



Mildura Rural City Council

Events Funding and Support Policy

Policy – CP010

Prepared	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Council Minute No.
Manager Leisure & Cultural Services	Executive Leadership Team	Council	August 2020	2020/0181
Trim File: 18/02/01			To be reviewed: August 2023	
Document Owner: Manager Leisure & Cultural Services			Review Frequency: Every Three Years	

1. Policy Purpose

To provide the framework for achieving the funding and support goals identified in the Mildura Rural City Council Events Strategy 2025.

2. Policy Statement

This policy operates in the context of and should be read in conjunction with the Mildura Rural City Council Grants Policy CP021 and the Events Funding and Support Guidelines.

Mildura Rural City Council is committed to supporting events within the municipality and recognises the value of events to both the economy and community.

The following vision, mission and goals, as identified in the Events Strategy 2025, provide the direction for the funding and support provided to events within the Mildura municipality.

Vision

To be known as a vibrant event destination, famous for events that celebrate our iconic locations on Murray River and vivid ancient landscapes. We will captivate visitor imaginations with events that savour the tastes and culture of one of Australia's most prolific food producing regions.

Mission

To position the Mildura region as a major event destination with a vibrant year round calendar of events that contributes to the economic and social well-being of our community.

Goals

- **Drive overnight visitor expenditure** – Attract external visitation, extend length of stay and increase overnight visitor expenditure.
- **Showcase Mildura** – Build Mildura's destination brand profile through events that align with the region's competitive advantages, attracting significant media profile.
- **Vibrant and sustainable events** – Facilitate vibrant events that captivate visitor imaginations in a diverse year-round calendar.
- **Creative community** – Encourage creativity, community connectedness and civic pride through event participation

3. Funding Streams

All funding subject to assessment of criteria and Council approval

Fund	Description	Economic Benefit	Funding amount	Application Round	Assessment Criteria
Hallmark Events (Tier 1)	May be supported where the event drives overnight visitor expenditure, showcases Mildura, creates a vibrant and sustainable event and encourage community connectedness and pride through participation.	>\$3M with minimum 10,000 unique visitors to the region	\$300,000	Open all year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic & tourism impact (50%) Profile of Mildura (10%) Community impact & benefits (10%) Event content (10%) Capacity & capability (20%)
		\$2-\$2.99M	\$37,501 - \$50,000		
		\$1.51-\$1.99M	\$25,001 - \$37,500		
		\$1-\$1.5M	\$20,001 - \$25,000		
Major Events (Tier 2)	May be supported where the event is established and drives overnight visitor expenditure, showcases Mildura, creates a vibrant and sustainable event and encourage community connectedness and pride through participation.	\$0.76-\$1M	\$15,001 - \$20,000	Annual Funding Round open February. Multi-year agreements available subject to conditions as outlined below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic & tourism impact (50%) Profile of Mildura (10%) Community impact & benefits (10%) Event content (10%) Capacity & capability (20%)
		\$0.51-\$0.75M	\$10,001 - \$15,000		
		\$0.25-\$0.5M	\$7,501 - \$10,000		
		\$0.15-\$0.249M	\$5,001 - \$7,500		
Community Events (Tier 3)	Events that generate marketing and media opportunities that builds the profile of the Mildura region and/or attract over 1000 people and are targeted primarily at a local audience but also attract visitation from outside the region	N/A	\$3,500-\$5,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profile of Mildura (25%) Participation and Engagement (30%) Meaningful experiences (15%) Community Development (20%) Capacity and capability of applicant (10%)
Community Events (Event Support Grant)	For small events attracting less than 1000 people, a non-competitive grant is available. The event contributes to making Mildura a great place to live; creates a sense of community by bringing people together; and delivers important messages, information and knowledge.	N/A	\$2,500	Annual Funding Round open February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation and Engagement (S/N) Meaningful experiences (S/N) Community Development (S/N) <p>*Non-competitive application process</p>

Fund	Description	Economic Benefit	Funding amount	Application Round	Assessment Criteria
Civic Events	Support for community led Australia Day & Christmas Carols events to enhance community spirit and encourage participation across all community.	N/A	As outlined in appendix A	Annual Funding Round open September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia Day or Christmas Carols event held in the Mildura municipality

* Note: Events which have not previously received events funding and support are eligible to apply for funding under the above streams at any time throughout the year by contacting the Events and Projects Unit.

