

Strategic policy

Community Grants

Corporate Plan reference:	<p>A strong community</p> <p><i>In all our communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available for all</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A creative identity that support community cohesiveness, development and wellbeing
Endorsed by Council on:	20 June 2013 (OM13/109)
Manager responsible for policy:	Group Executive Economic and Community Development Group

Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework which guides the administration of council's grants programs in a manner that is aligned to council's corporate strategic priorities and in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program.

Policy outcome

The outcomes of this policy include:

- achieving the objectives of council's *Corporate Plan*
- providing Community organisations with financial support to meet identified community need and provide benefit to the broader Sunshine Coast community
- developing vibrant, engaged and more resilient communities
- providing a standard approach and framework to establish community partnerships
- distributing funds in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all community grants programs.

This policy does not apply to:

- Sponsorship, donations, advertising, naming rights and service level agreements;
- Business grants; and
- Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF)¹.

Policy statement

Sunshine Coast Council recognises the vital contribution that Community organisations make to the economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing of Sunshine Coast communities.

Through the provision of community grants (subject to budget allocations), council is committed to supporting the implementation of community initiatives and partnerships that align with council's corporate priorities and criteria, and demonstrate a purpose that is in the interest of the Sunshine Coast community.

The *Community Grants Policy* is developed with a philosophy of partnership, whereby council provides a range of grants to encourage, engage and support groups within the community to make a positive and ongoing contribution to the region. With an emphasis on development and strategic and sustainable investment, this policy aims to build community capacity, encourage participation, and develop vibrant, engaged and resilient local communities.

The *Community Grants Policy* has been developed to ensure an equitable, open and transparent process for Community organisations to seek financial assistance which complies with relevant legislation. The policy and associated supporting guidelines act as tools to ensure that decision-making around the provision of community grants enriches the sense of community in our vibrant, green and diverse region.

Guiding principles

The following principles provide a consistent approach to the administration of the policy and the delivery of Council's community grants program:

- Community organisations are provided with funding support to provide community benefit to the Sunshine Coast community, in line with Council's strategic corporate priorities;
- Vibrant, engaged and more resilient communities are developed through capacity building and partnerships;
- Community organisations are enabled to attract other funding and in-kind support;
- Community organisations and volunteers are acknowledged for the positive contribution they make to the local community and Council's vision for the future; and
- Funds are distributed in an equitable and transparent manner that ensures good governance and adherence to the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications for community grants funding must meet the eligibility criteria below.

Who can apply?

Community organisations, as defined in this policy, are eligible to apply for funding if they meet all of the following criteria:

¹ Administration of the RADF program is managed by the State Government.

- Operate within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area, or are able to demonstrate that 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 adhered to, and/or have met acquittal conditions for previous council grants
- Meet the specific eligibility criteria of the funding program as set out in the supporting guidelines.

Individuals, as defined in this policy, are eligible to apply for funding through particular identified categories and programs (as outlined in the supporting guidelines of the specific funding program), if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Reside within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area, or are able to demonstrate that the project or program will benefit residents of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area
- Have no debt to 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
- Meet the specific eligibility criteria of the funding program as set out in the supporting guidelines.

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
- Businesses.

Project / Program Eligibility

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

- demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest
- align with the priorities of council's Corporate Plan, and
- adhere to the terms and conditions set out in the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program.

Ineligible Projects / Programs

Ineligible projects / programs include, but are not restricted to:

- the development of privately-owned facilities, except for the use of habitat improvements on privately-owned land, as in the case of some environment grants
- events, programs or services run solely for commercial profit
- activities that have already commenced prior to the grant application being submitted
- payment of debt
- political activities
- operational costs, in some funding programs, (see the supporting guidelines of the specific funding program).

Other eligibility restrictions may apply to specific funding categories, as set out in the supporting guidelines of the specific funding program.

Application Process

The Community Grants Policy and application process enables council to plan, prioritise and administer the distribution of funds to Community organisations in a transparent, equitable and inclusive manner.

Grants Officers can help community groups develop their grant applications if required.

Applying for Community Grants

- The method for submitting community grant applications is online. Grants Officers can assist applicants to lodge their online application if required.
- Applications must be submitted by the closing date. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Assessing Grant Applications

- Applications are checked against eligibility criteria and particular assessment criteria, as set out in the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program, and the applicant's ability to meet the funding program's terms and conditions.
- Applications are assessed by a panel comprising council officers, including program and category specialists.
- The number and types of projects approved will depend on the demand for funding, available program budget and corporate priorities.
- In some instances, part-funding may be offered

Acquittal Requirements

- All community grants funding must be acquitted. Timeframes and acquittal requirements are outlined in the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program.

Funding Decisions

Funding decisions in the community grants program are endorsed by council, CEO or delegate, dependant on the funding program. Decisions cannot be appealed.

Applicants who believe there has been an administrative error in the assessment of their application can contact council to investigate their claim.

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.

Measurement of success

The outcomes of this policy can be measured by the extent to which:

- the desired strategic outcomes are achieved, and
- there is compliance with the supporting guidelines for the specific funding program.

