

Grants and Sponsorship - Accommodation Grants Program - Joynton Avenue Creative Centre and Banga Community Shed

File No: X118602

Summary

The Accommodation Grants Program supports community, cultural, economic and sustainability focused organisations by providing accommodation in City-owned buildings within the property portfolio at below market or nil rent.

Recipients of Accommodation Grants enter into occupancy agreements with the City for a term of up to 5 years and can apply for up to 100% rental subsidy. Recipients are subject to an annual performance review.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre and Banga Community Shed are purpose-built making and creating spaces in the Green Square Creative Community Precinct. These buildings were jointly presented as 6 Accommodation Grant Program opportunities through a two-stage application process seeking applicants who would help develop a vibrant, mixed use, creative and community focused hub at 3 Joynton Avenue, Zetland.

This report seeks Council approval to enter into 6 occupancy agreements with the recommended applicants as a result of the application process for the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland and Banga Community Shed, 3B Joynton Avenue, Zetland.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a 3 year lease for Soul Reign Pty Ltd., ABN 36 672 625 580, trading as The Goodways Project at the Banga Community Shed, 3B Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy, with agreement for a further 2 year lease subject to satisfactory performance at a total cost of \$240,342 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (B) Council approve a 3+2 year licence for Season Arts Incorporated, ABN 49 796 837 399, in Tenancy 1 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy at a total cost of \$200,085 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (C) Council approve a 3+2 year licence for Artist Studio Collective, ABN 11 992 435 770, in Tenancy 2 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy at a total cost of \$238,269 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (D) Council approve a 3+2 year licence for Erin Kathleen Keys, ABN 54 764 767 254, trading as The Bench in Tenancy 3 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy at a total cost of \$239,798 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (E) Council approve a 3+2 year licence for Garuwa Creative PTY LTD, ABN 98 618 609 868, trading as WUNAN in Tenancy 4 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy at a total cost of \$168,013 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (F) Council approve a 3+2 year licence for Ashleigh Louise Garwood, ABN 80 851 278 800, trading as Artist Led Photographic Collective in Tenancy 5 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland from 1 February 2026 at 100% subsidy at a total cost of \$177,176 (excl. GST) over the full 5-year period;
- (G) Council note full details of applicants recommended for funding as per Attachment A to the subject report; Recommended for Funding - Accommodation Grants Program;
- (H) Council note the applicants who were shortlisted to the Eligibility List - Accommodation Grants Program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (I) Council note the applicants who were Not Recommended for Funding for the Accommodation Grants Program as shown at Attachment C to the subject report; and

- (J) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer agreements with:
- (i) Soul Reign Pty Ltd., ABN 36 672 625 580, at the Banga Community Shed, 3B Joynton Avenue, Zetland;
 - (ii) Season Arts Incorporated, ABN 49 796 837 399, in Tenancy 1 at Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland;
 - (iii) Artist Studio Collective, ABN 11 992 435 770, in Tenancy 2 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland;
 - (iv) Erin Kathleen Keys, ABN 54 764 767 254, trading as The Bench in Tenancy 3 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland;
 - (v) Garuwa Creative PTY LTD, ABN 98 618 609 868, trading as WUNAN in Tenancy 4 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland; and
 - (vi) Ashleigh Louise Garwood, ABN 80 851 278 800, trading as Artist Led Photographic Collective in Tenancy 5 at the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, 3A Joynton Avenue, Zetland,

on terms consistent with this resolution and in accordance with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Recommended for Funding - Accommodation Grants Program
- Attachment B.** Eligibility List - Accommodation Grants Program
- Attachment C.** Not Recommended for Funding - Accommodation Grants Program

Background

1. The City's Accommodation Grants Program supports organisations that benefit our communities and align to the strategic outcomes of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. It provides organisations with facilities in City-owned buildings within the community property portfolio at nil cost or below market rent on occupancy agreements of up to 5-year terms.
2. By presenting 6 available Accommodation Grants Program opportunities within 2 collocated sites within Green Square, the City aims to create and nurture a vibrant, mixed use, creative and community hub.

