

**DRAFT**

**POLICY**



**Central  
Tablelands  
Water**

# **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE and DONATIONS POLICY**

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a single, transparent, and legislatively compliant framework for Central Tablelands Water (CTW) to provide financial assistance to the broader community within the Council service area.

## SCOPE

This policy covers three categories of financial assistance and donations, and deems these all donations under Section 356 of the Local Government Act (1993):

1. Direct Cash Donations and Non-Cash/In-Kind Support
2. Connection Charge Reductions
3. Consumption Charge Reductions.

The policy is designed to integrate the categories into a cohesive, robust and efficient process.

### Statutory Obligations under Section 356

The core requirements under Section 356 are that any granting of financial assistance:

- must be for the explicit "purposes of exercising the council's functions" and therefore must be demonstrably linked to the Council's statutory responsibilities, such as promoting public health, social, economic and/or environmental wellbeing of the local government area, and
- must be uniformly available to all or a significant group of persons within the Council service area.

## STATEMENT

### Categories and Exclusions

This policy defines three categories of support:

1. **Category 1 - Direct Cash Donations and Non-Cash/In-Kind Support**  
Cash grants or non-cash support (e.g., equipment loans, discounted services) provided to eligible applicants.
2. **Category 2 - Connection Charge Reductions**  
Reduction in connection charge for registered, non-profit community organisations such as community halls and religious institutions.
3. **Category 3 - Consumption Charge Reductions**  
Reduction in consumption charges for registered, non-profit organisations providing medical and residential care facilities. At-home medical treatment is covered under the Dialysis Rebate Policy.

Individual financial hardship falls outside the scope of this policy.

### Definitions

- **Financial Assistance:** A broad definition encompassing cash grants, rate adjustments, waivers of fees and charges, and Non-Cash/In-Kind Support.
- **Community Organisation:** Any registered body (e.g., incorporated association, cooperative, trust) that holds non-profit status, possesses an ABN, and whose constitutional purpose is the provision of services or facilities benefiting the local community.
- **Medical Facility:** any place where medical services are provided (e.g., hospital, medical practice).

- **Non-Cash Support (In-Kind):** Assistance provided through the use of Council assets, staff time, or discounted access to services or facilities. This support must be quantified using the Council's standard market rate (Schedule of Fees and Charges) and will be treated as expenditure against the Section 356 budget.

#### **Financial Assistance Programs**

The Council's Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) outlines Council's statutory responsibilities and Council's Operational Plan supports the following programs:

#### **1. Category 1 - Direct Cash Donations and Non-Cash/In-Kind Support**

Category 1 support is intended to promote and encourage the social, educational, economic and environmental betterment of the local area through direct to recipient cash or in-kind support towards community events and activities.

Category 1 support is available to:

- Registered educational institutions
- Registered non-for-profit entities

Category 1 support is capped at \$500 per organisation, per year. A lesser amount may be donated.

Applications for Category 1 support will be considered each financial year as part of the budget setting process for the following financial year. All requests are to be included on the *Financial Assistance and Donations Form* and submitted to CTW no later than 31 March each financial year.

#### **2. Category 2 - Connection Charge Reductions**

Category 2 support applies a 50% reduction in connection charges for properties owned and operated by registered, non-profit organisations where the property is used to support local organisations providing cultural, religious, sporting, recreational or community benefit to CTW service area residents.

Category 2 support is available on non-commercial properties owned and operated by:

- Community organisations
- Registered religious institutions
- Charities and registered non-for-profit entities.

Category 2 support is capped at 50% of the annual applicable connection charge, per property, per year.

Applications for Category 2 support will be considered each financial year as part of the budget setting process for the following financial year. All requests are to be included on the *Financial Assistance and Donations Form* and submitted to CTW no later than 31 March each financial year. Partial year applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **3. Category 3 - Consumption Charge Reductions**

Category 3 support provides a reduction in water consumption charges for residential care facilities, including aged care, palliative care, and disability care services, to account for essential water use associated with additional care needs.

