

COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS POLICY

Responsible Department:	Planning and Sustainability
Responsible Section:	Economic Development
Responsible Officer:	Manager Economic Development

Objective

This policy aims to:

- (a) Outline Council's policy position on the provision of grants under section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (the Act).
- (b) Provide clear and transparent guidance on eligibility, criteria, and accountability by which Community Financial Assistance Grant applications will be assessed and determined, provided, and acquitted.

Introduction

Narrabri Shire Council's Community Financial Assistance Grant (CFAG) supports the delivery of projects and activities that pursue the values of a connected and unique, diverse and culturally rich community. The Community Financial Assistance Grant aims to support and empower local clubs and not-for-profit community organisations to deliver activities, programs, and events that contribute to the economic, infrastructure, social connections, and vibrancy of Narrabri Shire.

Community groups play a vital role in strengthening the local communities. Whether it's by bringing people together, improving local facilities, providing training and skill development, or encouraging community engagement and participation.

The Community Financial Assistance Grant provides the basis for Council to allocate funds under Section 356 of the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* in an equitable manner, based on the individual merits of requests for Council financial assistance, donations, in-kind support and/or sponsorships.

The Community Financial Assistance Grant is designed to assist the community's development, provide funding for capacity-building events, projects, programs, and activities that benefit the people and the Shire.

The financial support offered through Council's Community Financial Assistance Grant seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase the range of, and access to, recreational, social, cultural, and environmental activities, programs, and services to the people of Narrabri Shire.
- Encourage a sense of community pride that allow communities to promote their towns and villages through promotional activities.
- Reflect the community's priorities and vision (as outlined in current Council's Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program).
- Provide for the inclusion and participation of all members of the community that enable vulnerable individuals and groups to participate in local activities and opportunities.

- Foster community partnerships and encourage cooperation between community groups, organisations, and Council to ensure that all residents and organisations benefit from common resources.
- Promote Narrabri Shire as a vibrant, diverse place to live and visit.

Policy

1. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Community Financial Assistance Grants	Monetary payments or in-kind provision for an eligible project or event made in accordance with this policy
Eligible Applications	Applications that meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.
Eligible Activity	An event or project that meets the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.
Event	A one-off function, occasion, or other activity, which can last from a matter of hours to a matter of days but is not ongoing.
General Running Costs	The expenditure required to maintain the day-to-day operations of an entity or group.
Management Committee	A group of people with decision-making power in the strategy and operation of an unincorporated group, however described or identified.
Program	An ongoing or regular series of events designed to achieve an aim or outcome.
Project	The acquisition, construction, or installation capital assets or equipment.
Proposed Activity	An activity, event, or project that is put forward as a candidate for a Community Financial Assistance Grant.
Successful Applicant	An applicant awarded a Community Financial Assistance Grant by Council resolution under this Policy.

2. Community Financial Assistance Grants

- 2.1. Council may, at its discretion and subject to this policy, provide Community Financial Assistance Grants.
- 2.2. Eligible entities seeking a Community Financial Assistance Grant must apply to Council in accordance with this policy.
- 2.3. Community Financial Assistance Grants must only be awarded for eligible applications.
- 2.4. There shall be three grant rounds in each financial year. The principal dates for Community Financial Assistance Grants are set out in table 1.

Table 1: Funding Application Rounds

Round	Applications close at 23:59 on...	Assessment at Ordinary Council Meeting	Distribution of Funds
July – October	15 April	May	June
November – February	15 August	September	October
March - June	15 November	December	January

3. Funding Allocation

- 3.1. Council may, at its discretion, resolve to allocate an annual budget for Community Financial Assistance Grants.
- 3.2. The Community Financial Assistance Grants budget will be allocated over three rounds per year. Council will determine the allocation for each round.
- 3.3. The budget will be for one financial year at a time only and will not be recurrent.
- 3.4. The budget allocation for each round will be advertised on Council's website.
- 3.5. Council may, from time to time, resolve to not award the entirety of a round's allocated funds to successful applicants in that round.
- 3.6. Council may re-allocate surplus funds from a round to a future round in the same financial year.
- 3.7. The awarded grants for a round cannot exceed the funding allocation for that round unless Council re-allocates funds from a future round to fund the current round.

