



Community Contributions Policy

Policy Statement

The policy objective is to establish an equitable and transparent approach to allocating financial support by the Shire to the Denmark community. The policy outlines a framework and set of arrangements for funding community groups, organisations, and individuals who:

- contribute positively to the community;
- enhance the capacity of community groups;
- promote public safety;
- bolster environmental sustainability;
- support economic development;
- strengthen social well-being;
- support collaborative efforts with neighbouring local governments;
- facilitate significant financial leveraging for initiatives outlined in the Strategic Community Plan; and
- address service gaps in alignment with Council-endorsed strategies.

Policy Scope

This policy specifies that financial contributions to the community are allocated through one of four methods:

- Service Agreements
- Funding Agreements
- Grants
- Rates Exemptions

Definitions

Service Agreement Arrangement where the Shire has a core business or community requirement to provide a service and has made a workforce decision to engage with an external organisation to deliver the service.

A three to five year agreement with the annual amount funded being subject to Council's annual budget adoption.

Funding Agreement Arrangement where the Council have decided to provide a service to the community, which is beyond the core functions of local government.

These arrangements are a forward commitment for up to three years.

Grants

The Shire's financial contribution to support specific projects, initiatives, or activities. It is awarded based on criteria set by the Shire. Grant recipients must adhere to specific terms and conditions outlined by the Shire in the grant agreement, including reporting and acknowledgement requirements.

Policy Principles

1. Service Agreements and Funding Agreements

1.1 Service Agreements (Core Services)

The Shire may enter into Service Agreements with external organisations for the delivery of services that support or contribute to the functions of a local government. Service Agreements are intended to secure the ongoing delivery of core services that are considered necessary to meet community needs and Council objectives.

Service Agreements will be documented through a legally binding agreement and recorded in the Corporate Business Plan where applicable.

When determining whether a Service Agreement is appropriate, the following factors may be considered:

- Public safety, where there is no reasonable alternative provider available within the community.
- The service addresses an identified community need or service gap.
- The service contributes to the delivery of a Council-adopted strategy, plan or policy.

Funding provided under a Service Agreement will be considered annually through the Council's budget process.

As a Service Agreement nears the end of its term, Shire officers will undertake a formal evaluation and consult with the service provider and relevant stakeholders before making any future funding or agreement.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing compliance with service agreements and ensuring that all parties meet their respective obligations and responsibilities under the agreement.

1.2 Funding Agreements (Discretionary Activities and Services)

The Shire may enter into Funding Agreements with organisations undertaking activities, programs or services that fall outside the core functions of a local government but which Council considers provide a demonstrable benefit to the community.

Funding Agreements will normally be established for a period of up to three years and documented through a funding agreement.

When considering a Funding Agreement, Council may have regard to:

- The extent to which the activity delivers social, environmental, cultural or economic benefits to the community.
- Alignment with Council's strategic objectives and community priorities.
- The organisation's capacity to deliver the proposed outcomes.
- Opportunities to leverage external funding or in-kind support.
- The value for money provided by the proposed activity or service.

Funding provided under a Funding Agreement will generally be approved for a three-year period, subject to annual budget adoption and the recipient meeting the requirements of the agreement.

Recipients of funding agreements are required to submit an acquittal within two months of the end of each financial year during the term of the agreement.

1.3 Review

The Shire may periodically review all Service Agreements and Funding Agreements to assess effectiveness, community benefit and alignment with Council priorities as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.

2. Community Hall Contributions

Where a community organisation holds a lease with the Shire for the management of a community hall. Council may include an annual contribution to the maintenance cost.

3. Grants

Grants are essential for community groups to access funding for projects, programs, and events they want to deliver to the local community. As a rule:

- Applicants are not guaranteed funding, and no applicant is guaranteed full funding.
- Previously funded initiatives cannot be guaranteed funding in subsequent years.
- The available funds remain subject to annual budget considerations.
- Applicants must address the relevant criteria in the relevant funding category.
- The Shire of Denmark does not generally intend to be the sole provider of financial support for the funded project or activity.

Typically, two grant rounds a year will be advertised to the community. In the first round, 50% of the total budget will be made available, and in the second round, any unused funds, plus the budget balance, will be available.

As part of the budget process, the Shire of Denmark will receive formal feedback from officers on the measurable outcomes achieved in the previous grant rounds and based on broad community feedback, determine whether the grants meet the community's needs.

Grant categories

Category	Outcome	Maximum application
Minor Infrastructure Grants	To support small-scale capital improvements, asset upgrades, and essential equipment purchases that improve the usability, safety, or sustainability of community facilities. This stream also captures requests relating to items within Shire-owned or community-owned assets.	\$10,000
Community Activation Grants	To support programs, events, activities, and initiatives that enhance community wellbeing, participation, creativity, culture, and social connection.	\$10,000

4. Rate Waivers and Peppercorn Leases

The Shire of Denmark holds a significant portfolio of property assets available to community groups through leases (Refer to Council's Property Management Policy).

The Council contributes to community groups by providing a peppercorn lease instead of charging commercial rent. Peppercorn leases to community groups is recorded in the Annual Budget.

Council commits to supporting the activities of charitable groups in the community in an equitable and fair approach. As such, where a community group hold a lease for a Shire-owned facility, Council will consider granting a rate waiver through the annual budget process.

5. Reporting and Public Register

The Council will publish a register of all agreements, grants, and rate waivers on the Shire's website, to provide transparency to the community regarding services and activities supported by Council funding.

Responsibilities

The Council will approve:

1. New Funding Agreements.
2. The total annual budget allocation for grants.
3. Any rate waiver for community groups leasing Shire property.

The CEO will approve:

1. Service Agreements.
2. The grant assessment methodology, eligibility criteria, awarding and disbursement of grant funding.

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