



**Council Policy**

# **Partnerships Framework**

Version 1 - 26 April 2022

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## Policy - external Partnerships Framework

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### Introduction

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guiding principles for partnerships entered into by Lake Macquarie City Council (Council).

#### Scope

This policy applies to all partnerships entered into by Council, Council staff, and persons acting on behalf of Council. This policy does not limit the use of discretion where appropriate, provided the use of discretion can be justified.

The application of this policy is to be consistent with Council policies on business ethics and applicable codes of conduct.

Public-Private Partnerships are not within the scope of this policy.

#### Authorities and evaluation

This policy is a policy of Council and is therefore subject to review and approval by the Council. Council's Service Delivery Cluster is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the application of this policy.

#### Objectives

The objectives of this policy include:

- improving consistency across partnerships
- ensuring accountability is built into partnerships
- encouraging Council staff to provide further consideration to partnerships to support the delivery of Council projects, programs and initiatives
- taking advantage of opportunities that arise bringing considerable benefit to the city.

## Partnerships Policy Statement

Council recognises the importance of partnerships and collaboration and the inherent benefits they can bring to Council, in particular their ability to support the delivery of projects, programs and initiatives.

Council openly welcomes new and existing opportunities to collaborate with other organisations on the basis that these opportunities support the current objectives of Council, such as those outlined in the Council’s Community Strategic Plan and policies governing business ethics.

Council understands that relationships set the foundation to healthy partnerships and collaboration. The fostering of respectful and meaningful connections will be a significant focus for the Council under this policy.

Council has a responsibility to fulfil its statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993* and to manage its resources effectively and efficiently; this includes its management of partnerships. To do this, Council will ensure partnerships promote accountability using the most appropriate formal or informal mechanism. The table below outlines the tools available to Council.

Mechanism	Explanation
Formal Partnership Agreement	A formal partnership agreement is a clearly defined partnership with a definitive end date. Formal partnership agreements are signed agreements such as a contract or a memorandum of understanding. Such a document can cover multiple projects or activities, if it is appropriate to do so.
Strategic Alliance	A strategic alliance is an ongoing partnership with no or limited, defined parameters and no fixed conclusion date. Strategic alliances are formed when it becomes evident to partners that they could benefit from sharing information or supporting each other to deliver shared objectives. A strategic alliance is typically recognised through a letter of intent co-signed by each partner. The mechanism for this type of partnership is a Memorandum of Understanding.
Funding Arrangements	Funding arrangements are grant-funded or financially sponsored projects or activities, and include a formal agreement. Equally shared resources and decision-making do not characterise these arrangements. The budget is provided by one party, although on occasions it may be provided on the condition that the other party contribute funding.
Networks	Networks are established informal relationships, and can involve a range of contacts between members of organisations. They provide a means to gather and disseminate information not commonly shared through more formal means.
Event Sponsorships	To act quickly and to secure external events, Council can either enter into a sponsorship agreement or enter into a partnership, whichever provides the better arrangement and return on investment for Council.

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### Guiding principles

Council will consider the following guiding principles before, during, and after a partnership or collaboration. These principles are guiding principles only; they do not bind the Council in any way.

#### Creating the environment

- a) Council will only work with partners that share the Council's values.
- b) Each partner must have an understanding of each other's priorities and overall direction.
- c) Partners must understand Council's operating environment as a branch of government.
- d) Partners should determine mutual benefits early and be able to identify the benefits for Council, the community and the partner.
- e) Council will focus on building an ongoing relationship, not just a partnership.
- f) Recognise that collaboration works most effectively when the partners have shared values, and
- g) Partners should proactively manage expectations to ensure anticipated outcomes are identified early.
- h) Council may provide partnership support in-kind or financial subsidy or a combination of both.

