

# QCGC President's Day Presentation 2026

**Hosted by**  
QLD Council of Garden Club's Inc.

**Patron:** Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD

**Presented by:** Lisa Nardone

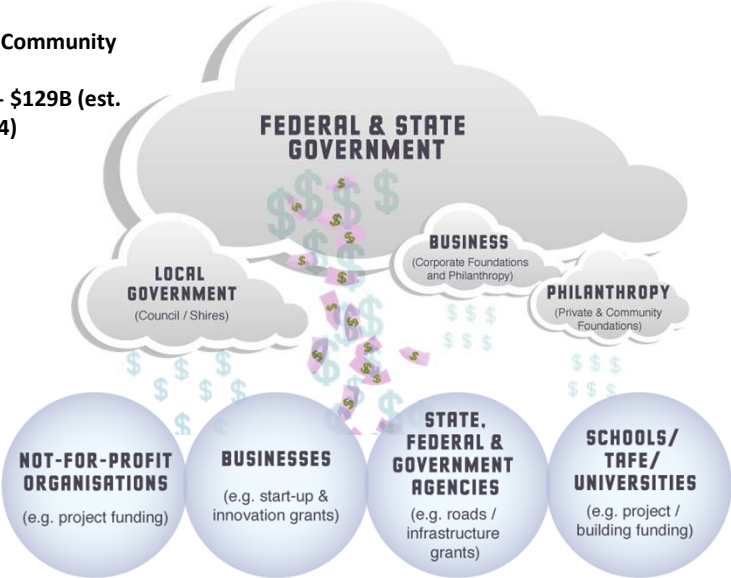
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## GRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

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**Total – Community Sector**  
**\$125B - \$129B (est. 2023-24)**



**FEDERAL & STATE GOVERNMENT**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
(Council / Shires)

**BUSINESS**  
(Corporate Foundations and Philanthropy)

**PHILANTHROPY**  
(Private & Community Foundations)

**NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS**  
(e.g. project funding)

**BUSINESSES**  
(e.g. start-up & innovation grants)

**STATE, FEDERAL & GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**  
(e.g. roads / infrastructure grants)

**SCHOOLS/ TAFE/ UNIVERSITIES**  
(e.g. project / building funding)

Image courtesy of The Funding Centre <https://www.fundingcentre.com.au>

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**Grants are:**

- For a specific purpose
- For a given timeframe
- Funds that aren't repaid
- Accounted for/acquitted
- Not usually for day-to-day costs
- For certain types of expenditure
- Highly competitive
- About achieving funder goals
- A useful tool
- A contract.

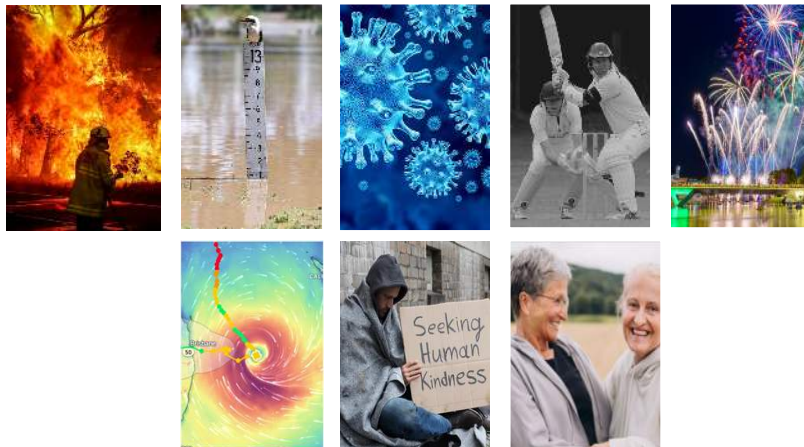
**Grants are not:**

- FREE money
- A good fit for everyone
- An 'expectation'
- A lifeline (in normal times)
- A loan or gift
- A reliable/regular income.

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**GRANTS ARE RESPONSIVE...**

**Changing to meet identified community needs & priorities...**



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## GRANTS ARE COMPETITIVE

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Grant programs are:

- Highly over-subscribed
- Highly competitive
- Sometimes hard to predict.

***Don't be discouraged! More than likely IT'S.  
NOT. YOU.***

*It's just not your turn...*

Plan/Align

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## CHOOSING THE RIGHT GRANT

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### Government Grants

- Government's goals/priorities; legal entity; higher accountability; cyclical; Easy-Complex in line with \$\$

### Structured Philanthropy

- Generally legal entity/auspiced; DGR/TCC; but sometimes they don't...

