

POLICY- COUNCIL

Grants Policy

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1. Preamble

The contents of and the commitments that council makes in the Grants Policy (the policy) are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of the City of Onkaparinga's general position in relation to those matters, and to facilitate its aspirations wherever it is reasonable to do so.

2. Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the way we provide funding to our communities.

We provide funding to external organisations and individuals to empower our communities and support their initiatives.

Ultimately this will improve the City of Onkaparinga and the lives of people that live, work, study and/or volunteer here, and enhance the experience for visitors to our region.

It is acknowledged that any legislative requirement which affects council will take precedence over council's policies and procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for our individual grant programs.

3. Policy principles

The principles of the policy are that funding programs will benefit communities within the City of Onkaparinga, and:

- be open and transparent
- be fair, equitable and inclusive
- support our communities' initiatives and activities
- encourage partnerships between community groups, and build collaboration between council and other organisations to maximise positive outcomes
- align with our strategic goals
- be in line with good governance and best practice.

4. Key outcomes

Our funding programs will be designed to deliver one or more of the following outcomes:

- Support community-led initiatives that wouldn't otherwise happen
- Build the capacity and capability of our community groups, businesses and individuals
- Attract visitors to our city
- Build trust with our communities and improve public perception of council
- Help achieve our Community Plan 2030 outcomes and other strategic priorities.

5. Scope

The policy guides the creation and administration of all of our grants, sponsorship, donations and scholarship (or similar 'grants out') programs where funding is provided to our communities through an application process.

The policy excludes:

- any funding provided without an application process
- any funding provided as a fee for service
- procurement, purchasing or tenders
- contract management.

The policy does not apply to grants attraction ('grants in') where we seek to win funding for council activities.

6. Definitions

Acquittal	means information provided by a grant recipient that ensures the funds have been administered responsibly and in line with the funding agreement/conditions of the funding program also known as a grant evaluation
Activity	means an event, program, project or capital works/ infrastructure development, or item purchase
Auspecting	means an arrangement where an eligible organisation agrees to apply for and manage a grant on behalf of another group. The auspecting organisation is responsible for all financial and acquittal requirements
Business	an organisation that operates for the purpose of making a profit, including those that have registered a business name and/or obtained an Australian Business Number (ABN). This includes sole traders, partnerships and companies as defined by the Australian Tax Office
Council	means City of Onkaparinga
Conditions of Funding	means all legal funding agreements and contracts
Donation	means funding provided on a once-off basis for a specific purpose, with no expectation of anything in return
Funded activities	means any event, program, project or purchase undertaken using funding from a grant program
Funding	means any monies provided to an organisation or individual through a grant, sponsorship, donation or scholarship to support the delivery of a particular activity
Funding program	means any grant, sponsorship, donations or scholarship program allocated based on merit through an application and assessment process
Grant	means funding provided by an organisation to another organisation or individual for an agreed purpose, usually to support the delivery of a particular activity for the purpose of this policy 'grant' means any grant, sponsorship, donation or scholarship program where we are providing funding to our communities to support their initiatives in line with the objectives of our funding programs, and allocating funding based on merit through an application and assessment process
Grants officer	means the officer responsible for administering a funding program

Local	within the City of Onkaparinga
Not-for-profit organisation	An organisation meeting the Australian Tax Office (ATO) definition of a legal entity, that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an incorporated association, or • an indigenous corporation AND/OR A charity or public benevolent institution registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
Profit	an advantage or benefit, in particular a financial gain, especially the difference between the amount earned and the amount spent on funded activities
Scholarship	means funding provided by an organisation to a student to support them furthering their education
School	Australian preschools/kindergartens, primary schools, secondary/high schools, and colleges that meet the definition of an educational institution defined in the Commonwealth's Australian Education Act 2013 This can include government/public, independent/private, and Catholic schools, but excludes institutions providing tertiary education (such as universities and TAFE colleges)
Sponsorship	means funding and/or in-kind support provided by an organisation to demonstrate their support, often in exchange for marketing/advertising/promotional consideration

7. Strategic context

The policy supports the achievement of our strategic goals as outlined in our Community Plan 2030 – guided by the themes of People, Place, Prosperity and Performance – and our strategies.

