



COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY

Policy 3/2021-2024

DATE

- Ordinary Meeting of Council 01.06.93;
- Extraordinary Meeting of Council 06.05.97;
- Corporate Development Committee Meeting 17.03.98 and 15.02.2000
- Ordinary Meeting of Council 12.09.2000, 10.07.2001, 09.07.2002, 08.07.2003, 13.07.2004, 12.10.04, 12.02.2008, 14.07.2009, 22.08.2018, 27.11.2018, 11.05.2021 and 07.02.2023

POLICY NO:	3/2021-2024
LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS	Section 356 Local Government Act 1993
RESPONSIBILITY:	CUSTOMER COMMUNITY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY
OBJECTIVE:	To provide Council with a framework for determining and allocating Council grants for the benefit of The Hills Shire community.
REVIEW	Within the first 12 months of each term of Council or as required.

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1. Desired Outcomes of the Policy

- The purpose of this policy is to enable Council to provide financial assistance for activities that increase community service outcomes and community participation activities for residents.
- Effective and efficient use of public resources allocated for assisting community groups and not-for-profit organisations to provide events, services, and activities for the benefit of The Hills Shire.
- An equitable, transparent process for determining and allocating Council's grants with appropriate accountabilities for grant recipients.
- Greater community participation, social inclusion, cohesion and engagement and improved quality of life for the community of The Hills Shire.

2. Policy Statement

This policy provides a framework to manage grant requests. It sets the parameters of support and highlights expected outcomes for each grant program.

Council will adopt an equitable and transparent process for allocation and management of all grants with appropriate accountabilities for recipients.

Council provides all financial assistance under Section 356 of the Local Government Act.

In accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act:

- (1) A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
- (2) A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.
- (3) However, public notice is not required if-
 - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.
- (4) Public notice is not required if the financial assistance is part of a program of graffiti removal work.

This policy framework has been developed to allow Council to normally consider not-for-profit grant requests from community groups by way of an annual Community Grants round each financial year. It is expected that most applications each financial year will be managed this way.

Council will not provide in-kind services such as waste removal, site set up, or equipment. Organisations must include these activities as part of their budget expenses and can be applied for as part of the grant.

Council receives requests for financial assistance at other times from persons, community groups and private gain entities, and this policy provides a mechanism for Council to consider these on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants are eligible for one grant per financial year excluding auspice arrangements.

Funding must be linked to a specific and defined activity or project. All funding recipients must enter into a funding agreement and meet all requirements of reporting and acquittal. Funding allocations will be contingent on the availability of funds.

Grants will be in three categories:

2.1 Minor Community Grant

Council will consider one small grant application per financial year up to \$2,500 from not-for-profit and incorporated organisations that are delivering community services, organising small events, or cultural activities for residents.

Council will consider applications for financial assistance up to a maximum of \$500 per person per financial year from individuals for their participation in state, national or international sporting, artistic, education and musical performance competitions.

The minor grant applications may be made throughout the year and will be assessed on a regular basis with approval delegated to the Mayor and General Manager.

2.2 Annual Community Grant

Council will provide financial assistance to local not-for-profit, incorporated, and/or registered charitable organisations delivering services to, or providing activities for, residents of The Hills Shire, through its Community Grants Program.

Subject to conditions, dollar for dollar grants between \$2,501 and \$25,000 will be available to:

- a) encourage community groups to develop projects, events or activities that encourage community participation, social inclusion, and community engagement.
- b) enable delivery of creative, artistic, and cultural projects that enrich the community.
- c) encourage community groups to develop and implement activities and projects that occur in the Hills LGA that address social needs.
- d) build community partnerships to improve access to community services or skills for residents of the Hills Shire.
- e) provide operational and/or equipment for local organisations and sporting groups to increase their community services beyond their current capability.

The Community Grants round under this category is reserved for community groups. It is a competitive process and information sessions to assist applicants are held prior to the closing date. The grant round is broadly focused on providing grants for community services in four main priority areas:

1. Events, concerts, theatre, and arts programs designed to engage key community members that entertain the broader community
2. Domestic violence prevention and recovery.
3. Mental health and suicide prevention.
4. Disability, youth, seniors and cultural projects that support community participation opportunities.