3.1 Business Events

All funding subject to assessment of criteria and Council approval

Fund	Description	Economic Benefit	Funding amount	Application Round	Assessment Criteria
Business Events and Conferences	Business events, including meetings, incentive trips and conferences which provide an opportunity to grow the visitor economy for the Mildura region. The event encourages the engagement with local businesses to deliver the event and stimulate the local economy. There are opportunities for delegates to experience Mildura's highlights and encourages friends and family to accompany on the trip or return in the future.	>\$0.76M	\$20,000	Funding open all year. Multi-year agreements available, subject to successful delivery of agreed outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracts overnight visitation to the Mildura Region Supports local businesses and stimulates local economy Creates opportunities to market Mildura as a tourist destination
		\$0.51-\$0.75M	\$15,000		
		\$0.25-\$0.5M	\$10,000		
		\$0.15-\$0.249M	\$7,500		
		\$0.1-\$0.149M	\$5,000		
		\$0.05-\$0.1M	\$2,500		

Business Events Funding can be used for purposes where the funds received stay within the Mildura region such as venue hire, catering, local entertainment, transport etc.

3.2 New, once-off, irregular or business events

New, once off, irregular or business events are eligible to apply for funding under the above streams at any time throughout the year by contacting the Events and Projects Unit.

Council reserves the right to enter into a multi-year Hallmark, Major or Business event funding agreement with an event organiser or promoter at the conclusion of a one off event based on a successful acquittal and validation of attendance data without having to enter into the annual funding round.

Council welcomes applications from significant events where the economic benefit exceeds \$3M and attracts at least 10,000 visitors to the region and also reserves the right to run an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to attract specific events or opportunities to the region to fulfil the objectives in the Events Strategy 2025. Funding of these events will be at the discretion of Council.

Applications must be submitted at least 3-5 months prior to the event date relative to the scale of the event.

3.3 Multi-Year Funding Agreements (Hallmark, Major Events, Community-Tier 3 and Business Events)

Successful applicants in the Hallmark, Major, Community-Tier 3 and Business Event categories may negotiate a multi-year agreement of three years.

- Opportunities to enter into Multi-Year agreements will only be offered every three years, with the first being offered in the 2021/2022 February funding round.
- Organisations will be required to submit a minimum three year Strategic Plan and Marketing Plan to be eligible for a multi-year agreement.
- First year funding will be based on the original event application, subsequent funding will be assessed from the acquittal report and based on criteria outlined in the funding streams.
- A Memorandum of Understanding for the three years will be entered into with annual funding agreements signed outlining the funding allocation for each year.
- Successful applicants have until 30 June each year to complete their event.
- An evaluation report and acquittal form must be submitted online within 60 days of the completion of the event or by 30 June each year.
- Successful applicants must have no outstanding debts with Council before they can receive any funding throughout the agreement period.
- Outstanding acquittal requirements relating to other Council grants will need to be satisfied before funding will be released.
- Year two and year three payments will only be available if all conditions of the funding agreement are met.

4. Events Funding & Support Eligibility Criteria

The following requirements must be met to be eligible for funding:

- Be based within the Mildura municipality or be applying for funding to conduct an event that significantly benefits the Mildura municipality.
- Hallmark (Tier 1) and Major (Tier 2) events - must be a constituted body or legal entity, such as an incorporated association (or auspiced by a constituted body or legal entity).
- Community (Tier 3 and event support grants) must be an incorporated association or entity with not-for-profit status (or auspiced by an incorporated association or entity with not-for-profit status).
- Fundraising and charity events. Where the event is identified as Community (Tier 3 or event support grants) 75% of the funds raised must stay within the Mildura municipality.
- Provide proof (certificate of currency) of public liability insurance cover (minimum \$10m or as otherwise agreed) relevant to the activities undertaken and for the duration of the event.

- Provide documentation and evidence to meet the funding category criteria.
- Be a public event, inclusive and accessible to everyone.

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Organisations funded or sponsored for the event through other Mildura Rural City Council programs.
- Organisations with outstanding debts to Council, or who have not previously acquitted a grant to the satisfaction of Council.
- Individuals.
- Political organisations, or events that have a political purpose.
- Religious groups or events unless the event is non-denominational and demonstrates a broader benefit to the community.
- Events that exclude or may offend parts of the community.
- Organisations who have not previously complied with permit or other conditions of Council, or who fail to apply for required permits.
- Event organisers who are registered 'for profit' applying for Community Event funding. However, 'for profit' event organisers may apply for "new, once off or irregular events" and be assessed for equivalent to Community event funding in the first year to assist with startup of the event. Subsequent funding must be based on validated data and meet assessment criteria for Hallmark or Major event funding streams.
- Private events that are not broadly accessible to the local community.
- Prize money, awards or activities associated with prizes or awards (e.g. trophies).
- Fundraising and charity events where less than 75% of funds raised stay within the Mildura municipality, unless the event is identified as Hallmark (Tier 1) or Major (Tier 2).
- Education events including events organised by tertiary institutions, primary or secondary schools or kindergartens.
- Events in conflict with or that accept sponsorship from organisations not aligned to Council's vision, mission and values.
- Capital works projects, facility maintenance or the purchase of capital equipment.
- Insurance or fees associated with risk and governance such as public liability insurance, event insurance or fees payable to a governing body.
- Expos, markets, fetes and circuses.
- Breakfast, luncheon and dinner events and gatherings which are predominately attended by a niche or small cohort of the intended community.
- Sporting, cultural, arts, education, special interest or other gatherings that take place on a regular basis such as monthly or weekly.

