

Grants and Sponsorship - Accommodation Grants Program - ReadyMade Works Incorporated

File No: S118918

Summary

The Accommodation Grants Program supports community, cultural, economic and sustainability focused organisations by providing accommodation in City of Sydney (the City) owned buildings within the property portfolio at below market rents or at no charge.

Accommodation Grants Program tenant ReadyMade Works Incorporated (ReadyMade) advised the City of its financial stress with deficit forecasts due to reduced grant funding from the NSW Government. It has requested an increase in its subsidy from 89% to 100% for the remainder of its current lease, which ends on 30 June 2026.

ReadyMade is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that runs a multi-purpose studio venue dedicated to providing affordable rehearsal space for Sydney's performing artists, primarily for independent dance. ReadyMade is the sole provider of paid dance residencies in the Sydney Local Government Area.

Since 2014, ReadyMade has occupied Level 1, 247-257 Bulwara Road Ultimo as an Accommodation Grant Program tenant. ReadyMade is currently in Year 5 of a 5-year lease, expiring 30 June 2026.

To enable ReadyMade Works Incorporated to explore new revenue options and to maintain its services to the arts sector, this report seeks Council approval to increase rental subsidy to 100% for ReadyMade for the remainder of its current lease.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the new subsidy and grant level for ReadyMade Works Incorporated at Level 1, 247-257 Bulwara Road Ultimo for the remaining months of the current lease on the following rental subsidy:

	Market Rental Value	Grant Subsidy	Grant Amount	Rent Payable
Pro rata Year 5 01/01/2026 - 30/06/2026 (180 days)	\$44,404	100%	\$44,404	\$0

- (B) Council approve the backdating of this subsidy to commence from 1 January 2026;
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into any documentation required to vary the lease to reflect the new rental subsidy; and
- (D) 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 to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. ReadyMade Works Incorporated (ReadyMade) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that runs a multi-purpose studio venue dedicated to providing affordable rehearsal space for Sydney's performing artists, primarily for independent dance. ReadyMade is the sole provider of paid dance residencies in the Sydney Local Government Area.
2. Since 2014, ReadyMade has occupied level 1, 247-257 Bulwara Road Ultimo as an Accommodation Grant Program tenant. ReadyMade is currently in Year 5 of a five-year lease, expiring 30 June 2026.
3. In 2025, the City was contacted by some of our creative tenants and funding recipients about the impacts and outcomes of Create NSW multi-year funding, which supports the core operations and staffing costs for local arts organisations. ReadyMade's annual funding from Create NSW was halved, from \$135,000 to \$65,000, and approved for 2 years.
4. City staff met with representatives of ReadyMade on 11 November 2025 to understand the impacts of this funding shortfall on the organisation. ReadyMade has proposed to adjust operations over the next 2 years by reducing the number of ReadyMade led artistic programs and paid residency opportunities. However, it will maintain hire access for independent dance practitioners and has committed to no net loss of space utilisation. New revenue generation options being explored include partnerships, philanthropic funding, and a development application to extend operating hours to increase usage and bookings. ReadyMade will need to draw on its marginal financial reserves to fund a modest budget shortfall.
5. To reduce expenses, ReadyMade has requested an increase to its Accommodation Grants Program rental subsidy from 89% to 100% for the remainder of its lease term (expiring 30 June 2026). During the next 6-month period we will be requiring all of our relevant Accommodation Grant Program tenants to submit an application for a new lease and subsidy agreement for their current space to be considered by Council. This includes ReadyMade.
6. On 5 December 2025, the Grants team facilitated an assessment meeting to review the ReadyMade subsidy change request. City staff assessors unanimously highly recommended the proposed subsidy change, to support this small organisation to continue to provide its critical service managing essential cultural infrastructure for Sydney artists.
7. ReadyMade approached the City on 11 November 2025 requesting an increase in subsidy. The City's review of that request meant that the request was not ready for Council consideration and approval until February 2026. On this basis, although the grants policy does not usually allow for retrospective funding, this report seeks Council's approval to backdate the subsidy from 1 January 2026.

8. The below table shows the proposed subsidy recommendation and notes the total impact on City revenue is \$4,844 across 2025/26:

	CURRENT SUBSIDY pro rata Year 5 01/01/2026 – 30/06/2026 (180 days)	PROPOSED SUBSIDY pro rata Year 5 01/01/2026 – 30/06/2026 (180 days)
Market Value Rent	\$44,403.63	\$44,403.63
Subsidy (%)	89%	100%
Subsidy amount	\$39,519.23	\$44,403.63
Rent payable	\$4,884	\$0

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

9. 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 grant is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - the provision of accommodation to cultural organisations contributes to the diverse range of services and support the City provides for our community. The diversity of these groups contributes to the vibrancy of the City's villages and the communities within them.
 - (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - approximately one third of the Accommodation Grant lease holders are cultural or arts organisations. These organisations support cultural development through the support of artists, and the delivery of culturally stimulating activities that engage our communities.
10. The Cultural Strategy 2025-2035 identifies the affordability crisis facing artists and arts organisations in Sydney, which has been further exacerbated by recent changes in both state and federal arts funding programs.

Risks

11. This request is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We 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) We have a cautious to open appetite for our strategic, community development, urban planning and creative functions and services.

Social / Cultural / Community

12. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program provides the City with a platform to support cultural and social initiatives from the communities and businesses within the local area.
13. The cultural organisations that are part of the Accommodation Grants Program make an invaluable contribution to our communities through the development and management of creative space, services, activities and programs.

Financial Implications

14. The total change in value of the recommended subsidy for the duration of the recommended period for ReadyMade is an additional \$4,884 in revenue foregone, compared to market value rent.

Relevant Legislation

15. 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. 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 Accommodation Grants Program;
 - (b) the details of this program were included in Council's adopted operational plan for financial year 2025/26;
 - (c) the program's proposed budget does not exceed five per cent of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates; and
 - (d) this program applies to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

16. The recommended increased subsidy in this report will be backdated to 1 January 2026, if approved by Council.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Annette Webb, Cultural Projects Coordinator Creative Spaces