



Small Business Friendly Grant Program: Round 1 – Website Development Funding Round Guidelines

1 Grant Round Objectives

The goal of this round is to increase the number of businesses in the Longreach Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) with an online presence, improving their accessibility, visibility, and overall customer experience. This will help businesses reach wider audiences, both locally and in neighbouring regions, and reduce reliance on social media or outdated directory listings.

2 Key Priorities

- 2.1 **New Website Creation:** Priority will be given to businesses that do not currently have a website.
- 2.2 **Customer Experience:** The project should align with Council's Economic Development Charter by improving customer experience and making local businesses more discoverable online.
- 2.3 **Improving Digital Reach:** Businesses should demonstrate how the development of a website will help them reach new customers, particularly in other communities and trade areas.

3 Timing

- 3.1 Applications for this funding round will open on Monday 7 October, 2024.
- 3.2 Applications for this funding round will close on Monday 4 November, 2024.
- 3.3 Funding will be awarded by Council at its 21 November ordinary meeting.
- 3.4 Successful applicants will be notified within ten days of the Council's decision, and funds will be made available shortly thereafter.

4 Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for this round of funding, businesses must:

- 4.1 Meet all conditions of the Small Business Friendly Grant Policy, not limited to but including
 - (a) Hold a valid and current ABN;
 - (b) Be based within the Longreach Regional Council Local Government Area;
 - (c) Employ fewer than 20 FTE employees;
 - (d) Not have any overdue or outstanding payments to Council; and,
 - (e) Have been in operation for at least 6 months before applying.

- 4.2 Not currently have an existing website (preference given) OR be redeveloping an outdated/non-functional website that no longer serves its purpose.
- 4.3 Provide a detailed project proposal for creating or significantly upgrading their website, including an explanation of how this will benefit their business and contribute to improved customer experience and discoverability.
- 4.4 Submit a quote from a third-party website developer or consultant for the cost of building or redesigning the website. This quote must itemise services and clearly show the estimated costs.

5 Ineligible Expenditure

- 5.1 The following expenses are ineligible for funding:
- (a) Domain renewal, website hosting fees, or ongoing website maintenance costs.
 - (b) Digital marketing, online advertising, or non-website related digital content creation.
 - (c) Staff or employee time spent on the project.
 - (d) Non-business personal expenses.
 - (e) Retrospective expenditure.

6 Funding Amount and Matched Contribution

- 6.1 Maximum Council contribution: \$2,000 per business.
- 6.2 Matched funding requirement: The applicant must contribute an equal or greater amount toward the total cost of the website development project.

7 Limitations

- 7.1 The funding round will be limited by the allocated budget.
- 7.2 Council reserves the right to award a lesser amount than that requested, or no amount at all.
- 7.3 Applicants may only submit one successful application to the program per financial year.
- 7.4 Activities and projects will not be funded from multiple Council funding programs.

8 Application Requirements

All applications must include:

- 8.1 **Completed Application Form:** Include all business details and relevant supporting documentation.
- 8.2 **Project Proposal:** Outline the website development project, explaining the need for the website, the expected benefits, and how the website will help the business reach more customers.

- 8.3 **Third-Party Quote:** Provide a formal quote from a qualified website developer that is external to your business. The quote must itemise the services provided (e.g., website design, e-commerce functionality, SEO setup).
- 8.4 **Digital Strategy Statement:** Describe how the business plans to maintain and utilise the website once it is developed, including content updates, customer interaction, and other relevant online activities.
- 8.5 **Proof of Matching Funds:** Demonstrate that the business can meet the required co-contribution for the project.

9 Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by a panel against the following criteria:

9.1 Need for Website Development (40%)

- (a) Does the business currently have a functional online presence? Preference will be given to businesses without existing websites over those seeking to redesign a functional site.
- (b) If a website exists, how outdated or ineffective is it? Is the redevelopment critical for improving digital presence?

9.2 Alignment and Impact (30%)

- (a) How well does the project align with the goal of improving customer experience and making the business more discoverable, particularly for customers from neighbouring communities and other areas?
- (b) What impact will the website have on the business's ability to attract, engage, and retain customers? How will the website contribute to expanding the business's reach beyond its immediate locality?

9.3 Feasibility and Financial Viability (20%)

- (a) Is the project clearly defined and feasible within the grant parameters?
- (b) Does the quote from the third-party consultant represent good value for money?
- (c) Will the applicant's contribution ensure that the project can be completed effectively?

9.4 Sustainability and Maintenance (10%)

- (a) Has the business demonstrated a clear plan for maintaining and updating the website post-launch?
- (b) Is there a commitment to ongoing digital engagement with customers?

10 Post-Project Acquittal

10.1 Grant recipients are required to:

- (a) Submit a project completion report within one month of the website launch, detailing the outcomes of the project and how the funds were used.

- (b) Provide a link to the new or upgraded website.
- (c) Share, through basic website analytics, the initial impact of the website (e.g., traffic increase, inquiries, sales, etc.).
- (d) Submit proof of expenditure, including receipts from the website developer and any other related costs.

11 Acknowledgement

11.1 Grant recipients must acknowledge Council's support through:

- (a) Provision of a Grantee testimonial detailing the support received and the impact on their business.
- (b) Publicly acknowledging Council in any promotional materials or media announcements related to the project.