



muswellbrook shire council

DRAFT Awarding of Grants and Contributions Policy

MSC072E

Authorisation Details

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Community Strategic Plan Goal	Collaborative and responsive community leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community		
Community Strategic Plan Strategy	6.2 Ensure Council is well managed, appropriately resourced, effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to its communities and stakeholders		
Delivery Program activity	6.2.1 Maintain a strong focus on financial discipline to enable Council to properly respond to the needs of the communities it serves		

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1. Policy Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide a framework for the establishment and management of Muswellbrook Shire Council's (Council) Community Grant and Contribution program in accordance with section 356 and section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).
- support the delivery of community driven outcomes and benefits aligned with the Community Strategic Plan for the benefit of residents of the Muswellbrook Shire Local Government Area (LGA).
- provide clear guidelines on the criteria by which community grant and contribution applications will be assessed and funding allocations, fee waiving and in-kind support determined.
- provide an equitable, open, and transparent process which allows Council to conduct a meaningful comparison of requests for grant funding and contributions.
- provide not-for-profit groups and individuals with financial and in-kind support to meet identified community needs.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the supporting grant guidelines. This policy and the supporting guidelines determine the types of organisations and individuals that Council considers appropriate to partner with through grant funding and contributions.

2. Risks being addressed

This policy outlines principles on the allocation of funds, fee waiving and in-kind support, thereby mitigating the risk of misappropriation of Council resources and ensuring an equal opportunity and transparent process.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Council staff and Councillors and regulates all grants and contributions awarded by Council to third parties listed in section 8.3 or as determined by Council.

Council departments which provide any type of grant or contribution from their operational budgets also must comply with the principles outlined in this policy.

This policy does not apply to Council sponsorships.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Acquittal	A report submitted as per the grant or contribution terms and conditions at the conclusion of an event/activity/project detailing how the recipient administered the funds and met the activity outcomes in the terms and conditions.
Council	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Community Strategic Plan (CSP)	The Community Strategy Plan describes the community's vision and aspirations for a period of ten or more years. Further information on Muswellbrook's CSP is available on Council's website: https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/council-integrated-planning-overview/
Contributions	Contributions include fee waiving and in-kind assistance and other cost that Council may incur or forgoes.
Fee Waiving	Council fees and charges waived or reduced amount applied. <i>Any financial assistance granted to offset or subsidise Council fees or charges is consistent with the requirements of s610E and s610F of the Local Government Act.</i>
Grants	Financial assistance to not-for-profit organisations and individuals that work towards enhancing the environmental, social, cultural, and recreational well-being of the communities of Muswellbrook Shire.
Grant and Contribution Terms and Conditions	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both Council and grant and contribution recipients.
In-kind	Includes staff time, plant, and equipment or other resources/supplies from Council. This "in-kind" assistance does not involve a direct cash component, but has financial implications for Council.
Personal Benefit	Something offered to or received by a council official, or someone personally associated with them, for their personal use and enjoyment. See Part 6 Personal Benefit of Council's Code of Conduct for further information.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 Principles

Muswellbrook Shire Council commits itself to the following:

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) - This policy and associated guidelines support delivery of the CSP and related documents.

Value with public money and outcomes orientation - This policy supports applications whose outcomes meet community needs and ideally offer a mix of funding sources to help maximise the impact of funding from Council. Value for money and acceptable financial risk for Council, using public funds, is considered as part of Council's assessment criteria.

Accountability and transparency - This policy provides a robust framework for the transparent and merit-based provision of grants and contributions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both Council and grant recipients.

Inclusiveness - Council invites and values applications from not-for-profit organisations and individuals representing people of diverse abilities, genders, ethnicity, cultures, and ages.

Collaboration - Council values the relationships grant recipients develop with Council, other grant recipients and the community. Collaboration enhances positive community outcomes through the delivery of initiatives funded by Council.

5.2 Assessment of applications

Council or a delegated committee of Council reviews and determines all applications.

