Have your say on the proposed policy for community funding

THAMES
COROMANDEL
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Empowering communities through transparency and clarity

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini

My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective

Across the district, people are making things happen – from volunteers restoring our dunes, to celebrating our unique heritage, to major events that keep towns buzzing with life.

Council funding helps these initiatives thrive. But the current policy for funding no longer fits how communities work today, so we're keen to change it. Priorities have shifted, the district has grown, and new opportunities and challenges call for clearer guidance for our communities.

That's where our Proposed Community Funding Policy comes in.

The goal is simple: create a funding framework that's clear, effective and enables our communities to lead initiatives that enhance wellbeing and leave a legacy.

We've done the leg work, and now we'd love to hear your feedback.

We want to hear from anyone with an interest in community funding – iwi, community organisations, event organisers, volunteers, or residents and ratepayers with ideas to share. Your input will help shape the final Community Funding Policy, creating a system built on partnership, clarity, and trust that benefits communities across the district.

How to have your say

Read through this proposal document and consider the policy document where needed.

Feedback period opens Monday 2 March to Monday 1 May 2026.

You'll find a feedback form at the end of the document, and more information on other ways to feedback at **tcdc.govt.nz/fundingfeedback**

Thames-Coromandel District Council supports local communities through contestable grants and funding. We back initiatives that build strong, resilient communities, encourage partnerships, and deliver social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. Our funding is fair, transparent, and focused on initiatives that align with Council and community priorities.

Council funding helps to:

+ preserve our heritage

+ maintain the places people gather

+ support local youth development

+ care for local spaces

+ bring people together through local events, festivals and celebrations

+ assist local clubs to run events and improve facilities

+ support environmental initiatives

+ support community arts and performances

+ support volunteer and emergency groups

Some previous recipients

Unite the community through local events and festivals

2022 | Whangamatā Lions Club received $1,400 for the Annual Santa Parade.

2022 | Steampunk the Thames received $3,816.85 for parade traffic management.

2024 | Tairua Pāuanui Promotions Trust received $15,000 towards the New Year's Eve fireworks display and advertising.

2025 | Whangamatā RSA received $3,577 towards Anzac Day event costs.

Support community arts

2022 | Tairua Troubadours received $1,350 for hall hire and production costs.

2025 | Open Studios Coromandel received $1,200 for their Arts Tour.

Assist local club events and improvements

2022 | Mercury Bay Rugby and Sports Club received $2,800 for fencing and facilities for a representative rugby match.

Preserve our heritage

2022 | Ngāti Maru ki Hauraki Inc received $9,086 to restore the historic railway station in Thames.

2025 | Thames Museum received $1,644 to develop a taonga Māori gallery and enhance the museum's role in preserving and showcasing local heritage.

Support environmental initiatives

2022 | Upper Coromandel Forest & Bird received $1,500 for native planting at Torehina Bay.

2024 | Spirit of Coromandel Trust Bike Park received $5,000 for weed spraying.

Support local youth development

2022 | Eastern Coromandel Community Services received $3,911 to run an outreach programme for youth aged 11–15.

2024 | Whangamatā Ocean Sports Club received $1,000 for their kids fishing at the wharf event.

2024 | Pārāwai School received $6,000 for advertising Thames youth programmes, initiatives and events for six months.

For local spaces

2022 | Kūaotunu Dune Care Group received $1,000 to remove invasive weeds and replant dunes.

2025 | Pāuanui Ratepayers and Residents Association received $966 to towards rabbit bait stations and bait.

Maintain places people gather

2022 | Coromandel Community Preschool received $1,270 for new learning equipment.

2025 | Eastern Coromandel Community Service received $2,000 for foodbank and Comfort Kai costs.

2025 | Whangamatā Surf Life Saving Club received $10,000 towards the renovation of the surf club.

Support volunteer and emergency groups

2022 | Onemana Surf Life Saving Club received $750 for lifeguard training.

2024 | Whangamatā Community Patrol received $10,000 to help purchase a new vehicle.

Why are we proposing this policy?

We're proposing the new policy because the current policy adopted in 2013no longer reflects how community funding works today, and it creates confusion for applicants.

The new policy will:

- clearly define who can apply for each type of funding

- explain what Council will and won't fund

- create more consistent processes across different funding types

- shift the focus toward community impact and wellbeing

- provide more flexible funding options (contestable, discretionary)

- improve transparency around assessment and decision-making

- make it easier to apply and report, with less paperwork

The goal is to make community funding simpler, more accessible, and more effective – so groups can spend less time navigating the process and more time delivering initiatives that benefit their communities.

