

## Expression of Interest – Bass Coast Counts Project

This project is generously funded by the Ecstra Foundation's Building Community Financial Capability Grant.

The Bass Coast Community Foundation is a community based, not-for-profit, charitable organisation which exists for public benefit specifically within the Bass Coast Shire region.

### The Project

Bass Coast Community Foundation (the Foundation) seeks the services of suitably qualified and experienced consultant(s) to investigate and develop a complete community profile of need and services relating to financial capability for the Bass Coast community. This will include categorisations such as women, older people including in aged care or home care settings, young people, Indigenous Australians and other marginalised members of the community such as the LGBTQI community and/or people experiencing financial hardship.

The Foundation does not presume to be an expert in the project's required methodology, however data collection and correlation along with the collection and sharing of experiences of the service users are key tasks of the project. This information will provide a thorough understanding of vital metrics for our community.

The resulting community profile will be in an appropriate format to share with organisations across the Bass Coast region that will assist target services appropriately, advocate for additional services based on evidence of need, and where appropriate target allocation of grants in a strategic and coordinated way.

### Context

In a recent report *Financial Wellbeing in the Australian Context* prepared by The Centre for Social Impact and Social Policy Resource Centre at the University of New South Wales, for Financial Literacy Australia it was acknowledged that:

*An ecological model is a useful framework for understanding financial wellbeing..... Strong influencers of financial wellbeing include financial capability, appropriate financial products and services (financial inclusion), social capital, household income and mental health'.*

The literature and lived experience of people living in Australia showed that gender, employment, physical health, parental influence, couple dynamics, having caring responsibilities and financial dependants, policy change and the cost of living all affect people's financial wellbeing.

Bass Coast Counts project will take an ecological approach to building a Community Profile that will provide up to date, Bass Coast specific, information. This approach will assist the Bass Coast Community Foundation and project partners to:

- understand our community's needs;
- act more collaboratively when appropriate; and
- advocate for improved services for our community.

There will be an emphasis on the impact of COVID 19 and other government policy changes, particularly those that impact on smaller rural communities. While COVID-19 was not present when the Ecstra Grant application was lodged, the impact of the virus is such that any consideration of financial wellbeing must include an assessment of the impact that COVID-19 is having on the short, medium and long term financial wellbeing and capacity of the Bass Coast Shire's community.

A traditional socio – demographic profile describing - age, gender, ethnicity, disability will be developed as a base line. This will be established as at December 2019, that is pre-COVID 19. Other key areas will be examined with a lens that includes pre and post COVID 19 data derived from traditional existing data sources and experiential data.

Building a financial well-being and resilience resource using an ecological model and a methodological approach that is widely accepted for assessing a community's financial wellbeing and which provides a framework that is relevant to the stakeholders of this project is paramount. To be useful the outputs of this phase of the Bass Coast Counts project must be easily translated to guide stakeholder initiatives (i.e. the results of the analysis must be easily translated to actions and be in a form that is easily able to be explained to all who may be effected).

### **Privacy Obligations**

The consultant will be bound by the Foundation’s confidentiality and privacy policy in addition to their own industry or organisation’s policy on such.

### **Data Protection**

The consultant acknowledges that it will not do any act or engage in any practice that contravenes the Foundation’s data security policy in respect of any data collected, held, used, managed, disclosed or transferred by the consultant, on behalf of the Foundation, under or in connection with this project.

### **Insurances**

The consultant is required to provide evidence and currency of its insurance policies in the format of the following table.

Insurance Type	Insured Amount (\$)	Expiry Date	Insurer
Public Liability	\$10,000,000		
Professional Indemnity	\$10,000,000		

### **Consultancy**

The consultancy will be for a period of three (3) months from commencement of contract.

- All services required for the project are to be provided in accordance with ATO specifications for consultants.
- Applicants shall provide proof of registration for GST.
- The Bass Coast Community Foundation is the principal for this project.
- All fees and prices for this project must be submitted in response to this EOI and must include all disbursements which are necessary to deliver the services.

### **The Budget**

This is a tightly financed project and no variations can be accommodated. For this reason, it is vital the consultant engages with the Foundation at the earliest time to explore the parameters and ensure expectations are clear and understood.

The maximum payment for this project is \$40,000 (inclusive of GST).

