Te anga pūtea hapori 2026

Community funding policy 2026

Draft for feedback

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini

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

1. Introduction

1.1. The Thames-Coromandel District Council (our Council) makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of our communities via our contestable grants, discretionary funding and community service level agreements. Grants are one way our Council supports projects that:

- deliver social, cultural, environmental and/or economic benefits
- respond to local needs and opportunities, and
- reflect our strategic priorities in our Long Term Plan and, in some cases, our community board priorities.

1.2. Our Council sets the amount we'll make available for grants (our grants budgets) through our long-term planning process.

1.3. This Grants Policy explains how our Council manages grants fairly and responsibly, and gives confidence that decisions are transparent, and funds are well managed. The policy explains:

- why we give grants
- the types of grants available
- who can apply
- what we will and won't fund
- how we make decisions, and
- how to apply and report back.

2. Why we provide grants

2.1. Our Council provides grants to:

- encourage collaboration and partnerships
- build strong, vibrant and resilient communities
- support community action that will have a strong positive impact
- help deliver initiatives that Council couldn't do on its own
- make sure public money is used fairly and openly.

3. Principles we work by

3.1. All Council grants follow these principles:

- **Fair and transparent** – we have clear rules and open processes.
- **Aligned** – grants must link to our Council and community priorities and be within our legal scope.
- **Accountable** – groups report back on what they achieved.
- **Accessible** – processes should be simple and fair.
- **Collaborative** – we back partnerships and initiatives that strengthen community wellbeing and resilience.
- **Best value** – money goes to projects with real community benefit.

4. Our grants

4.1.   Our Council runs several different grant schemes. Each has its own purpose, criteria and process. Appendix A is a list of terms used in this policy and Appendix B sets out the extra details for each individual scheme that apply in addition to the policy below.

4.2.   Types of community funding

4.2.1. Contestable grants

These are competitive funds to support the delivery of clearly defined initiatives. Applications are invited through scheduled funding rounds, which are publicly advertised and have an opening and closing date. All eligible entities can apply. Applications are assessed against criteria before funding decisions are made.

4.2.2. Discretionary funding

These are funding decisions made outside the contestable grant opportunities. The Council, community boards or delegated staff, decide how to use funds at their discretion based on local priorities and opportunities. Timing for a decision is dependant on staff reporting timelines. The outcome will depend on the decision-maker's judgement and available budget.

4.2.3. Community service level agreement

In some circumstances, our Council will fund organisations to deliver service levels on its behalf. In these cases, our Council determines that not-for-profit organisations are better positioned and skilled to deliver services or manage a community facility on its behalf. This ensures that services benefitting our communities are maintained at agreed levels and are delivered effectively. **These arrangements are outside the scope of this Policy.**

4.3.   Our grant opportunities

4.3.1. Local One-Off Grants

For one-time initiatives that make a difference locally. Grants are awarded through a publicly contestable process.

4.3.2. Local Operating Grants

Helps with the ongoing operating costs of running community programmes and services for up to three years. Grants are awarded through a publicly contestable process.

4.3.3. Community Board Focus Fund

Gives community boards flexibility to support local projects or Council-delivered initiatives.

4.3.4. Community Halls and Libraries Partnership

Supports community groups that manage Council-owned halls and libraries. The fund can cover core operating costs such as insurance, rates, maintenance.

4.3.5. District Plan Heritage and Trees Fund

Helps protect and care for significant heritage places and trees listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 in the District Plan.

4.3.6. District Events Fund

Supports big events that bring visitors, build community pride and boost our local economy. Major events may be eligible for multi-year funding. Grants are awarded through a publicly contestable fund.

5. Who can apply and what we fund

5.1. Who can apply

5.1.1. Most funds are open to:

- o incorporated societies, charitable trusts and other not-for-profit organisations
- o community organisations and iwi.

