

1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Council offers an Event Funding Program (the Program) in accordance with Policy 63 – Event Funding (the Policy). The Program provides cash funding and/or in-kind support to help establish and develop events that contribute to Dorset’s social, economic and tourism outcomes.

These guidelines explain eligibility, assessment criteria, critical dates, funding conditions and how Council makes decisions.

2 FUNDING PATHWAY

Council supports events through three pathways:

2.1 Tiered event pathway (core pathway)

Most applications are assessed and funded through a tiered system (Signature, Tier 1, Tier 2). The total value of support (cash plus the monetary value of in-kind support) will generally not exceed the applicable maximum for the allocated tier.

2.2 Seed funding (growth pathway)

Council may provide time limited seed funding to help an event reach a more mature level of delivery and impact.

2.3 Discretionary funding (out of round)

Council maintains a discretionary component of the Program (budget determined annually) which may be used to support eligible events that apply outside the main annual round.

3 FUNDING TIERS

Council allocated an event to a tier to determine the maximum funding and typical duration. The tier is determined by the event’s scale, reach and expected benefit.

3.1 Signature events

Large scale tourism events that deliver substantial community, economic and tourism benefits and/or state or national profile, with capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation.

Funding cap and duration

Maximum support will not exceed \$10,000 per annum, typically provided for up to 3 years, unless significant community, economic or tourism value can be demonstrated.

Greater amounts may be considered by Council where there is demonstrated attraction of interstate and/or international visitors specifically for the event.

3.2 Tier 1 events

Tier 1 applies to medium scale events that demonstrate a clear level of community or regional impact.

Tourism events

Tourism events within Tier 1 typically:

- Have the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation, while primarily appealing to a Tasmanian audience
- Are of regional significance
- Deliver economic outcomes, including increased visitation and spend in the local area
- Demonstrate consideration of environmental sustainability in event planning and delivery

Community events

Community events within Tier 1 typically:

- Celebrate local identity, culture or community, including Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Provide strong community benefits, including participation, wellbeing and social connection
- Offer meaningful opportunities for community engagement and involvement
- Encourage local participation, either as attendees, volunteers or contributors
- Promote health and wellbeing through participation or shared experiences
- Demonstrate consideration of environmental sustainability in event planning and delivery

Funding cap and duration

Maximum support will not exceed \$5,000 per annum, typically provided for up to 3 years, unless significant community or tourism value can be demonstrated.

3.3 Tier 2 events

Smaller scale events offering a local community benefit and/or local participation, potentially attracting regional visitation.

Funding cap and duration

Maximum support will not exceed \$2,000 per annum, typically provided for up to 3 years, unless significant community or tourism value can be demonstrated.

3.4 Duration and multi year funding

Multi year funding may be approved for eligible events. Event organisers seeking multi year funding are only required to submit one application for the term of the funding.

However, release of funding each year remains conditional on acquittal, compliance and event approval requirements being met.

4 EVENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

4.1 What is event development funding

Council may provide event development funding to support the establishment, trial, or strategic development of events, including both new and established events, where additional investment is required to achieve a step change in scale, quality or impact.

This applies to events that:

- are in an early stage of development; or
- are established but seeking to grow, reposition or improve their level of impact; and
- are not yet operating at a scale or level of impact that fully aligns with their potential under the standard tiered funding model

Seed funding is intended to support specific development activities, for example:

- building organisational capability (governance, systems, delivery capacity)
- improving event quality or programming
- increasing marketing reach and audience development
- expanding scale, participation or visitation
- enhancing accessibility or community outcomes

Development funding is intended to support development that strengthens or grows an event, rather than solely supporting ongoing delivery at its current scale.

Seed funding is not intended to offset ongoing operating deficits or maintain an event at its current level without a clear development outcome.

4.2 Duration

Seed funding is time limited and will generally not exceed 3 years. Funding beyond this period will only be considered where exceptional community, economic or tourism value and clear progression can be demonstrated.

4.3 Funding limits

Development funding may exceed standard tier funding limits, subject to Council approval. As a general guide, Council will not ordinarily provide development funding that:

- Exceeds 200% of the applicable tier maximum funding per annum; or

4.4 Performance expectations and progression

Recipients of development funding must demonstrate reasonable year on year progression over the funding period. This may include:

- Growth in attendance or participation
- Increased self-generated revenue (e.g. sponsorship, ticketing, grants)
- Reduced proportional reliance on Council funding over time
- Improved quality, delivery capability or outcomes

Council may require the submission of an Event Development Plan outlining:

- The intended development outcomes
- Key milestones
- Simple, measurable targets

Release of funding in subsequent years may be conditional on progression against these outcomes. Where reasonable progression is not demonstrated, Council may reduce, restructure or discontinue funding.