4. Eligibility

Entity Type

- 4.1. In order to be eligible for a Community Financial Assistance Grant, applicants must be:
 - (a) A registered not-for-profit organisation;
 - (b) An incorporated community group;
 - (c) An unincorporated community group that meets the criteria at clause 4.2 below;
 - (d) A community group that is affiliated that meets the criteria at clause 4.2 below;
 - (e) A registered sporting club that has a management committee and meets the criteria at 4.2 below;
 - (f) A school P&C Committee;
 - (g) A partnership arrangement between an eligible entity and a non-eligible entity;
 - (h) A not-for-profit Childcare Facility; or
 - (i) A registered charity.
- 4.2. Unincorporated groups, sporting clubs, or unincorporated affiliated groups must meet all of the below criteria in order to be eligible:
 - (a) A formal documented structure that establishes a management committee and governs the way the organisation operates;
 - (b) A management committee; and
 - (c) A bank account in the name of the group that requires at least two signatories to authorise transactions.

Insurance

- 4.3. Entities must hold current public liability insurance from a minimum of \$20,000,000 for the duration of the proposed activity's planning and execution.

Capability and Location

- 4.4. Entities must be capable of submitting a correctly rendered tax invoice.
- 4.5. Entities must be based in the Narrabri Local Government Area.
- 4.6. Notwithstanding 4.4 above, if an entity is based outside Narrabri Local Government Area but can display, with evidence, that their proposed activity positively impacts the residents of the Narrabri Local Government Area, they are not ineligible under clause 4.4.

Ineligible Entities

- 4.7. The following are ineligible to receive a Community Financial Assistance Grant:
- (a) Individuals or unincorporated groups (ie teams);
 - (b) Unincorporated or unaffiliated individuals and groups;
 - (c) Groups without formal structures;
 - (d) Entities that seek to make profit or operate for private gain;
 - (e) Government departments, agencies, bodies, or entities;
 - (f) Political parties or entities closely associated with political parties;
 - (g) Entities that have received a Community Grant, Community Sponsorship, or Community Financial Assistance Grant for two consecutive years, in the preceding three years regardless of their proposal's merit;
 - (h) Entities that have received a Community Grant, Community Sponsorship, or Community Financial Assistance Grant in an earlier round in the financial year for a similar activity;
 - (i) Entities that have received a Community Grant, Community Sponsorship, or Community Financial Assistance Grant in the previous financial year for a similar proposed activity.
 - (j) Entities that do not produce a current certificate of currency for the requisite amount set out in this policy; and/or
 - (k) Entities that have previously breached Council's funding deeds for Community Grants, Community Sponsorships, or Community Financial Assistance Grants.

Activity Requirements

- 4.8. In addition to the above, the proposed activity for which the grant is sought must:
- (a) Occur within the Narrabri Shire Local Government Area;
 - (b) Align with at least one of the strategic objectives outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan;
 - (c) Provide a recreational, social, cultural, economic, or environmental benefit for people in the Narrabri Local Government Area;
 - (d) Demonstrate accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in the planning and delivery of the proposed activity;

- (e) Be completed within 12 months of the award of a grant;
 - (f) Benefit a significant number of Narrabri Shire residents or benefit a township or locality in Narrabri Local Government Area; or
 - (g) Provide a significant public interest benefit to the Narrabri Shire Community.
- 4.9. Despite clause 4.7(a), an eligible entity may be awarded a Community Financial Assistance Grant to attend an event outside of the Narrabri Shire Local Government Area for the purpose of representing Narrabri Shire (including representation of individual townships, localities, or groups therewithin).
- 4.10. Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively for activities that have already occurred or commenced.

Ineligible Activities

- 4.11. The following activities or proposals for activities are ineligible for the award of a Community Financial Assistance Grant:
- (a) Donation of Council rates;
 - (b) Concessional use of The Crossing Theatre;
 - (c) Uniforms, accommodation, or travel costs associated with regional or state representation;
 - (d) Proposals that have not considered accessibility, diversity, inclusion or do not have regard for Narrabri Shire's Community Strategic Plan;
 - (e) Proposals that otherwise do not address or meet all of the activity requirements outlined above;
 - (f) Proposals for general running costs;
 - (g) Activities that have already commenced or been completed;

5. Applications

General

- 5.1. Applications for Community Financial Assistance Grants must be made using the electronic/online application form located on Council's website.
- 5.2. The General Manager may authorise the amendment of the prescribed form at any time as required.
- 5.3. Council will not accept paper forms.
- 5.4. Applications must be signed by at least two authorised representatives of the entity.

Timing of Applications

- 5.5. Applications for each round of grants must be submitted by 23:59 on the dates labelled "deadline for applications" set out in table 1.

