

Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council

Community Bus Hire Policy



This document is an official copy of the Community Bus Hire Policy of Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, developed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld), the Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld), the Public Records Act 2002 (Qld), relevant local laws, and the Council's adopted policies and procedures.

The Community Bus Hire Policy is classified as an Operational Policy. Operational policies provide direction for the administration and delivery of Council services and guide employee decision-making in the performance of their duties. This Policy has been approved by Council to support consistent, transparent and accountable decision-making by Council offers in the administration of hiring the community bus.

This Policy applies to Council employees and authorised officers responsible for assessing and administering assistance under the program.

Document Version Control			
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Details
1.0	20/09/2021	C162/21	Responsible Officer: Governance Manager Policy Type: Operational Policy
2.0	16/04/2026	C032/26	Responsible Officer: Governance Manager Policy Type: Operational Policy
		Recommended Review Date:	16/04/2027

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the guidelines, eligibility criteria, and conditions under which Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council (“Council”) may approve the hire of the Community Bus (“the Bus”).

Hire of the Bus is subject to Council’s assessment processes, operational capacity, and resource availability. Approval is at Council’s discretion and will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the criteria and conditions set out in this Policy.

Access to the Bus is not automatic and each request will be considered individually.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the administration and management of Community Bus hire by Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council. It outlines the eligibility criteria, approval process, and conditions of use that apply to all hire arrangements.

3. Definitions

<i>Community Education Provider</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Community Education Provider refers to a school, training organisation, or other recognised education or learning provider operating within Mapoon’s Local Government Area and delivering educational programs or services to community members.
<i>Community Organisation</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Community Organisation refers to a not-for-profit group, association, committee, or incorporated body operating within Mapoon’s Local Government Area that provides services, programs, cultural or recreational activities, or support for the benefit of the Mapoon community
<i>Community Stakeholder</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Community Stakeholder refers to an individual, group, organisation, government agency, or service provider that has an active interest, role, or involvement in matters affecting the Mapoon community and its residents.
<i>Driver Authorisation</i>	Restricted Driver Authorisation is the minimum requirement for anyone driving the commuter bus with passengers. The authorisation is issued by Council and lodged with TMR. The authorisation is for a period not exceeding 12 months. Alternately, drivers can hold a General Driver Authorisation (Passenger Services) issued by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.
<i>Local Business</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Local Business refers to a business that is physically based within Mapoon’s Local Government Area and operates primarily within the community, including businesses that are locally owned, Indigenous-owned, or employ local residents.
<i>Local Government Area (LGA)</i>	The area that a local council is responsible for, including its land, roads, facilities, and services. In this instance Mapoon’s Local Government Area is from Cullen Point to the north and the end of the bitumen road to the south.
<i>Mapoon Resident</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Mapoon Resident refers to a person who ordinarily lives within Mapoon’s Local Government Area, whether permanently or for an extended period, and can demonstrate a genuine residential connection to the community.
<i>Nearby Regional Area</i>	For the purposes of this Policy, Nearby Regional Area refers specifically to the Weipa Town Authority Area and the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council Local Government Area.



Nominated Person Nominated Person refers to the individual identified by the hirer as the primary contact and responsible representative for the hire of the Community Bus.

The Nominated Person is responsible for ensuring compliance with all conditions of this Policy, including safe and lawful use of the vehicle, timely communication with Council, and return of the vehicle in accordance with the terms of hire.

Operator Accreditation The operation of the Community Bus is subject to the requirements of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. New regulations came into effect on 20th February 2026 with a 6-month grace period for existing operators (expiring 20th August 2026). The Community Bus will be accredited as a *Community Transport Service owned and operated by the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council*.

The Bus For the purposes of this Policy, means the 19-seater, four-wheel drive vehicle (Registration 532S00) owned and operated by Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council and designated as the Community Bus.

4. Terms and Conditions

Community Bus Hire will be provided in accordance with the Terms and Conditions set out in this Policy. The nominated person is required to read, understand, sign, and agree to the Terms and Conditions via the Community Bus Hire Form prior to any arrangements being confirmed or services delivered by Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible to hire the Bus, the hirer must fit into at least one of the following categories:

- a. Community education provider
- b. Community organisation
- c. Community stakeholder
- d. Local business
- e. Mapoon resident
- f. Council Department, program, service or event
- g. Funeral – Hire relating to funeral arrangements is exempt from the eligibility requirements outlined in this Policy and will be assessed in accordance with Council’s Community Funeral Assistance Policy.

6. Application for Community Bus Hire

Eligible applicants must complete the Community Bus Hire Form and arrange payment in accordance with Clause 8 of this Policy, at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled funeral.

Applications for the hire of the Community Bus will generally be processed on a first-in, first-served basis. In exceptional circumstances, including emergencies, Council reserves the discretion to determine priority for bus allocation. All decisions relating to the allocation of the Community Bus will be conducted in a transparent, equitable, and consistent manner.

7. Fees and Charges

Fees and charges for Community Bus Hire are detailed in the Council’s annual Fees and Charges Schedule, which is available on the Council website (www.mapoon.qld.gov.au) and via the Community Bus Hire Form.

Fees are categorised as follows:

1. Charges – Fees that are payable and non-refundable.
2. Deposit – A refundable amount, subject to the requirements of Clause 9.



8. Payment

Payment of fees and deposits must be made in accordance with this Policy. Payment can be made via the methods outlined in the Community Bus Hire Form or as approved by Council. Full payment must be received at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled funeral.

