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General Policy

**APPLYING FOR EXTERNAL CONTESTABLE GRANT FUNDING**

- Intent** To establish a clear and consistent framework for determining when Council approval is required prior to the submission of external grant applications. This policy ensures transparency, accountability, and alignment with Council's budget and strategic priorities.
- Scope** This policy applies to all Cairns Regional Council employees and contractors involved in the development, approval, and submission of grant applications to State, Federal, or other external funding bodies for Contestable Funding Programs only.

**PROVISIONS**

Council's adopted budget establishes the priorities for capital (CAPEX) and operational (OPEX) projects and initiatives to be delivered by Council. Where a project is included in the adopted budget, it is considered a Council-endorsed priority and funding opportunities may be pursued.

**GRANT TYPES**

Council identifies three primary types of grant opportunities based on how funding is allocated and accessed:

**1. Direct (Untied) Funding**

Funding allocated directly to Council without the need for a competitive application process. These grants are untied, meaning they may be used at Council's discretion for any general operational or capital purpose. Acquittal or reporting is not required.

*Example: Financial Assistance Grant.*

**2. Non-Contestable Funding Programs**

Funding programs under which Council receives a predetermined allocation of funds, with no application or competitive process required. Council has no influence over the amount received. While the funding is not contested, these programs typically require milestone progress reporting and final acquittals to demonstrate compliance with program objectives and proper expenditure of funds.

*Example: Works for Queensland Program.*

**3. Contestable Funding Programs**

Funding programs involving a competitive application process, where Council submits proposals for consideration alongside other eligible applicants, such as other local governments or non-government organisations. These programs require strategic project selection to maximise Council's competitiveness and alignment with program priorities.

*Example: Local Government Grant and Subsidies Program*

**WHEN COUNCIL APPROVAL IS REQUIRED**

Council approval is required for contestable funding programs under the following circumstances:

**Material Changes to Budgeted Projects**

Council approval is required where a project is included in the adopted budget but a successful grant application would result in the proposed delivery timing or total project cost materially changing from that originally budgeted.

For the purposes of this policy, a material change includes:

- an increase in the project cost of more than 15 per cent compared to the approved project budget; and/or
- a change to the budgeted delivery timeline that results in the project being brought forward by more than one financial year.

Any such material change to project timing or cost must be considered and approved by Council prior to the submission of a grant application.

**Emergent Projects**

Council approval is also required for emergent projects, projects that arise after the adoption of the annual budget and were not provided for or accommodated in Council’s approved budget. These may include projects aligned with newly announced funding programs that deliver clear community benefit, or funding released in response to specific events, such as natural disasters, for the repair, restoration, or replacement of assets not anticipated during the budget process. As emergent projects are unbudgeted, they require Council approval before a grant application can be submitted.

**WHEN COUNCIL APPROVAL IS NOT REQUIRED**

Direct (Untied) Funding and Non-Contestable Funding Programs do not require Council approval as these funding programs are predetermined and operationally managed.

For contestable funding programs, a grant application may proceed without further Council approval where the project cost and timing has not materially changed (as defined above) from the adopted capital (CAPEX) budget or where an initiative can be delivered within existing operational (OPEX) budget allocations.

The application must still comply with all required internal approval and reporting processes, including relevant delegations for submitting the grant application.

**Reporting**

A report summarising grant applications made by Council, the status of those applications, outcomes, and associated values will be tabled with Council on a quarterly basis.



**This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.**

**Director responsible for Review: Director – Economic Development and Advocacy**

**ORIGINALLY ADOPTED:** 11 February 2026  
**CURRENT ADOPTION:** 11 February 2026  
**DUE FOR REVISION:** 10 February 2030  
**REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:**

*Ken Gouldthorp*  
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**Ken Gouldthorp**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**