

Attachment A

Draft Grants Policy 2026

Grants policy

Purpose

This policy provides the framework for managing Grant applications at the City of Sydney. It sets the expected outcomes of our Grant programs and the principles that underpin Grant making at the City of Sydney.

Scope

This policy applies to all Grants and value-in-kind provisions for all not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, sole traders, individuals, owners' corporations, unincorporated community groups and government agencies who apply to the City of Sydney for Grant funding.

All Employees involved in the development, assessment and administration of Grants are required to comply with this policy.

The policy does not include the procurement of other goods and services which is covered by the City of Sydney Procurement Policy, or donations to charities which is covered by the City of Sydney's Support for Charities, and Humanitarian Aid Guidelines.

Council may approve cash and in-kind funding to individuals and organisations outside this policy.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Assessors	Employees or external industry specialists with specific knowledge related to a Grant category engaged to evaluate Grant applications.
Eligibility criteria	The conditions which must be met by an applicant to qualify for a Grant
Employees	For the purposes of this policy, all City of Sydney permanent (full-time and part-time), temporary and casual employees, together with agency contractors (labour hire), work experience students, apprentices and volunteers.
Grant	Cash or value-in-kind support provided to applicants for a specified project or outcome
Grant administration	Refers to the processes the City of Sydney has in place to manage Grants. It includes planning and program design; promotion; assessment and decision-making; the management of Grant agreements; reporting; variation; review and evaluation; enforcement and close out.
Grant administration principles	Refers to the overarching values and standards that shapes how the City of Sydney designs, delivers, evaluates and manages the Grant program
Grants guidelines	Refers to a set of guidelines that set out funding opportunities, eligibility requirements, funding limits, assessment criteria and program objectives and priorities

Term	Meaning
Major grants	A long-term partnership between the City of Sydney and another community focused entity to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes. This may include a long-term lease of a community building.
Relationship Manager	Is the primary point of contact within the City of Sydney responsible for maintaining communication, assistance and contract management between the City of Sydney and the Grant recipient.
Value-in-kind	A value-in-kind (VIK) Grant is a form of support where the City of Sydney provides goods, services, facilities or resources instead of cash funding.

Statement

The City of Sydney is committed to building strong and resilient communities and to maximising wellbeing and connection for all residents. One of the ways we achieve this goal is by supporting community led projects and initiatives that strengthen the social, cultural, economic and environmental life of the city.

The City of Sydney’s Grants program supports communities and businesses to further the strategic outcomes of *Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision*.

This policy covers four key areas of the program:

- The Grants program and strategic alignment
- Grant administration principles
- Governance and oversight
- Grant administration.

This policy connects with several of our key strategy documents, as well as the Grants Guidelines, which provide detailed information on specific programs. Our website contains the Grants Guidelines and detailed information on funding opportunities, resources to support applicants and funding results. Please visit the City of Sydney’s website for more information.

The Grant program and strategic alignment

The Grant program is aligned with the City of Sydney’s overarching vision *Sustainable Sydney 2050*, its supporting strategies, and offers support under four strategic pillars:

- **Creative:** supports creative individuals and organisations to enhance and enrich the cultural life of the community.
- **Social:** supports initiatives that strengthen community wellbeing, inclusion and resilience.
- **Economic:** strengthens our economy innovation and promotes local precincts.
- **Environmental:** supports climate resilience, emissions reduction, and circular economy initiatives.

While some funding programs are broad in their objectives, each program aligns with the overarching vision. The City of Sydney will prioritise funding applications that best align with its strategic objectives.

The City of Sydney may set and/or revise specific funding priorities under each strategy to respond to a specific or emerging community need. These priorities are reviewed, set and communicated annually through our Grants Guidelines.

Principles of Grant administration

The City of Sydney is committed to the use of public funds through effective, fair and transparent processes, and clear program objectives linked to the City of Sydney's strategic goals. The guiding principles help inform decision making across the program.

1. *Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes*

The City of Sydney is committed to strengthening outcomes for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through its Grant program. We recognise that economic equity and inclusion are essential to achieving meaningful and lasting change. Our approach prioritises self-determination: initiatives led by First Nations communities that support the community's needs and aspirations.

The City of Sydney seeks to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across all stages of Grant design, delivery and evaluation. This ensures that Grant programs are culturally appropriate, responsive to community priorities, and contribute to long-term social, cultural and economic outcomes.

2. *Collaboration and partnerships*

Partnerships strengthen the impact of Grant programs by encouraging collaboration between the City of Sydney, community organisations, businesses, and other levels of governments, sharing of resources, expertise, and networks to deliver strategic outcomes.

Partnerships extend the reach, impact and sustainability of projects. By fostering partnerships, the City of Sydney helps ensure that funded initiatives reflect local priorities, generate greater innovation, and achieve outcomes that are more effective than could be delivered in isolation.

3. *Outcomes driven*

An outcomes-driven approach ensures that funding decisions focus on the impacts that projects deliver, rather than simply the activities. Grant programs are designed and measured against clear objectives that align with the City of Sydney's strategic priorities.

This ensures resources are invested where they will have the greatest impact. By measuring and monitoring outcomes, the City of Sydney can demonstrate the value of its investments, support continuous improvement, and deliver tangible benefits to the community.

