

## 9.10 Policy Review - Community Grants Program

REPORT BY THE FINANCIAL PLANNING COORDINATOR  
TO 20 APRIL 2022 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400088, GRA600009

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. receive the report by the Financial Planning Coordinator on the Policy Review - Community Grants Program ;
2. place the revised Community Grants Program Policy on public exhibition for 28 days ; and
3. adopt the revised Community Grants Program Policy if no submissions are received.

### Executive summary

A review of Council's Community Grants Program Policy is recommended to include a section for 'Variations to Policy'.

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

### Detailed report

A review of Council's Community Grants Program Policy is recommended to include a section for variations to policy. This will allow Council to exceed the amount of the grant cap and vary the timing of the Community Grants outside the Policy Restrictions when a project or program is deemed to meet additional or high community needs or a high economic benefit to the region. Varied grants must be awarded through a Council Resolution and will meet all requirements of the Local Government Act at the time of providing the grant. Additional justification or evidence may be required from the applicant, and this is at Councils discretion.

### Community Plan implications

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Looking After Our Community</b>
Goal	A safe and healthy community
Strategy	Support networks, program and facilities which promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy lifestyles

### Strategic implications

#### Council Strategies

Not applicable

**Council Policies**

By adopting the recommendation, Council is endorsing the Community Grants Program Policy changes be placed on public exhibition for comment. Should any submissions be received a further report will be presented back to Council for consideration. If no submissions are received at the end of the exhibition period, the revised policy will be adopted and apply from that date

**Legislation**

Not applicable

Financial implications

Not applicable

Associated Risks

Not applicable

AMANDA COVER  
FINANCIAL PLANNING COORDINATOR

NEIL BUNGATE  
ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

24 March 2022

*Attachments:* 1. POLICY - REVIEW- Community Grants Program.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER



## POLICY COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

*A prosperous  
and progressive  
community*

ADOPTED		REFERENCE	V4.2
COUNCIL MEETING MIN NO	32/21	REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2024
DATE	17 FEBRUARY 2021	FILE NUMBER	FIN300138, GOV400047

### Objective

The objective of this policy is to:

- establish clear and transparent criteria by which financial assistance requests will be assessed and allocations determined;
- provide a process which allows Council to conduct a meaningful and equitable comparison of requests
- provide guidelines for the submission of applications and assessment process
- inform grantees of the requirements to acquit their funding

### Scope

This policy applies to requests for financial assistance from not-for-profit community based organisations, groups and individuals that meet community needs and benefit residents in our community.

The purpose of the Community Grants Program is to enable Council to support local projects and activities put forward by those organisations that offer a significant contribution to community outcomes and goals as provided in the Towards 2030 Community Plan. In doing so, financial assistance is to be provided in a consistent, equitable and transparent manner.

### Legislative requirements

The Community Grants Program is governed by the following legislative framework.

The Local Government Act 1993, Section 356, states:

- (1) A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
- (2) A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.
- (3) However, public notice is not required if:
  - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
  - (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
  - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
  - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.
- (4) Public notice is also not required if the financial assistance is part of a program of graffiti removal work.

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

The Local Government Act 1993, Section 377, states:

(1) A council may, by resolution, delegate to the general manager or any other person or body (not including another employee of the council) any of the functions of the council, other than the following:

(q) a decision under section 356 to contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons,

## Related policies and plans

- Code of Conduct
- Towards 2030 Community Plan
- Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy
- Disposal of Assets Policy

## Policy

### General Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for assessment all applicants must:

- be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation or Individual. Unincorporated community groups are eligible to apply provided they are auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit organisation;
- have met any previous Mid-Western Regional Council grant acquittal requirements;
- have no outstanding debts of any kind to Mid-Western Regional Council; and
- complete the online application form by the applicable cut-off time and date.

Mid-Western Regional Council does not provide grants under this policy for:

- events that are eligible to apply for the Events Assistance Program, excluding the Mudgee, Gulgong and Rylstone Shows;
- programs that typically fall under the responsibility of another level of government.

In-kind support for the waiver of rates, fees and charges is considered financial assistance within this policy and therefore eligible for applications. The waiver of a bond or security deposit is not considered financial assistance, however if any damage should arise as a result of the event, the applicant will be liable for the cost.

### COMMUNITY GRANT CATEGORIES

Proposed projects must fall within one of the following categories (applicants cannot apply for funds in more than one category):

#### Youth Representative Grants Category

Youth representative grants are open to:

- persons that meet the eligibility criteria to represent on Youth Council; and

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

- are selected to represent Australia at any international competition or event, including but not limited to sporting, academic or the arts.

GRANT CAP: This grant is limited to \$1,000, and will be excluded from the requirements of the Community Grants Assessment Criteria.

