Sponsorship Policy

1 February 2026

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1. Policy Statement

Wyndham City Council recognises sponsorship as a valuable tool to support community wellbeing, economic development, and environmental sustainability. This policy provides a consistent and transparent framework for the management of sponsorship arrangements, both incoming and outgoing, in a manner that delivers mutual benefit, aligns with Council's strategic priorities, and ensures responsible use of public resources. All sponsorships will be assessed, approved, and managed with integrity, fairness, and accountability.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clear guidance on how sponsorship activities can occur between Council and external organisations, businesses and individuals.
- Ensure alignment with the Council Plan and associated strategic objectives, including community wellbeing, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability.
- Establish clear criteria and processes for sponsorship and ensure decisions are made fairly and without bias.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in sponsorship arrangements.

3. Definitions

Sponsorship: A commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides financial or in-kind support to an individual, organisation, event, program, or initiative in exchange for negotiated benefits such as brand exposure, marketing benefits, or public recognition).

In-kind support: Non-financial contributions made by a sponsor (eg goods and services). In the context of this policy, in-kind support excludes volunteering (eg time, skills, expertise or labour) as it involves workforce participation rather than goods or services.

Naming rights: The right to be recognised by name as a benefit of sponsorship.

Expression of Interest (EOI): A process where organisations express their intent to enter into a sponsorship arrangement.

Value for money: A measure that includes consideration of strategic benefits and risks, the capacity to advance Council's priorities, cost and contribution objectives, the best mix of funding sources, the direct and indirect costs of servicing the sponsorship, and the value of opportunities for networking or reaching new audiences.

Project: A defined set of activities or initiatives supported through sponsorship that align with Council's strategic objectives.

Agreement: A formal document outlining the roles, responsibilities, terms, and conditions agreed upon by both parties in a sponsorship arrangement.

Sponsorship register: An accessible record of sponsorships entered into by Council, promoting transparency and accountability.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Outgoing sponsorships where Council provides financial or in-kind support to external parties.
- Incoming sponsorships where Council receives financial or in-kind support from external parties.

This policy does not apply to:

- Community grants
- Community subsidies
- Capital grants, bequests, gifts
- Memorials
- Donations
- Philanthropic contributions
- Volunteering
- Any concurrent Sponsorship Arrangements preceding May 2025.

5. Principles and Guidelines

5.1 Alignment with Council Objectives

All sponsorships must align with Wyndham 2050 Vision and strategic goals, particularly align with “A liveable City – Wyndham is a great place to live, work, visit and invest in” as outlined in the Council Plan 2025-2029 (incorporating the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan), including:

1. Focus on community wellbeing and inclusion:
    - Emphasise sponsorships that enhance community health, accessibility, and equity.
    - Prioritise initiatives that celebrate diversity, cultural heritage, and inclusivity.

2. Support economic prosperity:
    - Encourage sponsorships that promote local businesses, tourism, and job creation.
    - Focus on initiatives that foster resilience.
    - Prioritise sponsorships that grow Wyndham City’s tourism events portfolio and help position the region as a must-visit destination for Council’s visitor target markets
    - Prioritise sponsorships that attract visitors from outside of Wyndham to grow the visitor economy and provide opportunities for local business yield, dispersal and dwell time

3. Environmental sustainability:
    - Favour sponsorships aligned with environmental protection and sustainability goals.
    - Prioritise initiatives that support green spaces, tree canopy increase, and climate resilience.

4. Liveability and infrastructure:
    - Support sponsorships that contribute to the “20-minute neighbourhood” concept
    - Prioritise initiatives enhancing public spaces, amenities, and sustainable transport.

5. Learning and development:
    - Encourage sponsorships supporting lifelong learning opportunities.
    - Focus on initiatives that enhance educational facilities and pathways for youth.

6. Arts and culture:
    - Promote sponsorships that support local artists and cultural events.
    - Prioritise initiatives that enhance the city's vibrancy and cultural offerings.

7. Community engagement:
    - Ensure the sponsorship process incorporates transparent communication with the community.
    - Align sponsorship decisions with community priorities identified through meaningful interaction and feedback.

8. Strategic partnerships:
    - Encourage sponsorships that foster collaboration with key stakeholders and other levels of government.
    - Prioritise initiatives that support council's advocacy efforts.

9. Financial responsibility:
    - Ensure sponsorship arrangements provide value for money and align with council's financial sustainability goals, as well as probity and risk management requirements.

10. Performance measurement:
    - Include clear metrics to measure the impact and success of sponsorship initiatives.
    - Align these metrics with council's overall performance indicators.

5.2 Alignment with Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP)

The LTFP gives effect to the Financial Management Principles in the Local Government Act 2020, which require Council's to ensure:

a) Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions are managed in accordance with Council's financial policies and strategies.
b) Management of financial risks.
c) Financial policies and strategic plans are designed to provide financial stability and predictability to the community.
d) Council maintains accounts and records that explain its financial operations and financial position.

5.3 Transparency and Accountability

- All sponsorship arrangements will be documented in formal written agreements approved by Council's legal team.
- A central sponsorship register will be maintained and made available for inspection.
- Sponsorship arrangements will be reported in Council's Quarterly and Annual Reporting, including any required financial reporting.

