



Policy Subject/Title: COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS POLICY

Policy Number: C/001

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Legislative or Regulatory Reference: Local Government Regulation 2012

Authorised by: Somerset Regional Council

Authorised on: 23 July 2008 [Doc Id 331891]

Review / Amendment dates:

- 14 July 2010 [Doc Id 464181]
- 24 July 2012 [Doc Id 629318]
- 8 October 2014 [Doc Id 781966]
- 11 November 2015 [Doc Id 852057]
- 11 October 2017 [Doc Id 995893]
- 28 March 2018 [Doc Id 1024321]
- 27 November 2019 [Doc Id 1160557]
- 29 July 2022 [Doc Id 1418869]
- 24 July 2024 [Doc Id 1646304]

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to comply with the legislative requirement to adopt a community grants policy¹ and ensure:

- the grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest;
- the community organisation meets the criteria stated in the community grants policy; and
- the grant is given in a way that is consistent with the community grants policy.²

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that funding and assistance made available by Council:

- aims to build community capacity and/or provides supplementary funding;
- assists with social, cultural, recreational and environmental outcomes that contribute to the development of inclusive and sustainable practices of community groups throughout the Somerset region; and
- enhances Council's profile in the community.

This policy will:

- ensure public money and in-kind assistance to community organisations and individuals within the Somerset region is distributed in an open, accountable and equitable manner;
- enable community assistance grant funds to be utilised for projects, events and services that benefit the community and further Council's aims and objectives for the region;
- identify how the Community Assistance Grants program is promoted to the community;
- determine the criteria for assessing community grant applications; and
- outline the process for distributing grant funding.

3. SCOPE

3.1 What this policy applies to

This policy covers:

- a) direct financial or in-kind support for community organisations, projects, events or services within the Somerset region;
- b) payment of general rates and Council cost recovery fees, on behalf of community organisations;
- c) assets given to community organisations;
- d) payments to individuals and teams as excellence bursaries.

3.2 What this policy does not apply to

- a) This policy does not apply to grants or concessions requested by commercial organisations or individuals other than those referred to in 3.1(d) above;
- b) For example, applications will not be considered for the payment of insurance premiums, water supply and sewerage accounts from Urban Utilities, other utility accounts such as electricity and telecommunications or the following charges levied with Council general rates:
 - Utility charges;

¹ s195 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

² s194 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

- Separate rates and charges;
- Special rates and charges; and
- State Government Emergency Levy.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Legislation

Section 194 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 (the Regulation) allows Council to give a grant to a community organisation if satisfied:

- the grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest;
- the community organisation meets the criteria stated in the community grants policy; and
- the grant is given in a way that is consistent with the community grants policy.³

Section 195 of the Regulation specifies that Council must adopt a policy about local government grants to community organisations, which includes criteria for a community organisation to be eligible for a grant from the local government.

Schedule 8 Dictionary of the Regulation defines 'community organisation' as:

- a) an entity that carries on activities for a public purpose; or
- b) another entity whose primary object is not directed at making a profit.

Council must:

- allow public access to the community grants policy;⁴
- keep written records stating:
 - the risks local government's operations are exposed to, to the extent they are relevant to financial management,
 - the control measures adopted to manage the risks; and
 - include a copy of its community grants policy with these written records;⁵
- include a summary of the local government's expenditure on grants to community organisations for the financial year in its annual report.⁶

4.2 Principles

Grants should be provided in an equitable manner. That is, grants should not benefit one group of the community and exclude another. Arrangements for making grants, should be made on a whole of region basis.

Grants should be provided to achieve an identified benefit to the community generally. The Council should ensure that the benefits are obtained. The process of awarding grants should be open and accountable.