#### Disability Representative Grants Category

Disability representative grants are open to:

- Persons that meet the definition of being disabled as per the Disability Discrimination Act 1992; and
- Are selected to represent at any state level or above, competition or event, including but not limited to sporting, academic or the arts.

GRANT CAP: This grant is limited to \$1,000, and will be excluded from the requirements of the Community Grants Assessment Criteria.

#### Business Associations Category

Business associations are organisations that represent the business community within the Mid-Western Regional Council area. To be eligible for funding the objectives of these organisations should align with strategies identified within Council's Community Plan theme 'Building a Strong Local Economy'.

For the purpose of this policy the business areas available for funding are:

- Gulgong
- Kandos/Rylstone
- Mudgee

Council may allocate an annual funding amount to a business association in each area. Council will prioritise claims based on need and program benefit, and will not cover the payment of wages for administration duties.

GRANT CAP: The annual amount for each business association per financial year shall not exceed \$10,000.

#### Community Groups Category

Community Groups are organisations that represent the community interests within the Mid-Western Regional Council area. To be eligible for funding the objectives of these organisations should align with strategies identified within Council's Community Plan themes 'Looking after our Community' or 'Protecting our Natural Environment'.

Council will prioritise claims based on need and program benefit, and will not cover the payment of wages for administration duties. Only one cap can be applied, per annum, for each program.

IN-KIND GRANT CAP: \$5,000

GRANTING OF COUNCIL ASSETS: See the Disposal of Assets Policy.

COMMUNITY EVENTS CAP: \$5,000

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/PROJECT CAP: \$10,000 (non-capital)

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

#### Capital Grants Category

Capital Grants are grants provided to an organisation (that meets the general eligibility criteria) towards a major item of capital expenditure, such as the construction/upgrade of a building or facility. To be eligible for funding, capital projects should align with strategies identified within Council's Community Plan.

Council will prioritise claims based on need and program benefit.

LOANS: Council will not lend funds to organisations for capital expenditure.

COUNCIL LAND: Council will not gift land to organisations for capital infrastructure, however, Council may consider applying an approved grant amount as an in-kind payment, or partial payment, towards purchase of surplus Council land. All requirements of the Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy must be met.

CAPITAL PROJECT CAP: \$25,000 or 50% of the total project cost, whichever is the lower.

#### Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund Grants Category

The Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) grants are provided to not-for-profit organisations or individual applicants to support sustained economic recovery and community resilience following the 2019-2020 bushfire season. The BCRRF Phase Two is designed to support community recovery by funding projects and initiatives that will promote community well-being, social and broader recovery and future disaster resilience following the bushfires.

Community projects need to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Improve community capacity, capability and resilience
- Improve community connectedness, identity of place and cultural heritage
- Improve and build regional and community knowledge
- Assist in local preparedness to future disasters and hazards
- Promote future disaster resilience following the bushfires
- Promote community well-being
- Support social and broader community recovery
- Support commemoration

Council will prioritise claims based on need and program benefit.

PROJECT CAP: Total funding is capped at \$62,500. This funding has been provided through the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement under the Bushfire Community Resilience and Recovery Fund.

#### Other Grants Category

Other grants include all not-for-profit or individual applications that do not meet one of the above categories, but still meet the General Eligibility Criteria. To be eligible for funding, these requests should align with strategies identified within Council's Community Plan.

GRANT CAP: \$2,000

#### Grants Management Process

##### APPLICATIONS

All grant applications are to be completed online, accessed from the Mid-Western Regional Council website. If you are unable to access the internet, facilities are available for lodgement at Council's Customer Service locations.

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

ASSESSMENT

All applications (except Youth Representative Grants) received are assessed by a panel of at least three relevant staff members. If required, some applications may be assessed by external parties who have skills and professional expertise that benefit the assessment process.

The application will be assessed against the following criteria relative to the amount of funding requested:

- Degree of benefit to the community aligned with the community plan
- Amount of resident participation
- Level of consultation and collaboration with other not-for-profit local groups in the planning and delivery of the project
- Organisational capacity to deliver the program or project

Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to seek feedback from staff on their application. Even though an application may meet the criteria it may not be competitive against other applications.

APPROVAL

Only Council has authority to approve grants for financial assistance. Council will be provided with a report on a quarterly basis to consider the assessment panel's recommendations for which applications will be funded and to what amount.

ACQUITTAL REQUIREMENTS

To ensure financial assistance is used by the recipient for the specified purpose all grantees must submit reports back to Council in accordance with the below requirements depending on the type of activity.

Grant Amount	Project	All other activities
<\$2,000	Brief report on the outcomes achieved at the end of the project	Brief report on the outcomes achieved at the end of the financial year
>\$2,000	In addition to the above a financial report with copies of invoices attached where relevant	In addition to the above annual financial statements with copies of invoices attached where relevant

UNSPENT GRANTS

Where unspent grants are reported in the acquittal this may jeopardise future applications for funding.

