

Corporate Plan Reference:	Theme 3: Prosperity
Endorsed by Council:	17 August 2023
Policy Author:	Project Officer, Economic Development

POLICY BACKGROUND

This Policy will guide the administration of Council's Economic Development Grant Program so that the grants:

- Assist Council to achieve its strategic goals and actions as they relate to the local economy.
- Align with the intent of the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government Regulation 2012, which state that (community) grants will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the guidelines that support this funding program. This policy does not apply to sponsorship, donations, advertising, naming rights and service level agreements

POLICY OUTCOMES

By strengthening focus on priority outcomes that enable collaboration and partnerships between Council, business representative groups and the business community, the Economic Development Grants Program advances the following Council strategies:

- Noosa Council Corporate Plan 2023-2028; and
- Noosa Shire Economic Development Strategy 2021-2030
- Noosa Shire Operational Plan 2022/23

The program will support stakeholders to deliver outcome driven projects that will positively impact the local business environment, business community and economy.

Outcomes supported by the Economic Development Grants Program include but are not limited to:

- Increased partnerships between local business and business groups.
- Growth and development of the shire's small business community.
- Building capacity, skills, and innovation in local businesses.
- Support precinct and place-based initiatives for small business.
- Implementation of projects that support the outcomes and objectives of Noosa Council's Corporate Plan, Economic Development (Smart Biosphere) Strategy and Destination Management Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

The Economic Development Grant Program supports projects that benefit the local business community and contribute to the local economic environment by providing one off, short term, project based financial assistance.

The maximum amount per grant application will be identified in the Grant Guidelines.

The Economic Development Grant Program is a competitive grant fund and will operate on an open grant round basis, where all applications are assessed individually against the criteria as outlined in the Economic Development Grant Program Guidelines. Projects must be completed within 12 months of approval.

WHO CAN APPLY

This grant program is open to the following organisations providing that the project or program for which funding is being requested benefits the residents of the Noosa Shire:

- Not for profit incorporated business representative groups provided that the benefit of the project extend beyond their membership base
- For profit businesses where the project is not run for the direct commercial profit of an individual business
- Consortiums – not for profit business representative groups, for profit businesses, governments

The applicant must:

- Primarily service the Noosa Shire business community
- Have an active ABN
- Complies with all governance and financial requirements of the State and Commonwealth as at the closing date for the grant program;
- Have appropriate insurances
- Meet Workplace Health and Safety requirements
- Have met acquittal conditions for previous Council grants,
- Have no debt to Council, or has entered into scheduled payment arrangements with Council that is being adhered to; and

If not eligible, the applicant may apply under an eligible auspice (administrator). The auspice organisation will take legal and financial responsibility for the grant and the project being delivered.

WHO CANNOT APPLY

- Business trusts
- Government agencies or departments of local, state and federal government
- Community groups that are not incorporated
- Individual residents

ELIGIBLE PROJECT OR PROGRAMS

To be eligible to apply to the Economic Development Grant Program, applications must:

- adhere to the terms and conditions set out in this Policy as well as the supporting Economic Development Grant Program Guidelines.
- demonstrate value for money
- demonstrate a tangible benefit to the Noosa business community.
- Have a financial or in kind contribution to the project
- Be consistent with the outcomes and benefits of the Economic Development Strategy

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Ineligible projects or programs include, but are not restricted to:

- Projects that do not contribute towards Council's Corporate Plan and/or key economic development strategies.
- Projects that cannot demonstrate value or a tangible benefit to the Noosa Shire business community.
- Projects, events, or programs run for the commercial profit of an individual, private sector business.
- Projects where most of the benefit will be derived outside of Noosa Shire.
- Fundraising for political or charitable activities.
- Initiatives already funded by other Council grants.
- Projects that have received consecutive funding from Council for a period of 3 years.
- As a means to make whole or part payment of any debt.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be invited from the 1st of July in each financial year and will remain open until the end of that financial year or until the funding is fully allocated.

Before submitting a grant, applicants must engage with an Economic Development Officer to discuss the proposed project. Applications will be submitted online using a current Noosa Council's Economic Development Grant Application Form.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding Deed of Agreement with Council and acquit funds within the allocated timeframes.

The timeframes and acquittal requirements are outlined in the Economic Development Grant Program Guidelines. Contract variations will be considered if highlighted to an Economic Development Officer before the project completion date.

Successful applicants will be required to actively and publicly acknowledge Council's support in all print and social media communications and in any presentations on the project.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council will endeavour to publicise the availability of its Grant Programs widely and in such a manner as to promote public confidence in and support of the process.

In assessing the grants, Noosa Council Officers will ensure:

- Public monies are allocated in a fair and equitable way;
- Ensure best possible value for money
- Check each application against eligibility criteria as set out in the Grant Guidelines

Council will fund no more than 75% of the total project cost. It is anticipated by Council that applicants will:

- Make both a cash and in-kind contribution to the project.
- Cash contributions can consist of either direct cash injection, ticket sales, sponsorship, or other grant funds (excluding other Council grant funds).

Council will determine the total allocation of funds to the Economic Development Grants Program through its annual budgetary processes. The number and types of grants approved will depend on the demand for funding, the available program budget, and corporate priorities which may change from year-to-year.

Economic Development Officers are available to provide advice and assistance in the development of grant applications. They will also assist organisations to identify additional and alternative sources of funding relevant to their project.

Final decisions in the Economic Development Grants Programs are made by the Director – Strategy & Environment (or delegated Manager).

NOOSA COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Noosa Council officers are bound by Noosa Council's Employee Code of Conduct and are therefore responsible for acting with impartiality and integrity and recognising and declaring any actual or potential conflicts of interest. This includes but is not limited to, personal connections with the applicant. Council officers are required to adhere to this policy when supporting, facilitating, or delivering grants-related activities and it is their responsibility to ensure that grant funding provided from public monies is:

- Effectively advertised and promoted to the community so that all potential applicants have equal opportunity to apply for funds;
- Assessed and administered transparently and with accountability; and
- Aligned with Council's objectives, goals, and priorities;

HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

In developing this policy, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*. It is considered that the subject matter does not conflict with any human rights and supports a human rights approach to decision making by Council.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Noosa Council Economic Development Grant Program aligns with the following Queensland Government legislation:

- Local Government Regulation (2012)
- Local Government Act (2009)
- Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act (1982).

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

[Noosa Council Corporate Plan 2023-2028](#)

[Noosa Shire Economic Development Strategy 2021-2030](#)

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new policy	N	Council	16/11/2017
2.0	Policy Review after new Corporate Plan, new Economic Development Strategy & 5 years since last Policy	Y	Council	14/08/2023