The benefits of the proposed policy

Grants Policy 2013	Proposed Community Funding Policy	What this means for you
Unclear expectations around who can apply	Clarity around who can apply for each funding type	You won't waste time applying for funding you aren't eligible for
Unclear expectations around what will and won't be funded	Clarity around what we will and won't fund	You can quickly see if your project aligns with funding criteria, making applications more likely to succeed
Inconsistent processes for different grant types	More consistent funding processes across different funding types	You'll have a simpler, fairer process to follow and know what to expect
Limited funding opportunities (mostly contestable grants)	Contestable and discretionary funding that is flexible to respond to emerging needs and opportunities	More ways to get funding that suit the type and timing of your initiative
Complicated and unclear assessment criteria	Improved transparency and fairness in how decisions are made	You'll understand how decisions are made and what is expected for a successful application
Complicated application and reporting processes	Easier for groups to apply and report back.	Less time spent on paperwork, so you can focus on delivering your project

What doesn't change in this proposed policy is the purpose of Council funding

We will continue to provide support for initiatives that benefit local people and communities, respond to local needs and opportunities, and align with Council's strategic priorities and, where relevant, Community Board priorities.

Details of proposed change

A new name

The current policy, called the **Grants Policy**, is proposed to be renamed the **Community Funding Policy**. The new name better reflects the different ways Council supports communities.

Clearer funding types

We've proposed to group all Council funding into three main categories. This makes it easier to see what type of support is available and how decisions are made.

Type	What it's for	Example
Contestable grants	Competitive funds with set application periods	Local One-Off Grants, District Events Fund and Local Operating Grants
Discretionary funding	Flexible funding for opportunities that come up outside of a set round	Community Board Focus Fund, District Plan Heritage and Trees Fund
Halls and Libraries	When a hall or library committee manages a facility on behalf of Council	Community halls and libraries partnerships

Updated list of funds

The proposed policy sets out six main grant opportunities:

Local One-Off Grants
for one-time initiatives or events

Local Operating Grants
to support ongoing services or programmes (up to three years)

Community Board Focus Fund
flexible funding for local priorities

Community Halls and Libraries Partnership
to support groups managing Council-owned halls and libraries

District Plan Heritage and Trees Fund
to protect and care for heritage sites and listed trees

District Events Fund
or major events that attract visitors and boost the local economy

You can find detailed information about each of these grant opportunities on pages 9 to 16.

Clarification on who can apply

- Most grants will be open to community organisations, iwi, incorporated societies, and charitable trusts.

- In limited cases, individuals, for-profit organisations, or Council itself may be eligible, if this is the best way to deliver community benefit.

Clarification on what we will and won't fund

The proposed policy makes it clearer what Council can fund and what falls outside our funding scope.

Strong focus on transparency and accountability

We're proposing clearer rules to:

- Make sure decision-making is fair and consistent,

- Improve reporting so that recipients show how funds were used and what was achieved,

- Return any unspent funds within 12 months unless approved to carry them over, and

- Set out what happens if conditions aren't met, such as being ineligible for future funding.

More about each grant type

The proposed Community Funding Policy includes **six main grant types.**

Over the next few pages, you'll find more information about each type of grant — including who can apply, what we fund, and how the process works.

LOCAL ONE-OFF GRANTS

Purpose

To support community-driven, one-time projects or events that benefit local people and communities. These grants are designed for initiatives that make a difference locally, whether by reaching a large number of people or creating a big impact for a smaller group.

How it works

- Each community board has its own Local One-Off Grant fund.

- Applications are competitive and assessed separately within each board area.

- One funding round per year, when budget is available.

- Applications are considered by the relevant community board at a formal public meeting.

- If approved, funds must be spent by 30 June of that year.

- An accountability report is required within three months of completing the project.

Who can apply

- Not-for-profit groups such as incorporated societies and charitable trusts.

- Informal groups and individuals may be considered case-by-case, with the relevant community board chair.

- Schools may apply, but not for Ministry of Education assets.

- All applicants must:

  o be based in the community board they are applying to, and

  o show that their project will benefit local communities.

Funding limits

- Up to 75% of eligible project costs.

- Up to 33% of costs where a project involves a facility upgrade.

- For parades and events, Council may fund traffic management costs in full.

What we won't fund

In addition to the general exclusions in section 5.3 of the policy, Local One-Off Grants cannot be used for:

- Wages or honorariums,

- Rent for private buildings,

- Medical expenses (except first aid kits and AEDs),

- Applications from local authorities (including Council) or public sector entities,

- Physical works or upgrades that require consents or permits, unless those approvals are already in place.

  o *Grants may be awarded in principle, but funds won't be released until consents are approved — and this must happen by 30 June of the same financial year.*

How we prioritise applications

We'll look for initiatives that:

- Deliver the greatest positive impact for the community,

- Align with Council's strategic objectives, and

- Reflect local community priorities.