5. POLICY

5.1 The main process

In granting direct financial support for community organisations, projects, events or services,

³ s194 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

⁴ s199 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

⁵ s164 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

⁶ s189 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

Council will use the following process:

- As part of Council's annual budget considerations, an amount will be decided upon which is available for making grants to community organisations. This decision may specify amounts for the different types of grants covered by this policy. A limit for individual grants may be set.
- Advertisements will be placed in local media for two (2) funding rounds per financial year (with the first round of each financial year including rates remission applications for that financial year). The advertisement will detail the availability and request applications be received by a specified date, addressing the selection criteria. However, organisations may be limited to two (2) applications per financial year with a lower priority given to applicants that have been funded within the previous 12 months.
- Applicants shall meet one of the following classifications:
 - a) a sporting / leisure / cultural organisation which is a non-profit group whose primary aim is to advance the social, cultural, leisure or sporting needs of its members and/or residents of the Somerset region;
 - b) a charitable organisation that is a non-profit group whose primary aim is to improve the quality of life of under-privileged sections of the community within the Somerset region;
 - c) a community service provider whose primary aims are to provide a community service to all or specific sections of the community within the Somerset region;
or
 - d) an educational institution within the Somerset region.
- Applicants for community assistance grants must be either incorporated entities or the grants must be auspiced by an incorporated organisation.
- When the advertisement has been issued, Councillors and Council staff may encourage organisations to apply, but should not indicate if an application is likely to succeed.

The following criteria may be used to assess grant applications:

- Non-recurrent grants of between \$500 and \$5,500 will be made available to not-for-profit community organisations to undertake projects, activities or events which benefit the wider community, depending on the availability of funds and the merit of projects, activities or events.
- Applications will be accepted for one (1) application per funding round (total of two (2) per financial year) and one rates remission (if applicable), per community organisation. Applicants must have met acquittal conditions for previous Council grants prior to the opening of the next funding round in order for their later application to be accepted for consideration.
- Maximum funding of \$5,500 per application unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.
- Funding for events held within the Somerset Region will be considered at the following levels:

Small scale event up to \$750

- 100 or less patrons expected; or
- Restricted to a particular group of patrons (e.g. membership required)

Large scale event up to \$1,500

- 100 – 1000 patrons expected to attend
- The first annual event for a group/organisation
- Event will be advertised throughout the Somerset Region

Annual Agricultural Shows up to \$2,000

- Restricted to annual agricultural shows held within the Somerset Region.

Large scale regional event up to \$3,000

- An event with 1000 or more patrons expected
- Evidence of previous event success provided (i.e. not a first annual event). First or previous annual events are to have met the criteria of a large scale event.
- Unrestricted attendance
- Event will be advertised throughout the Somerset Region

- Ticket sales and entry fees are not considered membership.
- Additional consideration may be provided to grant applications which involve a co-contribution from the applicant and/or where the applicant has sought additional grant funding, sponsorship, or donations from other sources for the relevant project. Council typically prefers 50% co-contribution to funding applications (e.g. project based) that are not an event.
- Because Council's intent is to use grants to enhance its profile in the community, Council would prefer not to provide funding for fundraising events but rather fund the cause that is the subject of the fund-raising event directly where appropriate.
- Council will give lower priority to applicants that have been funded within the previous 12 months.
- Council would prefer to not fund general recurrent costs of community organisations such as uniforms, insurance, or salaries.
- Council would prefer not to fund government entities through community assistance grants. Council will not fund entities that operate more than 30 gaming machines through community assistance grants.
- Council will not approve funding for projects, activities, or events if the project, activity or event is conducted on privately owned property without relevant Council approvals and insurances, or the proposed project, activity or event would entail improvements to this property which could potentially benefit an individual or business.
- Applicants will be required to:
 - a) demonstrate the community benefit that the project, event or service will provide.
 - b) provide a copy of the organisation's most recently audited financial statements where the organisation is legally required to be audited; or a copy of the organisation's most recent unaudited financial statements together with

relevant verification statement and copies of bank statements at the balance date (balance date being the closing date of financial statements representing all of the organisation's bank accounts and loans).

