

Gladstone Regional Council

Council Policy

Title	COMMUNITY INVESTMENT
Policy Number	P-2023-10
Business Unit/s	COMMUNITY AND LIFESTYLE
Date of Adoption	
Resolution Number	
Date Repealed	

1.0 PURPOSE:

Council recognises the value provided by local not-for-profit organisations, individuals, and businesses in delivering initiatives, projects, and services that contribute to a liveable, sustainable, and vibrant community.

This policy outlines a consistent, equitable, transparent, and efficient framework under which all donations, funding, in-kind contributions, and sponsorships are made to organisations delivering initiatives within the Gladstone region. It ensures Council conforms to the legislative requirements prescribed under section 194 and 195 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* as the decision-making authority disseminating Council funds through donations, funding, in-kind contributions, and sponsorships.

2.0 SCOPE:

This policy is effective from 01 July 2023.

Council is committed to ensuring our communities thrive. Through this policy Council provides funding, expertise, and support to organisations that deliver outcomes aligned to Council's plans and strategies.

The Community Investment Policy enables Council to:

- support our communities in attaining the resources and skills to identify and respond to local areas of need;
- partner with organisations to deliver community led and shared outcomes;
- activate community participation amongst residents;
- support the community sector with planning, risk mitigation, and capacity building initiatives; and
- contribute to the development of local students and sportspersons.

The following funding programs are outside the scope of this policy:

- Council policies that make provision for funding as adopted from time to time; and
- funding provided to organisations and/or individuals under the Regional Arts Development Fund and Council's Biosecurity Plan 2021-25.

3.0 RELATED LEGISLATION:

- *Local Government Act 2009;*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012;*
- *Human Rights Act 2019;*
- *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011.*

4.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Code of Conduct Policy;
- Councillor Conduct Code Policy;
- Community Development Strategy 2021-2026;
- Community Investment Program Funding Guideline;
- Community Investment Program Business Manual;
- Gladstone Regional Events Strategy 2019-2024;
- Privacy Policy.

5.0 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in the interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

“Australian Registered Charity” means an organisation that is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

“Community Hall” means a facility owned and/or operated by a not-for-profit community organisation where the primary purpose of the facility is for general community use (via a hire or other authorised use arrangement) where members of the public gather for group activities, social support, public information, entertainment, education, and other social purposes. It excludes those facilities where community use is not the primary purpose and may be only a minor ancillary use of the facility.

“Community Organisation” means an entity that carries out activities for a public purpose or an entity whose primary objective is not directed at making a profit and:

- it does not distribute its income and property among members; and
- it does not pay dividends to members.

“Donation” means a contribution of goods or cash to an organisation without an expectation of direct counter-supply or serviceable deliverables, given unconditionally and voluntarily.

“Educational Institution” means:

- primary schools, secondary schools, universities, and TAFE / Technical Colleges as recognised by the State and Federal Government; or
- childcare centre, early learning centre, kindergarten; or
- any group or association created for the purpose of achieving the educational institution’s objectives (i.e. Parents and Citizens/Friends Association).

“Funding” means a financial payment from Council for non-commercial projects, activities, or items which meet specific criteria within a formal application, assessment, and acquittal process (where applicable), and any financial or other assistance given is conditional upon agreed terms and conditions.

“Incorporated Association” means an organisation incorporated under the *Association Incorporation Act 1981* or other relevant legislation.

“In-kind contribution” means the provision of any service, product, or use of facility that would normally attract a fee and includes services procured by Council from external suppliers at its costs. This contribution may be provided in lieu of and/or in addition to a monetary contribution.

“Local” means a not-for-profit organisation, individual, or business that makes a significant contribution to the Gladstone Region by way of having a physical presence in the Gladstone Regional Council local government area.

“Not-For-Profit” means an organisation which does not operate for the profit, personal gain, or benefit of a particular person, people, or members.

“Project” means a service, event, activity, initiative, or equipment purchase for which an organisation might seek assistance.

“Public Interest” means the extent to which the community will be enhanced through funding the delivery of perceived benefits (social, educational, economic, environmental, cultural, and sport and recreational) of proposed projects and activities, having regard to competing interests or priorities.

Religious or Worship Group means (for the purpose of this policy) an organisation or group which is based on or otherwise connected with the practice, teaching, observance, or belief in a Religion. The definition of Religion as defined by the High Court of Australia:

‘means first, belief in a supernatural being, thing or principle; and second, the acceptance of canons of conduct in order to give effect to that belief, though canons of conduct which offend against the ordinary laws are outside the area of any immunity, privilege or right conferred on the grounds of religion’.

