

Community Betterment Fund Policy

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Version	1
Date Adopted	30 July 2025
Next Review Date	30 July 2026
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a structured and equitable framework for distributing financial assistance that supports community wellbeing on Palm Island. It aims to enable participation in endorsed sporting events and provide compassionate support for funeral-related expenses. The policy ensures that funding decisions are made transparently and consistently, in alignment with Council's strategic priorities and public interest objectives.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all applications submitted under the Community Betterment Funds Program, which includes the Sports Assistance and Funeral Assistance funding streams. It governs the provision of financial support to eligible individuals and organisations connected to Palm Island. All assistance must align with Council's public interest objectives and comply with approved funding limits, governance protocols, and operational procedures.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Council	Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and its authorised representatives.
Financial Assistance	Council-approved payment to support eligible activities under this policy.
Eligible Activity	A recognised sporting event, funeral, or community initiative endorsed by Council.
Supplier	An approved provider of travel, accommodation, transport, or funeral services.
Applicant	An individual, team, or organisation requesting support under the program.
Acquittal	Documentation confirming expenditure and compliance with approved funding use.
Public Interest	Activities that demonstrate broad community benefit and alignment with Council priorities.
Auspice	An arrangement where a community organisation applies for funding on behalf of another entity, assuming legal and financial responsibility.
Community Organisation	A not-for-profit group or association operating for the benefit of Palm Island residents.
Sport Assistance Package	A funding stream within the Betterment Fund dedicated to supporting travel and accommodation for sporting participation.
Funeral Assistance	A funding stream within the Betterment Fund dedicated to supporting funeral-related costs for Palm Island residents.
Retrospective Application	A request for funding where the activity has already occurred or costs have already been incurred.

Verified Vendor	A supplier approved by Council for direct payment, based on valid ABN, invoice, and service relevance.
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4. POLICY STATEMENT

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council upholds its commitment to supporting community wellbeing through targeted financial assistance. Financial support provided under this program aims to remove barriers for individuals and groups participating in endorsed activities. All grant decisions are made in line with the principles of accountability, transparency, and public benefit, in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, including Sections 189, 194, and 195.

5. APPLICATION

Applications may be lodged year-round, subject to funding availability. They must include a completed form, supporting quotes or tax invoices, and evidence of eligibility. Applications can be submitted at Council Reception or via email to reception@palmcouncil.qld.gov.au. Assistance with form completion is available from the Reception Officer. Funding is only available for future activities. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

6. SPORTS ASSISTANCE

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be based in Palm Island or clearly benefit Palm Island residents. They must be participating in a recognised sporting event at local, state, national, or international level, and demonstrate alignment with Council's public interest objectives.

Funding Limits

- Individual Cap: \$500 per financial year. Must be used for travel and accommodation only. Council pays suppliers directly.
- Community Organisation/Team Cap: \$40,000 per financial year.

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a completed application form, supporting quotes or tax invoices, and evidence of eligibility.

Processing

Applications are assessed fortnightly. Funds are paid directly to verified vendors. Retrospective applications are not accepted.

7. FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be based in Palm Island or clearly benefit Palm Island residents. They must

be seeking support for funeral-related costs such as transport, burial, or memorial services, and demonstrate alignment with Council's public interest objectives.

Funding Limits

- Individual Cap: \$1,500 per financial year.
- Community Organisation Cap: \$40,000 per financial year.

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a completed application form, supporting quotes or tax invoices, and evidence of eligibility.

Processing

Applications are assessed fortnightly. Funds are paid directly to verified vendors. Retrospective applications are not accepted.

8. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility requirements are defined under each funding stream. All applicants must demonstrate a clear connection to Palm Island and alignment with Council's public interest objectives. Activities must be future-focused and supported by appropriate documentation.

9. ASSESSMENT AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All applications will be assessed by appropriately delegated Council officers in accordance with adopted procedures. Officers must uphold impartiality and apply consistent assessment criteria that reflect Council's commitment to equity, transparency, and public benefit. Any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed to the Chief Executive Officer prior to assessment. Final approvals will be determined by Council resolution unless a formal delegation of authority has been adopted. All decisions must be documented and are subject to internal audit review.

10. GRANT ALLOCATION

Funding is allocated annually via the approved Council budget. The following maximums apply:

Applicant Type	Maximum Amount (GST Exclusive)	Annual Cap
Individual Participant – Sport Travel	\$500 (paid directly by Council)	\$100,000
Individual – Funeral Assistance	\$1,500	\$30,000
Sporting Team	\$10,000	\$100,000
Community Organisation (incl. auspice)	\$40,000	\$100,000

Note: Where a community organisation is applying on behalf of another as an auspice, eligibility may extend beyond the standard individual cap, provided the activity aligns with Council's public interest criteria.

The total amount of funding available is **\$130,000** for the Betterment Fund:

\$100,000: Community groups, organisations or individuals

\$30,000: Funeral assistance (quarantined for funeral-related support only)

The Sport Assistance Package is capped at **\$40,000** per financial year. Funds unspent by 30 June will not roll over.

Council will consider:

- The public benefit and community impact of the activity
- Whether other grants or support have already been received
- Operational implications for Council (e.g. in-kind donations)
- The availability of funds within the current financial year

Delegated officers may approve grants up to the threshold defined in Council's Financial Delegation Framework. Applications exceeding this threshold require formal resolution by Council. All decisions must be recorded in Council's grants register and are subject to internal audit.

11. INVOICING AND GST

Organisation Type	Invoice Required	GST Handling
GST Registered	Yes	GST must be itemised
Not Registered for GST	Yes	GST not applicable

Council will pay suppliers directly and issue remittance to applicant.

12. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy is guided by relevant Queensland legislation, including but not limited to:

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*

Supporting internal documents:

- *PIASC Financial Delegation Framework*
- *PIASC Employee Code of Conduct*
- *PIASC Community Engagement Strategy*
- *PIASC Financial Delegation Framework*
- *PIASC Grants Management*

13. Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where legislative amendment, audit recommendation, or operational necessity requires. Each review will confirm that the policy remains lawful, relevant, and aligned with Council's strategic and compliance obligations. Council will monitor compliance through routine reporting and internal assurance processes.