



Community Grants: Sisters of Saint Joseph Stream Guidelines

Up to \$10,000 for community-led projects that open up learning - for the Sisters of Saint Joseph and associates.

Inspired by Saint Mary MacKillop, our Community Grants support small but life-changing projects that create opportunities for learning across Australia. This stream is open only to the Sisters of Saint Joseph (SOSJ) and associates.

For more than 20 years, this program has supported community organisations working to improve equity in education, build economic independence, and strengthen community participation. Applications are considered through a competitive process against the eligibility and selection criteria for this stream.

At a glance

Funding	Up to \$10,000 (one round each year)
Application open dates	Open: 9am Monday 17 August 2026 Close: 5pm Friday 18 September 2026
Who can apply	Sisters of Saint Joseph and associates only (other organisations may apply through the Community Stream)
Project length	Up to 12 months
Focus	Lifelong learning, education equity, economic independence, community participation and engagement
Theme	Education in all its forms

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding through our grants program, check if you meet the criteria listed below:

- Applicants must be a community organisation or charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) AND with an Australian Business Number (ABN). The project must be delivered within Australia. Individuals are not eligible.
- Preference will be given to 'Small' Charities as defined by the ACNC.
- Applications must align with Mary MacKillop Today's Core Principles and Grant Priorities/Objectives.
- Applications are for a maximum of \$10,000 AUD.



- Funded projects must be completed within the 12-month timeframe (although the project may continue after this date).
- Applicants may apply for up to 20% administration costs within the project budget. At least 80% of funds MUST be used for project activities.
- Previous Grantees can apply for either an existing or new project. However, we are unable to fund ongoing service delivery, and we encourage grantees to show how the funding will enhance the project and build sustainability.
- Applicants must be able and willing to comply with Mary MacKillop Today's Policy Requirements in the delivery of the funded project

We are unable to fund:

- Multiple applications from one organisation: Applicants are encouraged to submit only one application for funding, or to clearly nominate your first preference from multiple applications.
- Public appeals for single beneficiaries (e.g. school fees for a disadvantaged student or equipment for a person with a disability) as there are likely to be more appropriate sources of support.
- Full salaries/wages/stipends; full project administration costs; capital funding.
- Applications for emergency relief.
- Ongoing running costs for a project.
- Activities for the promotion of a particular faith or religious adherence; political parties; activities that could create unwanted dependency on project funds (See Non-Development Policy).
- Applications that distance Mary MacKillop Today from the delivery of services e.g. funds to be pooled into a grants program. This includes scholarship programs.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Selection Criteria	Assessment Questions, i.e. "To what extent ..."
1. Community Need	• Does the project address a genuine and well-identified need in the community? • Does the grant funding help the Grantee 'kick-start' a new/ innovative idea or strengthen their ongoing work?
2. Project Approach	• Is the project well-planned, feasible and clearly described? • Are the timelines for implementation realistic?
3. Project Impact	• Are the expected outcomes meaningful and measurable? • Are there processes to evaluate the success/ effectiveness of the project?
4. Expertise and capacity	• Does the applicant meet eligibility criteria and demonstrate relevant experience?



5. Alignment with Mary MacKillop Today's Core Principles & Grant Priorities	Does the project align with Mary MacKillop Today's core principles and the grant focus and theme?
6. Safeguarding	Are appropriate safeguarding measures in place (especially for children/ vulnerable adults)?
7. Risk	Are risks identified and plans in place to mitigate them?
8. Partnerships and Collaboration	Does the project involve meaningful partnerships or community collaboration?
9. Sustainability	Does the project have identified ways of sustaining the project after funding is over?
10. Budget and value for money	Is the budget realistic, justified and offer good value?

How to apply

1. Read the [eligibility criteria](#) for this grant to check that your organisation and project qualify.
2. Review the [selection criteria and assessment questions](#), and address them clearly in your responses.
3. Prepare two referees who can speak to your organisation's capacity, the project's likely impact, and the need for it. If your project works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, at least one referee must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person with cultural authority to discuss your project.
4. Complete the online application form via the Apply now button when the round is open.

Applications are accepted for one funding round each year. Late submissions cannot be considered. Check the current round's opening and closing dates before you begin.

