



COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Background

The Hills Shire Council's Community Grants Program provides grants each year for innovative community projects and events that deliver sustainable and positive outcomes consistent with Council's vision for the community as listed in the Hills Shire Plan and the priority areas listed on Council's website.

These guidelines set out what you need to know about timing, eligibility and the process of applying for a grant. Financial assistance is generally available under the annual Community Grants round or at other times on a case by case basis as 'Other Financial Assistance' grants.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Community Grants and Donations Policy - **General Conditions for Annual Community Grants and Other Financial Assistance**.

Council provides all financial assistance under Section 356 of the Local Government Act as outlined in the Community Grants and Donations Policy. Applicants are only eligible for one grant per financial year.

Annual Community Grants Round

The annual Community Grants Program is focused on providing cultural and community service grants for not-for-profit groups between \$1,000 and \$15,000 and will be conducted in the second quarter each financial year.

There are two categories under the annual Community Grant round:

Cultural grants

- a) to support projects, events or activities that encourage community participation, social inclusion and community engagement within The Hills Shire.
- b) to enable delivery of creative, artistic and cultural projects that enrich the community.

Community Services Grants

- a) to encourage community groups to develop and implement programs or projects that address the social needs of residents within the Hills Shire.
- b) to build community partnerships to improve access to community services or skills for residents of the Hills Shire.
- c) to provide operational and/or equipment for local organisations and sporting groups to increase their services beyond their current capability.

The focus areas must align with the following priority areas:

- Events that connect the community;
- Domestic violence prevention and recovery;
- Mental health and suicide prevention; and
- Community participation opportunities.

Other Financial Grant Assistance

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

Council can in accordance with a resolution of Council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons, community groups and private gain entities for the purpose of exercising its functions including but not limited to examples such large scale events or celebrations, disaster fundraising, equipment and local community group infrastructure.

While these grants are not limited to the specific financial limits of the annual Community Grant round, the expectation is that there will be matched funds and partners for the project.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible to apply:

- Applicants for the annual Community Grant round must be a recognised legal or corporate entity such as a charity, not-for-profit, deductible gift recipient, non-government, or community-based organisation that provides community services and programs where the activity must be carried out within The Hills LGA
- Individuals who are Hills LGA residents, organisations who are disaster fundraising, and private gain commercial organisations can only apply under the Other Financial Assistance Grant Category in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act. Community groups can apply for ad-hoc grants under this category.

Ineligible to apply:

- Projects that are not located or held in 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). However, these organisations should consider whether they have an incorporated not-for-profit body (such as a P&C Association or hospital auxiliary) that may be eligible to apply for grants not involving school or government infrastructure.
- Councillors, staff and their immediate family, individuals who are not residents of The Hills LGA. Any conflict of interest may exclude the application from proceeding at Council's sole discretion.

Types of activities that can be funded

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

- Community projects, disaster fundraising, and/or events with matching dollar-for-dollar that align with community target areas listed within the annual Operations Plan and meet the eligibility criteria with at least a 50% score.

- Grant funds for expenses and/or equipment must be for the benefit of the intended recipients of the activity and this will need to be clearly articulated in the budget application for Council to assess. The intention of the Council funding is to deliver increased community outcomes for the recipients and should not be used for items such as food, event collateral or speaker fees without demonstration that local pro bono experts have been canvassed. This will need to be clearly articulated in the application.
- Organisations who are disaster or charity fundraising will need to clearly articulate how the funds will be used for the benefit of the end recipient not just administration or other expenses.

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.

Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria:

- The activity or event must be held within The Hills LGA.
- Applications must be made online, meet the applicable eligibility criteria, including agreement with the general conditions for annual Community Grants and Other Financial Assistance outlined in the Community Grants and Donations Policy.
- All relevant sections of the Community Grants Application Form are to be completed and all supporting documents must be uploaded by the closing date to be eligible to be considered by the assessment panel.
- All relevant supporting documentation must be attached to the application including:
 - Legal registration documents for a community organisation or company (mandatory).
 - Current Public liability and Personal Accident Insurance is required and/or Workers Compensation Insurance policy (if applicable)
 - Annual report for the organisation (if applicable)
 - Audited Financial statement completed by a Chartered Accountant (CA) or Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) for the organisations previous year financials (if available)
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure form for all applicants, board or committee members (mandatory).
 - Organisations with office holders, board or committee members must lodge their biographies and contact information with the application (mandatory).
- Applications including single items of expenditure of \$1,000 or more must include two quotes. A statement will need to be provided if unable to supply.
- Applications from community groups in the annual Community Grant round must be consistent with priority areas listed on Council's website.
- All applications must include the following:
 - Project name and description.
 - Comments on the viability of their project and impact on partnerships if Council does not provide 100% of the assistance requested.
 - Total budget cost of project including details of matching dollars.
 - Expected project dates, project milestones including acquittal and completion reporting dates.
 - Project location and evidence of how the project is supporting community service outcomes for Hills Shire residents.

- Organisations ABN details or auspicing organisation's details.
- If fundraising for another charity, 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.

Assessment

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 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? Can evidence or research be 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, current expenditure or income from other sources)? Can increased community outcomes be clearly articulated and the specific public good that recipients will receive be demonstrated?

Acquittal

All grants require a completion report within 60 days at the end of the project.

Major Grants are for amounts over \$5,000 and require a financial acquittal with all revenue and expenditure confirmed by a Chartered Accountant (CA) or Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA).

Minor Grants are for amounts from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and require a completion report.

Scoring matrix

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 – 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.

Enquiries

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