

GRANTS POLICY

	Grants Policy
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POLICY OWNER	Manager, Library & Community Services
ASSOCIATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES	• Strathfield Council Delivery Program 2025-2029 • Community Strategic Plan 2040 • Grant Standards NEW • Strathfield Council Code of Conduct
ASSOCIATED LEGISLATIONS	• Local Government Act 1993 (S.356 And S.377) • Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (S.217 (1)(a5)) • Registered Clubs Act 1976
REVIEW PERIOD	
This policy shall be reviewed and updated up to five (5) years or more often as necessary to ensure relevance.	

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1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes the framework and governance principals for the administration of Council's grant programs in support of Council's Community Strategic Plan. This policy is in place to ensure that the administration of grant programs follow best practice principles and in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

This policy should be read with reference to the Grant Standards 2026-2029. If new grants programs are established, operational standards must be developed in accordance with the principles established in this policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all grant-making activity made available by Strathfield Council, as per Section 356 of the *Local Government Act* and does not apply to of the regular procurement of goods, works and services.

The policy applies to all persons/organisations residing in the Strathfield Local Government Area or those that provide services directly benefiting residents of the Strathfield Local Government Area.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of the policy is to support the community of Strathfield providing financial assistance to individuals, community groups or non-profit organisations which:

- a) Encourage the development of services, facilities and events, which meet and enhance identified community needs and objectives of the Strathfield Municipality.
- b) Promote the active participation of residents in community initiatives and the development of their skills, knowledge and opportunities.
- c) Ensure equitable access to funding, including for under-served groups.
- d) Provide assistance to the community to develop initiatives and services, which are consistent with Council objectives and programs but not directly operated by Council.
- e) Ensure the focus of services is to bring people into a network of supportive relationships.
- f) Provide assistance to individuals or groups representing NSW or higher in their chosen field, including sporting, academic, cultural and artistic endeavours who require financial assistance to attend/compete in their chosen field.
- g) Outline best practice principles in administration of Strathfield Council's grant programs.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles	Responsibilities
Applicants	Must comply with all program guidelines and funding agreement requirements.
Assessment Panel	Assesses applications and provides recommendations in accordance with criteria.
Council	Approves grant programs and funding allocations (unless delegated).
Council Officers	Administer programs and support assessment processes.
Director	Provides oversight and ensures compliance with policy and code of conduct.
Finance	Processes payments and ensures financial compliance.

5. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Applicants	Persons/Community organisations/Organisations who apply for grants
Acquittal	An acquittal report is used to show how grant funds have been spent and that it is in line with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. An acquittal report usually consists of a written report that summarises how the project fared against the initial objectives of the grant. It also provides a financial statement detailing how the funds were spent.
Assessment Panel	Council officers that come together to form a panel that assesses eligible applications based on the criteria advertised through the Grant Standards. Provide a recommendation to Council to award funding, based on scoring and available funds.
Auspice	An arrangement where one incorporated community organisation ('the Auspice Body') agrees to apply for funding on behalf of a second organisation or individual that is, most often, not incorporated ('the Auspiced Party').
Community Organisation	All voluntary community groups, service organisations, community services, sporting groups, arts organisations, heritage societies and other organisations that come under the definition of "not-for-profit". Social enterprises that are auspiced by a not-for-profit organisation or that have a clear governance structure that precludes profits being disbursed to individuals are eligible under this sub-section.
Conflict of interest	A conflict of interest is where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that a person involved in the grant process may be influenced by a private interest when carrying out their public duty.
Financial assistance	Involves allocation or donation of Council funds, facilities or services to individuals or community groups or non-profit organisations for the purpose of enhancing or improving community services or facilities.
Funding Agreement	An agreement that states the purpose of the funding, the dollar amount and the conditions attached to the grant. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of the agreement. Once signed, organisations are under a legal obligation to comply with the stated terms and conditions.

