

COUNCIL POLICY



Policy name	SMALL GRANTS (UNDER SECTION 356 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993)
--------------------	---

Abstract

To govern the provision of financial assistance provided to community and sporting groups to assist in the continuation of existing local projects or to assist in funding a new project or initiative that helps meet the need of our growing community.

Dates	Policy or amendment approved Policy 21 Jun 2017 or amendment takes effect Policy is 21 Jun 2017 due for review (up to 4 years) 21 Jun 2021
Endorsed by	Director Planning and Environmental Services
Approved by	Gunnedah Shire Council, at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 21 Jun 2017 Resolution number: 22.06/17
Policy Custodian	Director Planning and Environmental Services
Relevant to	All community and sporting groups within the Gunnedah Shire Council local government area
Superseded Policies	Small Grants (Under section 356 of Local Government Act) (April 2012)
Related documents	Policy Framework, Financial Assistance Policy
Related legislation	Local Government Act 1993
File number	1100747

Contents

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Definitions
4. Policy principles
5. Policy statement
6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities
7. Acknowledgements
8. Version control and change history

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide clarity and guidance on how Council will provide financial assistance to community and sporting groups to assist in the continuation of existing local projects or to assist in funding a new project or initiative that helps meet the need of our growing community.
- 1.2 To provide an open and transparent decision making process for requests for financial support from Council.
- 1.3 To provide an accessible and equitable process for organisations and individuals seeking financial support from Council.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to any granting of a financial benefit by Council under S356 of the Local Government Act 1993. This policy falls under the umbrella of the Financial Assistance Policy and all applications lodged in accordance with this policy must also meet any requirements prevailing at the time under the Financial Assistance Policy.

3. Definitions

Community Group must be non-profit, community based and located within the Gunnedah Shire. The community group must be an incorporated body or auspiced by an incorporated organisation.

Sporting Group must be non-profit, community/sporting based and located within the Gunnedah Shire. The sporting group must be an incorporated body or auspiced by an incorporated organisation.

Eligibility for funding to successful community and sporting groups is available only once every two (2) years and must be current or proposed services/activities (retrospective funding will not be provided) and grants sought must be of a non-recurrent nature and be \$5,000 or less.

4. Policy principles

- 4.1 Council will apply this policy consistently to all applications for financial assistance under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 and as may be provided for in Council's Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan. The Principles underpinning this Policy include:
 - Principle 1 – Fairness and Impartiality
 - Principle 2 – Management of Conflicts of Interest
 - Principle 3 – Transparency of Process
 - Principle 4 – Priority of Need
 - Principle 5 – Best Value Community Benefit
 - Principle 6 – Financial Sustainability and Accountability

5. Policy statement

Section 356 Community and Sports Small Grants are available to assist in the establishment of projects, services and initiatives that foster community collaboration, enhance access to community resources and amenities, and support the sustainability of local community and sporting groups.

Council shall encourage community organisations to submit applications annually prior to the commencement of each financial year.

5.1 Legislative context

Section 356 of the Local Government Act states:

- (1) A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
- (2) A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.
- (3) However, public notice is not required if:
 - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.
- (4) Public notice is also not required if the financial assistance is part of a program of graffiti removal work.

5.2 Eligibility

- 5.2.1 Applicants must be non-profit and community based.
- 5.2.2 Applicants must be incorporated bodies or auspiced by an incorporated organisation.
- 5.2.3 Applicants/organisations must be located in the Gunnedah Shire area.
- 5.2.4 The project(s) must be current or proposed services/activities. Retrospective funding will not be provided.
- 5.2.5 The grant sought must be of a non-recurrent nature.
- 5.2.6 The grant amount requested must be \$5,000 or less.
- 5.2.7 Project must not be eligible for and not previously have received funding from the State or Federal Governments or other sources for the same purposes for which Council funds are sought.
- 5.2.8 Applicants must clearly indicate which funding stream they are applying for; being either Community Small Grants or Sports Small Grants.
- 5.2.9 Applicants are only eligible for funding once every two (2) years.
- 5.2.10 Where grants are being used to purchase equipment or materials the organisation is required to include in the application a minimum of one (1) quote for the items requested.

5.3 Excluded projects and organisations

5.3.1 The following projects will not be funded under this policy:

- (a) Activities/services which do not attempt to become self-supporting where the potential exists through fees or other feasible income producing activities;
- (b) Activities of a purely social nature which do not address a specific identified community need;
- (c) Activities which are eligible for support from state-wide or regional parent bodies;
- (d) Salaries
- (e) Organisations which have not observed accountability requirements for past Council provided assistance.
- (f) Organisations that have an existing written financial Agreement with Council.

5.4 Allocation of funds

5.4.1 Funds are allocated annually by Council as part of its annual budget. These funds will be apportioned between the two small grants streams as follows:

- (a) Community Small Grants 55%, and
- (b) Sports Small Grants 45%.