- c) provide details of the organisation's status in relation to GST.
 - d) provide written quotations, where applicable, to support the amounts included in the application.
 - e) provide details demonstrating that any other approvals required for the application have been obtained. For example, where the application is for funding the building of a shed on Council land, the applicant must obtain an approval from Council, as the property owner, prior to lodging the funding application.
 - f) provide details of any financial contribution to be made by the organisation or from another grant program, as preference may be given to applications that include such co-contributions.
 - g) acknowledge their understanding that where a community assistance grant is provided for the purchase of a non-current asset and the asset is sold within twelve (12) months after the date on which Council grants the funds for the purchase, the grant provided must be repaid to the Council.
- Applications that do not include all supporting documentation will not be considered further.
 - After the closing date, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate will consider all the applications and assess them against the criteria. In this process the CEO or delegate may request additional information from the applicants and may conduct interviews.
 - The CEO or delegate will make recommendations in relation to the grants to be awarded. Council will consider the recommendations and decide what grants are to be awarded.
 - Notwithstanding the closing dates of funding rounds, applications submitted outside of funding rounds may be considered by Council where the community organisation can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that would necessitate application outside of specified funding rounds.
 - Councillors have no discretionary funds available to them and as such cannot, as an individual, make any decision regarding the allocation of Community Assistance Grants.

5.2 Acknowledgements

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge;

- support provided to the organisation; and
- Promotional material and at the event

5.3 Acquittals

Successful applicants will be required to lodge an acquittal statement evidencing the expenditure of the grant. Any unspent funding must be returned to Council. Acquittal statements are to be lodged prior to the end of the financial year for which the grant was awarded, unless an extension is granted for the expenditure of the funds. Successful applicants will be precluded from receiving further grants until previous grants have been acquitted.

Grants provided for rates remissions will not be required to provide an acquittal.

5.4 Time limit on claiming grants

Grantees are required to claim grants via a tax invoice within three (3) months of the date of approval unless an extension is sought and granted. Grants after this period, where no extension has been approved, will be cancelled. Notification of grant approval will advise of the time limit and potential implications.

6 Somerset Excellence Bursaries

Council may decide to make a grant to individuals and / or teams in order to encourage academic, cultural and sporting excellence. These applications must be received by Council prior to the event.

Applications for assistance shall be in writing and provide details of the selection as either an individual or team at Regional, State or National level; the venue where the event / competition is to take place; details of the achievements leading up to the selection; and confirmation of their residence within the Somerset Region.

6.1 Conditions for Team applications:

- If event attendance is via nomination not selection (regional, state or national) a covering letter is to be provided detailing the teams reason for attendance and benefits to its members, for consideration by council.

The level of financial assistance to be granted is based on level of selection as follows:

Regional Level selection - \$250

- Representation of a region, district, or area.

State Level selection - \$500

- Representation of an Australian state or territory.

National Level selection - \$750

- Representation of Australia.

Selection for an event hosted internationally - \$1,000.

Team application (Regional, State or National) up to \$2,000

- per team/group of four (4) or more individuals.

Nomination (not selection) of a team to attend an event or training program up to \$1,000

- per team/group for nomination fees of four (4) or more individuals, whichever is lesser.

Successful excellence bursary applicants will be required to lodge an acquittal statement evidencing the expenditure of the grant. Any unspent funding must be returned to Council. Acquittal statements are to be lodged prior to the end of the financial year for which the grant was awarded, unless an extension is sought and granted for the expenditure of the funds. Successful applicants will be precluded from receiving further grants until previous grants have

been acquitted.

Somerset excellence bursaries are not community grants as defined by the Local Government Regulation notwithstanding that they are to be funded from the same budget allocation as community assistance grants.

Completed applications must be received prior to the event / competition start date to be eligible. Excellence Bursaries will be considered and approved at Officer level as delegated and reported to Council's Ordinary meeting monthly.

7. CONTROLS

The expenditure will be subject to the normal accounting controls.

No person may give an indication of the likely success of an application until the decision has been made by Council or by the delegated officer (if the application is for an Excellence Bursary).

Projects, events, activities, achievements or services that commence prior to the grant application being approved by Council, will not be eligible or supported.

A summary of all grants provided shall be included in the annual report.

8. DATE OF RESOLUTION

This original policy was approved by the Chief Executive Officer and adopted by the Somerset Regional Council at the Ordinary Meeting of 23 July 2008. This policy was last reviewed and amended on 24 July 2024.

Signed:

Date: 24 July 2024.