Guidelines

North East Community Fund

2026 grants and partnerships

North East Community Fund

NORTH EAST LINK

VICTORIA'S BIG BUILD

Contents

Front cover: Greensborough Football Club received funding to upgrade their kitchen facilities at War Memorial Reserve. Opposite page: Artist's impression of Chandler Highway and new Eastern Busway.

Introduction

1.1 About North East Link

North East Link is Victoria's biggest ever investment in Melbourne's north east. We're also completing the M80 Ring Road in Greensborough, overhauling the Eastern Freeway, building Melbourne's first dedicated busway and more than 34 kilometres of walking and cycling paths.
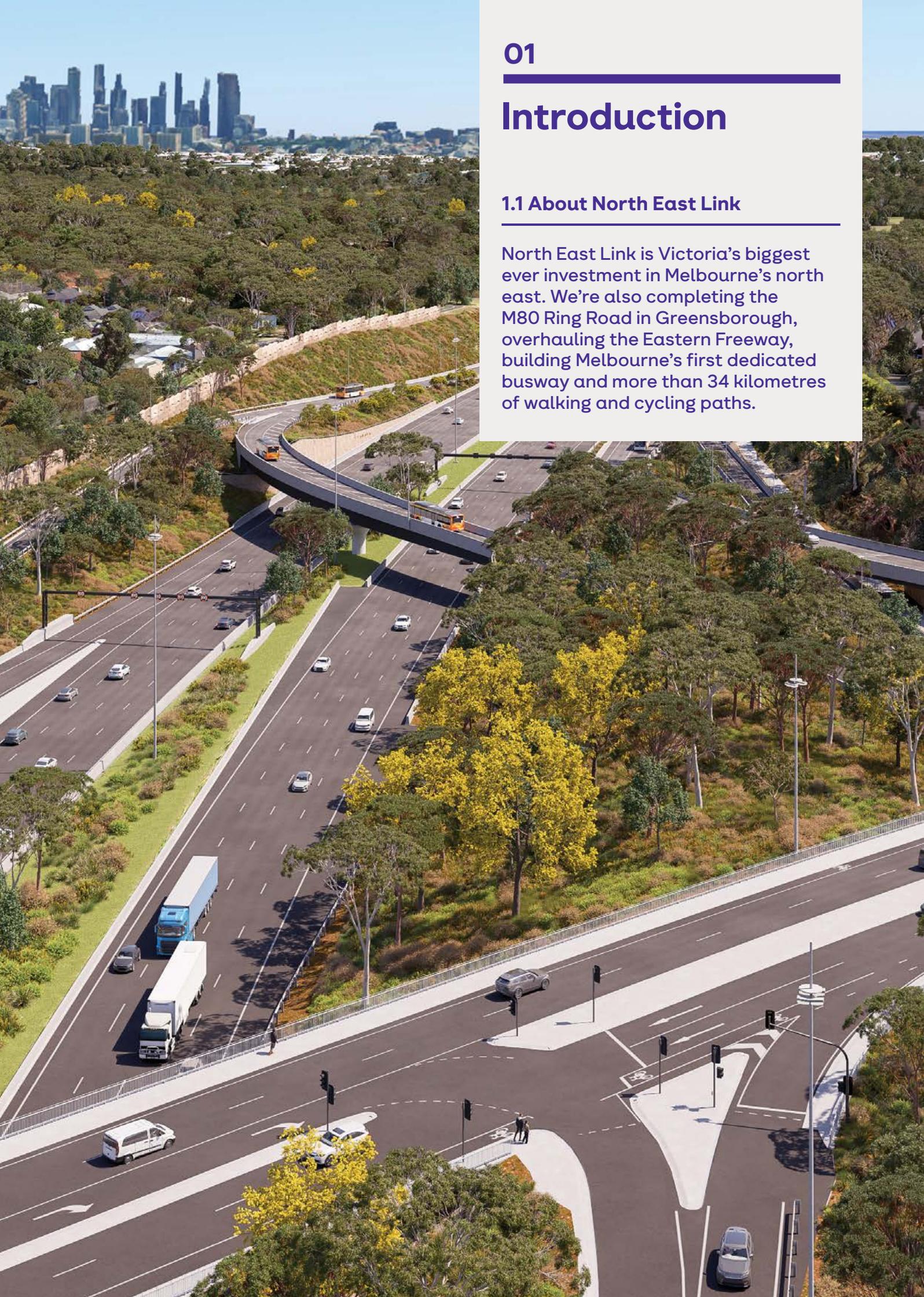
1.2 About North East Community Fund

Major works for the three massive projects that make up North East Link are taking place in built up urban areas. As they progress, the North East Community Fund will support areas and community organisations most impacted by construction.