### Corporate Philanthropy

- Legal Entity/auspiced; Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)/Tax Charity Concession (TCC); story is key; easy-complex in line with \$\$.

### Other...

- Competition 'grants' (1 'winner'); Sponsorships Discounts; Award programs.

Plan/Align

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## WHERE TO FIND GRANTS

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### Make a list of sites relevant to your:

- Local government area (Council)
- State Government area and sectors (State and governing sector/s)
- Federal Government sectors (relevant portfolios)
- Corporates who support your sector / activity type / target audience

### Sign up – Subscribe – Search

- Subscribe - newsletters and alerts from the list above
- Sign up - free GrantGuru (main site or through your Council)
- Subscribe - paid programs ONLY if its a reasonable return
- Be curious – speak to others – ASK, research grant recipient lists – monitor good news stories etc.

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## WHERE TO FIND GRANTS

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### Search Databases and Lists

- Email alert lists from Council, government departments, corporates
- QLD Government Grant Finder: <https://www.grants.services.qld.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Grants Hub: <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants>
- Our Community: <https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/grant/search> (\$125)
- **Grant Guru** - <https://grantguru.com.au/> (free or paid)
- <https://www.thegrantshub.com.au/> (\$29 per month)
- QCOSS - <https://www.qcoss.org.au/grants/>

### Popular Grant Programs

- GCBF - <https://www.justice.qld.gov.au/initiatives/community-grants>
- Stronger Communities - <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/stronger-communities-programme>
- Volunteer Grants - <https://www.dss.gov.au/volunteering-initiatives/volunteer-grants>

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## INTERNAL FACTORS – YOU

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### Are you grant-ready?

- Know your strategic priorities & 'wish-list'
- Grants Officer, Project Team/Committee
- Electronic file – certificates, insurances, financials, Annual Reports, Strategic Plan
- Evidence to back your claims
- Partnerships in place and evidenced
- Permissions, plans, quotes ready.

Plan/Align

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## COMPETITIVE GRANTS

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**Strong grants =**

**Priorities, Planning, Positioning**

(aligning intention, project planning, forming an argument)

**+**

**Words, Evidence, Process**

(the language, the evidence, the format)

Plan/Align

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## WHAT IS A PROJECT?

**Community grants are typically for 'Projects' not core business.**

For grant purposes, projects usually:

- ☑ Have a start date AND an end date
- ☑ Have defined steps/stages/actions
- ☑ Have elements that can be 'measured'
- ☑ Result in something new, improved, different or special.

Plan/Align

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## PROJECT PLANNING

### WHY?

**Why do you want to do it? Why is it important? Why will it make a difference?**

- **USE REAL EVIDENCE**  
Local data first (membership no's or trends; course numbers; age of participants; gender imbalance etc)
- **DISCUSS BENEFITS**  
(for the group AND for the community or membership)

### WHO?

**Who will benefit? Who will be involved? Who will support it?**

- Target group
- Partners
- Supporters/referees

## WHAT

### is the Project?

What will you do? What will you achieve?

- Intent & Objectives
- Outcomes
- Strategies
- Benefits
- Value (for money)

### HOW?

**How will you implement the project (steps/actions)? How will you measure success? How will it be sustainable?**

- Show you have thought it through
- Define how you will know if you've been successful (surveys, feedback, receipts, etc)
- Show how the project will keep on giving after the funding is gone

### HOW MUCH?

**Will it cost? Do you need? Will you contribute?**

- Will it cost?
- Do you need?
- Will you contribute?

### WHEN/WHERE?

**When will it start/end? Where will it happen?**

- Timelines
- Places
- Use the full 6 or 12 months allowed

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## CHOOSING THE RIGHT GRANT

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### Questions to consider:

- Do your vision & mission match the funders vision/mission/intent?
- Is it targeted at you?
- What have they funded in previous rounds?
- How much have they funded? Is it enough?
- Is it value for money for you? (time, effort etc)
- Is it right for you? (Proactive v Reactive?)

Plan/Align

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## WRITING YOUR APPLICATION

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## THE GUIDELINES

**Rule 1** – READ the guidelines

**Rule 2** – FOLLOW the guidelines

**Rule 3** – Remember rules 1 & 2!

**If in doubt – ring the program provider!**

Sourcing, Aligning

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## CRAFTING RESPONSES

**As a general rule, for all grants:**

- ☑ Write to the **'intent'** and/or **objectives**
- ☑ Use the **language** of the provider to align & communicate your story
- ☑ **'Deconstruct'** (pull apart) the question, read between the lines, use real evidence, answer in order
- ☑ Write **S.M.A.R.T**
- ☑ Write to the **assessment criteria**.

