

1 Purpose

This Guideline supports the 2.91 Community Grants Policy to provide support (financial and in-kind) to eligible organisations within the Toowoomba Regional Council (Council) area. The Guideline covers both non-competitive (i.e. 'Core Support' to pre-approved organisations for defined periods), and competitive grants.

2 Scope and applications

This procedure applies to Council Officers responsible for administering and approving community grants, and to eligible organisations in relation to their participation throughout grants process.

2.1 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
- Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Floral Parade entitlements
- Shade trees and shrubs in-kind grant program
- Development incentives
- Community Development equipment arrangements

3 Principles

This Guideline aligns with Council's 2024 - 2029 Corporate Plan goals 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 Key Priorities 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 Guideline.

4 Content

4.1 Grants Philosophy

4.1.1 Non-Competitive Community Grants

Council's Non-competitive community grants, also referred to as '*Core Support*' are provided with a philosophy of mutual commitment to sustain established events / activations, in return for strong governance, accountability and compliance with clearly defined obligations. Non-competitive funding is not intended to be discretionary, but rather a structured mechanism to support pre-approved organisations and activities that align with Council's strategic priorities and deliver demonstrable, ongoing community benefit.

Non-competitive community grants provide '*consistent payments*', '*insurance support*' (1. Public Liability, 2. Officer Insurance, 3. Volunteers Insurance), and support to specified community events / activations throughout the region. Non-competitive community grants are provided to various eligible organisations via an approved schedule generally for the term of Council. All pre-approved recipients have contractual obligations to sign an appropriate funding agreement, meet the terms of the funding agreement and subsequent acquittal requirements.

All documentation for funding, including agreements and reporting obligations are managed via Council's SmartyGrants portal.

Failure to meet contractual obligations at any point throughout the funding period, shall render the termination of Non-competitive funding for the specific organisation for the remaining term of Council.

4.1.2 Competitive Community Grants

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, these grants allow 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 funding rounds, it will not be eligible for further funding under the Community Grants Policy and Guideline, 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 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.

4.1.2.1 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.

4.1.2.2 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.

4.1.2.3 Major Grants

Major Grants (\$10,001 - \$150,000 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.

Applicants applying for a Major Grant are required to make a co-contribution (financial and / or in-kind). Refer Section 4.4.3.

4.1.2.4 Allocation of Focus Area

As part of the competitive application process, applicants for all grant types (Micro, Minor and Major) will 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. Cultural and Arts Support
3. Economic Development
4. Sport and Recreation
5. Environment
6. Event / Activations
7. Sports Tourism
8. Youth

4.1.2.5 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 will be modified to benefit 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.

4.2 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 advertised in local and regional media as appropriate.

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

If technical support is required throughout the application process, please utilise the SmartyGrants help hub or contact Grants & Sponsorship Officer on 131 872.

The Grants & Sponsorship Officer 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, along with any updated grant information and priorities.

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

4.3 Timelines

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

Grants Category	Funding Threshold	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-\$150,000 ex GST	1 July	12 August	5pm	September / October
Non-competitive grants	Predefined schedule	N/A	N/A	N/A	Payments will occur at different intervals of each financial year upon receipt of completed funding agreements

4.4 Funding

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

Funding for non-competitive grants will be provided in accordance with Council's approved schedule.

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

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 assistance 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.

4.4.1 Financial Assistance

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

The applicant organisation may also contribute cash to the project and this will be recognised as a financial co-contribution.

4.4.2 In-kind Assistance

Application requests for in-kind assistance (Major grant applications only) 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 potential in-kind support, contact the Grants and Sponsorship Officer on 131 872.

The applicant organisation may also contribute in-kind support to the project and this will be recognised as an in-kind co-contribution. In-kind contributions are only eligible where they are provided 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
- Donation 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 organisation 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.

Where there is not a formal quote to support labour costs, the following rates should be applied to volunteer labour contributions:

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

*Accurate as of December 2025. Unskilled volunteer labour cost is 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 qualifications and trade licences.

4.4.3 Co-contribution

Applicant organisations seeking a Major grant are required to make a co-contribution. Organisations may apply for a Major grant, and if successful, Council will contribute a percentage between 50% to 90% of the funding gap and up to a maximum of \$150,000 ex GST.