Banga Community Shed

3. Banga means 'make' or 'do' in Gadigal language. The Banga Community Shed (Banga) is a ground-level building space that includes three concrete-floored connected workshop spaces and a fenced community garden which is open to the public that leads on to Matron Ruby Grant Park. It is currently vacant after former tenant The Bower exited the space.
4. The Accommodation Grants Program opportunity process sought a tenant to occupy the workshop spaces and provide service or benefit the community, social or cultural and creative sectors, with applicants encouraged to consider active community collaborations in their submissions.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre

5. Joynton Avenue Creative Centre is a 2-storey multi-purpose creative facility built by the City to host creative tenants and cultural production and programs. It was previously licenced to 107 Projects from 2018, with the facility returning to the City in September 2024. The building has been occupied by 11 creative tenants with whom the City entered into licences following 107 Projects vacating the site.
6. Noting the urgent need for artist led solutions to rapidly diminishing creative studio space in our local area, and to encourage new, grass-roots ideas and collaboration, the building has now been divided into 5 tenancies that cluster rooms and creative practitioners together, fostering a multidisciplinary creative hub.
7. The 5 Accommodation Grants Program tenancies include:
 - (a) Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 1: an event room suitable to a public facing activity, an office and additional studio space;
 - (b) Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 2: an interconnected classroom with kitchen and balcony, with a separate studio space;
 - (c) Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 3: a large creative workshop with jewellery workshop fitout, with a separate storage space;
 - (d) Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 4: six small creative spaces, four connected with sliding lockable doors; and
 - (e) Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 5: six small creative spaces, five connected through sliding lockable doors.

Promotion of opportunity

8. Information about this grant program was made available on the City's website. Email campaigns were used to target interested parties who have expressed an interest in the Accommodation Grants Program, have applied previously for grants at the City or who have invested interest in the local area.
9. The City actively promoted this opportunity through ArtsHub, Koori Radio and Koori Mail, plus City e-newsletters, Twitter, LinkedIn, and both Facebook and Instagram, for which an engaging social media video was created.
10. In addition to advertising, this grant program included multiple face-to-face opportunities online support sessions to encourage new applicants to familiarise themselves with the building, the neighbourhood, and with City of Sydney processes.

Grant assessment process

11. A 2-stage process was undertaken for this Accommodation Grants Program opportunity. The aim was to encourage responsive grassroots and community-led activations. Applicants were asked to share their ideas through an Expression of Interest application prior to completing full Accommodation Grants Program application by invitation.
12. On 1 July 2025, the City commenced the 2-stage process for the 6 Accommodation Grants Program opportunities.
 - (a) Stage 1: an open Expression of Interest (EOI) which attracted a total of 109 applications with 30 applications shortlisted.
 - (b) Stage 2: shortlisted applicants were invited to complete a full Accommodation Grants Program application against the published criteria:
 - the need for the tenancy and proposed results
 - capacity and experience
 - connection and benefit to local communities including diversity, inclusion and equity and
 - the integrity of the proposed budget, project plan and partnerships.
13. Following the invitation to the 30 shortlisted applicants, a total of 22 full applications were completed.
14. The assessment panel consisted of City of Sydney staff from the First Nations Leadership, Social City, Creative City and City Property Service teams.

Recommendation

15. This report recommends that Council approve the subsidy level and grant value of the tenants listed, with annual increases of 3% in grant value year-on-year over the course of the occupancy agreement.