5. Events Funding Allocation

Priority of funding will be given to Hallmark (Tier 1), Major (Tier 2) and Business events (approximately 70%) that deliver major economic and tourism outcomes. Community (Tier 3 and event support grant) events will be assessed depending on available remaining funding (approximately 30%).

If applications for the non-competitive Community grant is oversubscribed with eligible applications, a pro-rata system will be followed where funding will be allocated based on the number of applicants divided by the amount of funds available.

6. Council Processes to Administer the Funding Programs

Grant funding is managed according to the grants administration process as outlined below and utilising Council's online grants system. Specific details relating to this process can be found in the Events Funding and Support Guidelines which will be made available for viewing at least 6 weeks prior to the opening of each grant round.

6.1 Advertisement of Program

A transparent process will be used to notify event organisers and the community of the available funding and how to apply via Council's various channels of information distribution which may include print media, Council website, events newsletter, information sessions and social media.

Council reserves the right to run an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to attract specific events or opportunities to the region to fulfil the objectives in the Mildura Rural City Council Events Strategy 2025.

6.2 Application Process

Funding and Support grants is a two-step application process. Applicants are required to complete a pre-application form designed to ensure their event is eligible under the Event Funding and Support Program and to classify the event into the appropriate funding stream. Where the event is identified as being eligible for Hallmark (Tier 1) or Major (Tier 2) event funding, validated evidence of the events ability to meet the criteria outlined in section 3.0 must be supplied.

If the application is deemed eligible under the Event Funding and Support Program, applicants will be invited to submit a full application, including supporting documents for the funding they are assessed as eligible for.

Organisations who have applied previously will receive an acquittal report outlining the funding stream the event has been classified into. This assessment will be made through validation of outcomes and attendance data from their previous event and will not have to complete the pre-application stage.

6.3 Assessment Process

An assessment panel consisting of at least three Council staff will assess applications against the evaluation criteria. At least one member of the assessment panel will be external to the Events and Projects Unit for applications made as part of the annual grant round. Officers may seek additional information and evidence, conduct interviews with applicants or undertake detailed research and review to gain additional information on likely impact of events.

The assessment panel reserves the right to allocate all or part of the funding requested, and to alter the category of funding applied for before making recommendations to Council. Council also reserves the right to defer or delay grant rounds based on specific circumstances that may impact the successful delivery of a grant round.

6.4 Approval and Notification Process

For applications made within the annual grant round the following will apply:

- Assessments conducted and recommendations will be made by a panel consisting of two Council Officers from the Events and Projects Unit and one Officer from an external department. All recommendations will be presented to Council for approval.
- Following Council approval and adoption of the report, applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing. Where requested, applicants will receive feedback from Council officers about their application.

For applications made outside of the annual grant round the following will apply:

- Funding recommendations of up to \$20,000 excluding GST. will be considered by the Events and Projects Unit and presented to General Manager Community for approval. Funding recommendations over \$20,000 excluding GST will be sent to Council for consideration.

6.5 Funding Agreement Process

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Funding Agreement outlining the Conditions of Funding including responsibilities, obligations and identified outcomes required of the organisation.

6.7 Monitoring and Reporting Process

Successful applicants will be required to evaluate and assess agreed outcomes as per the Funding Agreement. This could include the provision of information or a progress report in the lead up to the event to allow officers to monitor funded events.

6.8 Acquittal and Evaluation Process

Successful applicants must submit an acquittal report upon the completion of their event with the due date to be specified in the Agreement. The acquittal report must include an evaluation of the event (on agreed measures), evidence to support the outcomes, visitation to the region, and a detailed budget, including copies of receipts showing expenditure in accordance with the approved purpose of the grant. Funded organisations that are required to provide audited financial statements (funding over \$15,000) with their acquittal will have specified requirements and timelines detailed in the Agreement.