Crafting

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## ALIGN WITH THE OBJECTIVE / INTENT

### About / Aim / Objective / Purpose (the reason/intention)

1. The objective of the funding is to **enhance** community group **capacity to provide** services, leisure activities and opportunities for **QLD communities**.
2. The objective of the funding is to... **deliver 'field of play' infrastructure** projects that **enhance participation** opportunities at the **local community level**.
3. To support Queensland communities with the **development and delivery** of effective **road safety education and awareness initiatives**.

Plan/Align/Craft

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## DECONSTRUCT THE QUESTION

Example 1 –

**Tell** us about your organisation?

Example 2 –

**How** will the application benefit your organisation and the community?

Example 3 –

**What** are the service gaps / current or emerging issues that your proposed project will address for the current and future needs of your organisation?

Crafting

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## WRITE S.M.A.R.T.

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- ☑ **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed**
  - *'We will accredit 6 new First Aid officers by June 2026'.*
- ☑ **Cue the reader:**
  - Use the language of the grant provider
  - 'Chunk' information – short sentences, dot points
  - Real evidence from credible sources
  - Clear, concise language; first person; definitive
  - Use word count wisely – important facts not fluff
  - Maintain readability but consider &, /, +
  - RESPOND, restate, reiterate but DON'T repeat.

Crafting

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## WRITE FOR ASSESSMENT

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- ☑ **Answer the question being asked, but WRITE to the objectives & assessment criteria:**
  - **Eligibility** (confirm you are a good fit)
  - **'Need'** (Reason, not item; what & why; **evidenced**)
  - **Capacity to deliver** (experience/co-contribution/shovel ready)
  - **Partnerships** (who is helping; who else will benefit)
  - **Value for money** – matching funds/cost-benefit
  - **Sustainability** - income, longevity, management.

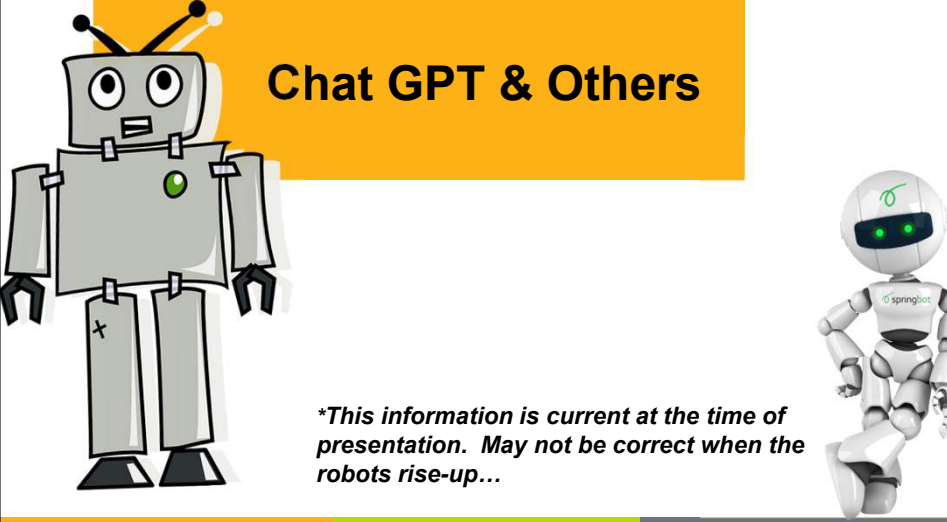
Crafting

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## Using AI?

### Chat GPT & Others




*\*This information is current at the time of presentation. May not be correct when the robots rise-up...*

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## WHAT IS CHATGPT?



*“ChatGPT is an AI assistant that understands and generates human-like text to answer questions, explain ideas, and help with writing or problem-solving. It works by recognizing patterns in large amounts of data, **not by thinking or knowing things like a person.** Its limitations include sometimes giving incorrect or outdated information, lacking real-world awareness, and **not truly understanding meaning or emotions,** despite sounding natural.*

By ChatGPT, April 2026 (75 words or less)

*\*This information is current at the time of presentation. May not be correct when the robots rise-up...*





Crafting / Ethics

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## KEY QUESTIONS

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Important considerations for volunteers and grant writers:

-  **SHOULD** you use it? (Ethics / Privacy)
-  **How** do you frame good questions/prompts to get useful responses?
-  **Are** the responses generated original, useful, contemporary?
-  **Can** you trust that the information is accurate and credible?








