

Community Grants Policy

Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide a transparent, accountable and fair governance framework to guide the disbursement of Shire grant funding to third parties, to support the delivery of community initiatives and events that contribute to the Strategic Community Plan.

Definitions

‘Applicant’ means an eligible organisation, club or individual submitting an application under a Shire grant program.

‘Grant’ is defined as a form of financial assistance that funds a community group or organisation to deliver a specific project. Grants are cash and/or in-kind contribution provided to a recipient for a specific, eligible purpose where there is no expected commercial return.

‘Grants guidelines’ means the guidelines published by the Shire’s Chief Executive Officer in accordance with this Policy.

‘In-kind’ means the Shire provides the value of its resources, goods or services to eligible parties instead of cash as part of a grant. In-kind contribution can include the fees associated with Shire services such as equipment hire, venue and facility costs, transfer of equipment, waste services and permits with all in-kind support attached to a dollar amount.

‘Personal benefit’ is any gift or benefit for the purposes of section 5.57 of the *Local Government Act 1995* or applicable code of conduct.

Any reference in this Policy to a dollar threshold for decision making on a funding limit is taken to be the combined amount of cash and in-kind support funding in Australian dollars.

Policy

The Shire of East Pilbara (“the Shire”) commits to sound governance practices to ensure that the Shire’s grant and funding programs are administered in accordance with statutory obligations and community expectations and support tangible contributions to the objectives of the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

1. Program Aims

Through the provision of grants, the Shire aims to:

- a. Strengthen the community by supporting a diverse range of activities, projects and initiatives that are responsive and representative of community needs;
- b. Build the capacity of individuals, community groups and local organisations to develop and implement sustainable solutions at a local level;
- c. Enable community organisations to deliver events and activities that contribute to the objectives of the Shire’s Strategic Community Plan;
- d. Encourage increased opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate the Shire’s diversity, history, lifestyle, environment and uniqueness;
- e. Support projects that deliver social and economic benefit for the local community; and

- f. Promote healthy living, wellbeing and life-long learning for community members of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

2. Administrative Principles

The following principles apply to the administration of Shire grants and funding:

- a. Robust planning and design – reduce administrative burden, enhance accessibility and improve overall effectiveness;
- b. Probity and transparency – ethical and accountable decision-making processes and active mitigation against bias and conflict of interest;
- c. Merit based process – clear selection criteria and scoring to support fair assessment and awarding of grant funds in line with strategic objectives;
- d. Community engagement – effective communication and support for grantees to manage expectations and improve outcomes and accessibility;
- e. Outcomes focused – outcomes aligned program design and criteria to drive tangible community benefits and contribution to strategic objectives;
- f. Value for money – careful stewardship of grant programs and allocation of grant funds to minimise waste and maximise impact from available budgets;
- g. Governance and accountability – clearly defined decision-making roles, record keeping processes, and accountability mechanisms;
- h. Proportionality – grant processes scaled appropriately to the size, complexity, and risk of the grant to reduce unnecessary burden while maintaining accountability and accessibility; and
- i. Evaluation and improvement – regular review processes to ensure grant programs are effective, efficient, and aligned with priorities.

3. Program Guidelines

Detailed objectives and requirements associated with specific programs and categories are outlined in the Shire's grant guidelines.

The Shire's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will establish the grants program guidelines to provide operational details and administration of the Shire's grants program.

The grants program guidelines must be:

- a. In line with this Policy and relevant legislation; and
- b. Published on the Shire's website.

The grants program guidelines will outline:

- a. Program aims;
- b. Strategic alignment and outcomes framework;
- c. Program eligibility;
- d. Projects and expenses not eligible for funding;
- e. Funding categories;
- f. Amounts that can be applied for;
- g. Additional grant category specific information including assessment criteria;
- h. Application processes and timeframes;
- i. Assessment processes and assessment matrix;
- j. Funding agreement process and requirements;
- k. Acquittal process and expectations; and

- l. Support available for applications.

4. Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for Shire grant funding applicants must:

- a. Reside, operate or provide a service that directly benefits people within the District of East Pilbara;
- b. Have no outstanding debts to, or grant acquittals with the Shire;
- c. Be registered as a not-for-profit body or registered charity within the Australian Charities and not-for-profit Commission (excluding Participation Grant applicants);
- d. Have a valid ABN and Public Liability Insurance Policy (excluding Participation Grant applicants);
- e. Have not been approved to receive funding or in-kind support within the same financial year;
- f. Submit the funding request during the timeframes indicated in grant guidelines;
- g. Be requesting funding for eligible activity and expenditure items; and
- h. Provide suitable information to support assessment as detailed in the application form.

5. Activity and Expenditure Eligibility

The following activities and expenses are not eligible for Shire grant funding:

- a. Activities that have already commenced or have been completed (retrospective funding);
- b. Cash prizes, gifts or fundraising activities;
- c. Recurrent operating expenses e.g. administration costs, staff wages and utilities;
- d. Activities that promote racism, violence, discrimination or segregation;
- e. Servicing outstanding debts or loans;
- f. Activities or events that are the responsibility of State or Federal Government;
- g. Purchasing or provision of alcohol, or the costs associated with meeting Liquor Licensing requirements;
- h. An individual's personal expenses e.g. living and medical;
- i. Political activities;
- j. Religious activities;
- k. Activities or events that conflict with planned Shire events;
- l. Activities or events that duplicate what another organisation is already delivering;
- m. State or Federal Government Departments, Agencies and Organisations (excludes Schools); and
- n. Activities that generate income which is not used for the purposes of the project.

