



Expression of Interest - Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east

Guidelines

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OFFICIAL



Premier
and Cabinet

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of Country.

We respectfully acknowledge all First Peoples of Victoria and celebrate their enduring connection to land, skies and waters. We thank First People for their care of Country and contributions to Victorian communities. We honour and pay our respects to First Peoples' Elders past and present.

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Accessibility

To receive this document in an alternative format, phone **1300 112 755**, email **multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au**, or contact National Relay Service on **1800 555 660** if required. HTML format is available at Expression of Interest – Chinese Community Centre <https://www.vic.gov.au/community-centre-expressions-interest>



For languages other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service National hotline **131 450** then ask for **1300 112 755**.

Contents

Victorian Government values.....	2
Message from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.....	3
Introduction and EOI program objective.....	4
Two - Stage approach	4
EOI principles and preferences	4
How 'ready' does your proposed project need to be?.....	5
Key dates and funding	6
Key dates and timelines.....	6
Funding available.....	6
Matched and additional funding requirements.....	6
Eligibility	7
Organisation eligibility	8
Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	8
Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?	8
Project eligibility - what the grant money can be used for	9
Eligible activities	9
Ineligible activities	9
Application documents.....	10
Stage 1.....	10
Stage 2.....	12
Assessment process overview	13
How your application will be scored	14
Merit-based assessment.....	14
How to apply	15
Submitting your application.....	15
How to strengthen your application	15
Do you have any questions?	15
Successful application(s)	16
Need more information or help?	16
Glossary	17

Victorian Government values

Multiculturalism in Victoria is more than just diversity of cultures, languages, faiths and traditions. It is providing the systems and supports that make our shared community stronger. It is the knowledge that sharing cultures and understanding our cultural differences is a strength. It also provides a sense of belonging that contributes to the community harmony Victorians are so proud of.

The Victorian Government is committed to:

- protecting the rights of all Victorians to be free from racism, vilification, and discrimination of any kind
- building community harmony
- ensuring every Victorian feels safe and can participate in all aspects of Victorian life, irrespective of Aboriginality, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, faith, language, culture, migration or visa status, class, ability and age.

The contractual relationship between funded organisations and the Department of Premier and Cabinet reflects this commitment. It sets out the expectation that in the delivery of projects and initiatives funded by the Victorian Government, organisations will promote and uphold the government's stated values of:

- one law for all
- freedom to be yourself
- discrimination is never acceptable
- a fair go for all
- it is up to all of us to contribute to a Victoria we can be proud of.



Message from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs

I'm pleased to open the Expression of Interest for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east.

The Allan Labor Government recognises the importance of having safe, accessible and culturally appropriate spaces to gather and celebrate heritage and traditions.

We know that having dedicated spaces to come together, allowing for celebrations of unique culture and tradition, is essential to the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

Our culturally diverse communities make significant social, economic and cultural contributions to our state, including Victoria's Chinese community.

Supporting culturally diverse communities to create and maintain their own spaces and facilities helps to build community connection, share cultural understanding, and foster a more inclusive society.

Since 2014, the government has invested more than \$96 million to deliver over 590 multicultural infrastructure projects, benefitting thousands of Victorians and strengthening the connections that underpin our diverse communities.

I invite Chinese community organisations to express their interest in establishing a Chinese community centre in Melbourne's east.

Recognising the Chinese community in Melbourne's east, this community centre will provide a safe space, focused on the distinct cultural needs of the community.

We are proud to support our diverse communities by investing in community infrastructure. I encourage Chinese community organisations to apply for this opportunity.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ingrid Stitt'.

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Introduction and EOI program objective

The **Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east** is intended to identify a lead Chinese community organisation that has suitable capability, capacity and wants to develop, build and manage a Chinese community-specific community centre to be located in Melbourne's east.

If a suitable organisation can be identified, they will be offered up to **\$2.4 million** towards the infrastructure costs of their proposed project.

Two - Stage approach

Stage 1 is an open application for all organisations that meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants in this stage need to demonstrate a basic project outline, the readiness and feasibility of their project, and provide documents to support and validate their application. An assessment process will then be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (the department) resulting in one recommended applicant or a shortlist of recommended applicants being invited to proceed to **Stage 2**.

Stage 2 will be invitation only for shortlisted applicants who passed the eligibility and merit assessments of **Stage 1**. Applicants in this stage will need to demonstrate more detailed project readiness and feasibility and provide additional supporting documentation. Applicants will progress through a second assessment process, including an expert review panel, before final recommendations are provided to the Minister.

