

### 1 Purpose

This Guideline supports the Community Grants Policy to provide support (financial and in-kind) to eligible organisations within the Toowoomba Regional Council area. The Guideline covers both non-competitive (i.e. 'Core Support' to pre-approved organisations for defined periods), and competitive grants.

#### 1.1 Exclusions

This Guideline does not apply to:

- Scholarships
- Rate concessions / remissions
- Regional Art Development Fund (RADF) grants
- Heritage Incentive grants
- Friends of Escarpment Parks (FEP) non-competitive grants
- Floral Parade entitlements
- Development incentives
- Community Development equipment arrangements

### 2 Principles

This Guideline aligns with Council's 2024 - 2029 Corporate Plan focus areas of People, Place, Prosperity and Performance.

- 1.1 Encourage initiatives that address community health and wellbeing
- 1.2 Identify, promote and grow opportunities for arts, cultural expression and the development of the creative industry
- 1.4 Improve community safety through effective design, information and programs
- 1.7 Encourage connection, resilience, equality and inclusion in the community
- 2.8 The uniqueness of our townships and villages throughout the region is understood and valued
- 2.10 Pursue options for a greener Toowoomba Region and Council
- 2.12 Preserve, protect and improve our environments
- 3.2 Work with peak bodies and representative groups to action initiatives that foster local businesses and generate local jobs.
- 4.3 Delivery of community and customer-focused service
- 4.6 Continuous improvement of business-processes and systems, including community consultation

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.

### 3 Grants Philosophy

#### 3.1 Overall Community Grants Philosophy

Council's community grants are developed with a philosophy of partnership, whereby Council provides grants to encourage, engage and support groups to make a positive and ongoing contribution to the fabric of our community. Community grants are provided to support capacity building across the Toowoomba Region, ensuring long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Consistent with the philosophy of partnership and sustainability and in order to promote community self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability, this policy allows competitive funding for a maximum of two successful applications for the same or similar project or event, regardless of the applicant. Once a project or

event has received funding in two separate periods, it will not be eligible for further funding under this Policy, even if future applications are submitted by different organisations.

Competitive grants are administered through Council's SmartyGrants portal via a competitive application process, and with subsequent funding is not guaranteed.

Council's approach is to ensure simplicity for applicants, creating a positive and accessible experience while maintaining robust governance arrangements. These governance measures enable objective and transparent assessment of applications, ensuring fairness and accountability. Funding decisions prioritise the most meritorious applications, assessed against defined criteria and aligned with available budget allocations.

### 3.1.1 Micro Grants

Micro Grants (\$1 - \$1,000 ex GST) will be made available year-round, subject to available budget. Micro grants will be a simple application form requiring minimal detail, with decision making focussing on responsiveness and available budget.

### 3.1.2 Minor Grants

Minor Grants (\$1,001 - \$10,000 ex GST) will be offered annually, subject to available budget, during a defined advertising and submission period (i.e. a six (6) week period). Applicants will be prompted through the application process to provide sufficient relevant information to enable robust assessment against the weighted prioritisation model, ensuring that submissions can be fairly evaluated in line with strategic objectives and funding priorities.

### 3.1.3 Major Grants

Major Grants (\$10,001+ ex GST) will be offered annually, subject to available budget, during a defined advertising and submission period (i.e. a six (6) week period). Applicants will be prompted through the application process to provide sufficient relevant information to enable robust assessment against the weighted prioritisation model, ensuring that submissions can be fairly evaluated in line with strategic objectives and funding priorities.

Applicants applying for a Major Grant are required to make a co-contribution (financial and / or in-kind). Refer Section 3.4.3.

### 3.1.4 Allocation of Focus Area

As part of the competitive application process, applicants may be asked to nominate an assigned 'focus area' that aligns with their specific grant application. These 'focus areas' broadly reflect the former grant program categories. This approach supports historical and trend-based insights, helping to identify areas of over / under representation in regard to the number of applications received and funding values. The resulting analysis may inform marketing strategies and targeted education for specific cohorts. 'Focus areas' include:

1. Community Support
2. Economic Development
3. Sport and Recreation
4. Environment
5. Event / Activations
6. Sports Tourism
7. Youth

Applicants for all grant types (Micro, Minor and Major) may be required to select an appropriate 'focus area' when completing their application.

### 3.1.5 Theming Grant Rounds

The delegated authority will consider whether theming a grant round is appropriate or necessary prior to communicating the opportunity to community and subsequent opening of the grant round. If a grant round is themed, the weighted prioritisation model may be modified to assess applications that address the theme.

Applicants whose submissions do not align with the designated theme will still be assessed and considered for funding, subject to available budget and the weighted prioritisation model.

### 3.2 Support and Assistance

Council will communicate with eligible organisations to advise of the available community grants. Notifications may be published via Council's website and advertising in local and regional media as appropriate.

Applicants are encouraged to seek guidance from Council's Grants Administrator to receive advice on Council's entire Grants process, and to identify additional or alternative funding sources.