8. Policy

8.1 PROBITY

We will make sure that our funding processes are fair, in accordance with the published grant guidelines, incorporate appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

Elected members and employees (staff):

- are not permitted to apply for our grants.
- must not be involved in compiling an application for our grants, noting guidance and advice for grant applicants is available through the Grants Officer (or from the Community Development Officers based at our Community Centres, Youth Centres and Neporendi)
- must not be named on an application for our grants
- must not initial or sign an application form or funding contract for our grant programs

- must declare any conflict of interest with a grant application, and must remove themselves from any role in the assessment and approval process
- must not profit in any way from our grant programs or the activities that they are funding.

This section of the policy should be read and applied in conjunction with our Managing Conflicts of Interest Procedure and the Local Government Act 1999.

8.2 THE ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

Elected members – through Council or a Committee of Council- are responsible for approving all grant programs:

- grant budgets (through the annual Budget process)
- the establishment of any new grants, including the grant guidelines
- major changes to existing grant guidelines, such as eligibility or the types of activities funded
- funding allocations.

Elected members may also be involved in the assessment process for grants, for example on the assessment panel.

8.3 GUIDELINES

Each funding program will be outlined in a guidelines document. The guidelines should explain:

- the purpose of the funding program, and any links to our Community Plan 2030 and/or our strategies
- who is eligible to apply
- amount of funding available (both the total funding pool and the minimum and maximum grant amounts)
- eligible costs (the types of activities that can be undertaken with the funding)
- open and close dates for applications (if applicable) an overview of the assessment process
- any merit criteria and/or weightings to clarify how applications will be scored
- a description of the acquittal requirements, and
- contact details for the grants officer.

The guidelines may also include frequently asked questions and other information to support applicants such as the assessment criteria and links to any relevant documentation.

The guidelines for each program will be reviewed periodically, and any major changes will be approved in line with Section 8.2.

8.4 APPLICATION FORMS

Any documentation required for community members to apply for funding (such as application forms) should be created and reviewed with the user in mind.

The amount of questions and supporting material required of the applicant should be commensurate with the amount of funding available and support an equitable and transparent assessment process.

For example the application process and form for a small grant to purchase equipment valued under \$500 should be simple with minimal questions, where the application process and form for a \$10,000 grant to fund a large festival may be longer and require additional documentation such as an event management plan, detailed budget information, and evidence of appropriate insurance cover.

8.5 ELIGIBILITY

Who receives our funding is not as important as the projected outcomes the funding is expected to deliver. However, this will be balanced by ensuring an equitable and fair distribution of our funding.

We may choose to preference projects in specific areas or newer activities to improve equity. We may also choose to prioritise funding local organisations and those whose purpose or principles align most closely with our own. Conversely we will not fund organisations whose purpose or principles do not align with ours.

Specific funding programs may target or exclude specific organisation types, such as businesses, schools, charities or not-for-profit organisations. Guideline documents will specify who is eligible for each funding program.

To be funded an organisation must be a legal entity as defined by the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The two exceptions – where permitted and specified within individual funding guidelines – are:

- when we fund individuals
- when auspiced by a legal entity.

8.6 AUSPICING

The intention of auspicings is so that community members and groups that do not meet the ATO definition of a legal entity are able to access our funding programs.

Organisations with a structure and/or purpose that is deemed ineligible for a grant cannot obtain auspicings in order to meet our eligibility requirements. For example a business cannot be auspicings in order to apply for a grant that is only open to not-for-profit organisations.

8.7 ACQUITTALS

An acquittal (or an evaluation report) will be required from all successful grant recipients as a part of their funding conditions. The level of information that must be provided in the acquittal should be in line with the amount of funding allocated through the grant program, and will be described in the grant guidelines, and detailed in the funding contracts.

