

GRANTS PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The grants program framework follows best practice and integrates Council's grant funding activities so that they strategically align with community needs identified in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Grants are distributed by the program via defined categories, in accordance with Council's strategic plan objectives and community priorities.

CATEGORIES

Grants are distributed through three funding categories that support current community needs and council priorities.

These categories may be reviewed and amended as necessary to maintain alignment with any future changes to council's vision, strategic plan or emerging community priorities identified through community consultation and Council strategic planning processes.

The categories are:

1. Edward River Council (ERC) Community Grants Program
2. Edward River Council (ERC) Annual Grants Program
3. Edward River Council (ERC) Quick Response Grants

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Edward River Council Community Grants Program offers financial support to not-for-profit community organisations, groups and associations for projects, equipment, events, exhibitions, or performances which contribute positively to the Edward River community.

The community grants program objectives will be influenced by emerging community needs, and priorities and categories, objectives, and themes may change from year to year.

The Community Grants Program aims to:

- ✓ Be responsive to emerging themes, issues, and trends
- ✓ Support not-for-profit community groups to provide a range of opportunities for residents;
- ✓ Provide equitable opportunity for the community to seek funding assistance from council;
- ✓ Strengthen communities with local responses to identified community needs;
- ✓ Facilitate support for initiatives that strengthen the community through opportunities for participation, development, inclusion, and sustainability;
- ✓ Foster support across a range of pursuits and interest areas including health and welfare, education, arts and culture, sports and recreation, youth, ageing, environment and access and equity; and
- ✓ Assist council to deliver identified objectives, priorities and strategies and align with the Community Strategic Plan.

ANNUAL GRANTS

The annual grants category provides a council contribution to the funding of annual celebrations and events that are co-funded by state or federal departments and which support community-strengthening initiatives or improve the quality of life of Edward River residents.

Annual grants will not be provided for private, individual, or political celebrations or events.

Some of the grant funds, in this category, are distributed by Council on behalf of or in collaboration with other agencies or organisations.

This is a non-competitive category with funding allocated within Council's annual budget to celebrations or events approved by council during annual budget deliberations.

Annual grants funding programs include;

Seniors Week Grants

Approval: Council resolution

Grant Program objectives are to:

- ✓ Provide opportunities for older people to participate in community life
- ✓ Assist older people to be healthy and active as they age
- ✓ Provide older people with cultural, creative, sporting, and recreational opportunities
- ✓ Support older people to plan for retiring, housing choices, and getting around
- ✓ Recognise and encourage the contributions of older people in the community.

For projects to improve the health and wellbeing of older people in the Edward River communities.

Council will approve a budget allocation, matching funds allocated by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, in the Operational Plan each financial year.

Grantees are required to recognise Council's contribution and invite the Mayor or a Councillor to attend an event during celebrations.

Youth Week Grants

Approval: Council resolution

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services offers funding on a dollar for dollar basis as a contribution towards the cost of staging local Youth Week activities and events.

Youth Week celebrates young people and their contribution to their local communities. It is now the largest annual youth participation event in Australia.

For projects to assist the staging of activities and events for youth in Edward River communities.

Council will approve a budget allocation, matching funds allocated by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, in the Operational Plan each financial year.

NAIDOC Week Grants

Approval: Council resolution

Edward River Council annual contribution to NAIDOC Week Initiatives through Koori Kids to run local NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) Week activities.

Council will consider approving a budget allocation in the Operational Plan each financial year.

Activities must promote partnership with the aboriginal community or an aboriginal organisation, include cultural education activities and encourage wider community participation in NAIDOC Week.

Schools and Education Grants

Approval: Council resolution

Successful grantees will be granted an annual amount to contribute to school speech night awards and events, or toward annual scholarships.

Grantees are required to recognise Council's contribution and invite the Mayor or a councillor to the speech night or scholarship award ceremony.

Council will consider a grant to local schools and education establishments for annual speech night awards, for academic and other achievement.

Council will also consider granting an annual contribution toward Edward River Community Education Fund.

Council will consider approving a budget allocation in the Operational Plan each financial year.

International Women's Day

Approval: Council resolution

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

Council will consider funding an event to celebrate achievements of women in the ERC LGA.

Council will consider approving a budget allocation in the Operational Plan each financial year.

Local Heritage Places Grants

Approval: Council resolution

To encourage preservation, enhancement, or documentation of heritage items within the Edward River Local Government Area and assist property owners to carry out restoration works which involve repair, maintenance, or reinstatement of heritage buildings.

Eligible projects are those related to preservation work on a heritage property that is listed as a heritage item in the Deniliquin Local Environmental Plans 1997 & 2013 and the Conargo Shire Council Local Environmental Plan 2013.