Supporting Documentation

- 5.6. Applications must include the following to be considered eligible:
- (a) Details of the organisation or entity applying, including contact details;
 - (b) Proof of organisation or entity type;
 - (c) A description of the Eligible Activity;

- (d) A valid and current certificate of currency for public liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$20,000,000;
 - (e) At least one letter of support from a stakeholder;
 - (f) An explanation of how the Eligible Activity will meet the eligibility and selection criteria;
 - (g) A budget for the Eligible Activity in accordance with this policy;
 - (h) A copy of a bank statement for the entity's bank account that they will nominate for the funds to be paid into;
 - (i) A profit and loss, income statement, financial report, or bank statement showing current balance and transaction listings for up to six months;
 - (j) Evidence of authority from relevant landowners, if the applicant does not own the land upon which the Eligible Activity is to take place;
 - (k) Evidence of contributions, both financial and in-kind, from other entities; and
 - (l) Any other document requested by Council.
- 5.7. Applications that have incomplete documentation will be rejected and will not be considered in that round of funding.

Budgets

- 5.8. Budgets must include:
- (a) A statement of all proposed funding sources, income, and costs for the Eligible Activity, taking into account the requested grant contribution;
 - (b) A copy of quotes, dated within ninety (90) days of the application submission, for all costs associated with the Eligible Activity.
- 5.9. Budgets must be including GST.
- 5.10. Quotes must indicate whether GST has been included or excluded.

6. Selection Criteria

Points Based Weighting

- 6.1. There shall be a points-based system against which applications will be assessed. Each selection criteria shall receive points weighting.

Core Selection Criteria

- 6.2. Applications will be selected based on the below criteria:
- (a) The activity must occur within the Narrabri Shire Local Government Area;
 - (b) The extent of alignment to the strategic objectives outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan;
 - (c) The extent of recreational, social, cultural, economic, or environmental benefit the proposed activity will provide to the Narrabri Shire community;
 - (d) The extent of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in the planning and delivery of the proposed activity; and
 - (e) The extent of public interest benefit to the Narrabri Shire community or the community of a township or locality within the Narrabri Local Government Area.

Additional Selection Criteria

- 6.3. Applications that meet the below will receive higher weighting based on the extent that:
- (a) Entities that commit to contributing financial support towards the cost of the Eligible Activities;
 - (b) Eligible Activities that demonstrate a partnership between community groups and/or organisations;
 - (c) Eligible Activities that have a high level of community support;
 - (d) Eligible Activities that show benefit to a broad cross section of the Narrabri Shire community;
 - (e) Projects and programs that can demonstrate they will be sustainable after the period of funding has ended; and
 - (f) Eligible Activities that promote or support social, cultural, and/or economic equity in the community.

7. Assessment and Determination of Applications

Assessment

- 7.1. The General Manager will appoint Council Officer(s) to assess applications.
- 7.2. The Council Officer(s) will review applications and make recommendations regarding eligibility and scoring of applications.
- 7.3. Assessment shall be on a competitive merit-based basis, in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4. Applications will be scored using the scoring system against which all applications are assessed.

Determination

- 7.5. Following assessment, for each round a report shall be submitted to relevant ordinary council meeting set out in table 1 above.
- 7.6. The report referred to at 7.6 above will outline:
- (a) the eligible proposals and their weightings; and
 - (b) ineligible proposals and the basis of their ineligibility.
- 7.7. Council will consider the report and pass a resolution regarding the awarding of Community Financial Assistance Grants.
- 7.8. Applications with higher scores shall be given preference unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- 7.9. Even if an application meets the criteria set out in this policy, Council may, at its discretion, provide partial funding or not award funding at all, regardless of any remaining budget allocation for the funding round.
- 7.10. Council may, at its discretion, award all, some, or none of the budget allocation for a round.
- 7.11. Council may, at its discretion, re-allocate budget allocation from a future round to a current round.

Notification

- 7.12. Council will notify all applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, of the outcome of their application within 14 days of the Council meeting at which Council determined applications.

8. Provision of Funding to Awardees

Funding Deeds

- 8.1. Council will enter into a funding deed with each successful applicant.
- 8.2. The funding deed must be duly executed by both Council and the successful applicant.
- 8.3. Where the successful applicant is an unincorporated group, the funding deed must be signed by all members of the management committee of that group. The parties to such a funding deed will be Council on the one part and each and all members of the management committee on the other.
- 8.4. The funding deed will set out the terms upon which the grant is made, including obligations of the parties.

