



LOWER EYRE
COUNCIL

Small Business Grants Program

Guidelines



"Working with our Rural & Coastal Communities"

CS-APP-06 – GUIDELINES - SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS PROGRAM

Version No:

1

Issued:

June 2026

Next Review:

May 2027

Responsible Department:	Corporate Services
Policy Adopted:	
Minutes Reference:	
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011
Related Policies/Procedures/Codes:	FIN-POL-02 – Loans to sporting bodies & community groups CS-APP-01 - Guidelines and application form Community Project Grant CS-APP-02 - Guidelines and application form Community Halls Support Program CS-APP-04 – Guidelines and Application Form - Community Volunteer Support Grant CS-APP-05 – Guidelines and Application Form – Small Donations and Events Grant
Review Frequency:	Annually for release after adoption of budget

1. INTRODUCTION

Lower Eyre Council recognises the benefit in supporting businesses to ensure a sustainable and diverse economy.

Council offers the Small Business Grants Program for projects put forward via nomination to stimulate a range of business and economic benefits to the Lower Eyre Council community.

Please read these guidelines carefully before completing the application form, as applications not meeting the stated funding criteria will be deemed ineligible.

If you require advice to complete the application form, please contact Council on 8676 0400 or email: mail@lec.sa.gov.au

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Small Business Grants Program meets Council's Strategic Plan 2024-34 directions to activate opportunities for economic growth and develop and implement an economic development plan. The Lower Eyre Economic Growth Plan 2025-30 aims to:

- Support improved business management.
- Support small business to sustain growth, create employment opportunities and future proof their success.
- Provide an environment which supports and facilitates opportunities for businesses.

The Small Business Grants Program aims to:

- Support small businesses to encourage growth, innovation, expansion, and local economic development.
- Encourage businesses to create and sustain employment opportunities in local communities.
- Help small businesses upskill their workforce or leadership to improve business management and entrepreneurship.
- Support the financial health of small businesses to maintain their stability, sustainability and build resilience for future challenges.
- Encourage sustainable environmental practices.
- Help small business leverage digital tools to support business growth and productivity gains.

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3. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

3.1 To be eligible for Council funding, a business must:

- Be undertaking a project, program, or activity, which will directly benefit the residents, ratepayers, and visitors of the Lower Eyre Council.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous funding received from the Lower Eyre Council and have no outstanding reporting requirements; and
- Have a current registered Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Have a shopfront, premises, or business location within the Lower Eyre Council.

3.2 Each application will be considered on its own merits within the framework of these guidelines.

3.3 There is no guarantee of approval.

3.3 Previously successful applicants are ineligible to apply to the Small Business Grants Program for two years.

4. CONDITIONS

4.1 APPLICATIONS

4.1.1 Applications for funding must be on the official application form.

4.1.2 All applications must include supporting documentation and evidence of project costs, concept designs or plans, and outline how the project will be managed and maintained into the future.

4.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

4.2.1 The project must have a clearly stated purpose and a practical plan for achieving that purpose, (including plans or sketches where appropriate).

4.2.2 The project should be a response to a demonstrated need and be appropriate to that need.

4.2.3 If successful, applicants will have 12 months to complete their project and provide a final report.

4.2.4 Where grant assistance is provided, the project must not be changed without the written consent of Council.

4.2.5 Examples of eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

Shopfront/ Streetscape Improvements

- Shopfront improvements such as painting, signage, lighting, displays.
- Outdoor dining infrastructure, landscaping, and improvements that activate underutilised frontage areas.

Business Growth and Expansion

- Purchase of equipment or machinery that increases productivity or capacity.
- Expansion of premises to support business growth, and fit-out costs associated with business expansion.
- Development of new products or services, and market research to support business growth opportunities.

Workforce Development

- Professional development including leadership, or industry-specific skills training.
- Succession planning and business continuity.

Digital Transformation

- Digital marketing strategies and implementation, development or upgrade of business websites, e-commerce platform implementation.
- Customer relationship management (CRM) software and point of sale (POS) systems.

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Sustainability Initiatives

- Energy efficiency upgrades/ renewable energy systems.
- Water-saving and waste reduction infrastructure and initiatives.
- Environmental certification programs, sustainable packaging initiatives.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Accessibility upgrades to business premises, and or improvements that enhance access for people with disability.
- Inclusive customer service training.
- Initiatives supporting culturally diverse or Indigenous-owned businesses.

Business Resilience

- Business continuity, risk management and emergency preparedness planning and systems.
- Diversification and innovative initiatives.

4.3 INELIBIBLE PROJECTS

The Lower Eyre Council does not provide grants under this program to:

- Individuals.
- Projects that duplicate existing services or programs provided by the applicant.
- Projects that would rely on recurrent funding from the Lower Eyre Council.
- Projects that directly contravene any existing Council policy.
- General donations to charities.
- On-going operational business costs.
- Retrospective projects or programs, or for budget deficits of existing projects or programs.
- Applicants who have not fulfilled the conditions of previous Council grant funding.

5. FUNDING

- 5.1 The maximum grant for any project is \$5,000. A contribution by the business will be highly regarded but not mandatory.
- 5.2 Total funding pool available for 2026/27 is \$10,000.
- 5.3 Where a project or program runs over budget, Council is not responsible in any way for meeting any shortfall.
- 5.4 Recipients must only use the funding as outlined in the Small Business Grants Program application form.
- 5.5 Projects should be completed within 12 months of receipt of funding unless otherwise agreed to by Council.
- 5.6 If the applicant needs an extension of time to complete the project, or the project as described in the Business Support Program application form changes, the applicant must advise Council in writing and seek approval for the changes before continuing.
- 5.7 A completed Project Acquittal Form, including an income and expenditure statement and copies of receipts, must be submitted to Council within thirty days of the completion of the project. Businesses which fail to complete this will be ineligible for future funding.
- 5.8 On lodging the Project Acquittal Form, any grant recipient considered to have not completed the project as agreed to by Council may be required to repay all or part of the funds.

