

Cessnock City Council Visitor Economy Grants and Sponsorships Program

Guidelines 2025-2026

This program supports initiatives that make the Cessnock region a thriving, inclusive, and welcoming place to visit, live, and invest.

Summary Visitor Economy Grants and Sponsorships

Cessnock City Council's Visitor Economy Grants and Sponsorships Program supports projects and events that grow tourism, attract visitors, and promote the region as a vibrant destination.

Total Funding Pool: \$54,000 | Maximum per Applicant: \$20,000

Funding Streams:

- **Significant Events:** Large-scale events attracting visitors.
- **Tourism Development Projects:** Initiatives enhancing visitor experiences and marketing.
- **Sponsorships:** Support for tourism-related activities that promote the region.

Applicants must be based in or deliver projects within the Cessnock LGA, hold an ABN, and have \$20M public liability insurance.

Applications are assessed on Economic Impact (40%), Strategic Alignment (20%), Capacity to Deliver (20%), and Value for Money (20%).

Applications Open: Tuesday 21st October 2025

Applications Close: 5pm Wednesday 19th November 2025

For more information contact

Cessnock City Council Economic Development

economic.development@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

02 4993 4100

1. About the Program

Cessnock City Council supports local businesses and event organisers to strengthen our visitor economy. The Visitor Economy Grants and Sponsorships Program provides funding for projects and events that attract visitors, increase overnight stays, and enhance the Cessnock region's reputation as a welcoming destination.

Total Funding Pool: \$54,000 | Maximum per applicant: \$20,000

Funding Streams:

- Stream A – **Significant Events:** Major events that attract visitors from outside the region.
- Stream B – **Tourism Development Projects:** Projects that improve visitor experiences or regional marketing.
- **Sponsorships:** Support for tourism-related initiatives that promote the Cessnock area.

2. Program Objectives

Program Purpose:

This program supports projects and events that attract visitors, boost tourism spend, and enhance Cessnock's profile as a vibrant destination. Funding helps local businesses and organisers strengthen the region's visitor economy through impactful, well-planned initiatives.

- Grow the visitor economy and support local businesses.
- Encourage a diverse, vibrant tourism sector.
- Deliver positive economic and community outcomes.
- Build Cessnock's profile as a regional destination of choice.

3. Who Can Apply

Applicants must:

- Be based in or deliver the project within the Cessnock LGA.
- Hold an active ABN and be financially viable.
- Provide current public liability insurance (\$20M minimum).
- Demonstrate capacity to plan and deliver the project within 12 months.
- Have acquitted any previous Council funding.

4. What Can Be Funded

Eligible projects and events include:

- Large-scale events that attract visitors and increase tourism spend.
- Tourism projects that enhance experiences, amenities, or marketing.
- Sponsorship activities that promote the region and provide positive exposure for Council.

Funding will not support:

- Routine operational or staff costs.
- Completed or retrospective activities.
- Projects for political, religious, or fundraising purposes.
- Activities outside the Cessnock LGA.
- Applications that do not meet eligibility or ethical standards.

5. Co-Contribution

Applicants must contribute to their project through cash or in-kind support.

Minimum Co-Contribution Requirements:

Project Type	Minimum Co-Contribution	Form of Contribution
Major events -over \$10,000 request	30–50%	Cash and/or in-kind
Smaller events -up-to \$10,000 request	20%	Cash and/or in-kind
Tourism projects	20%	Cash and/or in-kind

6. Assessment Criteria & Process

Council assesses applications against merit criteria and follows a transparent process.

Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Weight	Description
Economic Impact	40%	Demonstrated potential to attract visitors, increase overnight stays and boost local tourism spend. Applications should outline measurable outcomes and direct visitor economy benefits.
Strategic Alignment	20%	The project's alignment with Council's Destination Management Plan, Operational Plan, and Economic Development Strategy.
Capacity to Deliver	20%	The applicant's ability to successfully deliver the project, including relevant experience, planning and resourcing. All required documentation must be submitted to support the application.
Value for Money	20%	Evidence of financial viability, co-contribution, and potential for self-sustainability. Applications should demonstrate efficient use of funds, partnerships, and opportunities for Council recognition through promotional activities.

Assessment Panel includes:

Economic Development & Tourism Manager, Economic Development Officer, Finance Support Officer, and a nominated industry representative.

Assessment steps and timeline:

Council follows a transparent and consistent assessment process:

1. Eligibility check
2. Detailed assessment
3. Clarification requests
4. Assessment panel review
5. Final review and decision
6. Written notification within 30 business days of closing date

7. Application Process

1. Check eligibility and ensure your project aligns with program objectives.
2. Complete and submit the online application form by the closing date, including project plan, budget, and insurance.
3. Applications are assessed after the closing date and outcomes advised in writing.

8. Sponsorship Proposals

Email sponsorship proposals to

economic.development@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Include activity details, benefits to Council, and expected visitor outcomes.

9. Funding Agreements and Payments

Successful applicants must sign and return a funding agreement before funds are released. Payments will be made upon receipt of the completed funding agreement form and a valid invoice.

Council will issue a purchase order number, which must be quoted on all invoices and correspondence. Invoices submitted without this number cannot be processed. All invoices must be received before the end of the financial year in which the grant or sponsorship was awarded. Council will not pay more than the approved funding amount stated in the agreement.

10. Reporting, Acquittals and Variations

Final Acquittal: Must be submitted within 60 days of project completion and include financial statements, recognition evidence, KPI outcomes, and impact data.

Variations: Projects changing by more than 10% of scope or budget must seek written approval.

Non-Compliance: Council may withhold payments, recover funds, or decline future applications.

11. Recognition and Media

All funded activities must acknowledge Council's support with the statement: *'This project is proudly funded by Cessnock City Council.'*

Council's logo must be used in accordance with its communications guidelines, with approval from the Communications and Media Team.

12. Privacy and Conflicts of Interest

Council collects personal information to assess and administer this program. All personal information is managed in accordance with the *Cessnock City Council Privacy Policy* and relevant privacy legislation.

Applicants must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest when submitting their application and must notify Council immediately if a conflict arises during the delivery of the approved project or event.

13. Further Information

Contact: Economic Development and Tourism, Cessnock City Council

Email: economic.development@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 4993 4100

Website: www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au