If support is required throughout the application process, please utilise the SmartyGrants help hub or contact Council on 131 872.

The Grants Administrator may facilitate face to face engagements throughout the region to assist in the effective communication of the grants philosophy, better practice examples, tips and tricks to enhance the applicant experience, usability of the SmartyGrants solution and receive feedback from attendees to assist with continuous improvement of the overall process.

The Community Grants Policy and Guideline are available on Council's website [www.tr.qld.gov.au](http://www.tr.qld.gov.au), along with any updated grant information and priorities.

Interpreter services can be made available for people who have difficulty communicating in English, through the "Telephone Interpreter Service" (TIS).

### 3.3 Timelines

The opportunity to apply for competitive community grants will occur annually as outlined below, subject to available budget. Opportunities will be promoted in the media and on Council's website.

Competitive Grants Category	Amount	Opening Date	Closing Date	Closing Time	Notification to Applicants
Micro Grants	\$1 - \$1,000 ex GST	1 July	30 June	N/A	Within four (4) weeks of application submission
Minor Grants	\$1,001 - \$10,000 ex GST	1 July	12 August	5pm	September / October
Major Grants	\$10,001+ ex GST	1 July	12 August	5pm	September / October

### 3.4 Funding

Council endorses an annual budget each year. Within this budget is a defined amount allocated for competitive community grants, and this value encompasses the total financial and in-kind assistance available within a given financial year.

There are two (2) funding types available to applicants, 1. financial assistance and 2. in-kind assistance. Either funding type, or a combination of both may be requested through the competitive Micro, Minor or Major Grant application processes.

Applications are to be completed for Micro, Minor, or Major grants based on the total financial and in-kind assistance being requested. For example, requesting \$6,000 of financial assistance and \$5,000 of in-kind assistance equals a total amount requested of \$11,000. In this example, a Major Grant application is required to be submitted.

The total amount of funding requested and the type of in-kind supported requested cannot be guaranteed. Application success, including the total sum approved, is determined through the relevant assessment and approval process based on the information provided within the application. Factors, including details provided, and available budget, may influence the outcome, meaning partial funding or an alternate offer, such as in-kind support or a combination of financial and in-kind support may be awarded.

**3.4.1 Financial Assistance**

Application requests for financial assistance refers to the cash amount requested and / or payable by Council to the successful applicant organisation.

The applicant organisation or other funding body may also contribute cash to the project and be recognised as a cash co-contribution.

**3.4.2 In-kind Assistance**

Application requests for in-kind assistance should provide as much detail as possible as to the type of support being requested along with relevant dates/timelines. To determine the applicable costings and details for Council contributed in-kind support, please contact Council on 131 872.

The applicant may contribute in-kind support to the project and be recognised as an in-kind co-contribution. In-kind contributions are only eligible where they are provided / incurred after the opening of the grant round.

Types of project costs considered as eligible co-contributions include, paid and donated:

- Direct labour costs
- Volunteer support
- Relevant project professional fees
- Hire of plant and equipment

In-kind support, including provision of equipment, labour, or volunteers must be directly related to the project for which funding is being sought, to be deemed eligible. Costs that are considered to be ongoing in nature such as, organisation operational costs, contingency allowances, escalation costs, and grant administration costs are not eligible to be included as part of the applicant co-contribution.

Volunteer contributions must be itemised and include information on the number of volunteers, the hours of contribution and rate of attributed pay for the task being undertaken (refer maximum allowable limits below). All works must be undertaken by people with the appropriate skills, competencies and licences. A statutory declaration may be required to substantiate each contribution.

The following rates will be applied to volunteer labour contributions:

Project tasks	Cost per hour (GST exclusive)
<b>Professional labour</b> e.g. architects, engineers, surveyors, certifiers, project managers	Market rate up to \$160 per hour as per supplied quote / letter
<b>Skilled labour (licensed trades)</b> e.g. bricklayer, carpenter, painter, plumber, electrician	Market rate up to \$80 per hour as per supplied quote / letter
<b>Unskilled labour</b> e.g. volunteers, labourer	\$ 47.84*

\*Accurate as of December 2025. Unskilled volunteer labour cost to be determined by Volunteering Queensland Volunteer Calculator for 'all ages' value. This value is subject to change and should be accessed by applicants via the Volunteering Queensland website.

When completing the online application form, the following information must be provided:

1. details of the services or goods being provided;
2. details of the volunteer(s) attributable costs (hours and unit rates) for these contributions; and
3. details of the volunteer(s) involved including their relevant experience, qualifications and trade licences

#### 3.4.3 Co-contribution

Applicants seeking a Major grant are required to make a co-contribution. Organisations may apply for a Major grant to cover between 50% to 90% of the funding gap (total project cost excluding GST less any other external grant sources i.e. not Toowoomba Regional Council). If there is no external grant source, the funding gap is calculated based on the total project cost. Co-contribution schedules are outlined below:

- **10%** for projects involving planning work (e.g. lighting design, amenities / canteen / clubhouse plans, strategic club development plans).
- **25%** for projects with a funding gap **up to \$15,000 ex GST**.
- **30%** for projects with a funding gap **\$15,001 – \$34,999 ex GST**.
- **40%** for projects with a funding gap **\$35,000 – \$49,999 ex GST**.
- **50%** for projects with a funding gap of **\$50,000+ ex GST**.