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6. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 6.1 Council's assistance must be acknowledged where appropriate.
- 6.2 If successful with the application, the process from close of funding round to receipt of financial assistance can take approximately six weeks.
- 6.3 Businesses need to provide evidence (Certificate of Currency) to demonstrate they are insured.

6. ASSESSMENT

All applications will be assessed by Elected Members at the next available ordinary Council meeting following the close of the application period. Applicants will be advised of Council's determination following the Council meeting with the decision of Council being final. Applicants should expect the process to take up to six weeks from application close to notification of an outcome.

Elected Members will use the following criteria weighting and scoring guidelines to assess applications. Applicants should make sure their applications address the criteria to increase their chance of success.

Criteria	Definition	Weight (%)	Score (1–5)*	Weighted Score**
Project Viability	Assesses whether the proposed project is technically feasible within time and budget, including risk identification and mitigation. Ensures the funded activity is practical, affordable, and deliverable with limited resources.	20%		
Economic Impact	Focuses on realistic outcomes for job retention/creation, local spending, business growth, or supports local supply chains.	20%		
Demand	Evidence that the product or service provided by the business is in demand or has strong potential for growth.	20%		
Business viability	Clarity and detail on the business's objectives, vision and outlook	20%		
Social Impact	Captures the business or project's contribution to community, environmental impact or supports diversity, inclusion, First Nations, or vulnerable groups.	10%		
Strategic Alignment	How well does the project align with Council's Strategic Plan, Economic Growth Plan, and the aims of the business program.	10%		
Total		100%		

*1= very weak or low and 5=high based on how well the project addresses each program criteria.

**Weighted score = score x weight

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Weighting logic

Project Viability (20%) – This criterion ensures the proposed use of grant funds is achievable, appropriately scaled, and deliverable within the grant period.

Economic Impact (20%) – Small businesses generate impact through growth, job retention and local economic participation.

Demand (20%) – Confirmed or likely demand for service or product is important to business success.

Business Viability (20%) – Business failure is a risk to small business grant programs. Owner capability, basic financial management and operational stability are strong predictors of success.

Social Impact (10%) – Small business delivers social value through service provision, employment, and business practices.

Strategic Alignment (10%) – Ensures the project supports the long-term direction of Lower Eyre Council.

Scoring rubric

Score	Description (applies to all criteria generally)
1	Very weak – minimal or no evidence, not credible
2	Weak – limited evidence or significant gaps
3	Moderate – acceptable, meets minimum expectations
4	Strong – strong evidence, meets most or all expectations
5	Very Strong – excellent evidence, exceeds expectations clearly. Demonstrates best practice.

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Scoring Guidelines

1. Project Viability

- 1 – Project unclear, unrealistic, or not feasible; budget and timelines missing or implausible.
- 2 – Project partially defined; significant risks not addressed; weak costings or delivery plan.
- 3 – Project clearly defined; realistic scope and budget; basic risks identified.
- 4 – Well-planned project with clear milestones, realistic costs, and credible risk mitigation.
- 5 – Highly feasible project; implementation-ready; strong controls, contingencies, and delivery capability demonstrated.

2. Economic Impact

- 1 – Minimal or no identifiable economic benefit.
- 2 – Limited economic impact; benefits unclear or overstated.
- 3 – Moderate economic benefit such as job retention with modest growth.
- 4 – Clear economic contribution with job creation, revenue growth and local supplier use.
- 5 – Strong and measurable economic impact relative to business size, with credible evidence.

3. Social Impact

- 1 – No discernible social benefit.
- 2 – Minor or indirect social benefit with limited evidence.
- 3 – Clear social benefit with local employment and inclusive ownership.
- 4 – Strong social contribution aligned to community or inclusion objectives.
- 5 – Significant, well-evidence social impact integrated into the business mode with benefits for a wide or vulnerable segment of the community.

4. Demand

- 1 – No evidence of demand, assumptions unsupported.
- 2 – Limited demand evidence, market understanding weak.
- 3 – Reasonable evidence of demand and market knowledge.
- 4 – Strong evidence of demand with repeat custom or demonstrated plan to grow demand.
- 5 – Compelling demand with proven traction and scalability potential.

5. Strategic Alignment

- 1 – No alignment with program objectives.
- 2 – Weak or incidental alignment.
- 3 – Clear alignment with a least part of the Lower Eyre Economic Growth Plan or Council's Strategic Plan.
- 4 – Strong alignment with multiple priorities or objectives.
- 5 – Significant alignment that directly advances policy goals.

6. Business Viability

- 1 – Business unstable, high risk of failure, undemonstrated management and finances.
- 2 – Significant viability concerns, limited management capacity or financial control.
- 3 – Adequate viability, basic financial management and operational stability.
- 4 – Strong business fundamentals, capable management, and sound finances.
- 5 – Very strong viability, resilient, well-managed business with clear sustainability.

7. PROBITY

To ensure funding processes are fair and transparent, elected members and Council staff:

- Are not permitted to apply for Council funding (grants, sponsorship, or donations).
- Can not be named in an application for Council funding.
- Must not sign an application for Council funding.
- Must declare any conflict of interest with a funding application (including being a member of an applicant organisation) and remove themselves from the report and approval processes.
- Not profit from Council grant funding or donations.

Issue Date:	Description of Change:
June 2026	New grant program developed and adopted