



Community Grants Program

GUIDELINES 2026 (final round)

Overview

Intent / Purpose

Fraser Coast Regional Council's Community Grants Policy supports the Goals outlined in Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028. <https://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/corporate-plan>

- To be a diverse, strong and well governed region of vibrant places, with an innovative and diverse economy and connected as a whole by our community spirit and respect for our natural environment.
- To make a positive difference for the region and the lives of our community members by ensuring we provide a service that is forward looking and well managed.

Objectives of the Community Grants Program

- Provide identified and measurable social, community or economic benefits to the Fraser Coast communities;
- Align with Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028

This Program is intended to:

- Provide community organisations with support to meet identified community needs;
- Build community skills, capacity and resilience;
- Develop and maintain community infrastructure;
- Provide opportunities for community organisations to leverage Council's assistance to obtain funding from other sources; and
- Provide opportunities for community organisations to assist Council to deliver on Council's strategic goals and identified key initiatives

Grants Available

The Fraser Coast Regional Council Community Grants are targeted towards projects and one-off event funding. Organisations wishing to receive support for ongoing annual events should apply for multi-year sponsorship through the Community Sponsorship Program.

Organisations can apply for funding from \$1,000 to \$5,000 as cash and/or in-kind services subject to the following:-

- Maximum 2 applications, per organisation, per annum will be funded;
- Maximum grant limit of \$5,000 per annum will be funded (amount is inclusive of the value of any in-kind services provided by any Council Department).

With the change to the number of rounds within the 2025/2026 year by Council (ie reduction of rounds from 4 to 2 per year) there is one final round to be opened in early 2026 which will have an approximate funding pool of \$155,000 for allocation.

Co-contribution is not a requirement for this grant program, however applications where the applicant is making a financial contribution will be highly regarded.

Logistics

Proposed grant round dates.

Round	Open	Close	Estimated Advice of Outcome
Final Round 2025/2026	12 January	26 February	Mid March

Applicants and projects seeking funding must comply with the Fraser Coast Regional Council Community Grants Scheme Policy and the program guidelines.

Projects and activities are to be completed within six (6) months of the approval date (unless a variation has been sought and approved by Council). 'Request for Variation' forms are available and are to be completed online through the SmartyGrants Grants Portal.

Any funds remaining unallocated from a round will be rolled into the subsequent round.

Assistance, Assessment and Approval Responsibilities

Council's Grants team is available to provide general advice and guidance to local organisations when developing funding applications. It should be noted however that there is no capacity for Council Officers to write and submit applications on behalf of local groups.

If an applicant does not have access to a computer, Council libraries can provide access to a computer and the internet and some initial guidance to enable access to the application form.

Applications will be assessed as part of a competitive process targeting maximum benefits to the wider community. Organisations that have not received Council funding in the last 12 months will be prioritised in one of the selection criteria.

Eligibility of each application will be checked by Council's Grants Team with eligible applications then proceeding to the Assessment Panel for assessment.

Council's Community Development and Engagement Team will be consulted for advice and input on project relevance to adopted Community Plans and existing work within individual communities or groups of communities across the region. Feedback from other Council Departments will be sought as necessary.

The Assessment Panel will be comprised of Council Officers with recommendations for funding made to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Eligibility

Who can apply to Council's Community Grants Program?

Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations can apply for a Community Grant provided they:-

- are based within the Fraser Coast local government area or the funded project is being fully delivered with the Local Government region;
- are a legal not-for-profit entity, complying with all incorporation requirements of the State and Commonwealth as at the closing date for the grant program;
- Have all relevant insurances;
- Do not have any overdue debts with Council and have satisfactorily acquitted previous Council grant funding; and
- Have not had more than 2 applications, per organisation approved for the current financial year.

If a community group is not incorporated and seeks to apply for a Grant, the group is able to do so provided that the application is auspiced and administered by an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation that is willing and able to accept legal and financial responsibility for the grant.

Who cannot apply to Council's Community Grants Program?