The evaluation report and acquittal including validation of attendance data will become the basis for the pre-application for funding in the next financial year's annual funding round should an organisation wish to apply. A report will be provided to the organisation detailing the funding stream the event has been categorised into.

Should an acquittal not be received by the due date or additional information be required, funded organisations will receive a written request, and will have 14 days in which to provide the acquittal or additional information. If the acquittal or additional information is still not received, a subsequent request will be made giving the funded organisation an additional 7 days to respond.

Should an acquittal report remain outstanding, lack additional information following this process, or remain unsatisfactory (including if funds are not utilised for the purpose intended in the Funding Agreement), future applications may be impacted. This may include future validation of outcomes and attendance through pre-application or ineligibly for future funding rounds.

6.9 Variation Process

A variation to an Agreement may be requested via the Request for Variation form, which is available from Council's Events & Projects Unit. Variations or extensions to legally binding agreements relating to the funded event shall only be accepted by submission via the online grants system.

Consideration must be given to the effect the variation will have on the agreed outcomes for the event. If the variation is accepted, this will be confirmed in writing by Council. This variation will form part of the Funding Agreement. Appeals relating to the outcome of a variation request will not be considered.

6.10 Unspent Event Grant Reserve

An Unspent Event Grants Reserve will be established to hold grant payments that were budgeted to be paid out in the Annual Budget but remain unallocated and unspent at the end of the financial year. The unspent grant budget allocation may be transferred to the reserve at the end of each financial year. This reserve primarily would be used to help fund large or hallmark events.

Unspent grants would be transferred to the reserve from the following grant budgets:

1. Grants Payable to External Organisations
2. New Initiative Events

7. Definitions

Auspicing	Auspicing means that an organisation with a legal not-for-profit status takes responsibility for ensuring grant funds are used as specified in the grant allocation. Auspicing is commonly undertaken for community organisations or groups that are not yet legally constituted as a not-for-profit entity (Incorporated Association, a Public Company Limited by Guarantee, a Co-operative Society or a Trust).
Economic Impact	<p>New expenditure to the Mildura municipality calculated as the product of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of visitors who will travel to the Mildura municipality specifically for the event; • The average length of stay; and • Average daily expenditure for these visitors <p>Where daily expenditure information has not or is unable to be captured or demonstrated by the event organiser, the event organiser may elect to utilise the most recent average spend per night rate for domestic day visitors, domestic overnight visitors or domestic international visitors published by Tourism Research Australia.</p>
Event	<p>A planned public gathering of people in an open space, building or temporary structure, where more people than usual are gathering for an activity, celebration or other occasion.</p> <p>Sporting, cultural, religious or other gatherings of people that occur on a regular basis within each year (e.g. weekly, monthly, bi-monthly) are not considered events.</p>
Grant	Financial and/or in-kind support provided to an event organiser for a specific purpose and for a fixed length of time.
Irregular Events	An event that has not been held within the municipality within the last three years.

Validated Evidence	<p>Validated evidence is valid, verifiable, current and authentic information which substantiates event organiser’s assertions in relation to the number of visitors to an event and the average length of stay.</p> <p>Examples of validated evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Registration lists • Ticket sales reports • Head counts • Gate Counts • Attendance records • Information from accommodation providers
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8. Who is responsible for implementing this policy?

Manager Leisure & Cultural Services

9. Legislation and other references

9.1 Legislation

Local Government Act 1989.

9.2 Documents

This Policy is implemented in conjunction with the following documents:

- Mildura Rural City Council Events Strategy 2025
- Mildura Rural City Council Grants Policy – CP021
- Event Funding and Support Guidelines
- Funding Application and Agreements
- Events Planning and Management Guide
- Event Funding Process (internal operating procedures)
- Answering the Acquittal Questions Guide

9.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Asset Management		Financial Sustainability	
Committees		Human Resource Management	
Compliance – Legal and Regulatory	✓	Leadership & Organisational Culture	
Contract Management		Occupational Health & Safety	
Contract Tendering and Procurement		Organisational Risk Management	
Corporate Governance	✓	Project Management	
Environmental Sustainability		Public Image & Reputation	✓

Appendix A

Indicative Civic Funding Allocations for Christmas Carols and Australia Day.

Township	Christmas Carols Funding	Australia Day Funding
Mildura	\$3,000.00	\$500.00
Red Cliffs	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
Irymple	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Merbein	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Ouyen	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Nangiloc	\$500.00	\$500.00
Lake Cullulleraine	\$0.00	\$500.00
Walpeup	\$0.00	\$500.00
Underbool	\$0.00	\$500.00
Murrayville	\$500.00	\$500.00