

Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program

Funding Guidelines



Elton John 'Once in a Lifetime' Concert

1. About the program

1.1 Background

The Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program was introduced to support the attraction of major sporting and cultural events, concerts and conferences to stimulate the local economy. Since the program's inception in 2015 it has funded 313 events and conferences, which has injected an estimated \$221 million into the local economy. Some partnerships include: the National Orchid Conference and Show, Wagyu Association Australia Conference, Indoor Netball Super Nationals, T20 Allstars Cricket Festival, The Footy Show, Pre-season AFL and NRL, Women's National Basketball League, Brisbane Roar Training camp, Etnies Rumble on the Reef, Legends on the Lawn, Women's Big Bash League, Gold Coast Suns AFLW Partnership and Elton John and His Band – Once in a Lifetime Concert and more!

1.2 Aims & objectives

Events and conferences represent a cost-effective way of promoting our region and its attractions. Major events and conferences help boost the economy and provide wellbeing, lifestyle and cultural benefits to residents and beyond. Moreover, as an event or conference grows, it boosts tourism numbers and

creates fantastic industry growth opportunities for local operators such as event or conference facilities, hotels, restaurants and retailers. Mackay Regional Council works to support major events and conferences that achieve the following outcomes:

- raise awareness of the Mackay region, contribute to destination profile and appeal
- attract overnight visitation and expenditure from outside the region and increase length-of stay
- contribute to, enhance and grow the regional economy by generating new investment and developing business and industry
- fostering community pride.

While each of these objectives is important, it is recognised that each event and conference has unique characteristics and, therefore, the relative importance of these objectives will vary from event to event.

The means for quantifying and measuring outcomes related to these aims and objectives of the program is crucial.

Successful applications for funding will also need to demonstrate plans for future growth and sustainability of the event. Please note that not all applications will receive funding as the process is competitive.

1.3 Strategic alignment

The Invest Mackay Events & Conference Attraction Program correlates with the following corporate documents and guiding principles:

Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027:

Live and visit

- Places and spaces – Creating great, memorable and safe places and spaces

Invest and Work

- Region of choice delivered with genuine partnerships - Creating a region that people and businesses want to be a part of

Mackay Region Events Strategy 2020 – 2025

The Strategy identifies a vision for Mackay to be recognised as a leading regional events destination. The region's strategic approach to events will focus on creating and nourishing a successful regional events economy; so that the optimised events benefits are able to be realised. A four-pillar framework has been developed to deliver this vision:

- Set the structure in place
- Create the environment for success and sustainability
- Develop, acquire and partner
- Evaluate and evolve

2. Funding Available for Events and Conferences

2.1 Event Funding Tiers

Mackay Regional Council’s Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program funding comprises of five categories of event funding, including:

- Significant regional events
- Major events
- Hallmark events
- Event Sponsorship
- Event Analytics Support

Events that are primarily considered community-based events and thereby only attract local visitors and participants and generate local and regional media coverage are not considered eligible to apply for this funding. Applicants should consider other council funding options such as [Community Grants](#) or [Regional Arts Development Funding \(RADF\)](#).

Organisations or events that have received financial support from the Regional Arts Development Fund or Community Grants Program are ineligible to apply for funding under the Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program. This policy is in place to avoid dual funding and maintain the integrity of the funding programs.

Funding approval and the level of funding under this program is determined through the assessment process. The funding tiers are primarily based on visitation numbers and the return on investment. It is important to note that funding tiers are not incremental year on year, but rather merit-based and entirely at the discretion of Mackay Regional Council.

Council’s support for the event will be as a financial co-contributor and requests for 100% of an event’s budget will not be provided.

The following table is a summary of the key features of each funding category. The category of funding is not self-assessable and will be determined in the assessment process =. Further eligibility detail is provided in section 3 below.

