



Providing Funding and Support to the Community Policy

Document Control

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for how Port Macquarie-Hastings Council delivers funding and support to individuals and community organisations.

This policy ensures that all funding and support aligns with Council's strategic priorities, delivers community benefit, and is administered in a fair, transparent and accountable manner. It also clarifies Council's approach to community organisation rate support as part of a broader, holistic support model.

2. Statement

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council recognises the critical role that community organisations and individuals play in strengthening social, cultural and economic outcomes across the Local Government Area. Council is committed to providing funding and support through a structured and coordinated approach, guided by the Giving, Investing and Purchasing Model, to:

- Build community capacity
- Support delivery of services, projects and events
- Foster strong partnerships with the community
- Ensure value for money and responsible use of public funds

Council adopts a holistic approach to community support, where direct financial assistance is complemented by grants, subsidies, in-kind contributions and capacity-building initiatives. While direct rate relief may be applied where appropriate, it is not the primary mechanism of support.

All funding and support will be delivered in accordance with relevant legislation, best practice principles and Council's strategic objectives.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all forms of funding and support provided by Council, including but not limited to:

- Grants
- Donations
- Subsidies
- Rate relief
- Waivers and discounts (including rate-related concessions where applicable)
- In-kind support (e.g. facilities, staff time, services)
- Discretionary and mandatory payments

This policy applies across all areas of Council that administer funding and support programs.

It also acknowledges that Council administers subsidies required under legislation, including pensioner rate rebates and contributions to emergency services.

4. Principles

Council will apply the following principles when delivering funding and support:

- Community Benefit - Funding and support will prioritise activities that deliver clear and measurable benefits to the community and align with Council's strategic priorities.
- Equity and Accessibility - Processes will be fair, inclusive and accessible, ensuring equitable opportunity for eligible individuals and organisations.
- Transparency and Accountability - All funding and support decisions will be made through open, transparent processes with appropriate governance, reporting and oversight.
- Value for Money - Council will ensure that funding and support achieves the best possible outcomes relative to the resources invested.
- Consistency and Best Practice - Funding programs will be administered using consistent processes aligned with best practice grants management principles.
- Partnership and Capacity Building - Council will work collaboratively with community organisations to build capability, strengthen partnerships and support long-term sustainability.
- Compliance - All funding and support will comply with relevant legislation, policies and regulatory requirements.

4.1 Community Organisation Support Framework

The framework establishes a consistent and transparent approach for the provision of community organisation support to eligible community organisations, as part of Council's broader funding and support model.

4.2 Forms of support

Community organisation support is recognised within the Giving, Investing and Purchasing Model. Council may provide community organisation support through a mix of funding, subsidies, in-kind support and capacity-building initiatives to reduce operational costs and maximise community impact. This may include rate relief in the form of: waivers, rebates or reductions, deferred payment arrangements and/or subsidised access.

4.3 Eligibility Criteria

Eligible organisations must:

- Be a not-for-profit organisation, charity or incorporated community group
- Deliver activities that provide demonstrable public benefit to the community
- Align with Council's strategic priorities
- Demonstrate financial need and/or community impact

Priority may be given to organisations that:

- Support vulnerable or priority populations
- Provide broad and inclusive community access
- Deliver outcomes aligned to Council's Community Strategic Plan and Community Inclusion & Disability Action Plan

4.4 Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against:

- Community benefit and impact
- Strategic alignment
- Financial capacity and demonstrated need
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Value for money and sustainability
- Availability of alternative support mechanisms

4.5 Application and Approval Process

- Community organisation support will be administered through a formal application and assessment process
- Assessment will be undertaken by relevant Council staff in accordance with this policy
- Approvals will be made in line with delegated authority and legislative requirements, including Section 356 of the Local Government Act where applicable
- All decisions will be documented and communicated transparently

4.6 Conditions of Support

Approved support may be subject to:

- Use of land/facility for agreed community purposes
- Compliance with relevant legislation and Council policies
- Reporting on outcomes or community benefit
- Entry into a Funding or Subsidy Agreement where appropriate

Council may amend or withdraw support where conditions are not met.

4.7 Duration and Review

- Support will generally be time-limited
- All arrangements will be subject to periodic review
- Continued support must demonstrate ongoing community benefit and alignment with Council priorities

4.8 Integration with Other Support

Community organisation support will be considered alongside other forms of assistance, including:

- Community Grants Program
- In-kind and facility support
- Capacity-building and advisory services

Council may prioritise alternative support mechanisms where they deliver greater flexibility or community impact.

4.10 Governance and Compliance

- All support will comply with relevant legislation and Council policies
- A central register of rate support arrangements will be maintained
- Annual reporting will be undertaken to ensure transparency and accountability

5. References and Related Documents

Legislation and External References:

- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) – Section 356
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- NSW Auditor-General's Report: Performance Report on Grants Administration (2009)

Other Documents:

- Community Strategic Plan
- Community Inclusion & Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Community Grants Program Guidelines
- Financial Management and Procurement Policies
- Relevant program procedures, toolkits and templates

6. Definitions

Discretionary Payment

A payment where the amount is not fixed by law or regulation and may be provided at Council's discretion, including 'act of grace' payments or waived debts.

In-kind Support

Non-monetary assistance such as the provision of facilities, services, or staff resources to support community activities, services or events.

Funding Agreement

A formal agreement outlining the terms and conditions of funding provided by Council to an organisation or individual.

Grant

A financial contribution provided to organisations or individuals for specific purposes aligned with Council objectives, subject to defined terms and conditions.

Funding Program Administrator

A Council officer responsible for administering a funding or support program in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

Subsidy/Benefit

A non-repayable financial or non-financial contribution provided to reduce costs or support activities considered to be in the public interest. Some subsidies may be mandated by legislation.

7. Responsible Officer

The Group Manager Liveable Communities is the responsible officer for this policy.

The Responsible Officer is accountable for:

- Ensuring the policy is implemented and maintained
- Overseeing associated procedures, toolkits and systems
- Supporting consistent and best practice administration across Council
- Coordinating review and continuous improvement of funding and support programs

The General Manager, Directors, Group Managers and relevant staff are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within their areas of responsibility.