

# WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES FOR A JUST AND EQUITABLE FUTURE IN MELBOURNE'S WEST



## CONTEXT

Our vision is for a just and equitable future where everyone in Greater Melbourne can thrive. We know getting there depends on having the insights, leadership, and aspirations of communities experiencing inequality at the centre.

This grant round marks the beginning of our long-term, 10 year commitment to supporting such community-led change in Melbourne's West. We recognise that many organisations are already working with their communities to address social justice and inequality, and this initiative seeks to build on and amplify those existing efforts. By doing so, we aim to advance collective action and systems change towards equity and justice in the West.

This grant round represents the first phase of a place-based approach. At this stage, we envisage three broad phases of work and funding, starting with Phase 1 and co-designing subsequent phases with community partners in the West.

Phase 1 provides the foundation for this journey—strengthening the enabling conditions needed for long-term, community-led systems change. Rather than funding individual programs or services, it supports the scaffolding that allows deeper collaboration, leadership, and shared purpose to take root. This includes investing in the often under-funded but essential work of connectors, convenors, and community anchors—those building trust, nurturing local leadership, and holding the “messy middle” of collaboration. It also creates space for shared learning and reflection, helping to build the conditions for more aligned and community-defined action over time.

Our intent is to walk and learn alongside community partners and leaders to shape and adapt the initiative together as it evolves. By nurturing these connections, the aim is to both co-design long-term work in the West and strengthen the ability of partners to act collectively - helping to advance economic and climate justice, and build a fairer, more resilient and thriving future.

## A SHARED FUTURE

This initiative, and the funding within this first phase, is focused on advancing a just and equitable Western Melbourne - where communities lead climate resilience, and shape fair and sustainable local economies.

We see this future taking shape through two interconnected areas:

- **Climate Justice:** where communities lead adaptation efforts, strengthening climate resilience in ways that address inequities and centre those most at risk.
- **Economic Justice:** where communities shape economies that build community ownership, share power, and support people and planet into the future.

These two areas are deeply connected - climate resilience and economic justice must go hand in hand to create long-term dignity, opportunity, and wellbeing. In pursuing them, we also recognise that housing and other community priorities are essential means of achieving resilience and equity.

## FUNDING SCOPE

- Up to 10 organisations working across a diversity of communities, issues, and locations in ‘the West’
- Initial funding for up to **2 years**
- Maximum of **\$225,000 per grant**
- Successful applicants will receive an **additional \$25,000** to directly support participation and collaboration in shaping this initiative



## ELIGIBILITY

Organisations must be:

- Endorsed as a Tax Concession Charity (TCC) **and** as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) as covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997
- Australian charities registered and operating in Victoria, particularly Greater Melbourne
- Physically located in, or able to evidence, deep and genuine connection with a community or communities in Melbourne's West

## APPLICATION PROCESS

As Phase 1 of this initiative, this is an open and competitive grant round. It is designed to create opportunities for connection with existing and potential new partners. It also aims to ensure we don't make assumptions about who is best placed to participate in and lead this work.

We expect to fund and support only a small number of key organisations in this first phase. However, we may also invite other applicants into the wider exploration and learning process, recognising the importance of diverse voices in shaping this initiative.

Organisations will be asked to submit the grant application online. Please follow the [instructions](#) on how to create an account within [our online Grants Portal](#).

For this First Phase, applications will be reviewed by Foundation staff and an Advisory Panel, who will provide technical and community-informed advice to help shape recommendations.

Final recommendations are then submitted to the Foundation's Board for approval, after which all applicants will be notified of the outcome.

## TIMELINE

- **Applications open**  
**Wednesday September 17th 2025 at 10am.**  
Applications can be submitted by completing our online form - the questions are listed on the last page of these guidelines.
- **Applications close**  
**Wednesday October 15th 2025 at 4pm**
- **Outcome notification**  
**Mid December 2025**

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?



We welcome applications from community organisations or collaborations that are:

- **Willing to collaborate** with other organisations and networks through (funded) shared learning and action.
- **Focused on social justice and equity.** For example: working with under-served or marginalised people; strengthening community development, community building, gender equity, First Nations justice, food justice, or social inclusion; addressing disadvantage.
- Clearly connected with and reflective of the diversity of the communities in Melbourne's West, especially in and across **Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton, and Wyndham.**
- Engaged and interested in the intersecting issues of **climate resilience and economic justice.** It is not essential that these are your main foci, but we are particularly interested in organisations that see connections between these issues and their work.
- **Existing or emerging connectors, convenors, or community anchor organisations** — those building bonding and bridging capital within or across communities (e.g. neighbourhood houses, community centres, First Nations gathering places, community service organisations, etc); and
- **Focused on place** — not only delivering services in a location, but seeking to shape change with and by their community/ies.

