

POLICY SCOPE

This Policy applies to all applications received from businesses seeking assistance and/or financial incentives from Edward River Council.

POLICY PURPOSE

Edward River Council can play an important role in facilitating business growth and attracting investment into Deniliquin and the Edward River region. Council's continued focus is on the creation of new jobs and economic growth; promoting the Edward River Region as a business and investment location;

The purpose of this policy is to encourage new business investment or significant expansion of existing businesses in the Edward River Council area. It outlines the services available from Council to potential investors, business owners and operators

POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to the creation, retention and development of business and employment opportunities within the Local Government Area and continues to encourage business development

Council can offer incentives to development through various assistance mechanisms and personalised assistance to businesses.

The level of possible incentives available is influenced by the degree of economic, social and environmental benefits which the development will bring to the Local Government Area, and the businesses ongoing and independent sustainability. Any assistance is at the absolute discretion of Council.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To assist in the attraction of new business investment and the retention and significant expansion of existing businesses that will:

- Create significant Full Time Equivalent (FTE) new jobs and investment;
- Value-add through enhanced supply chains;
- Generate growth within key strategic industries and locations;
- Demonstrate innovation and environmental sustainability; and
- Diversify and make the local economy more sustainable,

PROCEDURE

General Principles

To be considered for assistance an applicant must demonstrate that the development will provide either significant net economic benefits through employment creation or retention, direct financial benefits to Council through additional income or reduced costs, social benefits through the improvement of community infrastructure (such as roads or recreational facilities) or environmental benefits through reduced greenhouse gas emissions or waste management.

The applicant must also demonstrate to Council that it:

- Has a robust business plan
- Has a strong supplier base and/or economic links in the local area

- Is financially sound and is sustainable in the medium to long-term
- Can demonstrate a long-term commitment to the region

Retrospective assistance, for developments that have already received planning approval or have commenced, is not available.

Levels of Assistance

The level of assistance to be offered is dependent on the extent to which any new project meets the Project Benefit Assessment Criteria. Projects may qualify for elements of either the Financial Incentive Program or the Investment Assistance Program or both.

Investment Incentives and/or Assistance

1. Financial Incentive Program

This assistance is designed for businesses creating significant Full Time Equivalent (“FTE”) positions and at the absolute discretion of Council, based on the merit of individual applications.

The range of assistance that may be provided includes, but may not be limited to:

- Waiving or discounting development application fees;
- Deferred payment of developer contributions and/or infrastructure charges and/or headworks
- Free assessment of trade-waste discharge requirements;
- Attractive vendor terms on purchase of Council owned industrial or residential land;
- Discounted sale price on multiple lot purchases of Council owned industrial land;
- Up to fifty percent of rates waived for a period of three years or up to five years in exceptional circumstances; and
- Other financial incentives considered appropriate in the circumstances.

2. Investment Assistance Program

A key point of contact to advise and facilitate:

- Dedicated business assistance officer to act a single point of contact;
- Property location assistance;
- Guided familiarisation tour;’
- Statutory planning including rezoning and subdivision;
- Council infrastructure requirements;
- Health and building assessments;
- Natural resources management;
- Compliance and local laws advice;
- Waste and wastewater management;
- Opportunity to present details of the project to Councillors and Council employees;
- Meetings with key State and Federal government departments;
- Contacts with key utility providers, property and employment agencies and business networks;
- Provision of relevant documentation and reports including regional and site-specific maps, plans and strategies; and
- Assistance with funding applications excluding Council-provided grants.

Businesses may be eligible for an investment incentive for a period of up to three years or five years in exceptional circumstances.

Application and Assessment Process

Applications for direct financial assistance through Council's Financial Incentive Program Scheme are to be made formally through an application process. Projects will undergo a rigorous assessment to ensure only eligible projects that will provide a net economic and community benefit to the Edward River Council are assisted.

Criteria

The following criteria will be evaluated by Council and must be addressed in the application and supported by a robust business case:

- The nature of the business;
- Employment generation (FTE jobs);
- Growth potential of the business;
- Level of capital investment;
- A strong supply base or economic links in the local area;
- Financial stability - the business is sustainable in the medium to long term;
- Demonstrates a long-term commitment to the region
- Timing for development;
- Environmental impacts of the development; and
- Evidence of experience in or completion of similar developments; and
- The potential for economic diversification in the LGA

All applications are referred to the Manager Community and Economic Development assessed as follows:

- Applications are assessed by a panel consisting Manager Economic Development, Manager Environmental Service and Manager Engineering and Assets; and determined by Council after considering a recommendation from the Executive Management Team.
- Applications are ranked using a quantitative and qualitative ranking matrix developed for this purpose.
- Each application is assigned a score based on the degree of economic, direct financial, social, and environmental benefit.

Any business considered eligible for the receipt of assistance is required to enter into a funding agreement with Council which commits the business to agreed targets relating to the benefits to be derived. Prior to the assistance being provided, the recipient is required to provide evidence that the targets have been met.

Generally, Council discloses any special development assistance provided to a developer after negotiations have concluded and Council has made its final decision.

However, where the developer has submitted a written request that information relating to development assistance remain confidential due to reasons of "Commercial in Confidence", a special resolution of Council is required to withhold such information.

This procedure is to be used as a guideline for all staff and management when dealing with new business and businesses looking to expand. Enquiries are to be referred to the

Manager Community and Economic Development who will coordinate the implementation of the policy.

RELATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Edward River Council Community Strategic Plan
Edward River Council Economic Development Strategic Plan
Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

NSW Local Government Act 1993

Business Department	Office of the General Manager
Responsible Officer	Manager Community and Economic Development
Doc ID	
Policy Review Date	Within 12 months of Local Government election.
Relevant Legislation	NSW Local Government Act 1993
Related policies, procedures, & protocols	Edward River Council Community Strategic Plan 2018-2030 Edward River Council Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021 Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036

POLICY HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date Changed/Adopted	Modified by	Description of Change
1	14/08/2019	Michelle Cobb	Draft Policy Developed
2			