

### 1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the development of niche tourism initiatives within the Toowoomba Region. It encourages the establishment and expansion of tourism experiences that attract high-value visitors and contribute to the region's tourism economy.

The policy aims to:

- Stimulate investment in tourism sectors, such as nature-based tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, First Nations tourism, adventure tourism, sports tourism and agritourism.
- Diversify the region's tourism offerings.
- Enhance its appeal as a destination for both domestic and international tourists and support the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Through this Development Incentive, Council seeks to promote economic resilience, liveability, and long-term sustainability across the region by providing discounts to infrastructure charges that would otherwise be payable.

Note: It is not the purpose of this policy to enhance the viability of marginal or speculative developments.

### 2 Scope and applications

#### 2.1 Effective Period

This policy is effective from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028. Council reserves the right to amend this policy at any time in response to changes in strategic priorities, budget allocation, or operational outcomes.

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#### 2.2 Program Budget and Discount Structure

Council has allocated \$5 million per year across all Development Incentive Policies, including this one.

- Development incentives are available on a 'first come, first served' basis until the annual budget cap is reached.
- Incentives, where successful, will be captured via an Infrastructure Agreement (IA) between Toowoomba Regional Council and the applicant. The IA will specify the purpose of the agreement, the amount of the incentive, and any conditions associated with same.
- If the remaining annual budget is insufficient to cover the full incentive amount for a development, only the available funds in the annual pool will be offered.
- Discounts to infrastructure charges will be applied at the time of payment, provided all conditions of the Infrastructure Agreement (IA) have been met. The appropriate Producer Price Index (PPI) adjustments will be calculated and applied at the time of payment.
- This Development Incentive cannot be used in conjunction with any other Development Incentive policies offered by Council.

### 3 Principles

Council is committed to:

- **Strategic Tourism Growth:** Supporting the development of niche tourism experiences that align with regional tourism strategies.
- **Transparency:** Ensuring a fair and consistent assessment process.

- **Economic Diversification:** Encouraging investment in tourism sectors that add value to the region's economy and enhance its competitiveness.
- **Job Creation and Local Benefit:** Promoting the creation of sustainable tourism-related employment and benefiting the local community.
- **Sustainable and Responsible Tourism:** Supporting developments that respect and enhance the region's environmental, cultural, and social assets.

These principles align with key objectives from the Toowoomba Regional Council Corporate Plan 2024–2029, including:

- 1.1 Encourage initiatives that address community health and wellbeing
- 2.7 Ongoing advancement and promotion of the Toowoomba Region
- 2.8 The uniqueness of our townships and villages throughout the region is understood and valued
- 4.3 Delivery of community and customer-focused service

In addition to upholding the Corporate Plan principles outlined above, Council is committed to upholding the obligations within the *Human Rights Act 2019* by giving proper consideration to the provisions of the Act when making decisions relevant to this policy.

## 4 Content

### 4.1 Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for this policy, developments must meet the eligibility requirements contained in the criteria below:

#### 4.1.1 Location

This policy applies to developments located throughout the Toowoomba Region.

#### 4.1.2 Development Types

Development must have a valid development approval for which a Decision Notice and an Infrastructure Charges Notice has been issued

Eligible development types involve the establishment or expansion of one or more of the following:

- Niche tourism developments that attract tourists to the region, such as: nature-based tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, First Nations tourism, adventure tourism, and agritourism related developments.
- Tourist accommodation development that provides short-term lodging for visitors, such as cabins, eco-lodges, resorts, farm stays and similar facilities.
- Function centres that contribute to visitor economy.
- Developments that support sports and competitions that contribute to visitor economy.
- Developments that create direct employment opportunities within the niche tourism sector.
- Niche tourism developments that support the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Eligible development types may apply for **ONE** of the following available discounts:

##### 4.1.2.1 Discount or waiver of development application fees

Applicants may apply for a discount on development application fees if the development initiative addresses the establishment or expansion of tourism experiences that contribute to the visitor economy:

The types of development application fees eligible under this section of the policy include:

1. **Development Application fees** as per the Register of Cost Recovery Fees and Charges - Planning and Development Services for the relevant financial year (for lodgement of development application or Exemption Certificates only), excluding:
  - a. Charges for assessment of technical reports;

- b. Fees not associated with the development assessment lodgement (eg Requests for Negotiated Decisions Notices, or Negotiated Infrastructure Charges Notices; Change of Development Approval or Request to Extend Relevant Period etc);
- c. Applications where the use or development has already been commenced or carried out unlawfully and the purpose of the application is to render that use or development lawful under the Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme or relevant legislation;
- d. Infrastructure charges; and
- e. State or Federal fees and charges.

