

## 7.3 Community Services Triennial Grant: Provision of Information and Wellbeing Support Services

### Executive Summary

#### Purpose

This report seeks Council endorsement to award the Community Services Triennial Grant: Provision of Information and Wellbeing Support Services 2022-25 (the Grant) to Access Health and Community. This grant will provide Council with the provision of specified community services for a term of three years, from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025.

The specified services include Information, Advice and Referral, Wellbeing and Support and In Home Parenting Support and Parenting Skills Groups.

#### Background

The purpose of the triennial grant funding is to provide support to the most vulnerable Boroondara residents who struggle to cope with the difficulties of dealing with life events such as grief, separation and family dysfunction. This service is critical for those who are not able to afford access to support through private providers. The service will be of significant benefit to families and individuals impacted financially by COVID-19 and are not used to requiring support. Many people will be first-time service users after losing a job or business due to the pandemic. The funded services aim to address a gap in the service system rather than to replicate existing services.

The Grant was advertised on Council's website on the Community Grants page. It opened on Monday 29 November 2021 and closed Friday 24 December 2021.

The evaluation is included in the confidential section of this report (**Attachment 1**). The fixed price for year one of the triennial grant (2022/23) is \$612,940 (excl GST) and expenditure in years two and three will increase by CPI. Foreshadowed funding for the future years of the contract has been provided for within Council's Long Term Financial Strategy.

#### Key Issues

The preferred applicant has demonstrated it is capable of delivering the prescribed services and has a sound operating history. Officers have assessed the application and support the provision of services being awarded to this organisation through the community services triennial grant. The services will be offered locally and will have a significant benefit for vulnerable residents of Boroondara.

#### Next Steps

Council officers will advise the applicants of the outcome of this meeting.

## Confidentiality

Confidential information is contained in **Attachment 1** as circulated in the confidential section of the agenda attachments, in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) and the definitions of 'confidential information' in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The information relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

The item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate transparency and accountability in Council's decision making.

If discussion of the confidential information in the attachments to this report is required in order for Council to make a decision, this item will be deferred to the confidential section of the agenda.

## **Officers' recommendation**

That Council resolve to:

1. Award the Community Services Triennial Grant: Provision of Information and Wellbeing Support Services to Access Health and Community (ACN 136672681) for a term of three (3) years commencing 1 July 2022. The estimated contract cost for the term is \$2,063,426 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits is \$1,875,842.
2. Authorise the CEO or delegate to execute the funding agreement with the above provider.

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**Responsible director: Carolyn McClean, Director Community Support**

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## 1. Purpose

This report seeks Council endorsement to award the Community Services Triennial Grant: Provision of Information and Wellbeing Support Services 2022-25 (the Grant) to Access Health and Community. This contract will provide Council with the provision of specified community services for a term of three years, from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025.

## 2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 (BCP) is Council's key strategic document which sets out the 10 year vision for the City of Boroondara based on the aspirations of our community, and the priorities they told us were important. The BCP is structured around seven priority themes as follows:

- Community, Services & Facilities
- Parks & Green Spaces
- The Environment
- Neighbourhood Character & Heritage
- Moving Around
- Local Economy
- Leadership & Governance

The services provided as part of the Grant are most relevant to Theme 1: Community Services and Facilities as outlined below:

**Strategic Objective:** Community services and facilities are high quality, sustainable, inclusive and strengthen resilience.

**Strategy 1.2:** Health and wellbeing is improved through delivering, facilitating, and advocating for services and programs that are accessible and affordable.

**Strategy 1.7:** Community resilience, safety and public health are improved by working in partnership with community and government organisations.

## 3. Background

Council is approaching the end of the current Community Services Triennial Grant term. Access Health and Community is the incumbent organisation undertaking the specified community services as part of this grant.

The purpose of the triennial grant funding is to provide support to the most vulnerable Boroondara residents who struggle to cope with the difficulties of dealing with life events such as grief, separation and family dysfunction. This service is critical for those who are not able to afford access to support through private providers. The service will provide significant benefit to young people, families, and seniors who have been financially or socially impacted by COVID-19. These impacts can be a result of job or business loss or social isolation due to lockdowns or lack of face to face learning or gatherings. The funded services aim to address a gap in the service system rather than to replicate existing services.

The prescribed services include:

Information, advice and referral services

Information and advice is provided to people on a range of social issues, including housing, family violence, advocacy and legal services. Those people who present with more complex needs are referred to other services.

Volunteer staff play an important role in the provision of these early intervention services. Trained volunteer community support workers can assist with information about community services, resources, facilities and link people to the appropriate agencies and supports.