TIMETABLE

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Applications open online via MWRC website	1 <sup>st</sup> May	1 <sup>st</sup> July	1 <sup>st</sup> October	1 <sup>st</sup> January

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

Applications close	6 weeks after opening	6 weeks after opening	6 weeks after opening	6 weeks after opening
Report to Council meeting (month)	July	October	February	May

\*\*These dates are based on anticipated Council meeting dates, if a Council meeting is moved or cancelled - applications will be submitted at the next available meeting date.

PRIVACY

Applicants should be aware that copies of applications for financial assistance may be included in a report to Council which will be published in the Council Business Paper and will be publicly available as well as being published on Council's website.



POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

### Variations to Policy

Council may vary the amount and timing of Community Grants outside the Policy restrictions when a project or program is deemed to meet additional/high demand community needs or provide very high economic benefit to the region. Varied grants must be awarded through a Council Resolution and will meet all requirements of the Local Government Act at the time of providing the grant. Additional justification or evidence may be required from the applicant, and this is at Councils discretion.

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### Definitions

Term	Meaning
Grant Caps	<p>A grant cap provides the maximum amount of claim for each grant category. There are many beneficial programs, groups and projects that are carried out within the Mid-Western Regional Council community, and caps are designed to ensure that grant funding is available for many, not just some.</p> <p>Grants should be applied for based on need. Caps are not allocations, they are maximums, and a lesser amount may be granted dependant on how the application meets the assessment criteria. Caps are also designed to give guidance to applicants around expectation of Council support.</p> <p>Applicants may only apply for a grant in ONE category, per project. Some caps apply as an annual maximum, where this is the case, it is specified in the category definitions. Applicants should advise which cap they are applying under; however, Council reserves the right to apply the most appropriate cap to the grant application.</p>
Acquittal	<p>An acquittal is a written report submitted after the funded project is complete or at end of financial year. It details how the grantee administered the grant funds and met the outcomes in the funding application.</p>
Auspice	<p>An auspice is an incorporated not-for profit organisation who receives, administers and acquits the funding on behalf of an unincorporated grant applicant. Unincorporated groups seeking funding must apply for funding under an auspice.</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Payments given to individuals or organisations which are not commensurate with a reciprocal benefit received by Council. It should be noted the following examples are not considered financial assistance and are therefore outside this policy:</p> <p>Payments made in exchange for the provision of a service which Council may otherwise provide itself.</p>

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

	Statutory contributions such as SES, Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire Brigades. Waiver of a bond or security deposit.
Grant	Cash provided to applicants for the specified purpose as outlined in the application. A grant is given with conditions that is must be administered for that purpose identified with requirement for acquittal.
In-kind	Refers to an arrangement whereby Council foregoes revenue on things for which they would normally charge a fee.
Not-for-profit organisation	A not-for-profit organisation is an organisation that does not directly operate for the profit or gain of its owners, members or shareholders, either directly or indirectly. Any profit must be used to implement the organisation's purpose and must not be distributed to members, owners or shareholders either while the organisation is operating or when it winds up.
Project/Program	A Project is a temporary organisation that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to an agreed Business Case
Business Association Group	Business associations are organisations that represent the business community within the Mid-Western Regional Council area. Examples include Chambers of Commerce.
Community Groups	Community Groups are organisations that represent the community interests within the Mid-Western Regional Council area. Examples include (but are not limited to) Fundraising Institutes, Hobby/Social Groups, Sports/Arts/Environmental/Health Groups, Associations etc

## ONLINE APPLICATION

The online application form requires the below information.

### APPLICATION FORM – COMMUNITY GRANTS

#### Applicants Details

- Name of organisation
- Contact person
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- ABN
- Bank Account

POLICY: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM | V 4.2, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

Project/Activity Details

- Name of project/activity
- Amount of funding requested
- Start and finish date
- Briefly describe project/activity

Address Criteria

- Degree of benefit to the community aligned with the community plan
- Amount of resident participation
- Level of consultation and collaboration with other local groups
- Organisational capacity to deliver the project/activity

Financial Information

- Income
- Expenditure
- Net budget. If the application shows a budget surplus there must be an explanation provided to justify why surplus funds are required and how they are to be used. For example a charitable donation or organisation fund raising towards a major purchase
- Most recent bank account balance, from either bank statement or treasurers report

Attachments

- Certificate of incorporation or letter from auspicings body

**APPLICATION FORM – YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE GRANTS/ DISABILITY REPRESENTATIVE GRANTS**

Applicants Details

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- ABN
- Bank Account

Project/Activity Details

- Name of project/activity
- Amount of funding requested
- Start and finish date
- Briefly describe project/activity