

Local Authority Project Funding - Guidelines

1. Purpose

To encourage the continued development of local authorities and their respective communities through the provision of funding to undertake priority community projects that are in line with these guidelines.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- Assist in building stronger communities and assist community priority projects as recommended by local authorities
- To assist local governing bodies and the constituent communities they represent to become stronger and self sustaining
- Assist in the provision of quality community infrastructure that facilitates community activity and integration
- Assist in developing local government capacity to provide legitimate representation, effective governance, improved service delivery and sustainable development.

3. Funding pool

The Local Authority Project funding pool is non-application based and is distributed through a methodology developed by the Northern Territory Grants Commission to regional councils.

This funding is only available for those local authorities published in the guidelines made by the Minister under Part 5.1A of the *Local Government Act*.

4. Local Authority Project Approvals

Individual local authorities must formally resolve each initiative this funding will be used for. A copy of this resolution is to be recorded in the minutes of the relevant local authority meeting.

At each local authority meeting, a report is to be submitted detailing the total amount of funding available and spent on local authority projects under this program in each financial year. The report is to include details and amount spent on each project of the relevant local authority for which funding has been provided.

5. Examples of Acceptable Purposes for Expenditure

- Repairs and maintenance of community assets controlled or owned by the council. For example:- office upgrades, fencing, solar lighting, road repairs and ablution facilities
- Acquisition of plant and equipment directly related to local government service delivery. For example:- trailers, garden maintenance equipment such as brush cutters, lawn mowers and pressure cleaners, rubbish bin enclosures /stands.
- Upgrade/enhancement of community sporting facilities. For example upgrade of community ovals, basketball courts and playgrounds, shade structures, picnic areas, seating and park furniture, tree planting and irrigation.
- Festivals or other events – but must only be conducted within a council's own Local Authority area.

Employee costs

If council employees are utilised as general labour to assist with approved projects, the value of such labour that can be expensed to the project is a maximum of \$30 per hour. The maximum amount that can be costed to general labour hours is 5% of the total annual local authority funding.

Risk Management

Where funds are to be used for a purpose outside the council's control or on an asset that is not owned or controlled by council, the council should consider the liability and insurance requirements associated with that project. Councils should consider each project on its merit before progressing with the project. All risks associated with the project are to be considered and met by the council. The Department will not be held responsible for any liability arising out of the use of these funds.

Pre-conditions

If the proposed project relies on pre-conditions (such as the acquisition of a section 19 lease under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*), then the project should not be undertaken until there is conclusive evidence that the condition will not hinder the progress of the project for which funds have been allocated.

6. Examples of Unacceptable Purposes for Expenditure

- Purchase of vehicles and fuel expenses
- Payment of salaries, cash prizes or recurrent operating costs of council
- Meeting costs and payments to local authority members
- Sponsorship by way of uniforms, travels cost and allowances
- Purposes that are not related to local government services and that should be addressed by another government agency.

Administration and/or project management fees are not to be levied on this grant funding.

7. Process for Grant Payment

Once the respective allocations for each local authority have been calculated regional councils will receive a letter of offer and acceptance documentation from this Department.

This advice will comprise the total grant amount being offered to the regional council as well as a breakdown of the amount to be made available to each local authority.

Regional councils eligible to receive these grants will need to comply with the following:-

- Ensure that there are no outstanding grant acquittals relevant to this Department's local government grants, otherwise there will be no payment made of approved grant/s
- Return the signed acceptance form back to the Department with appropriate authorisation.

These grants will be released around mid-September once the signed acceptance and the previous year's certification reports are received

8. Annual Certification

- The grant must be fully expended within two years of receipt of funding. Failure to do so may result in the Department taking action, including but not limited to: withholding further grant payments under this program or requesting unspent funds to be repaid.
- Councils are to submit a certified income and expenditure report (financial report) for the year ended 30 June for each of its local authorities.
- The financial report must be completed in the format as required by the Department and formally approved by Council. The financial report is to be submitted to the Department on or before 31 August in each year. Failure to provide the financial reports by 31 August will result in delays in paying further funds.
- All approved projects are required to be procured in accordance with the *Local Government Act* and, as far as practical under the NT Government's Buy Local Plan: <https://nt.gov.au/industry/government/sell-my-goods-and-services-to-government/buy-local-plan>
- Requests to carry-over unspent funds remaining after two consecutive years is to be submitted via email to: lq.grants@nt.gov.au. All requests will be considered on a case by case basis and approval is not automatic.
- The Department reserves the right to request the full value of the grant to be returned if the council disposes of an asset acquired with this funding within four years of the payment of the grant.

9. Contact Details

For further information please contact: lq.grants@nt.gov.au or (08) 8999 8820.