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Recreation Strategy

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Signed by Chief Executive Officer

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This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

1 PURPOSE

This policy establishes a framework for the various types of support offered by Loddon Shire Council to its community for economic and tourism development, recreational and community activities, events, facilities and services, education, and developing sustainable local communities.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to councillors, council staff administering the support schemes, and relevant community members applying for, or involved in, the schemes.

3 POLICY

Council has a commitment to assist with the provision of a range of facilities and opportunities that enable residents of the municipality to enhance and improve their quality of life within Loddon Shire. Financial and other assistance is provided through:

1. community planning
2. community grants
3. funding for public halls and recreation reserves
4. interest free loans
5. events sponsorship
6. allocations to development associations
7. secondary school scholarships
8. sports and recreation grants
9. sponsorships and donations

3.1 Community planning

Community planning is a long-term strategy for developing sustainable communities. Council commits funds from its annual budget to ensure a number of community planning projects are completed.

Allocation of funding to community planning is reviewed annually by Council. Community planning funds are allocated equally per Council Ward of the municipality.

In addition to the general funds, a Strategic Fund is committed for strategic projects.

3.1.1 Prioritising community plan projects

Community planning projects must demonstrate a clear link to each community plan and vision and/or local master plan, and be documented for prioritisation by an evaluation committee.

Council approval of projects will be based on criteria including funding available, equitable distribution across Council Wards, fit with the Corporate Plan, Council's ability to complete the works, internal evaluation score and councillor support of the project.

Projects can only be considered for the Strategic Fund if:

- the total cost exceeds \$50,000
- the project will deliver strategic impacts beyond just the local community.

It is preferable that these funds are used to leverage external funding.

Council will manage all applications to external agencies for strategic projects.

3.1.2 Delivering community plan projects

Council will commit to delivering all community planning projects approved for allocation of funding.

If a project is not completed within the financial year, the budget allocation for the project will be placed in reserve, and the project will be programmed for completion in the following financial year. If the project is not completed because Council has approved a community request that funding is allocated to another project, the funding will be transferred to that project.

3.1.3 Community consultation

The Manager Community Planning must consult regularly with communities and provide a quarterly report to Council on the progress of community planning.

Annual meetings with each community occur during February or March each year to elect representatives from each community to form a community planning committee. The annual meetings must be publicised in local media for any community members to attend.

Completed projects will be publicised via press releases or other media as appropriate.

3.1.4 Community planning committees

A community planning committee will be appointed for a period of twelve months to review and update the community plan and vision statement, determine its priority projects and potential Strategic Fund projects, represent the community to Council, and liaise with the community or other key stakeholders.

A committee will be responsible for acquitting community planning funds in situations where a contribution has been made by Council to the community organisation. The acquittal process will be in accordance with existing council procedures established for programs such as "Community Grants".

Where a community planning committee does not agree with a Council decision concerning community planning, a dispute resolution procedure will be applied.

3.2 Community grants

The Community Grants Scheme helps clubs and organisations to enhance the provision of their activities, facilities and services. Community grants are available for projects that:

- demonstrate a community need, e.g. in community plans or through other formal planning processes
- develop or improve upon existing facilities, programs or equipment that will increase opportunities for participation for residents within the municipality
- wherever possible demonstrate multi-use and/or broad community benefit
- involve a degree of self-help and club commitment both with in-kind labour and financial commitment
- demonstrate an effective and efficient use of resources, such as energy efficiency, environmentally friendly or the sharing of resources throughout the community
- are considerate of the need to provide access for all, for example, the needs of disabled and/or other special needs groups.

Projects can generally be categorised as:

- community development project

- establishment of new community services groups
- purchase of new equipment
- minor capital works

3.2.1 Eligibility

Community groups and bodies in the areas of sport, leisure, arts, culture and community services are able to apply for a community grant. Those that demonstrate the existence of a current management plan for their organisation, which identifies forward planning and a need for their proposed project, will be advantaged. Priority will be given to groups who are not funded by other government agencies and who are primarily voluntary organisations.

Projects that are not eligible:

- projects outside the Loddon Shire Council municipal boundaries
- projects considered the responsibility of other government/statutory bodies
- recurring costs such as utility charges, insurance, administration, etc.
- costs seen as being the responsibility of the individual participant
- projects that have commenced or are completed prior to the announcement of successful applications by Council
- projects or events designed to promote political or religious ideals
- projects for education agencies, private enterprise and groups operating outside the Loddon Shire.

3.2.2 Assistance

The level of support provided will be determined by Council as part of its budget approval process.

In-kind support in the form of voluntary labour can be included by clubs and organisations up to a maximum of 50% of the total project costs, to assist in matching Council's contribution. In-kind labour will be costed at the rate identified in the application form.

In-kind support such as donated materials can be included by clubs and organisations to assist in matching Council's contribution. Proof in the form of a written pledge by a supplier, indicating the goods to be supplied and the value of those goods, must accompany applications.

Ownership of any equipment or capital items purchased under this scheme will revert to Council ownership should the applicant agency dissolve or cease to exist.

No ongoing financial commitment is deemed to exist between Council and any successful applicant.

Any capital works proposed under this scheme must be approved by Council's Director Operations prior to commencement of work.