EOI principles and preferences

The EOI seeks to identify projects which meet the following principles and preferences – but alternative options put forward may also be considered:

- Projects proposing “whole of Chinese community” access to the community centre – in favour of preferenced access to a single language, faith or cultural group
- Projects proposing new construction or extension to an existing facility – in favour of renovating but not extending an existing space / facility
- New or initial project concepts - in favour of projects already commenced (unless the commenced project closely fits the other EOI preferences)
- Community led and managed projects - government is not the sole funder and only a minority, starting funder
- The identification of one most-suitable applicant organisation and project to be offered funding – in favour of splitting the available funding between more than one
- The target applicants are Chinese community organisations, but flexibility may be offered to a different entity type if a close fit to the EOI and preferences can be achieved.

How 'ready' does your proposed project need to be?

The department understands that community facilities such as community centres are important to organisations and their communities. These facilities also require very significant, ongoing community member commitment, financial and professional contractor resources to plan for, build, maintain and operate the facilities successfully.

The department also understands that Chinese community organisations and their communities across Melbourne's east may be at different stages of community scale, demand and need. They may already have existing facilities or may still be working towards achieving their first facility. In 2025, potential projects could be at the discussion, conceptual, planning or even construction or fit out stages

For the purposes of this EOI, the department is seeking a project ready to start physical works within a reasonable time frame – for example, within a year.

Stage 1 of the EOI tests the readiness level of applicants across a mix of factors including public commitments, financial, scale and current stage of development proposals.

Recognising that your organisation and project proposal will likely have a mix of strengths and weaknesses, and that it will be competing with others, we invite you to apply.



Key dates and funding

Key dates and timelines

The timeline for the EOIs is:

Stage 1 applications:

- Applications open 6 August 2025 and close 17 September 2025
- Assessment of applications, September/October 2025

Stage 2:

- Invitation to shortlisted organisations, October 2025
- Assessment period, November/December 2025

Please note: **Stage 2** exact dates are not yet confirmed.

Funding available

If a suitable organisation can be identified, they will be offered up to **\$2.4 million** towards the infrastructure costs of their proposed project.

Matched and additional funding requirements

The successful applicant(s) will be required to contribute a minimum equivalent amount in matched funding to the construction of the community centre (50% grant : 50% applicant funding contribution) and then the applicant organisation will fund any additional project funding requirements. Applicant organisations are also responsible for any costs exceeding the grant and matched funding amounts.

Applicants invited to **Stage 2** must demonstrate they can access the matched funding contribution and have a project financial plan when submitting the **Stage 2** application.

Supporting community diversity

Program funding aims to recognise and support diversity and encourage organisations to take an inclusive, intersectional approach in proposals.

There is an expectation that all applicants consider the diverse needs and experiences of community members including, for example, Chinese Victorian women, seniors, LGBTIQ+ people, youth, and children.

Applications which clearly outline how their proposal is inclusive of the whole Chinese community will be considered positively.

Eligibility

Applications to the program must be for the extension of an existing facility owned by the applicant organisation, or construction of a new facility on land already owned by the applicant organisation.

The intended project location should be within these Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Melbourne's east: Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse.

The same eligibility requirements apply to all applicant organisations and projects.

To be eligible to participate in the EOI all eligibility requirements must be met.

Your application must:

- meet the organisation eligibility criteria
- include only eligible grant activities that align with the EOI for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east program objective
- submit all mandatory documents
- meet matched funding requirements
- have no outstanding reports due to the department
- not be the responsibility of another ministerial portfolio (such as health or education)

Only eligible applications will be merit assessed and considered for invitation to **Stage 2**.



Figure 1 Eligible LGAs

Organisation eligibility

Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Organisation eligibility

Your organisation must be an incorporated legal entity registered under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) or the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) or incorporated through an Act of Parliament

and

Your organisation must have a current Australian Business Number (ABN) matching the applicant organisation's name

and

Your organisation must be a not-for-profit Chinese Community Organisation which you must confirm by showing that your organisation is either:

- registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- or**
- registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria as an incorporated association
- or**
- a social enterprise with a clearly stated purpose or mission related to supporting Chinese communities in Victoria (Social enterprises must attach their constitution, rules or governance documents with their application).

Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

Organisations that are not eligible for the Expression of Interest for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east program include:

- any organisation which is not a Chinese community organisation
- unincorporated legal entities
- individuals and sole traders
- organisations that:
 - are commercial or set up to make a profit (except social enterprises)
 - have not complied with the terms and conditions of previous grants
- groups whose activities sit in another ministerial portfolio (such as health, education or sport and recreation)
- public companies limited by shares (unless a foundational document can prove not-for-profit status)
- commercial enterprises
- local government authorities (LGAs) including LGA-managed, operated, administered, and regulated trusts
- TAFE institutes and universities – excluding community language schools that are eligible
- registered pre-, primary and secondary schools.

To check if your organisation is:

- an incorporated association, visit [Consumer Affairs Victoria <consumer.vic.gov.au>](http://consumer.vic.gov.au)
- a registered business, go to [ABN Lookup <abr.business.gov.au/>](http://abr.business.gov.au/).
- registered as a company, visit [Australian Securities and Investments Commission <connectonline.asic.gov.au/>](http://connectonline.asic.gov.au/)
- registered with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission \(ACNC\)](http://acnc.gov.au/charity), visit <acnc.gov.au/charity>

If you are not sure if your organisation will be eligible, email the Multicultural Affairs Infrastructure and Strategic Projects Team multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au to ask.

Project eligibility - what the grant money can be used for

A grant funding offer will **not** be made until the EOI process has completed.

If a suitable organisation can be identified, they will be offered up to **\$2.4 million** towards the infrastructure costs of their proposed project.

Eligible activities

Eligible infrastructure costs, in order of EOI preference, will include:

- **construction, trades and works to create a new community facility**
- **significant renovations / remodelling or upgrade works on an existing community facility** including:
 - alterations, extensions or internal remodelling to improve accessibility or create new rooms, kitchen or bathroom replacement.
 - outdoor areas such as permanent staging
- project management costs paid to a professional contractor (using up to 10% of the total grant amount requested) – these require a quote from a professional consultant and cannot be from a staff member or volunteer of your organisation.
- late-stage town-planning related works – but only if a planning application has already been lodged.

Ineligible activities

Grants funds cannot be used for the following:

- projects that do not align with the aim of the EOI to create a community centre
- project locations outside the target LGAs
- the purchase of:
 - land, property and/or buildings (project proponents must already own and not lease the land)
 - unfixed, mobile or transferable assets

- assets, materials and products from overseas suppliers (contractors must be based in Victoria)
- leasing of properties / buildings
- already completed or partly completed projects, works or activities
- contingency costs for the project
- planning permit and building permit application fees or tribunal costs
- projects that have previously received funding from Multicultural Affairs or the department; for example, if your organisation received funding in 2021 to construct a community hall or centre, you cannot apply for more funds to complete the same community hall or centre
- projects for infrastructure, facilities or land that is privately owned and not accessible by community members (community infrastructure facilities must have public access)
- organisations or projects that are the responsibility of another ministerial portfolio
- projects advancing political activities
- projects advancing religious activities (for example, infrastructure exclusively used for worship – to be funded, it must be open for wider community use)
- recurrent or ongoing costs (such as rent and utilities, staff salaries / volunteer payments, building maintenance)
- inappropriate use of public funds that don't match the EOI objective or Victorian values.

If you are not sure if your proposed activities will be eligible, email the Multicultural Affairs Infrastructure and Strategic Projects Team multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au to ask.

Application documents

Stage 1

Mandatory documents

The following documents are mandatory. They must be included for your application to be eligible.

Mandatory document	Requirements
Constitution, Foundation or Governance document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any format will be accepted.Most incorporated organisations have a document which sets out their purpose and organisation rules
Financial statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Include your organisation's financial statements for 2022-23 and 2023-24. (You may have already provided these to Consumer Affairs Victoria [through myCAV] or to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as part of their required annual reporting.)
Land Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A "Register Search Statement" from www.landata.vic.gov.au (or similar)
Photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6-8 photographs showing all areas of the proposed project location
Project Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You must use the Project Plan template at https://www.vic.gov.au/community-centre-expressions-of-interest
Copies of minutes from your last two Annual General Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any format will be accepted.
Public liability insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A certificate of currency for public liability insurance with a minimum cover of \$10 million for any one incident is required.

Readiness documents – attach if available

The following documents are not mandatory but you should attach them if they are available as doing so will likely improve your assessment score.

It is not anticipated that applicants will have all or even some of these documents.

Providing any of these documents assists the department to assess your organisation's and your proposed project's level of readiness but the assessment process also considers a broad range of other criteria.