### EOI Submissions

All EOIs shall be addressed to:

Executive Officer  
Suite B, Plaza Arcade  
140 Graham Street  
(PO Box 180)  
Wonthaggi VIC 3995

Email: [info@bccf.org.au](mailto:info@bccf.org.au)

### EOI Timetable

The Foundation advises that the following timetable will apply for the EOI process:

ACTIVITY	DAY	DATE
Invitation for EOI	Monday	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020
EOI Closing Date	Friday 5pm	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
EOI Short List Interview*	Tuesday	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
Announcement of Successful Party	Tuesday	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2020

\*EOI Short List – Subject to Principal approval process

### Principal's Representative:

All enquiries during the EOI period should be directed in the first instance to:

Carol Blair, Acting Chairman  
Bass Coast Community Foundation  
Suite B, Plaza Arcade  
140 Graham Street  
(PO Box 180)  
Wonthaggi VIC 3995

Telephone: 0418 572 607

E-mail: [Dep.Chair@bccf.org.au](mailto:Dep.Chair@bccf.org.au)

Lodgement of EOI is preferred by email to the below email address but may also be lodged by hand delivery or by mail.

[info@bccf.org.au](mailto:info@bccf.org.au)

Failure to comply with these conditions will render the EOI non-conforming.

### Information Made Available to Parties

The Foundation will make available any information relevant to the project. However, this information is owned by the Foundation and may not be complete or current. It is the applicant's responsibility to confirm and acquire any outstanding information required to complete the EOI.

### Applicant to Inform Themselves Fully

If an applicant has any doubt as to the meaning of any portion of the EOI documents they shall either:

- Ask the Foundation for clarification, which clarification shall be valid only if issued in writing; or
- Submit the EOI and include a statement of the interpretation upon which they rely and on which their EOI has been prepared.
- Any clarification given pursuant to this clause may also be issued to all other prospective applicants.

### Confidentiality and Conflicts

All Parties, including the EOI assessment panel, will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and a Conflict of Interest Declaration prior to the release of any internal documentation by the Foundation. These documents will be provided as part to the Contract execution process.

### Responsibility for Works

If in the opinion of the applicant, any specified details of the proposed project works or programming are likely to prevent them from, or prejudice them in fulfilling any of their obligations under a Contract, they shall submit details thereof with their EOI, shall respond primarily in accordance with the EOI specification, and shall submit price variations and full details of the changes they suggest.

### EOI Evaluation Criteria

The Foundation will evaluate EOIs on the basis of how adequately they meet the requirements for the project as outlined in the EOI, and the dialogue engaged in with the consultant as part of the EOI process.

The intent of the evaluation criteria is to ensure that the Foundation selects the provider that offers the best value for money.

Each EOI shall be scored for how well it meets each requirement on a scale of 0 to 5 (with 5 being the best score). The Foundation has established weightings for each requirement. The weighting shall be applied to each score to give an overall score for each requirement.

Applicants shall note that in this EOI the following weightings will be applied to the information submitted in the EOI responses:

Tender Criteria	Weighting %
<b>QUALITY</b>	
Demonstrated utilisation of ecological framework / methodology	30%
Capacity to deliver reports in accordance with key performance indicators	
Detail contained in reports	
Quality of EOI engagement and submission	
<b>PERFORMANCE, TRACK RECORD AND EXPERIENCE</b>	
Demonstrated proficiency, skill and experience of personnel	30%
Professional certifications and qualifications	
Referee evaluation of performance	
Compliance with EOI requirements	
<b>PRICE</b>	
The budgeted hours and price for each service provision (or part thereof)	40%
The cost of service provision in relation to proposed outcome / deliverables	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

The successful applicant will be the EOI that achieves the highest weighted score.

### Acceptance of EOI

It is anticipated that the Foundation will approve the successful applicant on the date listed in EOI timetable. The successful applicant will receive written notification as soon as practicable after that date. Following the Foundation's acceptance of the EOI the successful applicant will be provided with a contract to execute and return it to the Foundation for execution.

The Foundation will not be bound to accept, designate or nominate the lowest or any EOI for contract.

### **Payment Arrangements**

All payments will be processed as per the Contract and milestones delivered, within 10 days of receipt of invoice.

Invoicing must be in accordance with Australian Taxation Office Legislation and the New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999, as follows:

- The applicant has an ABN and is registered for GST;
- A Tax Invoice that complies with the requirements of the GST Act shall be provided and shall include the amount of GST in respect to price and/or schedule of rates.

### **Summary**

Bass Coast Community Foundation seeks a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to investigate and develop a complete community profile of need and services relating to financial capability for the Bass Coast community. The profile is to incorporate empirical data and anecdotal experiential stories from service users.

