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| Investing in Women  Grassroots Grants |
| Program feedback – June 2023 |
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# General feedback on applications

Thank you for your application to the *Investing in Women Grassroots Grant Program*.

We received an overwhelming amount of interest in this program and were pleased to see such varied and innovative gender equality projects across applications.

We received over 200 applications to the program, but were only able to fund 22% of these within the available budget, meaning the assessment process was highly competitive.

For this reason, we strongly encourage you to continue applying for future funding opportunities through the Victorian Government Office for Women, as may become available on an ad hoc basis.

To assist you in considering the outcome of your application and preparing for future opportunities, this document summarises feedback from assessment, and provides examples from some of the highest scoring applications we received.

#### Demonstrating expertise

Overall, strong applications considered how their organisation might be *uniquely* placed to deliver a project that catered to the needs and experiences of a specific group of women or girls in their local community, particularly where there was a gap in mainstream services.

They also took proactive steps to create safe and inclusive spaces for trans and gender diverse people, and designed activities that were tailored to the needs of a particular group of women, for example, older women or migrant women entrepreneurs.

#### Style and length of answers

We appreciate the time and effort it takes to put together a grant application and know this can be difficult to balance for small organisations. For this reason, we are happy to receive responses in the application form in your preferred style or format, including dot points, and encourage you to submit short and focussed responses.

While additional attachments can support your responses, you are not marked down for not including them, and assessment is mainly focussed on your responses to the application questions.

# Feedback on responses to application questions

#### Activities (Question: What are you going to do?)

Successful applications identified and then took a thoughtful approach to meeting a *specific* community need. They explained who the organisation was, why they were well-placed to lead the project and why the project was important.

Activities described were focussed and achievablewith the amount of funding requested and demonstrated how the funding would be spent.

**For example:** Applications with a clearly defined scope of planned activities built a convincing case that their project was achievable, relevant to the needs of their community and aligned with the goals of the grant program. A clear project scope might look like:

*‘With the $8,000 requested, we plan to partner with a local financial counsellor to run three workshops on use of Afterpay with girls and women aged 15-24.’*

Strong applications also thought about ways to progress gender equality at every stage of planning and delivering their activity.

**For example:** In a strong application for an event, an applicant might describe their plans to build women’s skills in event management and engage women suppliers, as well as providing an opportunity for women to attend the event itself.

Beyond building women’s personal skills, experience or confidence, successful applications considered the structural causes of gender inequality and took thoughtful steps to address them within the available funding.

**For example:** by offering childcare alongside a proposed activity or having a clear plan to work with community members of all genders to challenge gender stereotypes.

#### Objectives (Question: How does your project align with program objectives?)

While many applications were able to show an alignment with the overarching intention of the program, for example ‘*supporting and empowering Victorian women*,’ it was less common to see clear and intentional alignment with at least one of the program’s four core objectives:

* **Cultural change:** Victoria is free from gender stereotypes, gender roles and prejudices.
* **Health and wellbeing:** the health and wellbeing of Victorians are not limited by gender.
* **Safety and respect:** all Victorians are safe and treated with respect.
* **Economic and material security:** Victorians have equal access to economic and material security.

Strong applications were able to clearly demonstrate how the planned activity would contribute to achieving one or more of these objectives for women in their community.

#### Outcomes (Question: What will the project achieve?)

Outcomes for successful projects were realistic and connected clearly to proposed activities.

**For example:** While broad outcomes like “women’s health will improve” may be achieved, it is more compelling to focus on more specific outcomes of the activity. A more specific set of outcomes might look like:

*‘By supporting 10 women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to participate in in-language driver education, we expect to see participants gain confidence to go for their Australian driver’s licence.*

*Because a licence is a requirement of many jobs and supports women to travel independently, this activity will support women’s participation in the workforce and community. We plan to conduct a series of surveys with participants following the training to see how many go on to get a driver’s licence.’*

#### Addressing gender equality (Question: How will the project contribute to addressing gender inequality?)

Strong applications described specific barriers to women’s participation and gender equality experienced in their community, and demonstrated how the activity had been designed to address this.

**For example:** An application might have had a focus on digital literacy and social connection for older multicultural women, because the organisation observed that this cohort of women is at greater risk of isolation and there are no existing programs in the area that adequately address this need.