The funding gap is calculated as the total project cost excluding GST less any other external funding sources (i.e. grants, sponsorships, donations, etc) not from Toowoomba Regional Council. If there is no external funding, the funding gap would equal the total project cost. The table below shows the minimum co-contribution applicants must provide based on the funding gap:

Funding gap (ex GST)	Minimum Applicant co-contribution	Maximum Council contribution
For specialised planning projects such as: - Stand-alone planning work for significant infrastructure projects (e.g. multi-lighting design, amenities / canteen / clubhouse / community hall plans) - Organisational planning (e.g. strategic plans, master plans, conservation management plans, development of marketing plans)	10% of funding gap	Up to 90% of funding gap
Up to \$15,000	25% of funding gap	Up to 75% of funding gap
\$15,001 – \$34,999	30% of funding gap	Up to 70% of funding gap
\$35,000 – \$49,999	40% of funding gap	Up to 60% of funding gap
\$50,000+	50% of funding gap	Up to 50% of funding gap

Council will not solely fund Major grant applications. Co-contributions from applicant organisations may include:

- Applicant cash contributions
- Project / event projected income (i.e. from ticket sales, stall holder fees, gold coin donations, etc.)
- In-kind support

4.4.4 Seed funding

Eligible organisations may receive competitive funding on a 'seed funding' basis 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 funding rounds, it will not be eligible for further funding under the 2.91 Community Grants Policy, even if future applications are submitted by different organisations.

Seed funding is provided to kick-start activations, projects or initiatives with the view to their self-sufficiency beyond this support.

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 seed funding restrictions.

4.4.5 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 & Sponsorship Officer to receive advice on Council's grants process and to identify additional or alternate funding sources.

Please refer to section 4.3 for specific funding amount thresholds per stream.

4.4.6 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 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.

4.4.7 Conditions Associated with Financial Surplus from Activities

Where a 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 awarded 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 4.4.4 and 4.5.3.2).

4.4.7.1 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.

4.5 Grant Eligibility

4.5.1 Non-Competitive Grants

Non-competitive community grants are provided to various eligible organisations via a schedule approved by Council generally for the term of Council. All pre-approved recipients have contractual obligations to sign an appropriate funding agreement, meet the terms of the funding agreement and subsequent acquittal requirements.

For unincorporated organisations / groups, Council funds will be paid into an auspice partner's account.

Failure to comply with the 'Terms and Conditions' throughout the agreed term, will result in termination for the remaining term of Council, and may affect consideration of any future Council decisions relating to Core Support payments.

Organisations that wish to be considered for non-competitive support are required to contact Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer for further direction.

4.5.2 Competitive Grants

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project ideas and potential eligibility prior to applying and should seek advice through Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer. 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.

4.5.2.1 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.

4.5.2.2 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 approved for support through an alternate Toowoomba Regional Council grant stream for the same project / event in a given year.
9. An organisation that has been approved for support through a Toowoomba Regional Council grant stream for the same or similar project / event in two separate funding rounds.
10. An organisation that has not acquitted an overdue TRC funded grant application.
11. Recipients who have previously defaulted on the conditions of funding are ineligible to apply for competitive funding for three (3) years. Defaulting recipients may be referred to Council's debt collection processes if required.
12. Organisations who have not complied with all elements of the Grant Policy or this Guideline.

4.5.3 Eligible projects

A wide range of support will be considered for competitive funding based 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 analysis 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.

4.5.3.1 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.

4.5.3.2 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 delivery 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, acknowledging that grant funding may be released in instalments subject to status reports.

Micro grant applications are ineligible for multi-year funding.

4.5.3.3 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 in light of the intent of Assessment Criteria 5 which considers an applicant's prior funding history. Multiple applications for unique projects within the same funding round does not make the applicant organisation ineligible.

4.5.4 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 - \$150,000 ex GST) where the appropriate co-contribution is not evident or sufficient (refer section 4.5.3).
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.

4.6 Applying for a Competitive Grant

Applications for a competitive Community Grant are made online through Council's SmartyGrants portal.