Readiness document	Requirements
If available, any evidence of an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or managing Committee discussion or decision by your organisation's members to support or proceed with the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This will help to validate your organisation's membership support for the proposed project
If available, copies of professional conceptual drawings or schematics for the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any format will be accepted.
If available, copies of any evidence you have that architectural or town planning documents have been contracted or are in production for the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any format will be accepted
If available, the current planning permit or planning permit application for the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Planning Permit from your local Council or copy of lodged planning application
If available, the current endorsed plans for the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Endorsed Plan document from your local Council
If available, the current building permit for the proposed project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building Permit document from your surveyor
Evidence of matched funding or additional funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Acceptable evidence of any matched or additional funding includes your organisation's current bank statement at date of application showing a balance that at least meets the funding gap (account must be in the name of the applicant organisation)Statutory declarations and personal bank account balances of members of the organisation are not an acceptable form of matched funding evidence.

Stage 2

Mandatory documents

The following documents will be requested only if an applicant organisation is shortlisted / invited to participate in **Stage 2** of the EOI.

Mandatory document:	Requirements:
Business Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Business Case template will be provided only to Stage 2 shortlisted applicants• The Business Case will request information such as the proposal summary and project rationale, proposed operating model, an implementation plan, project financial planning (including confirmed finance or fundraising plans), and risk assessment.
Key People Profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Key People Profiles template will be provided only to Stage 2 shortlisted applicants to outline the relevant experience and capabilities of the organisation's authorised representatives and nominated project contact• The profiles will be an opportunity for shortlisted organisations to outline their experience with respect to delivering infrastructure projects and/or operating community facilities.

Optional documents

You may opt to attach further supporting documents to strengthen your application such as a letter of support or your organisation's current calendar of activities.

You will also be asked to attach any updated documents you may now have related to the "Readiness documents" above. For example, a copy of a planning application may not have been available when **Stage 1** applications close, but it may become available before the closing date of **Stage 2**.

Assessment process overview

All **Stage 1** applications will undergo eligibility assessment and then merit assessment.

Stage 2, shortlisted applications will undergo a further merit assessment

Assessment process	Stage 1	Stage 2
Eligibility assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department reviews all applications and attached documents to decide on eligibility. 	
Merit-based assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department will assess all eligible applications against the assessment criteria, based on responses provided in the Stage 1 application form and the attached documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department will assess shortlisted applications against the assessment criteria, based on responses provided in the Stage 2 application form and the attached documents.
Assessment panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A panel reviews the department's application recommendations. The panel will include representatives from the Multicultural Affairs portfolio and the Victorian Multicultural Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A panel reviews the department's application recommendations. The panel will include representatives from the Multicultural Affairs portfolio and the Victorian Multicultural Commission.
Ministerial approval		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minister for Multicultural Affairs makes the final decision based on the recommendations following the second assessment panel.
Application outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department notifies all organisations in writing, whether their application is recommended for invitation to Stage 2 of the EOI or not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department will notify final EOI outcomes to Stage 2 participants whether their application is recommended for funding or not.

All decisions by the department or the Minister for Multicultural Affairs are final. This includes decisions on any aspect of the EOI application, eligibility and assessment process and:

- any decision to invite the applicant to participate in **Stage 2** of the EOI or offer or award a grant under this EOI
- any decision to withdraw the invitation, offer or cancel a related grant funding agreement.