Term	Definition
Funding round	A determined period of time that a grant program is open for applications as determined in the Grants and Financial Assistance Standards.
Grants	Cash or value-in-kind support given to applicants for a specified purpose directed at achieving policy outcomes. Funds assist with the services or projects proposed by applicants and Council receives acknowledgement as the grant giver.
Grants Program	Are defined by Council through the Grants and Financial Assistance Standards to meet objectives that align with the Community Strategic Plan and are of benefit to the Strathfield community.
In-kind support	Non-cash contributions provided by Council or applicants, such as use of facilities staff time or equipment.
Incorporated organisation	A legal entity separate from its individual members that has been incorporated under Australian State or Territory law.
Insurance	A framework under which the insurer indemnifies (accepts the risk) on behalf of the insured (person or group or people) for loss or damage caused. Insurance protects a community organisation against its legal liability to pay damages. The most commonly required insurance is Third Party Insurance which covers an organisation for the potential costs associated with: a. compensation to third parties (for example, members of the public) for bodily injury; and/or b. property damage that may occur as a result of the community organisation's activities; and c. the legal costs that a community organisation may have if it needs to defend bodily injury and property damage claims made against it.
Not-for-profit organisation	An organisation which is not operating for the profit or gain of its individual members whether these gains would have been direct or indirect. A not-for-profit organisation can still make a profit, but this profit must be used to carry out the purposes of the organisation and must not be distributed to owners, members or other private individuals.
Residents	Individuals who have an address located in the boundaries of the Strathfield Local Government Area.
Social enterprise	A 'social business' that has the following characteristics: a. Social, environmental or cultural mission/objectives core to its purpose and focus. b. Limited distribution of profits –profits are reinvested in the enterprise and/or an associated social entity and not disbursed to individual shareholders. c. Mixture of capital inputs – the enterprise is supported through a mixture of grant income/subsidised income and trading income but must trade. d. Generation of social return in addition to a financial return, and a commitment to demonstrating this. e. Favours democratic decision-making structures and seeks high levels of accountability to their stakeholders, rather than just to shareholders.
Sponsorship	Involves a commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides a contribution in money or kind to support an activity in return for a certain specified benefit, beyond recognition or acknowledgment.

6. POLICY APPLICATION

6.1 Decision Making Authority

Council retains overall authority for grant program funding allocation. Operational decisions, including assessments and allocations within approved programs, may be delegated in accordance with Council's adopted delegations under the Local Government Act 1993.

6.2 Principles

- a) Each program sets out an application process to best achieve its objectives. This application process will be:
 - i. Open for publicly advertised dates
 - ii. Provide objectives and assessment criteria
 - iii. Online via Council's website
 - iv. Assessed by a panel including Council Officers or invited external experts.
- b) All individuals involved in assessment and decision making must declare any conflicts of interest and meet the requirements of Council's Code of Conduct.
- c) Conflicts of interest that are identified by individuals involved in assessment and decision making will be reported to and assessed by the Director of Corporate and Community, who will determine appropriate management and mitigations, including exclusion from the panel.
- d) Grant program assessment panel members are determined by the Director of Corporate and Community. These will consist of Council staff, not Councillors. External panel members may be appointed at the discretion of the Director of Corporate and Community.
- e) Council seeks to meet the needs of the community and maximise outcomes for the local area. Projects that represent good value for the level of funding requested and expected outcomes are supported.
- f) Funding shall not be awarded retrospectively.
- g) Funding shall not be awarded if grant payment date is after the applicant's event date/s.
- h) Council reserves the right to amend, suspend or alter a grant program at any time
- i) Council does not grant funds to applicants that fail to meet designated eligibility criteria. Grants must not be contributing to a fundraising objective of an applicant but must be made to program or project costs that can be assessed for on value for money and effectiveness against other applications.
- j) Unsolicited requests for financial support or donations will be directed to the quarterly Small Grants Fund and must meet requirements for that program to be considered for funding.
- k) All recipients must enter into a funding agreement and meet all requirements of reporting and acquittal.

