Grants and donations guidelines
for applicants

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1. Contents

RESPECT · INTEGRITY · INNOVATION · TEAMWORK · EXCELLENCE ·

Purpose

To provide guidance for applicants seeking funding from Council through various grants and donations programs aligned to the Community Strategic Plan 2025–2035.

Introduction

Council seeks to optimise the use of public funds through effective and efficient grant processes, and clear grant program objectives linked to Council's Community Strategic Plan to enhance social, cultural, and economic outcomes.

The Grants and Donations Guidelines is developed to assist applicants when applying for funding from Kiama Municipal Council (council). The guidelines must be read and applied in conjunction with Council's Grants Donations and Sponsorship Policy. The Guidelines provide detailed information of each grant or donation program, aiming to be easy to understand and follow. The Guidelines must be read prior to applying for a council grant to ensure you are eligible and applying to the appropriate grant.

Grants and donations:

- Support community development and active participation in civic life
- Empower the community to address issues that matter to them and take the lead on projects to enhance community life
- Stimulate business, tourism and economic activity
- Encourage partnerships with other organisations
- Assist groups and individuals to work together for collective benefit
- Create artistic and creative initiative, fostering experimentation and enterprise
- Provide new opportunities for audiences to engage in our community's culture

2. Guiding principles

Council's assessment and decision-making processes are guided by the following strategic alignment and principles. Applicants are required to demonstrate how their program, project or event aligns to one or more of the following areas.

a. Partnership and Collaboration

Council partners with a variety of organisations to deliver on its objectives. Council supports including not-for-profit community organisations that deliver programs and initiatives that build and maintain respectful, transparent and collaborative relationships. Your application should outline how your project contributes to partnerships between Council and the community.

b. Commitment to local

Council is committed to supporting local projects, local people and local business in order to achieve economic, social, environmental and community outcomes. This will be achieved through engagement with local community groups and organisations who are also committed to these outcomes.

c. Access, diversity and inclusion

Council values the identities, perspectives and experiences of the communities that live, work and visit our local area and believe this diversity strengthens our community. Kiama is a diverse community – from culturally, linguistically, age, sexuality and ability perspectives. Kiama is located on the Dharawal country, the home of our First Nations people who have resided on the South Coast of NSW for tens of thousands of years. Council acknowledges the richness of First Nations culture that underpins our community.

Council is committed to ensuring that our grant program is inclusive and accessible to our diverse communities. Applications from our diverse communities including First Nations people, young people, older people, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women and LGBTIQA+ communities are highly encouraged.

d. Value for money

The program seeks to obtain the best mix of applications to meet the needs of the community and maximise outcomes for the local government area. Projects that represent good value for the level of monetary or value-in-kind support requested are supported.

e. Sustainability

Council is committed to economic, social and environmental sustainability and welcomes projects that have these principles at their core, including:

- Economic sustainability: project is either one off or aim to self-fund future iterations.
- Social sustainability: project enables medium to long term benefits for participants.
- Environmental sustainability: all aspects of the project consider processes for inclusion of resources that are healthy and supportive of our environment.

f. Good governance and stewardship

Council is committed to rigor; efficient and effective decision making in the best interest of the public. The Grants Program Policy, Guidelines, Application, Assessment and Acquittal processes are developed to ensure equitable, accountable and reportable use of public funds.

Council employees involved in assessing or performing administration duties associated with grant and funding agreements must comply with the requirements of Council's Code of Conduct for staff, contractors, volunteers and relevant internal procedures.

g. Transparency

Council will ensure that grant processes are transparent and fair. Applications are assessed objectively against the eligibility criteria within the guidelines, using the assessment matrix. All conflicts of interests are addressed and declared as part of this process. Council will keep a register of all grants and funding available on the council's website. All applications for grants will be reported and documented through council meeting business papers.

h. Reflect and learn

Council is committed to continuous improvement. Applicants are invited to contribute to improving Council's grants procedure by providing their feedback.

i. Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035

Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is an overarching plan that represents the community's vision. This vision is outlined through four focus areas; liveable, sustainable, resourceful and responsible. All applications must demonstrate how their project, program or event address at least one of the above focus areas.

