

Major Events Support Fund

Application Guidelines 2026

These Major Events Support Fund Application Guidelines apply to the Major Events Support Fund (MESF) application process and outline the objectives of the funding, eligibility requirements, and the application assessment criteria and process.

1. Introduction

Venture Timaru recognises the positive contribution events make to our District.

Events provide a valuable platform to generate domestic tourism activity while also supporting local economic activity across the District. Events can also help to improve social cohesion, community spirit and pride, develop a stronger identity and sense of place, and generate national and global media profile.

2. Objectives of the fund

The Major Events Support Fund is sourced from the Timaru District Council and administered by Venture Timaru. The objectives of the fund are as follows:

- Demonstrate economic and social benefits to our District communities and be targeted to attract visitors from the wider region and beyond while ensuring high levels of community engagement.
- To support event organisers to deliver events that drive sustainable growth in domestic and international visitation and promote the Timaru District's unique identity.
- Venture Timaru's investment will be targeted with a specific focus on events that:
 - Promote domestic and international tourism – increasing visitor nights and promoting longer stays, encouraging increased tourism spend & stimulating economic activity
 - Support the Timaru District's and Tourism New Zealand's Tiaki Promise and values:
 - Hosting and looking after our visitors
 - Guardianship of natural resources
 - Focus on increasing value
 - Generate positive exposure for the District and opportunities to leverage the Timaru District's profile
 - Create long-term legacy for the Timaru District
 - Help generate visitation in the shoulder or low seasons (outside of December – February inclusive)
 - Sustainability:
 - Long term event sustainability - the ability to generate support beyond this funding
 - Environmental sustainability - showcase strategies in place to mitigate the impact to our environment and reduce waste
 - Events which bring significant benefits from outside of the Timaru District.

3. Applying for funding

The funding is for major events grants of between \$10,000 - \$50,000. Before submitting the funding application, please make sure you:

- Read these Major Events Support Fund Application Guidelines carefully to ensure you fully understand the eligibility requirements and the assessment criteria;

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- Accept and agree to the Major Events Support Fund Terms and Conditions
- Prepare the required information.

Applications for funding close on Thursday 20 August at 5pm. They will be assessed by the Venture Timaru Board. Decisions on applications are expected within 3 weeks of this date.

4. Preparing your application

Please provide as much detail as possible when preparing the funding application, because once the decision has been made and approved by the Venture Timaru Board, these details cannot be changed.

Key application requirements:

- Complete all sections of the funding application. Incomplete forms will not be considered.
- You must identify how your event aligns to the criteria of the fund.

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be prioritised for events funding from the Major Events Support Fund based on the following criteria:

- Visitation – attract local attendees and visitors to the region, stimulating economic benefit for the Timaru District.
- Profile – enhance and showcase the District’s profile.
- Legacy – generate legacy benefits for the region from holding the events.
- Community well-being – bring social benefits and enhance the well-being of the local community through high levels of community engagement.

Key priorities for events

Extent to which the event:

- Builds positive District identity and has a District-wide impact.
- Showcases the Timaru District’s assets and what is special about the District.

Funding criteria

The degree to which the event delivers the desired impacts for events:

- Brings people together from within our communities and attracts visitors to the District.
- Stimulates economic activity.
- Positively profiles the Timaru District and its diverse offering.
- Expresses the spirit of the Timaru District and its people and leaves a positive legacy for the community.

A wide range of events can be considered for funding.

Strengthening Existing Events

- Focus on events that have identified opportunities for increasing out of District visitor attraction that could be achieved through additional funding. Focus on building the District's proposition.
- Utilise the profile of the event to enhance the profile, narrative of the District.

Seeding New Events

- Create new events as a legacy, which expand on our current offering to drive repeat visitation to the District. Events need to be fit for current infrastructure and are encouraged to promote and leverage off the surrounding natural environment.
- Assist in addressing seasonality during the shoulder and low seasons for the District; consideration will be given to events that happen outside of peak period December – February inclusive.

All Events

The following will be considered:

- Economic benefits – the ability of an event to drive and stimulate benefits and/or future investment into the District;
 - The anticipated level of attendance including volunteer support, performers and/or competitors
 - Average length of stay and/or visitor nights
 - Daily expenditure per visitor.
- Potential of the event to grow, possibly into a major event for the District.
- Organisers need to demonstrate how the timing of their event meets key visitation and economic drivers. Consideration will be given to events that happen outside of peak event and tourism periods (September – March inclusive) – helping to ensure a good spread of events during the year.
- Identity and genre – so that we support a portfolio of events which includes a proportional blend and best use of our existing venues and facilities.
- How accessible the event is proposed to be:
 - Universal accessibility with specific considerations for disabled persons and where appropriate for older adults and children
 - Transport accessibility
 - Cost, affordability relative to target market
 - Open to anyone who wishes to attend; not restricted to certain sectors of the community
 - Access to knowledge and information through appropriate channels.
- Whether the event is one-off or multi-year with a sound strategic plan for its development.

