


Small Business Friendly Grant Policy		 <p>Longreach Regional Council</p> <p><small>Ilfracombe Isisford Longreach Yarak</small></p>
Policy Number:	11.11	
Policy Category:	Community	
Authorised by:	Res-2024-09-233	
Date approved:	19 September 2024	
Review Date:	19 September 2026	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and give effect to a transparent, equitable, and accountable framework for the Longreach Regional Council Small Business Friendly Grant Program – supporting local businesses in alignment with Council’s Economic Development Charter and the Small Business Friendly Program.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals and entities applying for a grant from Council under its Small Business Friendly Grant Program. It equally applies to Councillors and staff engaged in the administration and evaluation of applications under the program.

This policy will be administered in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, ensuring that grants are awarded only if they serve the public interest and satisfy the grant criteria.

LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012

DEFINITIONS

Acquittal Report: A mandatory report that must be submitted by grant recipients detailing how the grant funds were used, providing evidence of compliance with the grant agreement, and outlining the outcomes achieved. Failure to submit this report may impact future eligibility for grants.

Applicant: Any individual, business, or entity that submits an application for funding under the Small Business Friendly Grant Program. The applicant must meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in this policy and the relevant funding round guidelines.

Council: Longreach Regional Council, including its Councillors and staff.

Co-Contribution: The financial contribution made by the applicant, which must be at least equal to the amount of funding requested from the Council. This contribution is a mandatory requirement for grant approval and must be verifiable.

Eligibility Criteria: The set of conditions and requirements that an applicant must meet to be considered for funding under the Small Business Friendly Grant Program. These criteria are detailed in both this policy and the specific funding round guidelines.

Funding Round: A designated period during which applications for the Small Business Friendly Grant Program are accepted, assessed, and awarded. Each round will have specific guidelines, objectives, and evaluation criteria.

Ineligible Application: An application that does not meet the eligibility criteria or fails to comply with the guidelines and conditions set forth in this policy and the relevant funding round guidelines. Such applications will not be considered for funding.

Panel: The group of individuals, consisting of two Council officers and two Councillors, who are responsible for evaluating grant applications against the established criteria and making recommendations to the Council.

Retrospective Funding: Funding that is requested for activities, expenses, or projects that have already commenced, been completed, or incurred before a grant is awarded. Such requests are ineligible for funding under this policy.

Small Business Friendly Program: The Queensland Small Business Friendly Program (SBF) Program as established and administered by the office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner. Its aim is to bring people together around a common goal to enhance the operating environment for small businesses and provide the opportunities they need to thrive.

POLICY

Council is committed to supporting local small businesses through its Small Business Friendly Grant Program. The aim of the program is to:

- Address challenges and opportunities identified by the Longreach Regional Council Economic Development Charter, and the Queensland Small Business Friendly Program, as per the relevant funding round guidelines; and
- Support economic development in the region by incentivising local businesses to re-invest, innovate, and grow.

Grant Rounds

The program will offer two grant rounds per financial year. Each round will focus on an identified activity, guided by Council's Economic Development Charter and the Small Business Friendly Program.

Each funding round will have unique guidelines and evaluation criteria, developed in accordance with Council's objectives for the funding round.

Eligibility

To apply for funding, a business must:

- Be a legal entity;
- Hold a valid and current ABN;
- Be based within the Longreach Regional Council Local Government Area;
- Employ fewer than 20 FTE employees;
- Not have any overdue or outstanding payments to Council; and,
- Have been in operation for at least 6 months before applying.

All applications will be assessed against eligibility and evaluation criteria in this policy and the funding round guidelines.

Ineligible Applications

The following applications are ineligible under this program and will not be considered for funding:

- Applications from public-sector agencies or departments of state or federal governments;
- Applications from incorporated volunteer or membership groups, including any group that would otherwise be eligible for Council's Community Donation or Sponsorship funding;
- Applications from businesses not registered within the Longreach Regional Council Local Government Area;
- Applications from businesses that have overdue or outstanding payments to Council;
- Applications from businesses that do not currently benefit from a Development Application over their premises, where one is required;
- Applications that do not align with the published guidelines and criteria for the relevant grant round; and,
- Applications where Council funds will be used for
 - Wages or salaries for staff;
 - Recurrent costs of day-to-day operations;
 - Retrospective expenses;
 - Personal equipment or other expenditure that is personal or for personal gain;
 - Payment of Council rates, fees, or charges; and,
 - Items that would otherwise be funded by state or federal government bodies.

Grant Limitations

Applicants can apply for any amount up to the maximum Council funding component indicated in the funding round guidelines. Applicants are required to match the Council funding component with a co-contribution of at least equal value.

Applicants will be limited to one successful application per financial year.

Activities and projects will not be funded from multiple Council funding programs.

Council reserves the right to award a lesser amount than that requested, or no amount at all.

In the event a funding round is under-subscribed, budgeted funds not awarded will be carried over to subsequent rounds. Once funding for a round is exhausted, Council reserves the right to refuse applications.

The program will be limited by the allocated budget, and no additional budget allocation will be made, unless by resolution at a quarterly budget review.

Lodgement of Applications

Applications must be submitted using the Small Business Friendly Grant Application Form, along with all required documentation.

Applications will be accepted only during the grant round periods as advertised by Council. Once funding for a round is exhausted, Council reserves the right to refuse applications.

Assessment of Applications

Applications will be evaluated against the funding round guidelines and criteria by a panel consisting of two Council officers and two Councillors. The panel will make recommendations to Council based on their evaluation of each application.

Grants will be awarded by resolution of Council, at its sole discretion.

Council's decision on grant applications is final. No appeals will be heard, or correspondence entered in to.

Notification of Outcome

Applicants will be notified of the outcome within ten days of the relevant Council decision.

Acquittal Process

All grant funds must be expended within six months of receipt.

Recipients must submit an acquittal report within one month of project completion, demonstrating how the funds were used in accordance with the application, funding round guidelines, and evaluation criteria. Failure to acquit funds may result in future applications being rejected.

Acknowledgement

Grant recipients must acknowledge Council's contribution through provision of a Grantee testimonial detailing the support received and the impact on their business. Recipients must also acknowledge Council in any promotional materials or media announcements related to the project.

Authorised by resolution on 19 September 2024:



Brett Walsh

Chief Executive Officer