3. Funding Schedule

Funding program	Application timeframe
Small Community Grants and Donations	Open all year
Destination Event Funding	Two rounds annually
Signature Community Events Funding	Two rounds annually
Cultural Grant	Two rounds annually
Health and Sustainability Grant	Two rounds annually

General eligibility criteria

General eligibility
Applications for the Grants Program must: - Be an incorporated not-for-profit (or under auspice of an incorporated organisation) or charitable organisation and hold a current ABN. (*In some instances, funding for-profit organisations who have demonstrated they are best placed to deliver a public benefit and meet the relevant grant program's outcomes will be considered).* Exempt from this criterion are Destination Event Funding applicants, which may be commercial in nature.   - Operate within the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA) or can demonstrate that the project or program will benefit residents of the Kiama community.   - Submit application prior to funding deadline   - Have or will obtain appropriate insurance and adhere to Workplace Health and Safety practices or be under the auspice of another organisation.   - Demonstrate meeting at least one of the policy's strategic outcomes / CSP focus areas   - Have no debt to Council and have met and successfully complied with all Council funding, reporting and acquittal conditions for previous Council grants.   - Not be the recipient of any other Council financial / other type of assistance for the same event or project.   - Meet eligibility criteria and terms/conditions set out in programs outlined below   - Must have fully completed the application form, paying careful attention to required documents, budget breakdown, project description, work plan and timeframe.   - Build and enhance the reputation and brand of Kiama Municipal Council   - Work collaboratively and respectfully with council and staff representatives.

General ineligibility
- Projects that do not meet Kiama's Community Strategic Plan objectives   - Projects that have already commenced or have been completed.   - Applications from government agencies, political parties/activities   - Applications submitted after funding deadline   - Organisations that make profits allocated to shareholders, owners and/or members.   - Commercial entities / private organisations (exemption: Destination Event Funding).   - Projects that directly contravene existing Council policies.   - Projects that duplicate existing Council services or programs.   - Applications to cover funding shortfall from other government programs.   - Applications that do not demonstrate a direct benefit to Kiama residents.   - Requests for funding toward salaries/wages and operational expenditure including administration, insurance, office equipment, transport, travel, IT equipment.   - Development of privately-owned facilities.   - Applications to pay off a debt.   - Funding for core operational costs i.e. day to day operations   - Individual requests for funds to attend national or international sports events.   - Events that do not reflect the character and culture of Kiama or are deemed outside the physical and social limitations of our community and facilities.   - Services or products that are injurious to health.   - Initiatives that discriminate on basis of race, sex, age, disability or religion.   - Perceived to conflict with Council's policies / responsibilities to the community.   - Services or products that carry high risk of reputational damage to Council.   - Organisations or individuals in legal or social conflict with Council.   - Previous applicant with outstanding requests to provide adequate / additional reporting

4. The Grant Funding Programs

Small Community Grants and Donations	
Opening round	All year round
Total allocation	$15,000
Application Max	$500.00 per application

Objective
- Develop / support community capacity building, education and awareness.
- Facilitate community participation
- Enhance social, cultural or sustainable outcomes for local communities.
- Improve quality of life for individuals and community groups from diverse backgrounds.

Examples of projects previously funded through this program
- Christmas Carols
- Sporting competitions
- Photographic Exhibitions
- Healthy lifestyle programs

In addition to the General Eligibility Criteria outlined in the Policy and Guidelines, the following criteria applies to this program:
- Be incorporated or auspiced by an incorporated organisation
- Be not-for-profit (Council may request submission of latest annual financial report)
- Demonstrate benefit to the municipality, strengthen the community and contribute to council's goal of a socially just and inclusive community.
- Demonstrate that any monies raised through programs or activities associated with the donation will be used or distributed to benefit the Kiama community.
- Not be raising funds on behalf of another group which itself is a recipient of financial assistance from Council, State or Federal Government.

