



Community Grants and Assistance Policy

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Balonne Shire Council values and recognises the role of community groups and organisations within our Council area and endeavours to support them in a variety of ways.

Council acknowledges that through the provision of support to these groups, Council can assist to foster the enjoyment, appreciation and development of sports, arts, heritage, recreation and other community activities within the Balonne Shire.

2 PRINCIPLES

The Community Grants and Assistance Policy aims to provide grants to non-profit organisations based on volunteer community self-help groups, including the organising committees of community celebration and events but excludes political parties/lobby groups or those groups that receive regular funding from other sources, including other tiers of Government (e.g. schools, hospitals). Council will consider any other applications on a case by case basis. The policy is intended to provide a structure and process for making grants to community organisations, which is open, transparent, legal, and equitable and furthers the aims and objectives of the Council.

3 SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all requests for fee waivers, financial or in kind assistance granted to community organisations; assets given to community organisations and concessions (e.g. rates remitted) for community organisations by Balonne Shire Council.

The policy is to provide a framework which guides the administration of Balonne Shire Council's community Grants and Assistance Policy in a manner that is aligned to council's corporate and operational plans and in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

4 RESPONSIBILITY

Council's role is to facilitate the assessment of Community Grants and Assistance Program applications, provide funding support where possible, and to provide event organisers with the assistance required to plan effective community events in the Shire.



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5 DEFINITIONS

Council	Balonne Shire Council
Community Organisation	A not for profit organisation consisting of people having common interests. An entity that carries on activities for a public purpose or another entity whose primary object is not directed at making a profit. Includes sporting clubs, social clubs, schools, arts and cultural groups and service organisations.
Charitable Organisation	A benevolent institution organized for a specific purpose for the relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness providing services that are carried out for the public benefit and is a non-profit organization.
Grants	Grants are defined as “the giving of funds” with no onus on the recipient to repay these funds.
Fee Waiver	Waiver of the fees and charges that Council would usually charge for providing a service or product.
In kind Support	Includes activities or actions or the provision of services, equipment, plant or facilities to assist an event or project conducted by an individual or community based non-profit organisation. Examples may include:- assistance by Council staff to prepare grant applications, the use of Council plant or equipment by Council staff in their own time for authorised activities, assistance by Council staff in the operation or conducting of an event or project, the provision of facilities such as meeting rooms.
Donation	Any grant, fee waiver, carrying out of work, provision of “in-kind” assistance or other action involving a monetary cost to Council is considered to be a donation.
Sponsorship	Sponsorship is defined as a business agreement with organizations, where Council receives benefits equal to the value of the sponsorship.



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6 POLICY

6.1 Policy Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a systematic and equitable process for allocating financial assistance and support to individuals and community based non-profit organizations to respond effectively to community initiatives;
- To provide grants, assistance and support to a range of non-profit volunteer community self-help groups;
- To ensure that the grants achieve value for money in the support of local community involvement;
- To provide groups and organizations which have limited funds to undertake valuable community initiatives?
- To enhance and assist existing community initiatives, events and celebrations;
- To provide opportunity via community celebrations, events and functions for residents and visitors to enhance their appreciation of local heritage, culture and natural attributes;
- To contribute to a vibrant cultural and community life;
- To create opportunities which develop the knowledge, skills and confidence of community members;
- To encourage great participation levels in community life;
- To create opportunities to promote the Balonne Shire and its residents;
- To strengthen rapport with community groups and organizations;
- To support and develop community and cultural activities that enrich and extend personal and community engagement; and
- To enable our community and visitors to participate in and enjoy the widest community and cultural experiences.

6.2 Categories

Broadly speaking, the categories for which grants, fee waivers and sponsorship are community and cultural services.