- l) Applications for funding must be expended within the same financial year that the funds were granted.
- m) Unsolicited or non-program-based requests for funding will not be considered outside established grant programs.
- n) Events that are supported through the awarding of grant funding from Council must be held in the Strathfield LGA and is open to all residents to attend.

6.3 Eligibility

Each grant program will be subject to the below eligibility. Each program may include additional eligibility criteria in the Grant Standards of said program, and therefore should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The following individuals or groups are eligible to apply:

- a) Residents of the Strathfield Local Government Area
- b) Community Organisations that are located in or provide services to the Strathfield Local Government Area
- c) Unincorporated community groups when sponsored when auspiced by a local not for profit, Parents and Carers or Parents and Friends Associations.

The following are not eligible:

- a) Applicants that have;
 - i. outstanding or non-acquitted grants
 - ii. received a grant in the current financial year
 - iii. previously been awarded grants for the same project or purpose (this does not apply to annual events)
- b) Commercial or profit-driven entities, including Registered Clubs under the *Registered Clubs Act 1976*
- c) State or Federal Government departments, agencies or organisations, including schools, colleges, TAFE and universities.
- d) Political Parties
- e) Individuals or organisations who do not reside in the Strathfield LGA or provide services to the residents of the Strathfield LGA.

Each Resident, Community Organisation or Auspiced group can apply for one grant across all grant programs each financial year.

6.4 Auspice

Any auspice arrangement is to be administered through a partnership agreement that accompanies a grant application. If the grant application is successful, the Auspice Body then receives, holds and administers the funding to the Auspiced Party, so that the Auspiced Party can complete the funded project or activities.

All grant funding must be spent on the agreed project and not be used to cover costs for the Auspice Body. The Auspice Body works with the Auspiced Party to ensure all reporting requirements are met, assisting the Auspiced Party to further develop project management knowledge and skills with a view to the Auspice Party becoming independent (as appropriate) of the Auspice Body.

6.5 Assessment, Approval and Acquittals

The following principles apply to grant assessment, approvals and acquittals:

- a) All requests for grants and acquittals must be completed on Council's standard and online forms
- b) Applications must meet eligibility requirements and provide complete information
- c) Council may request additional information where required
- d) Council reserves the right to refuse requests or applications that are non-conforming, eligible for alternative Council grant programs or where there is no available budget
- e) Assessment of applications will consider alignment with stated Council's Community Strategic Plan objectives, available budget, eligibility criteria and compliance with this policy's requirements
- f) Following completion of the activity or event, applicants shall provide written confirmation in the form of an acquittal that the grant was used for the purposes it was awarded, noting;
 - i. Acquittals must be completed on Council's standard and online forms
 - ii. The acquittal will include providing photos, collateral and a brief description of outcomes
 - iii. Annual grants must be completed and acquitted by 31 July of the next financial year
 - iv. Quarterly grants must be completed and acquitted within 3 months after the event date or completion of project
 - v. Expenditure must be clearly shown through proof of transactions for the purposes outlined in the grant application
 - vi. Non-acquittal will result in any future applications being disqualified and not accepted.
- g) Decisions to approve and allocate grant funding under these grant programs are made by Council resolution on recommendation from grant program assessment panels.
- h) Acknowledgment of Council is required via
 - i. Inclusion of Council logo on printed promotional material
 - ii. inclusion of Council logo and statement "Proudly Supported by"
 - iii. Verbal acknowledgement during any formal proceedings.
- i) At the completion of a successful recipients initiative they may be requested to present outcomes and share their stories.

6.6 Accountability

Any variation to the expenditure of an awarded grant from stated objectives requires a written approval.

Funds that are distributed by Council under this policy are subject to the reporting requirements from Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 s217 (1)(a5) and are to be included in Strathfield Council's Annual Report each year.