Each year Council will call for applications from eligible groups or individuals to apply for Local Heritage Places Grants.

Total available grant funding is determined on an annual basis and includes a grant from the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

The level of funding that can be made available for each project is capped at a maximum amount as advertised each year. Successful applicants will be required to contribute a minimum of \$1 for every \$1 offered from the grant fund.

Council's heritage advisor will consider applications and make recommendations for endorsement by the Edward river council local heritage committee, for approval by Council.

All works must be completed, and an acquittal report submitted by the grantee at the beginning of May within the same financial year as the funds are approved.

QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS

The intended purpose of the Edward River Council Quick Response Grants is to provide council with an opportunity to fund worthy and extraordinary opportunities that were not able to be considered for funding as part of the community grants program.

The grants offer financial support to not-for-profit community organisations, groups and associations for extraordinary and worthy projects, equipment, events, exhibitions, or performances which contribute positively to the Edward River community.

The Quick Response Grant aims to:

- ✓ Enable council to fund projects that have not previously been considered for funding.
- ✓ Enable council to support opportunities that are one-off, or which have arisen outside of application periods for other council grants.
- ✓ Assist council to deliver identified objectives, priorities and strategies that align with the Community Strategic Plan.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The following conditions apply to all applications for financial assistance from Council:

- ✓ Financial assistance will only be granted by Council in accordance with s356 of the Local Government Act 1993 for the purpose of exercising Council's functions.
- ✓ Specified grants program expenditure will not exceed 5% of Council's income from ordinary rates for the year with limits on the maximum assistance provided to a grantee.
- ✓ Financial assistance will not normally be provided unless it has been disclosed in the adopted Operational Plan and budget. However, Council may by resolution approve a budget amendment to authorise an exception, within the provisions of s356 of the LGA.
- ✓ Disclosure of financial assistance within the Operational Plan will be on a program basis, and may not necessarily disclose specific recipients, although decisions as to recipients will be publicly available.
- ✓ Grant applications will be accepted only during the advertised application period for the relevant grant category or stream.
- ✓ If applications for other financial assistance for matters of merit arise outside a specific grant program category or application window, Council may resolve to fund the application from the Quick Response fund.
- ✓ Grant approval will be limited to the defined funding period. Approved applications will not automatically apply to subsequent years.
- ✓ Applications in competitive categories will be assessed on merit using the assessment matrix.
- ✓ Council may assess and approve applications based on the total grants funding the applicant has been granted, across all program categories.
- ✓ Grants will not be made by way of reductions or waiver of fees or charges, but rather any fees and charges will be recognised in full with a corresponding grant subsidy recognised in the appropriate activity cost centre.
- ✓ All grantees are required to publicly recognise Council's contribution.
- ✓ Generally, grants are not for personal or commercial gain. A proposed recipient who applies for personal gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under s356(2) of the LGA, until at least 28 days' public notice of Council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given. This public notice is not required if:
 - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - (b) the program's details have been included in Council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of Council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within Council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding through the Community grants program, applicants must:

- ✓ apply on the appropriate application form,

- ✓ demonstrate how funds will be used for the purpose of exercising Council's functions,
- ✓ meet all specific eligibility requirements and criteria in the Grants Policy Framework,
- ✓ have no outstanding debts to Edward River Council,
- ✓ sign and comply with the funding agreement accepting the conditions of funding, and
- ✓ provide any required acquittals to Council for grant funding received, by the specified date.

APPLICATION & ASSESSMENT

To simplify the process across the organisation, reduce administrative costs and ensure an equitable distribution of financial assistance, all grant applicants in competitive categories will be required to submit a new online application for a grant to be made within each funding period. The grants program procedure and guidelines will provide full details of the application and assessment process.

The period during which applications will be accepted, will be advertised by Council for each category and stream, in accordance with the grants program procedures and guidelines.

Grants approved during the application period will be budgeted for and identified in the Operational Plan

Important dates

Community Grants Program

July 2025	Applications Open
1 August	Applications Close
August	Panel Assessment of Applications
September	Report to council to approve funding
September	Funding announcements
30 June 2026	Funding acquittal completed

Annual Grants Program

Annual grants program funding, is determined by council each year as part of the annual budget deliberation process. Projects to be considered for funding will be submitted by the leadership team through council's annual budget process each year.

Quick Response Grants

Quick Response grant funding will only be considered by council if;

- a. The funding opportunity is a one-off, that was not able to meet the application timeframes for the Edward River Council Community Grants Program or
- b. The funding opportunity is worthy or extraordinary and will provide significant benefit to the community.