LOCAL OPERATING GRANTS

Purpose

To support the ongoing operating costs of community programmes or services that contribute to local wellbeing.

These grants give community organisations medium-term certainty so they can plan ahead and continue delivering important services.

How it works

- Each community board has its own Local Operating Grant fund.
- Applications are competitive and assessed separately within each board area.
- Funding rounds are generally held once every three years, when budget is available.
- Applications are considered by the relevant community board at a formal public meeting.
- Grants may be awarded for up to three years.

Who can apply

- Legally constituted not-for-profit organisations or charitable trusts that provide ongoing services to one or more of our communities.

Funding limits

- Council will contribute toward operating costs but will not cover the full amount.
- Grants can be awarded for a maximum of three years.

What we won't fund

In addition to the general exclusions listed in section 5.3 of the policy, Local Operating Grants cannot be used for:

- One-off projects or events (these are covered by Local One-Off Grants instead).

How we prioritise applications

We'll look for applications that:

- Deliver the greatest positive impact for our communities,
- Align with Council's strategic objectives, and
- Reflect local community priorities.

COMMUNITY BOARD FOCUS FUND

Purpose

To give community boards flexibility to fund local priorities and Council-led initiatives.

This fund allows boards to respond to local needs, support community-driven projects, and invest in initiatives led by Council where appropriate.

How it works

- Each community board has its own Focus Fund.
- The fund is discretionary, so proposals are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Applications or proposals may come from:
  - Community groups or not-for-profit organisations, or
  - Community boards/Council themselves.
- Decisions are made by the community board at a formal meeting.

Who can apply

- Community groups and not-for-profit organisations.
- Council or board-led initiatives may also be funded under this scheme.

Funding limits

- We may fund up to 100% of external initiatives (projects not Council-led or owned).
- For Council-led or owned initiatives, funding follows Council procurement policies and practices.
- For projects involving capital expenditure over $5,000, the fund allocation must consider:
  - Ongoing costs such as depreciation, insurance, and maintenance, and
  - How these will be funded in the future.
- Any resulting asset will be recorded in the Council's asset register.
- This fund cannot cover ongoing operating costs for capital projects.

What we won't fund

- No additional exclusions beyond the general exclusions in section 5.3.

How we prioritise applications

We'll look for proposals that:

- Deliver the greatest positive impact for local communities,
- Align with Council's strategic objectives, and
- Reflect local community priorities.

COMMUNITY HALLS AND LIBRARIES PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

Purpose

To financially support community groups managing Council-owned halls and libraries, helping ensure these facilities are managed effectively and sustainably for public use.

This partnership encourages community stewardship of public assets and ensures that halls and libraries remain accessible and well-maintained for everyone.

How it works

- This funding is ongoing and non-contestable — eligible groups do not need to apply.
- Funding levels are reviewed every three years alongside the Council's Long Term Plan.

Who?

- Community groups operating a hall or library that:
  - Hold a lease or facility management agreement with Council to manage a hall or library, and
  - Have the capacity to operate the facility effectively.
- Halls and libraries must be used for the benefit of the wider public.

Note: After the Council completes its review of the Community Leases and Licences to Occupy Policy, all groups with a facility management agreement will be expected to transfer to a lease agreement.

Funding limits

- For lessees, funding support will be provided to assist the group with day-to-day operational costs.
- For Facility Management Agreements holders, we will cover core operating costs including insurance, rates and maintenance as per the current process. We will also provide funding support for day-to-day operational costs.

How we prioritise applications

- All eligible groups receive funding automatically — there is no application process.

Process

- Funding is provided automatically where agreements are in place.
- Ongoing funding is confirmed in writing.

DISTRICT PLAN HERITAGE AND TREES FUND

Purpose

To help protect and maintain heritage places and significant trees listed in the Thames-Coromandel District Plan. This fund supports projects that conserve natural and cultural heritage for current and future generations.

How it works

- The fund is discretionary, and applications are considered as they are received.
- Funding decisions depend on available budget.

Who can apply

- Private landowners, iwi, and community groups.
- Projects must focus on heritage places or significant trees identified in the Thames-Coromandel District Plan.

Funding limits

- Up to $8,000 per project.
- Projects must be forward-looking — retrospective work cannot be funded.

How we prioritise applications

Projects will be considered if they:

- Focus on protecting, conserving, or restoring heritage items listed in: Appendix 1 – Historic Heritage Schedule, or Appendix 3 – Significant Tree Schedule.
- Have either: approved resource consent granted under the Resource Management Act 1991, or for significant trees, work is undertaken by a Council-approved contractor.
- Demonstrate that the applicant has the skills and resources to deliver the project.
- Comply with relevant heritage or environmental legislation (e.g., Resource Management Act, Historic Places Act).

What we won't fund

- Resource or building consent fees,
- Painting of buildings or structures, and
- Projects involving an item owned by Council.

