

EXTERNAL FUNDING APPLICATION POLICY (C97)

Policy No.	C97	Adoption Date:	Council Meeting 20 August 2025
Directorate:	Sustainable Infrastructure	Department:	Infrastructure Delivery
Revision Date:	August 2029		

GOOD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Supporting Pillar:	Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership Pillar 3. Decision Making Pillar 4. Structure, Systems & Policies
Link to Pillar:	Establish good processes and delegations to ensure decisions consider local community and broader municipal interests, are consistent.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of the External Funding Application Policy (C97) (the Policy) is to:
 - 1.1.1. Provide an overarching framework that provides transparent and effective administration of external agency funding.
 - 1.1.2. Provide comprehensive and clear direction in the management of new and existing incoming (external) funding programs.
- 1.2. This Policy has been developed to support the South Gippsland Shire Council (Council) to comply with its Good Governance Framework and obligations within the Local Government Act.
- 1.3. There are accompanying Guidelines to this Policy, offering direction on when Council should apply for external funding applications and ensuring alignment with the Council's strategic objectives.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The scope of this Policy relates to:
 - 2.1.1. All Council employees involved in applying or managing incoming grant funding related programs and acquittals.
- 2.2. The scope of this Policy also relates to all grant funding applications and agreements where:
 - 2.2.1. Council is the sole applicant or recipient in an external funding application or agreement.

- 2.2.2. Council is one of numerous partners in an external funding application or agreement. Either Council led, partner led, or a Council auspiced grant.
- 2.2.3. Any other external funding provided, where the funding agency approves a grant funding, with variations to the original proposal.
- 2.3. The scope of this Policy does not apply to the following external funding scenarios:
 - 2.3.1. Ongoing or recurring funding arrangements that do not require an application and/or acquittal process to occur, such as Financial Assistance Grants.
 - 2.3.2. Where Council is funded to provide services under an ongoing service agreement.
 - 2.3.3. For reimbursements or allocations made under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
- 2.4. The scope of this Policy does not apply to managing outgoing grants from Council to the community, donations and/or contributions. Outgoing grants from Council are supported in the *Grant Giving Program Policy (C98)* and the *Sponsorship, Contributions and Donations Policy (C88)*.
- 2.5. Council recognises that at times funds are assigned to Council without having made a formal application. These funding announcements may drive the creation of projects whether or not the project has been previously identified or budgeted for within Council. These funds should be administered in accordance with this Policy, to the extent reasonably practicable.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. The Principles of this Policy relate to:

Overarching Principles

- 3.2. Grant funding represents significant opportunities to Council in supporting the delivery of services to the community. Many of Council's services have long standing co-funded programs with the State and Federal Government. Grant management for external funding involves a detailed level of administrative, reporting and budgeting effort.
- 3.3. Council will comply with funding agreements, necessary auditing requirements and the overall management of the funding program.
- 3.4. Council has confidence that public money will be spent as intended. Council has effective controls for their funding programs to plan responsibly, manage resources and prevent fraud.

Grant Funding Application Identification and Approvals

- 3.5. Council actively seeks grant funding for the community in keeping with the current Council Plan, Vision, and the Community and Economic Infrastructure Blueprint 2021-2036.

- 3.6. Council will prepare its grant funding applications and assess funding offered in accordance with this Policy and funding guidelines.
- 3.7. Grant funding applications will not be approved to be submitted until:
 - 3.7.1. An understanding of the grant funding guidelines, timelines and Council eligibility are known.
 - 3.7.2. The necessary internal approvals have been secured in accordance with the Guidelines.
 - 3.7.3. Application objectives are clearly defined, aligning with the Council Plan and Budget.
 - 3.7.4. The source of Councils financial contributions/required funding ratios are identified in a budget.
 - 3.7.5. The source of any external financial contributions is identified and committed to by a third party.
 - 3.7.6. The life-cycle costs, potential risks and post funding project viability are identified including, ongoing maintenance of new and existing assets and financial feasibility.
 - 3.7.7. Application submissions are developed as outlined in the *External Funding Application - Guidelines*.

Grant Application Readiness

- 3.8. Applications must be at an appropriate level of readiness as per the *External Funding Application - Guidelines*.
- 3.9. Council will maintain excellence in the standard of grant funding applications submitted.
- 3.10. Strong relationships will be developed and maintained with funding agencies and other stakeholders.

Application Process

- 3.11. Where applicable, Council uses SmartyFile to coordinate and collaborate funding applications.
- 3.12. Council employees understand the systematic and comprehensive approach to obtaining State, Federal Government and Philanthropic grant funding.

Reporting and Acquittal Process

- 3.13. Council employees will comply with the guidelines, contractual requirements and reporting responsibilities of each signed grant funding agreement.
- 3.14. In accordance with each grant funding agreement rigorous accounting and acquittal of expenditure is necessary.
- 3.15. Formal acquittal reports and/or outcome reports may be necessary as per funding agreement specifications.

Auspecting Process

- 3.16. If seeking funding from State and Federal Government and the Philanthropic sector, Council may work with and support other organisations and stakeholders through auspecting arrangements.
- 3.17. Auspiced applications must align with the Council Plan.
- 3.18. Auspiced applications must be approved as per *the External Funding Application - Guidelines*.