Proposed grants will be assessed by a panel determined by the Mayor or General Manager, chaired by either the Mayor or delegate, minimum of three Councillors and an external

member such as an audit and risk committee member, followed by a report to Council for endorsement.

Individual scoring for both the annual community grants round and other financial assistance requests is to be conducted by the assessment panel members online and in advance of the formal panel meeting.

2.3 Other Financial Assistance Grant

Council receives requests for financial assistance on an ad-hoc basis and these can be considered under Section 356 of the Local Government Act.

Other Financial Assistance Grants are assessed quarterly by a panel determined by the Mayor or General Manager, chaired by either the Mayor or delegate, minimum of three Councillors and an external member such as the audit and risk committee, followed by a report to Council for endorsement.

Individual scoring for both the annual community grants round and other financial assistance requests is to be conducted by the assessment panel members online and in advance of the formal panel meeting.

Individuals, not-for-profit community organisations and commercial/private organisations can apply under this category for dollar-for-dollar match funding amounts in accordance with the requirements of Section 356 and may require being placed on public exhibition for 28 days following Council endorsement.

Not-for-profit organisations will need to provide explanation why application is being made through this program and not the Community Grants program.

3. Types of activities that can be funded

What types of projects, events and activities may be funded?

- Projects and programs for the community, heritage projects, events, declared natural disaster recovery activity, or charity fundraising —with matching dollar-for-dollar and meet the eligibility criteria. Other projects and activities may also be funded at the sole discretion of Council.
- Not for profit organisations who are charity fundraising will need to clearly articulate how the funds will be used for a program or project cost that can be assessed against the outcomes, not generally contributing to the fundraising objective of the applicant or for administration costs.

The following types of projects are not eligible:

- Illegal or immoral activities and political projects as well as projects that duplicate existing programs are unable to apply. Projects that should be funded as a core responsibility from other sources such as State or Federal Government are not eligible.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible to apply:

Minor Grants

- Individuals, incorporated and not-for-profit organisations based in The Hills LGA.

Community Grants

- Recognised legal or corporate entity such as a charity, not-for-profit, or community-based organisation that provides community services and programs where the activity must be carried out within The Hills LGA.

Other Financial Assistance

- Individuals, not-for-profit organisations, and commercial/for profit organisations based in The Hills LGA.
- Individuals who are Hills LGA residents, organisations who are disaster fundraising, and private gain commercial organisations can only apply for funds over \$2,501 under the Other Financial Assistance Grant (category 2.3) in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act. Community groups can apply for ad-hoc grants under this category.

Ineligible to apply:

- Applicants who have already received a grant in the same financial year, excluding auspice arrangements.
- Projects that do not benefit residents of the Hills LGA.
- Organisations or individuals with outstanding completion reports or acquittals from previous funding.
- State and Federal Government agencies and their entities (including NSW Government schools, Area Health Services and public hospitals).
- Councillors, staff and their immediate family,
- Individuals who are not residents of the Hills LGA.

5. Assessment Criteria

Council administers grants as the custodian of public funds and needs to know that recipients can manage funds and provide financial accountability.

At the time of lodgement for all requests. Council staff will initially assess the applications and contact non-compliant or incomplete applicants who will be allocated additional time to resubmit their completed applications. Incomplete applications will not proceed for assessment.

Assessment Criteria – all funding:

- Applications must be made online and meet the applicable eligibility criteria
- All relevant sections of the Application Form are to be completed and all supporting documents must be uploaded.
- All relevant supporting documentation in the relevant application must be attached to the submission including:
 - Applicants organisation or auspicing organisation's ABN (if applicable)
 - Current Public Liability Insurance for a minimum of \$20million is required for all organisations applying for funding (mandatory). If an individual is seeking funding, current Public Liability Insurance may be required for the event or activity that the funding is sought for and this will become a condition of funding.
 - A list of all members involved in the organising committee (mandatory)
 - Individual conflict of interest disclosure form for all the project organising committee members (mandatory)

