Grants and Sponsorship - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

File No: S117676

Summary

The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city. To achieve the objectives of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, genuine partnership between government, business and the community is required.

The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund is open all year for applications until the annual budget is exhausted.

This report considers 20 eligible applications for funding under the 2024/25 round of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund. Ten grants are recommended for a total cash value of $334,194 from the 2024/25 financial year budget, with one project receiving an additional $11,257 of value-in-kind (venue fee waiver).

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

(A) Council approve the cash and value-in-kind recommendations for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund program as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;

(B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;

(C) Council note that all grant amounts 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 or sponsorship under terms consistent with this resolution and the Grants and Sponsorship Policy; and

(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 to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

Attachments

Attachment A. Recommended For Funding - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

Attachment B. Not Recommended For Funding - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

Background

1. On 1 July 2024, the City announced the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund as being open for application on the City's website, with grant applications open all year round, until budget is exhausted.

2. Information on this grant program (such as application dates, guidelines, and eligibility criteria) was made available on the City's website. The City actively promoted the grant programs through the corporate website, content marketing, e-newsletters, paid and organic social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn), and AdWords. Email campaigns were utilised to target interested parties who have applied previously for grants at the City or who have expressed an interest in the City's programs.

3. As per the Grants and Sponsorship Program Guidelines, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund program is dedicated to local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, groups and organisations and is open to eligible not-for profit organisations, incorporated associations, corporations, co-operatives, partnerships, sole traders, trustees of a trust and an individual or unincorporated community group auspiced by an eligible not-for-profit organisation or corporation.

4. Five eligible applications were received from for-profit organisations and sole traders through the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund and the following one applicant is recommended for approval in this report:

    (a) Soul Reign Pty Ltd;

Grants Assessment Process

5. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program is highly competitive. Applications that are not recommended have either not scored as highly against the assessment criteria as the recommended applications or have incomplete or insufficient information. The City's Grants and Sponsorship team provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

6. The assessment process includes advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The applications are scored against defined assessment criteria for each grant program as well as the integrity of the proposed budget, project plan, partnerships, contributions and connection to the local community and industry sectors.

7. The assessment criteria for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund is:

    - Why is there a need for the project and what are the proposed outcomes, capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the project?

    - What is your experience in delivering projects?

    - How have you included the local diverse community and how will they benefit and/or being engaged?

8. Applicants who requested more than $20,000 in cash per year are also assessed against the following additional assessment criteria:

    - How does the project rate against the funding priorities?

9. The assessment meeting for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund was held on 3 and 4 April 2025. The assessment panel consisted of City staff from the First Nations Leadership, City Business and Safety and Social City Teams.

10. Once assessed, application recommendations are decided by Council, and approved applicants are awarded a contract which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.

11. It is expected that all successful applicants will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.

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

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund

13. The applications recommended for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund program are outlined in Attachment A to this report.

14. The program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2024/25	$500,000
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	($228,047)
Plus: Returned funds / contracts not proceeding on previous approval	$62,241
Total cash available	$334,194
Total number of eligible applications this allocation	20
Total cash value requested from applications	$855,830
Total value-in-kind support requested from applications	$11,257
Total number of applications recommended for cash and/or value in-kind support	10
Total amount of cash funding recommended for payment in 2024/25 (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2025/26 - $135,000) (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2026/27 - $50,000)	$334,194
Total amount of value in-kind support recommended for 2024/25 (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2025/26 - $0) (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2026/27 - $0)	$11,257

Cash amount remaining for payment in 2024/25	$0

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

15. 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 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.

Organisational Impact

16. The grants and sponsorships contract management process 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

17. This recommendation is within the City's risk appetite, which states:

    - 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.
    - 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.
    - 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/ Environmental

18. 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.

Financial Implications

19. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2024/25 grants and sponsorship budget, included in the City's approved operating budget for 2024/25 to support the recommended grants. Details and total values are provided in the table above.

Relevant Legislation

20. 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.

21. 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 program:

        (i) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund; and

    (b) the details of the program were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for financial year 2024/25;

    (c) the program's proposed budgets do not exceed five per cent of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2024/25; and

    (d) this program applies to a significant group of persons within the local government

Critical Dates / Time Frames

22. The funding period for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund for financial year 2024/25 is for activities taking place 12 months from the project start date. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Alana Goodwin, Grants Programme Coordinator