Item 3.

Grants - Creative Grants

File No: S117676

Summary

The Creative grants program aims to support creative Individuals and organisations to enhance and enrich the cultural life of the community. These grants will grow and retain Sydney's creative workforce, improve access to affordable and suitable spaces and ensure the freedom of creative experiences to reflect our diverse communities. Grants are available for creative projects, individual artist support and cultural infrastructure.

It consists of 3 categories:

Creative projects

Supports artists and cultural organisations to create new artistic works, respond to creative sector needs, present events, festivals and cultural experiences. It also supports projects that tell Sydney's stories and reach new audiences.

Artist support

Supports professional practicing artists to continue to live and practice in the City of Sydney and Greater Sydney areas. It aims to rebuild our creative workforce by supporting artists from priority communities across a range of artforms and at different stages of their career.

Cultural infrastructure

Aims to strengthen Sydney's cultural life by supporting new creative spaces that are affordable, accessible and fit for purpose, and by improving existing spaces for creative purposes in the local area.

This report recommends a total of 57 grants across these 3 funding categories for a total multi-year value of $1,376,606 in cash and $16,993 value-in-kind. These grants will be paid over a maximum period of 3 years. Further information on these recommendations are detailed within this report and its attachments.

If all recommendations are approved, the 2026/27 budgets for the Creative projects and Artist support fund will be exhausted. There will be $570,000 remaining to be allocated from Cultural infrastructure budget for the remainder of the 2026/27 year as this category is open year-round.

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 and value-in-kind recommendations for the Creative projects, Artist support fund and Cultural infrastructure grant programs as shown at Attachments A, C and E to the subject report

(B) Council note the applicants not recommended for the Creative projects, Artist support fund and Cultural infrastructure grant funding as shown at Attachments B, D and F to the subject report

(C) Council note that all amounts to be paid to grant recipients under the Creative grants program are exclusive of GST

(D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer agreements with any organisation approved for a grant under terms consistent with this resolution and the Grants Policy

(E) 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 - Creative projects

Attachment B. Not recommended for funding - Creative projects

Attachment C. Recommended for funding - Artist support fund

Attachment D. Not recommended for funding - Artist support fund

Attachment E. Recommended for funding - Cultural infrastructure

Attachment F. Not recommended for funding - Cultural infrastructure

Attachment G. Grant program budget allocation - Creative grants

Attachment H. Data report on outcomes of funding - Creative projects and cultural infrastructure

Attachment I. Data report on outcomes of funding - Artist support fund

Background

1. On 28 April 2026, Council adopted the Grants Policy and Grants Guidelines under which this grant program is delivered.

2. The City of Sydney's (the City) grants program provides the City with a platform to support cultural, economic, environmental and social initiatives from the communities and business, within the local area.

3. The Grant programs consist of Economic, Environmental, Creative and Social and community grants. This report covers the recommendations for the Creative grants program which includes the creative projects, artist support fund and cultural infrastructure grant programs.

Grant program opened	21 July 2026	
Grant program closed	1 September 2026	
Eligible applicant types	As per Grant Guidelines	
Eligible applications received and cash amount requested in 2026/27		
Creative projects	150	$4,632,821
Artist support fund	321	$8,025.000
Cultural infrastructure	7	$732,611
Total	**478**	**$13,393,432**
Number of applications from for-profit organisations and/or sole traders	419	
Applications recommended and cash amounts recommended in 2026/27		
Creative projects	16	$203,206
Artist support fund	40	$1,000,000
Cultural infrastructure	1	$100,000
Total	**57**	**$1,303,206**
If the recommendations are approved, the Artist support fund and Creative projects categories will be fully expended for 2026/27. The Cultural infrastructure category will have $530,000 remaining to be allocated before June 2027, as applications in this category are open all year round.		

For-profit organisations and/or sole traders recommended	48 for-profit organisations/sole traders in total: **5 for profit organisations:** - Art Space - Bower Bird Films Pty. Limited - Jotz Productions Pty Ltd - Studio Gilay Pty Ltd, - Trading Blak Pty Ltd, **4 Sole Traders recommended under Creative projects:** Catherine Anne Fargher, Ellen Sara Elisabet Bagge, Hannah Jane Belanszky, Jodie Ann Welsh, **39 Sole Traders recommended under Artist support fund:** Alana Hunt, Alex Riley Craig, Aliyah Mae Knight, Anne-Marie Te Whiu, Brittanie Shipway, Carmen Michelle Glynn-Braun, Claudia Landi Nicholson, David Leha, David Joseph Lobb, Deborah Louise Kelly, Emma Kate Hart, Emma Louise Harrison, Enoch Lutui Mailangi, Erica Brennan, Gurbal Singh Padda, Jack Patrice Ball, Jazz Ash Money, Jesse Talei Koroi, Jessica Dunn, Jodie Katherine Dowd, Julian Kirwin Hamman, Lily Amelia Cullen Ehrlich, Margaret Tra, Martin Del Amo Beyer, Mitchell Ashley Christie, Morgan Jessie Ann Hogg, Munasib Tasnim Hamid, Nick Breedon, Raquel Elizabeth Caballero, Rhyan Dominic Separa Clapham, Ruby Teys, Sarah Jane Norman, Soie An, Sonnet Junyin Cure, Thandiwe Christine Gudu, Thomas Francis Melick, Trent James Chi, Thor Foo, William Morgan Bain, and Yi Zhuang Andrea Nicole Lim (1 additional applicant recommended under the Artist Support fund is not a Sole Trader but is auspiced by an Eligible Not-For-Profit organisation)