4.5 Ongoing funding and transition

Development funding does not create an expectation of ongoing support. Future funding will be considered based on:

- Demonstrated progression and performance
- Alignment with the Program objectives and assessment criteria
- Council's budget and funding priorities

Where appropriate, events may transition to standard tier based funding or operate with reduced reliance on Council support.

5 ELIGIBILITY

5.1 Who can apply

- Incorporated groups and organisations
- Unincorporated organisations auspiced by an incorporated organisation
- Private organisations

5.2 Who cannot apply

- Individuals
- Government agencies, political groups and religious groups
- Applicants who have not successfully acquitted previous Council grants, who have outstanding debts to Council, or who are subject to legal action

6 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Council assesses application against:

- The Tier criteria (section 3); and
- The general assessment criteria below

6.1 General assessment criteria

Events should demonstrate some or all of the following:

- Capacity to manage the event and funding requirements
- capacity to evolve and/or deliver clear community value
- alignment to Council's strategic direction and contribution to a vibrant events calendar
- that the event is public, inclusive and accessible (proportionate to event scale)
- community participation and benefits (social cohesion, community development)
- local engagement (community, volunteers, businesses)
- inclusion of Aboriginal cultural practices or collaboration with Aboriginal communities
- economic input to Dorset businesses
- capacity to increase visitation, particularly overnight and off-peak
- a credible pathway to sustainability without ongoing Council support (defined in [Section 2.6](#))
- commitment to best practice sustainable event management/tourism
- compliance with relevant laws, regulations and Council requirements
- alignment with Council's marketing and tourism strategy and relevant initiatives

6.2 Detrimental impacts

The following factors may count against an application if not properly planned for:

- costs associated with event impact on Council infrastructure and open spaces
- traffic impacts affecting emergency response times/accessibility
- risk factors such as alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour
- extended monopolisation of key public open spaces
- poor waste separation and litter management
- unnecessary single use items and plastics

Enabling note

These impacts can often be managed through event design and controls. Applicants are encouraged to describe mitigations (traffic management, crowd management, RSA controls, waste systems, site protection and scheduling).

6.3 Ineligible applications

Council will generally not consider:

- applicants with demonstrated non-compliance with previous acquittal requirements or critical timeframes
- applicants who have not complied with event permit conditions, have failed to apply for required permits, or have demonstrated non-compliance with other Council conditions
- retrospective applications
- illegal activities, private events/functions, or events that may offend or exclude parts of the community
- events taking place outside Dorset, unless significant benefit for Dorset can be demonstrated
- events that are entirely tradeshows, conferences, teaching programs or lectures
- extensions to normal business operation
- Council will not generally fund the entire cost of an event. However, for new or developing events, Council may consider higher proportions of support where development funding is approved and a credible event development plan is provided.
- Where an applicant has the means to fund an event without external funding and lack of external funding will not impact the quality or growth of the event, the application may be assessed less favourably. Applicants who can partially self fund are encouraged to explain why Council support is catalytic (e.g. growth, accessibility, visitation, or community benefit).
- School fetes, markets or fairs, and events that are fundraising in nature will generally not be supported unless considerable community benefit can be demonstrated. Applicants should clearly describe the community benefit and accessibility to strengthen these applications.

7 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

7.1 How to apply

Applicants must submit a Funding Application form via Council's website. Multi-year applicants submit one application for the entire funding term.

7.2 When to apply

The main annual program opens for applications in February/March each year. Dates are advertised on Council's website and communication channels.

7.3 Pre-application support

Council may provide pre-application support to help organisers submit complete applications and navigate the event approval process.

7.4 Assessment process

An Event Funding Assessment Panel evaluates applications against tier criteria and general assessment criteria. The Panel makes recommendations to Council, and funding remains subject to annual budget estimates being approved. Applicants are notified of outcomes, and applications are subject to publication in an open Council agenda with personal information redacted.

7.5 Out of round applications

Discretionary funding may support eligible events applying outside the annual round, assessed by the Panel.

8 FUNDING AGREEMENT, EVENT APPROVAL, MILESTONES AND PAYMENT

Successful applications are subject to a Funding Agreement setting out terms, duration, payment schedule and milestones (including acquittal).

A Funding Agreement does not mean the event is approved to proceed. Funds are only provided once an Event Application is approved.

Ongoing funding is conditional on ongoing compliance with the assessment criteria and Funding Agreement.

9 ACQUITTAL AND POST EVENT REVIEW

Funding recipients must provide an acquittal and complete a post event review within the timeframes specified in the Funding Agreement.

Non-compliance may result in future funding being withheld, including subsequent years in a multi year agreement.

Where development funding has been provided, the acquittal must also demonstrate progress against the stated development objectives.

10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Read the Event Funding Policy and Guidelines before applying.
- If the event is new or changing, talk to Council staff early and describe the changes/innovations in the application.
- Answer all questions and attach supporting information.
- Ensure you address tier criteria and general assessment criteria explicitly.
- Use Council contact points for guidance where needed.