The $10 million fund seeks to support local initiatives and projects in Melbourne's northern and eastern suburbs – bringing lasting benefit to the area well before these massive projects are completed in 2028.

The fund has already supported more than 230 projects that align with the identified community priorities ranging from programs to increase participation, including community art exhibitions, sports club open days, and community centre upgrades.

Funding will be available throughout the construction of North East Link until project completion and the program will prioritise its support to those most impacted by construction. Funding will be awarded so that there is a spread of funding across a range of projects and categories.

The fund is managed by North East Link, part of Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA), on behalf of the Victorian Government.

1.3 Timeframes

The North East Community Fund grants and partnerships will run as outlined in the following table:

Applications close
3pm Thursday 30 April 2026

Applications assessed
May and June 2026

Applicants notified
July 2026

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email.

1.4 Grant writing workshops

These free voluntary workshops will assist participants to develop and write their grant application.

These workshop will focus on specific questions in the application form including the project description, budget, project plan and evaluation.

There are limited spaces, so booking is essential.

To make a booking, visit **northeastlink.vic.gov.au/ communityfund**

Grant writing workshop dates

Tuesday 24 March
1pm to 3pm
North East Link Watsonia Hub,
17 Watsonia Road,
Watsonia

Thursday 26 March
10am to 2pm, online

Tuesday 31 March
1pm to 3pm
Project Information Centre,
284 Doncaster Road,
Balwyn North

Thursday 9 April
6pm to 8pm, online

Thursday 16 April
6pm to 8pm
Veneto Club,
191 Bulleen Road,
Bulleen

Monday 20 April
6pm to 8pm, online

Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

Applicants must:
– be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation or community group or be sponsored (auspiced) by an incorporated not-for profit organisation
– be located in either the City of Banyule, City of Manningham, City of Boroondara, City of Nillumbik, City of Whitehorse, City of Whittlesea with the initiative or project to take place in a priority suburb
– have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and provide an incorporation number
– have a current public liability insurance (minimum of $10 million).

Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations may include but are not limited to:
– charities
– Australian Public Companies, such as companies limited by guarantee and/or limited by shares (non-distribution of profits or dividends)
– co-operatives
– trusts that are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
– not-for-profit associations
– Registered Australian Bodies
– Indigenous corporations
– organisations established under an Act of Parliament.