	Apply for ‘Significant regional events’ funding if:	Apply for ‘Major events’ funding if:	Apply for ‘Hallmark events’ funding if:
Funding eligibility	Up to \$25,000 per year	From \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year	From \$50,000 + per year
Your event achieves these outcomes:	Events or conferences that are distinctly Mackay-region focused that celebrate our locations and attract 30% of visitors and participants from outside the region. They generate regional and national media coverage.	Events or conferences which generate significant economic benefits with at least 40% of visitors and participants from outside the region and generate at least national, and ideally international, media coverage. Usually one-off or occasional events.	Events or conferences which are distinctly Mackay-region focused and celebrate our locations. Generally, a recurring event with 50% of visitors and participants from outside the region and that generate at least national, and ideally international, media coverage.

Maximum number of successful applications	Funding eligibility for this program is limited to a <u>maximum of five years</u> . After this period, continued funding is subject to the discretion of Mackay Regional Council. Beyond this period Event Sponsorship* may be considered.
You can demonstrate that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your event will benefit the whole community and destination appeal Must be able to demonstrate the potential capacity of the event to grow If you have received funding previously from this program, you have provided a satisfactory outcome report.
You are committed to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Council and other relevant organisations to ensure all event compliance requirements are met and ensure event risks are minimised Raising the awareness of the Mackay region and contributing to a positive destination appeal Ensure all opportunities are identified and leveraged Achieving independent long-term financial sustainability by developing diverse revenue streams and implementing effective financial management practices. This will reduce reliance on government funding and ensure the events continued success beyond the maximum funding period.

***Event Sponsorship**

Event Sponsorship category funding is for events and conferences which are distinctly Mackay region focussed which have surpassed the 5-year maximum funding period. This funding is for marketing and brand alignment support and eligibility and sponsorship level will be considered on application and approved at the sole discretion of Mackay Regional Council.

Event Analytics Support

Event Analytic Support category is to provide services by an approved contractor to capture, quantify and evaluate the economic, social and environmental impacts of the event or conference. The provision of this service will be assessed on application and is at the sole discretion of Mackay Region Council.

2.2 Conference Bids

Conference bid request and enquiries are received to Council through a variety of channels with the process involving a commercial bidding process to secure hosting rights.

Conferences will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the MECC Sales and Business Development Coordinator and the Senior Economic Development Officer to assess attendee numbers, venue capability, accommodation capacity and scheduling.

Conference bids will be reported to Council in the Invest Mackay Event and Conference Attraction Program monthly report.

2.3 Strategic Partnerships

A partnership is a multi-year agreement to host more than one event and includes additional partnership benefits. Strategic partnerships will be reviewed on a case by case basis and will be referred to a Council briefing for review by the full Council. Strategic Partnerships will be approved at the sole discretion of Mackay Regional Council.

Partnership outcomes will be reported to council in accordance with timeframes detailed in the partnership agreement.

3. Applying for funding

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

	<p style="text-align: center;">‘Significant regional events’ ‘Major events’ ‘Hallmark events’ ‘Event Sponsorship’ ‘Event Analytics Support’</p>
Location	This event takes place wholly within Mackay Regional Council boundaries
Event Profile baseline	<p>The applicant must be able to demonstrate the size of the event in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience • Spectator numbers • Participant numbers • Media profile
Event Growth Potential	The applicant must be able to demonstrate the capacity of the event to grow against the baseline outcomes and achieve independent long-term financial sustainability by developing diverse revenue streams and implementing effective financial management practices. This will reduce reliance on government funding and ensure the events continued success beyond the maximum funding period.
Support	Preference will be given to applicants that include evidence of confirmed support (both cash and in-kind) from the community, Mackay Isaac Tourism and or a governing body/partners (if applicable)
Type of Event	<p>The following types of events are not eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events that are primarily considered community-based events and thereby only attract local visitors and participants • Anniversaries/centenaries • Reunions • Community Show • Memorial Days • New Year’s Eve celebrations • Christmas Celebrations • Events that show little differentiation to similar events held within the region. <p>Please note - Applicants/events are to be free of debt to Mackay Regional Council and have no outstanding acquittals from previous Mackay Regional Council grant applications.</p>
Timing of expression of interest	<p>Funding will not be granted retrospectively or outside a funding round.</p> <p>Expressions of interest are to be submitted with a minimum window of six months lead time to utilise the funding to help develop and grow the event in line with the objectives of the program.</p> <p>Applicants are not permitted to apply for funding more than once in the same year.</p>
Promotion	The event must be listed on Mackay Regional Council’s Event Calendar and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) and evidence of the listing must be submitted with the application.

3.2 Conditions of funding

Once the eligibility of an event is confirmed, the following conditions of funding apply:

	Significant regional events’ ‘Major events’ ‘Hallmark events’ ‘Event Sponsorship’
Use of the funds to achieve growth	The applicant must demonstrate how the funds would assist the event to develop and grow in line with the aims and objectives of the of the program.
Application of funds	The application must outline proposed activities that will elevate the event and present specific and measurable outcomes to meet the program’s objectives.
Eligible uses of funds	<p>Funds can be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans with a professional contractor to address the long-term development of the event including business plans and succession plans (applicant must provide a copy of the contractors CV and or professional experience) • Marketing costs associated with the event that increase awareness and visitation of both the event and region (including digital, print TV, radio advertising, photography and videography for future even promotion) • Hire of temporary infrastructure • Appearance fee and travel costs • Entertainment <p>Funds must be used for the purpose which they are granted and any variations in the use of funds must be approved in writing by council.</p>
Ineligible uses of funds	<p>Funds may not be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance and legal costs • Capital or equipment purchase costs • Full-time employment costs • Administration expenses / sundries
Recognition of funding	Successful applicants will be notified of expectations upon contracting with Council.
Acquittal obligations	Funding recipients will be required to complete a post-event outcome report within 30 days of the event using Council’s provided outcome report template. An event impact/analytics study through the form of surveying may be conducted on sponsored events. This study will be undertaken at the discretion of Mackay Regional Council.

Please note:

The eligibility of an event and any approved funding uses are at the sole discretion of Council. No applicant is guaranteed funding nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full amount requested.

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

Expressions of interest are assessed against how well they meet the following general evaluation criteria:

	‘Significant regional events’ funding ‘Major events’ funding ‘Hallmark events’ funding ‘Event Sponsorship’
Eligibility (Essential)	The event satisfies the eligibility criteria contained in section 3.1 of the guidelines.
Economic impact (20%)	<p>The propensity of the event or conference to generate direct and incremental expenditure to the region by visitors and the event organiser in relation to the total spending generated (An Economic Impact Assessment will be generated by Council).</p> <p>Please note organisers who use local suppliers will be favourably viewed.</p>
Tourism impact (20%)	<p>Event timing – whether the event or conference intends to complement other events/ conferences or attract visitors in off-peak tourism periods.</p> <p>Visitor potential – the extent to which the event will attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors and increase their length of stay.</p> <p>Balanced events portfolio – whether the event contributes to a balanced events portfolio.</p> <p>Event growth potential - The extent to which the funding will assist with the enhancement and development of the event or conference. The potential of the event or conference to develop into a significant and strategically important event for Mackay region.</p>
Financial viability (20%)	The financial viability of the event, including the strength of the budget and the management and financial skills of the event organisers. The level of confirmed cash and in-kind support from community and corporate organisations, other sponsors, etc. Other sources of income will be favourably viewed.
Media and marketing (20%)	The potential of the event to raise the profile and appeal of Mackay region through media coverage. The strength and extent of the marketing strategy and its willingness to recognise Mackay Regional Council as an event sponsor/partner if funding is approved.
Social and community benefit (10%)	<p>The extent of social enrichment and potential benefits to the local community brought about by the event or conference.</p> <p>Demonstration of effective planning, including strategies for managing barriers to create an accessible and inclusive event will be viewed favourably.</p>
Environmental sustainability (10%)	The extent of the event's environmental impacts and the measures and practices proposed to minimise environmental impacts brought about by the event or conference.
Event permits and licenses (Essential)	The ability to obtain all relevant event licenses and approvals
Risk profile (Essential)	<p>The extent to which risks have been reasonably minimised and/ or mitigated.</p> <p>Ability to obtain public liability to a minimum of \$20,000,000.</p>

Please note that compliance with this criterion does not guarantee funding approval and approval under the program is at the sole discretion of Council.