5.1.2. In limited cases, individuals, for-profit organisations or the Council itself can receive funding.

5.2. What we fund

5.2.1. Our Council funds initiatives that:

- o deliver clear benefits for local people and communities.
- o align with Council priorities and (where relevant) community board priorities.
- o have a realistic plan, budget and people in place to deliver them.
- o show community support and, ideally, collaboration with other groups.

5.3. What we don't fund

5.3.1. While each grant scheme has its own limits, we generally won't fund:

- o initiatives that have already happened and retrspective expenses
- o debt repayment
- o religious or political activities
- o services that are central government's responsibility
- o Ministry of Education assets
- o legal costs
- o the purchase of alcohol
- o resource and building consent application fees
- o the making of a monetary contribution to a third party (charitable or non-charitable)
- o anything that doesn't meet Council's legal or policy requirements.

6. Applying for a grant

6.1. Information on all TCDC grant funding opportunities will be made publicly available on our website, and at our service centres and libraries. Information will include our grant funding options, eligibility criteria, application closing dates (where relevant) and application forms and documentation.

6.2. When to apply

6.2.1. Contestable grants have set funding rounds. You can only apply during these periods. Opening and closing dates will be advertised on our Council's website, social media and other channels. Applications must be lodged by the advertised deadline (if applicable).

6.2.2. Discretionary or ongoing grants (such as the Community Board Focus Fund, District Heritage and Trees Fund) can usually be applied for at any time. Applications/requests are assessed as they are received.

6.3. How to apply

6.3.1. All grant funding applications must be made using the forms and guidance provided for each specific grant. In general, an application should include:

- a clear project plan including what the initiatives should achieve and the outcomes expected
- the positive difference your initiatives will make for our communities
- how the initiatives will link to at least one Council priority
- evidence that the initiatives can be delivered including a budget, evidence of financial position and people and resources needed.

6.3.2. Applications must be complete.

7. How we decide

7.1. All applications are first checked against the eligibility criteria for the specific grant. To be eligible, an application must clearly show:

- what the initiatives is and how it will be delivered, and
- that the applicant has the skills, capacity and resources to deliver it.

7.2. Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements will not proceed.

7.3. Eligible applications are then assessed against the evaluation criteria for that grant. This includes how well the initiative aligns with Council priorities and goals and other criteria set for each grant scheme.

7.4. Funding is limited to the budget set aside each year. If the total value of eligible applications is higher than the funding available, not all initiatives can be supported. In this case, our Council will prioritise applications that best match the evaluation criteria.

7.5. Who decides

7.5.1. Funding decisions are made by the Council or relevant community board, Council committee, or staff with delegated authority, depending on the grant scheme.

7.5.2. All grant funding applications will be first directed to the relevant staff member responsible for the processing and recommendation of applications for approval. The staff member will then report their recommendation to the Council or relevant committee, community board or staff with delegated authority to make the final decision.

7.5.3. Our Council will always act with integrity, fairness and objectivity in making decisions on grant applications.

7.5.4. All funding decisions must be transparent, consistent with approved budgets, and free from any actual or perceived bias or conflict of interest.

7.5.5. Where an application is declined, applicants may request an explanation of the decision.

7.5.6. All funding decisions made by our Council, community boards or other delegated decision-makers are final.

8. What we require of recipients

8.1. Successful applicants will be provided with the terms and requirements that they must meet to receive and use grant funding including reporting obligations.

8.2. All grant recipients must ensure the funded activity complies with relevant legislation, regulations and the terms and conditions of the grant, including health and safety obligations.

8.3. Recipients are required to complete an accountability report and provide any other expenditure or evaluation information requested by Council within a time specified.

8.4. Accountability reports should show how the funding was used and what was achieved. This may include photos, receipts, financial records or other evidence.

8.5. Any unspent funds by 30 June in the year the funding was approved, must be returned to the Council, unless:

- at least 50% of the approved funding has already been financially committed/expensed, and,
- prior written approval from the relevant Community Board chair has been given to carry the funds forward for the purpose for which the original grant was received.

In the case of the District Events Fund and District Plan Heritage & Trees Fund, any approved funding will be expended in accordance with the timeline set out in the conditions of the grant approval.

