

Introduction

The **Shopfront Business Grants Program** is a competitive funding program providing financial support for small businesses who are planning to lease and activate commercial shopfronts within the City of Melbourne municipality. The initiative aims to reduce shopfront vacancy rates, strengthen the local economy, and create vibrant, engaging, and innovative streetscapes that attract and benefit both residents, workers and visitors.

The program will operate on an ongoing basis with applications accepted year-round until funding is exhausted.

The funding must be used to execute high-quality retail, hospitality, or creative space fit outs that enhance the surrounding precinct, drive foot traffic, and deliver a greater localised economic impact for the city.

Before starting your application, please read the **Program Guidelines**.

We also encourage you to join our information session on Monday 19 October 2026, from 12pm to 1pm. Registration details are available on our grants webpage.

The City of Melbourne boundaries

The municipality's geographic footprint encompasses Docklands, East Melbourne, Fishermans Bend, Jolimont, Kensington, North Melbourne, Melbourne's central business district, Parkville, South Wharf, West Melbourne and areas of Carlton, Carlton North, Flemington, Port Melbourne, South Yarra and Southbank.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It does NOT cover the **Melbourne metropolitan area**. If in doubt please refer to our [interactive map](#).

Want advice before you apply?

For any questions regarding the grants, contact businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

For advice on starting or growing your business in City of Melbourne municipality, or other matters like planning and permits, contact our Business Concierge service.

To request an appointment with Business Concierge, please fill out the [online form](#) or call 9658 9658 (press 1 for business) and Business Concierge will be in contact to discuss.

Please read before proceeding

Before proceeding with your application, please ensure:

- you have read the full grant guidelines
- you meet ALL eligibility criteria
- you have the following documentation ready to attach to your application:
 - evidence of a fully executed commercial lease signed by both the tenant and the landlord/ property owner
 - evidence of the shopfront being vacant for a minimum of six (6) consecutive months immediately prior to signing the lease

- a project plan outlining the key steps and timeline for establishing the business and opening the shopfront
- a project budget detailing the costs associated with establishing and operating the business, including fit-out works, equipment, stock, salaries and other operating expenses
- financial documentation, including financial projections and, where applicable, historical financial statements for the business

Please note that you can only submit one application per business per year

Eligibility

** indicates a required field*

Business eligibility

Please note that you will need to provide evidence for these responses as part of your application.

Does your business have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Is your business an Australia registered business, sole trader, company, business cooperative or partnership? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

**You will be required to provide your ASIC certificate or equivalent document with evidence of the business's legal structure.*

Does your business currently have less than 20 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

**To determine your business's FTE, the total hours of all employees must be no more than 800 hours per week.*

Does your business have the appropriate business insurances? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

**Minimum requirement is Public Liability Insurance covering up to \$20 million.*

Is your business financially viable without the funding being requested in this application? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

**You will be required to provide evidence of financial viability including past financial documentation.*

Is your business a franchise, subsidiary of larger company or unincorporated association? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Shopfront and lease eligibility

Please note that you will be required to upload a signed lease and evidence of length of vacancy as part of this application.

Is the shopfront you are leasing located within the City of Melbourne municipality? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*Check municipality boundaries at <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/city-maps>

Is your lease for a minimum of two (2) years AND the lease was signed no more than 90 days before this application is submitted? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you have evidence that the shopfront has been vacant for a minimum of six (6) months before you signed the lease?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*This needs to be a signed letter from the real estate agent or landlord stating the exact length of vacancy.