If your application is successful

We walk alongside our grant partners. Successful applicants are asked to:

- Share their story - images and short interviews we can use in newsletters and updates (always with your consent, and with care where a project involves people experiencing vulnerability).
- Provide a progress report at the halfway point and a final report at the end of the project.
- Provide a financial acquittal - an itemised account of how funds were used, with receipts.

We supply all reporting templates at the right times. This keeps the process transparent and lets us keep our supporters updated on the change their generosity makes.



Grantee Compliance Requirements

Grantees are expected to deliver their projects in a way that reflects good practice regarding safeguarding and child protection, financial management, the management of complaints and feedback, and the principles of non-discrimination. We do not require Grantees to have all these policies in place but should be able to demonstrate how they can work within these principles.

As such, there are several policies that will be extended to Grantees through our Grant Agreements. Before applying for a Grant, we encourage organisations to view these policies and ensure that they feel comfortable they can comply with these requirements.

Safeguarding

This includes the steps we take to ensure children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers and partners are kept safe in the delivery of community projects. For Grantees, we have the following requirements:

1. **Policy & Code of Conduct:** Grantees have a Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct that lists behavioural standards for all staff, volunteers and others working on their projects which includes the requirement to report any concerning behaviour or alleged incidents. If the project is working with children or contact with children and the organisation does not have a Code of Conduct, all project staff and volunteers will be required to adhere to Mary MacKillop Today's Code of Conduct in the delivery of project activities.
2. **Recruitment Screening:** Any staff, volunteer or other representative working directly with children should undergo adequate recruitment screening including behaviour-based interview questions, verbal referee checks and working with children check or equivalent.
3. **Reporting:** Grantees have a reporting procedure that outlines how reports of misconduct are investigated and escalated within their organisation. This must include procedures for reporting to law enforcement for criminal offences.
4. **Reporting to Mary MacKillop Today:** Grantees are required to immediately report any safeguarding incidents to Mary MacKillop Today (within 2 working days) if these occur or are reported to the organisation in the delivery of the funded project.

If your organisation does not have any of the above policies or procedures, they must be willing to comply with the requirements of Mary MacKillop Today in the delivery of the funded activity.

Complaints & Feedback

This provides all people with the opportunity to provide feedback or make a complaint about the work of Mary MacKillop Today or any of our partners. This ensures our programs are responsive, meet the needs and priorities of communities, and identify any negative impacts of our work. Grantees should:

1. Regularly provide opportunities for participants and others in the community to provide feedback or make a complaint about their organisations.
2. Ensure participants in the project are aware that the project has received funding from Mary MacKillop Today and understand that they can make a complaint directly to Mary MacKillop Today at complaints@marymackilloptoday.org.au.



Financial Wrongdoing

This requires the accountable, transparent and ethical use of project funds and requires partners to ensure that project funds are used only for approved purposes. This includes ensuring project funds are protected from fraud, and that funds are managed and acquitted in line with good practice financial management standards.

Non-Development Policy

Mary MacKillop Today is a community development organisation. Our purpose is to enable individuals and communities to build skills for self-sufficiency, regardless of their faith tradition, gender, age, political beliefs or any other factors. Mary MacKillop Today is therefore not able to provide funds for any projects that:

1. Promote a particular religious adherence: Mary MacKillop Today defines the promotion of particular religious adherence as preferencing community members who adhere to the Catholic/Christian faith at the exclusion of others or using our projects as a tool for the evangelisation of the Catholic/Christian or any other faith. This includes scripture or religious education programs, church infrastructure or resourcing, or any projects that explicitly target a particular faith group at the exclusion of others.
2. Support a particular political party or candidate: Mary MacKillop Today defines the support or promotion of a particular political party as any explicit or implied alignment between Mary MacKillop Today, our partners or our projects with a particular political candidate, party or ideology. This includes using Mary MacKillop Today funds, partner personnel or resources (such as cars, stationary or office space) to aid in a political campaign.
3. Adopt primarily welfare or charity-model approaches: Welfare or charity-model activities are those that may provide relief from poverty or distress but address the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of poverty or inequality. Mary MacKillop Today does support a small number of Welfare projects, however, prioritises projects that address the causes of poverty and inequality through activities that build skills for self-sufficiency and independence.

Please see the Mary MacKillop Today website for further information on these policies;

<https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/who-we-are/publications-and-reports/our-policies/>

Get in touch

If you're unsure about your eligibility or want to talk an idea through, we'd be glad to help before you apply.

Community Grants: Sisters of Saint Joseph Stream

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