

Grants and Sponsorship - Social Grants

File No: S117676

Summary

The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship programs support initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.

The annual Grants and Sponsorship programs have 2 main rounds: Summer and Winter. The Winter round was open from 8 July to 12 August 2025. This report covers the following funding program:

- Food support program

For the Food support program, 17 applications were received. This report recommends a total of 5 grants for a total value of \$221,815 in cash and \$6,000 value-in-kind in the 2025/26 financial year.

In addition, a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration fund applications were received and assessed. For the Collaboration fund, 7 applications were received. This report recommends 2 grants for a total value of \$35,400 in cash for payment in the 2025/26 financial year.

This report also seeks approval for a delegation to the Chief Executive Officer to approve grants totalling up to \$50,000 from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration fund to run a small grants round to activate and test usage of the spaces at 107 Redfern Street, Redfern.

All grant recipients will be required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes and acquit their grant. All figures in this report exclude GST.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the cash recommendations for the Food Support program as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant for the Food Support program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve the cash recommendations for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (D) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund as shown at Attachment D to the subject report;
- (E) Council note that all grant amounts are exclusive of GST;
- (F) Council approve the granting of financial assistance up to a total value of \$50,000 from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund to be used for a small grant round for organisations to apply for up to \$20,000 each to activate the spaces at 107 Redfern Street, Redfern;
- (G) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to determine applications in relation to the small grant round referred to in clause (F), with the outcomes to be reported to Council via the CEO Update;
- (H) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer agreements with any organisation approved for a grant or sponsorship under terms consistent with this resolution and the Grants and Sponsorship Policy; and
- (I) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to correct minor errors to the matters set out in this report, noting that the identity of the recipient will not change, and a CEO Update will be provided.

Attachments

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Attachment A. | Recommended for Funding - Food Support Grant |
| Attachment B. | Not Recommended for Funding - Food Support Grant |
| Attachment C. | Recommended for Funding - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund |
| Attachment D. | Not Recommended for Funding - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund |
| Attachment E. | Data Report on Outcomes of Funding - Food Support Program |

Background

1. The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports residents, businesses and not-for-profit organisations to undertake initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.
2. On 8 July 2025, the City announced the grants program as being open for application on its website, with grant applications closing on 12 August 2025. This was for a period of 5 weeks.
3. The funding program with key outcomes for the social pillar is:
 - (a) Food support program
4. The Food support program is open to eligible not-for-profit organisations and incorporated associations, and in tier 1 to individuals auspiced by an eligible not-for-profit organisation and unincorporated community group auspiced by an eligible not-for-profit organisation.
5. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund is open all year round with the First Nations Leadership team assessing applications in batches every 3 to 3 months.
6. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund is open to eligible Aboriginal not-for-profit and for-profit organisations and to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals. The following for-profit organisation is eligible for funding:
 - (a) Jodie Ann Choolburra.
7. The First Nations Leadership team is currently working with existing creative tenants of 107 Redfern Street, Redfern, to vacate by 5 December 2025. The next step will be to set up an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sub-committee to guide the temporary local Aboriginal activation of 107 Redfern Street in early 2026.
8. It is proposed that funding of up to \$20,000 each to a maximum total of \$50,000 is provided to successful applicants through an Expression of Interest process aligned to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund to support activations of the space. Eligible applicants will be those that are currently eligible through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund.
9. If approved, the Grants team will work with the First Nations Leadership team to run an expression of interest process over December 2025 and January 2026 for community members to propose short-term projects to be delivered from March 2026. The First Nations Leadership team would assess expressions of interest. Grants will be up to \$20,000 and managed through contracts with the City.
10. To allow for this program to be delivered within this short turnaround period, Council will need to approve the granting of financial assistance of up to \$50,000 in principle, with a delegation to the Chief Executive Officer to approve the recipients and report on the outcomes via CEO Update.

11. In the longer term, the City's objective is to develop a community-driven and community-led, sustainable Aboriginal creative and cultural hub. To support this process, consultants Cox Inall Ridgeway have been engaged to undertake research on relevant case studies and provide advice on viable governance and operating models to inform decisions regarding the future use of 107 Redfern Street.