To be eligible for this grant round, I confirm the applicant and/or business:

does NOT have an outstanding debt to City of Melbourne or have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with City of Melbourne. *

- ☐ True

has not received funding from other sources for the same activity being requested in this application. *

- ☐ True

is NOT a government department or agency, foundation or grant making body. *

- ☐ True

is NOT a political organisation or organisation that has a political purpose. *

- ☐ True

does NOT have an adverse effect on public health, safety, the environment or heritage. *

- ☐ True

does NOT sell or promote unethically sourced animal products. *

☐ True

does NOT exploit or use animals in harmful ways. *

☐ True

are NOT currently City of Melbourne employees, immediate family or contractors. *

☐ True

complies with anti-discrimination / anti-vilification legislation and / or is compatible with Council's policies, priorities or values. Council's priorities include those set out in the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26 (see www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/inclusive-melbourne-strategy) *

☐ True

has NOT received business grant funding from the City of Melbourne in the 12 months prior to submitting an application *

☐ True

Ineligible application - do not submit this application

Based on your responses, your business does not currently meet the eligibility requirements for the Shopfront Business Grants Program.

Please do NOT submit this application.

If you do submit this form, your application will not be assessed and you will not receive any further correspondence from us regarding this application.

If you wish to speak with us directly regarding your eligibility, please contact us via businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

City of Melbourne offers a wide range of grants and sponsorships to individuals, businesses and community organisations in a range of sectors. We recommend checking the [Grants and Sponsorships](#) webpage for any opportunities that may be suitable.

I acknowledge that this business is ineligible to apply for this grant round. *

☐ Agree

Applicant details

*** indicates a required field**

Name and contact details

Main contact *

Title First Name Last Name

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Role/position *

Email address *

Must be an email address.

Contact number *

Must be an Australian phone number.

Business details

* indicates a required field

Business name

Registered business name *

Organisation Name

Trading Name *

ABN *

The ABN provided will be used to look up the following information. Click Lookup above to check that you have entered the ABN correctly.

Information from the Australian Business Register	
ABN	
Entity Name	
ABN Status	
Entity Type	
Goods & Services Tax (GST)	
DGR Endorsed	
ATO Charity Type	More information
ACNC Registration	
Tax Concessions	
Main Business Location	

Must be an ABN.

Upload a copy of your Certificate of Incorporation or Registration of business name

Attach a file:

Business legal structure *

- ☐ Company ACN
- ☐ Cooperative
- ☐ Incorporated association
- ☐ Partnership
- ☐ Sole trader
- ☐ Not-for-profit organisations
- ☐ Other:

Date of establishment / incorporation *

Must be a date.

Business main phone number *

Must be an Australian phone number.

Business email address *

Must be an email address.

Website *

Must be a URL.

Australian Company Number *

Must be a number.

For more information about registering as a company visit www.business.gov.au.

Upload your ASIC certificate *

Attach a file:

Cooperative number *

If you are unsure of your cooperative number, visit [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

Incorporated Association *

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Form Preview

If you are unsure of your incorporated association number, visit [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

Current employees

Please provide the number of staff your business currently employs across **all** locations.

Full-time *

Must be a number.

Part-time *

Must be a number.

Casual *

Must be a number.

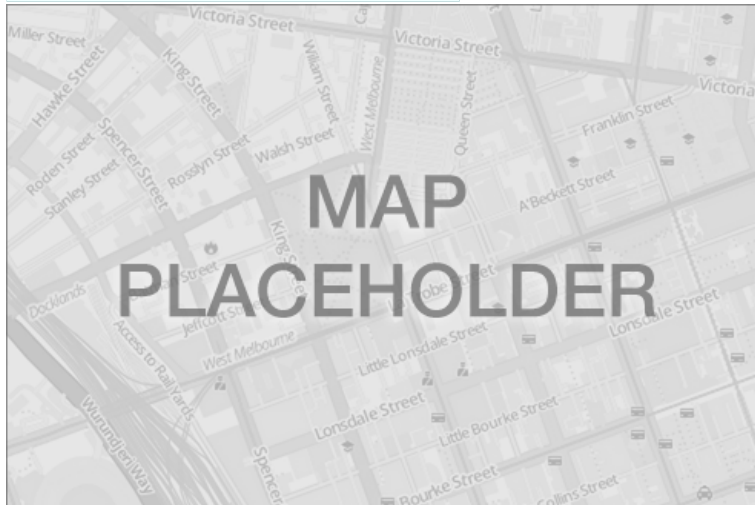
Lease and vacancy information

* indicates a required field

Your commercial shopfront details

Address *

Address



Address Line 1, Suburb/Town, State/Province, Postcode, and Country are required.