“Sponsorship” means a mutually negotiated arrangement entailing the provision of funds and/or in-kind contribution associated with an event, organisation, or project and results in tangible benefits (advertising, publicity, or other) to Council as the sponsoring organisation.

“Sporting Club” means sporting bodies that are not-for-profit and provide sporting facilities and opportunities for the public to engage in sport.

6.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy enables Council to offer access to donations, funding, in-kind support, and sponsorships under Council’s Community Investment Program. Recognising the need to be responsive to our community and proactive in building community capacity, Council will provide support for local initiatives, projects, and community related activities where Council considers it is in the public interest.

The Community Investment Program provides opportunities for financial assistance and in-kind support within the following categories:

- Grassroots Fund;
- Elevator Fund;
- Community Celebration Fund;

- Community Hall Fund;
- Waste Fund;
- Bursary and Scholarships Fund;
- Strategic Projects Fund; and
- Community Donations Fund.

6.1 Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for each category is identified in Attachment 1 and within the Community Investment Program Funding Guideline (guideline) published on Council's website.

Applications will only be considered if:

- the application complies with this policy;
- the application is accompanied by the mandatory information outlined in the guideline;
- the minimum criteria are demonstrated; and
- the application is received in the form requested by Council (i.e. online submission), is complete, and is received prior to the closing date of the funding round (where applicable).

Applications which are late or received outside of a funding round may be considered by the Chief Executive Officer in exceptional circumstances (i.e. online submission portal unavailable).

6.2 Application Rounds

A minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the opening date of a funding round, the opening and closing dates (where applicable) for the round shall be published on Council's website and other media sources as appropriate. All rounds shall be open for a minimum of four (4) weeks.

6.3 Grassroots and Elevator Funds

6.3.1 Grassroots Fund

The Grassroots Fund is intended for lower risk and lower cost proposals of up to \$10,000 excluding GST. Grassroots proposals can assist in developing the skills of the applicant in preparing, delivering, and acquitting funds and/or deliver an initial stage or smaller scale project for the applicant.

6.3.2 Elevator Fund

The Elevator Fund is intended for higher risk, higher cost proposals of over \$10,000 excluding GST (maximum \$30,000 excluding GST), which will involve a more detailed application and acquittal process. Applicants will need to demonstrate a high level of competency, capacity, and planning capability to deliver the stated proposal outcomes.

6.3.3 Grassroots and Elevator Funding Objectives

The Grassroots and Elevator Funds are divided into five (5) funding objectives of which applications must meet at least one (1) of the objectives:

Objective	Criteria
Capacity	The Capacity objective aims to foster community led collaboration and partnerships that help communities develop their own solutions to local areas of need. Initiatives and activities under this objective will generally strengthen and build the skills, knowledge, and capacity of community members and groups which can then be applied and shared. One (1) of the key outcomes of the Capacity objective is to advance the community aspiration of collective action, cooperation, and shared goals.
Place	The Place objective aims to foster the development of accessible, fulfilling, and engaging places and spaces for the community. This will be achieved through supporting the delivery of community led initiatives, projects, and activities that activate Council controlled or community owned and operated facilities, parks, and open spaces to provide safe and accessible social infrastructure that meets the community's diverse needs.
Connect	The Connect objective aims to foster community led initiatives and projects that strengthen relationships, community connection, civic participation, and understanding across all sectors of the community.
Wellbeing	The Wellbeing objective aims to foster healthy, safe, and supported communities through the delivery of community led partnerships, programs, activities, and resources that promote healthy lifestyles, positive wellbeing, and safe communities.
Planning	The Planning objective aims to foster and support the development of programs, plans, and strategies that strengthen the community's ability to deliver well planned and sustainable organisations, facilities, and activities across the region.

6.4 Community Celebration Fund

The Community Celebration Fund enables the development and delivery of initiatives and projects that facilitate community connection through events. Applications will be considered under the following categories and may include a cash component and/or an in-kind contribution:

Category	Focus Area
Community Event – up to \$1,500 ex GST	Support for community led events that are run by community organisations for broad public benefit.
Ignite Event – up to \$10,000 ex GST	Support for events that contribute to community pride/social outcomes and regional economy that attract up to 2,500 participants.
Impact Event – up to \$25,000 ex GST	Support for events that demonstrate tourism and regional economy benefits and attract 2,500 to 5,000 participants, with 10% out-of-region visitors.
Destination Event – up to \$50,000 ex GST	Support for events that are well established, well designed, and clearly demonstrate return on investment, building community pride, return visitation, regional profile, economic stimulus, and attract over 5,000 participants, with 15% out-of-region visitors.
Signature Event (no limit per application, subject to Council budget)	Support for events that drive the primary criteria of destination profile, economic impact, and overnight visitor expenditure. Attract visitors that invest in the region and over 25% out-of-region visitors.

