

Community Christmas Celebration Grants

Guidelines



Christmas celebration grants are available to community groups in Mount Alexander Shire.

We have heard, through our community engagement, that activation of public spaces is important, especially around Christmas. We are eager to see our communities embrace this grant opportunity and look forward to seeing the events and festivities during the festive season.

Grants of \$500 to each small town are available for outdoor Christmas decorations or events that bring the community together. Larger towns are eligible to apply for larger grants totaling up to \$10,000.

Grant details:

- \$500 available for small towns including Chewton, Campbells Creek, Guildford, Taradale, Elphinstone, Faraday, Fryerstown, Baringhup, Sutton Grange, Metcalfe and Muckleford.
- A total of \$2,000 each for Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead that may be used to fund several smaller initiatives from different groups.
- A total of \$4,000 available for Castlemaine that may be used to fund a number of smaller initiatives from different groups.
- To fund activities, events, or decorations to celebrate the festive season.
- Only one activity/event will be funded per township for the small-town grants, so make sure you check with other community organisations in your area before submitting your application, so you don't double up.
- Application process: Brief Online form through Smartygrants.
- Reporting requirements: Brief acquittal form to confirm funds spent and provide photos.

How to apply?

Discuss your proposal with the Economy and Culture team on 5471 1700. Complete your application online at: <https://mountalexander.smartygrants.com.au>

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Key Dates	
10 August 2026	Grants Program opens
30 August 2026	Grants Program closes Late or incomplete applications will not be considered
September 2026	Applications are assessed
Early October 2026	Applicants notified of the outcome of their application
Mid October 2026	Signed funding agreements due and invoices due Funds paid to successful applicants
November/December 2026	A list of successful applications will be published on Council's website and to local media

Who can apply?

Applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit, incorporated association, registered charity, or eligible service organisation;
- Not be in debt or in dispute with Council.

If your group does not have an ABN, is not incorporated or a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, you can still apply for a grant if you have an auspicing body, however, this must be included in the application. Auspiced applications must have a signed auspice agreement. An auspice agreement template is available on the Council's website.

What can be funded by the program?

Funding can be used for a wide variety of costs associated with Christmas activities such as:

- Music or entertainment
- Hiring of equipment – for example stage, speakers, tables, chairs, etc.
- Marketing/advertising
- Food
- Christmas decorations

What cannot be funded by the program?

- Activities or events that do not take place within the Mount Alexander Shire municipal boundary
- Organisations that have not acquitted for previous Council grants
- Projects or activities which are reasonably considered not acceptable by or offensive to the broader community
- Maintenance of facilities, equipment, or debts
- Capital expenditure (purchase of land, vehicles, or building on privately owned land)
- Recreational excursions (camps, holidays and tours)
- Ongoing operational costs (core business) such as salaries (except for contract work), rent, annual general meetings, insurance, and utility costs
- A private event that is not broadly accessible to the local community

Preparing your application

To apply for a grant, you will need to visit the SmartyGrants website:

<https://mountalexander.smartygrants.com.au>

Please note the following conditions before submitting your application:

- This is a competitive program and no application is guaranteed funding
- All successful applicants will be required to acknowledge Council support as outlined in the funding agreement
- All successful applicants will be required to register their event with our Venues and Events team and obtain relevant permits

The Smartygrants application form will require the following information:

- Contact details
- Date and time of event/activity
- Activity details (what are you planning on doing? putting up decorations, running an event? Will there be music, food or other entertainment?)
- Venue /site plans (depending on your chosen activity this could include traffic/parking details)
- Quotes for the goods and services that the funds will be used for are required to be submitted with your application

How are applications assessed?

All applications are assessed by the Mount Alexander Shire Council's Economy and Culture team.

Council must also ensure that the assessment of applications and awarding of grants are:

- o Fair
- o Transparent
- o Accountable

Assessment criteria

Assessment will occur on the events/activity's capacity to contribute to achieving any of the following objectives:

- Increase the visibility of Christmas in our region
- Increase connectedness across our community and region
- Increase opportunities for all of our communities to engage in celebrating Christmas
- Increase visitation to shopping precincts for retail and hospitality businesses

How will I know the outcome of my application?

Successful applicants will be notified by email.

- o A funding agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the funding being provided by Council will be sent. Funding agreements must be signed and returned, along with an invoice for the funding by the due date provided in the agreement.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.

- o Feedback on the reason(s) behind the decision will be provided. Applicants may also request to speak with a Council Officer about their application if they would like further feedback.

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