

STRATEGIC POLICY

MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR DISCRETIONARY FUNDING

Corporate Plan Reference:	<p>3. <i>Innovation and Creativity</i> 3.1 <i>Partnerships and alliances that drive innovation</i></p> <p>4. <i>Health and Wellbeing</i> 4.2 <i>Active lifestyles</i></p> <p>5. <i>Social Cohesion</i> 5.2 <i>Strong Community Groups and Networks</i></p>
Endorsed by Council on:	31 January, 2013
Policy Owner and Department:	Executive Director, Community Services

POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework which guides the administration of council's Mayoral and Councillor Discretionary Funding Program in a manner consistent with council's Community Grants Policy and corporate priorities; and complies with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Mayoral and Councillor Discretionary Funding Program Guidelines.

POLICY OUTCOME

The outcomes of this policy include:

- an ability for discretionary funds to be budgeted for community purposes and allocated by a councillor at the councillor's discretion, including discretionary funds for capital works that are for a community purpose;
- achieving the objectives of council's Corporate Plan, long-term asset management plan and annual budget;
- 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;
- distributing funds in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to the discretionary funds made available from Councillors to community organisations. This policy does not apply to council's community grants, sponsorship, donations, advertising, naming rights, service level agreements, joint ventures or business grants.

POLICY STATEMENT

This funding program provides Councillors with an annual amount (subject to annual budget allocations) for the allocation of discretionary funding to spend for community purposes to benefit Sunshine Coast residents. With an emphasis on community development and strategic and sustainable investment, this policy aims to build community capacity, encourage participation, and develop vibrant, engaged and more resilient local communities.

This policy ensures 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 discretionary funding enriches the sense of community in our vibrant, green and diverse region.

The Mayoral and Councillor discretionary funding can be allocated to Councillor Emergent Capital Works and Operational Works Funding for community purposes but the opposite does not apply.

The Mayoral and Councillor discretionary funding cannot be:

- stored or accumulated for use over more than two financial years;
- utilised for administration support service for Councillors;
- used to complement or be in addition to any existing council grant or other council funding sources/programs, where applications for funding have already been submitted to council;
- used for land acquisitions without a supporting council resolution; or
- used for any purposes contrary to the Corporate Plan, strategy, policy or adopted resolution.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles provide a consistent approach to the administering of this policy and the delivery of council's Mayoral and Councillor Discretionary Funding Program:

- Community organisations are provided with funding support to provide community benefit to the Sunshine Coast community, in line with council's 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.
- 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

Community organisations may apply for Mayoral and Councillor discretionary funding provided they meet the eligibility criteria as set out below.

Who can apply?

Community organisations are eligible to apply for funding if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Operate within the Sunshine Coast region or are able to demonstrate that the project or program will benefit residents of the Sunshine Coast.
- Have appropriate insurance and adhere to sound Workplace Health and Safety practices.
- Are able to demonstrate financial viability.
- Have met acquittal conditions for previous council grants and have no debt to council, or have entered into scheduled payment arrangements with council which are being adhered to.

Who cannot apply?

- Government agencies or departments of local, state or federal government;
- Organisations with more than 25 poker machines;
- Educational, religious or medical organisations, where the application is for the organisation's core business;
- Businesses and Individuals (unless otherwise stipulated within the supporting guidelines).

Project / Program Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for funding, Mayoral and Councillor Discretionary Funding Program applications must:

- be submitted on the required application form;
- be only for one grant per funding round (per annum);
- demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest;
- align with the priorities of council's *Corporate Plan*; and
- adhere to the specific terms and conditions as set out in the supporting guidelines.

As soon as practicable after an amount has been allocated from a councillor's discretionary funds, council must publish a notice stating:-

- the name of the community organisation to which the amount has been allocated; and
- the amount and purpose of the allocation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

This application process enables divisional Councillors to plan, prioritise and administer the distribution of discretionary funds to community organisations in a transparent, equitable and inclusive manner.

Councillor Support Officers and Council's Grant Development Officers can help community organisations develop their project application if required.

Community Services will ensure that an availability notice regarding the Mayoral and Councillor Discretionary Funding Program is published on council's website and information is available at key council locations.

Applying for discretionary funding

- Applications of a localised nature (local community benefit) can be submitted to the divisional Councillor/s where the community organisation is located or where there will be most benefit.
- Applications which have broader regional community benefits (within the Sunshine Coast region only) can be submitted to the Mayor.
- The preferred method for submitting applications is online. Councillor support officers and Grants officers can assist community organisations in lodging their online application.
- Applicants are responsible for obtaining all appropriate permits, approvals, insurance etc. relating to the project.

