

## Empowering Communities Round 2 - Call for Expression of Interest

### Background

The Building Safer Communities (BSC) Program is a cornerstone of the government's Crime Prevention Strategy and includes grants and community forums to support Victorian councils and community organisations to deliver innovative projects to address the causes of crime and improve community safety.

The Empowering Communities grants are part of the BSC Program and will support community-led initiatives in areas of Victoria where there are opportunities to improve community safety and address crime.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety (the department) is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from the following councils to coordinate an Empowering Communities initiative within their municipality, consistent with approach outlined in the program guidelines:

- Ballarat
- Bendigo
- Cardinia
- Casey
- Dandenong
- East Gippsland
- Frankston
- Geelong
- Knox
- Latrobe
- Maribyrnong
- Mildura
- Shepparton
- Whittlesea
- Wyndham
- Yarra

Based on an assessment of submitted EOI, six councils will be selected from the above shortlist to receive:

1. \$700,000 to resource the Empowering Communities initiative over the period to 30 June 2024
2. Support from the department to convene a Building Safer Communities Forum to explore issues of concern to the community and inform the consideration of a common goal, noting agreed costs for the forum will be met by the department.

### Overview of EOI process

By completing an EOI you are expressing interest in securing Empowering Communities investment for your municipality and committing council to coordinating activity to 30 June 2024.

The following link <https://deptjustice.smartygrants.com.au/ECRound2> will take you to the department's platform on SmartyGrants. You will be required to submit your EOI online using this link by **no later than 4pm on 13 September 2021**. Late submissions will not be accepted or considered.

The EOI focusses on three key areas:

1. Community need
2. Opportunity to build on and complement existing activity in your municipality
3. Community readiness

We aim to notify all councils of the outcomes of their EOI within two months of the closing date.

## Information required

Apart from addressing questions relating to the three selection criteria (see 'How your EOI will be assessed' section below), you will be asked to prepare an indicative budget for how the \$700,000 funding will be used. This budget should show a clear split between the **administration costs** you will require to coordinate activity for the full period as well as the **designated activity funding** that will be available to support the projects and activities that will comprise the initiative.

You are **not required** to include specifics of how the designated activity funding will be used in your EOI as this will be determined in conjunction with the Action Group over time.

Acceptable administration expenses include:

- costs relating to project management and the provision of secretariat support to the Action Group
- undertaking or resourcing any further community consultation requested by the Action Group to inform consideration of crime and perception of safety issues within the municipality in the formation of a common goal
- reasonable facilitation costs for initial Action Group meetings if an independent facilitator is considered desirable

You will also need to prepare a plan to show how the Empowering Communities initiative will be established in your municipality if your EOI is approved for funding.

You should provide sufficient evidence to support the information contained in your EOI.

## The Building Safer Communities Forum

A **Building Safer Communities Forum** will be held in the early stages of the initiative to bring a range of stakeholders together to:

- consider data and other evidence of issues that impact on crime and perceptions of safety in the community,
- identify priority areas for action to inform a focus for Empowering Communities activities; and
- identify strengths the community can build on (including activity that is already underway or planned) that the Empowering Communities work can build on.

Council will take the lead in organising the forum but work in conjunction with the department and Action Group to agree on date, format, content and participants. The Minister for Crime Prevention will open the forum.

Reasonable costs associated with holding the forum will be covered by the department subject to agreement, including any remuneration for community participants.

## How your EOI will be assessed

Your Expression of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear understanding of local crime and community safety issues</li> </ul>	<p>The EOI presents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data and other information to clearly explain the main crime-related issues impacting the community</li> <li>• A considered analysis of that information to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying factors impacting on crime and community safety</li> <li>• An understanding of the impact of crime on the community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to build on and complement local crime prevention efforts</li> </ul>	<p>The EOI demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong policy framework that aligns with the Empowering Community objectives and/or intended outcomes</li> <li>• An understanding of existing or planned local initiatives that could complement the Empowering Communities work</li> <li>• A clear consideration of how the Empowering Communities investment would 'fit' into and complement the local context</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community 'readiness' to establish an initiative</li> </ul>	<p>The EOI presents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of existing engagement mechanisms within the municipality that could inform and complement Empowering Communities activity</li> <li>• A clear understanding of local stakeholders and their potential level of interest in being involved that would enable the Action Group to be established quickly</li> <li>• An understanding of the strengths within the community that the initiative can build on</li> </ul>

The department will also consider the following in assessment of EOI applications:

- Value for money
- Experience in harnessing community interest and effort to address a related issue
- The level and quality of evidence provided to support the EOI
- Creating a spread of investment between metropolitan and regional municipalities

The department reserves the right to request further information from councils when finalising its recommendation of municipalities to be supported through the program. The department may also seek the input of other government departments and agencies.

## For further information

For further information on Empowering Communities or the Expression of Interest process, please contact Jace Westland, Grants Project Officer, Community Crime Prevention Unit, via email at [jace.westland@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:jace.westland@justice.vic.gov.au).