Council will not solely fund Major grant applications. Contributions from applicant organisations may include:

- Applicant cash contributions
- Grants from other bodies
- Sponsorship (Donations)
- In-kind support

Whilst not a mandatory requirement, applicants providing a co-contribution for a Micro or Minor grant may be looked upon favourably.

#### 3.4.4 Seed funding

Providing financial and / or in-kind assistance to eligible organisations to support new projects and events in the region is done on a 'seed funding' basis and may be provided for a maximum of two (2) periods (2 rounds of annual support or in the case of biennial events / projects 2 biennial events / projects). Seed funding is provided to kick-start new activations, projects or initiatives with the view to their self-sufficiency beyond this support.

Regardless of whether the event is new or pre-existing, repeat funding conditions apply (refer section 3.4.5).

Organisations will need to consider ongoing self-capacity, capability and innovation, or explore alternate partnership / funding opportunities that do not involve support from Council.

Micro grant applications are exempt from seed funding restrictions.

#### 3.4.5 Repeat Funding

Eligible organisations may receive competitive funding for a maximum of two (2) successful applications for the same or similar project or event, regardless of the applicant. Once a project or event has received funding in two separate periods, it will not be eligible for further funding under this Policy, even if future applications are submitted by different organisations.

Organisations will need to consider ongoing self-capacity, capability and innovation, or explore alternate partnership / funding opportunities that do not involve support from Council.

This clause takes effect from 2026/27 financial year with year one (1) funding being 2026/27.

Micro grant applications are exempt from repeat funding restrictions.

### 3.4.6 Funding Thresholds

Funding thresholds apply to all submitted applications based on the Micro, Minor and Major streams. Although funding limits apply, grant funds are limited and requests for smaller value grants are encouraged.

Applicants may make appointments with Council’s Grants Administrator to receive advice on Council’s grants process and to identify additional or alternate funding sources.

Grant Category	Funding Thresholds	Availability
Micro	\$1 up to \$1,000 ex GST	All year round, subject to funding availability
Minor	\$1,001 up to \$10,000 ex GST	1 Round per financial year
Major	\$10,001+ ex GST (*subject to co-contribution)	1 Round per financial year
Non-Competitive	Predefined schedule	Predefined schedule

\*Co-contribution requirements exist for Major Grant applications, refer Section 3.4.3.

### 3.4.7 Partial funding

The total amount of financial funding and type of in-kind support requested cannot be guaranteed. Application success, including the total support approved, is determined through the relevant assessment and approval process based on the information provided within the application and / or availability of requested in-kind support. Applications will be assessed on the information provided by the applicant during the application process. Ineligible budget items or insufficient information is likely to influence the assessment outcome, resulting in partial, nil or alternate funding components (financial or in-kind) being approved.

### 3.4.8 Conditions associated with Financial Surplus from Activities

Where an activity or project (such as an event) creates a financial surplus, the surplus can be retained by the eligible organisation or donated to another charity or eligible organisation. Prior approval from the approving delegate is required in circumstances where the funded organisation wishes to donate to another charity or eligible organisation.

Where an organisation makes a surplus from a project / event that is recurring in nature, it is recommended that the organisation retains a value equal to or greater than the Council grant, to reinvest in future projects / events, as there is a maximum of two (2) years funding eligibility to an individual project / event under the seed funding and multi-year funding conditions (refer section 3.4.4 and 3.4.5).

#### 3.4.8.1 Council Acknowledgment of Donated Funds

Where surplus from an activity or project (such as an event) is transferred or donated to another organisation, entity, or subsidiary (be it a charity or otherwise), as a result of a Council supported project, Council must be appropriately acknowledged in all related communications and media. This includes promotional materials, public announcements, and any other content referencing the donation.

## 4 Grant Eligibility

### 4.1 Eligibility

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project ideas and potential eligibility prior to applying and should seek advice through Council’s Grants Administrator. If a project is deemed ineligible under Council’s Policy and Guideline, there may be external grant funding opportunities available which the enquirer / applicant may be encouraged to explore.

#### 4.1.1 Who can apply?

Organisations can apply for a Competitive Community Grant if:

1. The organisation is an eligible organisation or is under the auspices of an eligible organisation;
2. The organisation operates or provides services within the Toowoomba Regional Council area; and
3. The application is for a project that does not form part of the core business of public and private educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary including Parents and Citizens Associations, and Parents and Friends Associations) and demonstrates broader community benefit.

Organisations that wish to be considered for non-competitive support are required to make contact with Council's Grants Administrator for further direction.