The project will commence as soon as practical after the EOI assessment and it is anticipated the consulting contract will run from 1<sup>st</sup> September – 30 November 2020.

The contract is for a fixed price within a budget of \$40,000 including GST.

Contact the acting chairman, Carol Blair via [Dep.Chair@bccf.org.au](mailto:Dep.Chair@bccf.org.au) with any questions prior to the EOI closing date.

Submit completed EOI before **5pm Friday 19 June 2020** to:

Executive Officer  
Suite B, Plaza Arcade  
140 Graham Street  
(PO Box 180)  
Wonthaggi VIC 3995

Email: [info@bccf.org.au](mailto:info@bccf.org.au)

## **Additional Information:**

### **The Bass Coast Community**

Bass Coast region encompasses a total land area of about 860 square kilometres (almost 90% of which is agricultural land), including extensive coastal areas. It sits on the fringes of the Melbourne/Dandenong Social Service Area to the north east and the La Trobe Health Community Service Area to the north and west. Its population is approximately 35,347 with a median age of 50 (compared with 37 for Victoria).

Bass Coast Shire has a lower proportion of households in the medium to high income category compared to Victoria and 2,153 people or 6.6% of the population in Bass Coast Shire in 2016, reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability<sup>1</sup>.

30% of the region's population live in locations that are among the 10% of locations that are the most disadvantaged in Victoria; and the 20% of locations that are the most disadvantaged in Australia<sup>2</sup>.

Social disadvantage is most apparent in Wonthaggi where a combination of key indicators of disadvantage, being low income, unemployment and single parent families are most apparent.

Support Services located in Wonthaggi that are focused on providing financial capability services are Anglicare, Salvation Army, and to a much lesser extent Bass Coast Health. This compares with a total of 54 support services located within the Dandenong and La Trobe Health Community Services Areas.

The support services listed above, and others not primarily focused on financial services, noted that many of their clients are traumatised, may be illiterate, and have disabilities and other issues affecting their ability to articulate, let alone access, services to meet needs. Many cannot afford nor have transport to get to the service they require.

There are key issues facing support services' clients that generally culminate in the client experiencing financial stress. As an example, significantly, if an individual had difficulty paying their water bill, they usually had a multitude of financial issues. These usually include difficulty in paying energy and mobile phone bills. Support service clients' needs include, emergency-relief, financial assistance, accrued bills, gaining or regaining financial independence. It was noted that some clients were returning with the same issues<sup>3</sup>.

The Bass Cost region is a growing area, with population growth in Bass Coast being among the fastest of all regional municipalities<sup>4</sup>. With this growth, comes increased mortgage stress, higher levels of domestic violence, greater levels of homelessness, and other financial disadvantage associated with a low socio-economic population.

This project will benefit the entire Bass Coast community, and learnings shared so that it has the potential to assist other smaller communities across Australia that are facing similar issues of location and disadvantage, have a methodology that enables them to provide accurate, current and useful information, which will build organisation capacity enabling many organisations to better serve their particular communities, enable lobbying for increased social services based on identified needs, and deliver a tool that can be used by community organisations to promote social and economic inclusion and advancement.

Currently, it is difficult to determine the estimated number of individuals in the Bass Coast Shire who fit the demographic profile of those being unable "to make confident financial decisions now, and for their financial future". Anecdotally, the service providers who deliver services in the Bass Coast have indicated to the BCCF that a lack of individual financial well-being is a significant issue for a large number of Bass Coast residents. These service providers have indicated that one of the issues that they face in getting the

resources required to improve the availability of financial counselling and well-being services is the lack of good data and quantitative evidence as to the extent of the need for such initiatives.

This project is intended to engage and build collaboration across the entire community of service providers and users of these services, promote social and economic inclusion and advancement for all sectors, and collect data and individual experiences to evidence both need and impact of existing and future initiatives (including the proposed training package). The process of delivering this project will increase not only our organisation capability but also those organisations and individuals that collaborate with us to deliver improved financial wherewithal across the community. It is also expected that this project will also assist Ecstra to better understand the need and demand for assistance in, not just the Bass Coast Shire, but also more broadly across other similar communities.

Consistent feedback from stakeholders in preparing this project reinforce the systemic disadvantage by members of our community when it comes to financial capability. This comes from a combination of a lack of knowledge, skill, attitudes and behaviours based on personal circumstances, as well as the continual withdrawal and underfunding of social services across the region. The lack of coordination, collaboration and access to services, as well as the lack of local data collection has a significant detrimental effect on advocacy and education for service improvement.

