

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT POLICY

Policy Owner:	Community and Lifestyle
Adoption:	
Version:	15
Link to Corporate Plan:	Accountable Council – We are providing good stewardship built on a foundation of trust. Connecting Communities – We work with you and for you, supporting the success of our communities. Resilient Economy – We play our part in supporting the success of our region.
Head of Power:	s195 Local Government Regulation 2012
Review Date:	5 August 2027

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and criteria that will be applied when giving a community organisation or individual funding (a grant). Furthermore, this policy demonstrates Council's compliance with sections 194 and 195 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

2 SCOPE

Parts of this policy (and funding streams and categories) apply to the following organisations and individuals based in or servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area:

1. not-for-profit community organisations (including Australian Registered Charities);
2. not-for-profit sporting clubs;
3. educational institutions; and
4. religious or worship groups.

The following funding programs are outside the scope of this policy:

1. Council policies that make provision for funding, exemptions, or concessions; and
2. funding provided to organisations and/or individuals under the Regional Arts Development Fund or any other program, grant, or scheme delivered by Council.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Community Investment Program Funding Guideline (guideline).

3.1 Principles

Council recognises the contribution of local community organisations towards the wellbeing and liveability of the region and aims to increase these organisation's capacity to deliver projects, activities, and services more effectively, while assisting Council in delivering its objectives and vision.

Council will provide support for local initiatives, projects, and community related activities through the Community Investment Program where Council considers it is in the public interest by:

- supporting our communities in attaining the resources and skills to identify and respond to local areas of need;
- partnering with organisations to deliver community led and shared outcomes;
- activating community participation amongst residents;
- supporting the community sector with planning, risk mitigation, and capacity building initiatives;
- supporting the community to be stronger, healthier, and more resilient; and
- contributing to the development of local students and sportspersons.

Due to the limited budget available to Council and the competitive nature of accessing community funds, organisations should not rely on the Community Investment Program as recurrent funding.

3.2 Funding Opportunities

The Community Investment Program provides opportunities for financial assistance and in-kind support within a number of funding streams and fund categories.

3.2.1 Mirco Grants Fund

The Micro Grants Fund supports local projects and initiatives for a community purpose that provide a demonstrated benefit.

3.2.2 Connected Communities Fund

The Connected Communities Fund provides support for new initiatives and projects which contribute to the wellbeing and liveability of the region.

3.2.3 Community Events Funding Stream

The Community Events Funding Stream enables the development and delivery of events that facilitate community connection in the following fund categories:

Fund Category	Purpose
Community Events	Support for community-led events, celebrations, and commemorations that are delivered by community organisations for broad public benefit.
Ignite Events	Support for events that contribute to social and community benefit, community pride, social outcomes, and/or regional economy.
Impact, Destination and Signature Events	Support for well established and well designed events with demonstrated return visitation, regional profile, economic stimulus, and overnight visitor expenditure.

3.2.4 Community Support Funding Stream

The Community Support Funding Stream fosters stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities by enhancing connection and building social cohesion in the following fund categories:

Fund Category	Purpose
Community Hall	To provide financial assistance to local organisations who own, lease, or manage a Community Hall in meeting operating costs.
Charity Waste Waiver	To alleviate the burden of organisations in the processing and disposal of general waste where the charitable organisation accepts pre-loved household belongings.

Fund Category	Purpose
Waste Donation	To support not-for-profit organisations, First Nations groups, and businesses that coordinate non-commercial litter clean up from foreshores, land owned/managed/leased/under the control of Council, or land otherwise approved by Council.
Public Toilet Subsidy	To provide financial assistance to incorporated associations who own, lease, or manage a Community Hall within the Gladstone region with operating costs in providing a toilet facility to the community.

3.2.5 Bursary and Scholarships Funding Stream

The Bursary and Scholarships Funding Stream recognises the excellence and achievements of students, trainees, and apprentices and contributes to their development in the following fund categories:

Fund Category	Purpose
Regional Schools Bursary	To recognise and reward excellence in the areas of academic success, attitude, attendance, and community contributions.
Col Brown Memorial Award	To recognise excellence and achievement for a local apprentice or trainee engaged through Apprentices and Trainees Queensland.
CQ University Scholarships	To encourage Gladstone region students to remain in the region and further their education at a CQ University Campus, with the objective of strengthening the future regional workforce.

3.2.6 Councillor Discretionary Fund

The Councillor Discretionary Fund provides support for a community purpose by building community capacity and encouraging participation, partnership, and collaboration.

