful grant application can make to your group. It is not only an injection of money but a signal that your group is on track.

You won't always be successful, but even when you're not you'll learn how to set out a concise and confident argument on why people should support your work, and that can't hurt.

I'm sure you'll find this guide an invaluable resource as you continue your great work in building a stronger community.

DENIS MORIARTY
Group Managing Director

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Introduction

Governments, philanthropic trusts and foundations provide hundreds of millions of dollars in grants funding to Australian community and not-for-profit organisations every year.

These grants support an incredibly diverse range of causes and activities, from supporting major environmental projects - a lake clean-up, wetlands restoration - to building a new adventure playground or supporting a small community group to expand its important services.

Despite the enormous volume of this flow of funding, many groups fail to secure even a dollar of it. Unfortunately, this means that many creative ideas designed to improve community life never see daylight.

While winning grants from government (federal, state and local), philanthropic trusts and foundations is serious and hard work, it's not as difficult as you might believe. There is an art to achieving success and it can be learned. It begins with identifying one or two people in your group who care enough about your cause and your goals to actually do the work. Then grants have to be found, researched, and applied for... and that's still not the end of the story.

You have to find grants that apply to your organisation – by, for example, subscribing to Our Community's Funding Centre which gives you access to Australia's most current and comprehensive database of government, philanthropic and other grants. After that, though, you need some tools to guide you through the grantseeking process.

This guide will assist you to:

- Identify which grants can support your project
- Research and collect background material for your proposal
- Clarify the components of grant applications
- Learn to write a compelling application
- Manage your relationship with your grantmakers.

We've tried wherever possible to use the advice of people from the coalface – the successful grantseekers who regularly win funding and grantmakers who spend their days sifting through applications looking for the cream of the crop.

This book provides a process for your group to follow, but we hope it gives you more than that – we hope it provides you with the confidence to apply for grants funding and to keep on applying.

Some people fire off one application, miss out, and give it up. Others think it is a waste of time to even bother sitting down to develop a single application. But if you spent a day putting together an application that made \$1000 or \$5000, think how much time and effort you saved in not having to run a chocolate drive, an appeal, the ubiquitous sausage sizzle or a special event.

The other thing to remember is that success breeds success. If there are two groups with fairly even claims for funding, grantmakers will inevitably lean towards the group that has a solid track record of winning grants funding and successfully completing the funded project.

We wish you every success and hope this book leads you to a long career as a successful grantseeker.

Why bother applying for Grants?

Some groups neglect grants funding because they think it represents too much extra work and too much time preparing applications. Some groups avoid it because they think you have to have influence, or special writing skills, or political clout. You don't.

A successful, targeted grant application pays for itself because it:

- **Saves time and money.** Some applications take only a few hours work to knock into shape, some a few days – but how many hours and how many people do you need to run a successful raffle or special event to raise \$5000? Or \$50,000?
- **Brings new money into the area.** Community groups, particularly in small towns, have a limited pool of individuals and businesses that they can keep “hitting on” for support. Grants funding means new money comes into the area without coming out of the pockets of your regular supporters.
- **Is accessible.** There are no barriers stopping you from applying for funding programs where your group meets the criteria.
- **Is cheap.** You don't have to put in much upfront to get a crack at the big money.
- **Raises serious money.** You can get an amount sufficient to make a difference - to help you expand, to run an event, to build new facilities, or even to undertake major capital works projects.
- **Puts you ahead of the pack.** Those organisations that know where the funding is and are confident enough to put in a winning application tend to apply for and win further grants.

Many groups will happily leap into other forms of fundraising that are resource and time-intensive yet a grant application can achieve the same or better result – and leave you with the ability to use the energy and enthusiasm of your volunteer force on other activities.

Introduction to Grantseeking

Each year hundreds of millions of dollars are given away in grants funding programs - everything from billion-dollar Federal Government programs to a few hundred dollars from small philanthropic or corporate foundations or local councils.

The first step in the grant application process is to learn what sorts of organisations have grant funding programs and who is eligible to apply for them.