For the Impact, Destination, and Signature categories, an Expression of Interest will be invited. This will enable partnership with applicants to deliver outcomes that align with Council's Corporate Plan and strategies within budget allocation/s.

6.5 Community Hall Fund

The Community Hall Fund provides an annual donation of up to \$2,000 excluding GST to assist local organisations who own, lease, or manage a Community Hall within the Gladstone region with operating costs. The hall must meet the definition of Community Hall as set out in this policy.

6.6 Waste Fund

The Waste Fund alleviates the burden of organisations in the processing and disposal of general waste. Applications will be considered under the following categories and may include a cash component and/or an in-kind contribution:

Category	Criteria
Charity Waste Waiver	Charitable organisations that accept pre-loved household belongings and have been issued with an exemption code from the Department of Environmental Science.
Waste Donation	Not-for-profit organisations, First Nations groups, and businesses that coordinate non-commercial litter clean up from foreshores, land owned/managed/leased/under the control of Council, or land otherwise approved by Council.

There will be no donation limitation applied per application; however once the annual budget allocation has been exhausted no further concession or funding will be applied.

6.7 Bursary and Scholarships Fund

6.7.1 Regional Schools Bursary Fund

The Regional Schools Bursary Fund provides Gladstone region educational institutions with donations to recognise and reward excellence in the areas of academic success, attitude, attendance, and community contributions. Donations in the following amounts will be provided directly to the educational institution to administer and award:

- Primary - \$200 excluding GST;
- Secondary - \$500 excluding GST;
- Combined (primary/secondary) - \$500 excluding GST;
- Technical College - \$500 excluding GST;
- CQ University Gladstone - \$500 excluding GST; and
- CQU TAFE Gladstone - \$500 excluding GST.

6.7.2 Col Brown Memorial Award

The Col Brown Memorial Award recognises excellence and achievement for a local apprentice or trainee engaged through Apprentices and Trainees Queensland. Annually, Council will donate \$1,000 excluding GST directly to Apprentices and Trainees Queensland to administer and decide the award.

6.7.3 CQ University Gladstone Campus Scholarships

The purpose of these scholarships is to encourage Gladstone region students to remain in the region and further their education at a CQ University Gladstone Campus with the objective of strengthening the future regional workforce. Seven (7) scholarships of \$2,000 excluding GST will be awarded annually to one (1) Year 12 student from each of the seven (7) participating regional secondary schools to contribute to the cost of studying on a CQ University Gladstone Campus. Donations will be provided directly to CQ University to administer and award the scholarships.

6.8 Strategic Projects Fund

The Strategic Projects Fund strengthens not-for-profit organisations through the provision of financial support to upgrade existing or build new facilities where the organisation has suitable land tenure as defined in the guidelines. Applicants must contribute a minimum of 20% to the project with funding of up to \$100,000 excluding GST may be granted by Council.

6.9 Community Donations Fund

The Community Donations Fund supports initiatives that contribute positively to the community that may not align with other funding provided for in this policy. Funding of up to \$1,500 excluding GST may be granted.

6.10 Assessment of Applications

Attachment 2 provides the method of assessment and decision maker for eligible applications.

All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria, this policy, the guideline, and alignment with Council's Community Development Strategy.

Council may request further information from applicants to substantiate the application at any time during the assessment process with all requests to be made in writing. Council may also seek advice from a competent Council employee having regard to the nature of the advice being sought (i.e. a qualified accountant may provide advice on financial matters).

Where the funding category guideline requires, a meeting with the applicant may also be held. In these circumstances, a record of the meeting shall be documented in writing.

In circumstances where a panel assessment is made:

- all panels will be comprised of a minimum of three (3) trained members; and
- all panels will be comprised of at least one (1) Manager or Specialist level position; and
- the panel will assess all applications received for a funding category for a round; and
- the panel will individually review and assess each application independent of the other applications; and
- all panel members must not have declared a conflict of interest (actual/potential/perceived) for any application/s received for a funding category for a round.