## 5 Organisations can apply for a Competitive Community Grant if:

### 5.1 Who cannot apply?

The following are not eligible to apply:

1. Individuals
2. For-profit companies, Trusts and other organisations.
3. Government, semi-government organisations and statutory authorities.
4. Unions and student guilds.
5. Research foundations.
6. Professional associations.
7. The core business of educational, religious and medical organisations (primary, secondary and tertiary including Parents and Citizens Associations, and Parents and Friends Associations).
8. An organisation that has been granted approval for support through a Toowoomba Regional Council grant stream for the same project.
9. An organisation that has not acquitted an overdue TRC funded grant application.
10. Recipients who have previously defaulted on the conditions of funding associated with competitive grants are ineligible for three (3) years. Defaulting recipients may be referred to Council's debt collection processes if required.
11. Organisations who have not complied with all elements of the Grant Policy or this Guideline.

### 5.2 Eligible projects

A wide range of support will be considered on its merits and community benefit, including but not limited to:

1. Assistance towards establishing a new service, facility, initiative or organisation.
2. Assistance to enhance or improve / upgrade an existing service or community facility.
3. Assistance towards feasibility studies, strategic plans, needs analyses or community consultations.
4. Assistance towards fees and compliance costs associated with undertaking approved projects.
5. Assistance towards planning projects, professional and application fees in preparing grant applications for larger projects.
6. Assistance towards publicity and promotion of approved projects.
7. An offset towards some of Council's Register of Fees and Charges for Council facilities, equipment or services including (but not limited to):
  - a. Park Booking Fees (not including seasonal use, electricity reimbursement, or Bonds).
  - b. Facility / Venue Hire Fees (not including recurrent bookings, or Bonds).
  - c. Hire of equipment.
  - d. Development Approvals and Building Approvals.
8. Development of a new event with the potential to become a regular event.
9. Revitalisation of an established event.

10. Enhancement of the professional delivery to economically sustain an event.
11. Social interaction within smaller towns / communities.
12. Deliver one or more of the following outcomes:
  - a. Connect local businesses.
  - b. Encourage business innovation.
  - c. Build business capacity and skills.
  - d. Contribute to the ease of doing business.
  - e. Enable partnerships and collaboration between businesses and / or organisations in the Toowoomba region.
  - f. Address a local workforce gap.
13. Community events which engage young people in planning, delivery and evaluation.
14. Equipment considered to have a long-life or needs infrequent replacement.
15. Projects which provide arts, cultural, sporting and active recreation opportunities.
16. Projects which engage people in community development and active citizenship.
17. Projects which target issues impacting community.

Preference is to provide funding that will facilitate deliverable outcomes for the community - that is, providing programs / facilities / capital projects / events.

### 5.2.2 Retrospectivity

Assistance for Competitive Community Grants may be considered retrospectively, only if the application is submitted prior to the occurrence of the project or event, between the opening of the Grant Round and before determination by the delegated approver.

*e.g. The Scout Association of Australia – Operation Nighthawk*

*If the event is planned for 12th August and the application was submitted within the advertised grant submission timelines, the event is eligible as it was held between the opening of the funding round and before determination of the by the delegated approver.*

Retrospective funding is unavailable for Micro Grants.

### 5.2.3 Multi-year funding

Council strives to promote capacity and capability building within the community through the competitive community grants process, therefore ensuring sustainability and longevity of projects that are funded. Applications seeking funding for projects that exceed a duration of one (1) year (e.g. multi-year construction projects), may be considered. Successful applications will be provided support upon approval of the project.

Micro grant applications are ineligible for multi-year funding.

### 5.2.4 Multiple projects by the same applicant organisation

Organisations applying under a Micro, Minor and/or Major application process for numerous and/or unique projects will be considered under Assessment Criteria 5 (refer section 6.5) which considers an applicant's prior funding history. Multiple applications for unique projects does not make the applicant organisation ineligible.

## 5.3 Ineligible projects

Competitive community grants will not fund:

1. Projects outside of the Toowoomba Regional Council Local Government Area.
2. Loan or other debt repayments.
3. Projects already started or completed prior to the grant opening date.
4. Recurrent administration and running costs and consumables, such as:
  - a. Regular wages.

- b. Regular office expenses.
  - c. Rent or mortgage repayments.
  - d. Rates, utilities, energy, insurance, or regulatory operational expenses (e.g. food licence).
  - e. Office devices, peripherals and IT equipment.
5. Utilities or insurance expenses for the project delivery.
  6. Projects with a commercial purpose.
  7. Projects which are deemed to be exclusive (i.e. benefit the applicant organisation) and have limited community benefit. (**Note:** For larger projects of both private and community benefit, only the portion of the project which is of community benefit shall be eligible for funding).
  8. Projects, activations and / or events already funded by other Toowoomba Regional Council Grants and / or initiatives.
  9. Purchase of land.
  10. Equipment that has a short life or needs regular replacement.
  11. Prize money, trophies, raffle prizes or fundraising.
  12. Events run solely for commercial profit.
  13. Programs such as coaching, professional development, training or first aid.
  14. Bonds.
  15. Applications that do not provide required documentation / evidence as per the application form.
  16. Major grant applications (requests of \$10,001+ ex GST) where the appropriate co-contribution is not evident or sufficient (refer section 3.4.3).
  17. Projects that lack relevant permissions / approvals or evidence of these being sought from the relevant authorities (e.g. facility upgrade request form and approval or landowner permission).
  18. Projects that are inconsistent with broadly accepted community standards / expectations or involve unlawful or illegal activities.