2. **Building and plumbing fees** as per the relevant Cost Recovery Register for the relevant financial year (for building, siting discretions, plumbing and drainage applications only), excluding:

- a. Private certification applications/fees; and
- b. Applications where the use or development has already been commenced or carried out unlawfully and the purpose of the application is to render that use or development lawful under the Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme, *Building Act 1975*, Codes or other relevant legislation.

**4.1.2.2 Discounted Infrastructure Charges**

Development must have a valid development approval for which a Decision Notice and an Infrastructure Charges Notice has been issued.

**4.2 Incentives Available Under this Policy**

This policy makes provision for discounts on infrastructure charges as set out in the table below:

Development Type	Discount	Maximum cap per Development
Development application Fees	75% discount of the applicable charge	\$20,000
OR		
Infrastructure charges (Urban Charge Area) OR	50% discount of the applicable charge	\$100,000
Infrastructure charges (Township and Rural Charge Area)	75% discount of the applicable charge	\$100,000

**4.3 Application Process**

The process for seeking and obtaining a discount under the provisions of this policy is set out below.

**4.3.1 Application Requirements**

Applications must be submitted using the approved form and accompanied by the required fee. *<Link to application form>*

An application for discounted development application fees must be made and decided prior to lodgement of the development application.

An application for a Development Incentive may be made any time after a Decision Notice and Infrastructure Changes Notice (ICN) is issued and before the payment is due.

#### 4.3.2 Assessment Process

Where an application meets the eligibility criteria, Council will assess the application against the provisions of this policy. In assessing the application, Council will consider the following:

- A Development Incentive will only be applied after all applicable infrastructure credits, offsets, or other reductions have been deducted. Development Incentives will apply only to the **net** payable infrastructure charges.
- Only one Development Incentive Policy may be applied to a development.
- Reserve its right to approve or refuse any application under this policy at its sole discretion.
- All developments must comply with relevant planning, building, and environmental regulations.

If an application for a discount of infrastructure charges under the provisions of this policy is approved, Council will enter into an **Infrastructure Agreement** with the applicant, outlining the terms and conditions of the arrangement.

### 4.4 Applicant Responsibilities to Complete Development within four (4) Years

#### 4.4.1 Timeframe to Complete Development

Discounts to infrastructure charges are given on the proviso that the development is **completed within four years** of the Infrastructure Charges Notice being issued.

Development is considered complete when:

- For building work: a Final Inspection Certificate or Certificate of Occupancy has been issued; or
- For MCU: the change happens; or
- Where for other development: as specified in the Infrastructure Charges Notice.

Where completion within four years is not achievable, applicants may request an extension if they can demonstrate reasonable grounds for delay. Council will assess such requests on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness while maintaining policy integrity.

#### 4.4.2 Revocation of the Development Incentive discount

If the development is not completed within four years of the Infrastructure Charges Notice being issued, Council has the right to revoke the Development Incentive.

## 5 Responsibilities/accountabilities

The Economic Development Branch is responsible for administering this policy.

The Infrastructure Charges team, within the Development, Infrastructure and Growth Branch, will be responsible for the assessment of the requests, and the administration of the Development Incentive agreements.

The Planning Branch, Place Branch, and the Plumbing Certification Team within the Development, Infrastructure and Growth Branch will be responsible for the assessment of the requests, and the administering discounts on development application fees.

## 6 Relevant laws

The legislation relevant to this Policy includes:

*Planning Act 2016 (Qld)*

*Planning Regulation 2017 (Qld)*

*Building Act 1975 (Qld)*

*Economic Development Act 2012 (Qld)*

## 7 Related policies/documents

Council policies are published on Council's website. If a policy listed below does not appear on the website please contact 131 872 or email [info@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@tr.qld.gov.au) to request a copy. Staff may access policies via the [Policy Register and Review Schedule](#).

