

This document outlines the application and evaluation approach that the Meander Valley Council (Council) will apply to determine applications for the Small Business Grant (SBG) Program. Your application must be in accordance with all information specified in this document.

What is the SBG for?

- The recovery from COVID-19 impacts and re-establishing the long term viability of small businesses (up to 20 full-time equivalent staff) in the Meander Valley local government area is a key priority for Council.
- The SBG grant is part of Council's COVID-19 Community Care and Recovery Package. An amount of \$100,000 has been allocated to support small business owners who can demonstrate an adverse financial impact from the COVID-19 Disease Emergency.
- The grants target businesses seeking to recommence normal operations after closing or reducing operations because of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency.

When can I apply?

- Applications for grants are open from 9am, Monday 18 May 2020 until 5pm, Sunday 14 June 2020.
- Applications must be made on Council's *Small Business Application Form*, which can be completed online or downloaded from Council's website.
- Applications for the SBG will be competitively assessed and at the sole discretion of the Council.
- There is no advantage to rushing an application as all applications will only be assessed after the closure date for applications.
- Applications should provide clear responses and supporting evidence. Council is not obligated to seek additional information before determining a grant application.

How much can I apply for?

- Small businesses may apply for a grant amount of up to a maximum of \$5,000. Applicants are only entitled to receive one grant.
- The amount awarded will be at the sole discretion of Council, having regard to the total number of grant applications and the demonstrated hardship and benefit of the grant to a business.
- Applicants seeking the maximum amount must demonstrate high need due to financial hardship AND high benefit in terms of direct links to the ongoing employment or re-employment of people.
- Applicants must provide evidence demonstrating they meet financial hardship as defined in this document.

When will the grants be paid?

- Grants can be paid from mid-July 2020 after approval of Council's 2020-21 Budget.
- Grants will be paid directly into the applicant's nominated bank account.

Who can get a grant?

The following eligibility requirements must be satisfied to be considered for a grant. The applicant must:

- Be a small business. For this grant a small business is one that employs or employed up to 20 full-time equivalent staff prior to 19 March 2020;
- Be a sole trader, partnership, company or trust registered in Australia for taxation purposes with an active ABN;
- Demonstrate that they operate "for profit" as an ongoing concern. Hobby or private not-for-profit businesses are not eligible;
- Be located and operating in the Meander Valley local government area;
- Demonstrate financial hardship and provide evidence to support a loss or future loss as a consequence of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency;
- Not be subject to any legal impediment, including bankruptcy or liquidation, that would impact the continuance of the business or trade of the business; and
- As of 19 March 2020, have been operating a business for two months or greater.

Do I have to demonstrate financial hardship?

Yes. Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria must also be able to demonstrate financial hardship. For the purposes of this program, financial hardship is defined as:

1. *A small business whose gross revenue or turnover has been reduced by more than 30% relative to a comparable period before the impact of COVID-19; or*
 2. *A small business whose future gross revenue (as demonstrated by cancelled orders) is reduced by more than 50% for the period to 30 September 2020.*
- A business must provide evidence of a reduction in gross revenue by comparing turnover and revenue before the declaration of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (19 March 2020) with the turnover or revenue after the declaration of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency.
 - The above comparison must compare like periods to like periods, for example, comparing revenues from April 2019 with April 2020. Business Activity Statements (BAS), where completed, are considered acceptable.
 - Where the financial impact relates to the loss of future orders, evidence of orders previously confirmed and now cancelled is to be provided.
 - Council is not obligated to request further information if the provided information is not sufficient. However, Council may, at its discretion, seek additional information (such as BAS) or evidence to satisfy a determination of hardship.

What evidence of financial hardship do I need?

In preparing your application you should provide clear evidence of financial hardship. That said, the effort and cost of preparing this evidence is acknowledged as a factor. Without limiting the means by which financial hardship can be demonstrated, one or more of the following are considered acceptable:

- Business Activity Statements;
- A relevant report from accounting software such as MYOB or Xero;
- A statement from a registered accountant;
- A statutory declaration from an appropriate and independent professional, who is familiar with the applicant's circumstances (for example a bank manager);
- A statutory declaration from the business owner detailing the nature and quantum of the hardship; and/or
- Documentation confirming receipt of a government subsidy related to hardship such as the Jobkeeper or Jobseeker benefit payments.

Applicants should provide as much detail as they can reasonably present.

How are applications assessed?

Eligibility does not automatically mean a grant will be approved. Applicants will be comparatively assessed on their ability to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Shut down their business resulting in lost revenue;
- Restricted trading or reduced operations as a result of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency;
- The extent of financial hardship relative to annual turnover;

As part of the application process, applicants are required to declare on their application form that they:

- Have a satisfactory credit history;
- Have met any statutory obligations that apply to their business, for example worker entitlements including superannuation;
- Have maintained a licence(s) and/or insurance(s) required to legally operate their small business; and
- Confirmation of intent to re-open and resume full trading.

Council's Community Grants Committee will evaluate applications and recommend grant recipients. Council will then approve the recommended grant recipients at a meeting of Council. The decisions of Council will be final and not subject to review or appeal. Applicants will be notified by email of the outcome of their application.

Where do I lodge my application?

Applications for the SBG program can be made:

- Online via the Meander Valley Council website at www.meander.tas.gov.au
- By email to mail@mvc.tas.gov.au
- By mail to Attn: Business Engagement Officer, PO Box 102, Westbury Tasmania 7303

All necessary supportive documentation must be emailed or attached to your application form for it to be considered (eg. any financial evidence of hardship).

If you need help completing your application, please contact Council on 6393 5300.

Confidentiality

The Council may use and disclose the information provided by applicants for assessing applications under the program guidelines and decisions on successful applicants. Council is also required to report the name and dollar value of successful grant applications.

Governance

As part of the Council's governance process, the Council may publicise the level of financial assistance and the identity of the business recipient from the grant program.

Right to Information

Information provided to the Council may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the Right to Information Act (2009).

Personal Information Protection

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act (2004) and the Council's Personal Information Protection Policy. This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates, on request to the Council.

Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Council, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains. Council accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document. Any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk. Council does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that is in any way related to the program.