Each Councillor will receive an equal fund to be allocated at their discretion, subject to the approval requirements outlined in section 202 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (and set out in Attachment 2). The decision to allocate funding must have regard to the Corporate Plan, long-term asset Management plan, and the annual budget.

An applicant will only receive funding for one (1) application per year across all Councillor Discretionary Funds. An applicant cannot make an application under the Councillor Discretionary Fund where the application has been unsuccessful under another funding stream by achieving an evaluation score of 50% or less.

Regardless of whether or not funding is allocated, Councillors must declare any conflict of interest (actual/ potential/ perceived) or declare that no conflict of interest exists for each application received.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council will:

- make publicly available the total amount budgeted for Councillor Discretionary Funds in the financial year; and
- maintain a publicly available register of all funding approved which includes the name of the recipient, the amount received, and the purpose of the funding.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for each funding stream and category is set out in the guideline and Attachment 1. Applications may only be considered if:

1. the application complies with this policy and the guideline;
2. the application is accompanied by the mandatory information outlined in the guideline;
3. the minimum criteria are demonstrated; and
4. the application is received in the form requested by Council (i.e. online submission), is complete, and is received prior to the closing date of the funding round (where applicable).

An applicant may make an application in more than one (1) funding stream per year. However:

- an applicant cannot make an application in a funding stream where the applicant has been successful in obtaining funding under that funding stream in the same financial year (excluding Connected Communities Fund); and
- an applicant cannot make an application in the Connected Communities Fund where the applicant has been successful in obtaining funding under the Connected Communities Fund in the same or prior financial year.

Applications which are late or received outside of a funding round may be accepted by the Chief Executive Officer in exceptional circumstances (i.e. online submission portal unavailable).

3.4 Assessment and Decision of Applications

Attachment 2 provides the method of assessment and decision maker for eligible applications.

All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria, this policy, and the guideline.

The Chief Executive Officer may request further information from applicants to substantiate the application at any time during the assessment process with all requests to be made in writing. The Chief Executive Officer may also seek advice from a competent Council employee having regard to the nature of the advice being sought (i.e. a qualified accountant may provide advice on financial matters).

Where the guideline requires, a meeting with the applicant may also be held. In these circumstances, a record of the meeting shall be documented in writing.

In circumstances where a panel assessment is made:

- all panels will be comprised of a minimum of three (3) trained members, comprising of:
 - at least one (1) Manager or Specialist level employee position; and
 - one (1) Councillor; and
 - another employee position;
- the panel will assess all applications received for a funding category for a round; and
- the panel will individually review and assess each application independent of the other applications; and
- all panel members must not have declared a conflict of interest (actual/ potential/ perceived) for any application/s received for a funding category for a round.

3.4.1 Moderation

For panel assessments, the Chief Executive Officer may also appoint a moderator who:

- will remain neutral to ensure assessments are fair and transparent;

- must not have been a panel member for the panel assessment being moderated; and
- must not have declared a conflict of interest for any application/s being moderated.

The role of the moderator is to:

- review panel assessments to ensure:
 - scores are objective, fair, and without bias;
 - standards of scoring (weighting) have been applied consistently between applications in consideration of the assessment matrices;
- ensure compliance with this policy, the guideline, and associated procedures; and
- award final scores and provide commentary for presentation as the officer recommendation to Council for decision on the outcome of applications.

3.5 Budget and Funding

Funding must not be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it has been approved unless written consent has been obtained from Council.

In circumstances where the value of applications exceeds the budget allocation for a fund category (and where applicable, funding round), funding will be provided based on the assessment score (highest to lowest).

Council reserves the right to partly fund any application. Applicants may also be required to make a co-contribution as set out in the guideline. The maximum amount of funding that may be provided to a successful applicant is:

Rating	Description	Funding
75%	An overall score of 75% and above demonstrates that the application has met or exceeded all assessment criteria. The decision maker may choose to fund the application up to 100% of the requested amount.	up to 100%
50% - 74%	An overall score between 50% and 74% demonstrates that the application has met the assessment criteria. The decision maker may choose to fund the application up to 75% of the requested amount.	up to 75%
0% - 49%	An overall score of 49% or below demonstrates that the application does not meet the relevant assessment criteria and will not be recommended for funding to the decision maker.	0%

Successful applicants may be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Council and/or may be subject to an acquittal process.

3.6 Review of Decision

There is no review available for decisions made by resolution of Council.

In circumstances where a decision has been made by an officer, the applicant may lodge an Administrative Action Complaint in accordance with the Complaint Management Policy.

