

A large decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of two overlapping semi-circles. The left semi-circle is orange and the right semi-circle is green. They overlap in the center, creating a dark blue shape. The background of the entire page is dark blue.

Council Policy

Financial Assistance

Document Overview

Document Category	Council Policy
Policy Title	Financial Assistance
Policy Statement	This Policy sets out the framework through which Council allocates financial assistance to eligible recipients contributing to the achievement of community benefit outcomes within the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area.
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Division	Organisational Performance
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Document Revision History	Date

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Dubbo Regional Council's role in providing financial support to others whose intent is to assist Council in delivering the objectives, strategies and actions identified in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.

The policy seeks to provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that the Council strikes an appropriate balance between prudent financial management and its ability to effectively meet meritorious requests for financial assistance.

Whilst the Policy includes other financial support mechanisms, the primary means of supporting the community to delivery community benefit outcomes is through the **Community Funding Framework**. The framework identifies two distinct pathways for funding opportunities with the primary difference being the source of funds.

The desired outcomes of the policy are:

- Enable Council to provide financial assistance for activities of significant local benefit, increase community service outcomes and/or community participation activities for residents.
- Effective and efficient use of public resources allocated for assisting others to provide events, services, programs, projects and activities for the benefit for the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area (LGA).
- An accessible, equitable, transparent and open process for determining and allocating financial assistance with appropriate accountabilities for recipients. A process that ensures the decision-making for providing funding complies with all relevant legislation.
- Greater community participation, social inclusion, cohesion, engagement and improved quality of life and wellbeing for the community of the Dubbo Regional LGA.
- Enable Council to invest in activities that will deliver substantial economic benefit to the Dubbo Regional LGA and its communities.

Related Information

Council receives request for financial assistance at other times from individuals, community groups, businesses etc., and this policy provides a mechanism for Council to consider these on a case-by-case basis. In the first instance a request received in this way may be provided with information or guidance to a funding pathway of the **Community Funding Framework** that may be suitable to apply to.

For example; if a request was received by Council before the opening date of the active assessment round, and the request was to fund a program that wasn't due to commence until the eligible delivery period of the Round, the applicant would be advised to complete the application for the Round once open.

For the purposes of this document requests are understood to include correspondence that references such matters as 'donations', 'sponsorship', 'grant funding', 'offsetting of costs', 'waiving fees and charges' etc.

Council does not waive Fees and Charges or provide in-kind services.

Dubbo Regional Councils Vision, Purpose and Values.



Related Legislation

- Local Government Act (1993)
 Section 356 Can a council financially assist others?
 - 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.*

- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*
- *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*

Dubbo Regional Council Policies and Documents

- Code of Conduct (adopted 27 July 2023)
- Corporate Image Policy (under review)
- Media Policy (adopted 28 September 2023)
- Procurement Policy (adopted 28 April 2022)
- Statement of Business Ethics (adopted 20 June 2023)

Scope

This Policy applies to eligible applicants seeking funding from Dubbo Regional Council in alignment with the strategic objectives as stated in the Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan and more specifically the Delivery Program and/or demonstrates significant local benefit.

This Policy does not apply to rates, charges, loans and interest and fees.

This Policy applies to all elected members of Council (Councillors), all employees of Dubbo Regional Council, any person or organisation contracted to or acting on behalf of Dubbo Regional Council, any person or organisation employed to work on Dubbo Regional Council premises or facilities and all activities of Dubbo Regional Council.

Policy

1. Financial Support Mechanisms

1.1 Community Funding Framework

Funding that enables and facilitates others to deliver community benefit outcomes in the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area.

To support community benefit outcomes, Council allocates an annual (and rolling) budget to the Group A funding pathway of the Community Funding Framework.

Applications are supported via SmartyGrants. The application enables Council to assess the merit of project in relation to the community/public benefits that it will deliver to the Dubbo Regional LGA and its alignment with Council's strategic plans.

1.2 Mayoral Discretionary Fund

Council allocates an annual budget to the Mayoral Discretionary Fund.

Applications are made in writing to the Mayor.

Applications are considered and determined by the Mayor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

1.3 Destination Events Fund

Incentive funding to attract and retain major events activity that delivery substantial economic benefits to the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area.

To convert event attraction initiatives, Council allocates an annual budget to the Destination Events Fund to help meet hosting fees and other event costs.

The economic benefit of events applying for incentive funding must be no less than \$400,000. Events applying for the Destination Events Fund must make a commitment to hold the event in the Dubbo Regional LGA for three years. Locally organised events are ineligible to apply.

Council reserves the right to determine funding outside of the Policy and guidelines should the event be deemed to be of benefit to the Dubbo region.

Applications are supported via SmartyGrants. The application enables Council to assess the capability of the event organiser to deliver the event, its history of delivering events of a similar scale, its commitment to returning to the Dubbo Region, and the projected budget. The application enables Council to also understand what benefits the event will deliver to our community.

1.4 Dubbo Regional Sports Council (DRSC) Playing Field Improvement Fund.

Partnership funding opportunity with sports clubs using Dubbo Regional Council sportsgrounds in the provision or development of quality facilities within the Dubbo Regional LGA.

To assist local sporting clubs/associations for the delivery of capital support infrastructure improvement works, Council allocated an annual budget to the Dubbo Regional Sports Council (DRSC) Playing Field Improvement Fund.

Applications for funding are restricted to incorporated clubs and organisations that pay ground usage fees, with preference given to DRSC members. Applications are made by the nominated forms and are coordinated by the Recreation Coordinator.

2. Funding Values

The following funding value limits are applied to provide clarity for both applicants and Council, with requirements and criteria increasing in complexity relative to the funding amount requested.