Process

- Applications are accepted year-round.
- They are assessed by Council staff and, if needed, external heritage or environmental experts.
- Successful applicants must provide progress and final reports on the project.

DISTRICT EVENTS FUND

Purpose

To support and attract major events that bring visitors to the district, strengthen community pride, and generate economic and social benefits.

How it works

- The fund is discretionary, and applications are assessed as they are received.
- Generally, one-off grants are provided.
- In exceptional cases, multi-year agreements may be considered for events that deliver significant ongoing benefits.
- Priority is given to events held outside the summer peak season.

Who can apply

- Event companies, individuals, and not-for-profit organisations.
- Applicants do not need to be based in the district, but must have the capability, capacity, and experience to deliver the event.

Funding limits

- One-off grants are the standard.
- Multi-year funding is considered only for events with high social and economic benefit, or if the event is strategically significant and meets Council's assessment criteria.

Eligible events

Event applications must demonstrate the potential to meet one or more objectives:

- Attract domestic and international tourists,
- Increase district visitation and spend outside the summer peak,
- Support a strengthened events sector.

Events must involve at least one of the following activities:

- Art and cultural activities,
- Sport and recreation,
- Music activities.

How we prioritise applications

Applications will be prioritised if they:

- Are large-scale and strategically significant,

- Generate significant economic activity, including:

  o Attracting at least 2,000 visitor days,

  o Producing measurable economic benefit (e.g., $300,000+ additional visitor spend),

  o Creating new employment opportunities,

- Are held outside the summer peak season,

- Strengthen the events sector,

- Raise the district's profile regionally and nationally,

- Have the potential to become a regular or nationally significant event,

- Align with the "The Coromandel – Good for Your Soul" brand,

- Contribute to a positive sense of place,

- Demonstrate strong health and safety, risk management, and environmental practices,

- Provide opportunities for local community involvement, including volunteering or supporting local environmental/charitable organisations,

- Consider the status of previously approved funds for the event if applicable.

Process

- Council will advertise when applications are open.

- Event organisers can apply any time using the application form.

- Applications are reviewed by Council staff, generally within 10 working days.

- Successful applicants will formalise an agreement with Council.

- For multi-year events, the application must outline the full programme and meet the high benefit threshold for multi-year funding.

FEEDBACK

This form is your chance to share what you think about the proposed changes. Your feedback will help us make sure the new policy supports the initiatives that matter most to our communities.

Feedback closes Friday 1 May 2026

ABOUT YOU

Are you providing this feedback on behalf of an organisation?

If yes, please provide the name of the organisation.

Your full name

Your e-mail address

THE BIG PICTURE

Overall, do you support the proposed policy for community funding?

a.   Yes

b.   No

c.   Unsure

Why did you choose this answer?
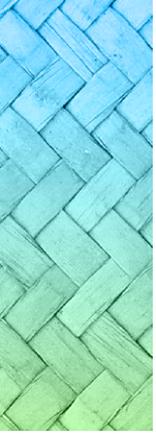
Do you support the simplified list of funds?

d.   Yes

e.   No

f.   Unsure

Why did you choose this answer?

Is it clear who can and cannot apply for each type of funding?

g.   Yes

h.   No

i.   Unsure

Why did you choose this answer?

Do you think that this proposal shows a strong focus on transparency and accountability?

j.   Yes
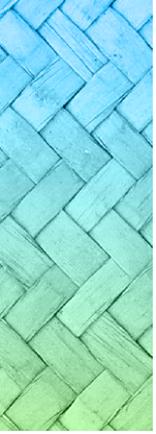
k.   No

l.   Unsure

Why did you choose this answer?

AREA SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

If you need more space to provide your feedback, feel free to use the additional page at the end of this form.

Do you have any feedback on our policy for Local One-Off Grants?

Do you have any feedback on our policy for Local Operating Grants?

Do you have any feedback on our policy for Community Halls & Libraries Partnership support?

Do you have any feedback on our policy for the District Plan Heritage & Trees Fund?

Do you have any feedback on our policy for the District Events Fund?

NEXT STEPS

Would you like to speak with a staff member in person about your feedback?

Yes

No

If you wish to speak to a staff member, please provide a contact number so we can get in touch:

Additional comment space

Privacy Statement

The information you provide is used for the purpose of obtaining feedback on the Proposed Community Funding Policy 2026. We must act in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020 and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. When you provide feedback to us, your name, general location and feedback will be publicly available. Personal details such as your address, phone number and email will be kept private and used only for internal purposes such as keeping you informed unless we are required to disclose it elsewhere. For more information on how we handle personal information, see our Council's Privacy Statement 2020 online. Please let us know if the information contains any sensitive information which you consider should not be publicly disclosed.