

1.21 Investment Attraction Incentives Policy

POLICY TITLE: INVESTMENT ATTRACTION INCENTIVES POLICY

FILE REF:

EXPIRY DATE:

1. OBJECTIVES

The Investment Attraction Incentive Policy is aimed at supporting an economy and business operating environment that encourages investment. This Policy establishes Lockhart Shire Council's framework with respect to investment attraction and support for business in the region.

Through this Policy Council will deliver targeted strategies and programs to support economic growth. The policy is focused on targeted investment support, whereby the nature and scale of the proposed investment will stimulate significant economic benefits diversity and value-add to the wider regional economy beyond the growth of the business itself.

Lockhart Shire Council's investment attraction incentives are designed to attract investment in key strategic industries and designed to stimulate significant and sustainable economic growth, diversify our industry base and value add to our regional economy.

This policy does not apply to cases where investment assistance is required by Council to support a business threatened by closure or downsizing.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

For the purpose of this Policy, investment attraction, or incentives to invest, involves pro- active and strategic targeting of investment support. It involves initiatives to support an environment which encourages investment and/ or incentives which specifically encourage or achieve a required activity.

Council's support for new investment in the Lockhart Shire may be provided in a number of ways both non-financial and financial including but not limited to:-

- ❖ Non-financial assistance, including (but not limited to) dedicated business officer assistance, fast-tracked development application process, assistance and support with property location, business support networks and marketing; and
- ❖ Financial assistance, including (but not limited to) waiving of development application fees and deferred payment of infrastructure charges.

These incentives are available for strategically important projects within identified industries and locations which will diversify the economy, support jobs growth and investment growth and provide a net community benefit.

The level of incentive applicable to a development and/or project will be determined by the eligibility criteria contained within the Policy.

Council will ensure that any incentives are provided in a transparent, equitable and risk-averse manner. Under this Policy, Council's investment support adopts an approach to ensure that the Policy delivers net community benefits and contributes to the long term economic sustainability of Lockhart Shire.

Direct Financial Incentive Offers must be supported by a resolution of Council.

3. INVESTMENT ATTRACTION INCENTIVES PACKAGE

The Investment Attraction Incentives Package is a discretionary scheme which seeks to attract and support projects that will deliver the greatest benefits to the Lockhart Shire.

The focus of the incentives package is on projects that will:

- ❖ Create new jobs and investment;
- ❖ Value-add through enhanced supply chains;
- ❖ Generate growth within key strategic industries and locations;

- ❖ Demonstrate innovation and environmental sustainability; and
- ❖ Diversify and make the local economy more sustainable.

The Investment Attraction Incentives Package is specifically targeted to businesses in the following industries:-

- ❖ Agricultural Production
- ❖ Manufacturing and Light Industry
- ❖ Transport and Logistics

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applications for Direct Financial Incentives will be assessed in accordance with the Infrastructure Charges Incentives Administrative Policy and Investment Attraction Incentive Policy.

The level of incentive applicable to a development and/or project will be determined by set eligibility criteria and may include (but not be limited to) Projects that:-

- ❖ Provide a significant net economic and community benefit to Lockhart Shire.
- ❖ Are identified as a key strategic industry for the Shire where incentives are applicable.
- ❖ Are within an identified location where incentives are applicable.
- ❖ Sustainable and result in jobs growth, may involve relocation to the Lockhart Shire region and are innovative and environmentally responsible.
- ❖ Diversify the region's economic base and value-add to business.
- ❖ Fill and identified gap or need in the local economy.

The following projects, activities and organisations are not eligible for direct financial assistance:

- ❖ A project that does not fit within the Infrastructure Charges Incentives Administrative Policy and Investment Attraction Incentive Policy eligibility criteria for identified targeted industries and/or location.
- ❖ A project of a government department or agency, government-owned corporation or regional development organisation.
- ❖ A project which can be more appropriately funded by another government program.

Council's Investment Attraction Incentives Package does not apply to cases where investment assistance is required by Council to support a business threatened by closure or down-sizing. Financial assistance will not be provided retrospectively.

5. THE INCENTIVES

The Investment Attraction Incentives Package is aimed at attracting investment in key industries and locations which will encourage jobs, growth and investment in the Lockhart Shire.

The Incentives Package is available to businesses wishing to relocate and/or expand operations within the Lockhart Shire Local Government Area.