- For funding requests between \$7,501 and \$25,000, applicants are required to provide financial statements including profit and loss statements and balance sheets covering 24 months and certified by an accredited independent accountant or auditor. If your organisation has been registered for less than 24 months, Council requires a current profit and loss and balance sheet prepared by a certified by an accredited independent accountant dated within the last 3 months.
- All applications must include the following:
 - Comments on the project or activities viability should Council not provide 100% of the financial assistance requested
 - Expected project dates, project milestones including acquittal and completion reporting dates.
- If fundraising, the following must be included with the application:
 - Amount expected to raise.
 - Articulate how the funds raised will be used.
 - Charity status of the organisation documentation.
 - Supporting letter from the charity the fundraising is for if another entity.

Additional Assessment Criteria for categories 2.2 and 2.3

Grants will be assessed on the following criteria.

1. Project details – What is the project about? Is the description well-articulated and reflects community service focus areas? Is the budget well thought out and deliverable?
2. Project innovation – Is this project a new idea, innovative and original and not already funded by Council, being facilitated by another local organisation or other levels of Government? Why should Council support it?
3. Project Reach – Who will benefit from this project/event? How many residents of The Hills will it impact? Has evidence or research been provided on proposed numbers?
4. Organisational Capability – Can the applicants demonstrate their operational capability and skills of key personal to deliver ongoing benefits of the project or event (especially if a recent start-up)? Are they able to provide evidence of similar successful projects?
5. Social and Participant Impact – Is it clear how the project grant will grow social outcomes or event opportunities (not just replace previous grants from Council, current expenditure or income from other sources)? Can new community outcomes be clearly articulated and the specific public good that recipients will receive be demonstrated?

Scoring matrix categories 2.2 and 2.3

Applicant response to each scoring criteria is given a score between 1 and 5, and the total scored responses will be a score out of 25.

Score	Descriptor
5	Excellent – New initiative or idea, never been funded, lots of detail, well written, well-articulated, evidence provided, is comprehensive.
4	Very good – good level of detail and description, evidence noted, all details in application addressed.
3	Average – Brief event or project description, evidence provided is average.
2	Limited – limited in detail or evidence so as the panel is not clear about the project outcomes or financial details of the project.
1	Poor – Detail about the project is poor, no evidence to support claims or need for the project, budget is not clear how funds will be spent, answers provided are vague.

6. Budget requirement for categories 2.2 and 2.3

- Grants cannot be used for normal ongoing organisational expenditure and/or equipment that would normally be funded by the operations of the organisation on an ongoing basis.
- Detailed individual line items of expenditure and revenue and the total budget cost for the project including details of matching dollars must be provided. Applications with single items of expenditure of \$2,000 or more must include 2x quotes.
- In-kind' resources are not ordinarily considered part of the formal matching budget and an explanation of any is to be articulated in the supporting documentation. An exception to this requirement may be granted if a community group can provide an adequate explanation to the assessment panel of why this is not achievable.
- For transparency reasons, a statement will need to be provided if the applicant intends to remunerate any of the organising committee with the name of the person and amount included as a line item in the budget.
- The applicants funding sources for the project indicated in the budget must be equal or greater than Council's grant allocation for the project and those that can demonstrate greater contributions than Council funding, from a range of various organisations, will be viewed favourably.
- Applicants applying for grants elsewhere for their project will need to demonstrate why Council should support the project.
- If organisations receive discounted or free venue hire through the Fees and Charges as part of the project, then the awarded value of the grant will automatically reduce by the full value of the benefit received.
- Council's financial assistance for the project will be detailed in the Agreement and can only be used for the stated purpose and unless agreed by Council, grants must be returned for projects that fail to commence within agreed timeframes. Grants not fully expended to the deliver the project must also be returned.

7. Acquittal

All grants require a completion report within 60 days at the end of the project. For Grants amounts over \$7,501 the report must include a financial acquittal with all revenue and expenditure confirmed by accredited independent accountant or auditor.

Enquiries

Community & Events Team

Email: grants@thehills.nsw.gov.au