Banga Community Shed

16. Soul Reign Pty Ltd, trading as The Goodways Project is the recommended applicant for the Banga Community Shed.
17. Soul Reign is a First Nations creative collective based in Sydney that uses art, storytelling, and hands-on making to support healing, youth engagement, cultural continuity, and self-determination. Their work is grounded in long-term impact, community partnerships, and cultural integrity.
18. The Goodways Project is a First Nations-led creative hub for individuals, groups, and communities. The project will use the Banga Community Shed tenancy to offer cultural workshops, provide mentorship and leadership development for First Nations youth and host culturally safe gatherings that foster belonging and wellbeing. Programs include workshops in artefact-making, Yidaki, screen printing, storytelling, and creative enterprise. Programs aim to assist First Nations creatives to develop skills in design, branding, and small business and create youth-led exhibitions and events, amplifying young voices and building community pride.
19. The opportunity for the Banga Community Shed was advertised for a lease of up to 5 years. It is recommended that a lease for 3 years be entered into initially, with an agreement that a subsequent lease for a further 2 years will be entered into subject to satisfactory performance by the grant recipient in the first 3 years.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre

20. Joynton Avenue Creative Centre is a 3-story building with a combination of open plan spaces, hireable spaces and 5 lockable footprints which the City sought to offer as tenancies through an Accommodation Grants Program process. Due to the interactive nature of the tenancies, it is recommended that the most appropriate model is for successful applicants to operate from their licenced areas independently as per their applications, with access to the shared non-licenced areas within the facility to conduct creative activities for the local community, the creative sector and the applicants' communities.
21. The opportunities for the Joynton Avenue Creative were advertised for licences of up to 5 years. It is recommended that a licence for 3 years be entered into initially, with an option for tenants to occupy for a further 2 years subject to satisfactory performance in the first 3 years.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 1

22. Season Arts Incorporated is the recommended applicant for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 1.
23. Season Arts Incorporated is a newly formed artist-run initiative that will deliver seasonable curated exhibitions in the ground floor gallery space along with hosting multi-disciplinary public programs that respond to exhibitions in communal areas of Joynton Avenue Creative Centre. The two additional rooms offered in Tenancy 1 will host creative residencies and provide space for curators and programmers to develop projects and carry out operational tasks.

24. Season Arts Incorporated proposed to establish a unique exhibition and public programming model called "Season," which delivers 3 curated exhibitions annually, each running for 4 months, accompanied by 8 fortnightly public programs. Exhibitions and programs will be selected through a community open call, facilitating a responsive and evolving activation of the ground floor that prioritises accessibility and representation. Season Arts Incorporated intend to establish 2 residency spaces for curators and programmers to develop projects, and co-directors and volunteers to carry out operational tasks.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 2

25. Artist Studio Collective is the recommended applicant for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre – Tenancy 2.
26. Artist Studio Collective is a group of 3 Sydney based artists/core creatives who will establish a collaborative studio to support their diverse practices, host gatherings, and build a vibrant inclusive hub.
27. Artist Studio Collective intend to draw on their experience working with Sydney-based institutions, connecting communities, fostering collaboration, care, and meaningful exchanges locally, nationally and internationally. The accommodation grant offers them rare multiyear studio tenancy which will provide them with the security to build a welcoming environment for artists and communities to connect, share knowledge, and produce meaningful work.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 3

28. Erin Kathleen Keys, trading as The Bench is the recommended applicant for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre – Tenancy 3.
29. The Bench is an existing tenant at Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, established in 2020 as a purpose-led creative workshop, dedicated to equitable access, social impact, and high-quality jewellery education.
30. The Bench has applied for a full rental subsidy to expend on their existing 'pay as you can' model, which will provide greater access to jewellery workshops and classes for underrepresented community members. Their tenancy will be used to solidify the existing business model, including fee-waivers for community members. The multi-year licence will also build opportunities for artist training and employment as workshop leaders, and for community members as collaborators and students.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 4

31. Garuwa Creative Pty Ltd, trading as WUNAN is the recommended applicant for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre – Tenancy 4.
32. Named after the East Kimberley practice of sharing and fair exchange, WUNAN will be a First Nations-led hub where film, fibre arts, education, intercultural practice and unexpected artforms will converge, enabling creatives to make work collaboratively while engaging local communities.

33. WUNAN will support socially impactful projects and creative residencies by hosting shared workspaces, public events, workshops, and community-led programs and events that foster knowledge exchange and cultural dialogue. The multi room tenancy will provide the opportunity for associated organisation members GARUWA, Indigitek, Nyumbar Education and artist / designer Sancia Ridgeway to collaborate and build together. The collective will empower First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse creatives to engage local communities and promote equity and leadership.

