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Community Grants Program: Guidelines 2025/26 - Round 2

Purpose

The Community Grants program provides funding towards community projects, community events, small capital equipment purchases, and community buildings and facilities to support primarily volunteer run community not-for-profit organisations in their activities where there is a benefit for the wider community.

The Cowra 2036 Community Strategic Plan articulates the Council and community vision to create

“a leading, innovative and creative community, proud of our place in history, offering opportunity with the best of country living.”

The community has identified seven key directions to follow in pursuing this vision, they are:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Innovation and Education
3. Liveability
4. Community Leadership and Engagement
5. Business and Industry
6. Transport and Infrastructure
7. Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship
8. Reconciliation and Inclusion

The Community Grants Program provides a range of funding opportunities to organisations to positively contribute towards achieving the shared vision for the shire.

General Eligibility Criteria

Organisations and groups

- Organisations must be an incorporated not-for-profit entity.
- Organisation must be primarily volunteer run.
- Organisations must be based within Cowra Shire and must be able to demonstrate how the project will directly benefit residents within the Shire.
- Have acquitted all previous Cowra Shire Council grants.
- Have no outstanding debts to Council.

Ineligible organisations and groups

- Government agencies.
- Registered Clubs within the meaning of the NSW Registered Clubs Act 1976.
- Schools (including associated parents and citizens/parents and friends organisations).
- Churches and religious groups; unless the proposed project can be considered to be in addition to the core business of the church or group, and the project benefits the wider community.
- Political groups.

Individuals and sole traders

- Individuals or sole traders are not eligible to apply.

Ineligible project expenses

- Recurrent costs including salaries/wages, insurance, administrative and operating costs.
- Payment of debt.
- Retrospective funding for projects, events, or equipment purchases.
- Projects and events receiving a donation from Council.
- Projects or events where the organising body is proposing to donate any proceeds to another cause.
- Generally, funding will not be provided to increase existing un-acquitted funds from Council for the same project.

General Guidelines

- Applications must demonstrate linkages to Council's Community Strategic Plan objectives.
- The project or event for which funding is sought, must be based within Cowra Shire and/or be able to demonstrate significant benefit to Cowra Shire residents.
- The Community Grants Program aims to provide limited financial assistance and is not intended to be relied upon as the sole source of income.
- Council encourages co-contribution from the applicants.
- Council reserves the right to part fund a grant application.
- Projects should be one-off and not reliant on on-going Cowra Council funding.
- Applicants are eligible to receive up to a total value of \$3,000 in grant funds per financial year.
- Projects must be targeted for completion within one (1) year of receipt of funding.
- Where organisations submit multiple Cowra Community Grant applications in any one funding round they must prioritise their applications in order of importance.
- In the instance that the funded project or event does not occur, the grant recipient will be required to repay the full amount of the funding awarded.
- Council reserves the right to not approve any application.
- Council requires external quotes from providers (from local suppliers where possible).

Categories and Funding

Category	Description	Maximum Amount	Examples
Sport and Recreation	Activities that provide access to physical and social pursuits to support the health and well-being of the community	\$1000	Skills clinic Sporting equipment
Arts and Culture	Events that foster the Shire's cultural identity, or that provide an accessible, diverse range of community art and cultural opportunities	\$1000	Art workshop
Small Capital Equipment	Purchases of small capital equipment items to support community organisation activities	\$1000	Photocopier printer
Building and Facility Development	Improvements to Council or community owned buildings and facilities	\$2000	Replace gutter on village hall
New Community Events	Support new events held within Cowra Shire, with broad appeal to both local and the wider community that celebrate significant occasions, encourage cultural diversity or brings communities together. For new events to be held between 1 April 2026 and 31 December 2026.	Based on expected attendance – Up to 200 \$500 201 and above \$1000	Significant anniversaries, launches and openings.

Important Dates

Round	Opening Date	Closing Date	Notification
Round 2 2025/26	2 August	27 August	Following the Council meeting: Monday 23 March

Assessment Process

Stage	Tasks
Pre-eligibility check	All applications are checked to determine applicant and project eligibility and to ensure that they are complete. Ineligible and incomplete applications will not progress to the assessment stage
Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="568 488 986 519">1. Alignment with program priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 562 1366 658">• The project aligns with the priorities of the Community Grants Program and the Cowra Community Strategic Plan. <li data-bbox="568 725 963 757">2. Demonstrated community need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 822 1366 887">• The need for the project is clearly demonstrated and relevant consultation, evidence and support is provided. <li data-bbox="568 954 911 985">3. Level of community benefit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1028 1382 1124">• The project is accessible for either the entire community; or if not, the targeted audience is either disadvantaged or has limited opportunities to participate in community life. <li data-bbox="568 1191 794 1223">4. Value for money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1265 1342 1330">• The project has a detailed budget and is supported by quotes from local suppliers, where appropriate. <li data-bbox="711 1335 1369 1400">• The applicant demonstrates additional investment either in cash or in kind.
Council Endorsement	Recommendations are presented to Council for final approval

Conditions of Grant

Successful applicants are required to undertake an acquittal process and provide Council with:

- Information on how the grant was spent
- Evaluation of the event or project and its outcomes
- Membership/participation rates
- Copies of any promotional material and media coverage generated
- Details of the acknowledgement of Council's support within the community

How to Apply

Applications are to be submitted using the application form available on the Cowra Council website www.cowracouncil.com.au

Please save the application form to your computer and email it to: council@cowra.nsw.gov.au with a subject line of Community Grant Application. Alternatively, complete a paper copy of the application and deliver it to Council at 116 Kendal Street Cowra.

Applicants can contact Cowra Council's Grants and Executive Projects Officer for any assistance in completing their application on 6340 2035 or by email at: council@cowra.nsw.gov.au