

Grants and Sponsorship - Cultural Grants

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 the Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, genuine partnership between government, business and the community is required.

The annual Grants and Sponsorship programs have 2 main rounds: Summer and Winter. The Summer round was open from 4 February to 11 March 2025. This report covers the following funding programs:

- Creative Grant program
- Festivals and Events Sponsorship Tier 1 General Festivals and Events program
- Festivals and Events Sponsorship Tier 2 Major Festivals and Events program

For the Creative Grant program, 147 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of 28 grants for a total value of \$585,000 in cash and \$1,884 value-in-kind for payment in the 2025/26 financial year.

For the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program (Tier 1 and Tier 2), 93 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of 25 grants to a total value of \$648,635 in cash and \$459,945 value-in-kind for payment in the 2025/26 financial year.

On 22 August 2022, Council adopted a Grants and Sponsorship Policy. All grants in this report were assessed in accordance with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, the Grants and Sponsorship Program Guidelines, the priorities set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and various other relevant City strategies and action plans.

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 Grant program as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant or value-in-kind for the Creative Grant program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve the cash and value-in-kind recommendations for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (D) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant or value-in-kind for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program as shown at Attachment D to the subject report;
- (E) Council note that all grant amounts are exclusive of GST;
- (F) 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
- (G) 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 Grant Program
Attachment B.	Not Recommended for Funding - Creative Grant Program
Attachment C.	Recommended for Funding - Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program
Attachment D.	Not Recommended for Funding - Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program
Attachment E.	Data Report on Outcomes Funding - Creative Grant Program
Attachment F.	Data Report on Outcomes of Funding - Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program

Background

1. The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports residents, businesses and not-for-profit organisations to undertake initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.
2. On 4 February 2023, the City announced the grants program as being open for application on the City's website, with grant applications closing on 11 March 2023. This was for a period of 5 weeks (in 2024 it was a 4-week period).
3. The 2 funding programs with key outcomes for the cultural pillar are:
 - (a) Creative Grant program
 - (b) Festivals and Events Sponsorship program (Tier 1 and 2)
4. The Creative Grant program is open to eligible not-for-profit organisations, incorporated associations, corporations, co-operatives, partnerships, sole traders, trustees of a trust, government cultural institutions, and individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by an eligible not for profit organisation.
5. A total of 99 eligible applications were received from for-profit organisations and sole traders through the Creative Grant program and the following 8 for-profit organisations and sole traders are recommended in this report:
 - (a) Alexander Forbes McClintock
 - (b) Electronic Music Conference Pty Ltd
 - (c) Ellen Sara Elisabet Bagge
 - (d) Green Fern Studios Pty Ltd
 - (e) Julie Anne Hanssens
 - (f) Kathryn Spencer
 - (g) Lu Bradshaw
 - (h) Victor Ho Duen Wu
6. The Festivals and Events Sponsorship program is open to eligible not-for-profit organisations, incorporated associations, corporations, co-operatives, trustees of a trust, government entities, unincorporated community groups auspiced by an eligible not-for-profit organisation and, for Tier 1 only, sole traders and individuals auspiced by an eligible not-for-profit organisation.
7. A total of 34 eligible applications were received from for-profit organisations and sole traders through the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program and the following 6 for-profit organisations and sole traders are recommended in this report:
 - (a) Business Events Sydney Limited
 - (b) Choulartons Australia Pty Ltd

- (c) Cicada Innovations Pty Ltd
- (d) Fuzzy Operations Pty Ltd
- (e) Laura Amy Kent
- (f) Trustee for the Big Design Group

Grants assessment process

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. The assessment criteria for the Grant programs was:
 - Need – why is it needed? This is where you describe what you are doing, why it is important and what will happen as a result of you doing this project.
 - Experience – how will you create the project, your skills and ability and your experience in doing projects. This may include a project plan.
 - Community benefit – who will benefit from your project, how will they benefit and how have you included the diverse communities in the local area.
 - City of Sydney funding priorities – your project should consider one of the funding priorities as these are identified areas that need assistance.
11. The assessment meetings for the Creative Grant program was held on 14 April 2025, the Festivals and Events Tier 1 on 10 April 2025 and Festivals and Events Tier 2 on 7 April 2025. All applications were assessed against the relevant publicised assessment criteria. The assessment panels consisted of City staff from City life, Strategy and Urban Analytics Teams, with input from First Nations Leadership and Venue Management Teams.
12. Once Council approves recommended applications, a contract is developed which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.
13. It is expected that all successful applicants will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
14. All grants and sponsorships are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.

15. Attached to this report is a high-level summary of the outcomes of the funding if the recommendations are approved. This provides insight into what the applicants have identified as what they can achieve if they receive the funding.

Creative Grant

16. The applications recommended for the Creative Grant program are outlined in Attachment A to this report.
17. The Creative Grant program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2025/26	\$600,000	
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$15,000	
Total cash available 2025/26	\$585,000	
Recommended in Summer Round 2025/26	\$585,000	
Cash remaining 2025/26	\$0	
2025/26	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 4,028,443	\$ 1,884
Total Recommended	\$ 585,000	\$ 1,884
2026/27	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 821,129	\$ -
Total Recommended	\$ 80,000	\$ -
2027/28	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 626,969	\$ -
Total Recommended	\$ 40,000	\$ -

Festivals and Events Sponsorship

18. The applications recommended for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program are outlined in Attachment C to this report.
19. The Festivals and Events Sponsorship program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2025/26	\$5,065,000	
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$3,830,000	
Total cash available 2025/26	\$1,235,000	
Recommended in Summer Round 2025/26	\$648,635	
Cash remaining 2025/26	\$586,365	
2025/26	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 3,292,060	\$ 459,945
Total recommended	\$ 648,635	\$ 459,945
2026/27	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 1,336,035	\$ 438,635
Total recommended	\$ 310,100	\$ 438,635
2027/28	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 952,385	\$ 458,635
Total recommended	\$ 25,100	\$ 458,635

2028/29	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$ 260,000	\$ 460,000
Total recommended	\$ -	\$ 460,000

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

20. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - the recommended grant projects in this report 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 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.
 - (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative 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.
 - (d) 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.

Organisational Impact

21. 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

22. 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

Social / Cultural / Community

23. 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

24. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2025/26 grants and sponsorship budget included in the City's approved operating budget for 2025/265 to support the recommended grants. Details and total values are provided in the table above.

Relevant Legislation

25. 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.
26. 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 programs:
 - (i) Creative Grants program
 - (ii) Festivals and Events Sponsorship program

- (b) the details of the programs were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for financial year 2025/26
- (c) each program's proposed budget does not exceed 5% of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2025/26 and
- (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

27. The funding period for the funding programs 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.

Public Consultation

28. During February 2025, online and in-person briefing sessions took place where potential applicants were notified about the grants and how to apply. Separate online briefing sessions were delivered for each program, to enable people who were interested in more than one program to attend each.
- (a) Across all programs, a total of 528 attendees participated in the online sessions. This represents a 214% increase on the number of attendees to the online information session that took place for the previous Summer Round of grant programs in February 2024.
 - (b) Two in-person sessions for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community were held in Redfern (5 February 2025) and Glebe (10 February 2025). A total of 20 attendees participated in these sessions, the same number of attendees for similar sessions that took place for the previous Summer Round of grant programs in February 2024.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Sam Wild, Manager Grants