Auspice arrangements for grants are designed to assist not-for-profit community groups who are small or may not yet be incorporated, they cannot be used by for-profit organisations to apply for grants that benefit a commercial business.
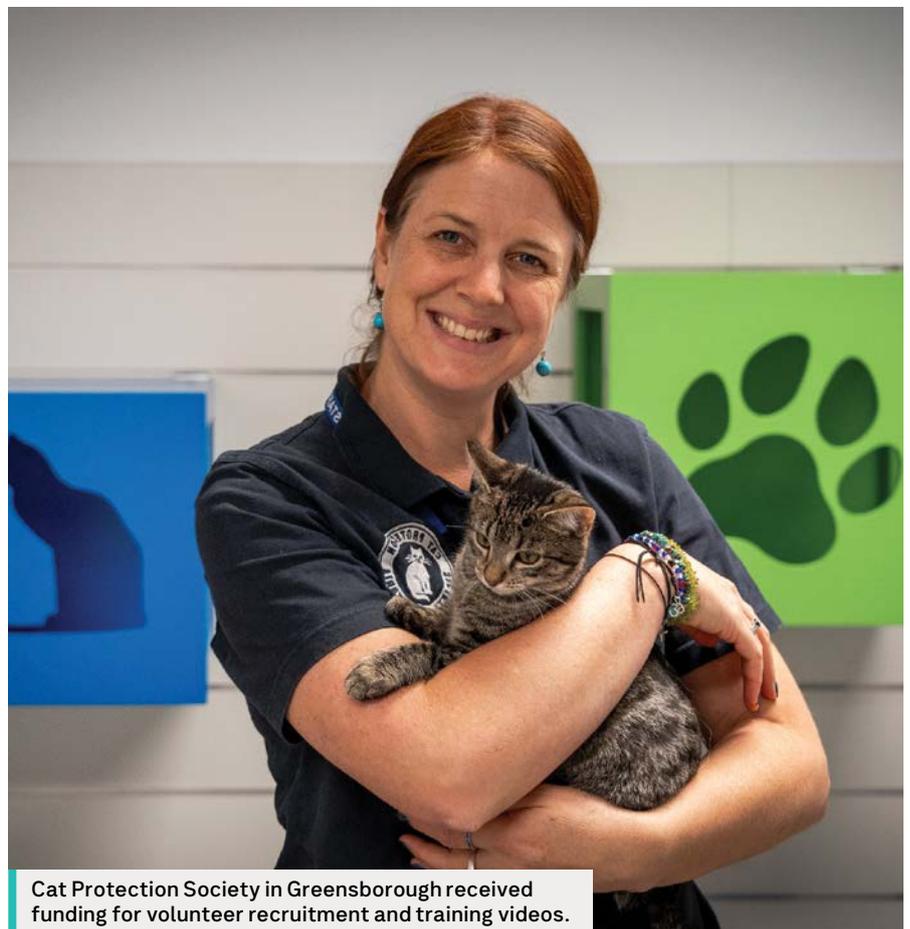
– The auspice organisation would receive the grant funding and have responsibility for ensuring that the project is completed on time.
– Evidence of the agreement between the two parties to undertake this auspice arrangement must be submitted with the grant application.

Auspice arrangements can only be used for grant applications and not partnership applications.

2.2 What areas are eligible?

Projects must be located in close proximity to the North East Link construction, with applicants required to demonstrate how their organisation has been impacted by construction. To be eligible for funding, projects must be delivered in one of the following suburbs:

Balwyn North

Blackburn North

Box Hill North

Bulleen

Bundoora

Doncaster

Doncaster East

Donvale

Greensborough

Heidelberg

Kew

Kew East

Macleod

Mont Albert North

Nunawading

Rosanna

Templestowe Lower

Viewbank

Watsonia

Yallambie

Cat Protection Society in Greensborough received funding for volunteer recruitment and training videos.

2.3 Not eligible for funding

Initiatives will not be eligible to receive funding if they:

– are intended to fund operational or core business costs including salaries and administration costs

– have the single purpose of promoting religion or political parties

– are currently fully funded by local, state, or federal governments

– are intended to exclusively use the funding to cover planning, design or preliminary construction costs

– are deemed as core curriculum activities of educational institutions

– derive income from gambling or are proposing to conduct activities that promote gambling

– have a debt or outstanding acquittal owing to the State Government authority where the project will be undertaken

– have already commenced or are scheduled to commence before the grants are paid or have not commenced but have secured all funding.

2.4 What projects can I apply for?

Proposed projects should fit into one of the following categories:

Participation equipment grants

Up to $5,000 to support community participation in local sport, art or recreation activities.

Connecting communities and neighbourhood grants

Up to $10,000 for a one-off initiative that aims to improve community connectedness and participation.

Celebrating communities and neighbourhood grants

Up to $20,000 for festivals, events, and installations that bring local people together.

Transforming communities and neighbourhood grants

Up to $75,000 for improvements to local community, sporting and recreation facilities and local environments.

Community partnerships program

Up to $100,000 for large scale partnerships where wide reaching community benefits or a significant lasting outcome can be demonstrated.

Projects should be able to be completed within 12 months of funding being announced.

Applicants may apply for a grant in more than one grant category; however, each application must be for a different activity.

We would strongly encourage community groups and organisations to put forward applications for projects that will generate the most community benefit.

The North East Community Fund aims to ensure the fair distribution of funding across impacted community organisations. Applicants that have previously received facility upgrades or other large Transforming grants or Community partnerships funding in prior rounds are encouraged to apply for the lower value Connecting, Celebrating, or Participation Equipment grant categories.

Funding for the Community partnerships program will only be considered where there is already external funding confirmed. Requests to North East Community Fund could be up to $100,000 but must not be more than 50 per cent of the total project cost.

