

POLICY NAME

Community Funding Program Policy

DATE ADOPTED

22 July 2024

REVIEW DATE

22 July 2028

COUNCIL MINUTE NUMBER

ORD 171

POLICY TYPE

Council

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

City Activation, Community and Place

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Grant Guidelines: Thriving Communities Grant Guidelines, Safe Communities Domestic and Family Violence Grant Guidelines, Local Creativity Grant Guidelines, Magnetic Places Grant Guidelines, Local Events Grant Guidelines.

Purpose

The Community Funding Program Policy (the Policy) establishes the governing framework for Penrith City Council's provision of community funding in the form of grants to the local Penrith community.

The Policy underpins Council's Community Funding Program (the Program).

Through the Program, Council aims to deliver grants to support and amplify a diverse range of activities, programs, events, and projects that support strong and connected communities that are thriving, vibrant, and creative.

Policy Statement

This Policy supports Council to efficiently deliver grants according to best practice to achieve strategic outcomes, support changing community needs, and improve community wellbeing, connection and cohesion.

The Policy provides guidance to organisations, groups and individuals when applying for grants administered by Council's City Activation, Community and Place team.

Scope

The scope of this Policy relates only to grants associated with the Community Funding Program, coordinated and administered by Council's City Activation, Community and Place (CACP) team.

The Policy applies to community funding that is considered and approved by Council for specific agreed purposes and is provided in the form of grants.

This Policy excludes sponsorships. Sponsorships are managed in accordance with Council's Events Sponsorship Policy.

For further information on exclusions, see page 6 of this Policy.

Objectives

The Program helps deliver on Council's strategic objectives, support resident's health and wellbeing, and build stronger more connected communities through:

- fostering community participation by building social and cultural connections.
- responding to local issues, priority areas of need and community aspirations.
- providing accessible and inclusive opportunities for community members who are considered vulnerable or underrepresented.
- building connection between Council and community organisations.
- leveraging outcomes beyond the capability of Council to deliver alone.

Principles

The following principles are used to guide decision making related to Council's Community Funding Program.

- **Outcomes oriented:** Grant administration focuses on maximising the achievement of strategic goals, outcomes and benefits rather than outputs.
- **Robust planning and design:** Grant administration is efficient, effective and transparent, ensuring grants meet identified need and deliver value for money.
- **Collaboration and partnerships:** Grant administration fosters collaboration between Council, grant recipients and other stakeholders.
- **Proportionality:** Grant administration requirements take into consideration scale, complexity and risk involved in each grant.

- **Value for money:** Appropriate consideration is given to the distribution of grants amongst groups within the community, the costs and benefits as realised through outcomes for the community.
- **Governance and accountability:** Grant administration is underpinned by governance structures, with roles and responsibilities clearly outlined.
- **Probity and transparency:** Grant administration is conducted ethically, with honesty, impartiality, integrity and accountability.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Legislation and policies relevant to this Policy include:

- Provision of Financial Assistance, Sections 356 and 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.
- Code of Conduct (Clause 440 Local Government Act 1993).
- Government Information (Public Access) NSW Act 2009 No 52.

Other Council policies relevant to this Policy include:

- Code of Conduct
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Sustainability Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Event Sponsorship Policy

Strategic Alignment

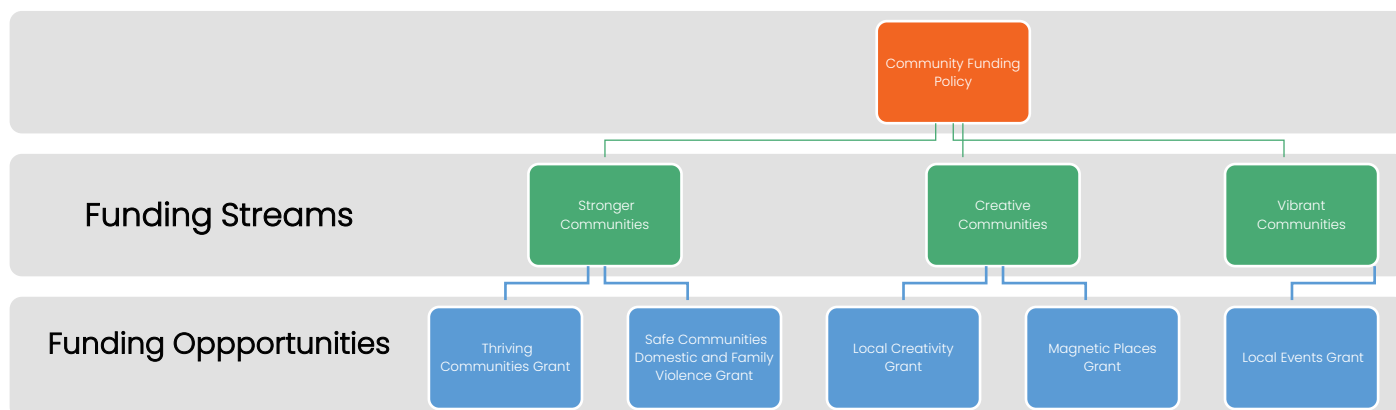
Council will fund activities, programs, services, and projects that align with community needs and the strategic directions outlined in the following key Council documents:

- Community Strategic Plan
- Delivery Program
- Operational Plan

Administration and Management of the Community Funding Program

Council manages and administers grants through its Community Funding Program. Funding is provided across three funding streams – Stronger Communities, Creative Communities and Vibrant Communities. Each stream has funding opportunities provided in the form of grants. Information about all available funding opportunities are published on Penrith City Council’s website and details will be provided in the specific grant guidelines.

