

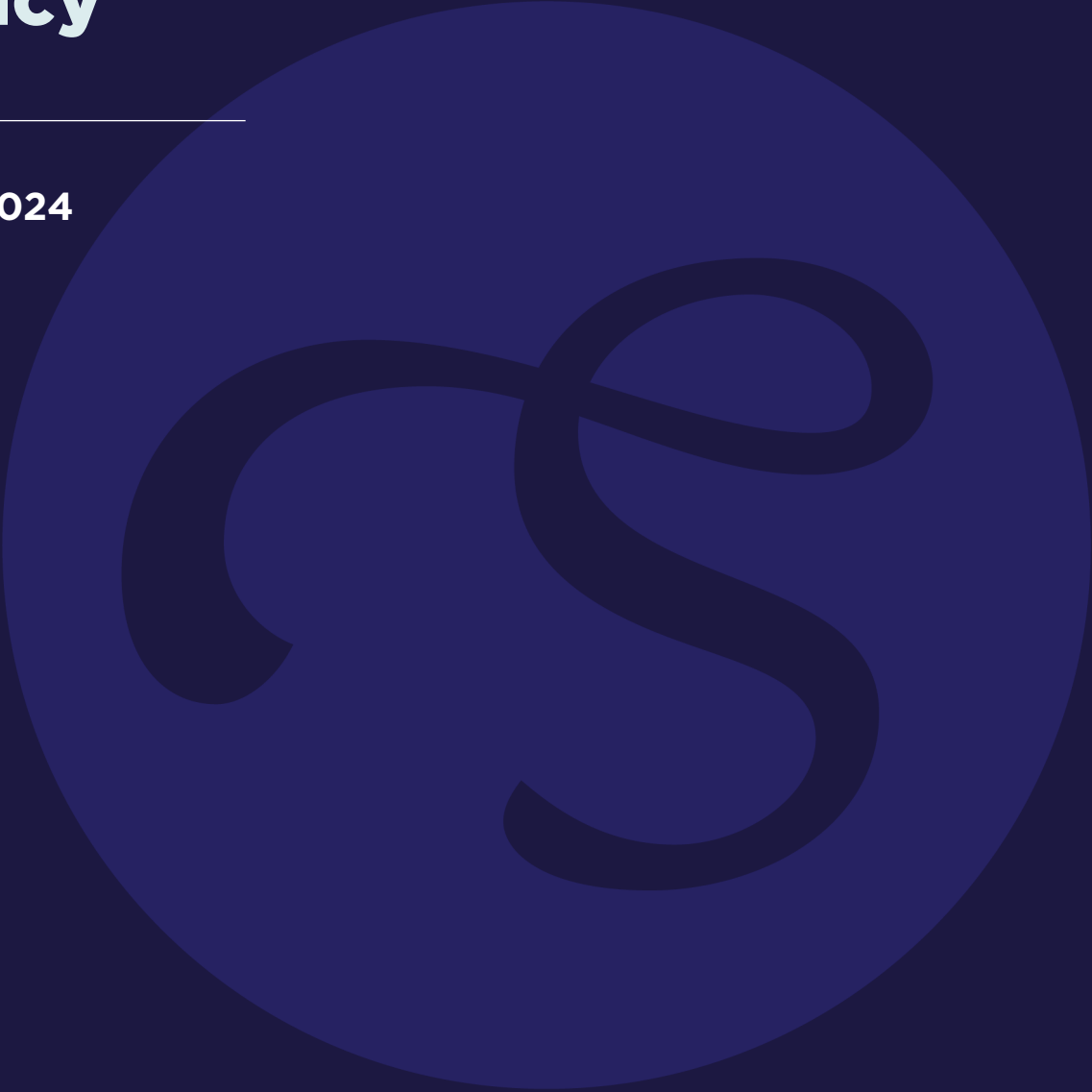
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**Strathbogie Shire Council**

# **Community Funding Policy**

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**April 2024**



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# Community Funding Policy

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Responsible Officer	Director Community and Planning

## 1. PURPOSE

Strathbogie Shire Council (Council) recognises the value and importance of the role community groups and organisations play in building vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities. Their contribution is vital to the Shire’s economic and tourism development, and the visitor economy.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guiding principles and accompanying framework for the allocation of Council funding to groups and organisations delivering initiatives including community planning within the Strathbogie Shire.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

*The Local Government Act 2020* identifies a primary objective of Council is to *achieve the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations*. Part of Council’s role in achieving this is to foster community cohesion and encourage active participation in civic life and ensure transparency and accountability in Council decision making.

Community funding programs are one way in which Council can enter into partnership with community organisations and groups through the provision of funds, to deliver activities, projects and initiatives that deliver mutual community benefit. This helps the Council and Community to deliver on Strathbogie Shire’s Community Vision and Council Plan. It helps to address community needs, support local networks, encourage participation in community life, facilitate innovation and responsiveness in community service provision, and promote access, inclusion and acceptance of diversity.

When councils support and resource community groups in seeking funds and achieving outcomes, the relationship between local government and the community is strengthened.

This policy outlines Council’s commitment to providing the community with access to funding for activities, projects and initiatives that align with Council’s strategic direction and the Council Plan and provides a framework that ensures the funding program is delivered in a fair and transparent manner.

Council commits to review the community funding model annually to ensure alignment with

- the Community Vision 2040 and the Council Plan
- community needs
- effectiveness and efficiency of operational and administrative processes including eligibility and assessment, decision making, monitoring and reporting, review and evaluation.

This review forms part of Council's continuous improvement cycle and demonstrates commitment to best practice in regard to the provision of community funding.

