

**Tennis West**

# **Grant Applications Guide**

*Hints and tips for your grant journey*



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## INTRODUCTION

Applying for a grant can be a fantastic way to source funds for a project at your Tennis Club, provided you give the submission the time and effort it deserves to give your club the best chance. Remember, failing to plan is planning to fail. You want your application for funding to be successful. So do we. Whether you are applying for a small grant of a few hundred dollars, or a larger grant to assist with a major facilities project, the principles are the same. Which is why we have created this handy user guide for putting together submissions for grants.

*"A goal without a plan is just a wish."*

## PREPARATION : Relationships

Relationships are absolutely key in the grant application process. Before you begin your application process we strongly suggest that you reach out to the below bodies to establish or strengthen your relationships and discuss your project plans.

Both of these groups below are here to support you. If there is no dialogue it is hard for that group to support and advocate for you as and when the need may arise.

### STATE SPORTING ASSOCIATION (SSA) - TENNIS WEST

Speak with your Tennis West Participation Leader (PL). Your PL can offer assistance and guidance throughout the process, from initial ideas through to providing another set of eyes to proof read your application. If you are applying for a grant for a facility specific project, speaking to our Places to Play (P2P) team is also vital.

Speaking with the Tennis West team and involving us in your project will allow you to:

- Clarify any terminology or provide additional information that may assist your application. The more we know, the more we can help! Remember, this is not our first time
- Draw from the Tennis West strategic facilities plan in order to support your application
- Show that your club is proactive and engaging with the State Sporting Association for the best outcomes for your club and the sport
- Show that your club has a long term vision for the success of your club and of Tennis in your community

### LGA - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Develop a relationship with your Community Development Officer (CDO). The role of the CDO is to engage and develop strong relationships with local residents and community groups, to establish priorities and needs and deliver community development in response. Having a dialogue with a representative of your LGA will allow you to:

- Align your project with their priorities to strengthen your grant applications
- Put Tennis on the agenda! If Tennis is a topic of conversation regularly this will go a ways to showing interest and demand for the sport in your LGA. If no-one at the LGA speaks of or hears about Tennis at all through lack of relationships you may have a harder time bringing your matter to the forefront of council minds
- Increase chances that Tennis is included in any long term LGA planning

Familiarise yourself with your local council here: <https://knowyourcouncil.com/WA-Council-Details.aspx>

## PREPARATION : Tools

### OPERATIONAL HEALTH CHECK

For all Tennis Australia grants, an Operational Health Check is a key pre-requisite.

Tennis Australia in partnership with the University of South Australia have been benchmarking the performances of tennis venues across the country for over 8 years. Industry benchmarking is carried out through the OHC and is one of the ways we recommend local governments stay abreast of the performance of local tennis venue management. The OHC can provide local governments an opportunity to work closely with their venue managers and clubs to identify key areas of performance across the areas of income, expenditure, management and usage.

The Operational Health Check for tennis venues is a national survey of facilities that measures performance in the areas of management, usage and financial sustainability. The survey data is used to produce industry benchmarks and medians enabling facilities to annually compare results against both individual performance and other venues of a similar size.

Clubs, organizations or businesses that either directly operate or use a tennis facility are able to access the survey online. Survey participants will receive a completion certificate and individual summary report within 2-4 weeks of submitting their data. Clubs also receive an Operational Health Check bulletin at the conclusion of each survey period. This information can be used to:

- Learn how the facility performs against national medians
- Compare the facility's results to previous year's performance
- Track areas of strength, areas to monitor and priorities to address
- Support strategic and business planning
- Evidence reporting and performance to stakeholders.

The collation of information regarding tennis facilities and clubs will aid the participation team at Tennis West and Club Development Officers working in local government authorities to assist clubs to achieve their shared objectives.

# GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

## BEFORE

1. Contact the grant funder; develop a relationship
2. Read the guidelines along with acquittal requirements – ensure your application and project can meet both of these!
3. Check the closing date/time
4. Research previous successful applications
5. Quality applications require plenty of time and attention! If you haven't started writing your application less than seven days out from closing – don't bother.

## DURING

1. Be sure to leave plenty of time to write your grant application. If you have not started writing 7 days before the closing date, it might be best to leave it this time or look for another grant with a later closing date.
2. Assume the grand funder knows nothing about your project. When writing your application, consider:
  - Who will benefit?
  - What is going to happen?
  - Where is it going to happen?
  - Why does it need to happen?
  - When is it going to happen?
  - How much is it going to cost?
3. Make sure you answer every question. Keep the grant guidelines handy and refer to them often to ensure you stay on track. Also be sure to organize your grant writing to correspond to the way the guidelines organize topics and questions. If the guidelines specifies sections, use those as titles/headings.
4. SPELL CHECK!
5. Double check that your budget balances. Triple check your math.
6. Tag and highlight relevant parts of supporting documentation.
7. Is your application to the point? There will be someone reading this application, amongst many others. Ensure you answer the questions without adding unnecessary text.
8. Submit your grant before the deadline and keep an original copy of your application including all supporting documentation.