Roles and responsibilities

Council makes decisions about the allocation of funds to the community grants program through its budgetary processes.

Endorsement of assessment panel funding decisions is undertaken by **council, CEO or delegate**, dependant on the funding program.

The Economic and Community Development Group is the primary administrator of council's community grants program, working in collaboration with various council groups to develop, promote, manage and regularly review the program. The group plays a lead role in the provision of

support and advice to potential grant applicants, and participates in assessment panels to review applications and determine outcomes.

Economic and Community Development also manages budgets and administers any legislative reporting or record keeping requirements for the community grants program.

In collaboration with the Economic and Community Development Group, all **other council groups**, in varying capacities, review, provide feedback and assess applications, and actively assist with the evaluation, management and promotion of 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.

Definitions

Acquittal

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.

Advertising

“The communication of council outputs and services to the public by using a medium commonly used for promoting ideas, goods or services and for which a fee is paid”².

Auspicing

Auspicing means that an organisation takes responsibility for ensuring the funds are used as specified in the grant allocation. An auspicing 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
- sign off on the acquittal form.

Business

A person, partnership or organisation which is not a Community organisation, and is engaged in a profit-seeking enterprise or activity.

Community Benefit

Council recognises that grants funding delivers significant social, economic, environmental and / or cultural benefits to our region including:

- building stronger communities by: improving connectivity and inclusion, increasing individual and community wellbeing, contributing to a sense of place, and strengthening shared community values;
- improving community and economic capacity and building social capital;
- celebrating our lifestyle, environment and culture;
- increasing commitment to sustainable practices and the promotion and protection of our natural environment; and
- contributing to a positive, vibrant image of the region.

² Sunshine Coast Council 2010, *Sponsorship Policy*.

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”³, i.e. not-for-profit organisation. “Any profit made by the organisation goes back into the operation of the organisation to carry out its purposes and is not distributed to any of its members”⁴. A Community organisation operates with a primary purpose of providing services to the community.

Community Purpose

A purpose that is in the public interest to residents of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a conflict between:

- a) an officer’s or Councillor’s personal interests (including personal interests arising from their relationships or club memberships, for example); and
- b) the public interest;

that might lead to a decision that is contrary to the public interest.⁵

Donations

A voluntary gift of product, service or cash without expectation of return.

Grant

Funds provided to a recipient through a formal 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.

Individual

A singular entity, as distinguished from a group, who carries on activities for a community purpose and benefit. The individual cannot apply the funds to make a profit.

In-Kind Support

In-kind support includes paid and volunteer labour, administrative support, rent-free accommodation or donations of materials, equipment or services.

Naming Rights

The right to name property, either tangible property or an event, usually granted in exchange for financial consideration.

Privately-owned

Belonging to an individual person, i.e. a private residence or land.

Service Level Agreements

A formally negotiated agreement between council and an organisation, individual or community group that details the nature, quality and scope of a service to be provided. The purpose of a

³ *Local Government Regulation* 2012, Schedule 7, p. 235.

⁴ Australian Taxation Office 2011, *Is your Organisation Non-Profit?*, http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content.aspx?menuid=0&doc=/content/24481.htm&page=2#P8_467

⁵ *Local Government Act* 2009, s173, p. 154

service level agreement is to formalise the services of a provider and outline the responsibilities of both council and the provider in the provision of a defined service.

Sponsorship

“A contractual business arrangement under which a sponsor, for a specified term, provides a contribution in cash and/ or in kind (“contra”) in return for specified negotiated commercial benefits. Benefits purchased may include the right to public recognition or association with a service, program, event, activity, individual or infrastructure. Sponsorship is different from grants funding, where money or goods are provided to recipients through a formally recognised program for a specified purpose, but with no expectation of commercial return⁶.”

Related policies and legislation

Sunshine Coast Council

- Sunshine Coast Corporate Plan 2021-2025
- Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041
- Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033
- Sunshine Coast Environment and Livability Strategy 2017
- Access and Inclusion Policy (2011)
- Sunshine Coast Arts Plan 2018-2038
- Sunshine Coast Cultural Heritage Plan 2021-2031
- Sunshine Coast Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2022
- Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021 – 2030
- Sunshine Coast Community Events and Celebrations Strategy (2010)
- Community Safety Policy (2014)
- Community Gardens Policy (2011)
- Cultural Development Policy (2012)
- Environment Levy Policy (2021)
- Event Policy (2010)
- Heritage Policy (2021)
- Sponsorship Policy (2016)

Queensland Government

- *Local Government Regulation (2012)*
- *Local Government Act (2009)*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act (1982)*

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new policy	Y	Council Ordinary Meeting	20/06/2013
1.1	Update Department names and re-branding	N	Corporate Governance	6/1/2017
1.2	Minor amendments to remove superseded policy	Y	Community Connections & Partnerships Lead	August 2020
1.3	Update related policies	Y	Community Connections & Partnerships Lead	15/9/2021

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⁶ Sunshine Coast Council 2010, *Sponsorship Policy*.