

Policy Title:	COUNCILLOR DISCRETIONARY FUNDS POLICY
Policy Subject:	Councillor
Policy No:	#2377464 v9
Directorate:	Organisational Services
Department:	Governance & Customer Services
Section:	Governance
Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager Governance and Customer Service
Authorised by:	Council
Adopted Date:	09/07/2013
Review Date:	24/06/2021
Amended Date:	24/06/2020
Risk Assessment:	High

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to the application and disbursement of Councillor operational discretionary funds for spending for a community purpose.

2. BACKGROUND

Local Government Regulation 2012 (QLD) Section 202 sets out the requirements for a local government for making discretionary funds available and the requirements for a Councillor in using discretionary funds.

This policy sets out the framework which guides the administration of Councillor discretionary funds in a manner consistent with its Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and Community Grants Scheme Policy as well as complying with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2009 (QLD)* and *Local Government Regulation 2012 (QLD)*.

3. POLICY OUTCOME

The outcomes of this policy include:

- An ability for Councillor discretionary funds to be provided for as part of the Fraser Coast Regional Council's operational budget to spend for a community purpose.

"Community purpose" for the purposes of this policy is defined as any activity that:

- a) encourages physical or intellectual activity through participation in sporting, recreational, cultural and social pursuits;
 - b) fosters an understanding and appreciation of the regions heritage and cultural diversity;
 - c) promotes and encourages environmental protection and sustainability;
 - d) supports and builds relationships with disadvantaged or vulnerable groups in our community;
-

- e) provides economic benefits to the region including promoting employment opportunities; and
 - f) encourages and promotes educational opportunities and initiatives and contributes to community wellbeing.
- Achieving the objectives of Council's Corporate Plan, Operational Plan, and Annual Budget; and
 - Outlining the approval process for the allocation of discretionary funds and ensuring the distribution of funds in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Each year Council may determine a budget allocation, not exceeding the prescribed amount, for the purpose of providing discretionary funding to meet requests for funds for community purposes to benefit Fraser Coast Regional Council residents (operational grants).

Under the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (QLD), Section 201B(5), **prescribed amount** means 0.1% of the local government's revenue from general rates for the previous financial year.

The discretionary funding is to have an emphasis on community development. This policy aims to build community capacity, encourage participation, partnership and collaboration and active citizenship and works in harmony with Council's strategic direction.

In accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (QLD) Section 202, the Mayor and each divisional Councillor is authorised to recommend grants not exceeding the annual allocation adopted by Council in its annual budget, subject to the funding criteria set out below.

The following criteria will apply to all requests received:

- a) funding must be allocated in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* (QLD), *Local Government Regulation 2012* (QLD) and must be consistent with Council's Community Grants Scheme Policy.
 - b) requests must be for non-profit community based organisations or groups who can demonstrate the funds will be utilised for a community purpose;
 - c) funds cannot be used to pay for recurrent costs of the non-profit community based organisation;
 - d) requests must demonstrate a purpose that is in the public interest;
 - e) all requests must be made on the Councillor Discretionary Fund Application Form;
 - f) applications can be made at any time during the financial year;
 - g) political parties, businesses and individuals are ineligible for funding;
 - h) funding for schools or school affiliated clubs or associations (eg. P&C) is acceptable provided the request supports a community benefit;
 - i) grants are to be paid by electronic funds transfer;
 - j) funds cannot be used for any purpose contrary to the Corporate Plan, Operational Plan, adopted Council policy, strategy or resolution of Council;
 - k) supplementary (top-up) funding for applicants that have applied for, or have already received, funding for the same purpose via any other Fraser Coast Regional Council grant program in the current financial year is acceptable, provided details are disclosed on the application form.
-

Funds to be carried in an Election year

Any remaining unallocated discretionary funding available immediately prior to the caretaker period in an election year are to be carried for use by the newly elected Councillor of the relevant division provided the expenditure criteria outlined in this Policy is met.

Conditions of Funding

1. Funding requests for \$5,000 or more will require an Acquittal Report to be submitted at the completion of the project/activity.
2. Funding request for less than \$5,000 may be asked to provide confirmation of expenditure at the completion of the project/activity depending on the subject of the request.
3. Applicants must acknowledge the divisional Councillor's contribution to the project/activity in a public manner. The acknowledgement is to be proportional to the value of the contribution.
4. Council will not be responsible for funding any recurrent operating costs associated with projects or activities funded by Councillor discretionary funds.
5. Councillors may contribute jointly to requests provided the request is approved by all Councillors and made on a single Councillor Discretionary Fund Application Form.
6. For events run by external agencies, their event incorporates best practice principles for inclusiveness and accessibility.
7. Funding cannot be allocated during the period starting on 1 January in the year a quadrennial election is to be held and ending at the conclusion of the election.

Approval requirements

The allocation of discretionary funds for operational grants purposes, must be approved as follows:

- (i) all applications – reviewed and recommended by the divisional Councillor;
- (ii) approval by the Chief Executive Officer;

The Chief Executive Officer must have regard to the local government's 5-year Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and Annual budget when deciding whether to approve the allocation of a Councillor's discretionary funds.

8. REPORTING

In accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (QLD) Section 202A(2), Council will maintain a record of all grants approved under the Councillor Discretionary Funds and will publish on Council's website and display on Councils' public noticeboard monthly, the name of each community organisation receiving funding and the amount and purpose of that funding. Allocations will also be reported in Council's Annual Report in accordance with Section 189.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROVISIONS

Councillors must declare any potential conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest on the Councillor Discretionary Fund Application Form.

10. ALLOCATED FUNDS

The allocation of funds for the financial year for operational discretionary funds, will be as per the approved budget.

11. HEAD OF POWER

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

12. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Community Grants Policy DOCS#3150084

13. ATTACHMENTS

Councillor Discretionary fund application form and guidelines DOCS#3155416
