



# COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DONATIONS POLICY

## Policy 3/2017-2021

### 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 and 11 May 2021

<b>POLICY NO:</b>	3/2017-2021
<b>LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS</b>	Section 356 Local Government Act 1993
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	CUSTOMER COMMUNITY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	To provide Council with a framework for determining and allocating Council grants and donations for the benefit of The Hills Shire community.
<b>REVIEW</b>	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 and donations 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 grants and donation requests. It sets the parameters of support and highlights expected outcomes for each grant program. Details on program eligibility, processes, and assessment criteria can be found in the Community Grants and Donations Program Guidelines.

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 the majority of applications each financial year will be managed this way.

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.

### **Financial Assistance**

Grants will be in two categories:

## **2.1 Annual Community Grant Round**

*Council will provide financial assistance to local not-for-profit, incorporated and registered charitable organisations delivering services to, or providing activities for, residents of The Hills Shire, through its annual Community Grants Program. Subject to conditions, dollar for dollar grants of up to \$15,000 will be available annually 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 annual Community Grants round under this policy is reserved for community groups. It is a competitive process and information sessions to assist applicants are held prior to the closing date. The annual grant round is broadly focused on providing grants for community services in four main priority areas:

1. Events that connect the community;
2. Domestic violence prevention and recovery;
3. Mental health and suicide prevention; and
4. Community participation opportunities.

Guidelines for applicants will be publicised on Council's website.

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

Proposed grants will be assessed by a panel, either chaired by the Mayor or delegate, minimum of three Councillors and an audit and risk committee external member and then report to Council.

## **2.2 Other Financial Assistance Grants**

Council receives requests for financial assistance for events or activities that occur in The Hills LGA on an ad-hoc basis and these can be considered under Section 356 of the Local Government Act. These applications are considered by the assessment panel using similar criteria as the annual Community Grants round and reported to Council.

While Not-for-profit applicants can apply under this category, the expectation is that they would normally apply during the Annual Community Grant Round. They will need to demonstrate why they did not or could not wait to apply through the annual grants program.

Individuals and for profit, commercial organisations can only apply under this category in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act and are not eligible to apply under the annual Community Grants round.

While these grants are not limited to the specific financial limits of the annual Community Grants round, the expectation is that there will be significant other grants and partners for

the project. If recommended for approval, the grants will be placed on exhibition for 28 days if required by Section 356 of the Local Government Act.

### **General Conditions for Annual Community Grants and Other Financial Assistance**

1. The annual Community Grants round is reserved for community groups and will be advertised at the same time every year.
2. The budget allocation for grants and donations is available for both grant categories based on merit at the sole discretion of Council throughout the year. If there is insufficient merit-based applications then the full Council budget may not be allocated.
3. Council will adopt an equitable and transparent process for allocation and management of all grants with appropriate accountabilities for grant recipients.
4. Proposed grants will be assessed by a committee, either chaired by the Mayor or delegate, plus a minimum of three Councillors and an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee followed by a report to Council.
5. At the time of lodgement for all requests, Council staff will initially assess non-compliant or incomplete applications, excluding them from proceeding to the assessment panel.
6. All applicants and office holders will be required to submit completed conflict of interest returns with their online application by the closing date.
7. 'In-kind' resources are not considered part of the formal budget and an explanation of any is to be articulated in the supporting documentation.
8. Each applicant must provide an assessment of whether the project could proceed with reduced Council Grant assistance.
9. A minimum 50% assessment scores for the criteria for any grants to be considered for approval.
10. 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.
11. The proposed activity must be held in The Hills Shire Council area and statistics on the percentage of Hills residents who participated or attended in the activity must be provided in the completion report.
12. 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.
13. Grant expenses and/or equipment must for the benefit of the intended recipients of the activity and not just the applicant, and this will need to be clearly articulated in the budget application for Council.
14. The intention of the Council grant is to deliver increased community service outcomes for the recipients, and that all expenditure must be related to the activity impacting the recipients.
15. 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.
16. There is an expectation that community groups would canvass opportunities for sponsorships and/or pro-bono assistance from the community for items such workshop food, audits, and event collateral or guest speaker fees in the first instance as part of their partnerships.
17. Applicants applying for grants elsewhere for their project will need to demonstrate why Council should support the project.
18. Council's financial assistance for the project will be detailed in the Community Grant agreement and can only be used for the stated purpose.
19. Unless agreed by Council, grants must be returned for projects that fail to commence within agreed timeframes.

20. All grants require a completion report within 60 days at the end of the project.
21. Grants in excess of \$5,000 must be acquitted with a profit and loss statement signed by a Chartered Accountant (CA) or Certified Practising Accountant (CPA). Unspent grants cannot be transferred to another project and must be returned to Council.
22. As part of the completion report, at the discretion of the Council, grant recipients may be required to provide a short presentation to Councillors on the financial and community outcomes achieved by the grant allocation.

### **3. Donations**

Council will consider applications from individuals, not-for-profit and incorporated organisations that are delivering community services, or organising local sporting or cultural activities in The Hills LGA. Sporting clubs or associations may apply on behalf of individuals who are competing outside of Sydney or internationally.

Sporting, Cultural and Community Services Donations will be one-off per applicant each financial year and will be considered on a case by case basis, based on demonstrated financial need and hardship as part of the application process.

Applications for donations may be made throughout the year and will be processed on a regular basis. Applicants will be notified of the outcome.

### **4. Associated Documents**

- The Hills Shire Council's Guidelines for Community Grants Program
- The Hills Shire Council's Guidelines for Community Donations Program

### **5. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - The Hills Shire Council's Guidelines for Community Grants Program

Appendix 2 - The Hills Shire Council's Guidelines for Community Donations Program

#### **Enquiries**

Community Outcomes Team

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