How your application will be scored

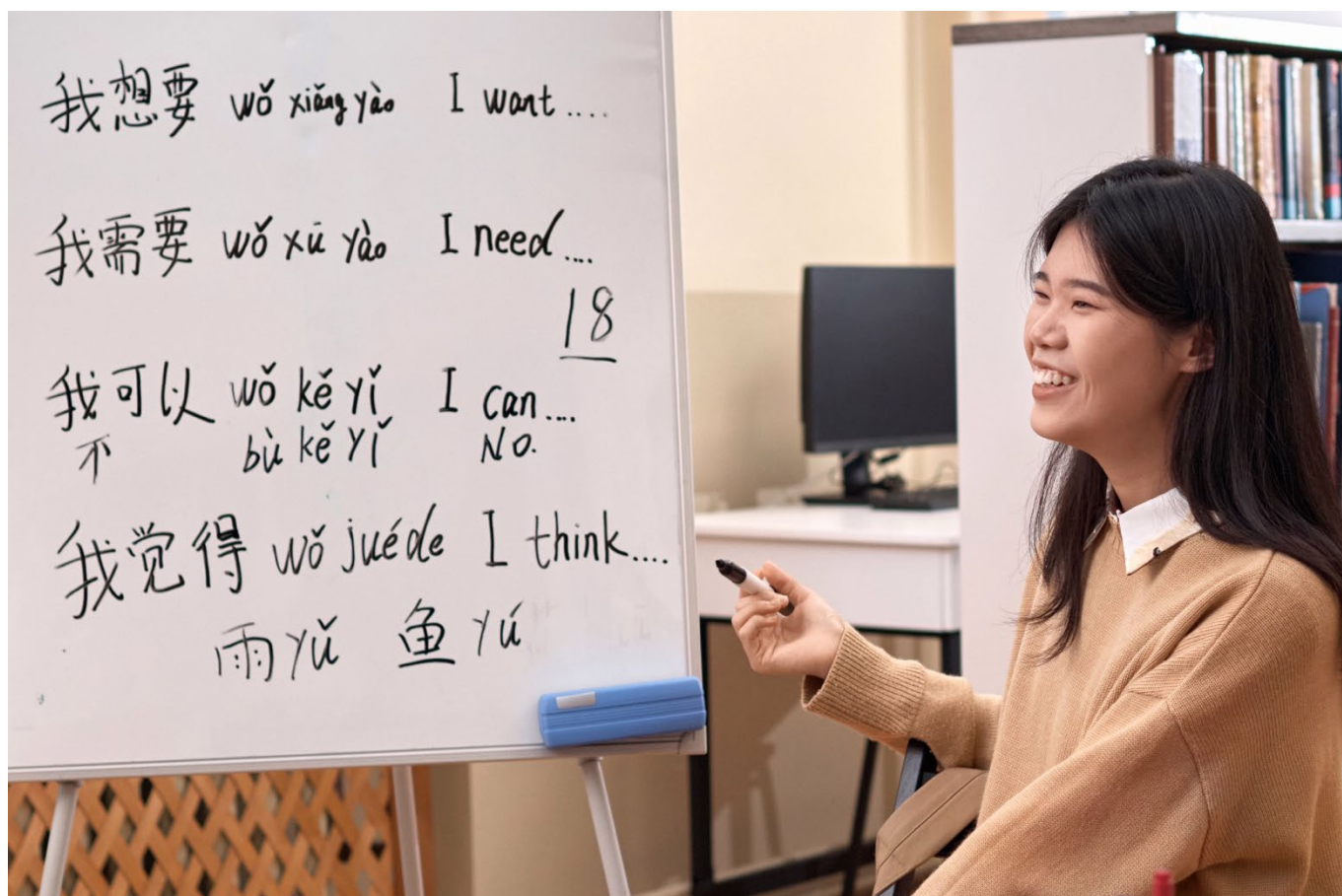
The assessment criteria and weightings are outlined in the table on the following page.

The Expression of Interest for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east program is an open and competitive program assessed on both eligibility and merit. The Department of Premier and Cabinet – Multicultural Affairs Programs and Partnerships branch (the department) runs the program.

The department may make retrospective changes to the program guidelines.

Merit-based assessment

Assessment criteria	Weighting
Alignment with the objective of the Expression of Interest for the Chinese Community Centre in Melbourne's east program	25%
Contribution to community, cultural, economic and social inclusion for the broad and diverse Victorian Chinese community	25%
Return on investment	20%
Readiness to proceed including project feasibility	15%
Organisational Capability to Deliver and Sustain a Chinese Community Centre	15%



How to apply

Applications open on 6 August 2025.

Read these EOI guidelines carefully and:

- make sure your organisation and project meet the eligibility criteria before you start an application
- if you have any questions about your proposed EOI response, proposed project or the application process, email the [Multicultural Affairs Infrastructure and Strategic Projects Team](mailto:multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au) at - <multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au>

Submitting your application

Submit your application by [completing the online application form](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-centre-expressions-interest) <https://www.vic.gov.au/community-centre-expressions-interest>

You must answer all the questions. Incomplete applications will not be eligible.

Submit all the mandatory documents. If you do not include all the mandatory documents, your application will be ineligible.

Applications close at 3:00 pm on 17 September 2025.

The Grants Portal, where applications are made, closes electronically at 3pm and so all applications must be completed with all attachments already uploaded before 3pm.

Late applications cannot be accepted. You will be notified of the outcome of your application once all applications have been assessed.

