

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: S117676 **DATE:** 21 November 2024

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Emma Rigney, Executive Director City Life

THROUGH: Monica Barone PSM, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 7.3 – Grants and Sponsorship - Environmental Grants

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

To provide Council with further information about the Green building grant program, funding allocations, emissions reduction and the Smart Green Apartments program.

Background

At the 11 November 2024 Environment and Climate Change Committee further information was sought on the following:

Green building grant program

Green building grants support building owners and owners corporations in the residential apartment building or strata sector, and the accommodation sector.

The Green building grant program is promoted through the residential apartment/strata sector by:

- Promotion through energy auditors, strata leadership network contacts and previous grantees.
- Advertising through Sustainable Apartments e-newsletters (online strata e-news – 3,043 subscribers, social media, webinars).

- Promotion through stakeholder networks including strata management companies, Sustainable Apartments reference group members, Owners Corporation Network, Strata Community Association, NABERS (NSW Government).

The Green building grant program is promoted through the accommodation (hotels, hostels and serviced apartments) sector by:

- [Sustainable Destination Partnership](#) Leadership Panel and associated stakeholders.
- Industry associations relevant to the tourism and destination sector.

Promotion is extended to target low-rise apartment buildings that are interested in electrification and solar assessments.

For hotels, hostels and serviced apartments feedback suggests the summer round better suits applications; this is reflected in the past summer round in which hotels applied for ratings across portfolios.

Funding reallocation

The Winter Round 2024/25 is the last time the Green building grant program will be offered for financial year 2024/25. In the Operational Plan for 2024/25, the City states:

‘Where the budget for one grant program is not fully expended, the underspend will be made available for transfer to other grant programs within this financial year as required’.

The reallocation of the remaining funds to the Festivals and Events category was due to the level of unmet demand in that category.

Emissions reduction

Residential apartment buildings

42,166 tCO₂e cumulative emissions have been avoided across the lifespan of energy efficiency projects that have been implemented by Owners Corporations since 2016. Note that building upgrades do not occur before the grant is acquitted hence outcomes are tracked beyond the life of the grant. The energy action plans delivered through grants inform long-term capital work plans for strata communities.

Accommodation sector: hotels, hostels and serviced apartments

Historically, interest in these grants has primarily focused on NABERS Energy and Water ratings, as well as Green Star performance. These ratings centre around benchmarking environmental performance and development of net zero plans rather than specific emission reduction measures.

Smart Green Apartments program

[Smart Green Apartments](#) (SGA) is an annual program supporting sustainable upgrades, cost reductions and performance improvements in apartment buildings. Each participating strata plan receives NABERS energy and water ratings and action plans with costed building upgrade recommendations, solar and electric vehicle feasibility studies (if applicable), advice on increasing recycling and access to webinars and networking opportunities.

Smart Green Apartments targets large apartment buildings (70+ lots) as these are typically more complex compared to smaller apartment buildings due to shared facilities, centralised services and metering. The program also focuses on residential precincts with multiple buildings and strata plans.

Apartment buildings that apply to Smart Green Apartments that are ineligible due to size, are referred to apply for Green building grants.

Unlike Smart Green Apartments applicants, Green building grant applicants must decide on a specific project(s) of interest and source a relevant assessor to provide a quote for the work. Applicants are welcome to apply for more than one grant. For example, an apartment building that receives a Year 1 NABERS rating as part of a Green building grant can later apply for a Year 2 NABERS rating following the implementation of measures designed to raise that initial rating.

Memo from Emma Rigney, Executive Director City Life

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Approved

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