- Government agencies or departments of local, state or federal government;
- Educational, religious, political, or medical organisations, where the application is for the organisation's core business;
- Schools are not eligible entities under this fund, however P&C organisations are eligible to apply;
- Commercial businesses and enterprises – (these types of organisations are eligible to apply for events grants through this program);
- Individuals;
- Not for profit community organisations with a liquor-licensed supporters / associated club, gaming licence or that commercially trades seven days a week (these types of organisations are eligible to apply for events grants through this program);
- Organisations who have an outstanding Outcome Report (Acquittal) as required by any other Council-provided Grant;
- Projects or activities run by, or involved with, political groups seeking to promote their core beliefs;
- Requests that are considered by Council to be the funding responsibility of other level of government;
- Requests that are related to repairs or maintenance to buildings or assets that form part of an Organisation's responsibilities in a lease agreement with Council;
- Projects or activities that have already started or have been completed prior to grant approval;
- Applications received outside of the application timeframes.

Council will not consider applications that:

- Are from ineligible organisations;
- Are incomplete or applications that do not include all the required supporting documentation;
- Are for retrospective funding for events or projects;
- Do not support Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028; [corporate-plan-2023-2028](#)
- Do not comply with the community grants policy;
- Do not comply with any applicable legislative requirements;
- Are from organisations that have already received funding (to the maximum grant amount defined in these guidelines) in the financial year through the Community Grants program; and/or
- Are for projects or activities that provide any ongoing financial or in-kind commitment for Fraser Coast Regional Council, unless agreed to by Council. (e.g. **ongoing and regular** maintenance of equipment, grounds works or structures located on Council Property)

Selection Criteria to be addressed by applicants

- Demonstrated community benefit from the planned activity or project;
- Clearly explained Project or Event including how the need was identified;
- Explanation of how the grant funds are to be spent and proportion that is local expenditure;
- Contribution of the applicant organisation to the proposed Project or Event, if applicable;
- Recent funding History – priority will be given to organisations that have not had recent (last 12 months) funding from the Community Grants Program.

Application Requirements

- Provide 2 quotes (wherever possible provide quote from local organisations or explain why you are seeking to go outside of the local region).
- Include project description, project need and the community benefit from the planned activity, how the need was identified and the expected outcomes of the planned activity and how these will be measured.
- Explain how funding will be publicly acknowledged.
- Attach a letter from the management committee (could include meeting minutes) approving grant application, or flying minute of executive approving application.
- Show evidence that the organisation is financially solvent.
- Complete a budget table and provide bank account verification documentation.
- Enter into a Funding Agreement with Council for the approved project.
- Provide an invoice to Council for the approved grant amount.

Application Process

- Council will publicise availability of its grant programs on Council's website and social media sites and by direct email to individuals/organisations listed on the Grants Distribution list.
- Council will undertake ongoing engagement and capacity building with the community, assisting applicants to identify and develop projects.
- Council's grant programs are managed online and applications must be submitted through the SmartyGrants portal. The application form can be previewed prior to commencement of the application, and a pdf file can be printed from the final (review) page once an application has been commenced.
- **The online form is the only method for submitting an application.**
- If an applicant does not have access to a computer, Council libraries can provide access to a computer and the internet and some initial guidance to enable access to the application form. If this process presents challenges for your Organisation please contact Council's Grants Team for advice.
- For help with the questions within the application form, assistance can be provided by Council's Grants Team.
- When an application is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirming lodgement and a copy of the submitted application for the organisation's records. If this email is not received, it means that the application was not successfully lodged. Please contact the Grants Team for advice.

Approval Process and Payments

- Applications will initially be assessed by the Grants Team to confirm organisational and project eligibility. If the grant round has not yet closed, and errors are identified, the Grants Team will endeavour to work with the applicant to correct the application. Any amendments must be undertaken within the open application status of the Grant Application Round.
- After the Grant Round closes, the Assessment Panel will undertake assessment of applications. The Assessment Panel makes recommendations for project grant funding to the Chief Executive Officer.
- In assessing the grants, the panel will:
 - ✓ Ensure public monies are allocated in a fair and equitable way
 - ✓ Ensure the best possible value for money
- Following Approval, successful applicants will be notified by email and provided with a funding agreement for signing. The agreement will need to be returned **within 30 days** of the 'advice of funding' to Council with a valid invoice from 'the applying Organisation to Council' for the grant amount. Failure to return within this time could result in cancellation of the offer of funding. In some instances there may be specific Conditions of Funding that need to be met before payment can be made. Where the application is auspiced, the invoice will need to be from the auspice organisation.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and can seek feedback from Council's Grants Team on how they can strengthen future applications.

