Community Partnerships Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This Community Partnership Policy has been established to ensure University of Newcastle (University) funded community partnerships, incorporating paid and unpaid sponsorships, align with the Looking Ahead strategic priorities.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to community partnerships that qualify for funding as detailed in the Eligible Criteria section of this document.

Section 3 - Principles

(3) Submission for community partnerships must clearly demonstrate the following principles:

a. alignment with the University's values and support for the University strategic plan;
b. support for the University's Indigenous commitment;
c. enhancement of the student experience by providing tangible, real-world benefits;
d. reinforcement of the University's reputation “of our regions, for our regions”’
e. complement of existing non-sponsored partnerships for practical learning and collaboration opportunities.

(4) The Community Partnership Plan will ensure partnerships have equal gender representation and are evenly distributed across four key themes:

a. health, wellbeing and sport;
b. arts and culture;
c. equity, diversity and social justice;
d. innovation, industry and sustainability.

Section 4 - Eligible Criteria

(5) To qualify for funding, community partnerships will be assessed by the Community Partnerships Committee against the following criteria:

a. alignment with the University corporate, college, school or research strategic plan;
b. clear demonstration of alignment with University values;
c. generation of positive, widespread and effective engagement through media coverage and storytelling;
d. support of business / industry partner development and engagement opportunities;
e. involvement of collaboration and resource sharing across colleges and divisions;
f. provision of student experience opportunities through event participation, engagement or access to experts;

g. delivery of student work experience opportunities through career-ready placements or volunteering;
h. provision of positive community engagement, including engagement with young people within our regions;
i. partner suitability and values alignment – partners must be clearly identified and reputation risks assessed.

(6) Please see Community Partnerships Agreement Evaluation Criteria.

(7) Members of the Community Partnerships Committee must adhere to the Disclosure of Interest Policy and Disclosure of Interest Procedure, and must recuse themselves from assessing any proposal where a conflict of interest may exist.

(8) The Community Partnerships Committee will not consider partnerships that:

a. are conferences, memberships, or subject-specific awards programs;
b. are charity or fundraising events;
c. only support individuals (i.e. individual athletes, performers);
d. are closely aligned to Federal, State or independent political parties;
e. are commercial activities, as defined by the Commercial Activities Policy;
f. can reasonably be judged to be racially prejudice, discriminatory, offensive or denigrating;
g. promote smoking, drug use or gambling;
h. pose a conflict of interest for the University;
i. are considered a reputational risk for the University.

Section 5 - Activation Matrix

(9) Community partnerships that qualify for funding will be assessed against the Community Partnerships Governance and Activation Matrix based on duration, spend and impact to determine the authorised delegate who may approve the arrangement, funding source and activation responsibilities. The matrix will consider:

a. duration of the partnership;
b. defined benefits across research, student experience, community/industry engagement;
c. impact on local/regional/national/international audiences with engagement across different channels.

(10) Please see Community Partnerships Governance and Activation Matrix.

Section 6 - Financial Commitment

(11) Partnership submissions will include a cost assessment that outlines the financial outlay plus in-house costs to activate the agreement. These in-house costs include (but are not limited by) staff time, collateral development and production, event participation, promotion and communications. Submissions will need to demonstrate agreement from supporting business units prior to committing internal resources.

Section 7 - Other Requirements

(12) All records relating to the assessment and activation of community partnerships must be maintained in accordance with the Records Governance Policy.

(13) Subject to contractual obligations, the University reserves the right to suspend or halt funding in the event a previously approved community partnership brings the University into disrepute.

(14) Ongoing community partnerships will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of this policy and any other relevant University policy.

Section 8 - Appendices

(15) Community Partnerships Agreement Evaluation Criteria

(16) Community Partnerships Governance and Activation Matrix

(17) Community Partnerships Committee Terms of Reference.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th June 2026
Review Date	19th June 2029
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Equity
Approval Date	1st June 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Nathan Towney Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Equity +61 2 4055 3001
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Equity

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.

"Delegate" - (noun) refers to a person occupying a position that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority, or a committee or body that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority.