Perpetual

Are myths holding your organisation back from applying for funding?

By Perpetual Private

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Every year, Perpetual's IMPACT Philanthropy Application Program provides an opportunity for Australian non-profits to access vital funding from the generous philanthropists we work with.

Over more than a decade, we've seen organisations of all sizes and across all sectors receive funding to pursue their mission and support the communities they serve.

This article addresses five common misconceptions about our grant program, to help you submit as strong an application as possible. No matter the size or scale of the work you do, or your specific focus area, understanding the application process can help you put your best foot forward.

Myth 1: If your organisation is small or volunteer-led, you shouldn't consider applying

Reality: Organisations of all sizes receive funding every year. It's not about size – it's about sustainability, governance, leadership, and impact, as well as the data you're capturing to measure these things. In the most recent round, 9% of successful applicants had annual revenue under $700,000.

Myth 2: Perpetual's grants program doesn't enable trust-based philanthropy

Reality: Within Perpetual's grants program, the application process is designed to build trust between philanthropists and the organisations that they are funding.

Trust-based philanthropy is about listening and responding to the sector's needs, not forcing organisations into a box. Our process is designed to do exactly this – for your organisation to tell your story and articulate the strategic needs of your organisation. We put as few parameters around what you can apply for funding for as possible, so you can tell us, and the sector, about how you can best serve your beneficiaries.

Myth 3: The Perpetual Foundation is Perpetual's corporate foundation

Reality: The Perpetual Foundation is a Public Ancillary Fund, with over 350 individual endowments (sub-funds) established by individuals and families. Endowments range in size from $20,000 to $20 million. The name reflects the perpetual nature of the funds, not a corporate identity. Perpetual manages investments, compliance and administration as trustee, and facilitates the grants to non-profit organisations. It's important to note that grants made from endowments are guided by the specific preferences of the individuals and families who founded them.

Myth 4: Only new and innovative projects get funding

Reality: The program doesn't have any preference to fund new and innovative nor tried and tested programs, each individual application is assessed on its own merits and capacity to create impact. In fact, there's been a significant shift towards funding existing programs over the past ten years. Philanthropy can and should invest in strategic needs – whether that's core operations, proven programs or new ideas. In the most recent round, funding was almost evenly split between new and existing programs receiving funding. This shift shows growing confidence in supporting proven work that delivers consistent outcomes.

Myth 5: The grants process is unnecessarily time-consuming and drawn out

Reality: It's true that there is a six-month gap between submitting an application and finding out if it has been successful. But this is for a good reason – during that time, applications are assessed, eligibility and compliance checked and strong applications shortlisted for consideration by philanthropists whose interests align. Where possible, co-funding is facilitated across multiple trusts or foundations to increase community impact. The process ensures every grant recommendation is backed by due diligence, supporting philanthropists to make confident, informed decisions. The framework is designed to enable collaboration, build confidence and trust, and ensure funding goes towards great impact for the community while protecting the legacy of each trust's founder.

More information

For more information, tools and resources to help support your organisation, visit our dedicated IMPACT Philanthropy Application Program page.

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