



Development Incentives Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to attract high-quality, sustainable development across the Balonne region, including economic, housing, and community infrastructure. It reflects Council's commitment to encouraging investment that improves quality of life, supports housing supply, enables reuse of existing buildings, and strengthens strategic sectors such as tourism, agriculture, health, and education.

2. SCOPE & AUTHORITY

This policy applies to:

1. Development applicants/landowners seeking a concession on Council application fees, rates and/or charges associated with undertaking new development or repurposing existing buildings in the Balonne region; and
2. Council employees and contractors responsible for assessing applications, administering incentives, and ensuring compliance with the eligibility criteria and procedural requirements outlined in this policy.

This is a discretionary policy, resolved by Council under its powers in accordance with the *Queensland Local Government Act 2009* Chapter 2, Section 9 which states:

9 Powers of local governments generally

(1) A local government has the power to do anything that is necessary or convenient for the good rule and local government of its local government area.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is designed to attract investment in qualifying developments in the Balonne region in order to stimulate sustainable growth, diversify and value-add to our regional economy. The focus of the policy is on developments that will:

- (a) Create new jobs and investment;
- (b) Value-add through enhanced service delivery, supply chains, or reuse of existing buildings;
- (c) Generate growth within identified strategic sectors;
- (d) Address housing supply needs including multiple dwellings, granny flats and other alternative housing models; and
- (e) Diversify and make the local economy more sustainable.

Council may offer targeted incentives such as fee waivers, rate discounts, and refunds to reduce barriers to development and encourage strategic investment.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 All Councillors and Council Employees

- Support and promote development initiatives that align with this policy.
- Ensure that development incentives are considered in relevant planning, decision-making, and service delivery processes.
- Encourage transparent and consistent communication with applicants and stakeholders.

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4.2 Managers and Directors

- Integrate development incentive objectives into operational planning and strategic frameworks.
- Provide leadership in identifying opportunities for eligible developments and partnerships.
- Monitor policy implementation and ensure alignment with Council's Corporate Plan and budget priorities.

4.3 Chief Executive Officer

- Shall be the custodian of this policy.
- Endorse and support the implementation of the policy across Council operations.
- Ensure appropriate resourcing and oversight of development incentive programs.
- Report to Council on the performance and impact of the policy, including uptake, outcomes and strategic alignment.

5. RISK

The implementation of development incentives carries several strategic and operational risks that must be actively managed to ensure the policy delivers intended outcomes without unintended consequences.

Strategic and Community Risks

- Financial exposure – over-utilisation of incentives may impact Council's revenue base or budget allocations for other services.
- Reputational risk – perceived inequity or lack of transparency in how incentives are granted could affect community trust and stakeholder confidence.
- Misalignment with planning objectives – incentives granted to developments that do not align with Council's planning scheme or strategic priorities may undermine long-term land use goals.

Operational Risks

- Compliance risk – failure to adhere to legislative requirements under the Planning Act 2016 or Local Government Act 2009 may result in legal or regulatory consequences.
- Administrative burden – increased volume or complexity of applications may strain staff resources and delay processing times.
- Monitoring and reporting gaps – inadequate tracking of incentive outcomes may limit Council's ability to evaluate effectiveness or adjust the policy as needed.

Council will manage these risks through:

- Clear eligibility criteria and assessment processes;
- Delegated decision-making with oversight;
- Regular policy reviews and performance reporting;
- Alignment with Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

5. IMPACTS

- Governance: The policy supports transparent decision-making and aligns with Council's strategic and financial planning frameworks.
- Community: Incentivised developments are expected to improve liveability, housing, and employment opportunities across the Shire.



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- Human Rights Compatibility Statement: The policy upholds the Human Rights Act 2019 by promoting fair access to development opportunities.
- Engagement: Community and stakeholder engagement will inform the ongoing refinement and application of the policy.
- Climate Variability: Eligible developments must comply with environmental standards and are encouraged to incorporate climate resilience.
- Sustainability: The policy promotes long-term economic and infrastructure sustainability through strategic development support.

6. ELIGIBLE DEVELOPMENT TYPES

The following development types are eligible for an incentive under this policy:

(a) Economic Development Incentive

1. Material change of use for "Commercial Activities" in the Centre Zone
2. Material change of use for "Industry Activities" in the Industry Zone
3. Material change of use for "Community Activities"

(b) Housing Development Incentive

1. Material change of use for a "Dual Occupancy" or "Multiple Dwelling"; or
2. Reconfiguring a Lot (creating lots by subdividing another lot) in the General Residential, Rural Residential or Township Zones.
3. Short-term accommodation/medium stay (eg. Airbnb-style).
4. Secondary Dwellings 'Granny Flats'.