Examples of what we may fund

Project	What can be funded	What will not be funded
Equipment Up to $5,000	– Sport equipment – Musical instruments – Art supplies – Scouts or Guides camp equipment – Educational toys – Uniforms/guernseys	– Prizes, awards or trophies – Equipment already purchased – Catering – Limited use uniforms – Facility upgrade – Phone(s)/laptops – Livestreaming solutions (e.g Frog Box Kit)
Connecting Up to $10,000	– Garden or sustainability workshops and community planting days – Tech upgrades for community learning – Education and coaching programs (e.g lapidary workshop, cooking or swimming program) – Programs to upskill community members – Volunteer training – Open/Come and try sessions – Arts and culture programs (e.g NAIDOC) – Fit out of tables, chairs, cabinets	– Community or club events – Ongoing scheduled event (not a new initiative) – Staffing and salaries – Research and consultative activities – Alcohol and bar-related expenses – Any event where a community member needs to be pay to attend – Signage
Celebrating Up to $20,000	– Community festivals – Art exhibitions/workshops/installation, e.g a mural – Cultural festivals and events – Event commemorating the history of an organisation, place or event – Concerts	– Events which are not open to the public, such as member award nights – Infrastructure – Events held outside of the priority suburbs – Any event where a community member will need to pay to attend – Alcohol and bar-related expenses
Transforming Up to $75,000	– Kitchen upgrades for multicultural centres or neighbourhood houses where community cooking programs run – Community garden – Upgrades that improve community usage such as upgrades to flooring, internal fit out, seating, roofing, heating and cooling – Access upgrades such as ramps, handrails, tactile surface(s) – Improvements to publicly used outdoor spaces – Upgrades to sporting facilities such as goal netting and training spaces	– Lighting upgrades – Vehicles (purchase, hire and running costs) – Signage – Bathroom or toilet upgrades – Preliminary designs/planning – Security system(s) – Car parks, garages or sheds – New building(s) – Fencing – Solar installation or upgrades – Large sporting equipment

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Assessment

3.1 Assessment panel

Applications for a North East Community Fund grant or partnership will be assessed by a senior panel convened by VIDA and any relevant state government departments or councils as required.

An independent probity advisor will oversee the assessment process.

Applicants will need to demonstrate ability to meet all assessment criteria.

3.2 Assessment criteria

All applications will be assessed on merit using the following program criteria:

Community connectedness and benefit
(30% of overall score)

Demonstrate how initiative will improve community connections by bringing people together and increase the level of participation an individual has within their community. Identify which community priority/s the project addresses, as outlined in Section 3.3 of the program guidelines.

Community impact
(50% of overall score)

Demonstrate proximity and construction impacts from North East Link, the M80 Ring Road Completion and/or Eastern Freeway Upgrades. Clearly outline the extent and nature of disruptions and the initiative's role in mitigating those impacts.

Organisation's capacity
(20% of overall score)

Demonstrate that the organisation has the capacity to deliver the initiative on time and within budget.

3.3 Community priorities

Projects submitted to the North East Community Fund should support the strengthening of community connectedness and participation, as well as align with at least one of the following priorities:

Health and wellbeing
Supporting programs and opportunities which promote healthy living and wellbeing.

Innovation
Supporting projects and events which help the community to solve future challenges.

Environment and sustainability
Enhancing and conserving green spaces and the environment.

Accessibility
Focus on mobility to make it easier for people to travel and explore their local area.

Leadership
Supporting and training future leaders to advocate for their community.

Education and skills
Providing information, skills, and new opportunities to members of the community.

Diversity
Supporting social inclusion for diverse populations.

Beautification
Supporting opportunities to improve the aesthetics and facilities of the community.

Arts and culture
Celebrating culture and building positive community perceptions.

Heritage
Celebrating history and creating links between the past and present within the community.

Social procurement
Commitment to generating social value through procurement within the Victorian Social Procurement Framework.

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How to apply

4.1 Online application form

Applications must be submitted online via the North East Community Fund web page at **northeastlink.vic.gov.au/communityfund**

Please note applications must:

- be completed by using the North East Community Fund application form, powered by SmartyGrants
- be submitted by an individual with authority to do so on behalf of their group/organisation
- be for only one proposed project
- be complete, as ineligible applications may not be considered.