Signature Community Events Funding

Opening round	2 rounds annually
Total allocation	$45,000
Application Max	$7,000 per application

Objective

- Develop / support community capacity building, education and awareness
- Facilitate community participation in local initiatives.
- Enhance social, cultural or sustainable outcomes for local communities.
- Improve quality of life for individuals and community groups from diverse backgrounds.
- Support eligible event organisers to plan and deliver successful community events that provide a significant benefit to residents, demonstrate value for money and align with Council's strategic goals and initiatives.

Examples of projects previously funded through this program

- Kiama Jazz and Blues Festival
- The Kazador – Mini Spiegeltent Season
- Significant art gallery exhibitions

In addition to the General Eligibility Criteria outlined in the Policy and Guidelines, the following criteria applies to this program:

- Community event that operates in and/or shows a direct benefit to residents
- Applications received before the deadline, and at least three (3) months prior to the proposed event start date.
- A current Event Permit or is working with council to obtain one (if applicable).
- Current public liability insurance of at least $20 million.
- Agree to proactively engage with local businesses and community groups in the planning and delivery of the event.
- Ability to present strong financial management i.e. financially solvent / event not entirely reliant on Council funding.
- Not be a frequently re-occurring event e.g. a weekly or monthly scheduled market.

Eligible items for funding may include but are not limited to:

- Hire of equipment, temporary structures, professional services (including artist fees).
- Traffic management plans including traffic control services.
- Promotion and advertising of the events.
- Access and inclusion measures at events and functions.

Ineligible items for funding include but are not limited to:

- Event costs already funded by council
- Consumables e.g. stationery, printing, fuel, vehicle / plant equipment repairs
- Travel expenses
- Mobile phone costs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Items costed from another government grant.

Destination Event Funding		
Opening round	2 rounds annually	
Total allocation	$130,000	
Application Max:		
Event Category	Events in years 1-3	Events in years 3+
Destination Event	Up to $10,000	Up to $8,000
Major Event	Up to $20,000	Up to $10,000
Multi-Year Funding	Eligible events, regardless of lifecycle, may apply for up to three years of support. Multi-year funding, however, is primarily intended for events with: • A demonstrated history of strong delivery • A compelling case for growth and long-term sustainability, and • Commit to delivering objectives within our LGA over multiple years. Multi-year funding is assessed on the proven or potential contribution to tourism, the local economy and alignment with Council priorities.	

Objective

- Attract overnight intrastate and interstate visitation
- Stimulate the local economy and tourism sector
- Occur outside peak visitor periods to balance seasonal demand
- Align with the Kiama Visitor Economy Strategy
- Demonstrate long-term vision, sustainability, and scalability
- Receive support in planning and delivery through Council's Events Toolkit

Examples of projects previously funded through this program

- Crooked River Winter Wine Festival
- Kiama Rugby Sevens
- Changing Tides Music Festival

In addition to the General Eligibility Criteria, the following criteria applies to this program:

- Be delivering a Destination or Major event or justify eligibility under these event categories
- Apply **at least 3 months prior** to the proposed event date
- Have approval or intend on meeting approval requirements to host the event
- Attract overnight visitors and actively seek to grow this segment
- Proactively engage with local businesses in event planning and/or delivery
- Evidenced strong financial management i.e. financially solvent / self-sustainable / not entirely reliant on council funding.
- Schedule the event outside peak visitation periods
- Deliver the event within 12 months of funding approval Not be a regularly re-occurring event e.g. a weekly or monthly market
- Have met / complied with all previous Council funding, reporting and acquittal obligations

Organisers are encouraged to become a Destination Kiama partner.