Grants assessment process

12. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program is highly competitive. Applications that are not recommended have either not scored as highly against the assessment criteria as the recommended applications or have incomplete or insufficient information. The City's Grants and Sponsorship team provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
13. The assessment process includes advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The applications are scored against defined assessment criteria for each grant program as well as the integrity of the proposed budget, project plan, partnerships, contributions and connection to the local community and industry sectors.
14. The assessment criteria for the Grant program was:
 - Need – why is it needed? This is where you describe what you are doing, why it is important and what will happen as a result of you doing this project.
 - Experience – how will you create the project, your skills and ability and your experience in doing projects. This may include a project plan.
 - Community benefit – who will benefit from your project, how will they benefit and how have you included the diverse communities in the local area.
 - City of Sydney funding priorities as outlined in the guidelines – your project should consider one of the funding priorities as these are identified areas that need assistance.
15. The assessment meeting for the Food support program was held on 17 September 2025. All applications were assessed against the relevant publicised assessment criteria. The assessment panels consisted of City staff from City Life and across the organisation with input from First Nations Leadership team.
16. The assessment meeting for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fund was held on 1 October 2025. All applications were assessed against the relevant publicised assessment criteria. The assessment panel consisted of City staff from the First Nations Leadership team.
17. Once Council approves recommended applications, a contract is developed which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.
18. It is expected that all successful applicants will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
19. All grants and sponsorships are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.

20. Attached to this report is a high level summary on the outcomes of the funding if the recommendations are approved. This provides insight into what the applicants have identified they hope to achieve if they receive the City's funding.

Food support program

21. Recommended applications are outlined in Attachment A to this report.
22. The Food support program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2025/26	\$1,500,000	
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$1,278,185	
Total remaining cash available 2025/26	\$221,815	
Number of eligible applications received in Winter Round 2025/26	17	
Number of grants recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	5	
Cash recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	\$221,815	
Cash remaining in 2025/26	Nil	
2025/26	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$2,714,513	\$6,000.00
Total recommended	\$221,815	\$6,000.00
2026/27	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$1,729,672	Nil
Total recommended	\$ 220,000	Nil
2027/28	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$1,572,580	Nil
Total recommended	Nil	Nil

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration fund

23. Recommended applications are outlined in Attachment C to this report.
24. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration fund program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2025/26	\$500,000	
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$345,000	
Total remaining cash available 2025/26	\$155,000	
Number of eligible applications received in Winter Round 2025/26	7	
Number of grants recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	2	
Cash recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	\$35,400	
2025/26 allocation for small grants round - 107 Redfern Street	\$50,000	
Cash remaining in 2025/26	\$69,600	
2025/26	Cash	Vik
Total requested	\$331,924	Nil
Total recommended (does not include allocation for small grants round - 107 Redfern Street)	\$35,400	Nil

Key Implications**Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision**

25. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the recommended grant projects in this report contribute to community development and support active participation in civic life. They empower the community to address issues that matter to them and drive projects to create a more inclusive and resilient city.

Organisational Impact

26. The grants and sponsorships contract management process will involve key staff across the City of Sydney. Identified staff set contract conditions and performance measures for each approved project, and review project acquittals, which include both narrative and financial reports.

Risks

27. This recommendation is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
- (a) We make decisions that align with our corporate objectives, policies and strategies and are committed to conducting our activities in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations and relevant industry standards.
 - (b) We foster a culture of ethics, integrity and responsible behaviour across our organisation. By creating a strong ethical foundation, we aim to minimise the likelihood of reputation-damaging incidents and enhance our ability to respond effectively when challenges arise.
 - (c) The City has a responsibility to ensure that it has sufficient resources in the short, medium and long term to provide the levels of service that are both affordable and considered appropriate by the community

Social / Cultural / Community

28. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program provides the City with a platform to support cultural, economic, environmental and social initiatives from the communities and business, within the local area.

Financial Implications

29. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2025/26 grants and sponsorship budget, included in the City's approved operating budget for 2025/26 to support the recommended grants. Details and total values are provided in the tables above

Relevant Legislation

30. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that 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 and section 377(1A) permits the delegation of the granting of financial assistance in certain circumstances.
31. Sections 356(3)(a) to (d) and 377(1A) is satisfied for the purpose of providing grant funding to for profit organisations and delegating the granting of financial assistance because:
- (a) The funding is part of the following programs;
 - (i) Food support grant program
 - (ii) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

- (b) The details of the program were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for financial year 2025/26
- (c) Each program's proposed budget does not exceed 5% of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2025/26, and
- (d) These programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

- 32.** The funding period for the funding programs is for activities taking place 12 months from the project start date. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting.

Public Consultation

- 33.** During July 2025, online and in-person briefing sessions took place where potential applicants were notified about the grants and how to apply. Separate online briefing sessions were delivered for each program, to enable people who were interested in more than one program to attend each.
- (a) Across all programs, a total of 115 attendees participated in the online sessions.
 - (b) Two in-person sessions for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community were held in Redfern and Glebe. A total of 20 attendees participated in these sessions.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Sam Wild, Manager Grants