8.8 UNSATISFACTORY DEALINGS

Organisations that have had unsatisfactory dealings with council may be precluded from receiving funding. For example, an organisation may be deemed ineligible for funding in future funding rounds if they have:

- breached their conditions of funding
- failed to deliver on the projected outcomes, or
- failed to acquit a grant.

A record will be kept of all breaches and issues in a central register for future reference, including any correspondence with the grant recipient.

Minor breaches or issues may exclude an organisation from being funded until the issue is rectified to council's satisfaction. Major breaches may exclude an organisation from being funded indefinitely. Whether or not an organisation is funded is always at council's discretion.

8.9 COUNCIL'S BRAND AND REPUTATION

The assessment of all funding applications will take into consideration the potential impact and risk – both positive and negative – on council's brand and reputation. We reserve the right not to fund any application or organisation that could possibly damage council's brand or reputation. This is particularly the case for applicants that do not align with our values (refer 8.5). Whether or not an application or applicant is funded is always at council's discretion.

8.10 LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications must be received by the deadline of the funding program as outlined in the relevant guidelines. Late applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted.

8.11 INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS AND MISSING INFORMATION

If a funding application submitted to council is incomplete or missing information, the applicant may be contacted by the grants officer to address the situation. The grants officer should inform the applicant of what further information is required and provide up to five business days for the applicant to submit the relevant information/documentation.

If the information is not provided within this period, the grants officer or assessment panel will then make a determination on the eligibility status of the application and/or proceed with the assessment based on the documentation available at that time.

8.12 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

Applicants are able to submit applications to separate funding programs within the same financial year (one application per program) providing that the applications are for different activities. However, to ensure equity and fair access to our funding, when assessing an application we may choose to rank an applicant lower if they have secured funding from us through another council funding program in the same or previous financial year. Specifically, how this will be applied will be detailed in the grant guidelines for each grant program.

When submitting multiple applications we will ask applicants to rank their applications in order of preference for funding, so that this can be considered in the assessment process for each of the relevant grant.

8.13 PROFIT MAKING ACTIVITIES

Activities that indicate they may return a profit for the applicant are acceptable, however consideration will be given to whether council funding is required in order for the activity to go ahead, and also how the profits are likely to be used.

These considerations will be taken into account in the grant assessment process, and for some grant programs may be addressed in the guidelines.

8.14 ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

To ensure transparent decision-making, applications will be assessed based on criteria provided in the program guidelines.

The assessment criteria and any scores allocated will generally guide the ranking of applications, whether they will be funded, and to what extent. However, council reserves the right to decide which applications will be funded and to what extent, regardless of any scores allocated through the assessment process. For example, new activities or activities in specific locations may be prioritised.

For probity, grants should be evaluated by an assessment panel, consisting of at least three people. It is preferred that panels include at least one elected member.

To improve transparency and community participation in council activities, community members may be involved in the assessment of applications and will adhere to council's Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Any conflicts of interest will be managed according to the Local Government Act 1999 and council's Managing Conflicts of Interest Procedure (also see 8.1).

Unless otherwise agreed through a resolution of Council, funding allocations will be approved by Council or a Committee of Council (in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference).

Applicants must not be advised of the outcome of any funding applications until the assessment process has been finalised, and funding allocations fully approved.

8.15 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All information collected during the funding process will be treated in accordance with council's Privacy Statement. It is important that (outside of meeting agendas) no information is shared publicly until the assessment process has been finalised, and funding allocations fully approved.

We may choose to publish information (for example on our website) once funding allocations have been approved. This may include information obtained through the application process, such as:

- the name of the applicant and any other parties involved in or associated with the project
- information about the proposed activities outlined in an application, such as the project name and summary/description
- the amount of funding sought and/or allocated.

8.16 CO-ORDINATION OF FUNDING PROGRAMS

Where possible our funding programs should be aligned so that we have consistent documentation, open and close dates and reporting. This will simplify things for our communities and for the promotion of our grants.

We encourage applicants to contact us to discuss their initiatives before commencing a funding application. If an application is received that is unlikely to be funded (e.g. an application to the incorrect funding program), where possible we will encourage the applicant to apply in the correct program. However, we will not re-allocate/move an application between funding programs as different application forms require different information in order to be properly assessed. Time permitting, we may contact the applicant to discuss their application and may also suggest alternative funding programs, however the correct form must be used in order for an application to be considered.

