

Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy

Policy Administration

Dates	Policy approved 24 July 2023 This policy is effective upon its approval. Policy is due for review July 2026
Approved by	Executive on 11 July 2023 Council on 24 July 2023
Policy Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Policy
Exhibition Period	N/A
Policy Owner	Manager, Office of the General Manager
Related Documents	Grants and Donations Policy
References & Legislation	Section 356 <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
Document Identifier	Policy #: Pol-049.03 Doc #: D23/185389
Breaches of Policy	Breaches of any policy will be dealt with and responded to in accordance with adopted codes and/or relevant legislation.
Record Keeping	All documents and information obtained in relation to the implementation of this policy will be kept in accordance with the NSW State Records Act 1998, Georges River Council's Corporate Records Policy and adopted internal procedures.

Purpose

The Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy (the Policy) guides the application and assessment process, allocation and evaluation of funding to address community needs under Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The Policy provides an overarching framework to manage the allocation of funds to individual and community groups to support activities or programs that benefit the wider community.

Scope

The Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy provides a framework which enables Councillors to provide financial support to individuals and community groups, subject to Council resolution that complies with Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (refer to Clause 3 of the Policy).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions apply throughout this policy.

Term	Meaning
Acquittal	An acquittal is required to be completed by the funding recipient to account for funds through the completion of a Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund expenditure form provided by Council. It details how the recipient administered the funds and met the project outcomes.
Grant	A sum of money given for a specific purpose and with an expectation that the money will be used for the agreed purpose.
Community Group	A recognised group (whether incorporated or not), association or organisation established to serve the interest of members and/or the broader community on a not-for-profit basis.
Not-for-profit	An organisation which provides services to the community and does not operate to make a profit.
Recipient	A party who has successfully applied for a grant.
The Fund	Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund.
General Manager	Means the General Manager of Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative

Policy Statement

1. Introduction

Funding allocations identified through the Fund must benefit residents of Georges River Local Government Area (LGA). The Fund can be allocated to social initiatives and will supplement Council's existing grants and donations program, allowing a timely and flexible approach to requests for funding from the community.

1.1. The Policy provides a framework to allow for the consideration of these requests in a manner that ensures:

- The approval of applications through the Fund can only be considered at a formal meeting of Council;
- The process for consideration of applications through the Fund is open, transparent and accountable, to this end, a register of all approved Fund allocations will be made available on Council's website;
- There is an appropriate acquittal process for the spending of funds; and
- That Council is acknowledged for providing them.

2. General Principles

2.1. The funds are available annually through the Office of the General Manager and will be allocated as non-capital components, details of which will be included in Council's Operational Plan. The amount will vary each year (as determined by Council) and the funds must be utilised in the financial year they are allocated.

2.2. Applications for funding through the Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund are submitted by councillors on behalf of an individual or community group.

2.3. Councillors can apply for funding using the prescribed online form which must be lodged through the Councillor Hub, as attached as Appendix A to this Policy.

2.4. Councillors are responsible for providing all required information on the application form (Appendix A) prior to submitting to Office of the General Manager including:

- Details of intended recipient
- Name of project/purpose of funding
- Amount of funding requested
- Supplier details including name and contact number
- Trading name
- ABN
- Conflict of Interest Declaration

Incomplete applications will be returned to the Councillor.

2.5. Individuals or Community Groups can only receive funding through this fund once per financial year per individual councillor.

2.6. The General Manager will provide a report to the next Ordinary Council Meeting outlining the details of any requests that have received support from Councillors seeking a resolution of Council to provide the financial assistance.

2.7. Councillors will then be able to approve requests they would like to support and the amount they would like to contribute. Multiple councillors can nominate to support the same request for funding, in which case the funding will be split

between Councillors, however, the maximum amount a recipient of funds may receive in the financial year is capped at \$6,000.

2.8 Each resolution for funding from the fund will detail the following:

- The recipient of funding;
- Name of project / purpose of funding;
- Amount of funding;
- Councillor who has requested the funding (including amount contributed from each Councillor's discretionary fund); and
- Balance of funds.

2.9 In application circumstances outlined above, Councillors are required to make a declaration in regard to conflicts of interest.

2.10 Details of all funds awarded through the Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund will be made available on Council's website, including the amount of funds provided and the purpose for which the funds are to be utilised and the outcome.

3. Applications on behalf of Community Groups or Individuals

3.1. Applications for the provision of funds to Community Groups or individuals must comply with section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* which states that:

- (1) *A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.*
- (2) *A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.*
- (3) *However, public notice is not required if:*
 - a) *The financial assistance is part of a specific program, and*
 - b) *The program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and*
 - c) *The program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and*
 - d) *The program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.*

3.2. Applications for Community Groups and individuals are capped at a total amount of \$2,000 per Councillor per financial year and will be considered in accordance with the criteria consistent with Council's Grants and Donations Policy. All applications must be lodged by councillors utilising the specified online application form which stipulates that applications must comply with the following criteria.

3.3. To be eligible for funding, applications must achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- The project or activity is aligned with approved objectives of Council's Community Strategic Plan;
- Provide economic benefits to the Georges River local government area;

- Provide opportunities for education and information exchange, regional, national and/or international events and activities that enhance the image and reputation of the area;
 - Promote Council as a natural sustainable city;
 - Promote the cultural diversity of the local government area;
 - Provide Council with positive media, promotional and publicity opportunities across a range of media platforms.
- 3.4 To be eligible community groups are required to have relevant and appropriate business/not-for-profit registration and have objectives and values (including those of any parent companies and subsidiaries) that are consistent with the objectives and values of Council. Information will be required to be provided regarding their membership base. Community Groups will be required to provide to councillors details of how the funds will be expended and the purpose for which the funds will be utilised.
- 3.5 To be eligible, individuals must be seeking funding to defray the costs of participation in an elite level sporting tournament, artistic or cultural event at a state, national or international level.
- 3.6 The following are examples of eligible activities or projects:
- Groups activities or programs that provide benefit to members and/or the wider community – such as sporting groups, seniors groups, youth groups, children’s and family groups, cultural groups, environmental groups and social support groups;
 - Small one-off projects to support incorporated not-for-profit groups to deliver community led projects and initiatives open to the community;
 - Community forums, information sessions or training programs that will directly benefit residents of Georges River Local Government Area;
 - Community events or celebrations that encourage wider community engagement;
 - Events that raise funds for charitable purposes;
 - Activities that increase participation in sport, the arts, environmental or civic activities;
 - Establishment of a new group.
- 3.7 The following are examples of expenditure for donated funds:
- Cover expenses associated with membership activities;
 - Transport costs;
 - Insurance;
 - Meeting room or venue hire fees.
- 3.8 The following will not be eligible for funding:
- Activities that have already taken place at the time application is received by Council (in these circumstances, extenuating circumstances, may be taken into consideration);
 - Activities that promote specific political or religious views or views that do not align with Council’s values;
 - Enterprises that are profit-making;
 - Salaries, wages or other payments made to staff and/or members of the community group or an individual;

- Capital works, renovations and purchasing and installation of fixtures and fittings;
- Ongoing/operating costs of community organisations;
- Projects that cannot be completed in the financial year for which the financial assistance is provided;
- Repeat projects or events that have previously been supported by Council;
- Parties and/or luncheons (e.g. Christmas parties).

3.9 Conditions of Funding:

- Where the project is of an ongoing nature, Council will not be responsible for recurrent costs or ongoing maintenance;
- Community groups or individuals who are the successful recipient of funds through another Council program such as through the Grant and Donations Policy in the current financial year will not be eligible for consideration;
- Funding may be used in conjunction with funding from other sources outside Council provided that funding is disclosed at the time of request to Council;
- Funding must be used for the purpose for which it is granted;
- Community groups and individuals will be required to acknowledge funding for projects; to this end the use of the Council approved logo is required in any promotional activity or signage related to the funded project and acknowledgement of this assistance must be included in media releases, invitations, posters, signs, digital channels such as website and any other suitable communications. "This project is supported by Georges River Council";
- Community Groups and individuals who receive funding are required to give permission for Council to use their name, value of the support offered and intended use of funds for any reporting or promotion purposes the General Manager deems appropriate;
- Funding will not be paid in advance.
- Cannot be applied for if a current application has been submitted under the Grants and Donations Policy.

3.10 Acquittal Process:

- Community Groups and individuals who are the recipients of funds will be required to account for funds through the completion of a Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund expenditure form provided by Council. The form will require details of how the funds were spent and in the case of community groups, provide income and expenditure statements and supporting Australian tax invoices and receipts which must be in English. All tax invoices must include the words 'tax invoice', the identity of the seller, such as business name or trading name (including contact details), Australian Business Number (ABN) and the date of issue of the invoice. All receipts must include the business name and ABN of the supplier, the date of supply, details of the product or service and the price.
- All funding recipients are requested to supply photographs of the finished project or event and any other relevant information.
- Failure to abide by the acquittal process will make a community group or individual ineligible for future funding.

4. Ethics and Governance Framework

Georges River Council, and all individual and community group recipients, will not support any activities, entities, or individuals associated with entities, that are considered to:

- discriminate, or encourage discriminatory behaviour, including discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, religion, sex and/or sexual orientation
- contribute to, or advocate for, the infringement of human rights
- demonstrate behaviour that does not align to council's strategic direction
- pollute land, air or water, or otherwise damage the natural environment
- produce, promote or distribute products or services likely to be harmful to the community
- exploit people through the payment of below-award wages or poor working conditions including any forms of modern slavery
- represent a reputational risk for Georges River Council to partner with or support or be seen to partner with or support.

Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
General Manager's Office	Review the Policy as required, including within the first year of a new term of Council (in accordance with Section 252(1) of the <i>NSW Local Government Act 1993</i>)
Chief Audit Executive	Review Policy for reforms to the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
Manager, Office of the General Manager	Overall responsibility for Policy delivery and oversight of policy approval
Executive Services Officer	Administration of the Policy

Version Control and Change History

Version	Amendment Details	Policy Owner	Period Active
3.0	Updated Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy – approved to be included as part of the Operational Plan 2023/24. Council Resolution CCL058-23	Manager, Office of the General Manager	25/7/2023 -
2.0	Updated Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy	Acting Manager, Office of the General Manager	26/7/2022
1.0	New Georges River Council. Councillors Ward Discretionary Fund Policy	Executive Manager, Office Of the General Manager	28/5/2018