1. POLICY SUMMARY

1.1 Murray River Council (the ‘Council’) recognises the value and importance of healthy and sustainable local economies and acknowledges it has a role to play as a catalyst for the growth of existing businesses and the attraction of new industries to Murray River communities.

1.2 Council is committed to the creation, retention and development of business and employment opportunities within the Council area and continues to encourage business development within its footprint.

1.3 This Economic Development Assistance Policy (the ‘Policy’) sets the guidelines for considering requests for economic development assistance submitted to Council.

1.4 It provides a transparent and equitable process for requests for assistance from existing businesses or investors making application to set up a new business with the Council area.

1.5 The Policy provides a strategic, consistent and accountable process for providing economic development assistance within the Council area.

2. POLICY SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to Councillors and Council staff when considering, assessing and approving economic development assistance requests.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Promote Council as a welcoming and supportive organisation willing to meet the needs of investors and developers to attract business development to the region; and
- Ensure that the Council region remains competitive with surrounding council areas in retaining existing and attracting new employment creating developments.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Currently, economic development funding requests are considered by Council in an ad-hoc way and without policy guidelines. There is a lack of consistency in evaluating and reporting in relation to requests for assistance.
4.2 To address the issues identified in 4.1, the Council requested that a policy and guidelines be developed.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 The types of economic development assistance that Council will consider are limited to the following:
   (a) Development of a personal assistance package that includes:
       (i) a personal Council contact responsible for assisting with a project
       (ii) information on external grant funding availability and deadlines
       (iii) introduction to potential investors, state and federal department representatives and local business organisations
       (iv) guiding a project through Council approval processes and negotiating road blocks
       (v) locating suitable land for a development.
   (b) Financial assistance, including:
       (i) waiving of development fees and charge including lodgement fees, head works charges and reduced service costs.
   (c) Provision of Council-owned land at cost or discounted price in accordance with Council’s Assistance Matrix – Guidelines (refer Table 1).

5.2 Those requesting assistance may be required to provide:
   ▶ Verification of the group or business’s registration or incorporation.
   ▶ Proof that the project will be located in the Council area.
   ▶ Details that clearly identify that the proposal is an economic development project that will establish a new business or expand an existing business.
   ▶ Details of community benefits including, but not limited to, employment creation.
   ▶ Information as to the type and value of assistance requested from Council.
   ▶ A business plan with a level of detail commensurate with the value of the assistance being requested.

5.3 Council’s staff must have regard to the following in assessing applications:
   (a) Value for money investment – the value for money assessment should consider:
       (i) contribution to the local community and wider region;
       (ii) employment creation; and
       (iii) total cost of Council contribution.
   (b) Open and effective grant process – the consideration for assistance process should be consistent, transparent and fair and seek to obtain an economically positive outcome.
   (c) Budget – expenditure on economic development assistance should not exceed the funding amount allocated in Council’s budget. Where there is insufficient funding available within the allocated budget, and the request for assistance is for a significant and highly beneficial project, the request must be presented to the Council for a determination.
Table 1: Assistance Matrix – Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs Created / Maintained</th>
<th>In-Kind Support</th>
<th>Financial Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to Staff Equipment or Services</td>
<td>Introduction to Other Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>4-6</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
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</table>

6. LEGISLATION, TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

6.1 Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 states:

356 Can a council financially assist others?
(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 20 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.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND DELEGATION

7.1 The intent of this funding is to provide in-kind support and/or reduced fees and charges to establish, support or enhance economic development in the Council area.
7.2 **Budget** – a budget amount of $50,000 will be allocated in each financial year for Economic Development Assistance.

*NB: Council will not provide cash assistance in respect of this Policy. The budgeted amount is to reconcile the cost to Council of in-kind support, discounted land prices or reduction in fees and charges.*

7.3 **Timeframe** – assistance will be available throughout the financial year, subject to funding availability.

7.4 **Eligibility** – an organisation must be incorporated or be a registered business, must operate or intend to operate within the Council area. Any request for funding should be accompanied by the documentation and proof identified in 5.2. Only one request for assistance can be made by each entity at any one point in time.

7.5 **Assessment** – will be undertaken by Council’s staff.

7.6 **Provision of assistance** – a report, detailing each request for assistance and including the type and value of any assistance proposed, must be provided to the Council prior to final approval and any offer of assistance is made. Multi-year assistance packages may be considered for large and staged developments.

8. **EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

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

8.2 This Policy will be formally reviewed every three (3) years or as needed, whichever comes first.

9. **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- Murray River Council Delegations of Authority (General Manager to Staff) Policy (POL107)

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version No.</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Resolution No.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initial Issue – On 12 May 2016, the Premier of NSW, The Hon Mike Baird MP, made the Local Government (Council Amalgamations) Proclamation 2016 under the Local Government Act 1993, whereby Murray Shire Council and Wakool Shire Council were amalgamated to constitute the new area to be known as Murray River Council, effective immediately.</td>
<td>27 Nov 2018</td>
<td>181118</td>
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Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy at any time

This Policy is scheduled for review in November 2021