Post 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 were recommended changes to the guidelines which will support stronger outcomes for the communities of the City. These are minor amendments to the existing guidelines, providing greater clarity on delegations and processes in line with Council requests. A major review of the Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines - which will include incorporating delivery of the new Cultural grant programs arising from the Cultural Strategy - will be undertaken in 2025/26, with Council to fully review the Policy and Guidelines in 2026.

At its meeting on 12 May 2025, Council resolved to exhibit the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines. The draft guidelines (inclusive of the recommended changes) were put on exhibition from 13 May to 10 June 2024.

No submissions for the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines were received during the period of public exhibition. Minor additions have been made to the Guidelines to clarify which programs for profit entities are eligible to apply for.

This report recommends Council adopt the revised Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines.

These are minor amendments to the existing Guidelines. A substantial review of the Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines will be undertaken in 2025/26, with Council to fully review the Policy and Guidelines in 2026.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note that no submissions were received from the community on the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines;

(B) Council adopt the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and

(C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines in order to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

Attachments

Attachment A. Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines

Background

1. A review of the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines was 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 new City of Sydney policies including the new Cultural Strategy 2025-2035 as they relate to grants and sponsorship.

2. 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.

3. At its meeting on 12 May 2025, Council resolved to exhibit the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines. The draft guidelines were put on exhibition from 13 May to 10 June 2025.

4. No feedback was received from the community on the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines during the period that it was publicly exhibited and therefore no further key changes to the Guidelines are recommended.

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. The revised Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines will take affect from 1 July 2025.

7. In line with the timeframe set out in the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, a major 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.

9. 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.

10. The program is aligned with 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 contribute 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.

    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

11. 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.

12. 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

13. 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

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

Relevant Legislation

15. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 regulates how financial assistance can be given by local councils.

16. 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.

17. 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

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

Public Consultation

19. The draft Guidelines were put on exhibition from 13 May to 10 June 2025. No submissions were received during this period.

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