Refunds of deposits will be processed following the return and inspection of the bus.

9. Bonds and Refunds

9.1 Security Bond

A refundable security bond may be required for all hires of the community bus. The amount of the bond will be determined by Council and specified at the time of booking. The bond is intended to cover any damage, excessive cleaning, or breaches of this Policy.

9.2 Bond Refund

The bond, or the remaining portion, will be refunded to the hirer following inspection of the vehicle by the designated Council staff member. Refunds will only be issued once the vehicle has been assessed as being left in a clean, secure, and undamaged condition.

9.3 Deductions from Bond

Council reserves the right to deduct from the bond any costs incurred for:

- Damage to the vehicle.
- Excessive cleaning or rubbish removal required.
- Breaches of this Policy or Council's legislative obligations.

9.4 Non-Refundable Fees

Any hire fees paid in advance are non-refundable unless otherwise determined by Council at its discretion.

9.5 Dispute Resolution

Any dispute regarding bond deductions or refund amounts will be managed in accordance with Council's standard complaints and dispute resolution processes.

10. Fee Waiver for Hardship

Council may, at its discretion, approve a full or partial waiver of fees and/or deposits where an applicant demonstrates financial hardship. Requests for hardship consideration must be submitted in writing and may include supporting documentation.

All hardship applications will be assessed in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, and equity, and final approval rests with the Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate).

11. Approved Travel Areas

For the purposes of this Policy, approved travel areas for the Community Bus are limited to the following:

- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA).
- Nearby Regional Areas

The bus may only be used to travel within these designated areas, unless prior written approval is obtained from Council. Travel outside the approved areas is strictly prohibited and may result in suspension or termination of hire.



12.1 Driver Requirements

Upon hire of the bus, Council will provide an authorised driver who is a Council employee, holds the appropriate, current, and valid class of driver licence required to operate the vehicle and holds the appropriate passenger services authorisation .

Only drivers employed and formally authorised by Council are permitted to operate the vehicles. Under no circumstances is the vehicle to be driven by members of the public or any unauthorised person.

All authorised drivers must:

- Hold a current and valid driver licence appropriate for the class of vehicle (Medium Rigid).
- Comply with all applicable road transport legislation and regulations.
- Operate the vehicle in accordance with Council policies and procedures.
- Comply with Council's Workplace Health and Safety requirements, including safe driving practices and National Heavy Vehicle Law (NHVL) fatigue management obligations.
- Adhere to a zero-tolerance drug and alcohol requirement while operating Council vehicles.
- Adhere to Council's Code of Conduct and behavioural standards.
- Maintain a logbook in accordance with the requirements of the NHVL/Queensland Transport.

Operation and use of the vehicles is subject to Council's insurance coverage conditions, approved usage parameters, and any limitations determined by Council. Council reserves the right to refuse or withdraw use of the vehicle where safety, compliance, insurance, or operational concerns arise.

12.1.1 Community Bus Conditions of Use

- a) The Bus will be provided to the hirer with a full tank of fuel, and it is the hirer's responsibility to return the bus with a full tank unless otherwise agreed to in writing by Council. If Council is required to undertake any refuelling it will be charged to the hirer. Refuelling by Council will incur a \$50 service fee.
- b) The bus may only be used during the approved hire period and within the travel areas specified and approved by Council on the Community Bus Hire Form. Any travel outside these areas or hire period is strictly prohibited unless prior written approval is obtained from Council.
- c) The total number of passengers must not exceed the legally permitted seating capacity of the vehicle. Only one person (adult or child) is permitted per designated seat, and seatbelts must be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
- d) The hirer is responsible for ensuring that all passengers behave in a safe, respectful, and lawful manner while in the vehicles.
- e) Smoking and vaping, including the use of e-cigarettes, are strictly prohibited inside all Council-owned vehicles.
- f) The carriage or consumption of illegal drugs and/or alcohol in the vehicles is strictly prohibited. Any person who is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be refused entry to the vehicle.
- g) Consumption of food and non-alcoholic beverages is permitted at the discretion of the hirer. However, a reasonable and common-sense approach must be taken regarding the type of items, keeping in mind cleanliness and safety.
- h) The vehicles must be returned in a clean and tidy condition at the end of the hire period. The hirer is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is left in an acceptable condition. Any additional cleaning costs incurred by Council as a result of the hire will be invoiced to the hirer.
- i) The hirer agrees to compensate Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council for any loss, damage, or expense arising from the hirer's use of the vehicle where the conduct of the hirer or passengers has caused or contributed to loss or damage.



- j) Where damage is determined to have been caused by an identifiable third party and Council is able to recover full compensation, the hirer will not be held liable for any associated costs.
- k) The Community Funeral Assistance Form must be completed and all applicable fees and charges paid in full prior to the vehicle departing. Current vehicle hire fees are detailed in Council's adopted Fees and Charges Schedule, available on the Council website (www.mapoon.qld.gov.au) and referenced in the Community Funeral Assistance Form.
- l) Council reserves the right to refuse, suspend, or terminate use of the vehicles where this Policy is breached, where safety concerns arise, or where use is inconsistent with Council's legislative obligations or operational requirements.
- m) If the driver determines that road conditions are unsuitable for the operation of the bus, his/her determination is final.

Variations to this Policy

Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council reserves the right to amend, replace, or revoke this Policy at any time.

13. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Policies

- Local Government Act 2009
- Local Government Regulations 2012
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council Community Funeral Assistance Policy
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council Vehicle Use Policy
- Queensland Transport (Passenger Transport) 1994