- Micro value \$500.00 and less.
- Minor value from \$500.01 and less than \$9,999.99.
- Major value \$10,000.00 and over.

3. Disbursement of Funds

All funds dispersed under the Policy are exclusive of GST.

Successful applicants will be required to provide Council with suitable and verified bank account details.

Payment of funds will be made in line with Council's payment cycles and may be subject to such terms as execution of a funding agreement.

4. Process

The provision of financial assistance under this Policy follows a four-step process:

1. Application or request
2. Assessment and evaluation
3. Funding Delivery (if successful)
4. Reporting and acquittal

Specific funding streams, channels, and pathways may include additional or tailored requirements at each stage of this process.

5. Baseline Eligibility Requirements

The following statements are the baseline eligibility criteria and form part of the applications for financial assistance. Should an applicant respond with false to any of the below they will be unable to apply.

The terms 'I', and 'My' are understood to be the 'applicant', and 'project' is understood to be the purpose of the funds such as 'events, services, programs, projects, and activities'.

- I have no outstanding return benefits, acquittals or reporting requirements from previous funding allocations.
- My project has not commenced, I am not applying for retrospective funding.
- I am not a government department, agency or other Council.
- I am not a political organisation nor does my project have a political purpose.
- My project does not have religious purpose.
- The primary beneficiary of my project is not a single individual or business, commercial entity, or seeks to generate profits for an individual/business/commercial entity.
- My project is not a general fundraising appeal.
- My project is not illegal or discriminatory.
- My project does not require continuous or top-up funding.
- My project does not seek funds for prize money, trophies or gift vouchers.
- My project does not seek funds for payment of debt or insurance premiums.
- My project does not seek funding for my usual, ongoing, day-to day or core activities.
- My project does not duplicate existing services or seek funds to deliver projects that should be funded as a core responsibility from other sources such as State or Federal Government.
- My project has community/public benefit for the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area.
- My project is consistent with Council's values and does not carry a risk of negatively affecting the reputation of Council or the Local Government Area.

6. Consideration, Assessment and Evaluation

Council reserves the right to consider, assess and evaluate requests for financial assistance relative to the funding amount and the details of the request.

The preferred assessment and evaluation process is to assess projects on the following criteria:

- **Clarity and Strength of Project Details**
The project is clearly defined, well-structured, and demonstrates a sound approach to achieving its objectives.
- **Effectiveness of Project Pitch**

The project is compelling, demonstrates a strong case for support, and clearly communicates the intended outcomes and benefits.

- **Community Reach and Engagement**
The project has the potential to engage a broad and/or targeted segment of the community, including underrepresented or priority groups.
- **Sustainability and Organisational Capability**
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to deliver the project effectively and sustain outcomes beyond the funding period.
- **Social and Community Impact**
The project delivers meaningful social outcomes and positively impacts the lives of participants or the wider community.
- **Alignment with Council Strategic Priorities**
The project aligns with and contributes to Council’s strategic objectives and community vision.

Responsibilities

Position/Title/Group	Responsibility
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are responsible for determining funding via relevant Standing Committee of Council and Ordinary Council meeting, following the recommendations of the assessment panel.
Chief Executive Officer	Is responsible for final determination of funding the Financial Assistance Policy, the Annual Statutory Report.
Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is accountable for robust assessment processes being applied and maintained. • Enforce processes to address issues of non-compliance around benefits to be returned and acquittal via guidelines, terms and conditions.
Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, a Manager, Team Leader, Coordinator, Administration/Support position. • Provide guidance to applicants with regard to information and materials available including RDA Orana Grants Hub grantguru.com/au/rdaorana, opportunity timelines (evaluation periods and Council meeting dates) • Advise Communications Services team of media opportunities. • Coordinate return benefits in line with funding agreements and guidelines. • Maintain and administer the SmartyGrants portal. • Ensure corporate records are maintained and registered Council’s Electronic Document Record Management System (EDRMS). • Ensure any materials developed in relation to the funding assistance sponsorship adhere to Council’s Brand Guidelines. • Provide support to the assessment panel where required. • Comply with relevant processes and procedures. • Process payments to successful applies in accordance with Council’s payment process and terms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee/coordinate the return of acquittals and acquittal process. • Support the Assessment panel as required.
Assessment panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of identified positions/members who are responsible for assessing applications in accordance with internal processes and appropriate delegated authority. • Consider all applications on merit and alignment to Council's goals, objectives and responsibilities. • Are responsible for making recommendations in accordance with the Policy, Framework, Guidelines and criteria as applicable.
Successful applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are responsible for the delivery of the project in accordance with the agreement. • Are responsible for providing information, as required and within nominated timeframes, to Council. • Are responsible for completion of acquittal, reporting and any other return benefits as outlined in the agreement.
Applicants	Are responsible for completing and submitting applications, including providing information, as required and within the nominated timeframes, during the application and evaluation process.

Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Acquittal	A report submitted (typically a form) by the successful applicant that accurately details the funded outcomes and how the funds were spent. Noting that acquittal requirements may differ in conjunction with specific funding provisions/mechanisms/channels.
Dubbo Regional Sports Council (DRSC)	An Interest Council under the Community Engagement Groups model. The DRSC has representatives from each sporting association/club conducting competitions within the boundaries of the Dubbo Regional LGA.
Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework	The system of integrated business planning for local government in New South Wales. It consists of a suite of interrelated documents that provide a rigorous and consistent approach to community planning. These documents include the Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan, the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
Project	The purpose of the funds such as events, services, programs, projects, and activities.
SmartyGrants portal	An online grants administration system, that streamlines the process of applying for, managing, and reporting on grants.

Document Control

Responsible Officer:	Chief Financial Officer
Division:	Organisational Performance
Prepared by:	Corporate Strategy and Performance Coordinator
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Previous Cover



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