

Public Exhibition - Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines

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 current Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines were adopted by Council in June 2024. This document aligns with the strategic directions and actions of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The delivery of support through cash and value-in-kind (VIK) is part of the many ways in which the City partners with the community.

As part of the commitment to review the Guidelines, a review has been undertaken to ensure that programs continue to deliver against Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and to meet best practice in grants management.

There are recommended changes to the Guidelines which will support stronger outcomes for the communities of the City.

The recommended changes to the Guidelines are reflected in the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines at Attachment A. The current Guidelines are at Attachment B.

This report seeks Council approval to place the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines on public exhibition.

Once exhibited and feedback received, the Guidelines will be brought back to Council for adoption.

These are minor amendments to the existing Guidelines, providing greater clarity on delegation and processes in line with Council requests. A substantial review of the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines and Policy will be undertaken in 2025/26, with Council to fully review the Policy and Guidelines in 2026.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note that the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines

Attachment B. Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines (current)

Background

1. On 24 June 2024, Council adopted the current Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines. Since then, there have been additional strategies and resolutions of Council relevant to the grant and sponsorship programs. These include:
 - (a) On 29 July 2024, Council requested the Chief Executive Officer to encourage community-led initiatives for reuse and repair through a dedicated Grants program, as part of NOM 13.5 Tackling Textile Waste in the City of Sydney.
 - (b) On 25 November 2024, Council adopted the Cultural Strategy 2025-2035.
 - (c) On 25 November 2024 Council agreed to a ban on providing grants, funding, and other forms of support, including non-financial support, to Australian Disability Enterprises or companies that pay their workers less than the national minimum wage, as part of NOM 16.10 Abolishing Subminimum Wages for Disabled Workers.
2. A review of the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines has been conducted to ensure that the programs continue to align with the strategic outcomes of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and to align grant programs with the recently approved Cultural Strategy 2025-2035 and Notices of Motion as they relate to grants and sponsorship.
3. Consultation was delivered through the following mechanisms:
 - (a) a survey of over 200 applicants on their user experience of the City's Grants and Sponsorship application process and support
 - (b) two workshops with the First Nations Leadership Team to review the impact of the Collaboration Fund and the programs as a whole and how we are engaging with community
 - (c) a total of 17 consultations with City staff from across teams on each funding program considering outcomes from the current guidelines.
4. As a result of the consultation, twelve key changes to the Guidelines and the grant and sponsorship programs are recommended, as outlined below. In addition, minor adjustments have been made to the guidelines to address clarity and usability.

	Recommended change	Details	Change driver
1	Fair wages: Sub-minimal wages	The General exclusions and ineligibility will note that we don't give grants or sponsorship to applicants that pay workers a subminimum wage, including applicants that are or engage Australian disability enterprises (ADEs).	Addressing NOM 16.10 - 25.11.24 - Abolishing Subminimum Wages for Disabled Workers.

	Recommended change	Details	Change driver
2	Grants to tertiary education institutions	The General exclusions and ineligibility will note that we do not give grants or sponsorship to tertiary education institutions seeking support for core business however if there is a worthy project they need to speak with City staff before applying.	Focusing funding on community based and priority need organisations.
3	Quick response grants	Criteria changes to meet urgent, community needs. Reduced funding cap, reduced turnaround time.	Focusing programs are urgently needed to prioritise community groups.
4	Innovation and Ideas grants: includes circular economy and removal of stage 1	Inclusion of circular economy –funding provision updated to include projects that support reuse and repair. No longer providing Stage 1 - Ideas form for Innovation and Ideas applicants to pitch ideas prior to application.	Addressing NOM 13.5 - 29.07.2024 Tackling Textile Waste in the City of Sydney. Ideas form was not well utilised by applicants.
5	Major grants category: New category	Combining Tier 2 Festivals and Events, and long term projects in Creative grant (e.g. City Recital Hall) and Community Services grant (e.g. Glebe Youth Services, Homelessness grants and Sydney Peace Prize). Allows for up to 5 years funding. Program by invitation only.	Existing long term or significant commitments that are currently spread across multiple programs. No additional funding required. This will make it easier for applicants to future plan.
6	Creative Live/work spaces grant	Includes new subcategory 'work spaces' and extends grant to be up to 2 years due to City management of Joynton Avenue Creative Centre.	Extension from 18 months to 2 years in alignment with Cultural Strategy. Workspaces were introduced to be available for Joynton Avenue Creative Centre.