6.10.1 Moderation

For panel assessments, the Chief Executive Officer may also appoint a moderator who:

- will remain neutral to ensure assessments are fair and transparent;
- must not have been a panel member for the panel assessment being moderated; and
- must not have declared a conflict of interest for any application/s being moderated.

The role of the moderator is to:

- review panel assessments to ensure:
 - scores are objective, fair, and without bias;
 - standards of scoring (weighting) have been applied consistently between applications in consideration of the assessment matrices;
- ensure compliance with this policy, the guideline, and associated procedures; and
- award final scores and provide commentary for presentation as the officer recommendation to Council for decision on the outcome of applications.

6.11 Budget and Funding

Due to the limited budget available to Council and the competitive nature of accessing community funds, organisations should not rely on the Community Investment Program as recurrent funding.

The funding limits that apply to each round will be published on Council's website annually following budget adoption.

In circumstances where the value of applications exceeds the budget allocation for the category (and where applicable, funding round), funding will be provided based on the assessment score (highest to lowest).

Council will not retrospectively fund projects and initiatives that have already been undertaken or commenced.

6.11.1 Partial Funding

Council reserves the right to partly fund any application. The maximum amount of funding that may be provided to a successful applicant is:

Rating	Description	Funding
75%	An overall score of 75% and above demonstrates that the application has met or exceeded all assessment criteria. The panel may choose to fund the application up to 100% of the requested amount.	up to 100%
65% - 74%	An overall score between 65% and 74% demonstrates that the application has met most assessment criteria and has alignment with Council's Community Development Strategy. The panel may choose to fund the application up to 85% of the requested amount.	up to 85%
55% - 64%	An overall score between 55% and 64% demonstrates that the application meets some assessment criteria and has alignment with Council's Community Development Strategy. The panel may choose to fund the application up to 75% of the requested amount.	up to 75%
54%	An overall score of 54% or below demonstrates that the application does not meet any assessment criteria.	0%

6.11.2 Funding Agreements

Successful applicants may be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Council.

The Funding Agreement will include (but not limited to) the conditions agreed to, payment terms, performance required, acknowledgements of funding, and evaluation methods.

The Funding Agreement will be drafted at Council's expense, although any costs incidental to the Funding Agreement will be at the successful applicant's cost.

6.12 Decision on Applications

The outcome decision for all applications received for a funding category assessed and decided at an officer level shall be communicated in writing to the applicant within four (4) weeks of the closing date of the round for the respective funding category.

The outcome of decisions for applications decided via resolution of Council for a funding category shall be communicated in writing to the applicant within 12 weeks of the closing date of the round for the respective funding category.

In circumstances where funding categories do not have an advertised closing date, the outcome decision for such applications shall be communicated in writing to the applicant within four (4) weeks of the date the application was received.

6.13 Review of Decision

There is no review available for decisions made by resolution of Council.

In circumstances where a decision has been made by an officer, the applicant may lodge an Administrative Action Complaint in accordance with the Complaint Management Policy.

6.14 Acquittal

Funding must not be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it has been approved unless written consent has been obtained from Council.

Attachment 2 identifies the funding categories for which an acquittal must be submitted. Acquittals must be submitted in the form required by Council within eight (8) weeks after the project is completed.

Failure to submit an acquittal and any information requested will impact future eligibility or result in some or all of the funding to be paid back to Council. Applicants will also be restricted from further eligibility for a period of at least two (2) years.

6.15 Governance Principles to Apply to Extraordinary Requests

It is acknowledged that from time to time, Council may need to consider community funding requests or circumstances that require agility in funding provided to the community that have not been captured through this policy. In these circumstances, good governance principles and processes must still apply with officers to conduct a documented assessment of extraordinary requests against the principles and objectives contained in this policy. Decision making on extraordinary requests are to align with the requirements set out in Attachment 2.

7.0 ATTACHMENTS:

1. Eligibility Criteria Matrix; and
2. Summary of Funding Assessment Requirements.

8.0 REVIEW MECHANISM:

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related legislation or governing documents are amended or replaced; or
2. Other circumstances as determined by resolution of Council or the CEO; or
3. One (1) year from date of adoption.