Reporting - In addition to requirements within Policy and Guidelines, the following applies:

A Post-Event Report must be submitted within 4 weeks of the event. This includes:

- Attendance figures and demographic data (age, location, overnight stays, spending)
- Marketing results (e.g. digital reach, shares, impressions)
- Learnings and recommendations for future improvements

Assessment Criteria – Destination Event Funding

Each eligible application will be assessed using the following weighted criteria:

Criterion 1 – Tourism Value and Destination Profiling (30%)
Evaluates the event's potential to elevate Kiama as a visitor destination.

Key considerations:
- Contribution to Kiama's profile as a tourism destination to out-of-area audiences
- Marketing and communications reach (e.g. media coverage, online reach)
- Alignment with Destination Kiama's brand and hero experiences
- Number of attendees expected to travel over 50km to attend
- Length of event and estimated visitor stay duration
- Event's uniqueness and alignment with Kiama's values and appeal
- Contribution to the Kiama events calendar, especially during off-peak periods

Criterion 2 – Economic Impact (25%)
Assesses the event's financial return for the community and local economy.

Key considerations:
- A minimum of 35% of attendees to be visitors from beyond a 50km radius of the event
- Estimated economic impact (target range: $50,000–$1 million by Year 3)
- Potential to drive overnight visitation (favour multi-day events)
- Engagement of local businesses and suppliers
- Effectiveness in balancing seasonality and generating visitation in non-peak periods
- Commitment to measure and report success (through surveys and data collation)

Criterion 3 – Social and Community Benefits (15%)
Measures the broader value the event brings to Kiama's community and culture.

Key considerations:
- Promotes positive community participation and local pride
- Inclusive, accessible, and welcoming for diverse audiences
- Celebrates cultural diversity, including engagement with First Nations and minority groups
- Environmental responsibility and social sustainability

Criterion 4 – Organisational Capacity & Planning (10%)
Evaluates whether the event team has the capability and planning in place to deliver successfully.

Key considerations:
- A comprehensive event management plan
- Clearly defined staffing and resource arrangements
- Relevant experience delivering this or similar events
- A balanced and realistic budget (with projected profit/loss)
- Evidence of event-readiness, including:
  - Liaison with stakeholders including emergency services
  - Status of permit/licence applications
  - Risk management plan and public liability coverage

Criterion 5 – Demonstrated Need for Funding (20%)
Assesses how essential Council funding is to the success or growth of the event.

Key considerations:
- Impact the funding will have on event outcomes, scale or sustainability
- Demonstrated efforts to secure other funding or generate income
- How funding supports event growth (e.g. longer hours, improved offering / accessibility)
- Whether Council support is critical to the event continuing or expanding

Criterion 6 - Previous Funding Recipients (if applicable)
If the applicant has previously received Council event funding: • A deduction of 5% will be applied if prior funding obligations (e.g. post-event reporting) were not met to a satisfactory standard.
Determining Maximum Monetary Contribution

The funding amount an event may be eligible for is influenced by:
   • The total number of years the event has operated
   • The number of years the event has operated within the Kiama LGA
   • If applying for multi-year funding, applicants must demonstrate:
   - A clear intention to operate in the Kiama LGA for at least three years
     A breakdown of anticipated benefits and expenditure for each year
     Evidence of event sustainability, audience growth and economic return over time

Cultural Grant

Opening round	2 rounds annually
Total allocation	$15,000
Application Max	$2,500 per application

Objective

- Enhance social, cultural or sustainable outcomes for local communities.
- Explore innovative arts practices and interdisciplinary collaboration that advances Kiama's arts profile in the wider community.
- Expand the understanding and utilise the power of the arts, cultural, social, educational, economic, and psychological benefits, for the overall health and wellbeing of the Kiama community and its visitors.
- Advance the professional learning and educational outcomes for artists.
- Improve the collaborative and mentoring opportunities for artists.
- Push the boundaries for community engagement with the arts through interactive, immersive and cutting-edge art experiences.
- Demonstrate inclusive practices that actively engage our diverse community ie gender, sexual and cultural diversity, ability and age.

