Community Grants Program
Guidelines

(Updated June 2025 Version 1.5)

The Community Grants Program supports and enables community organisations to deliver projects that contribute to our shared goal of a strong Sunshine Coast community. We value the resources and skills that community organisations and their volunteers bring. Council invests in projects that address community needs and align with our [Community Strategy 2019-2041](#), along with other regional priorities and our commitment to sustainability within the Sunshine Coast Biosphere.

Council welcomes applications that contribute to making a strong community in the following areas:

- *Healthy, active communities* - Information, services, and programs to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- *Vibrant communities* - Community places and spaces, transport and housing are available for all.

- *Inclusive communities* - Opportunities for everyone to participate and be involved.

- *Connected, resilient communities* - Communities are connected, resilient and safe. People work together to achieve shared goals.

- *Creative, innovative communities* - People value creativity, heritage, and First Nations culture.

The Program is governed by Council's [Community Grants Policy](#), which can be viewed at www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au.

Grant Types

Grant type	Applicant Type	Outcome timeframes	Amount
Major	Community group	6-8 weeks from closing date	Up to $30,000*
Minor	Community group	6 weeks from closing date	Up to $3000
Festive and Commemorative Events	Community group	Applications assessed every three months. Notification within approximately three weeks of assessment.	Up to $15,000 Up to 3 years funding available
Emergency	Community group	2 weeks after application received	Up to $3000
Individual Development	Individual	Applications assessed every two months. Notification within two weeks of assessment.	Up to $500 per individual or $2000 per team.
* Co-funding requirements apply for requests over $7500. Requests over $15,000 must be for infrastructure projects.			

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Major and Minor Grants

Major and Minor Grants support community organisations to deliver projects, activities and events that respond to community need and benefit the region.

Categories	Applications for Major and Minor grants can be submitted under one of the following categories: • Community Development • Community Facilities • Creative Development • Cultural Heritage • Economic Development • Sport and Recreation. Applicants can submit only one grant application per round.
Who can apply	Not-for-profit community organisations that meet all of the following: • are a legal entity with not-for-profit status or are registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (**ACNC**)* • operate within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area or can demonstrate the project or program will benefit residents of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area • have appropriate insurance and adhere to sound workplace health and safety practices • are able to demonstrate viability • have no debt to council, or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with Council, which are being met • have met acquittal conditions for previous Council grants. *If a community organisation is not a legal entity or registered with the ACNC, the application must be auspiced and administered by such a group.
Who cannot apply	• Government agencies or departments of local, state or federal government* • Educational, religious or medical organisations, where the application is for the organisation's core business • School Parent and Citizens' (P&C) associations • Businesses • Individuals.
Projects eligible for funding	Applications must: • demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest, with significant community need and benefit • demonstrate strong alignment with Council's priorities as described in current Council strategies, plans and policies • adhere to the terms and conditions of this funding program. To be eligible for funding for an event, events must be scheduled to take place after notification of funding outcomes.

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Projects & items not eligible for funding	
	• Ongoing operational or recurrent costs including salaries, rent, fuel
	• Activities that have already begun prior to a grant application being submitted
	• The core business of educational, religious or medical organisations
	• Donations, prize money, prizes or trophies
	• Development of privately-owned facilities
	• Payment of debt
	• Political activities
	• Projects run solely for commercial profit
	• Items included in another Council grant application
	• Projects run solely for fundraising purposes, without broader community benefit
	• School and church fetes
	• Celebration or competition activities and events where attendance is limited to individual organisations or their members
	• Judging, adjudication fees or uniforms for events
	• Catering, hospitality, food and beverages for events.

Funding limits

The following outlines the maximum amounts that can be requested for each grant type:

- Major Grants
  – up to $30,000 for infrastructure projects only - see Community Facilities category
  – up to $15,000 for all other projects
- Minor Grants – up to $3,000.

Co-funding requirements

Council cannot be the sole funder of every project. Depending on the amount requested, funds from other sources may be required.

