

Grant-giving Policy

Policy Reference No.	POL/303
File No.	HCC15/190
Strategic Objective	3.2 Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and assets that respond to community needs.
Adopted by Council	8 August 2022
Re-Adopted	N/A
Date for Review	August 2026
	<i>It is recognised that over the life of this Policy it may require minor administrative changes. Where an update does not materially alter the intent of the policy (i.e., changed department name of a Council, update to legislation) the change will be made administratively. Any amendment which materially alters this document will be made by resolution of Council.</i>
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Health and Wellbeing
Department	Community Health and Wellbeing

GRANT-GIVING POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to supporting the local community through grant programs that:

- **Contribute to social justice through supporting access, inclusion, equity, fairness, engagement, and participation.**
- **Foster thriving, connected, resilient, and sustainable communities.**
- **Build the capacity of Hume residents, businesses, and communities to achieve their goals, whilst also providing benefit to the broader Hume community.**

When granting public funds Council will act with integrity, accountability, impartiality, transparency and in the public interest.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. This Policy provides a framework for Council to grant public funds consistently and transparently through its externally facing grant programs.

3. SCOPE

3.1. The distribution of funding through grants programs is in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

3.2. This Policy applies to:

- 3.2.1. The granting of funds via competitive, merit-based program(s), from Council to the Hume community. Grant recipients may include residents, community groups (incl. sporting / environment, arts groups etc), organisations or businesses.
- 3.2.2. All Council Departments involved in the promotion, assessment, and management of grant programs where Council is providing a contribution directly to an organisation, auspice or individual.
- 3.2.3. Granting programs distributed by Council for community events.

3.3. This Policy does not apply to:

- 3.3.1. Funding received by Council from state or federal government agencies or non-government organisations resulting from grant applications made by Council officers.
- 3.3.2. Scholarships, other funded contributions (i.e., Service/Delivery Agreements, partnership agreements, partnerships with a Memorandum of Understanding etc) or general purchasing undertaken by Council.
- 3.3.3. Any sponsorship arrangements Council may enter with businesses.
- 3.3.4. The Hume Charitable Fund (managed by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is excluded as it is bound by their policies).

4. OBJECTIVE

4.1. In accordance with the Council Plan 2021-2025, this Policy:

- 4.1.1. supports Council in providing responsible and transparent governance, to ensure that grants provided to the Hume community meet the highest standards of probity and transparency.
- 4.1.2. ensures that Council acts in the public interest and deliver grants in a manner that is accountable, impartial, and inclusive.

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5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Fraud and Corruption Controls

- 5.1. Council will facilitate transparency and accountability of grant programs whilst mitigating against fraudulent or corrupt use of funds.
- 5.2. All grant-giving programs will be managed within Council's online administration system to ensure records are maintained and fully auditable.
- 5.3. To ensure a separation of decision making and allow an avenue for independent oversight, an individual or entity with the power to approve grants will not form part of an Assessment Panel (i.e., Councillors / Financial Delegate).
- 5.4. All members of Assessment and Review Panels (including external panel members, where relevant) must:
 - Complete relevant Fraud, Corruption and Conflict of Interest training and a Grant Program Induction prior to participating in Panels.
 - Adhere to Council's Conflict of Interest policies and requirements.

Grant Management and Operations

- 5.5. All grant-giving programs must have guidelines (including eligibility criteria), assessment criteria and terms of reference (including assessment panel composition). These must be approved by a resolution of Council.
- 5.6. All material changes, including recommendations to cease offering a grant giving program must be approved by a resolution of Council.
- 5.7. Non-material changes to grants programs can be made by Program Managers.
- 5.8. Each Grants Program must utilise an evaluation schedule developed in accordance with Council's Evaluation Framework.
- 5.9. Grant programs will be widely promoted across the municipality using a variety of promotional avenues to enable everyone who is eligible to apply for a grant has an opportunity to do so.
- 5.10. Applications must be submitted by the due date / time via Council's online grants administration system.
- 5.11. Late applications will be only accepted under exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of Council. Approval for late applications must be pre-approved by the relevant Department Manager with the rationale documented in Council's online grants administration system.

5.12. Eligibility

- Any grants provided to individuals must require proof of identity; address; and bank details.
- Any grants provided to organisations and businesses must require proof of organisational structure; ABN/GST status; relevant insurances; and bank statements.
- Applicants must declare any relationship(s) with Council staff / Councillors to inform conflict of interest processes.
- Grant applications will be automatically ineligible if they do not adhere to program guidelines or are not in alignment with Council policies and strategies, including, but not limited to:

Policy/Strategic Plans		Eligibility Guidance	
Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy		Projects/applicants that involve children but are unable to satisfactorily prove their compliance with Child Safe legislation.	
Financial Policies (Procurement, Fraud Control etc)		Projects/applicants that do not meet documentation requirements, have an outstanding debt to Council (without a payment plan in place) or outstanding acquittal from previous grant funding.	
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Hume Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.	Projects that encourage or materially gain from gambling will not be accepted, nor will applications for alcohol licences, or those associated with tobacco.
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- Current Officers or Councillors are ineligible to apply for any grant-giving programs.
- Canvassing of Councillors and Officers, or any attempts to influence the outcome of the grant application / process, is prohibited and will render an application ineligible.