TABLE OF AMENDMENTS			
Document History	Date	Council Resolution No.	Notes (including the prior Policy No, precise of change/s, etc)
Originally Approved	16/9/2008	08/538	
Amendment 1	1/9/2009	09/482	
Amendment 2	5/7/2011	G/11/621	
Amendment 3	7/8/2012	G/12/1162	
Amendment 4	2/7/2013	G/13/1624	
Amendment 5	15/7/2014	G/14/2087	
Amendment 6	25/8/2015	G/15/2528	
Amendment 7	01/09/2015	G/15/2544	
Amendment 8	02/08/2016	G/16/2860	
Amendment 9	20/12/2016	G/16/2950	
Amendment 10	18/07/2017	G/17/3124	
Amendment 11	7/05/2019	G/19 /3768	Combination of previous Policies: P-2017-39, P-2014-37 & P-2105-03. New policy adopted 7 May 2019 but not to commence until 1 July 2019.
Amendment 12	06/07/2021	GM/21/4550	Formerly P-2019-08 – Introduces changes to align with Community Development Strategy
Amendment 13	04/10/2022	GM/22/4846	Introduces Donations Fund and removes Mayors Discretionary fund and Community Led Investment fund.
Amendment 14			Amendment to funding limits per application and inclusion of such where not previously provided, introduction of expression of interest for Impact, Destination, and Signature Events, introduction of additional category to Waste Fund, inclusion of sections from CS-2022-15 Community Investment Corporate Standard to facilitate repeal of that document, further wording amendments including the reordering of content to improve readability.

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LEISA DOWLING
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Gladstone Regional Council

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Attachment 1 – Eligibility Criteria Matrix

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA To apply for funding organisations MUST meet the following:		GRASSROOTS FUND					ELEVATOR FUND					COMMUNITY CELEBRATION FUND					COMMUNITY HALL & WASTE FUNDS		BURSARY & SCHOLARSHIP FUND			STRATEGIC PROJECTS FUND	COMMUNITY DONATIONS FUND
		Capacity	Place	Connect	Wellbeing	Planning	Capacity	Place	Connect	Wellbeing	Planning	Ignite Event	Impact Event	Destination Event	Signature Event	Community Event	Community Hall Fund	Waste Fund	Regional Schools Bursary Fund	Col Brown Memorial Award	CQ University Gladstone Campus Scholarship	Strategic Projects Fund	Community Donations Fund
ELIGIBLE IF CRITERIA MARKED ✓	Not-For-Profit Community Organisation based in or servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area and may be an Australian Registered Charity but not a Religious or Worship Group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	Not-For-Profit Sporting Club based in or servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓
	Educational Institution in the Gladstone Regional Council area																		✓		✓		✓
	Business based in and servicing the Gladstone Regional Council area		✓					✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					
	Religious or Worship Group																	✓					✓

EXCLUSIONS – THE ENTITIES SHOWN BELOW ARE INELIGIBLE FOR ALL FUNDS	
Political Organisations and Political Parties	
Organisations that have access to funds generated from permanently licensed premises or onsite gaming machines	
Educational Institutions as defined in this policy (does not include Community Donations Fund, Regional Schools Bursary Fund and CQ University Gladstone Campus Scholarship Fund)	
Local, State or Federal Government Agency (examples: air travel, hospitals, main roads, railways and public transport, public works, industrial relations, police, and prisons)	
Organisations that have had an unsuccessful acquittal, an overdue acquittal, or not acquitted funds by the approved due date for prior Gladstone Regional Council Community Investment Policy funding	

Additional information on eligibility is contained in the Community Investment Program Funding Guideline

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Attachment 2: Summary of Funding Assessment Requirements

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT LEVEL	ACQUITTAL REQUIRED
Grassroots Fund		
Grassroots Fund	Officer	Yes
Elevator Fund		
Elevator Fund	Panel → Council General Meeting	Yes
Community Celebration Fund		
Community Event	Officer	Yes
Ignite Event	Officer	Yes
Impact Event	Expression of Interest → Panel → Council General Meeting	Yes
Destination Event	Expression of Interest → Panel → Council General Meeting	Yes
Signature Event	Expression of Interest → Panel → Council General Meeting	Yes
Community Hall & Waste Funds		
Community Hall Fund	Officer	No
Waste Fund	Officer	No
Bursary and Scholarships Fund		
Regional Schools Bursary Fund	Officer	No
Col Brown Memorial Award	Officer	No
CQ University Gladstone Campus Scholarship	Officer	No
Strategic Projects Fund		
Strategic Projects Fund	Panel → Council General Meeting	Yes
Community Donations Fund		
Community Donations Fund	Officer	No