4. Each funding round the City receives over 100% more applications it can fund within its allocated funding budget. Not all quality applications can be funded therefore the City applies a rigorous assessment process to ensure that recommended projects align with the City's strategies and priorities.

5. In assessing the applications, the assessment panel may recommend an amount less than what the applicant has requested. The main reasons why the panel may do this are;

   (a) the applicant has not made a case for full funding,

   (b) the applicant has requested funding for items that the City does not support

   (c) the panel wishes to support the project but does not have sufficient budget to provide the full request and therefore recommends a lower amount.

6. If an applicant does not receive the full amount requested they will have the opportunity to vary their project accordingly. If the panel have concerns about the applicant's capacity to achieve the objectives of their project, the panel may request a revised budget prior to contracting.

7. This program is assessed under the process and against the criteria as detailed in the approved Grants policy and guidelines.

8. Attached to this report at Attachment H (Data report on outcomes of funding - Creative projects and Cultural infrastructure) and Attachment I (Data report on outcomes of funding - Artist support fund) are high level summaries on the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the funding if the recommendations are approved for this Creative grants program. The two data reports provide insight into what the grant applicants have identified they hope to achieve if they receive the City's funding.

9. All applicants who applied for funding will be advised of the outcomes of their applications once Council has made its decision.

Key implications

Strategic alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

10. 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 program 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.

    (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - the recommended grant projects in this report contribute to supporting artistic and creative endeavours in our city, helping foster initiative, experimentation and enterprise by creative workers and providing new opportunities for audiences to engage in the city's cultural life.

    (c) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the recommended grant projects in this report contribute to helping stimulate business and promote economic activity. They encourage partnerships with other organisations on business development and assist groups of businesses to work together for the collective benefit.

11. Directions 6, 8 and 9 relate most closely to the Creative grants program however the City acknowledges that many of the grants recommended under this report will support projects with outcomes and impacts that reach beyond Directions 6, 8 and 9.

Organisational impact

12. All grants are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.

13. All grant recipients will be required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes and acquit their grant. The management of grant contracts 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

14. 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.

Financial implications

15. A financial summary of the recommendations for this program is at Attachment G. This details the proposed cash and value-in-kind allocations for the current financial year and any future financial years (where relevant). If the recommendations are approved there will be no further budget available for either the Artist support fund or Creative projects categories in the current financial year. As the Cultural infrastructure category is open all year round, there are funds remaining ($530,000) in this financial year's budget to be allocated before June 2027, should Council approve the recommendations from this category.

16. There are sufficient funds allocated in this financial year's operational budget to support the recommended grants. The forward multi-year proposed recommendations are included in the long-term financial plan.

17. Value-in-kind support has been recommended for selected applicants as detailed in the Attachments to this report. The value-in-kind budget is approved each year as part of the grants budget and there is sufficient budget to support these recommendations.

Relevant legislation

18. 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.

19. Under section 377(1A)(a) to (d) of the Local Government Act 1993 public notice of the financial grant assistant for the Creative grants program is not required because:

    (a) the funding is a part of the Creative grants program

    (b) the details of the program were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for this financial year

    (c) each programs' proposed budget does not exceed 5% of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for this financial year

    (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical dates / Time frames

20. The funding period for this grant program is for activities taking place 12 months from each project start date. In this report there are also recommendations of funding for future financial years to support activities for multi-year projects. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting.

Public engagement

21. At the opening of the annual grant program, the City of Sydney delivers a number of community focused online, telephone and in-person information sessions designed to share more details of the opportunities and support prospective applicants. Details of the type and number of sessions and attendees, are included in the table below:

Type of information session	**Number of sessions**	**Number of attendees**
Creative grants program webinar	1 (21 July 2026)	158
All other program webinars	3 (various dates)	230
Telephone bookings (15-minute sessions)	416 (all programs)	416 (all programs)
In-person meetings (20-minute sessions)	61 (all programs)	61 (all programs)

22. As per the Grants Guidelines, all grant applicants, whether they are successful or unsuccessful, are invited to seek feedback from the grants team. This feedback, delivered orally, provides unsuccessful applicants with a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their submission that were identified by the assessment panel.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Sam Wild, Manager Grants