Examples of projects previously funded through this program

- Art exhibitions
- Festivals
- Book launches
- Album releases

In addition to the General Eligibility Criteria outlined in the Policy and Guidelines, the following criteria applies to this program:

- Applicants must live, and/or deliver their project, in the local government area and be one of the following;
    - An individual artist – amateur, emerging semi-professional or professional
    - A not-for-profit community organisation or group
    - An arts based for profit business (*In some instances funding for-profit organisations who have demonstrated they are best placed to deliver a public benefit and meet the relevant grant program's outcomes will be considered*).
- Project must not have been previously funded through council's Cultural Grant.
- Apply for one year of funding only (recurrent projects i.e. annual events, that are considered will receive a one-off seed funding only if successful).
- Any funds provided must not lead to the applicant becoming dependent on council's ongoing financial support).
- Applicants must demonstrate financial need for grant support.
- Projects must have a realistic timeframe or completion within the grant period.
- Applicants must agree to participate in program evaluation and submit project reports.

Health and Sustainability Grant	
Opening round	2 rounds annually
Total allocation	$15,000
Application Max	$2,000 per application

Objective

- Enhance health and environmental sustainability outcomes for local communities.
- Partner with / support community groups in development and delivery of projects that improve health, wellbeing and quality of life for all residents and visitors
- Provide and promote opportunities for the community to:
  - engage in regular physical activity
  - develop skills in sustainable practices
  - develop knowledge and skills in healthy eating and active living principles
  - improve the health of the natural environment
  - improve the mental health and wellbeing.

Examples of projects previously funded through this program

- Kiama Community Garden
- Landcare Illawarra
- Public School P&C Association
- Parkinsons Kiama.

In addition to the General Eligibility Criteria outlined in the Policy and Guidelines, the following criteria applies to this program:

- Be a not-for-profit incorporated community organisation (or under auspice of an incorporated organisation) or be an incorporated school P&C and have relevant insurances. Where partnerships are proposed, a letter identifying the lead organisation will be required, and all organisations need to sign the application form.
- If a proposed project's governance is to be auspiced by another organisation, written confirmation of the auspice arrangement must be submitted with the grant application and an officer of the auspice organisation with appropriate delegated authority must co-sign the application.
- Must ensure that the project is not for the purposes of charitable fund raising.
- Must be able to match dollar for dollar funding amounts for project either in cash or in-kind (includes volunteer hours)
- Must submit new and innovative projects (rather than previously funded projects)
- Project must not have been previously funded through this program.
- Apply for one year of funding only. Recurrent projects ie. annual events are eligible for one-off seed funding only, if successful.
- Funds must not lead to applicant becoming dependent on ongoing council support.

5. The Grants Procedure

a. How to Apply

Programs will be promoted via council's website, social media channels, media releases, newsletters, information sessions and / or direct email or phone contact. Council uses the [SmartyGrants](#) online platform for all funding applications. Once a funding round opens:

- Speak to council's grants team for advice before submitting your application.
- Set up an account to commence the application process.
- Press 'Save Progress' before you continue to the next page.
- If you wish to leave a partially completed application, press 'Save and Close'. Log back in with the same registration details to continue the application. Select the 'My submissions' link at the top of the screen to start where you left off.
- Download any application, draft or completed, as a PDF by clicking on the 'Download PDF' button located at the bottom of the last page of the application form.
- Navigate forward / back through the application by clicking 'next page' or 'previous page'
- A number of people can work on an application using the same log in details as long as only one person is working at a time. Ensure you save as you go.
- If you wish to upload/submit attachments to support your application they will need to be saved on your computer, or on a storage device. It is a simple 'drag and drop' or 'browse' to locate your saved document (leave time to upload one at a time).
- Ensure you review your application thoroughly before you submit. We recommend saving your work in a Word document as a backup.
- You will not be able to submit your application until all mandatory fields are completed.
- Once application is submitted no further editing / uploading is possible.
- The registered email will receive a confirmation and copy of the application (check your junk/spam folder). If you do not receive this email, presume your application has NOT been submitted. Please contact council as soon as possible in this case.

