

The Corporate Financial and In-kind Assistance Policy

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POLICY

PURPOSE

The Corporate Financial and In-kind Assistance Policy ensures a consistent, coordinated and transparent approach to the way Council provides assistance.

It provides a framework for decision-making in regards to how the Organisation approaches support, and is underpinned by detailed guidelines to assist Council officers administer effective assistance programs including appropriate reporting and approval procedures. It ensures that Council takes into account ICAC probity issues including:

- Transparency of process
- Accountability and monitoring, and
- Obtaining value for money.

This Policy also ensures applicants are provided optimal opportunity to seek assistance through the most appropriate channels, and maximising success through completion of appropriate application forms.

BACKGROUND AND RELATED LEGISLATION

Dubbo Regional Council provides a variety of levels of assistance to community and industry groups, organisations and individuals.

Assistance can be financial (cash) or in kind (eg discounted fees, waived hire fees or no charge services).

Council has a responsibility to ensure that all assistance provided is managed through a transparent process, that the community is aware of the right channels to make requests through, and that all agreements are managed effectively.

This Policy aims to

- increase transparency around the level of assistance provided
- provide clear communication of a process for applying for assistance
- apply a more consistent approach in responding to all assistance requests
- provide a matrix to communicate expected return benefits for sponsorship

This Policy ensures that no assistance is to be provided by Dubbo Regional Council outside the channels and processes outlined in this Policy.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all financial and in-kind assistance by or on behalf of Dubbo Regional Council. It applies to Councillors, and all Council divisions, businesses and facilities.

Related Policies and documents

Dubbo Regional Council's

- Sponsorship procedures, processes, guidelines and forms
- Event Development Fund procedures, processes, guidelines and forms
- Major Event Sponsor Program procedures, processes, guidelines and forms
- Community Assistance Program procedures, processes, guidelines and forms
- Event Attraction, Support and Delivery Policy
- Advertising Policy
- Tender Management Policy
- Quotation Management Policy
- Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Sponsorship in the Public Sector 2006

DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Event Development Fund	To assist in building and growing local events
Major Event Sponsor Program	To help drive economic benefits for the region
Financial Assistance Program	Assistance to improve or enhance community well-being and amenity
Sponsorship	Identified by the organisation as an investment of mutual benefit

POLICY

There are six key channels community and industry groups, organisations and individuals can access to gain financial or in kind assistance from Dubbo Regional Council:

- 1 Event Development Fund
- 2 Major Event Sponsor Fund
- 3 Financial Assistance Program
- 4 Sponsorship
- 5 Community Service Obligations
- 6 Determination of Elected Members

1 Event Development Fund

The Event Development Fund acts essentially as an ‘incubation fund’ where not for profit organisations conducting events can apply for cash or in-kind services from Council.

Events can apply for funding- cash only - up to \$1,000 and over \$1,001 – with a different application process for each.

Events receiving assistance from the EDF would need to recognise that Dubbo Regional Council supported the event, but the application will not be judged on ‘sponsor’ benefits to Council (e.g. logo inclusion in advertising).

\$15,000 cash is allocated annually to assistance requests under \$1,000. This process is open to applications all year round. Applications are determined by a Council Officer.

\$30,000 cash be allocated for applications over \$1,000. This process open to applications once a year from September. Applications are determined by panel review.

Successful applicants have to spend the funding within the next calendar year.

Events can only apply for support for any individual event once a year via either of the EDF processes. For example, event ABC could not receive \$5,000 worth of support / funding and then apply for an additional support (cash or in-kind) through another process/channel.

There are conditions to funding which are outlined in the Event Development Fund Guidelines and applicants must complete an Event Development Fund Application form.

2 Major Event Sponsor Program

The Major Event Sponsor Program is an event attraction initiative aimed at securing high-yielding target markets: conferences; sporting events and festivals. No cash is provided – only in-kind Council services (eg reduced hire fees, linemarking etc)

Events can apply under two streams of funding Stream 1 (up to \$2,000) and Stream 2 (up to 10,000). Only not-for-profit events are eligible to apply and applications will be assessed based on the economic return. As the Program is based on a sponsorship model, Council will need to be acknowledge across various platforms and as funding is only provided in-kind, an acquittal process will not apply. Stream 3 is quarantined for high-level, strategic event attraction initiatives.

Stream 1: up to \$2,000 [allocation \$20,000] – open for financial year period – determination by a representative of Director Corporate Development

Stream 2: up to \$80,000 [allocation \$80,000] – invited September – determination by Director Corporate Development and approval by General Manager

Events receiving \$2,000 or more are guided by a matrix outlining benefits to be returned commensurate with Council’s support.

3 Financial Assistance Program

An amount of \$30,000 is allocated to the program that aims to ease the financial burden of not-for-profit organisations that contribute to the Dubbo community. The application process is open twice a year, with \$15,000 on offer in each round. Applications open in February and July each year.