The table below outlines co-funding requirements:

Amount requested from council	Minimum co-funding requirement
Up to $7500	Co-funding is not required
$7501 - $15,000	50% of project costs must come from other sources Up to 50% of the co-funding requirement can be volunteer hours, valued at no more than $43.30p/h. E.g. To be eligible for $10,000, the total cost of the project would be at least $20,000.
$15,001 - $30,000	75% of project costs must come from other sources Up to 20% of the co-funding requirement can be volunteer hours, valued at no more than $43.30p/h E.g. To be eligible for $30,000, the total cost of the project would be at least $120,000.

Other funding sources could include:

- applicant's cash contributions
- grants from other funding bodies
- donations
- sponsorship
- in-kind support.

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Assessment criteria	Major and Minor Grant applications are assessed using the intent, purpose and priorities of the chosen category as well as the following criteria:

- demonstrated need for the project, activity or event
- benefit to the people of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area
- evidence of consultation, community partnerships and collaboration
- strength of alignment with community priorities as described in current Council strategies, plans or policies
- capacity of the applicant to successfully complete the project
- balanced, realistic and complete project budget
- level of funding contributed by the applicant and/or others towards the project
- evidence the organisation has inclusive participation policies and practices
- evidence the organisation is working towards or maintaining self-sufficiency
- show alignment with the Sunshine Coast Biosphere's values (participation, celebrating belonging and innovation).

Further consideration will be given to projects that:

- reduce environmental impact and/or deliver sustainable living outcomes
- build skills, capacity and governance of community groups
- activate places and spaces
- procure from local businesses, social enterprises and/or First Nations businesses
- budget to procure a Welcome to Country by the Traditional Custodians of the Sunshine Coast (the Kabi Kabi peoples or Jinibara peoples).

Lower priority is given to applicants who have been awarded a council Major or Minor grant within the previous 12 months.

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Major and Minor Grant Categories

Community Development Category	**Outcomes:** Healthy, Active Communities; Vibrant Communities; Inclusive Communities; Connected, Resilient Communities.

This category supports community-led projects, activities and events that contribute to a strong community (as identified in the Community Strategy).

Category priorities

Projects funded under this category will address one or more of the following:

- improve physical and mental health and wellbeing

- activate community places and spaces

- respond to and support people experiencing homelessness

- contribute to community members feeling valued, respected, welcome and included

- support and recognise volunteers and promote volunteering opportunities

- encourage community participation and involvement

- strengthen social connections and sense of belonging, and reduce social isolation

- prepare for, respond and recover from climate risks, disasters and emergencies and enhance community resilience

- improve community safety and feelings of safety

- work towards preventing domestic and family violence

- support our Sunshine Coast Biosphere by promoting sustainable living and travel practices and behaviours

- build the skills and capabilities of community organisations to help achieve these priorities

In relation to applications for **animal management** grants, projects must:

- enhance community safety outcomes

- align with the key objectives of Council's Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021 -2030

- assist in the promotion and advancement of responsible pet ownership practices eg desexing, microchipping, registration.

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Community Facilities Category	**Outcome**: Vibrant Communities
	This category supports projects that develop, maintain or improve buildings or land, ensuring safe, accessible and inclusive community facilities.
	Choose this category if your project involves planning or undertaking work on buildings or land. Examples include but are not limited to:
	• facility improvements (such as extensions, renovations, accessibility ramps, amenities)
	• facility repairs and maintenance (such as painting, guttering, window replacement)
	• permanent installations (such as solar panels, air conditioning, signage)
	• new infrastructure (such as sheds, shade, fences)
	• land improvements (such as drainage, irrigation, landscaping
	• costs associated with planning of projects for permanent works.
	Category priorities
	Projects must meet all of the following outcomes:
	• provide well maintained and inclusive community facilities that enable opportunities for community connection
	• adhere to the principles of access, equity and inclusion
	• help manage identified risks
	• comply with Australian Standards
	• minimise environmental impact – Reuse, Reduce, Recycle and follow the seven principles of sustainable construction: sustainable design, durability, energy efficiency, waste reduction, indoor air quality, water conservation, sustainable building materials
	• have a current maintenance schedule.
	Well-developed projects that are ready to be delivered and have secured co-funding (if required), are highly regarded. See co-funding section above for details.

