

Document Control		
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1.0.4	28/6/2023	M21/06/23
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1. Purpose and Scope

To provide direction for the administration of Council's community grants programs in a manner that is aligned with the *Local Government Act 2009* and *Local Government Regulation 2012* and supports Council's vision for embracing opportunities, promoting wellbeing and celebrating strong communities.

This policy applies to all grant categories and programs administered by Gympie Regional Council.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with supporting grants guidelines that are reviewed annually and endorsed by Council.

At its discretion, Council may establish grant categories and grant programs to respond to community needs or issues.

This policy does not apply to sponsorships, donations, advertising and service level agreements.

2. Related Legislation/Documents

Local Government Act 2020 (Qld)

Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)

Associated grants guidelines approved by Council for the financial year

Approved budget and Revenue Statement for the financial year

3. Definitions

To assist in interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

- **Acquittal** is the process by which a recipient demonstrates in writing to the funding body that it has expended the funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement on completion of the activity or project;
- **Auspic** means that an organisation takes responsibility for ensuring the funds are used as specified in the grant funding agreement. An auspic organisation will be responsible for:
 - the receipt, banking and administration of all moneys
 - project monitoring and completion
 - ensuring the applicant acquits the funding on time
 - completion of the acquittal form;
- **Competitive grant round** is a round where applications open and close on specified dates. Applications are assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria and prioritised based on merit;
- **Community organisation** "An entity that carries on activities for a public purpose; or another entity whose primary object is not directed at making a profit" *Local Government Regulation 2012*, i.e. not-for-profit organisation with any profit made by the organisation going back into the operation of the organisation to carry out its purposes (not distributed to its members). A Community organisation operates with a primary purpose of providing services to the community.
- **Community Purpose** means a purpose that is in the public interest to residents of the Gympie Region Local Government Area.
- **Grant** means funds provided to a recipient through a formal grants program for a specified purpose, directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with council policy, where the recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria;
- **Rolling grant round** is a round which is open for applications until funds are expended, or until the closing date. Applications that satisfy eligibility and meet assessment criteria on merit are recommended for funding.

4. Policy Statement

Council's community grants provide financial assistance to eligible community organisations and applicants to deliver initiatives which respond to community need, align with relevant Council strategies and plans and enhance the social, environmental, and/or cultural wellbeing of the Gympie region.

The desired outcomes of this policy and supporting guidelines are:

- Supporting the achievement of Council's Corporate Plan including developing resilient communities that are respected, connected and supported by fostering strong community values and embracing diversity;
- providing community organisations with financial support to meet identified community need and provide benefits to the broader Gympie region community;

- distributing funds in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.

4.1 Grant Rounds:

Opening dates for grant rounds are outlined in Council's grants guidelines and published on Council's website and associated communication channels.

4.2 Type of Grant Assistance:

Grant assistance will take the form of a financial payment in the amounts permitted in the grants guidelines.

4.3 Number of applications:

Provided they meet the eligibility criteria, applicants can submit the number of applications per round and category as outlined in the grant guidelines.

4.4 Eligibility Criteria:

Eligibility criteria relates to applicant type (e.g. individuals, community organisations, businesses), project type, funding amount and project delivery timeframes.

Who can apply?

Grant applications must meet the specified eligibility criteria outlined in Council's endorsed grants guidelines. As a minimum, community organisations must:

- Be an incorporated not-for-profit community organization (including not-for-profit co-operatives and companies limited by guarantee), or have an auspice arrangement with an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation;
- Hold \$20M public liability insurance and other forms of insurance relevant to the project (see Insurance Coverage for External Parties Policy);
- Have no outstanding debt with Council or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with council which are being adhered to, and/or have met acquittal conditions for previous council grants;
- Be based in, or provide direct benefits to, the Gympie region.

Project / Program Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for funding, community grant applications must:

- demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest
- address the purpose and/or priorities of the grant category
- align with council's priorities as described in current council strategies, plans or policy positions, and adhere to the terms and conditions set out in the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program.

4.5 Application Process

The method for submitting community grant applications is outlined in the supporting guidelines. Applications must be submitted by the closing date. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

4.6 Assessment:

- Applications are checked against eligibility criteria and assessed against the particular assessment criteria as set out in the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program
- The number and types of initiatives approved will depend on the demand for funding, available program budget and Council priorities.
- In some instances, part-funding may be offered.

4.7 Funding Decisions:

Funding decisions in the community grants program are endorsed by Council, CEO or delegate, dependent on the funding program. Decisions are final. Applicants who believe there has been an administrative error in the assessment of their application can contact council to investigate their claim.

- For grant categories with a maximum value over \$2,500, the grants assessment panel will provide grant recommendations to Council for consideration and approval by resolution;
- For grant categories with a maximum value of \$2,500, the grants assessment panel will provide grant recommendations to Council's Delegated Officer for consideration and approval.

4.8 Conflict of Interest Provisions

All officers or Councillors are responsible for recognising and declaring any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. This may include, but is not limited to, personal connections with the applicant. Anyone having a determined conflict of interest should not debate or be involved in any discussions on any matter relating to the specific applicant.

4.9 Disqualification:

Direct contact with or lobbying of elected members of Council by applicants in relation to Council grant applications is prohibited and will disqualify the application. Lobbying of Local Government Employees in relation to the grants is prohibited and will disqualify the application.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Elected Councillors determine the allocation of funds to the Community Grants Program through its budgetary processes. Council is also responsible for approving the Community Grants Policy and Grants Guidelines which direct the administration of Council's grants program.

Endorsement of assessment panel grant recommendations is undertaken by Council, CEO or Delegated Officer, dependent on the grant category (and its maximum grant amount).

The Community Development Team is the primary administrator of Council's Community Grants Program. Various council business units assist to develop, promote, manage and review the program, as well as assessing applications for specific categories. The Community Development Team plays the lead role in the provision of support and advice to potential grant applicants and participates in assessment panels to review applications and determine grant recommendations. The Community Development Team also manages budgets and administers any legislative reporting or record keeping requirements for the community grants program.

Council officers are responsible for implementing this policy when supporting, partnering, facilitating, or delivering grants-related activities to ensure a consistent approach across council, in line with all relevant legislation.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related legislation/documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council.
3. As initiated by the CEO or Executive Team.
4. Periodic Review within three years from date of adoption.

7. Delegations

The delegation under this policy is included in the delegation schedule.