## WHAT WE ARE NOT LOOKING TO FUND



This round is focused on strengthening the conditions for community-led, systems-change work in Melbourne's West. To stay true to this purpose, there are some areas we are not seeking to fund directly:

- Standalone research or university-led projects. While we value the role of research and evidence, funding in this round is directed to community-led initiatives. Universities and research institutions are welcome as partners where they are working in genuine collaboration with community organisation led work.
- The development of new tools, frameworks, or guides. While these can be useful, our priority in this phase is resourcing the relationships, collaboration, and leadership needed to enable community-led action, not creating additional tools.

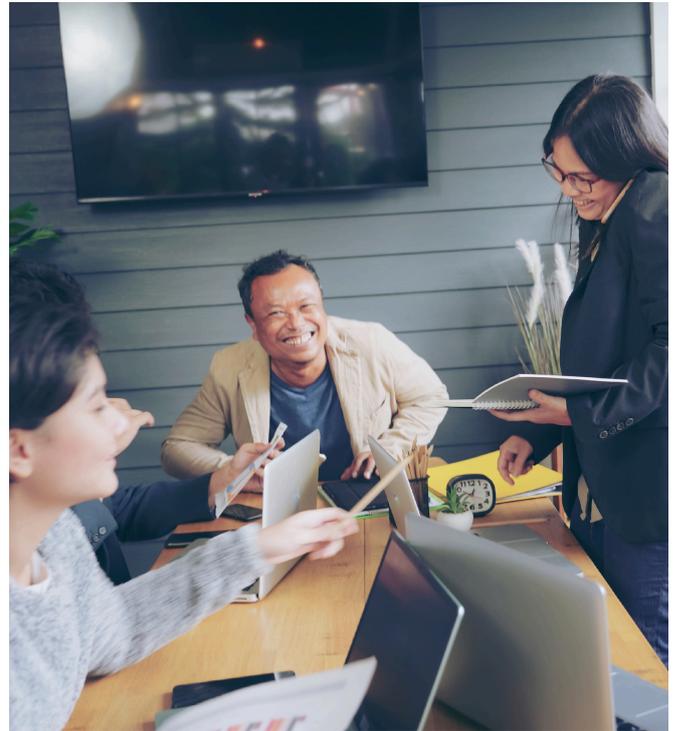
Whilst the Foundation continues to support frontline service delivery through other grant programs, this initiative is focused on something different — strengthening the conditions that make long-term, community-led solutions possible. Here the emphasis is on the “scaffolding” work—building trust, collaboration, and leadership—that helps community-led change take root and thrive.

## FUTURE COLLABORATION

This initiative is being designed to evolve in partnership with communities. Beyond individual grants, we will work with successful community partners and key collaborators to co-design the initiative's future phases. This will include collective learning sessions, individual check-ins, and shared resources for communications, advocacy, and evaluation. The aim is to strengthen relationships and support more joined-up, systemic action across the West. The dedicated additional \$25K is to support successful partners in collaborating with us in this way.

This work will also connect closely with the Centre for Just Places, who are currently working on a project that will provide valuable insights into social justice challenges and opportunities across Melbourne's West. Their work will offer updated data and evidence on the region's social justice needs, as well as insights into the readiness of diverse cross-sectoral actors for collaborative, place-based approaches.

Together, this partnership will help ensure that learning, reflection, and co-design are embedded in the initiative, build on the Foundation's existing investments and lay the groundwork for more integrated, community-led change.



## GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The application questions are below to help you prepare and reflect ahead of starting your application in our online grants portal. Please note that there is a 2,500 character limit for most answers.

- Project name and a high-level description of the work for which you're seeking support.
- What is your organisation's or collaboration's vision for Melbourne's West - what changes do you want to see in your community?
- What is your organisation or collaboration working on in the West, and how do you see it connecting to climate resilience and/or economic justice?
- Where in the West is this work focused?
- How is your organisation connected to the communities you work with in the West?
- Who are you currently working with in the West on economic justice or climate resilience, if at all?
- What new relationships or partnerships would you like to develop through this grant, if any?
- What would become possible with this funding that isn't possible now?
- What changes would you like to see after two years of this work?
- Total funding request and outline any other funding or in-kind contributions that will support this project.
- Feel free to mention or add anything else.

## GRANT REPORTING

We see reporting as part of our collective learning journey. Whilst we expect that grant partners will provide a mid-point progress update and a final report, we will approach this work together. Our aim is to share the responsibility for reflection and learning, rather than place the burden solely on partners.

Reporting will be qualitative and reflective, focused on what is being learned, what is shifting, and what support may be needed. The exact form will be agreed with each partner as the work progresses, ensuring it is meaningful for both partners and the Foundation.

## OUR THEORY OF PHILANTHROPY

For those who may be interested, you can find our theory of philanthropy, which underpins this initiative, [here](#).

## CONTACT US

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