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Creative Development Category	**Outcomes**: Vibrant Communities; Inclusive Communities; Creative, Innovative Communities
	This category supports projects, events and activities that contribute to Council's Creative Arts Plan **vision** for the Sunshine Coast to be alive with arts, culture and creativity and align with the **values** of this plan to be bold, authentic, sustainable, inclusive and connected .
	Category priorities
	Projects funded under this category will address one or more of the following:
	• empower First Nations artists
	• build the capacity of local artists and creatives and the local arts sector
	• grow arts audiences and local participation in the arts by offering a diverse range of creative experiences
	• boost dynamic places* and innovative approaches that enable artists and audiences to connect, create and share
	• build the reputation of the Sunshine Coast as a creative region.
	*Applications for fixed creative infrastructure projects must be submitted under the Community Facilities category.
	Please note:
	- applicants are encouraged to consider and reflect award or industry recommended rates of pay to arts and cultural workers involved in projects
	- where applicable applicants must demonstrate evidence of adhering to cultural protocols.
Cultural Heritage Category	**Outcome:** Creative, Innovative Communities
	This category supports projects, activities and events that document, conserve, promote and make accessible the region's heritage and social history in alignment with Council's Heritage Plan outcomes of knowledge, conservation, support, communication, and advocacy.
	Category priorities
	Projects funded under this category will have lasting community benefit and address one or more of the following:
	• *Knowledge* - research, record and share the culture and heritage of the Sunshine Coast Region, including:
	- Traditional Custodians (Kabi Kabi peoples and Jinibara peoples), and local First Nations people
	- Descendants of Australian South Sea Islanders
	- The history and development of the region, significant personalities, and local connections to state, national and international events.
	- Contemporary heritage (post-1950s)
	• *Conservation* - Incorporate innovative practices to protect and conserve the Sunshine Coast's natural and cultural heritage for current and future generations, including the documentation and conservation of significant objects.
	• *Support* - Provide opportunities to stimulate understanding, activation and appreciation of the region's cultural heritage
	• *Communication* – Increased visibility of heritage to strengthen community identity, resilience, and awareness of Sunshine Coast's cultural heritage.
	• *Advocacy* – Increased awareness and appreciation of the region's diverse heritage
	Applicants must discuss their project with a council Cultural Heritage Officer prior to submitting their application. Please contact the Grants Team on (07) 5420 8616.

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Economic Development Category

Outcome: Sustainable economic growth, leadership, and collaboration

This category supports projects, activities and events that improve the economic performance and prosperity of the Sunshine Coast or a local community. Recipients must be not-for-profit community organisations.

Category priorities

Projects funded under this category will address one or more of the following:

- build leadership, sustainability and equity across industry
- stimulate investment and growth across one of the region's six focus economies:
  - knowledge economy
  - digital economy
  - production economy
  - green economy
  - visitor economy
  - place based economy
- retain business and expand their capabilities
- drive innovation, technological advancement and scaling up
- encourage talent and skills attraction, retention and development.

Sport and Recreation Category

Outcome: Healthy, Active Communities.

This category supports projects, activities and events that promote participation in sport and recreational pursuits across the Sunshine Coast.

Category priorities

Projects funded under this category will address one or more of the following:

- contribute to building healthy and active communities
- provide physical activity initiatives or opportunities
- improve the sustainability of sport and recreation clubs
- engage a broad spectrum of the community
- provide access for all abilities
- provide benefit to multiple user groups.