Joynton Avenue Creative Centre - Tenancy 5

34. Ashleigh Louise Garwood, trading as Artist Led Photographic Collective is the recommended applicant for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre – Tenancy 5.
35. Artist Led Photographic Collective is a group of 4 Sydney based contemporary photography artists who have collaborated in response to the closure of key photography institutions and the need for dedicated spaces as photography evolves. They will use the multi room tenancy to create permanent studios, a shared technical lab, and a flexible project space. The lab will offer professional equipment, including printers, scanners, and lighting, normally out of reach for individual artists.

The collective represents a range of diverse voices, perspectives and lived experiences. The collective will take advantage of their secure tenancy by engaging in local audiences, offering workshops, talks and open studios to help build a vibrant community around photography's changing cultural role.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

37. 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 Accommodation Grants Program recipients 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.
 - (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - A thriving cultural and creative life – we are all able to participate in, contribute to and benefit from its cultural life. The recommended Accommodation Grants Program recipients in this report are creative and cultural practitioners who will activate both Joynton Avenue Community Centre and Banga Community Shed for a range of communities, including other creatives.

Organisational Impact

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

39. Staff will work with Joynton Avenue Creative Centre tenants and community hirers to ensure the facility meets intended use and closely monitor how recommended applicants meet performance measures.

Risks

40. The proposal is considered to be within the City's Risk Appetite as set out below.
- (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

41. 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.
42. The 6 selected tenants represent a cross section of the creative/community ecosystem that includes young emerging artist / curators, practicing professional artists, a First Nations led creative hub, a photography based collective, a jewellery workshop and shared location for a collective of First Nations organisations.

Financial Implications

43. The total value of the recommended subsidies for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre and Banga, for the duration of the 3+2-year occupancy agreement terms is \$1,263,683. This represents a 100% rental subsidy and a forgone market rental revenue of \$1,263,683 (excl. GST).
44. The budget for the Accommodation Grants Program revenue and offsetting subsidy expense will be incorporated into the future years budget cycles 2026/27 onwards accordingly based on above values.
45. Budget for the 2025/26 Accommodation Grants Program subsidy did not include the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre as it came in-house managed by the City for an interim period until a new Accommodation Grants Program agreement became operational. Given that previous Accommodation Grants Program tenants at Joynton Avenue Creative Centre and Banga were on 100% subsidy, there is no additional budget implication in rent foregone across these 2 sites.

46. There are sufficient funds allocated in 2025/26 within City Life operating budget to absorb the pro-rata accommodation grant subsidy amount covering anticipated starting period February 2026 to 30 June 2026 amounting to \$99,175 to support the recommended grants.

Relevant Legislation

47. 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.
48. Section 356(3)(a) to (d) is satisfied for the purpose of providing grant funding to for profit organisations because:
- (a) the funding is part of the following programs:
 - (i) Accommodation Grants Program
 - (b) the details of the programs were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for financial year 2025/26
 - (c) the program's proposed budgets do not exceed five per cent 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

49. The commencement date for each occupancy arrangement recommended in this report is from February 2026. Occupancy arrangement documents will be developed for all successful applications following Council approval.

Public Consultation

50. During this Accommodation Grants Program process throughout July to September 2025, the following was made available to potential applicants:
- (a) an online information session, with subtitled recording made available on the corporate website
 - (b) two site inspections / Community Open Days on Saturday 12 July 2025 and Thursday 17 July 2025, with 170 attendees in total
 - (c) an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information session with a member of the First Nations Leadership team on Thursday 17 July 2025 with 18 attendees
 - (d) individual bookable 20-minute applicant support sessions (8 to 21 July 2025) were attended by 28 applicants, including 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicant support sessions and
 - (e) applicants shortlisted and invited to complete a full (stage 2) Accommodation Grants Program application, were offered a feedback session and a second site visit to assist them to complete their submission.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

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