## AFTER

### Successful

- Don't stalk the grant funder - if your application is successful you will be contacted in due course
- Consider the Grant Agreement or grant requirements carefully
- Check acquittal requirements at the beginning of your project not at the end. Keep on track with when your project must be acquitted by – projects generally take longer than expected.
- Provide regular updates. Photos are good
- Maintain the relationship you have developed with the grant funder

### Unsuccessful

- Don't shoot the messenger.
- Request feedback
- Listen to the feedback provided and work on it for your next application

## PLANNING PROCESS IN DEPTH

### Failing to plan is planning to fail.

Writing an application for a well-planned project is much easier than seeking funding for a project which is poorly planned. Your grant provider will require the details so you need to identify them and be able to communicate them clearly before beginning your application.

### Define the project (What)

- What is the scope of the project? What is going to happen?
- What will the planned project produce? (Output)
- What will the project contribute to the direct and wider community? (Outcomes)
- What is the purpose of the project? (Objective / bigger picture)
  - Eg: community benefit, employment creation, social or environmental benefit
- What are the risks associated with the project? Is there anything that will prevent the project from succeeding?
  - What are the mitigation strategies for these risks?

### Identify the need (Why)

- Why is this project needed in the community? (Need vs want)
- What are the current limitations of the community
- Is there evidence of community support
- What benefits will be achieved?
- Why is it important in the context of your area?
  - Use Facts, eg: economic dependency, population decline, difficult socio-economic conditions

### Identify the people (Who)

- Who will be the key driver/s of the project?
- Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
- Who are the stakeholders and partners and what is their capacity to help the project?
- Is anyone else doing something similar in your community, or elsewhere?
- Can you strengthen your application by partnering with another organization?
- Who will manage the project? Who are your staff/volunteers? Do you have the right skills and experience mix to see the project through?

### Define the process (How and When)

#### How

- Is this a one-off project or do you really need ongoing funding?
- How will your project be implemented?
- Are there special skills or resources needed?
- How will you ensure your project is delivered?
  - Define roles and responsibilities
- How will you know when you have achieved your goal? What are the success measures for the outcomes of the project?

### How much

- What is the total cost of the project?
- How much cash and in-kind resources are available? (Consider both committed and expected)
- How much funding is needed?
- Have you considered all costs? (Insurance, auditing etc)
- Are your costs realistic? (Have you overly cautious or overly generous? Do you have a contingency?)
- When do you need the money?
- Does the project represent good value for the grant provider?
- How will the funds be managed?

### When

- When will your project start and finish?
- How long will the project take to complete? Are there stages?
- Are there any seasonal considerations for your project?
- If voluntary labour is being used, how much time are the volunteers realistically able to give?
- If specialist skills are needed, are those specialists available during the expected timeframe?

### Add meaning to 'place' (Where)

- Where will the project's outcomes be felt? Will the outcomes extend regionally, or remain within the local area/community?
- What do you know about the target area / demographic group? What information can you access to justify that your project meets local needs? (Council/ committee documents / records etc).

Once you can confidently address these questions, you are ready to apply! Good Luck!

## ACQUITTAL TIPS

Great news; your hard planning work has paid off and your grant application was approved! As well as getting your project underway, now is also the time to review the acquittal requirements for the grant to ensure you deliver.

Acquittal is a formal condition of funding. If you do not provide a satisfactory grant report at the times and in the manner detailed in your funding agreement the grant provider may not make any further payments that may be due to you, and you may be ineligible to apply for further grants.

You may also be asked to pay back all or part of the funding provided to you. The grant provider may take action to recover any unspent or misspent funding as a debt due and payable.

To ensure you meet the requirements, consider the following;

- Check acquittal requirements at the beginning of your project not at the end. This will allow you to plan for any required progress updates and ensure you stay on track with the acquittal date.
- Keep on track with when your project must be acquitted by – projects generally take longer than expected. While every effort should be made to respect the guidelines and complete and acquit the grant on time, if there are going to be delays be respectful and have that conversation in advance.
- Provide regular updates. Part of maintaining that relationship you've worked hard to establish is ensuring that you don't just 'cut and run' once the funding has been approved. Showing that you value the grant and the process will maintain the positive relationships you've spent time building. Photos are a good method for updates.
  - Your grant provider may have their own guidelines for providing updates, but if not there is a template on the Tennis West website that you may wish to use as a guide
- It is easy to see the acquittal process as a burden, now that your project has now been completed and you just want to close the file. Treat the acquittal process as an integral part of good governance and project management.
- Remember the acquittal is not just about the financial statements. It is also related to your project outcomes so be sure to include a final result of the project.
- Don't forget your Tennis West team! Speak with your PL or Places to Play if you require support during the acquittal process.