Memorandums of Understanding / Deeds

- 3.19. Council shall enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Deed on projects that are initiated by a third party such as other Government Authorities and sporting clubs.
- 3.20. Council shall enter a MoU or Deed on projects that are to be delivered by a third party such as other Government Authorities and sporting clubs.
- 3.21. Where Council is not the lead agency and/or Council contributes funds to a project Council will ensure its obligations to the funding programs are completed.

Conflict of Interest

- 3.22. All Council employees involved in the grant funding application process are required to declare any conflicts of interest.
- 3.23. In the event of a declared conflict of interest the relevant person must decline to participate in any discussion or decision-making process and have the declaration noted as part of Council's conflict of interest process. This ensures any direct, indirect or a perceived conflict is promptly identified and managed appropriately.

Documentation and Communication

- 3.24. All Council employees are responsible for managing and maintaining complete and accurate records. Record keeping will be in line with *Corporate Information Management Policy (C49)*.
- 3.25. Council will facilitate collaboration and clear communication between funding agencies and Council.
- 3.26. Council shall maximise its efforts to gain the support of Members of Parliament and key stakeholders as per Council's adopted Advocacy priority list (Advocacy Strategy).
- 3.27. Grant funding will be utilised for the specific purpose that it was applied and approved for (including variations). Grant funding will be managed in accordance with the related grant funding agreement, guidelines, and this Policy.
- 3.28. Written approval from the funder is required before Council can publicly announce any successful grant applications.
- 3.29. Council must acknowledge the funder in communications as per their funding guidelines.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

This Policy mitigates Council's risks as described below:

People

- 4.1. By aiming to provide fair, transparent and effective administration of each funding agreement, so the community receives the maximum benefit from grant funding.

Reputational

- 4.2. This Policy provides Council with a framework to manage the funding process for an external agency with a consistent, transparent and accountable, approach ensuring that opportunities for subsequent grant funding are not compromised.
- 4.3. Grant funding has stringent reporting, administration and communication requirements. Failure to adhere to these requirements can negatively impact Council's future funding opportunities.

Financial

- 4.4. This Policy mitigates the risk of inconsistent financial allocation of grant funding program.
- 4.5. This Policy mitigates the risk associated with supporting outgoing monies for projects to minimise potential negative impacts and fraudulent activities.
- 4.6. This Policy ensures Council funding is appropriately matched to external funding opportunities.

Governance

- 4.7. This Policy has been developed to support the Council to comply with its Good Governance Framework and obligations of the *Local Government Act*.
- 4.8. This Policy may need to be read in conjunction with the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy (C96)*.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Human Rights Charter

- 5.1. This Policy has considered the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Gender Equality

- 5.2. This Policy has considered the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in its development including a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA).

Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.3. All Council employees, Managers and Directors across all directorates are responsible and accountable for adhering to and implementing this Policy.
- 5.4. All Council employees shall internally register grant applications that Council employees are considering applying for as per the *External Funding Application - Guidelines*.

5.5. All Council employees shall internally register grant applications where Council are not the lead for the application or where Council contributes funds as per the *External Funding Application - Guidelines*.

5.6. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the *External Funding Application - Guidelines*.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

6.1. This Policy will be reviewed and adopted by Council on a four-year cycle or at Council's discretion.

7. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legislative Provisions	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibility Act 2006</i> <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> <i>Goods and Services Tax 1999</i> <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2004</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i>
Council Supporting Documents	Advocacy Strategy Asset Management Policy (C04) South Gippsland Asset Plan 2025 to 2035 Capital Works Policy (C85) Grant Giving Policy (C98) Complaint Handling Policy (CE73) Council Plan Employee Code of Conduct (CE20) Financial Plan 2025/26 – 2034/35 Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy (C19) Corporate Information and Management Policy (CE49) Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy (C96) Occupational Health Safety & Wellbeing Policy (CE78) Procurement Policy (C32) Risk Management Framework (C35) Risk Management Policy (C35)
Related External Documents	<i>External Funding Application - Guidelines</i>

8. DEFINITIONS

Acquittal	An acquittal is an income and expenditure statement for the grant and confirmation that the funding has been spent on the activity in accordance with the Grant Agreement, Schedule, Terms and Conditions.
Deliverables	Deliverables are the outputs of a project. Deliverables can be tangible or intangible.
Funding Agencies	Funding agencies are any external organisation, public or private, which undertakes a contractual agreement with Council. The funding agency often dictates how their funds may be used, what deliverables/milestones are expected and what reports are required.
Funding	The amount or amounts payable under a funding agreement to Council, which may include interest earned on that amount. The amount will be directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with government Policy.

Grant	A grant is defined as funds, generally from government sources, available to Council upon providing a compelling application and receiving successful evaluation, for specified uses to achieve agreed objectives.
Milestones	Milestones are the control points that mark the completion of key stages of the project.
Progress Reports	A progress report is a report in which Council are updating information about a project. Progress reports make it possible for funders to stay informed about a project and to change or adjust schedules, deliverables, milestones and budgets.
SmartyFile	SmartyFile is a repository which enables collaboration for Council employees to view, search and sort grant submissions across multiple funders in one spot.

9. REVISION HISTORY

Approved By	Approval Date	Sections Modified	CM9 Ref#
<i>Council Meeting</i>	<i>20 August 2025</i>	<i>Policy Review</i>	<i>D6291725</i>

10. ATTACHMENT SUMMARY

Nil