

## Recommendation

### That Council:

1. Receive and note the Draft Policy 63 – Event Funding (copy provided in the attachments);
2. Resolve to receive written submissions from the community regarding the Draft Policy 63 – Event Funding for a 28 day period, commencing Wednesday 18 September 2024; and
3. Resolve to directly consult with key tourism and event agencies, former event funding recipients and other key stakeholders

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the newly developed draft Policy 63 – Event Funding for endorsement to allow community consultation to take place.

## Background

The development of an Event Funding Policy is listed as an activity in Council’s 2024/25 Annual Plan. Council has previously supported events by reviewing submissions during the annual budget estimates process, however there has not historically been a comprehensive framework to guide levels of event support.

## Planning, Environment and Statutory Requirements

N/A

## Strategic and Annual Plan

- Strategic Plan (2023 - 2032), Imperatives 3 and 3.1
- Annual Plan (2024/25), Activity 13

## Risk Management

The introduction of the Policy mitigates the risk of providing event support (either financial or in-kind) that exceeds the amount allocated for events in the annual budget estimates.

It also provides a framework to ensure that Council allocates event funding equitably and consistently, and ensures transparency for Council, event organisers and the community by requiring successful recipients to acquit funds and provide post event reviews.

## Financial and Asset Management Implications

In preparing the annual budget estimates, Council will determine the allocation for the Event Funding program. This will be informed by an event funding application process which will conclude before the relevant annual budget estimates are finalised.

Council's total combined event support last financial year was \$89,700 with \$35,500 of cash contribution and \$54,200 worth of in-kind support.

## Community Considerations

The introduction of the Policy will provide the community with transparency around the event funding process, how event funding is used and how much financial and in-kind event support Council provides.

## Consultation

It is recommended that the proposed policy be advertised for community consultation for a 28 day period. Any submissions received will be considered before the Policy is recommended for adoption.

## Officer's Comments

Council's vision is to be an inclusive, thriving and connected community which includes recognising the significant impact that a diverse events calendar can have on the economic and social wellbeing of the region. Events can be a major driver of visitation which has positive economic benefits for local hospitality, tourism, retail and transport industries. Events also create opportunity for various industries and community groups to create 'spin-off' experiences, promotions or events to maximise user experience and promote longer stays in the region.

Events are also recognised as having positive social outcomes for communities as they generally promote participation by local businesses, volunteers, and community members. This is particularly important in remote municipalities such as Dorset where communities rely on events to bring people together.

To support the development and continuation of events in the region, Council included the following strategic imperatives in its Strategic Plan 2023-2032:

- *Council will support and deliver events and festivals in conjunction with a regional marketing strategy for a vibrant community; and*
- *Council will review and possibly expand grant and sponsorship programs.*

The Policy outlines Council's position on supporting events by providing funding and will be underpinned by Event Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines) which will provide transparent and clear criteria for event organisers seeking financial or in-kind support from Council to deliver events in the municipality. The Policy and Guidelines will provide a framework for Council's Events Funding Program and will provide for any future expansion of the program if the need is identified.

The Policy and Guidelines will also support the North East Marketing Plan per activity 3 in Council's 2024/25 Annual Plan. Council will seek feedback from key stakeholders in the tourism and event industry during the consultation period.

It is anticipated that if the new Policy is adopted, Council will advertise an Event Funding Application process in early 2025 whereby event organisers can apply for funding for events being held in 2025/26. Applications received through this process would be assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria by an Event Funding Evaluation Panel and the Panel would make recommendations to Council about the events to receive financial or in-kind support. This process would inform Council's 2025/26 Budget Estimates to ensure that adequate funding is available for the Event Funding Program.

The draft Policy is available in the agenda attachments, along with the draft event funding guidelines.