8.17 CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants will be required to sign and adhere to a funding agreement, or Conditions of Funding, and deliver their activity/activities as outlined in their funding application. The conditions will require a funding acquittal/evaluation report to finalise the grant arrangement (refer 8.7).

The conditions will include relevant clauses to ensure successful applicants:

- use our grant funds for the purpose outlined in their application
- indemnify council and our staff against any actions, costs, claims, charges and expenses which may be brought or made to claim against them in relation to their funded activities
- comply with all relevant legislation, laws, regulations and guidelines
- obtain any required consent, permits, licences or approvals before commencing their funded activities, and comply with them
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of employees, volunteers and the public
- undertake to minimise any impact to the environment and local residents
- manage all enquiries/complaints in relation to their funded activities
- are aware of their requirements for reporting and acquittal/evaluation.

Applicants that breach or do not comply with the Conditions of Funding may be asked to return our funding and/or may be deemed ineligible for future funding (refer section 7.1.3 Eligibility). All contractual breaches/non-compliance will be recorded in a central register for future reference, and made available to grant assessment panels for consideration.

8.18 PAYMENT

The schedule of payments for funded activities should include:

- An initial payment of between 50 to 95 per cent of the council funding amount within one month of the signing of a funding agreement. The actual amount should be determined by the level of complexity and risk of the funded activity, and will be detailed in the relevant funding guidelines.

- the final balance of council funding following confirmation of a satisfactory acquittal of the funded activity.

For activities receiving \$5000 or less in council funding, we may make a single full payment of 100 per cent. Payment terms must be detailed in the guidelines whenever full funding is not allocated up front.

8.19 CANCELLED OR POSTPONED ACTIVITIES

When a successful applicant notifies us of the cancellation of their funded activity we will consider this on a case-by-case basis. Generally we should seek return of our funding in line with the relevant grant guidelines, allowing for the deduction of any costs incurred by the applicant to date (as identified in a final budget). If the applicant believes there is an option to alter the activity, or defer or postpone it for up to 12 months, this option is preferred to cancellation. When activities are changed or postponed, funding can generally be retained by the applicant until the activity has been completed within the re-negotiated timeframe.

All changes to funding agreements must be documented and recorded in line with our Document Management Procedure.

8.20 ONGOING FUNDING

We recognise that without ongoing funding some activities would not continue. For this reason we may offer ongoing funding, for example to successful community events that continue to build community connections and reduce social isolation. Ongoing funding will only be offered to successful not-for-profit applicants that have satisfactorily held their activities for five or more years and successfully acquitted their grants (or three successive activities for biennial activities).

For our larger grants it is preferred that our ongoing funding reduces over time. This will be detailed within the guidelines for those relevant grant programs.

8.21 UNALLOCATED FUNDING

It is within council's discretion to:

- a) move unallocated funds between funding programs/rounds¹
- b) utilise unallocated funds in an additional funding round²
- c) retain unallocated funds as savings.

8.22 UNSOLICITED REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

Unsolicited requests for funds will be directed to an appropriate funding program (if any) and must fulfil the application process and meet requirements as detailed in the relevant guidelines to be considered for funding. If applicable, alternative funding opportunities may be presented for consideration.

8.23 COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

Any concerns, complaints or disputes raised will be managed according to council's [Customer Complaints Policy](#).

8.24 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

All funding documentation must be recorded in our corporate document management system in line with our Document Management Procedure. This will be the responsibility of the grants officer managing each individual funding program.

1 Where a funding program has multiple funding rounds within the same financial year, where possible any unallocated monies will be added to future rounds for the same funding program within the same financial year.

2 Any unallocated monies from our funding programs may be pooled into an additional funding program with a view to maximising the allocation of funds that have been set aside for our funding programs.

9. Further information

This policy is available for downloading or printing from our website www.onkaparingacity.com.au