VIDA reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to accept or reject any project proposal that is lodged after the closing date and/or not lodged in accordance with the requirements of the North East Community Fund guidelines (this document).

4.2 Applying for a grant

Please have the following information ready before you start filling out the application form.

Information on the applying organisation, including:

- Name, address, contact details
- Incorporation Registration Certificate
- ABN
- Public Liability Insurance certificate of $10 million or higher
- Auspice organisation information where relevant.

Details about the project:

- Project title
- Type of project (equipment, participation activity, capital works, other)
- Which priority area/s (suburb and Council area) will benefit
- Timeline
- Detailed project budget.

Responses will be required to outline:

- Proximity to/impacts from construction
- How your project will improve community connectedness
- The number of community members who will benefit
- Evidence the project/program has community support
- Information about land ownership and/or council approvals (if relevant)
- Details on your organisation to give us confidence that you can complete the work
- How you will measure success.

In relation to project costs, you will be asked for:

- The total cost of the project
- Your organisation's contribution, including evidence of co-funding
- How much funding you are seeking

- How the funds will be used
- Quotes to support any individual budget item that exceeds $1,000
- Any other funding sources you have already secured.

Where co-funding is identified, evidence is requested for secured funding.

For non-secured co-funding, you will be asked how the project can be re-scoped if this is not received.

Additional information and attachments

Where relevant, the below are requested:

- Evidence of land and/or building ownership (e.g rates notice)
- Where you do not own the land/building, evidence of landowner permission
- Auspice agreement
- Supporting information, such as project and risk management plans and/or designs.

For infrastructure projects it is strongly recommended that supporting documents such as project designs, evidence of preliminary investigation and/or any technical material is uploaded at the time of application.

Project-specific expenses, such as wages or other project or administration costs can be included up to 10% of the total project cost. Please note, applicants may be asked to demonstrate how these costs relate specifically to your project and provide supporting evidence on how the costs were calculated.

VIDA reserves the right to reach out to applicants to obtain additional information relating to their submitted grant or partnership application during the assessment period.

Required documentation

	Equipment Up to $5,000	Connecting Up to $10,000	Celebrating Up to $20,000	Transforming Up to $75,000	Partnerships Up to $100,000
Public Liability Insurance and Certificate of Incorporation	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Annual report including financial statements	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Quotes for items over $1,000	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Project/Program and Risk Management Plan	Not required	Optional	Recommended	Required	Required
Evidence of Co-funding (confirmed)	Required where applicable	Required where applicable	Required where applicable	Required where applicable	Required
Asset owner evidence of consent	Not required	Required where applicable	Required where applicable	Required	Required
Evidence of asset ownership and/or current land/ building lease	Not required	Required where applicable	Required where applicable	Required	Required
Letters of support	Not required	Recommended	Recommended	Required	Required

4.3 Getting assistance with your application

If you have an idea for a project but have questions about applying, chat to the North East Community Fund team.

The team can also answer any questions prior to your organisation submitting your application.

Phone **1800 105 105** or email **communityfund@northeastlink. vic.gov.au**

If you require an interpreter, please call **03 9209 0147**.

Bulleen Templestowe District Junior Football Club received funding for the Bullants Community Kick-off Day.

The fine print

5.1 Terms and conditions

Projects which receive a funding offer from the North East Community Fund will be required to enter into a funding agreement and accept terms and conditions in relation to the project proposed.

5.2 Privacy collection notice

VIDA collects your personal information for the purpose of administering the North East Community Fund. We may disclose your personal information to other state government organisations and thrid parties, including:

– SmartyGrants

– relevant local councils

– VIDA third party contractors.

Information is collected for the purposes of:

– processing and assessing your application

– allocating grants

– communicating with you

– confirming required permissions

– enquiring about past/current/future funding as required.

We will only send you communication about any applications you make and updates to keep you informed on the North East Community Fund. You may choose not to provide us with all personal information we request from you, which may impact whether we accept an application from you, respond to your queries or take your feedback into account.

You have the right to access and correct personal information about you held by us. To request access or request changes to the personal information we hold about you, or for more information about how we manage your personal information, please refer to our Privacy Policy which is available on our website at **bigbuild.vic.gov.au/privacy** or contact us for a copy.