All funding opportunities are open for applications during specific times, either once or twice a year.



Assessment Process

All grant applications are assessed by at least three relevant Penrith City Council staff, including those with knowledge and experience relevant to the grant opportunity.

If required, up to one external panel member may be included on an assessment panel. An external panel member will only be engaged where there is a particular skillset not available within Council at the time of assessment or if deemed beneficial to the assessment process. All external parties are required to have relevant skills and experience required to assess grants. External assessors cannot submit a grant application in the grant round they are assessing.

All assessors are required to make a conflict-of-interest declaration on each application as part of the assessment process.

Approval Process

Council has the authority to approve grants or other forms of financial assistance. Council delegates this role to the General Manager in accordance with the delegations enabled by the Local Government Act (1993).

The Program will operate on a competitive, merit-based selection process. Applications will be assessed by the assessment panel against Assessment Criteria detailed in Grant Guidelines and the principles of this Policy. Upon conclusion of the assessment process, Council officers are required to submit a Summary Report and

recommendations to the appropriate authorised Council representative/s for endorsement/approval.

Approval of a grant does not imply that Penrith City Council has given any other required consent, authorisation or approval.

Grant Guidelines

Each grant within the Program has specific Grant Guidelines (Guidelines), published on Council's website.

Guidelines specific to each grant include, at a minimum, the following:

- Grant overview
- Grant objectives
- Application requirements
- Eligibility requirements
- Reporting and acquittal requirements
- Assessment criteria

The General Manager may make changes to the Guidelines that are not inconsistent with this Policy.

Funding Conditions

The following conditions will apply to all grants in the Program:

- a) Activities, programs, events and projects must take place in Penrith Local Government Area (LGA).
- b) Activities, programs, events and projects must be free or low cost.
- c) Only eligible applicants may be granted funding. The eligibility criteria differs between funding opportunities and is detailed in the Grant Guidelines.
- d) A funding application is only considered successful once notice is provided in writing by Council and the successful recipient returns the signed funding agreement to Council.
- e) Council's contribution is limited to the amount stated in the funding agreement. All other costs associated with the project are to be paid by the grant recipient.
- f) Funding must only be used for the purposes outlined by Council in the funding agreement. Changes in scope must be negotiated with Council and confirmed in writing.
- g) When an organisation or individual accepts funding and/or signs a funding agreement, this serves as evidence that they accept the conditions within this Policy and the relevant Grant Guidelines.

- h) In cases where there are unspent funds, the recipient will be required to return unspent funds to Council.
- i) Council reserves the right to withdraw funding and/or cease an agreement with a funding recipient if:
 - the project is not progressing satisfactorily according to the funding agreement; or
 - if the organisation ceases to be eligible; or
 - the organisation breaches funding conditions; or
 - the project risks the positive reputation of Council.

If this occurs, the organisation will be fully liable for costs involved and remaining unspent funds must be returned to Council.

- j) The organisation or individual receiving the funding must obtain all relevant permits or approvals from Council or other relevant authorities before they proceed with an activity, program, event and/or project.
- k) Funding recipients cannot use Council's logo in promotional material unless they have prior approval in writing from Penrith City Council.

Any other funding conditions will be outlined in the Grant Guidelines, and funding agreements.

Exclusions

Council reserves the right to exclude financial assistance under this Policy for:

- a) Activities, programs, events or projects that duplicate Council responsibilities.
- b) Groups or individuals whose activities, objectives or mission conflicts with Council's policies or strategic objectives.
- c) Funding requests for business-as-usual operational costs.
- d) Commercial or political activities.
- e) Activities, programs, events, or projects with the sole purpose of fundraising.
- f) Private functions.
- g) Retrospective funding.
- h) Building and building maintenance costs.
- i) Operational and administrative expenses.
- j) Meeting shortfalls in operational funding.

Additionally, the below organisations are ineligible for financial assistance under this Policy:

- Government organisations.
- Educational organisations, including schools (school parent representative bodies such as Parents and Friends Association are eligible).
- Political parties.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

In cases where funding is provided for a supply, that is, expenditure of the funds must adhere to a binding legal obligation or for providing goods or services to Council, and the applicant is GST Registered, the recipient is eligible to charge GST on a valid Tax Invoice.

Transition of Current Funding Opportunities to Align with this Policy

This policy supersedes and replaces any previous policies related to Council's Community Funding Program delivered by the City Activation, Community and Place team.

All current funding agreements with community funding recipients will remain until they are completed according to the agreed timelines and deliverables.

The implementation of any new grants administered by City Activation, Community and Place team will align with this Policy from inception.

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this Policy. Where an update does not significantly alter this document, such a change may be made administratively, and a Council resolution is not required. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, or a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which significantly alters this document must be made by resolution of the Council.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

Document Control

Policy History	Date
Version 1 – Adopted by Council	22 July 2024
Version 2 – Amendment to Policy	1 August 2024
Version 3 – Amendment to Policy	17 January 2025