



BUSINESS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Application Guidelines 2025/26



INTRODUCTION

The Ararat Rural City Council, New Business Façade Improvement Grants Scheme is part of Council's plan to assist businesses from throughout the Shire to improve the appearance of their building façades and encouraging the filling of existing empty properties.

The scheme provides a grant from Council on a 2:1 basis up to \$10,000 for new or relocating businesses to complete improvements to the building façade.

SCOPE

All new or expanding business establishing or relocating into a commercial area of a town within the Ararat Rural City may be eligible.

Eligible businesses that operate from a commercial or industrial premises with street frontage would need to either;

- 1. In the process of expanding and/or relocating to a new commercial premises**
- 2. Relocating from a home-based business**
- 3. Started a new business after June 30 2025**

Works that can be completed as part of the scheme

include:

- Painting of the façade
- Cleaning the existing façade
- Replacement of doors, windows or glass work to facade
- Removal of redundant signage, air conditioning units and hoardings to the façade
- Minor repair, maintenance or reinstatement of missing elements
- Minor repairs to existing façade tile or stone accents
- Minor repairs to structural façade elements and awnings
- New, repairs and replacements of verandas
- Installation of new business signage
- Installation of outdoor lighting
- Installation of fixed outdoor heating or cooling
- Installation of retractable café blinds or awnings
- Production and Installation of matching external street dividers/ Planter boxes or umbrella sleeves (hospitality specific)
- Collaborative Façade Improvement projects will be reviewed on individual merit (Contact EDU directly to discuss).

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED WITH APPLICATION

You will need to provide the following documents as part of your application:

- Description of works to be completed as part of the application form.
- A quote for the proposed works.
- Where the application is proposing the painting of a building, the colour palette may need to be provided for approval by Council.
- Photographs of the building's existing condition will need to be provided including close ups of the affected areas. Photographs will also need to be provided following the completion of the works if the application is successful.
- A planning permit may be required for the proposed works that need to be completed (see application form). The permit process, if required, can run in tandem with this application.
- If your building is heritage listed, you will be required to undertake research to provide Council with evidence including photographs or other documentation. Council may be able to assist with this research or provide information on whether your business is located within a heritage building.

APPLICATION DETAILS

To apply for funding as part of the Façade Improvement Grants, applicants will need to consider the following:

- Council will not grant funds from the program retrospectively.
- Council will not provide funds for ongoing or administrative costs not directly related to the project.
- Council will not provide funds for equipment purchasing (e.g. ladders, gurneys, scaffolding, and safety barriers). Hiring of equipment is permitted when related directly to the project.
- Council will not grant funds for works where a planning permit is required and has not been granted prior to commencement.
- Quotes supplied with the application are to be used. Any alterations to the application need to be approved by Council.
- Third party quotes are required.



ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be assessed against a set criteria, judged by a internal panel with the successful applicants receiving written notification from the Chief Executive Officer. Applications will remain open until all funds are exhausted.

LEVEL OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

Businesses can apply on a \$2:\$1 basis to complete improvements to their façades with the amount capped at \$10,000 per business.

An example of a business applying to the scheme would be:

- Business - \$5,000
- Council - \$10,000

Businesses would be able to contribute over the \$5,000 amount if they wish to complete more significant works but would still only be eligible for \$10,000 from Council.

If a business only wanted to complete minor works they could apply to the fund for an amount under \$10,000.

An example of this would be:

- Business - \$1,000
- Council - \$2,000

TIMING OF PROJECT

Once Council has made a decision regarding the successful applicants the works will need to be completed by 31 May 2026 so that funding can be provided to the applicant in the 2025-2026 financial year.

HOW DO I FIND OUT IF MY APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Applicants will be notified whether their application is successful or unsuccessful over the phone by the Economic Development team and in writing by the CEO.

HOW DO I RECEIVE FUNDING?

It is preferable that businesses submit all associated documentation including copies of the paid invoices shortly after completion of the works. However, businesses will have until 31 May 2025 at the latest, so that Council can reimburse agreed expenses within the same financial year.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for the program, simply complete the Retail Area Façade Improvement Program Application form on-line. Please contact the Economic Development team if you need assistance with your application.

www.ararat.vic.gov.au/facade-improvement-grants-application-form

COUNCIL CONTACT

For further information on the Ararat Rural City Council Façade Improvement Grants Scheme please contact the Economic Development (EDU) team on 5355 0200.

