Item 3.

Grants - Social and Community Grants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

File No: S117676

Summary

Social and community grants

The Social and community grants helps bring our vision of a fair and resilient city to life by supporting community projects that encourage inclusion, connection and wellbeing. It helps communities to take the lead in solving local challenges, encourages people to work together and makes it easier to access the support and services they need. It also works to strengthen community organisations so they can keep going and plan for the future.

The program is made up of 2 categories:

Social and community projects

Supports community-based organisations to provide programs that help increase social cohesion and inclusion, develop healthy and resilient communities, and support participation in community life.

Food support projects

Supports community-based organisations to deliver long term and sustainable projects and programs that increase access to affordable and healthy food for our priority communities. All applications must demonstrate delivery of food safety requirements.

For the Social and community projects this report recommends a total of 19 grants across these 2 categories for a total multi-year value of $1,051,961 in cash and $41,055 value-in-kind. These grants will be paid over a period of 3 years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund works to address the priorities, needs and aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, while supporting a sustainable local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector. The program aligns with the City's community strategic plan and our commitment to reconciliation.

For the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund this report recommends a total of 4 grants for a total value of $173,500 in cash. These grants will be paid over a single year.

Further information on these recommendations is detailed within this report and its attachments. If all recommendations are approved, the 2026/27 budgets for the Social and community grants will be exhausted. There will be $176,500 remaining to be allocated from Collaboration fund 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 Social and community projects, Food support projects and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund as shown at Attachments A, C and H to the subject report

(B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended for the Social and community projects, Food support projects and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund as shown at Attachments B, D and I to the subject report

(C) Council note that all amounts to be paid to grant recipients under the Social and community grants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund programs 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 - Social and community projects
Attachment B.	Not recommended for funding - Social and community projects
Attachment C.	Recommended for funding - Food support projects
Attachment D.	Not recommended for funding - Food support projects
Attachment E.	Grant program budget allocation - Social and community grants
Attachment F.	Data report on outcomes of funding - Social and community projects
Attachment G.	Data report on outcomes of funding - Food support projects
Attachment H.	Recommended for funding - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund
Attachment I.	Not recommended for funding - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund
Attachment J.	Grant program budget allocation - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund

Background

1. On 28 April 2026 Council adopted the Grants Policy and Grants Guidelines under which the Social and Community grant program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund are 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. This report covers the recommendations for the Social and Community grants program which includes the social and community projects and food support projects categories as well as recommendations for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund.

Social and community grants program

Grant program opened	21 July 2026	
Grant program closed	4pm, 1 September 2026	
Eligible applicant types	As per Grants Guidelines	
Eligible applications received and cash amount requested in 2026/27		
Social and community projects	97	$3,385,006
Food support projects	29	$1,995,399
Total	**126**	**$5,380,405**
Number of applications from for-profit organisations and/or sole traders	Not applicable as for-profit organisations and/or sole traders are not eligible to be considered for funding under the Social and Community grant program.	
Applications recommended and cash amounts recommended for 2026/27		
Social and community projects	9	$361,642
Food support projects	10	$284,319
Total	**19**	**$645,961**
If recommendations are approved, the 2026/27 budget for the Social and community grants program will be fully expended.		
For-profit organisations and/or sole traders recommended	Not applicable (see above).	

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

Grant program opened	9 June 2026	
Grant program closed	30 June 2027 (program is open all year for applications until the budget is exhausted - applications are batched and assessed at different points of the year)	
Eligible applicant types	As per Grants Guidelines	
Eligible applications received and cash amount requested in 2026/27		
Total	6	$290,000
Number of applications from for-profit organisations and/or sole traders	2	
Applications recommended and cash amounts recommended for 2026/27		
Total	4	$173,500
As the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund is open all year round, should Council approve the recommendations from this program in this report, there will be $176,500 remaining in this financial year's budget to be allocated before June 2027.		
For-profit organisations and/or sole traders recommended	0	

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 Grant policy and guidelines.

8. Attachment F (Data report on outcomes of funding - Social and community projects) and Attachment G (Data report on outcomes of funding - Food support projects) to this report are high level summaries on the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the funding if the recommendations are approved for the Social and community grants program. The 2 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.

11. Direction 6 relates most closely to the Social and Community grants program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund, however the City acknowledges that many of the grants recommended under this report will support projects with outcomes and impacts that reach beyond Direction 6.

Organisational impact

12. All grants are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the grant 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 the Social and community grants program is at Attachment E and for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund at Attachment J. 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 this program in the current financial year.

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. 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. Public notice of the financial grant assistance is not required for the Social and Community grants program in accordance with section 356(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 because the recommended eligible grant recipients do not act for private gain and additionally section 356(3) of the Local Government Act 1993 applies as

(a) the funding is a part of the Social and community grants program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

(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 to which the recommended grant recipients seek funding 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. The earliest start date for any projects recommended in this report is 1 January 2027. 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**
Social and community grants program webinar	1 (24 July 2026)	94
All other program webinars	3 (various dates)	294
Telephone bookings (15-minute sessions)	416 (all programs)	416 (all programs)
In-person meetings (20-minute sessions)	61 (all programs)	61 (all programs)

22. In addition to the above, the grants team hosted an in-person briefing at 119 Redfern Street for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants about all the City's grant programs - including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund - at which 6 people attended. Grants staff also presented at the First Nations Connect workshop on grants writing, where 12 people attended. There were also Grants staff available at 119 Redfern Street or the Redfern Community Centre for 3 full working days over the round opening period, available for pre-booked or walk in meetings with community members to promote the grant opportunities.

23. 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.

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