

# Rate Subsidy for Community Groups

**Date Adopted:** 28 September 2021

**Version:** 1.1

## Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Establish guidelines and criteria for provision of an annual rate subsidy to not-for-profit community organisations delivering benefits to the Maitland community under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993;
- Ensure transparency in the establishment of an annual financial allocation and determination of a rate subsidy across qualifying applicants by the elected Council, as per Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993;
- Following Council resolution, document the administration process for the application of the subsidy against qualifying rate assessments prior to issue each year.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to Council officers undertaking assessment of annual applications for a rates subsidy from eligible community organisations for the determination of the elected Council in April each year, including the application process, assessment, reporting to Council, decision-making, implementation and process administration.

This policy applies to rates subsidy-related matters only and operates distinctly and separately from Council's Section 356 Community Grants Policy.

## Policy Statement

Text Council recognises that there a wide range of community groups providing valuable services and facilities to Maitland residents, some of which are required to pay rates. Rating exemptions available under current rate legislation are expressly defined, and do not enable exemptions for all not-for-profit community groups operating across city.

This policy has been developed to provide a transparent mechanism by which community organisations contributing to the provision of services and facilities aligned to the outcomes of Council's community strategic plan and Council's values can seek an annual subsidy to contribute to offsetting the cost of rates.

### 1. Eligibility

Incorporated not-for-profit groups located in the Maitland LGA, and providing services, activities or a facility to residents of the LGA and being the rateable owner of the land on which they operate, are eligible to make a rates subsidy application.

Applicants must demonstrate the alignment of their group’s service/activity/facility with the community strategic plan and Council’s values through provision of their Constitution, Terms of Reference or similar.

Applicants must demonstrate they are financially sustainable through provision of evidence such as financial statements.

Applicants with an existing non-rating related debt with Council are excluded from the program.

## 2. Application

Applications will open via Council’s website in November each year and be promoted via a range of Council communication channels.

Community organisations will be required to lodge their application via completion of a web form and uploading of supporting documentation by the end of February each year.

The application is for a single year only and must be reapplied for annually.

## 3. Assessment

Council officers will assess each application, with a report prepared incorporating recommendations for consideration of the elected Council in April. All applications and a recommendation will be provided to council to formally resolve the granting of the subsidy to each applicant.

Potential conflicts of interest must be declared and managed in line with Council’s Code of Conduct.

## 4. Funding Available

A funding allocation will be made under this policy each year and incorporated into the Operational Plan as and when adopted by Council.

## 5. Allocation of Funds

Eligible applicants will have 50% of their general and any applicable special rates subsidised.

## 6. Notification and Application of Subsidy to Assessment

All applicants will be formally advised of the outcome of their application by the end of June, following adoption of the annual Operational Plan. The subsidy to be provided against each assessment will be applied on the annual assessment notice prior to it being issued in July.

## Policy Administration

<b>Business Group:</b>	Finance
<b>Responsible officer:</b>	Annette Peel
<b>Council reference:</b>	Ordinary Meeting 28 September 2021 Item 11.1
<b>Policy review date:</b>	Three (3) years from date of adoption

<b>File number:</b>	Local Government Act 1993 Sections 356, 377, 560
<b>Relevant legislation</b>	Operational Plan
<b>Related documents</b>	Revenue Policy

## Policy History

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
Version 1.0	28 September 2021	New policy adopted
Version 1.1	-	Updated to new branding and alignment to organisation structure. No change to content.