(c) Development Assessment Incentive ('Money Back Guarantee')

1. Any development application refused at a Council meeting.

Note: The eligible land use types are as defined in the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019* and the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

The following developments are ineligible for an incentive under the Policy:

1. Development which has commenced (construction has commenced or the use has commenced) prior to the effective period of this policy and/or prior to obtaining all required development permits for the use.
2. Development undertaken by or on behalf of the State or Federal Government Departments, Agencies or Government Owned Corporations.
3. Development that is inconsistent with Council's planning scheme.
4. Development with the potential to result in significant negative environmental impacts on the community or other environmental standards (e.g. pollution, hazardous waste or noise).
5. Development for Reconfiguring a Lot where all lots do not comply with the relevant allotment size requirements specified in Table 7.4.2.2 of the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019*.

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to apply for an incentive available under this policy, a development must be the subject of a current development application. Additionally, developments must meet at least one of following criteria to be eligible for an incentive:



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For the Economic Development Incentive:

1. A minimum capital investment of \$100,000; or
2. A minimum of two (2) Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs created within three (3) years; or
3. A minimum of two (2) additional employment opportunities created in Balonne Shire (may be by economic formula) within three (3) years; or
4. No less than 66% of the construction workforce will consist of locals; or
5. Have a business plan for the proposed Commercial, Industry or Community activity; or
6. Repurposing or reuse of existing buildings for commercial, community or residential use.

Note: New jobs must not be transported or relocated workforce within the Shire. A new business must commence operation within two years of the date of the approval.

For the Housing Development Incentive:

1. The Material Change of Use must result in additional housing stock in the Balonne Shire.
2. Reconfiguring a Lot must result in a minimum of 2 additional lots in the Balonne Shire.
3. Secondary Dwellings 'Granny Flats'.

For the Development Assessment Incentive ('Money Back Guarantee'):

1. A current development application has been refused by Council.

8. VALUE OF INCENTIVE

For the Economic Development Incentive:

A 50% discount of development application fees will be granted where the applicant meets one (1) of the eligibility criteria listed above, upon receipt of an eligible application.

A 100% discount of development application fees will be granted where the applicant can demonstrate compliance with two (2) or more of the eligibility criteria, upon receipt of an eligible application.

First year 100% rates rebate once fully compliant with conditions, subject to Council's Revenue Statement, when repurposing or reuse of existing buildings for commercial, community or residential use.

For the Housing Development Incentive:

A 100% discount of development application fees will be granted upon receipt of an eligible application.

Waiver of \$1,050.00 water connection fee and \$550.00 plumbing application fee for new residential builds.

First year 100% rates rebate once fully compliant with conditions, subject to Council's Revenue Statement, when repurposing or reuse of existing buildings for commercial, community or residential use.

For the Development Assessment Guarantee:

For development applications refused by Council, 100% of fees paid to Council upon lodgement of the application will be refunded.



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9. EFFECTIVE PERIOD

The policy will take effect from the Council Resolution date of 13 April 2023 and will conclude on 13 April 2025.

No consideration will be given to applications for incentives received outside of the Effective Period.

10. APPLICATION

To receive an incentive under this policy, applicants must complete the relevant application form and submit this to Council along with any supporting documentation detailing how the development meets the eligibility criteria.

Council may request further information from the applicant to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

11. ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed by delegated Council officers in accordance with the eligibility criteria.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of Council's assessment within 15 business days of application lodgement.

12. PROCESSING

Applicants will be required to pay the fee upon lodgement of the application, if a waiver or partial waiver is approved, this will be reimbursed once the developer has complied with all conditions of the Development Approval.

13. RELATED LAWS

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Planning Act 2016*
- *Planning Regulation 2017*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*

14. RELATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

- *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019*
- *Balonne Shire Council Schedule of Fees and Charges*
- *Corporate Plan 2025-2030*
- *Community Engagement Policy*
- *Enterprise Risk Management Framework*

10. REVISION HISTORY

Revision 2 adopted by Council on 29 June 2023.

Reviewed September 2025.



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15. DEFINITIONS

“Commercial Activities” include the listed land uses as defined in the *Planning Regulation 2017*:

- Theatre
- Tourist attraction
- Bar
- Club
- Function facility
- Hotel
- Food and drink outlet
- Office
- Sales office
- Shopping centre
- Showroom
- Shop
- Short-term Accommodation
- Service industry

“Industry Activities” include the listed land uses as defined in the *Planning Regulation 2017*:

- Low Impact Industry
- Medium Impact Industry
- Service Industry
- Transport Depot
- Warehouse

“Community Activities” include the listed land uses as defined in the *Planning Regulation 2017*:

- Health care services
- Hospital
- Childcare centre
- Club
- Community care centre
- Community residence
- Community use
- Educational facilities

“Secondary Dwelling” as defined in the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019* and the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

“Dual occupancy” as defined in the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019* and the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

“Multiple dwelling” as defined in the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019* and the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

Note: In the event of any inconsistency in the definitions of the *Balonne Shire Planning Scheme 2019* and the *Planning Regulation 2017*, the *Planning Regulation 2017* takes precedence.



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12. ATTACHMENTS – APPLICATION PROCESS FLOWCHART