8.6. Failure to meet the conditions of the grant — including providing accountability information or complying with funding requirements — may result in:

- termination of the grant,
- repayment of part or all of the funding, and/or
- being ineligible for future Council funding.

9. Policy review

9.1. The Council will review this policy every three years, or sooner if needed. We'll use feedback from applicants, recipients and staff to make improvements.

Appendix A

Terms we use and what they mean

Activity	A good or service provided by, or on behalf of the Council or its council-controlled organisations and as defined in the Council's Long Term Plan.
Community board area	A geographic area set out by the Council in which the Community Board carries out its responsibilities, and as defined by the Local Government Act 2002.
Community delivered initiatives	Initiatives delivered by community groups that address specific needs or opportunities within their communities.
Community group	A voluntary or not-for-profit organisation formed by individuals or entities with a shared interest or purpose.
Community hall	A council-owned community centre or hall is a place where people can meet for social purposes including events, education and recreational activities.
Community library	A community library is a space within a Council-owned building, containing collections of reading material and online resources for use and/or borrowing by the public. Community libraries may, but are unlikely to, met the standards for New Zealand Public Libraries (LIANZA). In this policy, community libraries do not include specialist or research libraries, or facilities which are a library in name only such as the Thames Carnegie Library building.
Community plan	A statement of what is important to a particular geographical community. The preparation of community plans are usually facilitated by the Council and are used to inform its decision-making.
Council priorities	The outcomes that the Council aims to achieve for the Thames-Coromandel District in the present and future. The outcomes are set out in the Council's long term plan.
Facility management agreement	A formal agreement between the Council and a community group that defines the responsibilities for managing and operating a Council-owned community hall or community library but excluding lease agreements.
Initiative	Any planned activity, project, programme or event.

Local community priority	An objective, goal or action for a town/settlement, rural area or community board area as documented in:

- the relevant community plan
- the relevant community board work programme, and/or
- a resolution by the relevant community board in alignment with its Terms of Reference.

Off Peak or Shoulder Season	After Waitangi Weekend to before Labour Weekend.
Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives are more specific goals that the Council sets to help achieve its broader priorities.
	They are set out in our community impact strategies, which are plans or frameworks that focus on improving particular aspects of community wellbeing and quality of life. Examples include strategies for heritage, positive ageing, or recreational biking.
	These objectives may also be recorded in Council's activity plans, which describe what Council aims to deliver for each activity and how this supports the long term and annual plans.
Thames-Coromandel District Plan	The Thames-Coromandel District Plan – Operative in Part and the Operative Version of that Plan when it becomes fully operative.

Appendix B

Individual grant schemes

10.   Local One-Off Grants

10.1. Purpose

To support community-driven, one-time initiatives that benefit local communities.

10.2. Grant type

The Local One-Off Grant is a competitive fund. Each community board has its own grant pool, and applications are considered separately within each board area.

10.3. Who can apply

We will accept applications from legally constituted not-for-profit groups such as incorporated societies and charitable trusts. Individuals and groups without a formal legal structure may be considered on a case-by case basis, with approval from the relevant community board chair. Requests for schools may be considered except for funds for Ministry of Education assets. All applicants must be operating within and benefit the relevant community board area of the grant being applied for.

One application may be submitted per applicant, per funding round.

10.4. Funding limits

- We will contribute up to 75% of eligible initiative costs, or will contribute up to 33% of costs where the initiative involves a facility development.For parades and events, Council may fund traffic management costs in full.

10.5. Our evaluation criteria

We will prioritise applications that:

- deliver the greatest positive impact for our communities, whether by reaching many people, by making a big difference for a smaller group in alignment with our Council priorities and strategic objectives
- align with our local community priorities.