4. Application Process

4.1 Lodging the expression of interest

Mackay Regional Council will consider supporting events and conference that meet the criteria for one of the five event categories - Significant regional events, Major events, Hallmark events, Event Sponsorship Partnership and Event Analytics. An expression of interest form is to be submitted by applicants who wish to be considered for funding. To obtain a copy of the expression of interest form please contact Council's Economic Development and Tourism Program on – ashley.ferguson@mackay.qld.gov.au or call 1300 MACKAY (622 529).

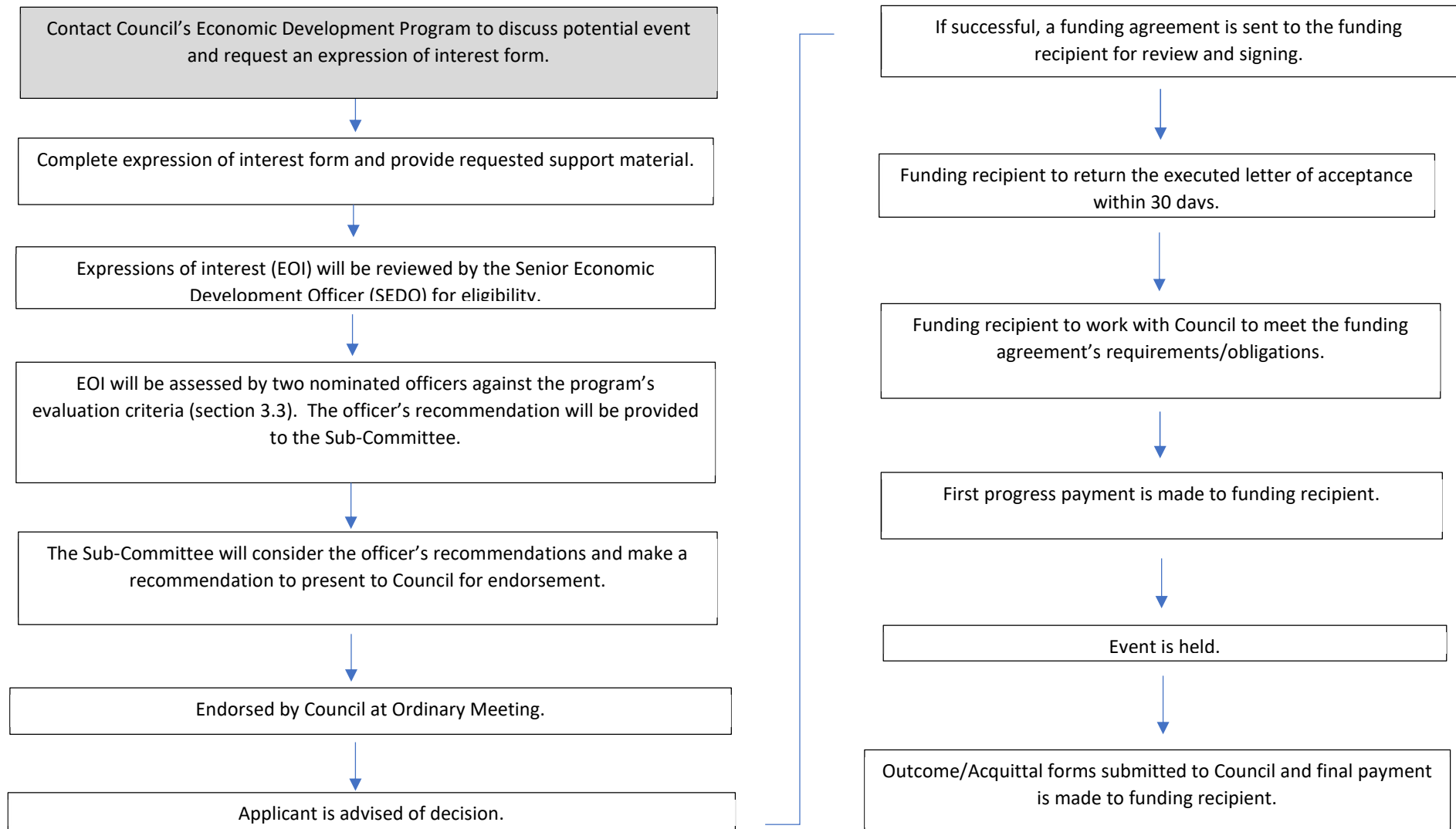
All expressions of interest must address the eight evaluation criteria points (refer to section 3.3) and must include the following additional supporting material:

- [Risk Management Plan](#) for the event and a copy of your Public Liability
- [Detailed event budget](#) (including all incomes and expenditure)
- [Marketing and PR Plans](#)
- The event must be listed [on Mackay Regional Council's What's on calendar and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse](#) (ATDW) calendar and evidence of both listing must be submitted with the application.
- Photos and videos of past events (with permission for Mackay Regional Council to use these images for promotion of the event, should funding be successful)
- Letters of support (not essential, but desirable)
- Any other relevant information or material

It is preferable that expressions of interest are submitted with a minimum window of six months lead time to utilise the funding to help develop and grow the event in line with the objectives of the program.

Please note – The assessment duration for applications can take up to 8 weeks to process.

Figure 1: Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program Process



4.2 Assessment process

Expressions of Interest (EOI) will be received and initially reviewed by Council's Senior Economic Development Officer to ensure all relevant paperwork has been submitted.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) will be assessed by two nominated officers in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the program guidelines (section 3.3). The nominated officers may include representatives from Economic Development and Tourism, MECC and Events and Corporate Communications and Marketing.

Officer's recommendations will be presented to a Sub-Committee of the Economic Development and Growth Strategic Advisory Committee (EDGSAC).

The Sub-Committee will provide recommendations for Council endorsement.

Applicants will be notified as to the success or otherwise of their EOI. Funding recipients will be required to execute the letter of offer as part of their funding agreement within 30 days of the date of the letter of offer or the agreement will be deemed void.

Disclaimer: The eligibility of an event and any approved funding uses are at the sole discretion of Council. No applicant is guaranteed funding, nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full amount requested.

4.3. Sub-Committee Membership

- Co-Chairs of the Economic Development and Growth Strategic Advisory Committee (two elected members of Mackay Regional Council)
- Mackay Regional Council Director Planning Growth and Sustainability
- Mackay Regional Council Executive Manager Economic Development and Tourism
- Mackay Regional Council Senior Economic Development Officer – Tourism and Events

4.4. Quorum

The quorum for the Sub-Committee will be two Sub-Committee members, including one elected member.

4.5. Frequency

The Sub-Committee shall meet monthly.

Additional meetings can be organised as required.

5. Post-event Acquittal

5.1 Performance Measure

Funding recipients will be required to complete a post-event outcome report using Council's provided outcome report template. An event impact/analytics study through the form of surveying may be conducted on sponsored events. This study will be undertaken at the discretion of Mackay Regional Council.

The outcomes will be measured through an event evaluation and will be recorded in a matrix to benchmark future events and funding.

Important Notice

Mackay Regional Council reserves the right to amend or alter these guidelines from time to time in its absolute discretion.

Mackay Regional Council is under no obligation to accept applications which are deemed incomplete or ineligible and/or received after the application deadline. No applicant is guaranteed funding nor can any applicant be guaranteed to receive the full amount requested.