## 6 Applying for a grant

Applications for a competitive Community Grant are made online through Council's SmartyGrants portal. Applicants may be required to provide details of the project and attach relevant supporting information regarding:

1. The need for the project and who will benefit, such as a Community Benefit Statement with reference to program objectives, any relevant feasibility studies or statistical analysis; results of a community survey; or a needs analysis.
2. How and why the support being requested will positively impact the local community.
3. Planning undertaken, including a budget, cost estimates and / or quotes, and concept plans.
4. Evidence of event management plans (including risk management and marketing plans), or project plans etc.
5. Support for the project, including letters of support; partnership agreements or intentions.
6. Confirmation of other funding, and evidence of the organisation's own contributions.
7. Evidence that support has been sought from other funding schemes.

All applicants will be required to provide standard details including contacts, details associated with the organisation and the organisation's eligibility and may be required to provide supporting documentation (e.g. certificate of incorporation).

### 6.1 Summarised Applicant Steps

1. Locate Council's Grants and Funding page via Council's website - [Grants & funding](#).
2. Review the Grants Policy and Grant Guideline and eligibility criteria.
3. Log In / Create a SmartyGrants account (sign up with an email address and password).
4. Update / Create your SmartyFile to allow for an easier application process.
5. Prepare your responses to required questions and ensure all supporting documents are obtained.

6. Complete the online application via SmartyGrants, ensuring all documentation is attached.
7. Submit before the closing date (Minor / Major) or while funds are available (Micro).
8. If support is required throughout the application process, please utilise the SmartyGrants help hub or contact the Grants Administrator by contacting Council on 131 872.

## 6.2 Lodging your application

Applications for Council's competitive Grants must be made online via the SmartyGrants portal. Applications will only be eligible if they have been submitted by the due date and time and contain all required supporting documentation. An online application cannot be attempted without first creating an account. Applicants can create a SmartyGrants account (at no cost) by registering their username (e.g. a club / organisation email address) or utilising an existing account. Applicants who have previously used SmartyGrants may sign in using their existing username and password.

If you need support throughout this process, please refer to the SmartyGrants help hub, or contact Council on 131 872.

## 7 Assessment Criteria

All Minor and Major competitive grant applications will be assessed against a weighted prioritisation model to determine the most meritorious applicants based on available funds. The weighted prioritisation model may incorporate the following criteria, utilising both quantitative and qualitative metrics:

1. Alignment with Council's Corporate Plan and Council Strategies
2. Demonstrated need, evidence, and potential for advancement
3. Capacity, capability, and likelihood of success
4. Locality
5. Applicant funding history consideration
6. Co-contribution

### 7.1 Alignment with Council's Corporate Plan and Council Strategies

Assesses how well the proposed project supports the strategic priorities and objectives outlined in Council's Corporate Plan and other Strategies, ensuring alignment with long-term community goals.

### 7.2 Demonstrated Need, Evidence, and Potential for Improvement

Evaluates the extent to which the proposal addresses a clearly identified need, is supported by relevant data or community input, and offers measurable potential for positive impact or improvement.

### 7.3 Capacity, Capability, and Likelihood of Success

Considers the applicant's ability to deliver the proposed initiative / project, including relevant experience, resources, partnerships, and a realistic plan for implementation and sustainability.

### 7.4 Locality

Prioritises initiatives / projects that are regionally driven, supporting place-based outcomes and regional equity. i.e. Regionally located submissions will receive a higher weighting than those based in Toowoomba.

## 7.5 Applicant Funding History Consideration

Supports equitable access to funding by giving preference to applicants who have not previously received Council grants in the past two (2) financial years through a competitive Council grant process, encouraging broader participation and diversity of recipients.

## 7.6 Co-contribution

Applicants for Major Grants (\$10,001+ ex GST) are required to contribute to their project either financially or through in-kind support. This criteria recognises the value of shared investment, with higher co-contributions receiving stronger weighting in the assessment. Submitted applications in this category without any form of financial and or in-kind co-contribution will be deemed ineligible. Refer section 3.4.3.

# 8 Assessment Process

Following submission, each application will be reviewed for eligibility (applicant organisation and requested funding elements) by Council's Grants Administrator. Once eligibility is confirmed, the respective assessment process will commence. Conflict of Interest (COI) forms are required to be completed by the Grants Administrator and assessment panel members as required.