Council will not accept hard copies or email submissions, or any submission received after the closing date. Download the [Help Guide for Applicants](#) or check out [Applicant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)](#) if you require assistance.

b. Tips to assist your application

- Register your organisation/ group on SmartyGrants
- Read relevant plans, strategies and the Events Toolkit if relevant, on council's website
- Set clear, achievable and measurable outcomes that match the funding criteria
- Include evidence of need/ demand for your program i.e. data, reports, consultation
- Ensure your budget is accurate by obtaining quotes for your project.
- Use plain English.

c. Assessment and decision making

1. Submissions received within deadline are assessed by Internal Assessment Panel.
2. Recommendations for funding will be submitted to Council for endorsement.
3. Successful & unsuccessful applicants are notified by email following Council's decision. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback on request.
4. A written funding agreement is prepared for all successful applicants outlining the level of funding offered and the conditions and obligations with such, inclusive of reporting / acquittal requirements.
5. Details of successful applications will be published on the Council website.

NB: Applications for grants under $1000 are approved by the CEO as per Council delegation.

d. Funding Agreement and Obligations

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with Council detailing the terms, obligations, deliverables and conditions of receiving the support. This agreement will also note recognition requirements such as Council / Destination Kiama logo placement, branding and signage.

Grant agreements must be signed by an authorised representative with the requisite authority to bind the organisation. Successful applicants will be required to accept the department's payment schedule noting payments will be made according to set milestone deliverables, detailed in the grant agreement.

Successful applicants will have 15 calendar days from the date of the Letter of Offer to accept and sign the funding agreement with Council. The offer may be withdrawn if the agreement is not executed within the timeframe, and the granted event support becomes void.

Council reserves the right to withhold the balance of the funding if the organiser fails to comply with the obligations outlined in the funding agreement.

Council's funding support must be acknowledged by successful applicants for the specified programs, and where applicable as per section 7.3 of the Policy.

e. Payment Arrangements

Payment will be made by Council to the nominated bank account by electronic funds transfer. The payee will need to be set up as a supplier on the Council system.

f. Acquittal

Financial acquittal is required for all Council grants. A report must be submitted:
- before deadline date in the funding agreement, via SmartyGrants portal or pdf form
- Including supporting documents to prove expenditure of council grant funds.

Failure to meet the above criteria may result in an applicant being:
- Required to return allocated funding to Council and/or
- Becoming ineligible for future Council grants.
- Applicants who have not provided adequate grant acquittal documentation within 6 months (four weeks for Destination Event Funding) of the original grant approval date will be referred to Council's Finance Department for debt retrieval.

6. Failure to meet Funding Agreement

Applicants who fail to deliver on aspects of their funding agreement within the agreed timeframe may be eligible for one of the alternative options:
- <u>Variation requests</u> – submit in writing. A response will be provided by Council.
- <u>Extension requests</u> will not be accepted beyond a twelve-month period from original event date, unless extenuating circumstances are demonstrated.

In the event that an applicant can no longer complete any or all of the approved project, unspent grant funds will be returned to Council and any partial expenditure must be acquitted.

7. More information

You can visit Council's website or call the grants team for more information on (02) 4232 0444

8. Related links

[Community Strategic Plan](#)

[Delivery Program and Operational Plan](#)

[Grants and Donations Program](#)

[Kiama Tourism & Events Strategic Plan](#)

[Smartygrants Application Platform](#)