How to strengthen your application

Applicants can strengthen their applications by responding carefully to all questions in the application form and providing strong evidence of both the need for the project and the expected benefits and outcomes from the project. High scoring applications are likely to:

- Answer all questions, using data to strengthen their response
- Describe how community members will use the community centre and what benefits they will gain from doing so
- Share more information about the applicant organisation
- Provide all the mandatory documents (only applications providing all the mandatory documents will be assessed)

Do you have any questions?

To support organisations considering an application and to ask any related questions, the department team is available for Teams meetings which you can arrange by contacting

[Multicultural Affairs Infrastructure and Strategic Projects Team](mailto:multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au) at - <multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au>

Successful application(s)

If your organisation's EOI **Stage 1** response is reviewed as recommended for further consideration, you will be invited to participate in **Stage 2** of the EOI.

If your organisation's EOI **Stage 1** response is reviewed as not recommended for further consideration, you will be advised of the application outcome before **Stage 2** of the EOI opens and application feedback will be available for your organisation.

Need more information or help?

For more information, email or phone

- multicultural.infrastructure@dpc.vic.gov.au

An email will reach the EOI team directly and you can ask a question or arrange a Teams meeting to ask questions.

- 1300 112 755 during business hours

A phone call will reach the call centre.



Glossary

Expression of Interest (EOI) - Chinese Community Centre – guidelines specific definitions

Term	Definition
Additional funding	The amount of any “funding gap” between the grant amount requested and the total project cost – which your organisation will be required to pay and provide evidence it can pay (if shortlisted for Stage 2).
Application / EOI response	The phrases “application” and “EOI response” are used throughout these guidelines and the application form. They have the same meaning / are interchangeable.
Community Centre	<p>A community centre, community hall or community hub is a building or facility where members of a community gather for group activities, social support, public information, and other purposes.</p> <p>Activities at the centre generally support community gatherings and can be very wide-ranging but might include, for example: cultural celebrations and cultural education incl language / food / music and dance classes, art and recreational activities, support for specific cohorts such as seniors or young families or youth activities, meetings of the community on various issues, volunteer activities, organising local non-government activities.</p>
Department of Premier and Cabinet	The Department of Premier and Cabinet – Multicultural Affairs Programs and Partnerships branch (the department) operates the program.
Grant amount requested	This is the funding amount (\$) that your organisation is applying for.
Chinese community organisation	An organisation that is owned and managed by a Chinese ancestry, language, faith or cultural community which services Chinese Victorian community member needs, customs, and traditions. The organisation will exist to support people from Chinese ancestry, cultural, language or faith groups.
Intersectional approach	An approach that examines and addresses the interconnected nature of attributes of a person or group of people that create overlapping and interdependent systems of disadvantage or discrimination. This includes through religion, ancestry, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, language or communication requirements and ability.
Match(ed) funding	<p>The amount your organisation will be required to pay as its monetary contribution towards the total project cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minimum matched funding contribution required for this program is \$1 from the grant : \$1 from the applicant organisation. <p>The applicant organisation can raise its matched funding contribution from various possible sources such as its own savings reserves, from</p>

	<p>other grants such as Commonwealth or philanthropic grants or bank loans.</p> <p>The minimum matched funding contribution must be available at the completion of Stage 2.</p>
Direct members and broader community participation	<p>Direct members are the registered and/or paid subscribers who make up an organisation's core, "direct" membership (this is often supported by a membership fee).</p> <p>Typically, a community organisation will also allow broader community participation in the organisation's events and services or activities (perhaps for a fee per event or activity).</p>
Need	<p>Clearly explaining your organisation's "need" for a community centre provides the assessor with part of the rationale for recommending funding.</p> <p>Your explanation should be objective and supported by data and/or other relevant resources that help to substantiate the need to fund the opportunity for your organisation.</p> <p>Remember that assessors are reviewing competitive applications which are all from other Chinese community organisations so take the opportunity in the application form to explain why your proposed project is different and make the case for your organisation's relative need for funding.</p>
Social enterprise	<p>An organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being led by an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission that is consistent with a public or community benefit • deriving most of its income from trade • reinvesting most of its profit or surplus in fulfilling its mission (at least 50%).
Total Project Cost	<p>Total Project Cost is the anticipated final cost of all activities needed to reach an opening of the community centre.</p> <p>At Stage 1 of the EOI, we understand that the Total Project Cost information you provide will be an early "best estimate".</p> <p>At Stage 2 of the EOI, a more developed cost estimate will be expected.</p>
east / east metropolitan / Melbourne's east	<p>The intended project location should be within the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of: Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash or Whitehorse.</p>