3.7 Extraordinary Applications

Council may need to consider community funding applications or circumstances that require agility in funding provided to the community that have not been captured through this policy or the guideline. The decision to accept an extraordinary application is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer with the decision of such applications to be made in accordance with Attachment 2.

4 RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Human Rights Act 2019
Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct Policy
Councillor Conduct Code Policy
Community Investment Program Funding Guideline
Community Investment Program Business Manual
Privacy Policy

6 CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Gladstone Regional Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* when adopting and/or amendment this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to any human rights relevant to the decision.

7 ATTACHMENTS

1. Eligibility Criteria Matrix
2. Summary of Funding Assessment Requirements

8 EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy is successful when community led projects, activities, and services realise the objectives and vision of Council and support the success of our communities through a reduced reliance on the funding available under this policy. This will be measured through:

- social, cultural, and economic benefit;
- the financial sustainability of community organisations;
- the capability of community organisations to deliver projects, activities, and services; and
- the diversity of applications.

9 DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Australian Registered Charity	An organisation that is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Term	Definition
Community Hall	A facility owned and/or operated by a not-for-profit community organisation where the primary purpose of the facility is for general community use (via a hire or other authorised use arrangement) where members of the public gather for group activities, social support, public information, entertainment, education, and other social purposes. It excludes those facilities where community use is not the primary purpose and may be only a minor ancillary use of the facility.
Community Organisation	An entity that carries out activities for a public purpose or an entity whose primary objective is not directed at making a profit and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it does not distribute its income and property among members; and • it does not pay dividends to members.
Discretionary Funds	As defined in s109 of the Local Government Act 2009 and are funds in Council's operating fund that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budgeted for community purposes; and • allocated by a councillor at the councillor's discretion.
Donation	A contribution of goods or cash to an organisation without an expectation of direct counter-supply or serviceable deliverables, given unconditionally and voluntarily.
Educational Institution	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary schools, secondary schools, universities, and TAFE / Technical Colleges as recognised by the State and Federal Government; or • childcare centre, early learning centre, kindergarten; or • any group or association created for the purpose of achieving the educational institution's objectives (i.e. Parents and Citizens/Friends Association).
Funding	A financial payment from Council for non-commercial projects, activities, or items which meet specific criteria within a formal application, assessment, and acquittal process (where applicable), and any financial or other assistance given is conditional upon agreed terms and conditions. Includes donations, sponsorship, and in-kind contributions.
Funding Stream	The categories of funding available under this policy.
Incorporated Association	An organisation incorporated under the <i>Association Incorporation Act 1981</i> or other relevant legislation.
In-kind contribution	The provision of any service, product, or use of facility that would normally attract a fee and includes services procured by Council from external suppliers at its costs. This contribution may be provided in lieu of and/or in addition to a monetary contribution.
Local	A not-for-profit organisation, individual, or business that makes a significant contribution to the Gladstone Region by way of having a physical presence in the Gladstone Regional Council local government area.
Not-For-Profit	An organisation which does not operate for the profit, personal gain, or benefit of a particular person, people, or members.
Project	A service, event, commemorative service, activity, initiative, or equipment purchase for which an organisation might seek assistance.

Term	Definition
Public Interest	The extent to which the community will be enhanced through funding the delivery of perceived benefits (social, educational, economic, environmental, cultural, and sport and recreational) of proposed projects and activities, having regard to competing interests or priorities.
Religious or Worship Group	(For the purpose of this policy) An organisation or group which is based on or otherwise connected with the practice, teaching, observance, or belief in a Religion. The definition of Religion as defined by the High Court of Australia: <i>'means first, belief in a supernatural being, thing or principle; and second, the acceptance of canons of conduct in order to give effect to that belief, though canons of conduct which offend against the ordinary laws are outside the area of any immunity, privilege or right conferred on the grounds of religion'.</i>
Sponsorship	A mutually negotiated arrangement entailing the provision of funds and/or in-kind contribution associated with an event, organisation, or project and results in tangible benefits (advertising, publicity, or other) to Council as the sponsoring organisation.
Sporting Club	Sporting bodies that are not-for-profit and provide sporting facilities and opportunities for the public to engage in sport.

10 REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed upon the earlier of:

1. Two years from the date of adoption of the most recent version;
2. Any relevant statutory review periods;
3. The related legislation or governing documents are amended or repealed; or
4. A request from the Chief Executive Officer or Council.

