



Council Policy ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Corporate Plan Reference:	Theme 3: The Noosa Economy. 20 year goal – Our economy is diverse and resilient
Endorsed by Council:	16 November 2017
Policy Author:	Economic Development Advisor

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 as they relate to the economy.

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

The Economic Development Grant Program will support the delivery of the Local Economic Plan and enable collaboration and strategic partnerships between Council, business representative groups and the business community. It will support stakeholders to deliver outcome driven projects that will positively impact the local business environment, business community and economy. Economic Development Grant Program projects could for example:

- Connect businesses
- Encourage business innovation
- Build business capacity and skills
- Contribute to the ease of doing business
- Enable partnerships and collaboration between businesses and/or organisations in the Noosa region
- Address a local workforce gap
- Assist in growing the reputation of Noosa as a preferred business location
- Attract additional funding from other sources to the Noosa Shire
- Contribute to the growth and development of existing and new industry to Noosa.

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, governments¹.

Additionally applicants and projects must:

- Primarily service the Noosa Shire business community
- Comply with State / Federal incorporation requirements
- Have appropriate insurances and meet Workplace Health and Safety requirements
- Have met acquittal conditions for previous Council grants, and
- Are able to provide a copy of the most recent Annual Report including audited or reviewed financial statements.

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.

Additionally, applications must demonstrate value for money and Council may determine priority funding areas on a year-to-year basis. These priorities will be identified in the Economic Development Grant Program Guidelines.

The Economic Development Grant Program is a competitive grant fund, where all applications are assessed individually against the following criteria:

- The extent to which the project aligns with and addresses key findings, weaknesses and/or threats, or targets the opportunities identified in the Local Economic Plan
- The extent to which the project can demonstrate community benefit
- The scale of the economic impact likely to be achieved (e.g. creating the conditions for business success, industry or business development, investment attraction)
- The level of innovation, insight or creative thinking that makes the project unique
- The quality of the application (e.g. a well-developed, clear and realistic action plan, supported by research where appropriate and including an accurate financial plan/budget)
- The ability of the organisation and/or stakeholder group to deliver the project
- The potential for the project to create business/industry networks and partnerships that can drive future economic development activities.

Grant funding cannot be used for:

- Programs, projects and services run for the direct commercial profit of an individual business
- Activities that have already commenced or will commence outside the project period
- Retrospective funding
- Events that do not have a clearly identifiable benefit to the business community
- Projects that do not benefit the Noosa community
- Payment of debt
- Charitable fundraising
- Political activities
- Items funded by other Council grants

¹ For the purposes of this grant program a consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources to achieve a common goal.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Economic Development Grant Program consists of the following categories:

1. Quick Response Grants

This category supports small, one off projects such as workshops, meet ups and events that engage and benefit the Noosa business community.

2. Project Partnership Grants

Project Partnership Grants support innovative one-off projects of merit that have a positive impact on the local business environment and will be completed within 12 months of commencement.

3. Multi Year Partnership Grants

Multi Year Partnership Grants assist stakeholders to deliver longer term programs agreed by Council that extend beyond a 12 month period.

Multi Year Partnership Grant recipients will be required to provide an annual progress report that includes a financial report, which demonstrates delivery of agreed projects and outcomes.

Where a not for profit business representative association successfully apply for a Project or Multi Year or Partnership Grant, funding agreements will consider providing financial support to the organisation for the term of the project for operational costs providing the project provides significant benefit to the Noosa business community.

Council will not wholly fund grant projects. It is expected that the applicant will make both a cash and in-kind contribution to the project. Applicant cash contributions could consist of either direct cash injection, sponsorship, other grant funds.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Economic Development Grant Program will operate on an open grant round basis. That is to say, applications will open on a date specified in the Economic Development Grant Program Guidelines and remain open until the end of the financial year or until the funding is fully allocated.

Applications must be submitted on a current Grant Application Form made available by Noosa Council, and all successful grant applications must acquit funds within the allocated timeframes as outlined in the supporting grant program guidelines for the specific economic category.

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Council and will be required to actively and publicly acknowledge Councils support.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council will publicise the availability of its grants programs widely and in such a way as to promote public confidence in the process.

In assessing the grants, Council 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 appropriate Grant Guidelines;

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.

Nominating funding priorities for the individual grant categories will be considered as a part of Councils annual budget process. Priorities can be applied to ensure the Economic Development Grant Program continues to meet Council objectives and responds to current economic conditions.

Council officers are available to provide advice to applicants and help develop grant applications. They will also assist organisations to identify additional and alternative sources of funding relevant to their project or event.

Council officers are bound by Councils 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 may include but is not limited to, personal connections with the applicant. Anyone having a determined conflict of interest should not debate or be involved in any discussions on any matter relating to that application.

Council officers are required to adhere to this policy when supporting, facilitating, or delivering grants-related activities. It is the responsibility of Council officers to ensure that grants and funding provided from public monies are:

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

Quick Response Grant applications will be approved by the Economic Development Manager.

Project Partnership Grants with a value of less than 30% of the original Grants Program budget amount will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer based on recommendations from the Director Environment and Sustainable Planning. Grants valued at over 30% of the original Grants Program budget amount will be approved by Council.

Multi Year Partnership Grants will be approved by Council

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Noosa Council Corporate Plan
Noosa Shire Local Economic Plan
Noosa Social Strategy

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new policy	N	Council	16/11/2017