Lease commencement date *

Must be a date.

Lease end date *

Must be a date.

Upload a copy of your signed commercial lease *

Attach a file:

A minimum of 1 file must be attached.

Upload your evidence of vacancy length *

Attach a file:

A minimum of 1 file must be attached.

The letter must be issued by either the landlord or real estate agent and state the exact length the shopfront has been vacant.

Trading days and operating hours

What are your expected trading days? *

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday

What are your expected opening hours? If these differ throughout the week, please list the opening and closing times for each day. *

Assessment criteria - Business Offering and Uniqueness

* indicates a required field

Use this section to explain what your business does, what your business' unique point of difference is, and how your shopfront will contribute to an activated and vibrant streetscape.

Provide a brief description of your business, including what your business does and what products and/or services it offers. *

Word count:

Must be no more than 300 words.

What makes your business offering unique? If you are introducing a new brand, concept, or experimental retail format to Melbourne, please highlight that here. *

Word count:

Must be no more than 300 words.

List at least two businesses in the surrounding precinct that you consider to be your main competitors.

For each business, briefly explain what they offer and how your business is similar to and different from theirs.

Competitor name

What does the competitor offer, and how does your business compare

How will your shopfront physically activate the streetscape and positively impact the surrounding precinct? *

Word count:

Must be no more than 300 words.

What experience will customers have when they visit your business? How will your opening hours, customer service, use of technology, or shop layout make their visit better than other businesses in the area? *

Word count:

Must be no more than 300 words.

Assessment criteria - Readiness and Delivery

* indicates a required field

Project plan

Please upload your detailed project plan. *

Attach a file:

Your project plan must outline the key steps and timeline for establishing the business and opening the shopfront.

Please provide an indicative opening date for your new shopfront. *

Must be a date.

Project budget

Please upload your project budget. *

Attach a file:

Your project budget must detail the costs associated with establishing and operating the business, including fit-out works, equipment, stock, salaries and other operating expenses.

Please provide information on how you will fund the shopfront fit out outside from this grant. *

For example overdraft facilities, lines of credit, private investors, other grants or funding.

Please upload any supporting financial documentation and/or quotes.

File description	Upload your file

Financial viability

Your small business's financial viability is a key assessment criterion. Applicants must provide financial documentation that demonstrates the business's capacity to operate sustainably and outlines the owner's investment in the enterprise.

At a minimum:

- Existing businesses operating from another location or online must provide a 2025-2026 financial year statement.
- New businesses, or businesses without an operating history, must provide two years of financial projections, including:
 - Profit and loss
 - Balance Sheet
 - Cash flow

The City of Melbourne provides [financial templates \(XLSX, 52 KB\)](#) for applicants to use in their application. It is not mandatory to use these, however please ensure the financial information you provide in this section is reasonable, balanced, accurate, sufficiently completed. Include all assumptions and notes that support your business's financial data.

If using City of Melbourne templates please save each document type separately and upload in the appropriate section below.

Is your business already trading at any locations, including as an online business?

*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Financial statements and projections

Upload financial documentation covering the past 12 months. *

Attach a file:

If your business has been operating for less than 12 months, provide financial documentation since business commenced operating.

Upload your projected profit and loss statements for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Upload your projected balance sheets for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Upload your projected cash flow statements for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Financial projections

Upload your projected profit and loss statements for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Upload your projected balance sheets for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Upload your projected cash flow statements for the next 24 months. *

Attach a file:

Marketing strategy

How do you plan to market and promote your business and store opening? *

Word count:

Must be at least 50 words.

Include your target audience, key promotional channels, and planned activities to attract customers during the first 12 months of operation.

Business visibility and engagement

Please indicate which of the following activity will occur as part of your proposal:

*

- ☐ Launch of a new product / service
- ☐ Marketing campaign
- ☐ Social media campaign
- ☐ Store / business opening
- ☐ Media launch / event
- ☐ Photoshoot
- ☐ Other communications or marketing activity / event/s
- ☐ No activity planned

Permit pathway

Do you have all permits required to operate your business at the new shopfront, or have you commenced the process? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

If you are unsure what permits you may require, please contact our Business Concierge team for assistance.