- **Community services** include the range of sporting and recreation activities and other community services e.g. youth, aged care. Applications may be lodged in writing at any time at least four (4) weeks prior to any event/function and will be assessed in accordance with the policy. The notice period may be relaxed to allow late applications to be accepted and considered in accordance with policy.
- **Cultural Services** includes the range of arts and culture services including performing and visual arts and crafts, literature, history and heritage and their expression through festivals, exhibitions, performances and public celebrations. Applications may be lodged in writing at any time at least four (4) weeks prior to any event/function and will be assessed in accordance with the policy however; applications for grant assistance towards festivals must be made at least six (6) months in advance.



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6.3 Eligibility organisations

Council will consider providing financial assistance to community based and non-profit organisations, teams or individuals that:-

- Are based within the boundaries of the Balonne Shire Council area; or able to demonstrate that the project, program or activity will directly benefit Balonne Shire residents
- Have an incorporated association or has an auspice body
- Have appropriate insurance such as public liability insurance
- Provide services or arrange events, activities or opportunities within the Shire

6.4 Eligible Applicants must not:

- Be a political group or organisation
- Be a discriminatory group or organisation
- Have outstanding Council grants that have not been acquitted satisfactorily
- Have outstanding payments due to Council for rates, fees, rents or other charges
- Proposed events, services, activities or opportunities outside of the Balonne Shire Council area, unless the applicant can demonstrate a direct community benefit
- Be an individual
- Be a business

6.5 Projects/Activities Eligible for Assistance

Council will consider applications against the following criteria:-

- Demonstrate a purpose that is in the community's interest;
- Align with the priorities of Council's Corporate and Operational Plan;
- Align with the priorities of Council's Community Plan;
- Improve the capacity and wellbeing for the Balonne Shire Community;
- Increase and encourage community participation.
- The project/event will deliver tangible benefits i.e. financial, social, to residents of the Balonne Shire.



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6.6 Ineligible Projects/activities

Ineligible projects include, but are not restricted to:

- The development of privately owned or commercial facilities;
- Annual licence fees, annual lease/rental fees, electricity charges, rates and charges (refer to Community Rate Support Program for assistance with rate utility charges), health approvals or development application fees.
- Sporting organisations who request financial assistance to purchase capital and equipment items.

6.7 Requests for Grants or In Kind Assistance

All requests to Council will be on the appropriate application form and contain the following information:-

- Amount of grant and/or type of in kind assistance sought;
- Total cost of project/event for which the grant is sought;
- Purpose of the project/event;
- Benefit of the project/event to the Balonne Shire community;
- Details of the value of the cash or in-kind contribution being invested into the project/event by the group/organisation;
- Details of any other funding sources; and
- Details of any previous assistance provided by Council in the past twelve (12) months.

6.8 Project/Event Assistant Types

Waiver of fees

Council will consider reimbursement of fees and charges by way of a grant upon receipt of a written request from the relevant individual or organisation and will be considered on a case by case basis. Fees and charges will not be waived unless otherwise stated in this policy.

The Civic/Community Halls, Showgrounds, Parks and Equipment (tables, chairs, and crockery/cutler) are recognised as community assets. In accordance with Council's fees and charges use is subject to the relevant Conditions of Hire. Council will consider requests for fee concessions from Community/Charitable Organisations on request. Council does however; in accordance with this policy provide the use of the Civic/Community Halls for rehearsals free of charge for not-for-profit/charitable organisations at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Bonds must be paid regardless of any concessions or fee waivers that may be granted. (Up to \$500 CEO approval, >\$501 Council approval).



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In kind assistance

In kind assistance may include but not restricted to the following:

- Cleaning services;
- Provision of staff and equipment;
- Provision of facilities;
- Photocopying and printing services;

Council will undertake reasonable photocopying and printing services for community organizations however, this will be subject to the Chief Executive Officer or Director.

Council is committed to assisting local community organisations with the hosting of community events. (Up to \$500 CEO approval, >\$501</=\$3,000 Council approval).