Category 3 support is available to:

- Charities and registered non-for-profit entities providing residential care facilities.

Category 3 support is calculated on a quarterly basis and reduces water consumption charges by the equivalent of 140 litres per day, per resident (averaged over the previous financial year's occupancy), in accordance with Section 558(4)(a)(ii) of the Local Government Act 1993.

Applications for Category 3 support will be considered on a case-by-case basis and supporting documentation must be submitted quarterly for calculation of the applicable reduction.

### **Ineligible Applicants**

Financial assistance shall not be granted, under any circumstances, to:

- Private commercial enterprises or individuals seeking profit
- Political parties or organisations whose primary purpose is political advocacy
- Organisations that have failed to acquit previous CTW support
- Retrospective applications
- Organisations that are currently delinquent on payments to CTW.

### **Application and Appeals Processes**

An application form must be completed for requesting financial assistance or donations. The application form is available on the CTW website [www.ctw.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ctw.nsw.gov.au).

All staff and Council members involved in the application review or resolution must complete a formal conflict of interest declaration prior to commencing their duties regarding that specific application.

All applications received, will be reviewed by the Executive Manager Corporate Services and assessed against the scope of this policy before presentation to the General Manager. Then they will go to Council as part of the draft Operational Plan report and placed on public display for 28 days, prior to final approval by Council each June.

If an application is received that is outside the scope of the three program categories, it will require a report to Council for consideration and placed on public display for 28 days prior to approval.

Any unsuccessful applications determined by the General Manager can be appealed to a Council meeting within 30 days of notification of the outcome. Applicants should write to the Executive Manager Corporate Services, stating the reasons for appeal, and request inclusion on the Council meeting agenda. Any unsuccessful applications or appeals determined at a Council meeting cannot be appealed, the decision of Council is final.

Financial assistance provided in a single year does not lead to a commitment to recurrent financial assistance in following years. Organisation must apply each year if ongoing financial assistance is required.

### **Assessment Criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria, ensuring assistance contributes directly to the Council's functions:

- **Strategic Alignment:** The extent to which the project aligns with and delivers outcomes specified in the Council's Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP).

- **Community Impact and Need:** Demonstrated evidence of community need and the reach or leverage capacity of Council support (e.g., strong volunteer commitment or co-funding from other sources).
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Clarity and specificity of the project outcomes and the ability of the applicant to measure and report on the achievement of those outcomes.

### **Approval and Delegation**

All applications under categories 1 and 2 will be consolidated and presented to Council for consideration and resolution at the April meeting, for inclusion in the annual budget preparation. All requests are to be included on the *Financial Assistance and Donations Form* located on CTW's website and submitted to CTW no later than 31 March each financial year.

The General Manager is delegated to approve all applications under Category 3.

### **Acquittals and Reporting**

An acquittal form is required for all Category 1 donations and must be provided within 60 days after funding is spent. The acquittal form will be sent to successful applicants upon notification of the applicant outcome.

All donations will be reported as part of CTW's Annual Report.

A Register of Connection Charge Reductions under Category 2 is required to be maintained on the CTW website.

Any non-cash/in-kind support provided (such as discounted facility hire, use of Council equipment, or staff time) will be quantified. Valuation will be conducted using the Council's current Fees and Charges, or, where no fee exists, based on a reasonable market comparison.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed each term of Council (4 years) or more frequently if needed, with reference to any relevant legislation, best practice guides, or other related factors.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Local Government Act 1993
  - Section 356 (financial assistance)
  - Section 377 (delegated authority)
  - Section 428 (annual reporting)
  - Section 558 (exemptions from water supply special rates)
  - Section 610E (waiving or reduction of fees).
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
  - Section 207 (record of donations for auditing purposes).

### **VARIATION**

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.