

1. Program Overview

The Local Business Innovation Fund (LBIF) is a two-year competitive grant program established by Quilpie Shire Council to support local businesses in innovating, growing, and improving their long-term sustainability. The Fund aims to strengthen the local economy by supporting projects that:

- Improve business and customer accessibility
- Enhance the use of technology and digital capability
- Stimulate local activity through shopfront and premises improvements

The total funding pool is \$100,000 over two financial years, supporting eligible businesses across the Quilpie Shire.

2. Grant Period

- **Grant Opens:** 1 July 2026
- **Grant Closes:** 30 June 2028
- Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis or in rounds, subject to available funding.

Quilpie Shire Council reserves the right to close the program early if funds are fully allocated.

3. Objectives of the Fund

The objectives of the Local Business Innovation Fund are to:

- Encourage innovation within local and community-based businesses
 - Improve customer experience and accessibility
 - Support businesses to adopt digital and online technologies
 - Enhance the visual amenity and functionality of local business premises
 - Promote economic resilience within the Quilpie Shire
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4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Eligible Applicants

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Operate a **business or community enterprise** within the Quilpie Shire Council local government area
- Hold an active **ABN**
- Be financially viable or demonstrate a clear pathway to viability
- Be compliant with all applicable Council regulations, licenses, and planning requirements
- Applicants' project must include 50% contributing funding, with the LBIF contributing up to 50% of total eligible project costs.

Eligible applicant types include:

- Small and micro businesses (1-9 employees)



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- Sole traders and partnerships
- For-profit commercial businesses

4.2 Quilpie Shire Business Definition

A community business is defined as an enterprise that:

- Operates within the Quilpie Shire
 - Provides goods or services that meet a community need
 - Reinvests profits into service delivery, local employment, or community benefit
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5. Ineligible Applicants

The following are not eligible:

- Government agencies or Council-owned entities
 - Any community organisation to which Council's community grants policy applies
 - Incorporated non-profit organisations operating a trading or community business
 - Registered Australian Charities
 - Businesses located outside the Quilpie Shire
 - Retrospective projects already completed before funding approval
 - Projects primarily for personal benefit
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6. Funding Priorities

Projects must demonstrate a clear benefit to customers and the broader community. Applications must align with at least one of the following priority pillars:

6.1 Business and Customer Accessibility

Examples include:

- Physical accessibility improvements (ramps, handrails, compliant entryways)
- Customer flow and layout improvements

6.2 Technology Development

Examples include:

- Website creation or upgrade
- Online booking systems or e-commerce platforms
- Digital payment solutions
- Customer relationship management (CRM) or inventory systems

6.3 Shopfront and Premises Refurbishment

Examples include:

- External shopfront upgrades
- Painting, lighting, display improvements
- Signage improvements enhancing visibility and safety (wayfinding)

- Minor refurbishments that improve functionality or appearance

6.4 Grant Writing and Business Support

Council also provides grant writing support through Peak Services, with support for grants including:

- General guidance and advice on target funding eligibility (Up to 30 minutes)
- 1 Qty. review of funding submission with summary feedback (Up to 30-60 minutes)
- General guidance and advice on grant acquittal submission preparation (Up to 30 minutes) and/or
- 1 Qty. review of grant acquittal submission with summary feedback (Up to 30-60 minutes).

Grant writing and business support is available for applications at any time in the grant period, with the intention to build grant writing skills and capacity within the Quilpie Shire businesses. Grant writing support is available for applications with a value of \$30k or more. This service is intended for future grant support as a bonus for Shire businesses and not for the LBIF grant.

7. Funding Tiers

The total grant pool is **\$100,000 over two years**. Funding tiers are outlined below:

Tier	Grant Amount	Purpose
Tier 1 – Micro Grants	Up to \$5,000	Small-scale improvements, digital tools, minor upgrades
Tier 2 – Growth Grants	\$5,001 – \$15,000	Significant technology upgrades, accessibility works, and refurbishments
Tier 3 – Impact Grants	\$15,001 – \$30,000	High-impact projects delivering strong economic or community outcomes
Grant Writing and Business Support	Applied for during the application process	To provide grant support to Quilpie Shire Businesses with grant programs over \$30k in ROI.

Applicants may only receive one grant during the eligible period, unless otherwise approved by Council.

8. Co-Contribution

Applicants are required to make a 50% financial contribution to their project. Council identifies the LBIF fund as a catalyst in getting community innovation projects underway. Stronger applications will demonstrate significant shared investment and commitment.

9. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed competitively using a weighted scoring model totalling 100 points. Funding will be recommended to projects that best meet the objectives and priorities of the Local Business Innovation Fund.

Criterion	Weighting	Description
Alignment with Funding Priorities	30%	The extent to which the project aligns with one or more of the Fund's priority pillars (Accessibility, Technology Development, or Shopfront Refurbishment) and clearly addresses the intent of the program.
Community and	25%	Demonstrated benefit to the local community and economy, including improved services, increased visitation, local employment



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Economic Benefit		opportunities, or broader community use.
Project Feasibility and Readiness	20%	Evidence that the project is well planned, achievable within the proposed timeframe, and supported by realistic costings and quotations. Ensure that the building and planning have been met.
Value for Money	15%	The degree to which the project represents good value, including appropriate project scale, reasonable costs, and demonstrated co-contribution by the applicant.
Applicant Capacity and Capability	10%	The applicant's ability to deliver the project successfully, including relevant experience, governance arrangements, and financial capacity.

Additional Considerations

During assessment, Council may also consider:

- Geographic spread of funded projects across the Shire
- Distribution of funding across grant tiers
- Past performance of applicants in delivering Council-funded projects
- Available funding remaining in the program

Council may seek additional information or clarification from applicants before making a funding decision.

10. Grant Conditions

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement with Quilpie Shire Council
- Use funds solely for the approved project
- Complete the project within the approved timeframe
- Provide acquittal documentation, including receipts and project outcomes
- If successful will be asked to engage in a funded project profile to promote business in Quilpie Shire.

11. Important Dates

- LBIF Round 1 grant program will be open for applications from 1 July 2026 and closing on 28 August 2026.
- Eligible works may be undertaken once the Financial Incentive Agreement (FIA) has been executed.
- All acquittal documentation must be submitted by no later than 30 June 2028.
- Failure to submit acquittal documentation by this date may result in ineligibility for grant approval and payment.

12. Program Governance

Quilpie Shire Council reserves the right to:

- Amend guidelines at any time
- Allocate funding across priorities at its discretion



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- Decline applications that do not meet the guidelines of the grant
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14. Enquiries

For further information, residents may contact:

Quilpie Shire Council

Corey Richards

Deputy Director Community & Business Development

Phone: (07) 4656 0509

Email: admin@quilpie.qld.gov.au

These guidelines are issued by Quilpie Shire Council and should be read in conjunction with any associated application forms, fact sheets, or public notices.