## TIPS

- Have you got the right grant? Make sure you match the grant to your program, not your program to the grant! If you need to fundamentally change your project to suit the grant, it is the wrong grant program for you.
- Do your research. What type of projects have been approved for funding by this provider in the past? Why should your project receive a grant over others that may apply?
- Your application is not all about you and your project – it is also about your grant provider! Know the funders priorities. If possible, link your project and grant application to key strategic or operational planning documents from the funding organization to show your aligned goals.
- Divide and conquer! Grants for larger sums can be quite time consuming. Consider using a team to write the application. Divide up the sections for your 'grant writing team' to research and generate responses to. Have one person collate the final version to ensure cohesion across the application.
- Create one central location to keep all of the documents, to ensure no mix up of duplications, deletions or outdated versions. Consider using a live document sharing platform such as GoogleDocs or Dropbox.
- Be concise. Consider using dot points or a table to display information clearly as opposed to long, word heavy paragraphs
- Don't assume prior knowledge. The aim and outcome of your funding request should be clear to someone who knows little about your organization or project. Consider asking an 'external party' to read your application, ask them if they understand what the project is and if the responses address the questions in the application form.
- Be reasonable with your expectations. Your funding request should match the scale of the project. Demonstrating other contributions, including your own organization, is important.
- Letters of support must be current and support the project for which you are applying for funding. Ensure you leave plenty of time to request and receive your letters of support from relevant parties.
- Check your attachments. Have you attached all required documents? Are the copies clear and readable? Have you highlighted relevant sections (if applicable)? These may include annual reports, ABN, insurance, financial statements, quotes from suppliers and so on.
- Never just change the name of the grant provider if applying for multiple grants. Always give the grant the fresh start that is needed to ensure you cover all of the provider's requirements.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Club Sinking Fund

Tennis West advocates that clubs should aim to generate an annual profit which will allow the club to maintain a 'sinking fund' to help pay for facility refurbishment projects. Your 'sinking fund' is separate to your annual maintenance budget; it is the savings that will place you in a stronger position because:

- In some cases the club will need to fund 100% of a project
- Organisations, Councils, the State Government and Tennis Australia often give priority to applicants who make their own contribution to a project

The amount required for your annual sinking fund will vary based on:

- The number and type of courts at your club
- Your occupancy arrangement, and whether the landowner (such as your council) has responsibility for capital refurbishment, or has a specific policy for club-council co-contributions

To assist this consideration, you might:

- Refer to the [Tennis Australia National Planning and Development Guide](#) on the Tennis Australia Website
- Complete an Operational Health Check – refer to above or ask your Participation Leader for more information

### Tennis Australia's Facility Loan Scheme

The Tennis Australia Facility Loan Scheme financially assists affiliated tennis clubs, centres and associations with upgrades, replacements and improvements on their tennis facilities, by providing low interest loans.

A club, centre or association will often embark on a project utilizing grant monies from local government and/or state government, as well as their own funds. The Tennis Australia loan is designed to assist in shortfalls the club may have in funding their project after other avenues of funding have been determined.

For more information, visit: <https://www.tennis.com.au/clubs/funding-and-facilities/facility-loan>

### Tennis Australia's National Court Rebate

Tennis Australia's National Court Rebate (NCR) assists state/territory affiliated venues, local government and schools to develop tennis facilities in Australia; including new courts, surface conversion, upgrading existing court surfaces, Hot Shots courts, Tennis Australia's Book a Court with integrated gate access technology, associated tennis infrastructure, major projects, strategy and planning. The National Court Rebate is intended to stimulate progressive facility developments in line with the national court surface policy, Tennis 2020 – National Facility Development and Management Framework for Australian Tennis; as well as a range of tennis programming, coaching and competition initiatives. Tennis Australia has developed four key pillars that must be in place at local tennis venues and championed by successful NCR funding recipients:

- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Community Benefit
- Accountability

For more information, visit: <https://www.tennis.com.au/clubs/funding-and-facilities/national-court-rebate-scheme>

## HOT LINKS

From time to time Tennis West will communicate to clubs about grants that may be of interest, however, there are a number of sources that provide information on current grants available that you can access at any time. It is worth taking the time to look into a few of these if you have a project in mind to see if there is a grant suitable for your project.

- <http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/funding>
- <https://grantguru.com.au/search/?Location=%5B%22Western+Australia%22%5D&Sectors=%7B%7D&sortBy=default&Category=%5B%22Community%22%5D>
- <https://sportscommunity.com.au/grant-category/wa-grants/>
- <https://www.thegrantshub.com.au/>
- <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants>

Additionally, there are a number of large organisations who offer community grants at various times throughout the year. It may be worth spending some time doing a bit of research to discover these companies and find a grant that fits your project.

Examples of these organisations include but are not limited to:

- Bankwest
- Bendigo Bank
- Cadbury
- Holden
- Lotterywest
- NAB