## 8.1 Non-competitive Grants Assessment Process

The administration of Council's Non-competitive Grants (pre-approved Core Support) will be provided by Council's Grants Administrator, including but not limited to:

- Preparation of Report (every four (4) years) seeking approval of identified recipients
- Annual notification
- Funding agreement
- Acquittal
- Reporting
- Support, queries and advice.

Full administrative duties are detailed in section 10.

Assessment and approval for non-competitive grants is generally for the term of Council. The approved delegate will consider and approve a schedule of defined amounts for various eligible organisations.

## 8.2 Competitive Grants Assessment Process

The online application for Council's competitive community grants is managed through the SmartyGrants portal and a link can be found via Council's website. The application, including all supporting documentation, must be submitted online prior to the specified closing date and time. Applicants are encouraged to utilise the SmartyGrants help hub or contact Council's Grants Administrator for support, queries, and advice throughout the application period. Council's Micro, Minor and Major grants are offered on a competitive basis, and the amount of funding requested cannot be guaranteed.

Full administrative duties are detailed in section 10.

## 8.3 Micro Grants Assessment Process

All submitted micro grant applications (\$1 - \$1,000 ex GST) including both financial and / or in-kind assistance will be assessed by Council's Grants Administrator for both eligibility and assessment. Council may utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) as part of the review of applications to determine eligibility and assist with application assessment. The Grants Administrator will provide recommendations to the approved delegate for

consideration and approval. The approved delegate has final approval and may adjust recommendations as appropriate.

## 8.4 Minor and Major Grants Assessment Process

All Minor and Major competitive grant applications will be assessed against an organisational grants prioritisation model to determine the most meritorious applicants based on available funds. Council may utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) as part of the review of applications to determine eligibility and assist with application assessment. The approved delegate has final approval and may adjust recommendations as appropriate.

### 8.4.1 Preliminary Eligibility Review

The Grants Administrator will review all submissions to ensure applications align with competitive grant priorities, philosophies, and eligibility criteria, prior to convening an assessment panel. Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be used as part of the preliminary review. Misaligned applications will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed to assessment. Notification of misaligned applications will occur after the delegated approver has considered the assessment panel's recommendations and made a final determination.

### 8.4.2 Assessment Panel

Once the initial eligibility review has been completed, an assessment panel will be appointed and convened to review the applications in detail. The composition of the assessment panel will be contingent upon the type and style of application received, may include both internal and external representatives and must constitute a minimum panel membership of five (5) individuals (excluding the Chair).

Appointed assessment panel members (once declarations of Conflicts of Interest have been assessed) will be allocated an appropriate time to review, assess and participate in the assessment panel process.

The assessment panel will review and score each application against the weighted prioritisation model based on the defined assessment criteria.

The Chair of the assessment panel is required to convene a meeting with panel members. Panel members' individual assessment reviews are to be discussed to assist in reaching a consensus on the outcome and scoring of each application. Consideration of available resources will form part of the consensus meeting.

The most meritorious proposals will be recommended for funding within the limits of available resources.

The recommendations of the assessment panel are to be provided to the appropriate delegate in a report, compiled by the Grants Administrator, for final determination.

A range of alternate recommendations may be requested of the assessment panel by the delegated approver (e.g. full, partial, no funding, geographic analysis, community benefit analysis).

The assessment panel may provide the delegated approver with a range of recommendations. The delegated approver has final approval and may adjust the recommendation as appropriate.

## 9 Receiving a Grant / Funding Obligations

Successful grant recipients will be required to comply with a range of funding obligations, which include, but are not limited to, the following obligations:

1. Enter into a Funding Agreement with Council.
2. Use the grant only for the nominated purpose for which it is given unless written approval is given by Council for a variation.
3. Obtain all appropriate permits, approvals, licenses, insurances and indemnities etc. relating to the project.
4. As part of the conditions of funding, applicants approved to receive Council funding greater than or equal to \$25,000 will be required to submit a status report or other planning documentation outlining progress updates and milestones.

5. Contact Council's Grants Administrator if unforeseen circumstances arise that cause delays, prevention or withholding of a proposed activity, event or project, including timeframes and budget. The grant recipient will be required to complete a Variation Request within SmartyGrants before the activity / project end date outlining:
  - a. the changes sought to the funding agreement (e.g. change to timelines, change of scope and / or location), and
  - b. outline the reasons for the change.The Variation Request will be reviewed by Council's Grants Administrator with a decision (outcome) to be provided in writing.
6. Expend the funds within twelve (12) months of being granted. If unforeseen circumstances arise that cause delays, applicants are required to contact Council's Grants Administrator to seek an extension of time. Extensions will not be granted unless written approval has been given by Council's Grants Administrator.
7. Acknowledge Council's support as set out in the Funding Agreement.
8. In accordance with instructions outlined in the Funding Agreement, acquit the grant within six (6) weeks of completion of the project or event. If unforeseen circumstances arise that cause delays, applicants are required to contact Council's Grants Administrator to seek an extension of time. Extensions will not be granted unless written approval has been given by the Grants and Sponsorship Officer, and failure to acquit the grant within these timelines without an approved variation will deem the organisation in default.
9. When completing the acquittal, submit appropriate evidence of funds received and funds expended e.g. provide a copy of a bank statement indicating TRC grant funds have been credited to the organisation's account, receipts for purchases, 'paid' tax invoice/s showing a nil balance or zero balance.
10. Acknowledgement and compliance with seed funding provisions refer section 3.4.4.
11. Acknowledgement and compliance with surplus conditions refer section 3.4.8.
12. Unspent grant funds totalling more than \$100 must be returned to Council.