5.5 Community Small Grant stream

5.5.1 Applicants must demonstrate they are meeting or will meet a clear need and avoid unnecessary duplication. As Council seeks to promote planning and coordination between local organisations, those applicants who demonstrate a practice of consultation and collaboration with others will receive priority.

5.5.2 The applications are required to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (a) Address existing gaps in service or community development;
- (b) Address issues and/or recommendations outlined in the Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan;
- (c) Promote community development and seek to address issues of access and equity;
- (d) Improves collaboration with other organisations/groups in the Shire;
- (e) Has involvement from volunteers and self-help initiatives which build upon Council's contribution;
- (f) Includes consumer/user participation in management of the project; and
- (g) Has an innovative and creative approach to identified needs.

5.6 Sports Small Grants stream

5.6.1 The applications are required to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (a) Improve participation in their organisation or sports activities;
- (b) Address safety concerns;
- (c) Support, train and enhance volunteers;
- (d) Address issues identified within the Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan.

5.7 Completing and lodging applications

5.7.1 Applications are to be completed in the form prescribed by Council and lodged by providing completed forms along with any supporting documentation, addressed to the General Manager, by the advertised closing time and date by any of the methods as follows:

- (a) by mail, by sending to: PO Box 63
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380
- (b) by email, by forwarding to: council@infogunnedah.com.au
- (c) by fax, by sending to: 02 6740 2119
- (d) in person, by delivery to: Gunnedah Shire Council
63 Elgin Street
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

5.8 Assessment of applications

5.8.1 Applications under the Small Community and Sports Grants streams will be assessed by a panel of four (4) persons made up of three (3) elected members as determined by resolution of Council and the Responsible Officer.

5.8.2 The Responsible Officer will provide copies of the applications to the panel, a summary of all applications received and an assessment of the applications including:

- (a) Eligibility under the program's objectives and criteria
- (b) Assessment of the amount of the assistance requested
- (c) Other information relevant to the application
- (d) An account of any other assistance provided to the applicant by Council, whether that assistance be cash or in-kind

5.8.3 The Responsible Officer shall prepare a Council report articulating the recommendations of the assessment panel for consideration and determination by a meeting of the full Council. An application under the Section 356 Small Grants program for financial assistance will not be actioned, reported to Council for consideration, or decided upon unless:

- (a) Clear and detailed information on any and all assistance proposed or requested are provided.
- (b) An assessment of the application taking into consideration the eligibility as outlined in this policy has been undertaken, and
- (c) Any and all information required in accordance with Council's Financial Assistance Policy has been provided.

5.9 Communication of Council's determinations and presentation to successful applicants

5.9.1 Applicants will be advised of the result of their application after the determination has been made by Council.

5.9.2 Presentation of the grants to the successful applicants following determination by Council at a time and place determined. Should the Mayor be unavailable the presentation will be made by the Chairperson of each of the panels assessing the applications.

5.10 Accountability requirements for all S356 grants

- 5.10.1 All applicants must upon expenditure of the funds complete a Declaration of Expenditure on the prescribed format certifying that the grant was expended for the purpose for which it was granted.
- 5.10.2 The purpose for which the grant is approved may only be altered with the prior written approval as determined by a resolution of Council. If the money is expended on a purpose other than that approved by Council, Council retains the right to demand repayment and exclude the applicant from any future assistance from Council.
- 5.10.3 Any grants unexpended by 30 June of the same financial year are to be returned to Council unless prior written approval is obtained.
- 5.10.5 In recognition of the limited resources available to many applicants, Council will endeavor not to demand separate and excessive outcome reports. Where possible annual reports and other suitable documents will be accepted if sufficient space and detail have been given to the project or activity funded by Council.
- 5.10.6 With the concurrence of the applicant, Council may organise to pay the supplier directly.
- 5.10.7 Council encourages applications which target communities in the outlying villages and the indigenous community needs.

6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities

6.1 Policy Custodian – Director Planning and Environmental Services

The Policy Custodian is the officer accountable for managing policy compliance and initiating the policy review process. They will also have the responsibility for all aspects of policy implementation, unless appropriately delegated to another officer. These responsibilities include being the primary contact point for advice on the policy or its implementation; establishing and maintaining Council's records in relation to the policy; proposing amendments; and managing the consultation process when the policy is due for review.

6.2 Responsible Officer

The Community and Social Planner

7. Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Nil

8. Version control and change history

Date	Version	Approved by & resolution no.	Amendment
18 Apr 2012	2	Council, 218.4	Revision at request of Council
23 July 2012	3	Policy Working Group	Reformat in accordance with Policy Framework
14 June 2017	4	Council	Revisions to provide additional clarity for applicants.
21 Jun 2017	5	Council 22.06/17	Revision