10.6. What we won't fund

In addition to the items specified in section 5.3, we will not fund:

- wages or honorariums
- rent for private buildings
- medical expenses excluding first aid kits and AED (Automated External Defibrillator)
- applications from local authorities including or Council or public sector entities
- physical works and/or improvements to community buildings owned by a not-for-profit group or the Council that require consents and permits, before the necessry consents or permits

are obtained. Grants may be awarded in principle, but funds will not be released until all conditions are satisfied which must be by 30 June in the year a grant is awarded.

10.7. Process

We will hold one funding round per year when budget is available. Applications will be considered by the relevant community board at a formal meeting. Successful applicants must spend funds by 30 June of that year and provide an accountability report within three months of initiative completion.

11. Local Operating Grants

11.1. Purpose

To help cover the operating costs of community programmes or services that contribute to local wellbeing, in a manner that provides medium-term certainty.

11.2. Grant type

The Local Operating Grant is a competitive fund. Each community board has its own grant pool, and applications are considered separately within each board area.

11.3. Who can apply

We will accept applications from legally constituted not-for-profit organisations or charitable trusts providing ongoing programmes or services to one or more of our communities.

11.4. Funding limits

We will provide a contribution toward operating costs but will not cover full costs. Grants may be awarded for up to three years.

11.5. Our evaluation criteria

We will prioritise applications that:

- deliver the greatest positive impact for our communities, whether by reaching many people, by making a big difference for a smaller group and/or by addressing an evidence based community need.
- align with our Council priorities and strategic objectives
- align with our local community priorities.

11.6. What we won't fund

In addition to the items specified in section 5.3 we will not fund:

- a one off Initiative
- wages or honorariums
- rent for private buildings.

11.7. Process

We will generally hold one funding round every three years when budget is available. Applications will be considered by the relevant community board at a formal meeting.

12.   Community Board Focus Fund

12.1. Purpose

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

12.2. Grant type

The Community Board Focus Fund is a discretionary fund. Each community board has its own fund, and proposals are considered separately within each board area.

12.3. Who can request funds

We will accept requests from community groups and not-for-profit organisations. We may also use this fund for board-led projects.

12.4. Funding limits

We will fund up to and including 100% of an external initiative (i.e. not Council led or owned). Where we decide to allocate funding to a Council-led or owned initiative, our procurement policies and practices will be followed. The ongoing costs of Council initiatives involving capital expenditure of over $5,000 (including for example depreciation, insurance and maintenance) and how these will be funded must be considered when determining the allocation of the fund. The resulting asset will be recorded in the Council's asset register. This fund cannot be used to cover the ongoing operating costs of capital projects.

12.5. Our evaluation criteria

We will prioritise applications that:

- deliver the greatest positive impact for our communities, whether by reaching many people or by making a big difference for a smaller group
- align with our Council priorities and strategic objectives
- align with our local community priorities.

12.6. What we won't fund

 In addition to the items specified in section 5.3, we will not fund:

- wages or honorariums
- rent for private buildings
- medical expenses excluding first aid kits and AED (Automated External Defibrillator)

12.7. Process

Proposals may be proactively identified by our Council or a community board or submitted by an external organisation. All decisions will be made by the community board at a formal meeting.

13. Community Halls and Libraries Partnership Support

13.1. Purpose

To financially support community groups managing Council-owned halls and libraries ensuring they are managed effectively and sustainably for public use. This partnership supports community stewardship of public assets.

13.2. Grant type

The Community Halls and Libraries Partnership Support arrangement is ongoing and non-contestable.

13.3. Who is eligible

Community groups that hold a lease or facility management agreement with our Council to manage Council-owned halls and libraries, and have the operational capacity to do so, are eligible for this funding support. Halls and libraries must be used for the benefit of the wider public.

13.4 Funding limits

Pending funding approval every three years in conjunction with the Council's long term planning process the following will apply:

- 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 a per the current process. We will also provide funding support for day-to-day operational costs.

13.5 Our evaluation criteria

All eligible groups who manage a Council-owned community hall or library will receive funding support without the requirement to apply.

13.6 Process

Ongoing funding support will be confirmed in writing.

14. District Plan Heritage and Trees Fund

14.1. Purpose

Our Council provides funding to help protect and maintain heritage places and significant trees listed in the Thames-Coromandel District Plan.