This policy and the Community Funding Model is also consistent with the recommendations from the VAGO 2022 Fraud Control over Local Government Grants Review.

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

The following guiding principles underpin best practice in funding, grant management and administration and are applied throughout the funding lifecycle.

#### **3.1 Social Justice**

Our funding approach encompasses the key values of social justice that aim to decrease inequity and establish environments that are inclusive, connected, supportive of all people and improve areas of social isolation, this includes Council's commitment to Gender Equality.

#### **3.2 Sustainability and Climate Action**

We support and encourage:

- Environmentally sustainable practices in the way we manage our funding
- The application of sustainable approaches to community funded projects and services
- Consideration of localised responses to community funded projects and services

#### **3.3 Robust Planning and Design**

Our funding administration is efficient, effective and ethical with a continuous quality improvement approach and the establishment of effective risk management processes

#### **3.4 Governance and Accountability**

We have a strong governance framework in place that:

- Defines Council and community roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
- Establishes the policies, procedures and guidelines necessary for funding recipient selection
- Supports public accountability for decision making and funding administration

#### **3.5 Transparency**

Our program administration ensures our funding decisions are impartial, transparent and well documented, and that appropriate reporting and fraud measures are in place.

#### **3.6 Maximise Outcomes**

Our funding program is aligned with our strategic directions to deliver maximum value for money and the best possible outcomes for the community.

#### **3.7 Flexibility and Responsiveness**

Our program responds to changing economic, environment and community needs

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

Key terms and definitions used throughout this document are shown in the table below.

Term	Definition
Acquittal	An acquittal consists of a written report on the project implementation and a financial statement detailing how the funds were spent.
Applicant	A person who submits an application for grant funding
Assessment Criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications are judged and used to assess the merits of proposals
Assessment Process	The steps that must be followed by individuals and organisations to be considered for funding. It includes the forms, written documentation, and the eligibility and assessment criteria to be satisfied.
Auspice	An agreement where one organisation (the 'principal organisation') agrees to apply for funding on behalf of a second organisation that is not incorporated (the 'auspiced organisation'). If the funding application is successful, the principal organisation then receives, holds and administers the funding to the auspiced organisation, so that the auspiced organisation can complete the funded project or activities.
Community Organisation	Not for profit organisations and groups that encompass a wide range of activities, programs and services aimed at improving people's quality of life.
Community Planning Group	A recognised community group who undertakes locality-based community planning, develops a community endorsed Community Plan, represents the community to Council and advocates on behalf of the community as required.
Conflict of Interest	A relevant person has a <b>material conflict of interest</b> in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. A relevant person has a <b>general conflict of interest</b> in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.
Council	means the Strathbogie Shire Council.
Funding	A sum of money or form of subsidy that Council provides to an organisation under a formalised agreement.
Funding Agreement	A written agreement between Council and the funding recipient. The funding agreement states the purpose of the funding, the financial amount, and the conditions of the funding including key deliverables. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of the parties.
Funding – Strategic Partnership	A partnership that has been entered into between Council and a community organisation so they can work collaboratively to achieve common outcomes. Strategic

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	partnerships include the provision of funding to deliver on an idea that will strengthen the community and is aligned with Council's strategic priorities.
Grant	A sum of money given to a recipient for a specified purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with Council's strategic priorities. Grant recipients are selected on merit against a set of criteria. Grants have conditions attached outlined in a Funding Agreement. Grants are dispersed as a one off and are not provided as long-term funding.
Incorporated	A group has a legal identity of its own, separate and distinct from the individuals who formed or make up the group.
In-kind support	Includes volunteer labour, administrative support, rent-free accommodation or donations of materials or equipment.
Not-for-profit organisation	A body that: (a) operates exclusively for charitable, civil, sporting or other social purposes; and (b) does not share or allocate the funds or profits of the body or organisation with the owners, shareholders or executives of the body or organisation.
Project	The program, activities, event, or service being funded through the funding.

**5. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY**

The Community Funding Policy applies to all funding distributed by Council to the community via strategic agreements and through the following programs:

- Community Grants Program
- Event Grants Program
- Community Planning Program

This policy applies to organisations, community groups and not for profit organisations applying for community funding. Council may consider entering into a funding agreement outside of these specified programs, subject to budget allocations and at the discretion of Council.

This policy also applies to all Council Officers and Councillors involved in the promotion, assessment and management of community funding that fall within the policy framework.

A Community Funding Model is adopted by Council annually to support the provision of all Community Funding. This includes the adoption of associated Guidelines, Applications, Assessment and determination/ decision making process for all grants.

**6. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ownership of the Community Funding Policy sits with the Community and Planning directorate.

Council Officers and Councillors are responsible for the application of the policy.

Role	Responsibilities
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Director Community and Planning	Apply the policy to guide the process required for the consistent, equitable, transparent, and efficient delivery of grants and funding
Councillors	Apply the policy to inform decision making ensuring the consistent, equitable and transparent approval of grants and funding

**7. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION**

The following Council, State, regional and national plans and policies are relevant to this policy.

**Legislation**

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

**Related Council documents**

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Governance Rules
- Community Engagement Strategy 2019-2022
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Funding Model
- Council Community Grant Guidelines
- Council Event Grant Guidelines
- Council Community Planning Program Guidelines

**8. POLICY REVIEW**

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

This Policy will be reviewed 12 months from the time of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (e.g. a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

**9. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010**

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

**10 IMPLEMENTATION**

Refer to Council’s Community Funding Model and associated Guidelines for detail regarding implementation.