- Assessment of the event's ability to strategically align and drive brand and marketing outcomes that increase promotion of the District:
 - Allows visitors opportunity to explore the Timaru District and gives the opportunity to showcase the District
 - Generates marketing opportunities for the District.
- Engagement:
 - Assesses the event's capacity to create positive engagement and generate community buy-in and pride.
- The degree to which the event uses sustainable practices:
 - Financial (e.g. overall cost of the event relative to the scale and benefits of the event, working towards a strategy for events to become more financially sustainable)
 - Transport planning
 - Sound environmental operations and works to promote green initiatives
 - Respects the environment and promotes protection of key assets
 - Supporting local businesses where possible
- Whether the event is in the appropriate venue for its scale and type, and/or makes the best use of the District's event infrastructure.
- Provides opportunities to leverage economic partnerships or leaves a legacy which enhances social, cultural or environmental benefits.
- Extent to which the event adds to any cumulative impacts on local neighbourhoods and businesses, balanced against benefits to the District (relates to its timing and location relative to other events in the calendar).

5. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for funding from the Major Events Support Fund, the event and/or event organiser(s) must meet the following criteria:

- The event must take place in the Timaru District by 31 July 2027.
- All application assessments will be considered, both collectively (with other applications) and independently upon their respective merit in order to ensure a balanced portfolio of event categories (types) and year-round weighting. There will be three primary categories considered:
 - **Emerging events** that are new and warrant a kick start sponsorship investment as they are seen to have significant long-term growth potential for the Timaru District.
 - **Cornerstone long-standing events** that have proven performance in delivering high profile for the Timaru District, add to the District's value proposition and where Venture Timaru's ongoing support will drive incremental visitation and expansion opportunity.
 - **Significant one-off events** that present an opportunity to deliver substantial benefits to the Timaru District by way of profile, increased visitation and economic impact.
- The organisation responsible for the event must be a legal entity such as a trust, company or

incorporated society, and must be able to provide evidence of this status if requested.

- The organisation must have no outstanding debt owing to Regional/District Councils, Government Organisations or any Council Controlled Organisations, nor any other third-party debts.
- The event/organiser must fully declare any additional Government, Council, Local Board, or Council-Controlled Organisation funding, grant or koha/donation for the event.
- The applicant must comply with all Council regulatory and statutory requirements relating to the preparation and delivery of the event, including obtaining all necessary permits and consents.
- The event must be held within the planned timeframe.
- All events will require public liability insurance, however, the amount of cover will be assessed on an individual event basis.

6. Ineligibility

Some types of events and event-related costs are not eligible for funding through this fund:

- Applications that are incomplete or fail to meet the fund requirements.
- Events seeking funding to substitute funding already committed (such as Council funds).
- Private functions, lunches, or dinners.
- Fixed assets.
- Events that in the view of Venture Timaru are likely to advance and/or promote religious, ministry or political purposes.
- Events that in the view of Venture Timaru are likely to denigrate, exclude, or offend parts of the community.
- Events that in the view of Venture Timaru are likely to present a hazard to the community or pose a significant risk to the public.
- Events that have breached previous funding agreements with Councils, including post-event reporting criteria, and where no commitment has been made to rectify this.
- Retrospective funding of events.

7. Supporting information

Venture Timaru will undertake due diligence on prospective events in order to ascertain the applicant's ability to deliver the event. Supporting documentation will be required as part of your application and as part of the funding contract process.

The documentation will include:

- 1) Event budget
- 2) Event marketing plan (approx. 1-2 pages)

- 3) Event business plan – approx. 1-2 pages including information on:
 - The event vision, purpose and goals/objectives
 - A financial assessment and funding for the event
 - Governance and management of the event
- 4) Indication of timeline and implementation of event Health & Safety and Risk Management planning
- 5) If applicable, resolution from committee meeting indicating intention to apply for the Major Events Support Fund (for Incorporated Societies or other charitable organisations).

Should your application for funding be successful, further information and documents may be required to facilitate your event through Timaru District Council, iwi or other parties, for example, permits, consents, risk management plans and waste management plans.

8. Successful applicants

Once funding has been approved, all successful applicants will receive a funding agreement. This is a formal contract which outlines what is expected of event organisers and the amount of funding Venture Timaru is granting and the specific area for which it has been granted. The funding agreement will also outline the post-event reporting requirements for event organisers.

9. Event reporting

All successful applicants will be required to formally report to Venture Timaru on the use of monies granted, as outlined in the funding agreement.

10. Privacy

The personal information that you provide in the funding application and any subsequent correspondence or discussions with us will be held and protected by Venture Timaru in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Major Events Support Grant Terms and Conditions.