Funding principles

Priority will be given to applications that respond to identified community needs and align with Council's vision, corporate objectives, priorities, and strategies.

The Grants Program will prioritise support where:

- ✓ Applicants must be based in the ERC LGA or the project must provide significant benefit for the ERC residents
- ✓ The applicant is not already in receipt of substantial funding/in-kind support from ERC;
- ✓ The proposed activity or project is innovative or unique for the ERC LGA;
- ✓ The proposed activity incorporates collaboration/partnerships with other groups;
- ✓ The proposed activity maximises community benefit;
- ✓ The proposed activity or project meets any identified council priorities; and
- ✓ The proposed activity demonstrates sustainability;
- ✓ The proposed activity enables access and inclusion in accordance with council's 'Disability Inclusion Action Plan'

Application assessment

- ✓ Applications will be assessed by council using the assessment matrix below.
- ✓ Applications will be reviewed to ensure they are eligible for consideration and that all sections of the application have been completed and all documents are attached.

Assessment Matrix

CRITERIA	WEIGHT	SCORE	WEIGHTED SCORE
Community Benefit: There is a clearly identified and demonstrated local need for the project. The project addresses the social, economic, or environmental needs of residents in the Edward River area.	50%		
Partnership: The applicant and/or another partner is participating in or contributing to the project (e.g. financial or in-kind support, letters of support, multiple project partners).	20%		
Innovation: The project will solve an issue in a new or unique way. There are no similar projects or programs occurring within the Edward River LGA.	10%		

Inclusivity: The applicant has considered the needs of community members who experience financial, social, or physical disability.	10%		
Sustainability: The project benefits will be ongoing after the grant has been expended. No ongoing funding will be required from Edward River Council.	10%		
SCORE			

Grants Program Guidelines

Help and advice in relation to council grants programs is available by contacting council Grants Officer at the Customer Service Centre;

1. In person at Council's Customer Service Centre
2. By Phone on 03 5898 3000
3. By email at council@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

Community groups seeking to apply for funds through the Grants Program must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- ✓ Be submitted by not-for-profit community organisations, groups, and associations;
- ✓ Provide direct benefits to the residents of the ERC LGA;
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate financial viability and competence;
- ✓ Have adequate public liability insurance and appropriate health and safety policies in accordance with the funding agreement;
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate a contribution in the form of funds, services, or in-kind support;
- ✓ Be based in the ERC LGA or have significant benefit for the ERC residents;
- ✓ Be able to plan effectively and be well organised;
- ✓ Have no outstanding grant acquittals or outstanding debts owing to council;
- ✓ Be submitted by the due date. Only one application can be submitted per funding round.

Who can not apply?

The following will not be considered for funding:

- ✓ **A group who has failed to acquit a previous community grant for a funded project by the due date;**
- ✓ Applications for retrospective funding;
- ✓ Recurrent costs, salaries, and on-costs;
- ✓ Insurance, such as (but not limited to) Public Liability insurance;
- ✓ Social excursions, e.g. bus trips or picnics;
- ✓ Applicants applying to another council funding stream for a grant for the same activity;
- ✓ Late or incomplete applications; (*This condition does not apply to the Quick Response fund*)

How much can I apply for?

The Community Grants Program provides funding up to a maximum amount of \$3000.

What should I include in my application?

- ✓ All sections of the application form must be completed.

- If your project is to take place on a public or private site or venue, you must obtain the consent and support of the landowner and have them sign the declaration
- All applicants must attach a copy of their current public liability insurance.
- All applicants have the option to attach additional material in support of the application such as letters of support, photos, or recent media coverage.

NB: Applications need to be completed in full. All supporting documentation requested; including public liability insurance, quotes etc, if relevant, must be submitted at the time of the application. Applications that do not include all the required information will not be accepted.

Other Important Information

- Multiple applications from the same group will not be assessed.
- Applications to fund an event or a project that may be offensive to sections of the community, will not be considered.
- Applications submitted will be acknowledged via a confirmation letter.
- Successful applicants will need to enter into a Funding Agreement, which outlines the conditions under which the grant will be made available. Council may make funding conditional and subject to specific conditions being met.
- Funding is provided at the cheque presentation, once the signed Funding Agreement is completed.
- Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge council's support. For example, an official Edward River Council logo must be used on any promotional material or at any official events associated with the activity and on any produced literature.
- Successful applicants will need to report on how the grant was spent (acquittal).
- Applicants must not spend money on the proposed activity before funding decisions are announced. This is considered retrospective funding, which is not eligible for support.
- Funding is not automatic on application. All requests are subject to consideration on their individual merits each year.