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Festive and Commemorative Events Grants

Festive and Commemorative Events Grants support costs associated with delivering the following community-led event types **only**:

- Festive Season Events* - Christmas, New Year (31 December / 1 January) and Australia Day
- Commemorative Events - Anzac Day and Remembrance Day

Applications for funding for **all** other types of events can be submitted in the Major or Minor Grant rounds under the category most relevant to the focus of the event. Please contact a Grants Officer on (07) 5420 8616 for assistance with selecting the most appropriate category for your event.

Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for Festive and Commemorative Events grants are the same as Major and Minor Grants
Events Eligible for Funding	- Festive Season Events* - Christmas, New Year and Australia Day Events - Commemorative Events - Anzac Day and Remembrance Day Events *The Festive Season is defined as the Christmas, New Year and Australia Day period (December – January)*
Funding Limits	The maximum funding amounts are: - Up to $15,000 for regional events - Up to $3,000 for local events *Multi-year funding*: Up to three years of funding is available to well-established community organisations with a proven track record of delivering festive or commemorative community-led events.
Assessment Criteria	**Outcome:** Connected, Resilient Communities **Priorities** Events funded will: - bring the local community together in a free or low-cost community event that is accessible, inclusive and reflects local character - contribute to a balanced network and calendar of events within the locality and region - provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate and connect - support the activation of our places and spaces - support the engagement of local performers and event suppliers - demonstrate sound event management principles and planning - demonstrate a commitment to sound environmental practices.

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Multi-Year Funding	Well-established community organisations with a proven track record of delivering festive or commemorative community-led events that meet above priorities can apply for up to three years funding.

All the following criteria must be met:

- evidence of collaboration with council regarding the event

- evidence applicant group is well-established

- strong history of applicant group successfully delivering the event

- evidence of long-term planning and commitment to deliver event for funding term.

Where multi-year funding is allocated, subsequent years of funding will be conditional upon:

- delivering agreed outcomes

- compliance with funding conditions

- satisfactory acquittal of previous year's funding

- Council's budget availability.

Applicants interested in applying for multi-year funding must contact a Grants Officer on 5420 8616 before submitting an application.

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Emergency Grants

Emergency grants are available to support projects that have arisen as a consequence of failure, damage or loss of essential equipment or infrastructure due to unforeseen circumstances. During a declared Disaster Situation, applicants can apply for other costs (including, but not limited to, operational costs when an organisation demonstrates financial hardship).

Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for Emergency grants are the same as Major and Minor grants.
Funding Amounts	Applicants can apply for up to $3000.
Projects Eligible for Funding	Funding must be for projects or costs which are: • deemed to be an 'emergency' (requiring rapid response) • significantly impacting the organisation's ability to continue to operate. Costs may be incurred prior to application, but applicants should be aware that funding is competitive, and council cannot guarantee that the application will be successful. Costs that are covered by insurance are not eligible for Emergency Grant funding. Only one Emergency Grant related to a declared Disaster Situation can be made by an organisation per disaster event, per financial year. *A declared Disaster Situation is one where a Notice of Declaration of Disaster Situation has been published in the Queensland Government Gazette, and affects the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area.*

Assessment Criteria	Emergency grant applications will be assessed using the following criteria:
	
	• failure, damage or loss of essential equipment or infrastructure due to unforeseen circumstances and deemed to be an emergency
	
	• significant impact on the organisation's ability to continue to operate
	
	• significant health and safety implications for the organisation's and/or service users
	
	• evidence that the project is not covered by insurance.
	
	During a *Declared Disaster Situation* the following assessment criteria can apply, subject to available budget:
	
	• significant impact on the organisation's ability to continue to operate, due to:
	  - costs that have arisen due to a declared disaster event, or
	  - cash flow hardship as a result of a declared disaster event.
	
	• costs meet the significant community need created by the declared disaster.
	
	• priority will be given to applications which evidence an organisation's financial hardship and/or a plan for sourcing more sustainable funding into the future.

