

MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL
COUNCIL POLICY

COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

POL-601.V#2



**murray river
council**

1. INTRODUCTION

Murray River Council (the 'Council') recognises the value and importance of the role that community groups and organisations play in building vibrant, inclusive and healthy communities.

Council further acknowledges that local organisations and groups may from time to time, in the absence of alternative funding sources, require financial assistance to help meet a demonstrated need within the community.

Council is accountable to the community for the management and disbursement of its funds that must be undertaken in a manner that maximises the benefits of the community and is seen to be fair and equitable. It also recognises that organisations and groups in receipt of Council funds have a responsibility to use those funds for the purposes for which they were given and that those purposes are of benefit to the community.

2. OBJECTIVES

This Community Financial Assistance Policy (the 'Policy'), together with Council's Community Financial Assistance Program Framework (the 'Framework') sets out Council's framework for considering the provision of grant funding to the community and provides information for Council and the community on the principles guiding the community grants program.

This Policy specifically outlines Council's approach to making decisions in relation to grant requests, including:

- ▶ To provide a fair, equitable, transparent and consistent method for providing financial assistance to community organisations and groups in accordance with the terms of Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 (the 'Act');
- ▶ To provide financial assistance to eligible organisations and groups, bearing in mind that the Council is trustee and custodian of public assets and is bound by its charter to effectively account for and manage those assets;
- ▶ To inform the community and Council's employees of its guiding principles and objectives of the administration of the community grant program;
- ▶ To promote a sense of community and social cohesion within Council's communities;
- ▶ To encourage innovation throughout the Council area; and
- ▶ To foster community partnership and a positive and professional public image for the Council.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all forms of financial assistance provided to community groups and organisations by Council.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Council can financially assist others under Section 356 of the Act for the purpose of exercising its functions.

Financial assistance granted by Council must comply with Section 356 of the Act.

Also, under Section 377 (1A) of the Act, Council may delegate its functions relating to the granting of financial assistance if:

- (a) The financial assistance is part of a specified program, and
- (b) The program is included in 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 five percent of Council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
- (d) The program applies uniformly to all persons within Council's area or to a significant proportion of all persons within Council's area, and
- (e) Any financial assistance granted to offset or subsidise Council fees or charges is consistent with the requirements of Section 610E and Section 610F of the Act.

5. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Council commits to:

- ▶ Provide funds each year for the purpose of providing assistance to eligible community groups and organisations.
- ▶ Fund applications, within the constraints of the budgeted funds, which meet the Policy guidelines, build capacity and provide benefit to the community.
- ▶ Make decisions on the granting of assistance based upon need, value to the community and conformity with Council's Community Strategic Plan and annual operational plan.
- ▶ Distribute its grants in a transparent, fair and equitable manner.
- ▶ Ensure that grants provided are spent for the purpose for which they are provided and that the agreed outcomes are delivered.

6. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Manager Economic Development & Tourism to monitor the adequacy of this Policy and recommend appropriate changes.

This Policy will be formally reviewed within four (4) years of adoption or as needed, whichever comes first.

7. LEGISLATION, ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

Legislation

- ▶ Local Government Act 1993 (NSW);

Associated Documents

- ▶ MRC Framework - Community Financial Assistance Program Framework
- ▶ MRC Form - Community Grants Program Application Form
- ▶ Community grant program
- ▶ Councils draft operation plan
- ▶ Councils Community Strategic Plan
- ▶ Annual Operations plan

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Fee waiver	<p>Where an individual or group requests that a fee or charge (as outlined in the Council's Community Strategic Plan) is reduced or waived.</p> <p>Examples of what will be considered by Council as a request to waive fees are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ a reduction in the cost to hire a hall or reserve ▶ a reduction in the cost to hire Council plant or equipment
Grants	<p>Contributions provided to various community-related activities by Council and can include cash, in-kind and fee waiver.</p> <p>Examples of grants, as provided through Council's Community Financial Assistance Program, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Annual Allocations which are allocated to recurring projects that Council generally contributes to on an annual or multi-year basis. ▶ Community Grants which are allocated to one-off projects. These grants are open to community groups and organisations who can make application in accordance with the policy guidelines. Applications must be received during the stipulated annual application period. ▶ Quick Response Grants which are administered by the Mayor and General Manager and may be allocated to worthy projects or opportunities that occur outside of the application window for Council's Community Grants (refer above). Council will allocate funds to the Quick Response Grants each year, during budget deliberations, and may, from time to time, set a maximum grant amount.
In-kind support	<p>A contribution of Council's staff time, equipment or other services. In-kind support incurs a cost to Council and has a financial value to a group or organisation that must be calculated.</p> <p>Examples of in-kind support are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ utilisation of Council staff or services ▶ temporary loan of light depot equipment – sand bags, bollards, witches hats, signage, bunting and safety tape ▶ temporary loan of special events equipment ▶ preparation of Council reserves for use for special events ▶ event promotion through Council publications ▶ auspice of grant funding by Council

Note: In accordance with the NSW Local Government Act 1993, annual rates cannot be reduced or waived.

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No.	Details	Dates	CM9 Reference	Resolution No.
1	Initial Issue	21 Aug 2018 to 22 Oct 2019	VF/19/62 CTL/19/19	160818
2	Reviewed as per schedule	22 Oct 2019 to	VF/19/62 CTL/19/77	191019

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy at any time
This Policy is scheduled for review prior to October 2023.

Disclaimer:

This document was formulated to be consistent with Murray River Council's legislative obligations and with the scope of Council's powers. This document should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, guidelines and codes of practice. In the case of any discrepancies, the most recent legislation should prevail. This document does not constitute legal advice. Legal advice should be sought in relation to particular circumstances and liability will not be accepted for losses incurred as a result of reliance on this document.