DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government



2026-27 Indigenous Councils Funding Program Guidelines

23 June 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country. We recognise the ongoing spiritual and cultural connection Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have with land, water, sea and sky. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past and present, support future leaders and acknowledge First Nations People's right to self-determination.

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1. Introduction

The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) is responsible for administering the Indigenous Councils Funding Program (ICFP).

The 2026-27 ICFP will assist Queensland's 16 Indigenous councils in meeting the costs of delivering local government services to their communities.

The ICFP is a non-competitive, allocation-based program allocated to eligible Indigenous councils.

From 2026–27, ICFP will be delivered as:

- **Base allocation:** paid to all eligible councils in accordance with the approved needs-based allocation methodology and program guidelines.
- **Top-up allocation:** payable only where a council meets the minimum performance standards in Section 6 at the relevant assessment point(s) (including staged payment, withholding of the top-up, and a remedial pathway).

2. Program objectives

The ICFP aims to help Indigenous councils meet the costs of delivering local government services to their communities, including but not limited to:

- **General public services**
  - Council office operations and systems, governance, leadership, advocacy, information, community engagement.
- **Public order and safety services**
  - Public space control, including public nuisance, noise and litter management, street lighting, safety officers (e.g. lifeguards), control of declared pests/plants, animal management, fire services and hazard control, natural disaster relief, and mitigation.
- **Public health services**
  - Refuse services, waste management, vermin and vector control, food licensing/inspections, community health services.
- **Essential services**
  - Water treatment and supply, waste-water systems, gas, drainage, flood mitigation
- **Public amenity services**
  - Land development, town planning, building control/certification, public conveniences, picnic areas, environmental protection, natural resource management, environmental acquisitions, beach control, environmental licensing, recycling, erosion control, cemeteries.
- **Transport and communication services**
  - Roads, footpaths, traffic control, parking, public transport, ferries, barge landings, jetties, airports.
- **Recreation and cultural services**
  - Parks, playgrounds, sports fields and venues, swimming pools, libraries, public internet, halls, galleries, museums, heritage sites, festivals.

- **Other economic services**
  - economic development, tourism promotion, industrial estates, residential land, tourist facilities/venues, caravan or camping areas, other business activities.
- **Public education services**
  - Public awareness campaigns

3. Funding details

Funding allocations are based on a methodology that considers the main factors that impact the cost-of-service delivery in Indigenous councils. Population, remoteness and dispersion, and the potential of each council to raise revenue to offset costs are considered in the allocation model.

The funding period is for the 2026-27 financial year.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Eligible grant recipients

- Aurukun Shire Council
- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
- Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mornington Shire Council
- Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Torres Strait Island Regional Council
- Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

4.2 Eligible Costs

Funding provided under the 2026-27 ICFP **MUST** be used towards the cost of delivering local government services as set out in Section 2 of these guidelines.

5. Key performance indicators

A council must meet **all** minimum performance standards below to be eligible for the ICFP top-up allocation for the relevant payment period. Where a council has an approved extension under legislation (for example, an extension for financial statements), the council will be assessed against the extended due date.

1. **Adoption of budget**
    - The council has adopted its annual budget in accordance with legislative requirements by 1 August of each year OR by a determined date set by the Minister.
2. **DLGWV quarterly grant reporting**
    - The council has submitted all required quarterly grant reports (for Local Government Funding programs) to the department within the required timeframes and in the required format within the department's grant management system (eGrant).
3. **General Purpose Financial Statements completion within legislative timeframes**
    - The council has its completed General Purpose Financial Statements (GPFS) audited within legislative timeframes by 31 October each year OR approved extended timeframes set by the Minister and provided evidence to the department of completion.