	Recommended change	Details	Change driver
7	Green building grant	Three years funding up to \$50,000 per year available. Program overview increases type of projects that can be applied for. Includes resource recovery – funding updated to include projects that support reuse and repair.	To expand the opportunities for use, increase interest in and applications to Green building grant program. Addressing NOM 13.5 - 29.07.2024 Tackling Textile Waste in the City of Sydney.
8	Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights protocols	The General exclusions and ineligibility will note that we do not give grants or sponsorship to applicants or for projects that do not respect Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights.	Supporting self-determination, respect for Aboriginal practise and encouraging meaningful collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creators. Alignment with new Cultural Strategy.
9	Business Advocacy organisations	Business Advocacy organisations eligible for Business Sector support grants and Festivals and Events sponsorship. Business Advocacy organisations will not be required to match funding for Festivals and Events sponsorship.	Allowing organisations who can match with cash or value in kind, which is better suited to those organisations.
10	Letters of support	Noted in How to Apply, that City of Sydney employees and Councillors cannot provide support letters for our grants program or benefit from a grant.	Providing clarity to applicants on this governance matter, to further reduce requests.

	Recommended change	Details	Change driver
11	Satisfactorily completion and/or compliance with prior contract terms	Including as ineligible, applicants or projects where persons associated with the applicant or project have been involved in a previous project for which a City of Sydney grant or sponsorship was provided and the project was not satisfactorily completed or the applicable contract terms not complied with.	Providing greater clarity to applicants on their responsibilities during and after the project, and noting that can impact future grant opportunities.
12	New Glossary items /Definitions	New items included in Glossary/Definitions section.	Providing clarity to applicants on new terms used in the guidelines. Alignment with new Cultural Strategy and definition within A City for All strategy mid-point review.

5. City staff will continue to evaluate and assess the standards and impact of the Grants and Sponsorship programs to ensure its alignment to the City's strategies and with best practice in grants management.
6. If approved the draft Guidelines will be put on exhibition for 28 days. Feedback from the community will be reviewed and considered before the final Guidelines are submitted to Council for endorsement.
7. In line with the timeframe set out in the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, a substantial review of the Grants and Sponsorship Policy will happen in 2025/26 and both the Policy and Guidelines will be brought to Council in 2026.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

8. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision is a vision for the sustainable development of the City into the future. Building on our community's vision for the future, there are 10 directions for 2050, 10 targets to measure progress and 10 ambitious project ideas that bring the vision to life. The provision of grants and sponsorships is a key mechanism for the City to further the aims identified in its social, economic, environmental, and cultural policies. All applications are considered against the 10 strategic directions and how they can directly deliver or encourage the further development of the aims and objectives identified in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
9. The program is aligned to the following strategic directions and objectives:

- (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - Grants and sponsorships contribute to the City's endeavours in improving environmental performance of our residents and businesses by supporting new and innovative approaches to delivering sustainability outcomes and strengthening community resilience.
- (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - Grants and sponsorships contribute to the safe and responsible use of public spaces for community access and enjoyment of city residents, workers and visitors.
- (c) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - Grants and sponsorships 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.
- (d) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - Grants and sponsorships contributes to improved wellbeing, well located, inclusive and affordable services that improve social connections and embrace a safe city.
- (e) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - Grants and sponsorships 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.
- (f) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - Grants and sponsorships 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.
- (g) Direction 10 - Housing for all - Grants and sponsorships aligns with the City's position on affordable housing, homelessness and social sustainability, as set out in A City For All, the social sustainability strategy, as well as Housing for All, the City's housing strategy.

Risks

10. 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.
11. The City has a responsibility to manage the distribution of public money to community through an open and transparent process. The Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines document provides this transparency and allows for public input.

Social / Cultural / Community/ Environmental

12. The grants and sponsorship program provides the City with a platform to support social, cultural, economic and environmental initiatives from communities, community organisations and businesses within the local area.

Financial Implications

13. There are no additional financial implications beyond the grant budgets submitted as part of the draft 2025/26 budget and future years' forward estimates.

Relevant Legislation

14. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 regulates how financial assistance can be given by local councils.
15. As part of the Local Government Act 1993 and Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, the City is required to exhibit changes to its grants program.
16. The Grants and Sponsorship Policy provides the governance framework for how the City's grants and sponsorship program is managed, and how decisions are made. As set out in the Policy, the Guidelines provide details about each of the grant programs including funding priorities, key dates, funding available, eligibility criteria, application processes and assessment criteria. The Policy and Guidelines ensure that the City meets the requirements of section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 in relation to its grants and sponsorship programs.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

17. The proposed revision to the Guidelines will be implemented for the 2025/26 financial year immediately following adoption by Council.

Public Consultation

18. The Guidelines will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days.

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