Variations of Funding

Applicants who wish to make a variation to their original planned activity or project must complete a variation form.

All variations must be assessed by Council Officers and with the following approval delegations applying:-

Requests for Variation of Funding Amount	Requests for Variation of Time	Request for Variation of Scope (incl supplier)
All requests for variation to funding amounts must be approved by the CEO.	Up to, or equal to, 3 months must be approved by the Manager Community Development & Engagement	Requests for minor variations of scope, including supplier change only, must be approved by the Manager Community Development & Engagement
	More than 3 months but less (or equal to) 6 months must be approved by the Executive Manager Community & Culture	Requests for major variations of scope (example – omission or addition of project works) must be approved by the CEO
	More than 6 months but less (or equal to) 12 months must be approved by the Director Strategy Community & Development	
	More than 12 months must be approved by the CEO.	

Grant Acquittal Requirements and Conditions

- All successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Council and acquit funds within the allocated timeframes.
- Project Outcome reports (Acquittal) will be available to successful applicants online through the SmartyGrants portal. All questions must be completed on the acquittal form and evidence supplied including:
 - ✓ receipts;
 - ✓ photographs of activities;
 - ✓ proof of Council acknowledgement (logo placement on flyers, advertisements, social media etc.)
- Successful applicants will be required to actively and publicly acknowledge Council's support. The level of acknowledgement will be determined by the amount funded and will be outlined in the funding agreement.
- All projects must be completed within six (6) months of the Funding Agreement being executed.
- Unspent grant funds must be returned to Council within 60 days of the project completion.

- Should an applicant not fully acquit the funding within six (6) months of the date set out in the funding agreement document, without an appropriate variation approval, a three (3) year exclusion period from future applications may be applied.

Examples of eligible projects and activities

Facilities / Improvements – Undertaking necessary repairs / improvements to the applicant's facilities.

Applicants applying for funding to undertake facility improvements must either:

- own the building and/or land; or
- have an instrument of tenure, demonstrated custom and practice (or a combination of both); and
- have written approval of the owner (lessor) to undertake the proposed facility improvements – this includes for any land/buildings leased by the applicant group from Council; and
- provide evidence of consultation of planning / building permissions needed.
- Improvements might include:
 - construction of demountable buildings, amenities blocks, playgrounds, sheds, lighting or storage facilities;
 - internal and external building improvements
 - upgrades or refurbishments to existing facilities
 - fit-out costs required for occupation and use
 - removable items requiring fixed footings (e.g. goal posts or shade structures)
 - permanent fixtures to buildings including air conditioners, extensions, patios or decking, solar panel and system installation, solar battery storage, awnings
 - grandstands or stadium seating
 - fencing
 - shade structures
 - landscaping

Equipment – Purchase equipment that will be used by the applicant organisation in delivering services to its members and the broader community. This might include:

- Kitchen equipment (fridges, stoves, canteen equipment)
- Office equipment (photocopiers / scanners)
- Grounds maintenance equipment (mowers etc.)
- Sporting equipment

Events – event elements including:

- Marketing Costs -including advertising
- Hire of temporary infrastructure

- Road closure costs
- Programming elements that have lasting benefit to the community (workshops etc)

Examples of in-eligible expenditure

- Activities undertaken or committed to purchase before the organisation is notified in writing their application is successful
- Repayment of debts and loans
- Overseas travel costs
- Consumables including catering
- Funding for a staff or member social event
- Purchase of goods or services that benefit an individual or small, targeted group in the community
- Purchase of Alcohol.
- Projects or activities that provide an ongoing financial or in-kind commitment for Fraser Coast Regional Council unless agreed to by Council. (e.g. **ongoing and regular** maintenance of equipment, grounds works or structures located on Council Property)
- Gifts or prizes in the form of cash, gift card or goods and services.
- Donations to and sponsorship of other groups
- Grant writer fees and associated costs are ineligible for funding. Associated costs include project management fees (including payment for managing the construction of facility improvements and/or the purchase of funded items)