INCENTIVE	DESCRIPTION
Dedicated Business Assistance Officer	A dedicated Business Assistance Officer will act as a single point of contact for prospective investors, providing continuity of advice and assistance in helping to meet individual business requirements.
Fast Tracked Development Application Process	Guaranteed development application assessment timeframes including provision of pre-lodgement meetings, dedicated assistance and guidance. Guaranteed 10 day turn around on low complexity applications, house and shed applications and concurrence agency assessments, not requiring further referral or public notification.

Property Location Assistance	Assistance provided to prospective investors searching for ideal development sites or building premises within the Lockhart Shire.
Guided Familiarisation Tours	Provision of a guided familiarisation tour to highlight the region's unique characteristics and business potential.
Business Case Assistance	Assistance provided to prospective investors in obtaining the local economic and business data needed in preparation of project analysis and viability studies.
Business Welcome Information Package	Provision of a package of information pertinent to business operations in the Lockhart Shire to prospective investors or relocating employees.
Industry Networking	Provision of information and contact details for regional Industry Bodies and Business Enterprise Groups including an introductory meeting.
Business Support	Access to Murray-Riverina NSW Business Chamber and Riverina Business Enterprise Centre to provide support through disciplines including accounting, legal, marketing, financial planning, banking, business mentoring, real estate, construction and more.
Financial Incentives *	<p>Financial incentives may include but not be limited to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waiving or discounting of development application fees. - Deferred payment of developer contributions and/or infrastructure charges. - Access to free co-operative regional marketing campaigns. - Free assessment of trade waste discharge requirements. - Attractive vendor terms on purchase of Council owned industrial or residential land. - Discounted sale price on multiple lot purchases of Council owned industrial or residential land. - Other financial incentives considered appropriate in the circumstances and based on the merit of individual applications.
Business Profile, Marketing & Connectivity	Access to business profile and marketing assistance through Council's website, business networks including but not limited to Regional Development Australia, Murray-Riverina NSW Business Chamber, Riverina Business Enterprise Centre and Lockhart Shire Tourism.
Community Engagement	Provision of general public relations/media advice and assistance and/or participation in marketing/awareness campaigns to assist with community engagement for relevant projects.

* Any financial incentives approved by Council may be subject to conditions. In particular the deferral of any developer contributions and/or infrastructure charges payable in accordance with a development consent issued by Council may be subject to:-

- Execution of an appropriately worded agreement prepared by Council's solicitor.
- Lodgment with Council of a bond, bank guarantee or other appropriate surety.
- Registration of a caveat in favour of the Council on the title of the subject land.
- Where the development involves the subdivision of land, lodgment of the survey plan with the Land Titles Office within 30 days of it being certified by Council.

6. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications for Direct Financial Assistance through the Investment Attraction Incentives Policy are to be made formally through an application process.

Projects will undergo a rigorous assessment to ensure only eligible projects that will provide a net economic and community benefit to the Lockhart Shire will be assisted.

Criteria considered during the evaluation of applications may include:

- ❖ The nature of the proposed business.
- ❖ Expected economic impact of the project/business.
- ❖ Capital investment.
- ❖ Employment generation (including indigenous employment).
- ❖ Income generation for residents.
- ❖ Level to which the proponent/project contributes to economic diversity.
- ❖ Economic sustainability of the project.
- ❖ Growth potential of the business.
- ❖ Level of innovation or research.
- ❖ Development capabilities.
- ❖ Ability to leverage additional economic growth in the future.
- ❖ Anticipated environmental impacts of the project.
- ❖ Timing of the project.
- ❖ Evidence of competing locations.

Proponents must provide a fully completed application form together with relevant supporting documentation as outlined in the application form. Council Officers can provide detailed advice on eligibility and guidance with the application process and documentation. Acceptance of a signed application does not guarantee approval for either all or part of the incentive being sought.

7. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Lockhart Shire Investment Attraction Incentives Scheme Guidelines

Lockhart Shire Investment Attraction Application Form

Section 356 of the Local Government Act: - Can a council financially assist others?

- 1) *"A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.*
- 2) *A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.*
- 3) *However, public notice is not required if:*
 - a) *the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and*
 - b) *the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and*
 - c) *the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and*
 - d) *the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area."*