The Federal Government has recognised that Financial Counselling and Financial Capability work is vital to a community's well-being but Bass Coast is missing out on services in these areas. This project provides an opportunity and the prospect to take steps toward equity for our community.

### **Defining Financial Wellbeing**

A common theme in the research on this issue is that "*financial wellbeing is a term that recognises that finances are inextricably linked with our individual and social wellbeing*" (ANZ Survey of Adults in Australia, April 2018). This reinforces the importance of ensuring that the scope of the Bass Coast Counts project includes the requirement that the model developed also takes into account the broader individual and social wellbeing of the Bass Coast Shire's community.

A review of recent research on financial wellbeing as preparation for scoping the project has found that there is an established Financial Wellbeing Score which appears to be widely accepted as a way of measuring this issue in Australia and as such would provide this project with a useful mechanism to analyse and benchmark the Bass Coast environment, both in terms of changes over time, including impacts of COVID as well as against other regions to help us determine relative disadvantage and gaps that need support to resolve.

Professor Elaine Kempson at the Personal Finance Research Centre (PFRC) et al. have proposed a model that describes the influence of factors such as behaviour, knowledge and experience, attitudes, motivations and environmental factors on financial wellbeing.

For example, the ANZ Survey applied the PFRC model to estimate an overall financial wellbeing score for each respondent. The score was derived from measures of the three components of financial wellbeing:

- The ability to meet financial commitments such as bills and loan payments;
- The extent to which people felt comfortable with their current and future financial situation, and to which their finances enabled them to enjoy life; and
- Resilience for the future or the ability to cope with a significant unexpected expense or fall in income.

Respondents to the ANZ Survey received a score out of 100 for each of these components. The three scores were then added together and divided by three to provide an overall financial wellbeing score out of 100.

Another example can be seen in the approach taken by the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The CFPB sees financial well-being as containing these four components:

- Control over day-to-day and month-to-month finances
- Capacity to absorb a financial shock
- On track to meet your financial goals
- Financial freedom to make choices to enjoy life

A number of human service provider agencies believe that financial wellbeing is the foundation on which many other aspects of an individual and households' general wellbeing is built. For example, the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg believes that strong Financial Well-Being has positive implications on educational achievement, contributes to better health outcomes and builds a stronger community for all. The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) and Social Policy Resource Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales has developed the following model of financial wellbeing for the Australian Context.

**Table 1: A model of financial wellbeing**

Financial wellbeing means...				
Meeting expenses and having some money left over		Being in control		Feeling financially secure
<b>Dimension 1</b>	<b>Meeting expenses and have some money left over</b>			
Definition	Includes having an adequate income to meet basic needs, pay off debts and cover unexpected expenses and having some money left over			
Sub-dimensions	Able to meet expenses	Able to manage debt	Savings buffer	Able to afford "little extras"
<b>Dimension 2</b>	<b>Being in control</b>			
Definition	Includes feeling and acting in control of your finances now and in the future			
Sub-dimensions	Having control over your financial situation		Setting and pursuing goals for future spending and life planning	
<b>Dimension 3</b>	<b>Feeling financially secure</b>			
Definition	Includes not having to worry much about money and having a sense of satisfaction with your financial situation			
Sub-dimensions	Limited financial worry		Satisfaction with financial situation	

People's levels of financial wellbeing and the resources they need to draw on to support their wellbeing may **change across the life course**. In particular, people's wellbeing is affected during transitional or life course events, such as moving out of home, having a baby, changes to employment status and income, and retirement. The experience of financial shock can also affect people's financial wellbeing.

The Bass Coast community is severely constrained by its limited access to empirical and organised information relating to the social, economic and behavioural issues affecting the financial capability of its constituents and has very limited community services that are able to meet the demand for a range of services that are necessary to improve the financial and general well-being of most disadvantaged people in the Bass Coast Shire region. A consistent factor impacting on most disadvantaged groups in the region appears to be linked to poor financial security.

<sup>1</sup>. <https://profile.id.com.au/bass-coast/assistance>

<sup>2</sup>. SEIFA (Socio-economic Indexes for Area) ABS Information Paper [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS)

<sup>3</sup>. South Gippsland Water Needs and expectations of vulnerable and disadvantaged customers report (confidential document)

<sup>4</sup>. Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2016 – 2021