The office bearers of organisations receiving a community grant will be required to enter into a formal Terms and Conditions of Grants Agreement with the Loddon Shire Council.

All projects funded under the Community Grants Scheme must be completed by 31 March in the financial year of funding.

3.3 **Public halls and recreation reserves**

Council provides an annual funding allocation that supports public halls, indoor stadiums, and active reserves within the Shire.

The values of allocations are determined by Council annually within the budget process.

Allocations are provided to assist committees of management with the costs associated with ongoing operating and maintenance costs, such as utility, administrative and insurance costs, repair of broken windows, electrical and plumbing repairs and repairs to and replacement of equipment.

3.3.1 Categorisation and eligibility

The Building Asset Management Plan categorises reserves, halls, stadiums, clubs, and organisations and defines their eligibility for funding.

3.4 Interest free loans

Interest free loans are available to community organisations for capital improvements to facilities within the Shire.

Loans are provided subject to the following conditions:

- loans must be paid back to Council within 5 years
- a list of guarantors must be provided by the club, which will form an obligation to guarantee payment if the club defaults
- an application is required from the club outlining the project, all sources of funding, and the loan amount required.

Council will determine which applicants will receive interest free loans according to:

- availability of funds
- ability of the applicant to repay the loan
- the level of benefit to the community.

3.5 Events sponsorship

In recognition of the benefits that accrue to the community as a result of community events, Council provides assistance to community groups organising these events.

Council may provide sponsorship for events held within the municipality which provide important community development opportunities or attract a significant number of visiting competitors/participants, officials and families.

Applications from community groups can be made for either:

- Major Event Category: for events of regional or state significance, e.g. state sporting events and/or major festivals, and that attract a significant number of visitors from outside the region, or
- Minor Event Category: for events of local and sub-regional significance i.e. annual sporting tournaments or local community festivals. These events will attract a moderate number of visitors from other communities.

The levels of sponsorship for each category will be determined by Council in its annual budget cycle.

Council support may also include:

- preparation of community facilities, provided that the preparation does not entail any alteration to the facilities (this may include grounds preparation, the provision of signs and rubbish collection)
- support in the coordination of the event, which may include photocopying, assistance with preparing a submission to attain the event, visitor information, etc.
- ensuring an appropriate Council official is available to conduct a public address, presentations, etc.

Any costs associated with the above works will be deducted from the allocated amount.

In exchange for the Loddon Shire Council's support, the community group will:

- enter in a formal agreement confirming that funds allocated by Council will be spent on advertising and promoting the event
- display Loddon Shire Council's banner at the major venue for the duration of the event
- acknowledge Council's assistance/sponsorship in all printed programs, media and promotional material
- allow Council to reproduce or use any photographs or promotional material for the purposes of publishing in press releases, council publication, reports and for any other appropriate purpose
- complete all acquittal paperwork as supplied by Council.

Projects or events designed to promote political or religious ideals are ineligible for sponsorship under this scheme.

Closing dates for applications will apply, and late applications will be ineligible.

3.6 Development association allocations

A number of development committees exist within the Shire of Loddon that perform local tourism and economic development functions throughout the Shire:

- Bridgewater Progress Association
- Boort Development Association
- Mitiamo Progress Association
- Dingee Progress Association
- Wedderburn Tourism
- Loddon Southern Region Tourism
- Pyramid Hill Progress Association
- Boort Tourism Committee
- Wedderburn Development Association
- Inglewood Development and Tourism Committee

Council annually allocates funding within its budget to assist local development, progress and tourism associations to cover administration costs such as postage and photocopying.

Organisations must provide Council with financial data to help Council better understand the needs of the group and distribute funds equitably. Each development committee is funded according to the size of the community they service.

Payment is administered by the Director, Economy and Community and is made annually.

3.7 Scholarships – secondary schools

Council will provide Shire Scholarships to all secondary schools within the Loddon municipality to promote the value of education within local schools and reward excellence and initiative. These scholarships will be awarded at the discretion of the school.

Council's budget decision process will determine the quantum of the scholarships each year.

Where available, a Council representative will present the scholarship at the annual awards event.

3.8 Sports and recreation grants

Council may apply for state or federal government sport and recreation grants on behalf of sporting and recreation groups in Loddon Shire.

In addition to sourcing these grants, Council provides an additional 10% of the value of the grant to the group receiving the grant.

Council strategies such as the Recreation Strategy will set the priorities for Council to apply this funding. The grants are used for building new facilities, rather than maintenance or repair of existing facilities.

3.9 Sponsorships and donations

From time to time, Council receives approaches from community groups or individuals for sponsorships and donations. These requests usually relate to an individual's or community group's fundraising event.

The granting of sponsorship/donations will be the decision of Council, based upon a written request from an individual or community group, which must describe the community benefit that will be derived from the sponsorship/donation.

When deciding upon a request, Council will consider:

- the funds available for sponsorships/donations, and
- the benefit that will be derived for the Loddon Shire community.

Council will provide an amount of funds for sponsorships/donation in its annual budget. The annual amount provided will be the decision of Council.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007). Loddon Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

5 REVIEW

The Director Economy and Community will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.