Wellbeing and Support

This service is needed for clients with more complex needs than those requiring information, advice or referral. Given the complexity, a limited number of sessions may be required to ascertain an understanding of the client's needs. This service will act as a bridge to other services through identification of the individual's needs and providing support and encouragement to access appropriate services. The worker will source appropriate services and undertake referral processes to those services.

In Home Parenting Support and Parenting Skills Groups

This service supports parents experiencing difficulties with adjusting to the challenges of parenting and those requiring additional support with infant attachment and sleep settling. Many parents of children experience significant challenges in their parenting role. These challenges may include behaviour management, bonding and attachment, boundary setting, discipline, development of routines and gaining access to both universal and specialist services. Group based programs are an effective way of assisting parents to further develop their parenting capacity and establish new networks.

The triennial Grant was advertised on Council's website and a number of capable incorporated not-for-profit community-based service providers were advised of the process being undertaken, including the incumbent. Applications opened on Monday 29 November 2021 and closed Friday 24 December 2021.

The administration of the Grant has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Council's Community Strengthening Grants policy.

#### **4. Outline of key issues/options**

Submissions were reviewed for compliance and eligibility and then evaluated on the weighted selection criteria contained in the Grant guidelines. As part of this evaluation, interviews were held with organisations in the week commencing Monday 7 February. This was to ensure that the capacity and relevant experience, partnerships and affiliations, commitment to achieving a strong and engaged community, finance and governance and service costings could be demonstrated and confirmed by the applicants.

The evaluation is included in the confidential section of this report (**Attachment 1**).

Requirements of the successful organisation included:

- Provision of services in accordance with the Agreement to commence no later than 1 July 2022 and continue for a period of three years.
- Maintenance of records of all service provision in strict confidence.
- Submission of copies of its audited annual financial statements as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year but no later than 31 October.
- Provision of quarterly and annual reporting as required by the Funding Agreement.
- Maintenance of an up to date Risk Management Plan.
- Ensuring compliance with all relevant Acts of Parliament, Regulations, Rules, Codes, Orders or Industry Awards and/or Agreements, By-Laws, Local Laws and other legislative requirements including obtaining all necessary licences and meeting all guidelines of State and Federal government authorities with respect to the activities being undertaken.
- Ensuring all employees, volunteers, agents and contractors engaged by the Organisation are appropriately skilled, trained and qualified to undertake their duties.
- Maintenance of appropriate levels of insurance and indemnification as prescribed in the Agreement.

Following the assessment process, officers propose Council award the Community Services Triennial Grant to Access Health and Community (ACN 136672681) for a contract term of three (3) years. The estimated contract cost for the term is \$2,063,426 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits is \$1,875,842.

Access Health and Community has demonstrated it is capable of delivering the prescribed services and has a sound operating history. Officers have assessed the application and support the provision of services being awarded to this organisation through the community services triennial grant. The services will be offered locally and will have a significant benefit for vulnerable residents of Boroondara.

## **5. Consultation/communication**

Organisations with the capacity to provide the prescribed services, including the incumbent, were contacted to ensure they were aware of the opportunity to make a submission for the Community Services Triennial Grant.

## **6. Financial and resource implications**

The estimated contract cost for the term is \$2,063,426 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits is \$1,875,842. The proposed expenditure in 2022-23 is forecast to be \$612,940 (excluding GST). The triennial grant in 2023-24 and 2024-25 will incorporate an increase in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) ABS Catalogue 6401.0, All Groups Index Table 1 Melbourne on each anniversary of the commencement date of the agreement. Foreshadowed funding for the future years of the contract has been provided for within Council's Long Term financial strategy.

	Annual grant payment (inc GST)	Annual grant payment (excl GST)
2022/23	\$674,234	\$612,940
2023/24 estimate (2% inc)	\$687,719	\$625,199
2024/25 estimate (2% inc)	\$701,473	\$637,703
Total	\$2,063,426	\$1,875,842

## 7. Governance issues

The administration of the Grant has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Council's Community Strengthening Grants policy.

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, particularly those rights associated with respect, equality and dignity.

The officers responsible for this report have no general or material interests requiring disclosure.

## 8. Social and environmental issues

The prescribed services are specified to support vulnerable members of the Boroondara community. The services are broad and reach a wide catchment of people to enable them to better cope with difficult life events and pressures.

## 9. Evaluation and review

The successful organisation participates in quarterly meetings and provides annual reports for review. Emerging issues are regularly discussed and links are made with the broader service system.

## 10. Conclusion

Officers propose to award the Community Services Triennial Grant to Access Health and Community for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025. The estimated contract cost for the term is \$2,063,426 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits is \$1,875,842.

**Manager:** Andrew McHugh, Manager Health and Wellbeing Services

**Report officer:** Wendy Smith, Social Policy Consultant