



Council Policy

Policy Title:	Community Financial Assistance Program
Policy Number:	1.2
Focus Area:	Governance and Process
Responsibility:	Governance and Corporate Risk
Meeting Adopted:	17 July 2018 - 170718/6

OBJECTIVE

To allocate financial assistance funds to community groups in an equitable and appropriate manner and to assist Council in exercising its functions.

POLICY

Overall Aims

1. To acknowledge and support community groups within the Richmond Valley Local Government Area (LGA).
2. To consult with the community on a regular basis to determine the growing and changing needs of the community.
3. To comply with S356 of the Local Government Act in maintaining a consistent, open and equitable approach to the provision of financial assistance by Council to applicants in the Richmond Valley community.
4. To link financial assistance to Council's Community Strategic Plan through its Delivery Program and Operational Plans.

Introduction

During the annual budget review each year Council allocates funds for Community Financial Assistance. To optimise the benefit of these funds in the community, funds are allocated in accordance with the process, eligibility and selection criteria outlined in this Policy.

Funding Process

Each year Council will allocate an amount in its annual budget for Community Financial Assistance. Council will advertise and call for applications from community groups for financial assistance from \$100 up to \$5000 on a bi-annual basis.

Ordinarily, applications will be advertised twice yearly, calling for applications to be submitted in March and September, with those applications then decided by Council in May and November. 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 budget.

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

Applications will be assessed based on each applicant's eligibility, including how well they have addressed the selection criteria, the application's overall merit and the amount of financial assistance requested. An assessment panel composed at the General Manager's discretion will review applications and make recommendations for partial funding, full funding or no funding.

A summary of applications along with funding recommendations will be presented to Councillors at a workshop and Councillors' comments and recommendations noted.

Based on this feedback, Council staff will finalise recommended allocations, and prepare a report to Council advising of the collective recommendations.

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

Eligibility

Financial Assistance is available to incorporated not-for-profit community organisations and groups which provide a community service or the like within the Richmond Valley LGA; that service should assist Council in exercising its functions.

Preference will be given to programs and activities with a direct social or community benefit. Equipment and infrastructure may be funded if the request is considered of sufficient benefit to the community. Only one application per organisation per round of funding will be considered.

Applications must be from incorporated organisations or associations holding the appropriate public liability insurance. Unincorporated not-for-profit community organisations can apply for assistance through eligible incorporated sponsor organisations. Sponsor organisations must agree to take responsibility for the receipt, application and acquittal of the assistance provided.

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.

The following activities/projects are not eligible for funding:

- Operating costs or recurrent expenses
 - staff/ volunteer/ committee member costs including salaries and professional development
 - insurance, leases, bills, consumables and disposables
- Items/ equipment primarily for use by one individual or a closed group of individuals only; equipment must have a broad benefit.

- Fundraising or scholarship based initiatives
- Promotional items
- Groups already receiving financial assistance from another source of Council funding are not eligible for assistance under this process.
- Event funding. This is subject to another process. Events, including equipment to support events, will only be funded under the Community Financial Assistance Program if they are one-off, community-based events that provide a social benefit to the community.
- Funding for activities which have already occurred, or items already purchased.

Groups are encouraged to contact Council to discuss their application if they are unsure of the eligibility of their project.

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 previous community financial assistance in previous years.
- Include consideration of whether requirements for previous funding have been met.

Conditions of Funding

Funding is allocated to groups on the understanding that groups will undertake the following:

- Funding must be used for the purpose for which it is granted; i.e. for activities and items included in the original grant application.
- Should a community group or organisation become aware that the original project will not proceed or be only partially undertaken, including in the instance where additional funding or resources become newly available, the group must notify Council in writing as soon as possible, and seek Council's written approval to amend the project purpose.
- If funding is not spent for the original project, all unexpended funds are to be returned to Council.

- Projects must acknowledge Richmond Valley Council as the funding body in the activity. The use of the Council approved logo is required in any promotional activity or signage related to the funded project and the applicant acknowledges this assistance as below on media releases, invitations, posters, signs, digital channels such as website and any other suitable communications;
"This project is supported by the Richmond Valley Council Community Financial Assistance Program."
- Groups who receive funding will be required to acquit funding by showing proof of expenditure for the purpose nominated within 12 months by completing the Acquittal for Community Financial Assistance Program - Evaluation of Grant and Financial Report form.
- Groups who fail to comply with any of these conditions will not be considered for further funding.

Procedures

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

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by Council at the time of any relevant legislative changes, compliance requirements or at least every four years.