6. Sponsorship Considerations

6.1 What Council may sponsor

Council will consider sponsoring the following opportunities that clearly align with and advance the Council strategic priorities, specifically:

- Events that enhance community life (e.g., cultural festivals, health initiatives)
- Activities promoting economic benefits (e.g., business expos, innovation programs).
- Events that draw visitors to Wyndham (e.g. sporting events and activities), supporting Council's tourism objectives and help grow the visitor economy.
- Initiatives supporting general events that have robust sustainability practises in place.
- Programs that advance Reconciliation and celebrate First Nation Cultures.

6.2 What Sponsorships Council may accept

- Partnerships that enhance Council events or services
- Sponsorships that provide clear community benefits
- Initiatives aligned with Council's strategic objectives

6.3 Exclusions

Council will not enter into sponsorship arrangements with individuals and organisations that:

- Produce or promote tobacco products.
- Promote activities that could be considered discriminatory.
- Are prohibited by law from participating in sponsorship arrangements.
- Are involved in current legal disputes or in financial arrears with Council.
- Pose a conflict with Council's broader policies, practices, values, or objectives
- Promote activities that present a potential risk or hazard to the community
- Are currently engaged in a procurement, RFQ or tendering process with Council
- Are recipients of other Council funding
- Are not aligned to Council priorities or objectives

Council will not accept any sponsorships, donation, or contribution that may be reasonably perceived as supporting or promoting a political party, political candidate, or political interest.

Consideration and approval of further sponsorship money must comply with Council's authorising process (refer to Sections 7.2 and 7.3).

6.4 Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria may be used by Council departments to determine a scorecard evaluation specific to its sponsorship objectives.

- Alignment with Council objectives and strategic plans
- Community benefit and impact
- Economic impact (e.g., potential to draw visitors and generate economic activity)
- Financial viability and value for money
- Reputational considerations
- Positioning of corporate brand considerations
- Feasibility and resources required
- Risk assessment
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Track record of the applicant
- Ethical considerations
- Capacity to deliver
- Evaluation plan
- Environmental/sustainability impacts
- Compliance with relevant laws and regulations

7. Sponsorship Process

7.1 Expression of Interest (EOI) & Tailored Engagement

- Council will periodically announce sponsorship opportunities through public channels.
- External parties may submit a Sponsorship & Partnership Expression of Interest (EOI) form to either apply for sponsorship funding or propose sponsorship support to Council.
- Where applicable, timelines for submission and assessment will be clearly communicated for each opportunity.
- In addition to the EOI process, Council may pursue or respond to sponsorship opportunities through tailored engagement.
- All sponsorship arrangements - whether initiated through an EOI or tailored engagement - will be subject to agreed evaluation, approval, and reporting processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with Council objectives.

7.2 Application and Assessment Procedures

- Applications will be assessed by a designated funding panel against the approved assessment criteria.
- Due diligence checks will be conducted on potential sponsors.
- Recommendations will be made to the appropriate decision-making authority.

7.3 Approval and Authorisation Levels

The approval and authorisation of sponsorship agreements will be in line with Council's authorising process, whether incoming or outgoing:

Additional considerations:

- All sponsorships, regardless of value, must be assessed against determined criteria.
- Sponsorships deemed contentious or likely to pose a significant reputational risk will be escalated to a higher approval level, regardless of monetary value.
- Annual cumulative sponsorship amounts from a single sponsor will be considered when determining the appropriate approval level.
- In-kind sponsorships should be valued at their market rate and approved according to the same thresholds.
- All approvals and their respective authorisation must be documented and maintained within the central sponsorship register.

8. Sponsorship Agreement

All sponsorship arrangements must be documented in a formal written agreement approved by Council's legal team signed by both parties, including:

- Roles and responsibilities of both parties

- Detailed description of benefits, deliverables, and mutual obligations
- Payment schedule
- Reporting and acquittal requirements
- Termination clauses

9. Risk Management

9.1 Risk Assessment Procedures

- A thorough risk assessment will be conducted for all sponsorship arrangements including review against all Council funding streams to ensure financial integrity and equitable resource allocation.
- Potential conflicts of interest will be identified and managed.

9.2 Conflict of Interest

- All staff involved in sponsorship decisions must declare any conflicts of interest.
- Staff with declared conflicts of interest must not participate in any aspect of the sponsorship decision-making process.

10. Evaluation and Reporting

- For sponsorship provided by Council, recipients must submit an acquittal report on the outcomes of sponsored activities as required by the relevant Council department.
- Council will evaluate all sponsorship arrangements against agreed-upon key performance indicators (KPIs).
- An annual review of the sponsorship program will be conducted.

11. GST Implications

- Sponsorship payments made by Council will be GST inclusive.
- Council will assess GST implications for all sponsorship agreements, particularly those involving in-kind contributions.
- Council is registered for GST and will apply GST to all sponsorship arrangements where a benefit is provided in return (such as advertising, signage, or naming rights).
- Council will account for GST on in-kind sponsorships, where goods or services (rather than money) are exchanged.