Assessing discretionary applications

- This policy's guiding principles inform decision-making around the allocation of Mayoral and Councillor discretionary funds.
- Applications are checked against eligibility criteria and the community organisations ability to meet the funding programs terms and conditions.
- 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 discretionary funding must be acquitted within eight weeks of project completion.
- Applicants must use funds for the purpose for which the funding was awarded, unless written permission for a variation has been obtained from the divisional Councillor/s prior to activities being undertaken.

Discretionary Funding Decisions

Discretionary funding allocations and decisions will be determined by the divisional Councillor/s where the community organisation is located or where there will be the most benefit. If the community benefit can be demonstrated to exist across Councillor divisions the Councillors involved can agree on a part or equal contribution funding arrangement by mutual agreement.

Regional discretionary funding allocations and decisions will be determined by the Mayor.

In accordance with state legislation, discretionary funding targeted for allocation to capital works requires the Mayor and CEO approval. If the councillor seeking funding for capital works is the Mayor, then the Deputy Mayor and CEO approval is required.

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

Councillors are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest with an application. In this instance, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and CEO or delegate may be responsible for approving a discretionary funding application to ensure organisational transparency.

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

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

- the policy progresses in achieving desired strategic outcomes
- there is compliance with relevant legislation and the supporting guidelines.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Community Services** Department is the primary administrator of council's community grants, partnerships and discretionary funding programs, working in collaboration with various council departments to develop, promote, manage and regularly review the programs. The department plays a lead role in the provision of support and advice to potential grant applicants, and, where applicable, participates in assessment panels to review applications and determine outcomes.

Where discretionary funding is applied, relevant details will be publically recorded by Community Services as prescribed in the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

The **Finance and Business** Department assists in the financial administration of council's community grants, partnerships and discretionary funding programs.

The **Infrastructure Services** Department is responsible to scope, evaluate, provide feedback on and manage any new capital or operational works based applications in accordance with the Councillor Emergent Capital Works and Operational Works Policy.

The **Executive Office** Department provides direction and where required approval for discretionary funding applications where a councillor potential conflict of interest exists to ensure organisational transparency.

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.

Business

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

Co-Funding

Council is not able to be the sole funder for every project. Depending on the amount requested, gathering funds from other sources may be required. These could include:

- applicant contribution
- grants from other funding bodies
- sponsorship
- in-kind support.

Community Benefit

Council recognises that grants funding delivers significant social, economic, environmental and 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.

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”¹, 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”². 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 region.

Discretionary Funds

“Discretionary funds are funds in the local government’s operating fund that are budgeted for use by a Councillor at the Councillor’s discretion”³ for the benefit of the community.

Grant / Funding

¹ *Local Government Regulations 2012*

² 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

³ *Local Government Act 2009*
Sunshine Coast Regional Council

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 person which is not a community organisation.

In-Kind Support

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

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 return.

RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Sunshine Coast Council

- *Sunshine Coast Community Plan: Our Vision for 2030*
- *Sunshine Coast Corporate Plan 2009-2014*
- *Cultural Development Policy (2012)*
- *Placemaking Policy and Charter (2012)*
- *Councillor Code of Conduct (2011)*
- *Public Art Policy (2011)*
- *Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plan (2011)*
- *Sunshine Coast Aquatic Plan (2011)*
- *Waterways and Coastal Management Strategy 2011-2021*
- *Sunshine Coast Positive Ageing Strategy 2011-2016*
- *Sunshine Coast Access and Inclusion Plan 2011-2016*
- *Sunshine Coast Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-2016*
- *Events Policy (2010)*
- *Heritage Levy Policy (2010)*
- *Festive Season Strategy (2010)*
- *Sunshine Coast Climate Change and Peak Oil Strategy (2010)*
- *Sunshine Coast Wellbeing Charter (2010)*
- *Community Events and Celebrations Strategy (2010)*
- *Economic Development Strategy (2010)*
- *Sunshine Coast Youth Strategy 2010-2015*
- *Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan 2010-2015*
- *Wellbeing Charter (2010)*
- *Procurement Policy (2009)*
- *Community Engagement Policy (2009)*
- *Environment Levy Policy (2009)*
- *Sunshine Coast Waste Minimisation Strategy (2009)*
- *Employee Code of Conduct (2008)*

Queensland Government

- *Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (2012)*
- *Local Government Regulation (2012)*
- *Queensland Local Government Act (2009)*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act (1982)*

Version control:

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Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Eg. Create new			<i>DD/MM/YYYY</i>
	Eg. Review			