5.13. Assessment Process

- Grant applications will be assessed on their individual merit, in consideration of eligibility and intention of the grant category.
- During the assessment process, consideration will also be given to equitability of distribution.
- To support fairness, transparency, and accountability:
 - All grant programs will be assessed via an Assessment Panel.
 - Annual grant programs will be subject to review via a Councillor Review Panel. The overall role of a Councillor Review Panel is to review the probity of the grant process, taking into consideration:
 - the intent of the program,
 - evidence that assessment was undertaken in accordance with adopted guidelines and criteria,
 - equitability and fairness.

The specific role of each Councillor Review Panel will be outlined in the grant program's Terms of Reference.

- After consideration of applications and grant program objectives, Council, the relevant Director and Chief Executive Officer may propose an alternative form of assistance to meet the stated objectives of any application. This may include direct support to a project, activity, or event.

5.14. Approval Process

- Unless otherwise approved by Council, the following process applies:

Year-round grant programs

- Council resolution to delegate authority to approve / award grants for designated grant programs / categories.
- Assessed by nominated Assessment Panel.
- Recommendations approved via Delegated Authority (i.e., Director), with decisions reported back to Council (retrospectively) at least twice a year, or more frequently if requested by Council.

Annual programs

- Program established and endorsed by a resolution of Council.
- Assessed by nominated Assessment Panel.
- Process reviewed by a Councillor Review Panel.
- Recommendations endorsed by a resolution of Council.

5.15. Contracting and payments

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- All payments will be managed in accordance with Council's standard timelines, practices, and policies.
- Following grant approval, recipients must be offered a Letter of Agreement.
- Grant payment cannot be made until a signed Letter of Agreement is received.

5.16. Project reporting and Acquittals

- All grant programs must include a financial acquittal to ensure monies are spent in accordance with the signed Agreement.
- Council reserves the right to recover or write-off grant funding, or to take other appropriate action, in the event of non-compliance with the Letter of Agreement.
- Failure to comply with grant requirements, including failure to:
 - meet the terms of the Letter of Agreement,
 - seek a variation prior to altering an approved project,
 - acquit outstanding grants,
 - return unspent funds,

may render organisations ineligible for any further funding through Council programs until these matters are resolved.

5.17. Exceptions and Variations

- Material exceptions can only be made with written authorisation from the Department Manager and must be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.
- Non-material exceptions can be made at the discretion of Officers and must be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.
- After funding has been provided, any changes to an approved project must be endorsed by the relevant Department Manager via a Variation Request and documented in Council's online grants administration system.

5.18. Appeals

- Council's decision regarding successful / unsuccessful grants is final and an appeal will not be considered unless new evidence / good cause is demonstrated.
- Specific conditions relating to any grant appeals processes are to be included in each Grant Program's Guidelines and Terms of Reference.
- Any disputes or complaints regarding Grants programs or processes will be dealt with in accordance with Council's Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy.

Record Keeping

- 5.19. All application outcomes will be recorded in Council's online grants administration system.
- 5.20. Following confirmation of the Council decision, all organisations will be notified of the outcome of their application.
- 5.21. Within 30 days of Council's decision, an announcement of successful grant recipients will be published on Council's website.
- 5.22. Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

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6. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acquittal: information provided by a grant recipient that ensures that funds have been administered responsibly and in line with conditions of the grant program. “Acquittal” includes mid-project reporting (i.e., mid-year reporting for longer term projects or where release of further funds is reliant on acquitting at a specified time in the life cycle of a grant).

Annual categories: programs and categories that have one predetermined timeframe during which to apply. Includes one-off opportunities (unless specifically justified when program is devised.) See also “year-round categories”.

Applicant: individual or organisation submitting a grant application.

Auspice: an agreement where one organisation agrees to apply for and manage a grant on behalf of another organisation.

Auspecting Organisation: In an Auspice arrangement, this is the organisation who agrees to take on responsibility for financial and acquittal requirements on behalf of another group (usually smaller, and unincorporated).

Canvassing: attempts made to persuade a person to vote / score in a particular way.

Councillor/s: the individuals holding the office of a member of Hume City Council.

Council Officer / Officer: the staff of Council appointed by the CEO.

Council / Hume: Hume City Council which is a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020.

Delegated Authority: This is the Officer (usually Director or CEO) who has been delegated the responsibility to approve year-round grants by Council resolution.

Grant: any assistance by way of a sum of money provided to Council by a funding organisation on the condition that the assistance is used for a specified purpose as outlined in a successfully submitted grant application and/or committed to through a funding agreement to achieve agreed objectives through milestone reporting.

Grant-giving (and Grant Making): The process by which Council distributes grants.

Letter of agreement: a legal document setting out the terms and conditions, milestones acquittal requirements and consequences of non-compliance that govern the administration of funds by Council, determined by the funding organisation. Sometimes referred to as Funding Agreement.

Material change / exception: any decision or action that would change the purpose, scope or delivery of a grant or grant program. For example, an action, amendment or exception to existing rules that would be likely to change an assessor’s view of an application.

Non-material change / exception: minor administrative alterations, improvements to program process, or corrections, actions, amendments, or exception to existing rules that would not be likely to change an assessor’s view of an application.

Organisation: a group, business or other legally structured body that consists of a group of individuals acting as one applicant.

Program: The set of categories and guidelines developed by any Council department tasked with grant-giving for a specific purpose.

Recipient: Applicant who has been approved for a grant by Council.

Variation: the process to change the deliverables/scope of a project, service or program funded by a grant that must be agreed by both parties.

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Year-round categories: categories that are open all year round until funding is exhausted, or in multiple time-bound rounds.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2021-2025 Council Plan
- Community Grants Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Fraud Control Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Records and Information Management Policy
- Social Justice Charter
- Sponsorship Policy
- Staff Conflict of Interest
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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