Briefly describe the current status of any permits, licences, or approvals needed for your project. Include any applications submitted or approvals already received. *

Assessment criteria - Economic Impact

* indicates a required field

Projected employment opportunities

How many **new jobs** will your business create within the City of Melbourne within the first 12 months of trading?

Please note: Only include ongoing employees. Do not include contractors, event staff, or temporary employees such as Christmas casuals.

New full-time *

Must be a number.

New part-time *

Must be a number.

New casual *

Must be a number.

Projected turnover and investment

Indicate your projected turnover and investment into the business over the next 12 months.

Projected gross turnover *

Projected investment *

Must be a dollar amount.

Must be a dollar amount.
For more guidance on how to respond to this question, please refer to our FAQs.

Localised procurement

As part of the City of Melbourne's commitment to a strong, competitive and resilient economy, we request that grant recipients report on their business's use of local suppliers, including social enterprises or businesses with social and environmental impact.

A local supplier is a business based within the City of Melbourne municipality.

What is your estimated spend on local suppliers for the first 12 months of trading at this location? *

Must be a dollar amount.

Assessment Criteria 4 - Community Benefit

* indicates a required field

Community benefit

The City of Melbourne has a [Commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The City of Melbourne recently released the **SDG Align platform**, a free digital toolkit to help businesses to measure, track, and accelerate their sustainability impact across the Sustainable Development Goals.

For this section applicants are required to complete the SDG Align assessment and provide a pdf copy of their SDG Align report.

How to use SDG Align

- Take the assessment on the [SDG Align platform](#)
- Review your results and develop your action plan
- Sign the declaration (optional)
- Download the report, save a copy and upload below

Using insights from that assessment, please identify your **top three priority Sustainable Development Goals** for your business take action on over the next year.

For each of your chosen goals, please select from the action your business will take from the drop down, and provide details on how you will achieve the goal.

Please upload your SDG Align report *

Attach a file:

Please select THREE goals your business will focus on for your funded period. *

☐ 1. No Poverty

☐ 7. Affordable and Clean Energy

☐ 13. Climate Action

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ 2. Zero Hunger | ☐ 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth | ☐ 14. Life Below Water |
| ☐ 3. Good Health and Well-Being | ☐ 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | ☐ 15. Life on Land |
| ☐ 4. Quality Education | ☐ 10. Reduced Inequalities | ☐ 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions |
| ☐ 5. Gender Equality | ☐ 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities | ☐ 17. Partnerships for the Goals |
| ☐ 6. Clean water and Sanitation | ☐ 12. Responsible Consumption and Production | |

At least 3 choices and no more than 3 choices may be selected.

1. No Poverty

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

2. Zero Hunger

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

3. Good Health and Well-being

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

4. Quality Education

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

5. Gender Equality

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

6. Clean Water and Sanitation

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

7. Affordable and Clean Energy

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

10. Reduce Inequalities

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

11. Sustainable Cities and Communities

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

12. Responsible Consumption and Production

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

13. Climate Action

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

14. Life Below Water

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

15. Life on Land

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

17. Partnerships for the Goals

Please select the action that your business will commit to over the next 12 months. *

Please note that grant recipients will be required to report in detail on their progress for the selected action.

Please provide details on how you will achieve the selected goal. *

If you plan to take more than one action in this SDG area, you can include this in your response.

Grant Funding Request

*** indicates a required field**

Funded activity

Please provide a short outline of how the funding will be used and how it supports your project. *

Provide a short description (100 words recommended) of your project.

Grant request

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Form Preview

List the **individual items** for which the grant funding will be used.

List the cost **excluding GST**.

Refer to the Guidelines for information on what items are eligible. Any expenditure items deemed ineligible will not be considered.

Expenditure items	\$ (excluding GST)
	Must be a dollar amount.