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Individual Development Grants

Individual Development Grants are available to support Sunshine Coast Local Government Area residents who are performing, competing or presenting at national or international competitions, conferences or events (eg sport, arts, cultural, community, heritage, economic and environment).

Eligibility and Assessment Criteria	Individuals must be selected by a recognised national body and provide a letter of selection.

Individuals who meet all of the following criteria:

- have been a permanent resident in the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area for at least the preceding 12 months

- are representing the region by performing, competing or presenting at national or international competitions, conferences or events

- have met acquittal conditions for previous council funding.

In addition to the above, applicants for sporting events must be:

- competing in official national and international championships, recognised by a National Sporting Organisation (NSO) that is endorsed by the Australian Sports Commission

- selected for an official Queensland or Australian team, endorsed by the relevant National Sporting Organisation (NSO).

For non-sporting applications:

- the assessment panel will confirm the status of the selecting body
- individuals are eligible to receive funding for one national and one international competition, conference or event per calendar year only.

Activities that have already begun prior to a grant application being submitted are not eligible for Individual Development Grant funding.

Funding Limits

While this program offers a maximum of $500 per individual, there is a sliding scale of funding amounts relating to the nature of the activity, its location, and (where relevant) the number of individuals from a team applying. (see table below)

Groups or teams attending the same event: The total amount of funding to members of a group or team attending the same event cannot exceed $2,000. Any team member who wishes to apply, must submit their own application. Team applications will not be accepted, however all eligible members of the same team who wish to apply MUST submit their applications within the same assessment period. For further information phone the Grants Team on (07) 5420 8616.

Nature of Activity	Location	Funding Limit
International activity	Overseas – beyond Australasia/Oceania	$500
International activity	Overseas – within Australasia/Oceania	$450
International activity	Within Australia, excluding Queensland	$400
International activity	Within Queensland	$350
National activity	Interstate – beyond NSW and ACT	$300
National activity	Interstate – NSW and ACT	$250
National activity	Within Qld – beyond South East Qld	$250
National activity	Within South East Qld (including Bundaberg)	$200

Items Funded

Funding will assist with expenses incurred whilst attending an activity eg travel, accommodation, entry fee and registration.

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Information for Grant Applicants

Lodging an Application	Application forms are submitted online via Council's grants and funding webpage www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/grants. These forms will be made available on council's website when the relevant round is open. Quotes are required for all items over $500 and must be included with your application. The delivery of the Community Grants Program is subject to annual budget allocations.
Assessment	Grants are assessed by panels, which include council staff experienced in each category. In some instances, part-funding may be offered.
Payment	Successful applicants will be notified via email and will be directed to fill in the online Funding Agreement Form before payment can be made. Funds must be claimed within eight weeks of notification, except where an extension has been granted. In some instances, there may be specific Conditions of Funding that need to be met before payment can be made. If the applicant is being auspiced, payment will be made to the auspicing organisation.
Acknowledgement	All successful applicants are required to acknowledge council's support actively and publicly. The level of acknowledgement required is outlined in the funding program agreement and associated acknowledgement guidelines. Council's logo and Acknowledgement Guidelines will be emailed to successful applicants following notification. In addition, funding recipients must also ensure that council's positive reputation is maintained at all times.
Acquittal	Acquittal is the process where you show how you spent allocated funds. All successful applicants must submit an online acquittal within eight weeks of project completion. Organisations will not be considered for further grant funding from council if previous grant acquittal conditions have not been met. Please note that you will be required to return funds if you do not submit a satisfactory acquittal that includes proof of expenditure.
Applicant Support	Grants Officers can help community groups develop their project and applications. For further information and assistance, visit council's website at www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/grants or contact us on: • (07) 5420 8616 • grants@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au Note: Office hours are 8.30am – 4.30pm, Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays). If you do not have your own computer, you can access a computer at any of council's libraries at no cost. Please let us know if you have difficulty speaking English and we can organise an interpreter to assist you.

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