Financial Requirements

- 8.1. Funds will not be released until the funding deed has been duly executed by the successful applicant, typically being signed by at least two authorised representatives of the entity.
- 8.2. Successful applicants must register their financial details through Council's supplier portal (EFTsure).
- 8.3. Successful applicants must submit a correctly rendered tax invoice to Council for payment of the awarded grant.
- 8.4. Clauses 8.2 and 8.3 above do not apply to the extent that the grant is for the concessional use of Council facilities and/or a donation of Council services. In those instances, Council will journal the funds internally upon use of the facilities and/or provision of the services. A duly executed funding deed will still be required in these circumstances.

Transfer of Funds

- 8.5. Payment will not be made until a funding deed has been executed by both Council and the successful applicant.
- 8.6. Payment of grants will be:
 - (a) made to the successful applicant following completion of the financial requirements above;
 - (b) made within fourteen (14) days of the provision of a tax invoice from the successful applicant; and
 - (c) transferred to the successful applicant's nominated bank account.
- 8.7. Following payment of the grants, the recipient must confirm receipt of the funds in writing.

9. Obligations of Successful Applicants

General

- 9.1. Successful Applicants must each:
 - (a) Complete the financial requirements within 60 days of being notified of the outcome of their application.
 - (b) Participate in a meeting with the General Manager or their delegate to review and sign a funding deed that sets out the terms and conditions associated with the grant;
 - (c) Consent to Council publicly acknowledging the successful application, including all forms of media;
 - (d) Promote Council, its logo, and brand in association with the activity for which the grant was awarded;

- (e) Invite a representative from Narrabri Shire Council to attend any openings or presentation relating to the activity for which the grant was awarded;
- (f) Obtain relevant approvals from Council to undertake the proposed activity and comply with relevant Council policies and guidelines.
- (g) Inform Council of any variations to the activity for which the grant was awarded from that which was set out in the executed funding deed;
- (h) Lodge an end-of-project acquittal documents within six weeks of the activity's completion;
- (i) Provide documentation as required by Council upon request;
- (j) Communicate with Council in a timely manner;
- (k) Advise Council if there are circumstances that render it unable to carry out or complete the activity for which the grant was awarded;
- (l) Return to Council any funds advanced by Council in the event that the activity for which the grant was awarded cannot occur;
- (m) Provide a delegate to attend the presentation ceremony; and
- (n) Complete all documentation and meet all timeframes required by Council.

9.2. Funds provided for grants must only be used for the Eligible Activity for which it was applied and granted.

Insurance

9.3. Successful Applicants must each hold and maintain public liability insurance of at least \$20,000,000 for the duration of the Eligible Activity.

10. Non-Compliance

Withdrawal of Funding

10.1. If a Successful Applicant fails to complete the financial requirements or duly execute the funding deed within 60 days of being notified of the outcome of their application, the grant offer may be withdrawn and the funds re-allocated to the next funding round.

10.2. If a Successful Applicant fails to comply with the obligations of this policy or the funding deed, Council may withdraw the grant.

10.3. If a grant is withdrawn, Council may pursue any funds advanced or applied as a debt owing to Council.

10.4. Council reserves the right to withdraw funding from applicants or representatives of applicants who have acted in a manner which may be considered illegal, unethical, may bring Council into disrepute, or which would be against Council's strategic objectives.

11. End-of-Project Reporting

Acquittal Process Obligations

11.1. Awardees must lodge an End-of-Project acquittal document within 6 weeks of the activity's completion.

11.2. Project acquittals must be in the form prescribed by Council, set out in the funding deed

11.3. Unless an extension is granted by Council in writing, failure to lodge an acquittal by the due date will result in:

- (a) Allocated grant funding will be forfeited, and any funds already paid by Council will become a debt owed to Council by the applicant; and
- (b) Future applications being deemed ineligible until an acquittal is lodged in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

12. Review

12.1. This policy will be reviewed within twelve (12) months of an Ordinary Council Election.

12.2. This policy may be reviewed at any other time when required.

References

- *Local Government Act (NSW) 1993* (NSW).
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW).

History

Minute Number	Meeting Date	Description of Change
114/2016	April 5, 2016	Adopted
164/2017	August 15, 2017	Reviewed
275/2019	November 26, 2019	Adopted
	December 24, 2019	Rebranded
336/2022	October 18, 2022	Endorsed for Public Exhibition
362/2022	November 22, 2022	Adopted
114/2023	May 23, 2023	Endorsed for Public Exhibition
176/2023	July 25, 2023	Adopted