Total grant request

These fields are automatically calculated based on the proposed expenditure items above.

SUB-TOTAL (EX GST) *

This number/amount is calculated.
Excludes GST. Must be no more than \$20,000.

GST *

This number/amount is calculated.

TOTAL (INCL GST) *

This number/amount is calculated.
Includes GST. Must be no more than \$22,000

Additional Information

* indicates a required field

In this section you can provide any further information that supports your application. This may be market research, media analysis or other documentation about your business.

Upload supporting documentation

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Has your business previously received grant funding from the City of Melbourne?

*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

List the grants and/or funding your business has previously from City of Melbourne, including the year and the amount. *

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Applicant Declaration

* indicates a required field

Privacy

The City of Melbourne is committed to protecting your privacy. The information requested on this form is being collected by City of Melbourne for the purpose of assisting with the assessment of applications for grants and sponsorship. All information collected is securely stored in Smartygrants and City of Melbourne computer systems. The personal information will be disclosed to assessment panel members for the purpose of assessing your application. It will not be disclosed to any other external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. If the personal information is not collected, Council may have difficulties in contacting you in a timely manner in relation to your application. If you wish to alter any of the personal information you have supplied to City of Melbourne, please contact Council via telephone +61 3 9658 9658 or email businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au

By submitting an application you consent to council publishing the recommended/successful applicant's name, project name and description and amount funded on our website. This information may also be used for promoting the City of Melbourne's grant program more generally.

I will inform the City of Melbourne if any significant changes to my business or proposed activity occur before I am notified of the outcome of my application. *

- ☐ Yes

I confirm that the information contained in this application is to the best of my knowledge true and accurate. I understand that providing false and misleading information is a serious offence. *

- ☐ Yes

Declaration

Name of authorised person *

Position *

Date *

Must be a date.

Business Demographics (optional)

* indicates a required field

About these questions

The following questions help us better understand the businesses that apply for and receive City of Melbourne grants. This information helps us identify which business communities we are reaching and where there may be opportunities to improve access to our programs.

Your responses will be used for reporting, research and program evaluation purposes only. They will help us monitor participation across different types of businesses and inform the design of future grant programs and support services.

These questions are voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all of them. Your responses will not be considered as part of the assessment process and will not affect your eligibility for funding. Any information you provide will be managed in accordance with the [City of Melbourne's privacy obligations](#).

Does your business identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Islander owned?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Is your business majority-owned (50% or more) by one or more than the following?

- ☐ Women
- ☐ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- ☐ People with disability
- ☐ People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Does your business have people in management roles who identify as any of the following?

- ☐ Women
- ☐ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- ☐ People with disability
- ☐ People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Does your business actively employ or support people from any of the following groups?

- ☐ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- ☐ People with disability
- ☐ Young people (15-24 years)
- ☐ People seeking asylum or refugees
- ☐ Long-term unemployed people
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Would you like to be contacted by our Procurement team to register your organisation on our First Nations supplier database? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Applicant feedback

* indicates a required field

Thank you for applying to the Shopfront Business Grants Program.

We would appreciate your feedback on the application process. Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions.

How clear and helpful did you find the program guidelines?

Was any part of the application process unclear or difficult to complete?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the application process or application form in future funding rounds?

Do you have any other comments or feedback about the Shopfront Business Grants Program?

How did you hear about the Business Growth and Impact Grants?

Select all the apply *

- ☐ I'm a previous City of Melbourne grant applicant
- ☐ City of Melbourne - website
- ☐ City of Melbourne - Business in Melbourne newsletter
- ☐ City of Melbourne - other newsletter
- ☐ City of Melbourne - social media (Meta - Facebook and/or Instagram)
- ☐ City of Melbourne - social media (LinkedIn)
- ☐ Melbourne Magazine
- ☐ Melbourne News
- ☐ Other social media
- ☐ Internet search
- ☐ Word of mouth/referral
- ☐ None of the above

Does your business wish to receive updates on grants, sponsorships and other forms of business support from City of Melbourne? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No