Applicant must complete a Financial Assistance Program Application Form. Recommendation by the Director Community Services is made to Council for determination.

4 Sponsorships

A sponsorship is a commercial arrangement in which Dubbo Regional Council provides a contribution in money or in-kind to support to an activity in return for certain specified benefits.

Sponsorships, by their nature imply a level of partnership and mutual endorsement however Council must be careful not to enter sponsorship agreements which require or imply the City's endorsement of commercial products, services, companies or individuals.

Applicants must complete a Sponsorship Application Form to 'pitch' to Council for sponsorship. The applicant needs to clearly outline what Council / the City would receive in return for sponsorship. Council officers make the decision to sponsor initiatives on the basis of the application, and alignment to the Corporation's goals, objectives and responsibilities.

All sponsorships should provide a clear benefit to Council. Sponsorship agreements entered into by Council should have the objective to benefit or support the community in which it operates, to benefit Council as an organisation and are worthwhile commercial investment.

Events receiving \$2,000 or more are guided by a matrix outlining benefits to be returned commensurate with Council's support.

Consideration of all sponsorship proposals should follow the internal Sponsorship Approval Process - included in the Sponsorship Guidelines and Procedures' document.

All sponsorship agreements are to be approved by the General Manager (excepting application for under \$2,000).

5 Community Service Obligations

All Divisions of Council have some resources available to meet a level 'Community Service Obligations' and assistance is applied for in accordance with the same process for Sponsorship.

Any request for assistance must articulate some level of benefit to Council – i.e. recognition of support, but the decision to provide assistance is not based on 'sponsor' benefits to Council, rather alignment to Council meeting a critical or strategic community need.

All Community Service Obligation agreements are to be approved by the General Manager.

6 Determination by elected members

In addition to the five primary assistance channels listed above assistance may be provided based on direct representation to Council and a determination made via resolution of Council; or funding provided under the Mayor's Discretionary Fund.

Note: these should not be considered primary channels for accessing assistance from Council.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Staff

The staff member of Council responsible for managing the request for assistance is required to;

- Ensure appropriate application form has been completed
- Consider all applications on merit and alignment to Corporation goals, objectives and responsibilities
- Gain appropriate approval Manager or Director.
- Gain approval by the General Manager.
- Advise corporate communications staff of any agreements involving Media.
- Ensure any agreement has been carried out in accordance with the application.
- Ensure any organisation receiving \$2,000 refers to the matrix outlining benefits to be returned to the Organisation, commensurate with the level of investment.
- Ensure any agreement is listed in the central database of inward and outgoing assistance maintained by the City Development and Communications Branch.
- Ensure any materials developed in relation to the sponsorship agreement adhere to the Corporate Image Policy.

2 Managers

Managers authorising sponsorship are required to;

- Determine value of sponsorship based on Corporation goals, objectives and responsibilities
- Make a determination of requests under \$2,000
- Recommend sponsorships of over \$2,000 to the General Manager via the Outgoing Sponsorship Form
- Determine benefits to be returned to the Organisation based on the Outwards Sponsorship Matrix (in negotiation with the applicant).
- Record evidence of return benefits via Trim [File12/2088].
- Managers are to advise the General Manager before a refusal letter is sent.

3 City Development and Communications Branch

Staff of the City Development and Communications Branch are responsible for maintaining an annual database of incoming and outgoing assistance and reporting those to Executive Staff.

- Sponsorship [File12/2088] reported via Corporate Communications Supervisor as an appendix to 6 monthly report
- Event Development Fund and Major Event Sponsor Program [File16/213] reported via City Promotions and Events Supervisor via annual report

All requests for Sponsorships are to be directed in the first instance to the Corporate Communications Supervisor who will consider the proposal and make a recommendation to the appropriate officer via Trim.

If assistance is required, Council staff may consult with Communication officers regarding the request.

The City Development and Communications Branch is not responsible for ensuring sponsorships have been carried out in accordance with agreements..

4 Director Community Services

The Director Community Services is responsible for the administering Council's Financial Assistance Program and making recommendations to Council for final determination. \$40,000 is allocated and applications open each February and July.

5 Director Corporate Development

The Director Corporate Development is responsible for the Organisation's event attraction, support and delivery initiatives. An amount of \$45,000 is allocated under Council's Event Support and Development Fund; and an amount of \$200,000 allocated to the Major Event Sponsor Program. Where applicable, support to events is recommended by the Director Corporate Development to the General Manager for determination.

6 General Manager

The General Manager is the authority for final approval on all outgoing sponsorships over \$2,000; Community Service Obligations; and funding to events over the amount of \$1,000 (Event Development Fund) and \$2,000 (Major Event Sponsor Program).

Proposed agreements are to be provided to the General Manager via Trim.

The General Manager is also the authority for refusal of sponsorships or funding cash and in-kind.