

RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL POLICY REGISTER

Policy No: 1.4.5

Reference: Grants and Subsidies - Advertisements, Applications, Evaluation, Policy

POLICY:	GUIDELINES FOR SECTION 356 (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
FUNCTION:	Finance
OBJECTIVE:	To allocate financial assistance funds in an equitable and appropriate manner.
DIRECTORATE:	CORPORATE SERVICES

POLICY

Overall Aims

1. To acknowledge and support cultural development in the community.
2. To consult with the community on a regular basis to determine the growing and changing needs of the community.
3. To link financial assistance to Council's Management Plan and Section 94 Plans for the area and other Policies, where appropriate.

Introduction

During the management planning process each year Council allocates funds for Section 356 Financial Assistance. To optimise the benefit of these funds in the community, funds are allocated in accordance with the strategies, eligibility and selection criteria outlined in this Policy.

Strategies

Each year Council will allocate an amount in its annual budget for Section 356 Financial Assistance.

In August/September each year Council will advertise and call for applications from individuals/groups/organisations for financial assistance from Council in accordance with the requirements of Section 356 of the Local Government Act. The advertisement will advise the deadline for applications, which will be no less than 28 days from the first date of publication.

All applicants will be made aware that there are limited funds available as determined in Council's Management Plan.

All applicants will be required to complete an application in the approved form, which will include a brief description of the organisation, the organisation's viability, the purpose of the funding request and the need to be accountable for any funds provided.

The above process will occur only once in each financial year and allocation of funds is at Council's discretion. The funds allocated as part of this process will be 80% of the total allocation for the respective year.

Councillors will receive copies of each application prior to the Meeting at which the annual allocation of Section 356 Financial Assistance is considered

Council staff will be available to facilitate the decision making process.

Councillors are encouraged to contact co-ordinating staff to discuss applications and/or merit of the various proposals.

Each Councillor is to rank applications which they consider deserve funding in order of merit, and indicate the amount of financial assistance they consider should be allocated to each application. Councillors may indicate that particular applicants should receive an amount of funding from 100% of the amount requested, to nil based on their assessment of the application, in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the selection criteria outlined in this Policy.

Staff will then collate the results, average the rankings and recommended allocations, and prepare a report to Council advising of the collective recommendations. Applications will be funded in accordance with the collective recommendations of Councillors, and the funds allocated from the top of the order of merit/ranking downwards, until the budget allocation is fully committed.

The Section 356 Financial Assistance allocations are to be approved by resolution of Council.

Funds are to be made available to groups as soon as practicable after the resolution has been made.

Eligibility

Financial Assistance is available to non-profit organisations which provide a community service or the like within the Council area; that service should assist Council in exercising its functions.

Financial assistance will only be provided to applicants who act for private gain, in exceptional circumstances, and then only strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Act, including 28 days public notice.

Recurrent budgets and salaries will not be funded.

Groups already receiving financial assistance through Council's Management Plan are not eligible for assistance under this process.

Assistance with funding for events is subject to another process; accordingly, funding relating to the conduct of events will only be funded under Section 356 contributions if they are one off community based events that provide a social benefit to the community.

Groups who receive funding will be required to show proof of expenditure for the purpose nominated within 12 months by completing the Evaluation of Grant and Financial Report form. Groups who fail to comply will not be considered for further funding.

Selection Criteria

In ranking applications and making recommendations of the amount of financial assistance that should be allocated to applications, Council should:

- Consider how each project will assist Council exercise its functions.
- Consider the impact each project will have on the community or on disadvantaged groups within the community.
- Consider the number of potential beneficiaries from the proposed project or service.
- Where the project has a smaller number of potential beneficiaries from the proposed project or service, consider the relative disadvantage of that group of people (e.g. low income, youth, Aboriginality, rural or social isolation, disability, etc.).
- Consider the availability of other funding sources.
- Consider resources/projects availability to the general community.
- Consider the equity of support to groups across the area.
- Consider whether or not the applicant has received Section 356 Financial Assistance in previous years.
- Include consideration of whether requirements for previous funding have been met.

Process for the Balance of Funding (20%)

Throughout the respective financial year applications for Development Application Fees for Charitable Organisations will be dealt with and allocated in accordance with the Council Policy for that process.

The remaining balance of the Section 356 allocation each year will be subject of a further report to Council in May/June of the respective financial year.

That report will advise of additional one off applications/instances that could be considered for funding. In that regard applications that should have been part of the annual August/September round will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Procedures

The General Manager will ensure that staff develop, maintain and comply with procedures supporting implementation of this Policy.

VARIATION

Council reserves the right to review, vary and/or revoke this Policy from time to time.