All applicants will be required to provide standard details including contact details associated with the organisation and the organisation's eligibility and general project information. Based on the grant stream (Micro, Minor or Major), applicants will also be required to provide relevant supporting documentation 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 cost estimates and / or quotes, and concept plans.
4. Evidence of project plans (including event management, risk management and marketing 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.

Council has adopted a scalable approach to grant types, whereby Micro Grants are intentionally simple, with information requirements increasing progressively for Minor and Major grant applications.

4.6.1 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 for each competitive grant.
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.
Applicants receive an email notification to confirm application submission.
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 Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer on 131 872.

4.6.2 Lodging your application

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.

4.7 Assessment Criteria for Competitive Grants

Micro grant applications require minimal detail with decision making focussing on responsiveness and available budget.

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 (Major only)

4.7.1 Alignment with Council's Corporate Plan and Council Strategies

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

4.7.2 Demonstrated Need, Evidence, and Potential for Advancement

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

4.7.3 Capacity, Capability, and Likelihood of Success

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

4.7.4 Locality

Prioritises projects /events 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.

4.7.5 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) separate funding rounds for the same or similar project through a competitive Council grant process, encouraging broader participation and diversity of recipients.

4.7.6 Co-contribution

Applicants for Major Grants (\$10,001-\$150,000 ex GST) are required to make a minimum mandatory co-contribute to their project / event either financially or through in-kind support. This criterion recognises the value of shared investment, with co-contributions above the minimum requirements receiving stronger weighting in the assessment; scores increasing as the level of additional co-contribution increases. Submitted applications in this category without any form of financial and or in-kind co-contribution will be deemed ineligible. Refer section 4.4.3.

4.8 Assessment Process

Community Grants applications will be reviewed for eligibility (applicant organisation and requested funding elements) by Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer and managed through the SmartyGrants portal found via Council's website. Once eligibility is confirmed, the respective assessment process will commence. Conflict of Interest (COI) forms are required to be completed by the Grants & Sponsorship Officer and assessment panel members as applicable.

Full administrative duties are detailed in section 5.

4.8.1 Non-competitive Grants Assessment Process

The administration of Council's Non-competitive Grants (pre-approved Core Support) will be provided by Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer, 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.

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.

4.8.2 Competitive Grants Assessment Process

Council may utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) as part of the review of applications to determine eligibility and assist with application assessment.

4.8.3 Micro Grants Assessment Process

All submitted micro grant applications (\$1 - \$1,000 ex GST) will be assessed by Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer for both eligibility and assessment. The Grants & Sponsorship Officer will provide recommendations to the approved delegate for consideration and approval. The approved delegate has final approval and may adjust recommendations as appropriate.

4.8.4 Minor and Major Grants Assessment Process

All Minor and Major competitive grant applications will be assessed against an organisational weighted prioritisation model to determine the most meritorious applicants subject to available funds. The approved delegate has final approval and may adjust recommendations as appropriate.

4.8.4.1 Preliminary Eligibility Review

The Grants & Sponsorship Officer will review all submissions to ensure applications align with competitive grant priorities, philosophies, and eligibility criteria, prior to convening an assessment panel. 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.

4.8.4.2 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 applications 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 & Sponsorship Officer, 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.

4.9 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 may be required to submit a status report outlining progress updates and milestones throughout the duration of the project. This may align with progress payment instalments, as appropriate.
5. Contact Council's Grants & Sponsorship Officer 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 & Sponsorship Officer 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 & Sponsorship Officer to seek an extension of time. Extensions will not be granted unless written approval has been given by Council.
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 & Sponsorship Officer 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 4.4.4.
 11. Acknowledgement and compliance with surplus conditions refer section 4.4.7.
 12. Unspent grant funds over \$100 must be returned to Council in full within 60 days.

4.10 Reporting

All assistance awarded under the 2.91 Community Grants Policy will be reported in Council's Annual Report.

The Grants & Sponsorship Officer 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.

5 Responsibilities / Accountabilities

As outlined throughout the Guideline and summarised below.