Additional eligibility requirements and funding conditions may apply to specific funding categories, as set out in the grant guidelines and/or funding agreements.

The Shire reserves the right to withdraw funding from a successful applicant if the activity has not progressed satisfactorily during the agreed timeframe, the organisation or activity ceases to be eligible, the organisation breaches the funding agreement, or the activity poses a reputational risk for the Shire. Should this occur the recipient will be liable for costs involved, and funds will be returned to (or recovered by) the Shire.

6. Strategic Alignment

The Shire's grants and funding programs are designed and delivered to support community organisations and initiatives that contribute to the objectives of the Shire's Strategic Community Plan.

To maintain strategic alignment, maximise outcomes, and support ongoing program evaluation and improvements, the grants guidelines will include reference to the Strategic Community Plan and the Shire's strategic objectives through a detailed outcomes framework.

The outcomes framework must demonstrate the anticipated causal links between Shire grant funding, the outputs and outcomes of funded projects, and how these are expected to contribute to strategic objectives.

7. Assessment Matrix

To further support strategic alignment and enable effective, fair, and accountable decision making, the grant guidelines will include an assessment matrix. The assessment matrix will be developed to ensure alignment with the program's aims, outcomes framework, eligibility requirements, and any category specific criteria.

The assessment matrix will be used by the Shire to score, compare, and make decisions about funding allocations.

Provision of the assessment matrix within the grant guidelines will ensure that application requirements and decision-making processes are clear and transparent.

8. Assessment and Approval Process

All eligible grant applications will be forwarded for assessment and assessed against the selection criteria using the assessment matrix as identified in the grants guidelines.

All ineligible grant applicants will be notified in writing and given an opportunity to address ineligibility conditions and invited to resubmit. Where applicants are not satisfied with the officer's decision related to eligibility requirements, the applicant may submit a request for review to the CEO. On occasions where eligibility is unclear or further consideration is required the officer will defer the decision of eligibility to the assessment panel and, where required to the CEO.

The Chief Executive Officer will establish an internal assessment panel for assessment of all eligible grant applications within a program. The assessment panel will make recommendations to the decision maker (Council, delegate or sub-delegate) for approval as required. The decision maker may not be involved in the assessment of applications.

Applications up to a value not exceeding \$3,000 do not require Council approval and may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or sub-delegate.

Applications may only be approved subject to the availability of funds in the approved Annual Budget.

Canvassing of Council Members or assessment panel members will disqualify applicants.

9. Funding Agreement

All successful grant applicants are required to enter into a formal written funding agreement prior to funds being released by the Shire.

The funding agreement will include:

- a. Purpose;
- b. Term of funding;
- c. Shire contribution and approved activities;

- d. Confirmation of any co-contributions;
- e. Grant terms and conditions including acquittal requirements, termination of agreement and repayment of funds;
- f. Expected Shire benefits;
- g. Shire Branding requirements;
- h. Media, communications and other promotional opportunities; and
- i. Declaration on behalf of recipient.

10. Acquittal

An acquittal must be provided to the Shire within 28 days of the conclusion of an approved grant funded project.

The acquittal must include:

- a. Financial evidence of expenditure including receipts;
- b. Details of the project including how many people attended, benefit to the community, outcomes;
- c. Evidence on how the Shire was acknowledged; and
- d. Photos, survey results or feedback provided from attendees.

Acquittals will be retained by the Shire to ensure compliance with the funding agreement and used in consideration of any future funding requests from the applicant.

11. Conflicts of Interest

In the administration and awarding of grants and funding, any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be managed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, its regulations and the codes of conducts.

Employees, assessment panel members and Council Members with any involvement with a grant or other funding application must declare:

- a. any direct or indirect financial interests they have with the application; and
- b. any impartiality interests they have with any application.

12. Reporting

All grant funding and associated budget allocations must be included in Council reports requesting approval and reported in the Shire's Annual Report. The Shire will promote its funding of applicants, projects, events and other initiatives through social media and Shire website and using other media outputs as appropriate.

Where significant program changes have been enacted, an assessment report outlining the positive and negative implications of the changes will be provided to Council within 12 months.

13. Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed every two years.

14. Authorisation Details

References:	The Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, may amend the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines as required.		
Authorised by:	Council		
Date:	24 September 2010	Item No.	9.2.3
Review/Amendment Date	31 January 2014	Item No.	9.2.2
Review/Amendment Date	27 June 2015	Item No.	9.2.5
Review/Amendment Date	28 August 2020	Item No.	9.3.1
Review/Amendment Date	25 November 2022	Item No.	11.3.1
Review/Amendment Date	30 June 2023	Item No.	11.3.3
Review/Amendment Date	25 October 2024	Item No.	12.1.1
Review/Amendment Date	31 July 2026	Minute No.	2026/213
Next Review	Every two years		
Responsible Directorate	Executive Services		
Responsible Officer	Manager Executive Services		
File No.			