11 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Reason/Change	Date	Council Resolution
0	Adoption	16/09/2008	08/538
1		1/09/2009	09/482
2		5/07/2011	G/11/621
3		7/08/2012	G/12/1162
4		2/07/2013	G/13/1624
5		15/7/2014	G/14/2087
6		25/8/2015	G/15/2528
7		1/09/2015	G/15/2544
8		2/08/2016	G/16/2860
9		20/12/2016	G/16/2950
10		18/07/2017	G/17/3124
11	Combination of previous Policies: P-2017-39, P-2014-37 & P-2105-03. New policy adopted 7 May 2019 but not to commence until 1 July 2019.	7/05/2019	G/19 /3768
12	Formerly P-2019-08 – Introduces changes to align with Community Development Strategy.	6/07/2021	GM/21/4550
13	Introduces Donations Fund and removes Mayors Discretionary fund and Community Led Investment fund.	4/10/2022	GM/22/4846

Version	Reason/Change	Date	Council Resolution
14	Amendment to funding limits per application and inclusion of such where not previously provided, introduction of expression of interest for Impact, Destination, and Signature Events, introduction of additional category to Waste Fund, inclusion of sections from CS-2022-15 Community Investment Corporate Standard to facilitate repeal of that document, further wording amendments including the reordering of content to improve readability.	15/08/2023	GM/23/5076
15	Removal of operational content. Amendment to funding streams, eligibility criteria, and partial funding amounts. Inclusion of Councillor Discretionary Fund and Public Toilet Subsidy.		

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ATTACHMENT 1 – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA MATRIX

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA To apply for funding the following MUST be met:		MICRO GRANTS FUND	CONNECTED COMMUNITIES FUND	COMMUNITY EVENTS FUNDING STREAM			COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUNDING STREAM				BURSARY & SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING STREAM			COUNCILLOR DISCRETIONARY FUND
		Micro Grants Fund	Connected Communities Fund	Community Events Fund	Ignite Events Fund	Impact, Destination, and Signature Events Fund	Community Hall Fund	Charity Waste Waiver	Waste Donation Fund	Public Toilet Subsidy	Regional Schools Bursary Fund	Col Brown Memorial Award	CQ University Gladstone Campus Scholarship	Councillor Discretionary Fund
ELIGIBLE IF CRITERIA MARKED ✓	Not-For-Profit Community Organisation based in or servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area and may be an Australian Registered Charity but not a Religious or Worship Group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Not-For-Profit Sporting Club based in or servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓
	Educational Institution in the Gladstone Regional Council area										✓		✓	✓
	Religious or Worship Group							✓						✓

EXCLUSIONS – THE ENTITIES SHOWN BELOW ARE INELIGIBLE FOR ALL FUNDS

Political Organisations and Political Parties
Organisations that have access to funds generated from onsite gaming machines
Educational Institutions as defined in this policy (does not include Councillor Discretionary Fund, Regional Schools Bursary Fund and CQ University Scholarship Fund)
Local, State or Federal Government Agency (examples: air travel, hospitals, main roads, railways and public transport, public works, industrial relations, police, and prisons)
Organisations that have had an unsuccessful acquittal within the prior two (2) years, an overdue acquittal, or not acquitted funds by the approved due date for prior Gladstone Regional Council Community Investment Policy funding

Additional information on eligibility is contained in the Community Investment Program Funding Guideline

ATTACHMENT 2 – SUMMARY OF FUNDING ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

CATEGORY	DECISION MAKER	CO-CONTRIBUTION	ACQUITTAL REQUIRED
MICRO GRANTS FUND			
Micro Grants Fund	Officer	Not Required	Yes
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES FUND			
Connected Communities Fund	Expression of Interest ➡ Panel ➡ Interview/Presentation ➡ Council General Meeting	Minimum 30%	Yes
COMMUNITY EVENTS FUNDING STREAM			
Community Events Fund	Officer	Not Required	Yes
Ignite Events Fund	Officer	Minimum 30%	Yes
Impact, Destination, and Signature Events Fund	Expression of Interest ➡ Panel ➡ Council General Meeting	Minimum 30%	Yes
COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUNDING STREAM			
Community Hall Fund	Officer	Not required	No
Charity Waste Waiver	Officer	Not required	No
Waste Donation Fund	Officer	Not required	No
Public Toilet Subsidy	Officer	Not required	No
BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIPS FUNDING STREAM			
Regional Schools Bursary Fund	Officer	Not required	No
Col Brown Memorial Award	Officer	Not required	No
CQ University Scholarship	Officer	Not required	No
COUNCILLOR DISCRETIONARY FUND			
Councillor Discretionary Fund	Mayor ➡ Deputy Mayor and Chief Executive Officer Councillor ➡ Mayor and Chief Executive Officer	Not required	Yes ¹

¹ An acquittal is required where the funding received is more than \$1,500.