Role / Responsible Officer / Organisation	Key Responsibilities / Accountabilities
Council	
Grants Administrator (generally considered the Grants and Sponsorship Officer)	1. Primary contact 2. Administers end to end process for competitive and non-competitive grants: a. Promotion and communication of grant opportunities including advertising of assessment criteria if applicable b. Management of applications and eligibility assessments c. Assess and provide recommendation for Micro Grant applications d. Coordination of assessment processes (may include Chair responsibilities) e. Notification of successful (full and partial) and unsuccessful applications f. Preparation of funding agreements g. Coordination of payments h. Oversight of project acquittals and reporting (includes ensuring reminders are sent) 3. Declare any conflicts of interest and act with impartiality

	- Ensures compliance with Council Policy, Guideline and procedures - Maintains accurate records and reporting for internal and external stakeholders through SmartyGrants portal - Undertakes appropriate grant application education opportunities and continuous improvement processes. - Uphold and ensure delivery of the Grants Philosophy - Complete an annual evaluation report for both competitive and non-competitive community grants.
Assessment Panel Members	- Review and assess eligible Minor and Major grant applications - Apply assessment criteria consistently and fairly - Provide recommendations based on merit, alignment with weighted prioritisation model and strategic priorities - Declare any conflicts of interest and act with impartiality - Participate in panel discussions for consensus - Operate in a manner that ensures delivery of the Grants Philosophy
Delegated Approver	- Review recommendations and ensure alignment with policy, guideline, and budget - Approve funding decisions within delegated authority limits - Ensure transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment in decision-making - Operate in a manner that ensures delivery of the Grants Philosophy
Council	- Approves the overarching Grants Policy - Endorses the annual grants budget allocation - Provides strategic direction and oversight of the grants program
Applicants	
Eligible Organisations	- Responsible for the preparation and submission of an online grant application which meets the eligibility criteria. - Must ensure the proposal aligns with the grant objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria - Required to provide accurate and timely information, including evidence of need, project details, and co-contribution commitments if applicable
Successful Organisations	As above and: - Accountable for delivering the funded project as outlined in the funding agreement (time, cost and quality) - Must complete acquittal reporting and demonstrate outcomes, use of funds, and compliance with grant conditions / funding agreement - Expected to maintain open communication with Council throughout the project lifecycle

5.1 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-\$150,000 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.

6 Relevant laws

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

7 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 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)

8 Related forms

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

9 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).

Term	Definition
Auspicings	Auspicings 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	An entity that carries out activities for a public purpose; or another entity whose primary object is not directed at making a profit. 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: • Incorporated entity (Incorporated Associations) with an ABN • Incorporated entity without an ABN, need to supply a 'Statement by a Supplier' form from the Australian Tax Office. • Unincorporated entity with an ABN • Australian public company, limited by guarantee • Charitable institution • Public benevolent institution (PBI) • Health promotion charity (HPC).
Financial assistance / support	Financial assistance refers to the cash amount requested and / or payable by Council to the successful applicant organisation. Financial assistance can also refer to a cash co-contribution/s from the applicant organisation or other funding body to the project.
Funding gap	Calculated as the total project cost excluding GST less any other external funding sources (i.e. grants, sponsorships, donations, etc) not from Toowoomba Regional Council). If there is no external funding, the funding gap would equal the total project cost.
In-kind assistance	The supply of support in the form of staff time and / or minor Council equipment (Major Grant applications only). Costs of these services will be accounted for internally to transparently track and report on Council's support for the community. 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.
Micro Grants	Funding assistance 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.

Term	Definition
Minor Grants	Funding assistance 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.
Major Grants	Funding assistance from \$10,001-\$150,000 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.
Non-Competitive Grants	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.
Project	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.
Seed Funding	Seed Funding is provided to kick-start new activations, projects or initiatives with the view to their self-sufficiency beyond this support. 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 project (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.

10 Policy details

Policy category:	Organisational Procedure	Policy version number¹:	2.00
Date adopted/approved:	26 May 2026	Effective date:	26 May 2026
Approval authority:	Chief Executive Officer		
Policy Owner:	Community Development, Facilities and Tourism Branch		
Contact officer:	Grants and Sponsorship Officer		

¹ 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

Review date:	January 2027
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11 Revision history

Policy version	Approval date	DM Reference
1.00	20 January 2026	12508607v8
2.00	26 May 2026	12640123v6