Funding Centre - www.fundingcentre.com.au

The basic resource in this area is Our Community's *Funding Centre Scoop* newsletter and grants database, Australia's most comprehensive. They list grants available to not-for-profits in all the categories below -

- Federal government grants
- State government grants
- Philanthropic & community foundation grants
- Corporate grants

The monthly *Funding Centre Scoop* newsletter and special email alerts highlight newly available grants and detail the eligibility requirements for each grant. Subscription to the service also enables you to search the grants database.

OK, you'd expect an Our Community publication to plug Our Community services, but there's really no getting around it. The Funding Centre is the cheapest service in Australia, the one with the most grants listed, the most regularly updated, and the most convenient. Subscribers can search the database at any time of the day or night by visiting the website.

Government grants

Local Government

Have you applied for a grant or for support from your local Council?

If the answer is NO, then you have a good starting place, as local governments are often the best place for a small or inexperienced

group to begin. Local government bodies play a key role in providing small grants and funding, and if they can't fund you they can usually help you in other ways. For some reason, though, groups often overlook this source.

Grants offered by local governments (often using funds redirected from state governments) tend to be made available for specific projects or to be aimed at target groups within a community. Check with your local council for details of their grants program. See if a "Community Chest" operates in your area, and whether your group is eligible to tap it for funding.

As well as providing direct funding, many local governments also provide assistance to groups seeking grants funding from other sources. It's important to make contact and keep in contact with the person (community development officer etc) whose job it is to support local groups.

Federal & State Government

Local governments don't often have large sums of money at their disposal. If you want these, you'll have to aim higher - at federal and state-level grants. These include both grants made directly by government departments such as the Health Department and Education Department and those made by quasi-governmental organisations such as Film Australia, VicHealth or the Arts Council.

Philanthropic grants

Philanthropic grantmakers are purely private organisations channelling individual, corporate or family goodwill. Over recent years the Federal Government has changed legislation to make it easier and more attractive for people to set up their own Private Ancillary Fund (a charitable fund similar to the United States family foundation model).

It is hoped that over time, more of those funds will offer open grants programs.

Philanthropic grantmakers include:

Family Philanthropic Foundations

These are either managed or strongly influenced by the original donor or members of the donor's family. For example, second, third and now fourth generation descendants of Sidney Myer, the original donor, oversee the Myer Foundation. These foundations will normally specify broad funding priorities and areas of interest, which may change over time.

Private Independent Philanthropic Foundations

These may have begun as family foundations, but they are now administered by a board or a trustee company which is legally empowered to make grants. The grants can be based on the donor's stated priorities, and are usually guided by expert committees.

At other times trustees can have broad discretion over the distribution of the income. The trust is then known as a discretionary trust.

Community Foundations

Community Foundations build their funding bases through contributions from several or many donors, usually within a given geographic region or interest area. This money is then used to support charitable activities at a local level, in a particular city or shire, region or state. For example, the Cairns Community Foundation has been established to support charities and community groups in Far North Queensland.

Corporate Foundations

The corporate sector gives in two main ways. Some foundations receive their grantmaking funds from an allocation or a percentage of the profits made by the corporation. Unlike some of the famous foundations in the USA such as the Ford Foundation, Australian corporate philanthropic foundations tend to retain close ties with their donor companies (although most, like the Mazda Foundation, are separate, legal organisations with their own guidelines and funding priorities).

Alternatively, companies can set up and manage a grantmaking program within a profit-making company. Leader Community Newspapers' 'Local Grants', Australia Post's 'Our Neighbourhood' grants and Australian Ethical's 'Community Grants' (all open at time of writing) are three examples of companies that run such programs.

Grantmaking, which is essentially philanthropic, shouldn't be confused with such other forms of business-community partnership as sponsorship, which is directly aimed at making money for the company.

"The hardest obstacle to overcome in having a good idea funded is to have faith that there is a journey that this idea can take. It sometimes is easy to say that everything is too hard. So maintain the faith!,,

Advice from an experienced grantseeker