## 10 Reporting

All assistance (financial and in-kind) awarded under this Policy will be reported in Council's Annual Report.

The Grants Administrator must complete an annual evaluation report for both competitive and non-competitive community grants. This report is to be prepared in sufficient time to ensure that findings and recommendations can inform the planning and delivery of future funding rounds. The evaluation will provide a comprehensive assessment of the program's effectiveness in achieving its stated philosophy of partnership, sustainability, and community capacity building. At a minimum, the report will address analysis, observations, and recommendations through documenting:

- Key learnings and opportunities for continuous improvement across all program components;
- Relevant success measures, including the extent to which funded projects achieved their stated outcomes;
- Applicant eligibility compliance and adherence to all funding agreement conditions;
- Verification of appropriate acknowledgement of Council in funded activities;
- Reporting back to Management on key metrics and success indicators, including community impact and participation levels;
- Achievement of acquittal requirements and compliance with all timeframe obligations;
- Identification of trends, risks, and recommendations to strengthen program delivery and reduce reliance on ongoing Council funding.

## 11 Responsibilities / Accountabilities

As outlined throughout the Guideline and summarised below.

Role / Responsible Officer / Organisation	Key Responsibilities / Accountabilities
<b>Council</b>	
Grants Administrator (generally considered the Grants and Sponsorship Officer)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Primary contact</li> <li>2. Administers end to end process for competitive and non-competitive grants:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promotion and communication of grant opportunities including advertising of assessment criteria if applicable</li> <li>b. Management of applications and eligibility assessments</li> <li>c. Assess and provide recommendation for Micro Grant applications</li> <li>d. Coordination of assessment processes (may include Chair responsibilities)</li> <li>e. Notification of successful (full and partial) and unsuccessful applications</li> <li>f. Preparation of funding agreements</li> <li>g. Coordination of payments</li> <li>h. Oversight of project acquittals and reporting (includes ensuring reminders are sent)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Declare any conflicts of interest and act with impartiality</li> <li>4. Ensures compliance with Council Policy, Guideline and procedures</li> <li>5. Maintains accurate records and reporting for internal and external stakeholders through SmartyGrants portal</li> <li>6. Undertakes appropriate application education opportunities and continuous improvement processes.</li> <li>7. Uphold and ensure delivery of 3.1 Overall Community Grants Philosophy</li> <li>8. Complete an annual evaluation report for both competitive and non-competitive community grants.</li> </ol>
Assessment Panel Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and assess eligible Minor and Major grant applications</li> <li>2. Apply assessment criteria consistently and fairly</li> <li>3. Provide recommendations based on merit, alignment with weighted prioritisation model and strategic priorities</li> <li>4. Declare any conflicts of interest and act with impartiality</li> <li>5. Participate in panel discussions for consensus</li> <li>6. Operate in a manner that ensures delivery of 3.1 Overall Community Grants Philosophy</li> </ol>
Delegated Approver	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review recommendations and ensure alignment with policy, guideline, and budget</li> <li>2. Approve funding decisions within delegated authority limits</li> <li>3. Ensure transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment in decision-making</li> </ol>

	4. Operate in a manner that ensures delivery of 3.1 Overall Community Grants Philosophy
Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approves the overarching Grants Policy</li> <li>2. Endorses the annual grants budget allocation</li> <li>3. Provides strategic direction and oversight of the grants program</li> </ol>
<b>Applicants</b>	
Eligible Organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsible for the preparation and submission of an online grant application which meets the eligibility criteria.</li> <li>2. Must ensure the proposal aligns with the grant objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria</li> <li>3. Required to provide accurate and timely information, including evidence of need, project details, and co-contribution commitments if applicable</li> </ol>
Successful Organisations	<p>As above and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountable for delivering the funded project as outlined in the funding agreement (time, cost and quality)</li> <li>2. Must complete acquittal reporting and demonstrate outcomes, use of funds, and compliance with grant conditions / funding agreement</li> <li>3. Expected to maintain open communication with Council throughout the project lifecycle</li> </ol>

### 11.1 Approvals for Grant Applications

Grant Category	Approver
Non-competitive grants	Chief Executive Officer
Micro (\$1 - \$1,000 ex GST)	Chief Executive Officer
Minor (\$1,001 - \$10,000 ex GST)	Chief Executive Officer
Major (\$10,001+ ex GST)	Chief Executive Officer

In exceptional circumstances, where adherence to the standard grants process may not be feasible, or in the best interest of the community due to an emergency or matter of significant community importance, the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager Environment and Community Services have authority to approve community grant allocations outside the standard process, provided such decisions are documented and reported to the relevant delegated approver.