#### Shaping partnerships and building relationships

- a) A partnership can be cancelled at any time, by any partner.
- b) Council and its partners need to agree and document the purpose of the arrangement to galvanise a shared understanding of what is expected.
- c) Partners should develop an understanding of each other's roles, applicable policies, priorities and limitations.
- d) Partners should allow for sufficient time to develop mutual trust and respect.
- e) Partners should ensure the right people are at the table, with commitment and involvement from senior and operational representatives of each partner organisation, as appropriate.
- f) Council will endeavour to achieve, and seek from its partners, consistency of personnel representing it over the length of the partnership, so far as possible.
- g) When appropriate to do so, the Council will only develop a formalised agreement once both parties agree upon principles, goals, outcomes, expectations, roles and responsibilities.
- h) Partners should build flexibility into its approach to roles and responsibilities and collaboration activities to accommodate changing circumstances and opportunities as they arise.
- i) Council will appoint a member of the partnership (Council or partner) to drive and coordinate governance, operational and communication activities.

#### Decision-making and management practices

- a) Council will ensure there are adequate controls in place to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993* (and other applicable legislation).
- b) Council will explore processes for selecting organisations and proposals to be supported.
- c) Partners need to communicate frankly and fearlessly throughout the partnership timeframe.
- d) Council and its partners should document decision-making authorities and provide provenance of that authority (ie: evidence that they have appropriate authority/delegation)
- e) Partners should document the history, context and development of the partnership. Where there is a change in personnel, partners should ensure that adequate information about the history and culture of the collaboration is passed on through a formal handover process.
- f) For event partnerships, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or an officer authorised by the CEO, has the authority to partner with an external organisation to deliver an event in the city, up to the value of \$50,000 per year, per organisation.
- g) Council will report on all partnerships in which Council participated during the year in its Annual Report, in accordance with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

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### Evaluation and sustainability

- a) Council will ensure it evaluates its partnerships and collaborations at regular intervals and will encourage its partners to do the same.
- b) Partners should address sustainability issues early, including the development of a funding plan, where appropriate.
- c) Each partner should commit to being flexible and agile (within reason) to ensure 'no outcome' is not the compromise to a 'good outcome'.
- d) The partnership should have a clear exit strategy once the partnership's outcome has been achieved or if the partnership, or partner's involvement in it, is time-limited.

### Complaints handling

- a) Council will manage all complaints in accordance with its Feedback Management Policy and Code of Conduct
- b) Council's partners should develop appropriate complaints handling processes that model the NSW Ombudsman's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines.

## Controlled Document Information

### Authorisation Details

<b>Folder No:</b>	F2020/01121	<b>TRIM Record No:</b>	D09779636
<b>Audience:</b>	External - Partnerships with Council		
<b>Department:</b>	Community Partnerships	<b>Officer:</b>	Manager Community Partnerships - Andrew Bryant
<b>Key focus area(s):</b>	Connected Communities		
<b>Review Timeframe:</b> Max < 4 years	4 years	<b>Next Scheduled Review Date:</b>	26 April 2026
<b>Authorisation:</b>	Adopted by Council - 26 April 2022		
<b>Authorisation - Council Adoption Date:</b>	26 April 2022		

### Related Document Information, Standards & References

<b>Related Legislation:</b>	(Legislation Name) NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998	(Relationship/Context)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	(Policy name) Sponsorship from Council Policy  Funding from Council Policy  Business Ethics Policy  Procurement Policy  Feedback Management Policy  Privacy Management Plan Policy  Code of Conduct -Staff and Code of Conduct - Council Officials	(Relationship/Context) Framework for providing sponsorship to external entities for major community, cultural and sporting events  Framework for providing funding to external entities  Contains standards of ethical behaviour expected of council and its partners  Provides guidance around procurement decisions which give the best value and outcomes to the city  Guidance to ensure feedback is handled effectively and in accordance with Council's Customer Charter  Provides guidance around privacy and protection of customers, business partners, and employees  Expected standards of behaviour
<b>Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements:</b>	(Document Name)	(Relationship/Context)
<b>Standards, COP's &amp; Other References</b>	(Standard, COP or Other References)	(Relationship/Context)

### Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Partnership	Joint initiative for coordinating a strategic approach to achieve a common vision, goal, or outcome
Alliance	An ongoing partnership where each partner benefits from sharing information or supporting each other to deliver shared objectives

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### Consultation (update for each version created)

<b>Key Departments, Teams, Positions, Meetings:</b>	Arts, Culture & Tourism; Communications & Corporate Strategy; Internal Ombudsman
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### Version History

Version No	Date Changed	Modified By	Details and Comments
1	26/04/2022	Andrew Bryant	New Policy