6. Assessment, evidence, and decision-making

- **Assessment points:** The department will assess councils' funding eligibility against the minimum performance standards at the time(s).
- **Notification:** Where the department identifies a potential non-compliance, the department will notify the council in writing, outline the standard(s) not met, and provide an opportunity to respond and/or provide additional evidence within a specified timeframe.
- **Decision-making:** Decisions to pay, stage, or withhold a top-up amount will be made by the Deputy Director-General of the Local Government Division.

7. Payment rules (including withholding and staging)

- **Base allocation:** The base allocation will be paid as soon as the project funding schedule has been executed by the council and the department.
- **Top-up allocation:** The top-up allocation will be paid only where the department is satisfied the council meets the minimum performance standards at the relevant assessment point(s).
- **Non-compliance response options:** Where a council does not meet one or more minimum performance standards, the department may (subject to the grant agreement and delegations):
    - withhold the top-up amount until the council meets all minimum performance standards; and/or

- stage payment of the top-up amount (paying part and withholding part) where this is permitted under the program guidelines/grant agreement and is considered appropriate to support timely compliance; and/or
- place the council on a remedial pathway (Section 8) and link top-up release to agreed milestones (Section 9.2).

- **Catch-up payments:** Where a top-up amount is withheld solely due to non-compliance with minimum performance standards, the department may release the withheld top-up amount (in full or in part) once the council demonstrates compliance, subject to any cut-off dates or limits specified in the program guidelines and grant agreement.

8. Remedial pathway

Where a council does not meet the minimum performance standards, the department may require a remedial pathway to support compliance.

A remedial pathway may apply where required evidence is late, missing or repeatedly deficient. In these cases, the department and the council will agree in writing to a remedial plan setting out required actions, responsibilities, due dates, and evidence requirements.

The department may provide targeted support, including guidance, check-ins, or referrals to support programs. The remedial plan will be time-limited and include milestones aligned with statutory and program deadlines.

Release of any withheld top-up amount may be linked to achievement of the agreed milestones and provision of the required evidence. If non-compliance continues, the department may escalate its response under the grant agreement.

A council will exit the remedial pathway once it has met all minimum performance standards and the department has verified the required evidence.

9. General funding conditions

9.1 Head Funding Agreement and payment schedule

A Head Funding Agreement has been executed between the recipient councils and the State, that sets out the general arrangements of state grant funding.

9.2 Payment schedule

Payment Year	Schedule Payment	Payment Milestones
2026-27	Initial (First) payment 100% of the 2026-27 approved **base** allocation	The department will make payments to eligible grant recipients as soon as practicable after 1 July 2026, subject to the Project Funding Schedule being executed by both parties.
	Second and Final payment 100% of the remaining 2026-27 **top up** allocation	The department will make payments to eligible grant recipients upon confirmation of: - Adoption of council's budget by 1st August OR by a date determined by the Minister

		- Submission of DLGWV's quarterly grant reporting (June and September 2026)
2027-28	Initial (First) payment 100% of the 2027-28 approved **base** allocation	The department will make payments to eligible grant recipients as soon as practicable after 1 July 2027, subject to the Project Funding Schedule being executed by both parties.
	Second and Final payment 100% of the remaining 2027-28 **top up** allocation	The department will make payments to eligible grant recipients upon confirmation of: - Adoption of council's budget by 1st August OR by a date determined by the Minister - Submission of DLGWV's quarterly grant reporting (June and September 2027) - Adoption of council's GPFS completion within legislative timeframes OR by a date determined by the Minister.

Payments will be made via electronic transfer using the department's grant management system (eGrant).

9.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Provision of grant funding to local governments is not considered a taxable supply and therefore GST is not applicable.

10. Enquiries and contact details

Councils can obtain further information by contacting the Grant and Program Management team at LGDgrants@dlwv.qld.gov.au or by visiting Local Government | Local Government, Water and Volunteers

Department of Local Government,
Water and Volunteers
GPO Box 2247, Brisbane,
Queensland 4001
13 QGOV (13 74 68)
info@dlgwv.qld.gov.au
dlgwv.qld.gov.au

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