## 12 Relevant laws

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

### 13 Related policies/documents

Members of the public can access Council policies 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

2.91 Community Grants Policy

#### Other documents

[Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 14 Related forms

The online application forms for Council's Competitive Community Grants can be accessed via Council's Grants and Funding webpage.

### 15 Definitions

Term	Definition
Assessment Criteria	Assessment criteria are the specific standards or benchmarks used to evaluate the quality, performance, or achievement of an application. They define what success looks like and provide a clear basis for judgement.
Assessment Panel	Appropriately appointed working group which may include both internal and external representatives and must constitute a minimum membership of 5 individuals (excluding the Chair). The composition of the assessment panel (Minor and Major Grants combined) will be contingent upon the type and style of applications received. The composition of the assessment panel shall be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (or Delegated Authority).
Auspecting	Auspecting is an agreement from one organisation (i.e. an eligible organisation) to accept legal and financial responsibility on behalf of an organisation which may not have its own legal status. Approved funds are deposited into the auspice partner's account.
Co-contribution	The amount of financial and / or in-kind assistance that will be provided by the eligible organisation.
Eligible Organisation	<p>An entity that carries out activities for a public purpose; or another entity whose primary object is not directed at making a profit.</p> <p>An organisation registered as a not-for-profit entity and recognised by the Australian Taxation Office or Australian Securities and Investments Commission in at least one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated entity (Incorporated Associations) with an ABN</li> <li>• Incorporated entity without an ABN, need to supply a 'Statement by a Supplier' form from the Australian Tax Office.</li> <li>• Unincorporated entity with an ABN</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian public company, limited by guarantee</li> <li>• Charitable institution</li> <li>• Public benevolent institution (PBI)</li> <li>• Health promotion charity (HPC).</li> </ul>
Financial assistance / support	<p>Financial assistance refers to the cash amount requested and / or payable by Council to the successful applicant organisation.</p> <p>Financial assistance can also refer to a cash co-contribution/s from the applicant organisation or other funding body to the project.</p>
In-kind assistance	<p>The supply of support in the form of staff time and / or minor Council equipment. Costs of these services will be accounted for internally to transparently track and report on Council's support for the community.</p> <p>In-Kind support may be provided by the applicant (either as assets or labour/services) as co-contribution towards the overall project / activity delivery (mandatory requirement of Major grants), relevant criteria and assessable values are outlined in the Community Grants Guideline.</p>
Micro Grants	<p>Funding assistance (financial and in-kind) from \$1 - \$1,000 ex GST to eligible organisations to deliver projects, innovative activities and minor resource and equipment purchases that support community strengthening initiatives and enhance the quality of life to the community and Region.</p>
Minor Grants	<p>Funding assistance (cash and in-kind) from \$1,001 - \$10,000 ex GST to eligible organisations to deliver projects, innovative activities and minor resource and equipment purchases that support community strengthening initiatives and enhance the quality of life to the community and Region.</p>
Major Grants	<p>Funding assistance (cash and in-kind) above \$10,001 ex GST to eligible organisations to deliver projects, innovative activities, and major resource and equipment purchases that support community strengthening initiatives and enhance the quality of life to the community and Region. Applicant co-contribution is mandatory.</p>
Non-Competitive Grants	<p>Non-competitive Grants or Core Community Support is a Council endorsed non-competitive funding allocation to identified groups, organisations and/or committees within the Region for a specific purpose.</p>
Project	<p>An event, activation, activity, initiative, project, plant and equipment purchases, infrastructure projects or maintenance, whereby, approved funds for the agreed initiative occurs during a defined start date and end date.</p>
Seed Funding	<p>Seed Funding is provided to kick-start new activations, projects or initiatives with the view to their self-sufficiency beyond this support.</p> <p>Eligible organisations may submit up to two (2) funding applications (i.e. Minor or Major Applications) for the same activation, project or initiative (one (1) application per funding round), after which, no further applications will be eligible to receive support, for the same or similar</p>

Term	Definition
	application (irrespective of a different eligible organisation making the application).
Weighted Prioritisation Model	Scoring matrix which aligns to the assessment criteria and theming of a particular round (if applicable) used to determine the most meritorious applications.

## 16 Policy details

<b>Policy category:</b>	Council Policy	<b>Policy version number<sup>1</sup>:</b>	1.00
<b>Date adopted/approved:</b>	20 January 2026	<b>Effective date:</b>	20 January 2026
<b>Approval authority:</b>	Council		
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Community Development, Facilities and Tourism Branch		
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Grants and Sponsorship Officer		
<b>Review date:</b>	January 2027		

## 17 Revision history

Policy version	Approval date	DM Reference
1.00	20 January 2027	12508607v8

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<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