### Council policies

Nil

### Other documents

Toowoomba Regional Council Charges Resolution (version in affect at time of applying for policy)

Toowoomba Regional Council Register of Fees and Charges (version in affect at time of applying for policy)

Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme (version in affect at time of applying for policy)

[Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029](#)

Mapping - <https://maps.tr.qld.gov.au/WAB/PlanningScheme/>

- Land Use Zones – Planning Scheme – Land Use Zones - Zones

## 8 Related forms

Development Incentive Application Form [DM#12240924](#)

## 9 Definitions

Term	Definition
Accommodation	Refers to short-term lodging specifically designed to cater to visitors, including hotels, motels, serviced apartments, resorts, caravan parks, eco-lodges, farm stays, and other facilities that provide temporary stay options for people travelling for leisure, business, or cultural experiences. These developments play a key role in supporting the visitor economy by enhancing the region's capacity to host tourists and encouraging longer stays.
Adventure Tourism	Refers to tourism experiences that involve active participation in recreational or outdoor activities, often requiring physical exertion or skill. These activities may include hiking, cycling, kayaking, zip-lining, abseiling, horse riding, or similar pursuits that engage visitors in dynamic and often nature-based experiences.
Agritourism	Under the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> (Qld), the term <b>agritourism</b> is defined in Schedule 24 (Dictionary) as follows:  <b>Agritourism</b> means a tourism activity— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that is carried out on land used for a rural use; and</li> <li>that allows visitors to experience agricultural operations or rural settings.</li> </ol>
Certificate of Occupancy	As defined under the <i>Building Act 1975</i> , refers to:

Term	Definition
	a. a certificate about its BCA classification in force under <a href="#">section 106</a> ; or b. an interim certificate of occupancy in force under <a href="#">section 104</a> .
Council	Toowoomba Regional Council.
Cultural Tourism	Refers to tourism activities and experiences that centre on the arts, culture, and heritage of a region, attracting visitors through cultural events, performances, exhibitions, and historical experiences.
Decision Notice	A written notice issued by Council under the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> or the <i>Economic Development Act 2012</i> that confirms the outcome of a development application, including any conditions.
Development Incentive	A reduction or discount in infrastructure charges granted subject to meeting the requirements set out in this policy and specified in an Infrastructure Agreement.
Ecotourism	Refers to ecologically sustainable tourism, with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas, that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, and conservation.
Final Inspection Certificate	As defined under the <i>Building Act 1975</i> , a certificate (a <i>final inspection certificate</i> ) in the approved form for the final stage of the building work.
First Nations Tourism	Refers to tourism experiences that are owned, operated, or led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and which showcase the cultures, knowledge systems, histories, stories, and connection to Country of Australia's First Nations communities. These experiences may include guided tours, performances, art, storytelling, cultural practices, and immersive activities that promote understanding, respect, and celebration of First Nations peoples and cultures, while providing social and economic benefits to Indigenous communities.
Infrastructure Charges	Charges imposed on development to contribute to the cost of trunk infrastructure such as roads, stormwater, parks, water supply, and sewerage networks.
Infrastructure Agreement (IA)	An agreement about the contribution towards trunk infrastructure that is made between a person or entity, and the Council.
Material Change of Use (MCU)	As defined under the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> , a <b>material change of use</b> , of premises, means any of the following that a regulation made under <a href="#">section 284(2)(a)</a> does not prescribe to be minor change of use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the start of a new use of the premises;</li> <li>b. the re-establishment on the premises of a use that has been abandoned;</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	c. a material increase in the intensity or scale of the use of the premises.
Nature-based tourism	As defined under the <i>Toowoomba Planning Scheme 2016 Schedule 1 means</i> -  the use of premises for a tourism activity, including accommodation for tourists, for the appreciation, conservation or interpretation of—  a. an area of environmental, cultural or heritage value; or b. a local ecosystem; or c. the natural environment.
Producer Price Index (PPI)	An index published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that measures the average change over time in the selling prices received by domestic producers for their output. The PPI is used to adjust the levied infrastructure charges in accordance with the relevant charges resolution.
Revocation	Refers to the formal withdrawal or cancellation of a previously granted development incentive, approval, or agreement.

## 10 Policy details

<b>Policy category:</b>	Council Policy	<b>Policy version number<sup>1</sup>:</b>	1.00
<b>Date adopted/approved:</b>	17 June 2025	<b>Effective date:</b>	1 July 2025
<b>Approval authority:</b>	Council		
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<b>Contact officer:</b>	Manager Economic Development		
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## 11 Revision history

Policy version	Approval date	DM Reference
1.00	17 June 2025	12260383v2

<sup>1</sup> Printed copies are uncontrolled. It is the user's responsibility to ensure that any copies of policy documents are the current issue. Any delegations should be verified via the relevant Delegation Register as it takes precedence if there is a conflict. The Chief Executive Officer will, if necessary, be the sole arbiter in resolving any issues of conflict