Crafting / Ethics

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## BENEFITS TO USING AI

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Five great reasons:

-  **Improve efficiency:** automate time-consuming tasks (drafting/proofreading/ summarizing; **some research**); give *valuable insights\**; allow more time for other tasks.
-  **Get started:** Overcome writer's block; generate lists/ points /useful ideas; quickly draft responses to *simple questions\**.
-  **Improve writing structure:** organise info; help to express ideas; add bullet points/lists; improve flow, clarity, coherence
-  **Customise language:** adopt language/tone/writing style; align to program priorities; add polish, flavour, wit, *humour\** etc.
-  **Grammar, editing, word count:** All editing; improve readability; increase/decrease word or character counts.

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### Prompt & Answer Example

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**Prompt** - Write a 50 word organisation overview about the QLD Council of Garden Club's Inc, using verifiable source data.

**ChatGPT's Answer (<10sec):**

The Queensland Council of Garden Clubs Inc is a not-for-profit umbrella organisation established in April 1967 to promote friendship and cooperation among garden clubs across Queensland. It represents over 130 affiliated clubs and societies, supporting horticultural knowledge, community participation, and environmental awareness while enabling autonomous member groups to share resources, activities, and expertise.

(53 words, 417ch, 1 ref)

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### Prompt & Answer Example

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**Prompt** – Research the physical and social benefits of being a member of a garden club or horticultural society in Queensland Australia. List the top 5 benefits as dot points.

**AI's Answer <5sec:**

- Improved physical health and fitness
- Reduced stress and better mental wellbeing
- Stronger social connections and friendships
- Enhanced sense of community and belonging
- Greater wellbeing and quality of life.

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## Tone & Style...

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**Prompt** – Rewrite the overview in a friendly tone and in the style of a swashbuckling pirate of the seven seas!

### ChatGPT's Answer:

Ahoy, mateys! The Queensland Council of Garden Clubs Inc be a grand crew, a-hoistin' sails since 1967. It unites over 130 club and society ships, promotin' friendship and jolly cooperation among the gardens of Queensland. This mighty fleet be a treasure hoard of horticultural wisdom, green goodness and community spirit. So hoist yer colors, share yer bounty, and join this fine adventure through gardens and greenery. Arrr!



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## LIMITATIONS ON USING AI

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### Five (current) considerations:

- ✓ **Different access to real-time info:** Programs are evolving, as is the data they are trained on...
- ✓ **Accuracy & Bias:** Can still make mistakes or reflect bias from data it's been trained on. **Fact-check from trusted sources.**
- ✓ **Limited contextual understanding:** 'human-like' responses, not human thought – **lacks subtleties, context, nuance, etc.**
- ✓ **Common Sense Reasoning:** Still struggles with real-world common sense. **Can't rationalize/understand complex situations.**
- ✓ **Can make things up!** Gives plausible but factually incorrect answers. Doesn't understand info it's trained on; **may not choose independently verified facts etc.**

*\*This information is current at the time of presentation.*

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## FINAL THOUGHTS ON USING AI

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**Prompt** - Hi Gemini, in a conversational tone and in 50 words or less, tell me your thoughts on using AI to write community grants.

### Gemini's Answer:

Hey! Using AI for grant writing? It's interesting! It could definitely help with drafting and formatting, saving time. But you'll still need that human touch! AI might miss the unique community vibe or the passion that really sells a project. It's a tool, a powerful one, but not a replacement for human effort, connection and understanding. So, use it smart!

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## ACQUITTING YOUR GRANT

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### Acquitting = Financial Accountability

- demonstrating you've spent the money on what you said you'd spend it on (receipts, accounts).

### Reporting = Outcomes achieved

- What did you do? What was the result? What did you learn?

### Tips:

- Have a 'grant only' account
- Stick to budget and keep receipts
- Take photos; record dates & times
- Write media releases; keep newspaper clippings
- Record facts, figures, 'learnings'.

Managing

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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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- Letters of Support (LOS) if requested, should be **meaningful** not templated.
- Monitor email inbox and spam folder
- Very few grants fund 'retrospectively' – **wait for approval email BEFORE you spend!**
- Manage your grant well and it will lead to more
- ACQUIT properly and within the timeframe.
- IF there's a problem – COMMUNICATE early (seek a variation or extension).

Managing

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## PITFALLS AND PROMISES!

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- ❖ There is never a guarantee of success
- ❖ Planning & evidence is everything!
- ❖ Persistence is important
- ❖ Grants are not 'free' money
- ❖ Grants create work, work, work

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Managing

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Book a call to discuss your needs

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