12. Naming Rights

Naming rights occur when a sponsor’s name is formally attached as a prefix to a Council-supported activity, program or event. Any proposal to grant naming rights requires specific Council approval and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In considering such

requests, Council will carefully evaluate the potential financial, legal, marketing and branding implications to ensure the arrangement aligns with Council's strategic objectives and community expectations.

13. Implementation and Review

- This policy will be implemented across all Council departments.
- Training will be provided to relevant staff on policy implementation.
- The policy will be reviewed biennially or earlier if required due to legislative or organisational changes.

14. Related Legislation and Policies

- Local Government Act 2020
- Wyndham 2050 Community Vision
- Wyndham City Council Plan 2025 – 2029 (incorporating the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan)
- Procurement Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Community Grants Policy
- Community Subsidies Policy
- Wyndham City Long term financial Plan (LTFP) 2025/26 - 2034/35
- Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Report – Fraud Over Local Government Grants

Appendix

The table below provides a side-by-side comparison to highlight the purpose, assessment approach, eligibility, and governance mechanisms of Council's key funding policies.

Feature	Community Grants Policy	Community Subsidies Policy	Sponsorship Policy
Definition	Financial support provided via a competitive, merit-based process to community groups, organisations or individuals to deliver projects that align with Council priorities and demonstrate community benefit.	Financial or in-kind support provided to eligible community groups or organisations to support their ongoing activities or access to Council resources. Not competitive - based on eligibility.	A commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides financial or in-kind support to an individual, organisation, event, program, or initiative in exchange for negotiated benefits such as brand exposure, marketing benefits, or public recognition).
Purpose	Stimulate new initiatives, empower community-led projects, and build capacity within Wyndham.	Remove participation barriers, promote equity, and support access to essential community services or Council-owned resources.	Build strategic partnerships and build reputation and awareness for Council and region's priorities through mutual benefit arrangements.
Assessment Approach	Competitive, merit-based. Applications are scored against published assessment criteria.	Non-competitive. Eligibility-based with consistent criteria. Formal agreements set conditions.	External parties may submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via Council's online form to either apply for sponsorship funding or propose sponsorship support to Council. In addition to the EOI process, Council may pursue or respond to sponsorship opportunities through

			tailored engagement. All sponsorship arrangements will be subject to agreed evaluation, approval, and reporting processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with Council objectives.
Examples of Support	Project seed funding, one-off programs, pilot initiatives, events, capacity-building activities.	Venue hire discounts, rate concessions, ongoing core funding for service delivery or programs.	Event sponsorship, co-branded initiatives, promotional partnerships, naming rights. Examples include but not limited to: Large public events, cultural festivals, major community activations, local business-led programs and activities.
Eligibility	Community groups, not-for-profits, individuals (as per category). Must demonstrate capacity, planning and impact. 80% of project/event must be Wyndham residents.	Registered not-for-profits, eligible community groups or individuals. Must demonstrate need and alignment.	Individual, organisations, events, programs or initiatives that align with Council's values and strategic objectives. Benefits negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
Funding Type	Financial only (usually one-off or time-limited).	Financial or in-kind (fee waivers, discounts, access to resources). Often ongoing or annual.	Financial and/or in-kind support (eg branding, marketing, venue access), usually with reciprocal value of negotiated benefits.

Decision-Making	Scored and ranked, approved via delegated authority or Council resolution.	Assessed for eligibility and strategic alignment, approved under delegation.	Assessed by a panel against set criteria, with approval depending on scope- any sponsorship involving naming rights must be approved by Council.
Cross-Over/Overlap Potential	May overlap with Sponsorships when an event or project offers both community benefit and promotional value to Council. For example, a community festival could be eligible for a grant to support program delivery while also being considered for sponsorship if it enhances Council's visibility. Similarly, Grants may complement Subsidies where a group receives a grant to run a program and a subsidy to reduce the cost of venue hire or operational expenses. Careful assessment is needed to ensure the funding source is appropriate to the primary purpose of support and to avoid duplication.	Can complement Grants by supporting the same organisation or project through different mechanisms - for instance, a group may be granted a subsidy for ongoing facility hire while also receiving a grant to deliver a specific community initiative in that facility. While Subsidies are generally non-competitive and based on eligibility, their intersection with Grants and Sponsorships highlights the importance of clear communication, defined funding purposes, and coordinated oversight to ensure transparency and avoid unintentional double-dipping.	May overlap with Subsidies where the sponsored initiative relies on Council-owned resources, such as venues or equipment, and requires subsidised access. In such cases, the sponsorship may support promotional outcomes, while the subsidy ensures affordability and accessibility for the group or audience involved. Sponsorships can also align with Grants where Council is promoting initiatives that deliver both strong community impact and align with strategic priorities.

Governance & Review Cycle	Reviewed every 4 years or as required. Informed by audit recommendations and best practice.	Reviewed every 4 years or as required. Guided by legislative compliance and equity principles.	Reviewed every 2 years or as needed. Governance based on transparency, value, and reputational alignment. There are no provisions in the Local Government Act 2020 that call for mandatory public consultation.

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