14.2. Grant type

This Fund is discretionary and administered as applications are received.

14.3. Who can apply

We will accept applications from private landowners, iwi, and community groups for projects to protect, conserve or restore natural or cultural heritage items specified in the Thames-Coromandel District Plan.

14.4. Funding limits

We will provide up to $8,000 per project. Projects must be forward-looking and not retrospective. The availability of remaining budget each financial year, will determine whether an application can be financially supported.

14.5. Our evaluation criteria

Projects that meet the following criteria will be considered for funding:

- Projects to protect, conserve or restore natural or cultural heritage items specified in the Thames-Coromandel District Plan that are included in either:
    - Appendix 1 – Historic Heritage Schedule, or
    - Appendix 3 – Significant Tree Schedule.
- Projects must be either:
    - The subject of an approved resource consent granted by the Council under the Resource Management Act 1991, or
    - In the case of items listed in Appendix 3 – Significant Tree Schedule, work undertaken by a Council approved contractor.
- Applicants must demonstrate the capability to manage the project, including any necessary resource consents or approvals.
- Projects must be in alignment with relevant heritage or environmental legislation (e.g. Resource Management Act, Historic Places Act).

14.6. What we won't fund

We will not fund resource and/or buildings consent fees, the painting of buildings or structures or projects involving an item from the Council.

14.7. Process

We will accept applications year-round. Applications will be assessed by Council staff and, where necessary, external heritage or environment experts. Successful applicants must submit progress and final reports.

15. District Events Fund

15.1. Purpose

Our Council will provide District Events funding to support and attract major events that bring visitors, strengthen community pride, and generate economic and social benefits.

15.2. Grant type

This Fund is discretionary and administered as applications are received.

15.3. Who can apply

We will accept applications from 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.

15.4. Funding limits

We will provide one-off grants. In exceptional cases, multi-year agreements may be considered for events with significant ongoing benefits. Priority will be given to events held outside the summer peak season.

15.5. What events are eligible

15.5.1. Event applications must demonstrate the clear potential to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- o   attract domestic and international tourists to the district
- o   increase district visitation in our off peak or shoulder season
- o   support a strengthened events sector

15.5.2. Event applications must fulfil one or more of the following activities:

- o   art and cultural
- o   sport and recreation
- o   music activities.

15.6. Our evaluation criteria

We will prioritise event applications that are large-scale, strategically significant, and:

- will generate significant economic activity:
- attract significant visitor numbers (at least 2,000 visitor days)
- generate measurable economic benefit (e.g. at least $300,000 of additional visitor spend)
- create new employment opportunities
- will be held during the off peak or shoulder season
- contribute to a stronger events sector

- raise the district's profile regionally and nationally
- have the potential to become a regular event that is unique to the Coromandel or part of an event series that is held on a national scale in several locations
- align with the "The Coromandel – Good for Your Soul" brand, or its successor
- contribute to a positive perception of 'sense of place'
- demonstrate strong health and safety, risk management, and environmental practices
- provide opportunities for local community involvement and benefit such as opportunities provided for local volunteer groups to participate in and benefit from the event or supporting local environmental or charitable organisations
- the status of previous funds approved for events in the year, if applicable.

15.7. Process:

Event organisers can apply for funding support using the application form at any time. Applications will be reviewed and assessed by council staff within 10 working days of being submitted, unless the applicant is notified otherwise. Council staff will review applications, and final decisions will be confirmed. Staff will work together with successful applicants to formalise an agreement between the Council and the event organiser.

If the event organiser intends to deliver multiple events over a 12-year period, the entire programme should be treated as one application. If the organiser wishes to deliver an event over multiple years, the application must specify this and meet the very high social and economic benefit threshold for multi-year agreements.

Policy type	Governance
Policy owner	Group Manager Community
Adopted by	Pending
Document ID	ECM doc set:
Date policy adopted	Pending
Policy effective from	Pending
Date of next review	Pending