Donations

Donations are inclusive, but not restricted to the following

- Gift baskets
- Awards
- Prizemoney

(Up to \$500 CEO approval, >\$501</=\$3,000 Council approval).

Sponsorship

Sponsorships are a monetary sponsorship towards an event, service, activity or opportunity with the grantee is to acknowledge Councils contribution

(Up to \$500 CEO approval, >\$501</=\$3,000 Council approval).

6.9 Reimbursement of Rates, Fees and Charges

Council will not approve requests for financial contributions to reimburse rates payments, fees and charges, health inspection fees, health approvals or development application fees.

6.10 Requests Outside Of Listed Policy

Council may consider requests for grants that are outside the scope of this policy and each case shall be considered on merit without precedent. These requests may include, but are not limited to National or Charities external to the Balonne Shire Council, subject to residents of Balonne Shire receiving an identified benefit from the grant and receipt of satisfactory evidence of need and donations to disaster relief funds for humanitarian reasons



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6.11 Community Grants Program

The Council may implement a Community Grants Program which will involve public advertising and consideration of application for funding assistance in accordance with the published guidelines decided by it from time to time. It is not compulsory that a Community Grants Program be instigated in any financial year

6.12 Application Process

In the event that Council elects to implement a Community Grants Program, Council shall use the following process:

- The applicant must read and understand Balonne Shire Council's Community Grants and Assistance Policy
- Advertisements will be placed on the Balonne Shire Council Website and social media
- All applications must be made on a relevant form:
 - Fee Waiver Request form for fee waivers up to \$1000, or
 - Community Grants and Assistance Application form for all other assistance types, which includes fee waiver requests over \$1000
- Councillors and council staff may encourage organisations to apply, but should not indicate if an application is likely to succeed;
- Once an application is submitted, the Council officers will consider all the applications and assess them against the criteria. In this process the Council officers may request additional information from the applicants and may conduct interviews;
- All eligible and complete applications for fee waiver, in-kind support, donations and sponsorships will be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate (for applications up to \$500) for a decision.
- All eligible and complete applications for fee waiver, in-kind support and sponsorships will be reviewed by the appropriate officer with a recommendation provided to the full Council (for applications over \$500) for a final decision at the next available Council meeting. This process may take up to two months to complete.
- The Full Council will consider the recommendations and decide what grants are to be awarded.
- All applicants will be informed of the outcome within ten working days of a decision being made.
- Arrangements for successful applications for fee waiver, in-kind support, donations and sponsorships will be made within thirty working days of approval being given.

6.13 Acquittal Process

The Council may require, as a condition of each grant, that the organisation submit a report confirming that the grant has been used for the purpose intended. This may be a copy of the accounts of the organisation supported by an explanation, if necessary. A requirement for special audit reports should be avoided unless the council has reason to suspect that the reports submitted are misleading or incorrect.



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If requested, to acquit the funding, recipients must forward a letter to Council four weeks after the completion of the funded activity. The letter should provide a brief outline of the outcome of the funded project and acknowledgement of how Council's funding was expended. Should a letter not be received by Council within the 4 weeks, the organisation will be ineligible for further funding.

6.14 Exception to Policy

The awarding of grants under the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) will be exempt from this Policy. RADF grants will be awarded and distributed under the guidelines of the RADF Program.

7 LEGAL PARAMETERS

Legislative authority: Local Government Finance Standard 2005.

Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Standard 2005 requires that a policy about grants to community organisations must state the following matters:

- The types of grants to community organisations the local government considers to be appropriate for receiving grants from its funds;
- That the local government may give a grant to a community organisation only if the local government is satisfied:
 - The grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest; and
 - The community organisation satisfies the criteria mentioned below:
 - The criteria a community organisation must meet to be eligible for a grant from the local government; and
 - The procedure the local government must follow when approving a grant to a community organisation.

8 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Community Grants and Assistance Application form

Fee Waiver Request Form