Applications will be reviewed and assessed against the following criteria:

- a) alignment of the proposed event/activity/project to the themes in the Muswellbrook Shire CSP;
- b) level of community interest and/or significance as demonstrated by the applicant;
- c) relevance to the Muswellbrook Shire LGA and/or community;
- d) evidence of match funding where applicable; and
- e) impact, value for money, return on investment and alignment with Council's brand and reputation.

When assessing applications, the following documents will be considered:

- a) Council's Awarding of Grants and Contributions Policy;
- b) The associated grant guidelines; and
- c) the applicant's risk assessment for the event/activity/project.

5.3 Grant and Contributions Terms and Conditions

All grant agreements, must adhere to the following principles:

- Take the form of a written agreement;
- Not infer any real or apparent conflict between the intent and actions of Council;

- Not impose or imply conditions that would limit or appear to limit Council's ability to carry out its functions fully and/or impartially;
- The grant and/or contribution does not compromise or question the integrity of Council operations;
- Be based on public accountability and transparency with clear statements of objectives and benefits negotiated;
- Council considers the value for money received in return for Council's investment in the grant and/or contribution; and
- Grants and/or contributions will not include Council's explicit endorsement of the organisation or the organisation's activities or product.

6. Roles, Responsibilities, and Delegations

Council or a delegated committee of Council has delegation to recommend the approval or rejection of applications for grants and contributions.

Role	Responsibility
Muswellbrook Shire Council	Annually determines the budget allocated to the grants and contributions program.
A delegated committee of Council	Under section 377 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW), a committee of Council may be delegated authority to approve a grant or contribution as part of the grants and contributions program.
General Manager	Under section 377 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW), the General Manager may be delegated authority to approve a grant or contribution as part of the grants and contributions program.
Director Community and Economy	Review and publish the grants and contributions program, including the policy and guidelines.
Grants or contributions recipients	Comply with this policy and the grant guidelines, as well as any conditions of the Grant and Contribution Terms and Conditions.

7. Dispute Resolution

The General Manager is the interpreter of this policy and shall be the sole arbiter in respect to the application of this Policy.

8. Related Documents

8.1 Legislation and Guidelines

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Sponsorship in the Public Sector May 2006

8.2 Policies and Procedures

Revenue Policy

Community Strategic Plan

Delivery Plan

Operational Plan

Model Code of Conduct

8.3 Other Supporting Documents

Grants and Contributions Application Form

Grant and Contribution Terms and Conditions

Community Grants and Contributions Guidelines

Sport and Recreation Large Capital Grants Program Guidelines

Sport and Recreation Small Capital Grants Program Guidelines

Muswellbrook Community Sustainable Education Grant Guidelines

Muswellbrook Sustainable Education Grant Application Form

Local Heritage Assistance Fund Guideline

Muswellbrook Shire Council's Landcare Grants

Sustainable Event Management Procedure and Checklist

Post Event Evaluation and Reporting

Version History

This section identifies authors who reviewed the Policy and the date that it became effective.

Version No.	Date changed	Modified by	Amendments/Previous adoption details
V1	08/03/2004		
V2	11/10/2004		
V3	14/11/2005		
V4	13/05/2013		Waiving User Hire Fees and Development Application Fees for Charitable organisations
V5	14/02/2017		
V6	11/06/2019	Joshua Brown	Significant rewrite. Adopted by Council 11/06/2019, Minute No. 325.
V7	03/10/2023	Policy review group	Significant rewrite and separation of awarding and seeking sponsorship policy. Policy renamed from <i>Financial Assistance and Sponsorship Policy</i> to <i>Awarding of Sponsorship, Grants and Contributions Policy</i> . Public exhibition of draft policy 30/11/2023 – 04/01/2024. Adopted by Council on 27/02/2024, Minute No. 295.
V8	29/11/2024	Policy review group	Significant rewrite and separation of sponsorship and grants into individual policies.