4. *Strong Governance*

Strong governance provides the framework that ensures Grants are managed with integrity, consistency, and compliance. Clear roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authority are required, along with documented processes to manage risks and conflicts of interest.

Strong governance is critical to protecting the integrity of Grant program. It ensures that decisions are legally sound, ethically defensible, and aligned with City of Sydney policy and strategic priorities. Effective governance safeguards public funds, supports Employees in their roles, and provides assurance to the community.

5. *Transparency*

Transparency ensures that all stages of the Grant process are clear, open, and accessible. Applicants and the broader community must be able to understand the criteria, processes, and outcomes associated with the Grant.

Transparency is vital in maintaining trust in the Grant program. It demonstrates accountability and ensures that funding decisions are made fairly and consistently. They also encourage participation by showing that access is equitable and decisions are based on merit.

6. Proportionality

Grant programs vary in scale and complexity. Effective Grant administration requires a customised approach where resourcing and process are scaled to the size, risk, and complexity of the Grant. Small Grants should have simple processes, while major or higher-risk Grants require greater scrutiny.

Proportional requirements reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, making programs more attractive and achievable for smaller organisations. At the same time, this ensures that larger projects are subject to appropriate oversight, protecting public money while maintaining efficiency.

7. Value for money

Determining value for money in a Grant project requires carefully assessing the costs of the project against the benefits and impact it delivers for the community. It is not just about minimising cost, but about balancing efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and sustainability to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The City of Sydney is committed to the responsible stewardship of public funds. Applying value for money principles ensures that limited resources deliver the greatest community benefit, supports fair decision-making, and enhances public confidence in the Grant program.

8. Sustainability and community resilience

The City of Sydney is committed to building the capacity of communities and business, to encourage organisations and community to work together to make a bigger impact and to plan for future financial sustainability.

The City of Sydney also supports others to take positive steps to build the resilience of our communities to mitigate, respond, adapt and recover from shock events and chronic stresses. Organisations applying for Grants are encouraged to show adequate consideration of any environmental impacts and benefits. Organisations are to ensure that any events or programs funded through a City of Sydney Grant are delivered in an environmentally sustainable way.

Governance and oversight

The City of Sydney is committed to equity, effectiveness and transparency in its management of Grants. The City has established processes and procedures in place to ensure value for money in delivery of the Grant program, oversight of assessment and decision making and support for ethical and safe practices.

Ethics framework

The City of Sydney does not support any activities or entities that unnecessarily:

- allow the exploitation, misrepresentation or misappropriation of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) or cultural identity.

- pollute land, air or water or derive their principal source of revenue from the extraction or sale of coal, oil or gas
- destroy or waste non-renewable resources
- market, promote or advertise products or services in a misleading or deceitful manner
- produce, promote or distribute products or services likely to be harmful to the community
- acquire land or commodities primarily for speculative gain
- create, encourage, or perpetuate militarism or engage in the manufacture of armaments
- encourage gambling or entice people into financial over-commitment
- exploit people through the payment of below-award wages or poor working conditions
- unlawfully discriminate, or encourage unlawful discriminatory behaviour, including discrimination based on ability, culture, religion, age, gender and sexual orientation in employment, marketing and/or advertising practices or contribute to the inhibition of human rights generally
- sell or promote any prohibited items or services on City of Sydney land, such as fur and exotic animal skin products and feathers, other than where is permitted under traditional first nation cultural practices
- promote pornography
- support the production or sale of tobacco

Child Safety

The City of Sydney is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and has policies in place to support this commitment. Where a Grant application involves child-related programs or services, applicants must provide their child safety/child protection policy and procedures.

Making a complaint or reporting suspicions of fraudulent conduct

To make a general complaint about the Grant program or its processes you can use the City's official complaint channels, which include an online form, email, phone, or mail. For suspicions of fraud or corrupt conduct, use the dedicated online form noting that you can remain anonymous and such reports are handled with sensitivity.

Grant administration

Grant planning and design

The planning of a Grant program involves a policy decision to meet an identified strategic need within the community. This requires considerable planning, input and collaboration across multiple internal teams across the City of Sydney.

It is critical to the success of the program that all components associated with the implementation and delivery of a Grant program are considered. These include:

- identified need and how it aligns with the City of Sydney's stated strategic priorities
- capacity of Grant recipients to deliver outcomes in a sustainable way
- the costs, benefits and risks of the program over its lifecycle
- reporting and measurement of performance, impact and outcomes
- the impact on resources to effectively manage and administer the program.

No new Grant program can proceed to Executive or Council for endorsement without the approval of the Manager Grants.

Eligibility

The Local Government Act 1993 governs how Council can provide public money to the community. The Grants Guidelines set out the City of Sydney's eligibility requirements for each funding category.

Applications

All applications for funding must be submitted for review through the Grant program. Applicants must clearly detail the project outcomes and how they align with the City of Sydney's strategic goals and meet the eligibility requirements of the Grants Guidelines.

For some groups or individuals needing additional support in making their application, oral Grant applications are available through the Grants team. For more information, please refer to our website.

Assessments

All applications will be assessed by at least three people with knowledge and/or experience in the subject area of the application. Where relevant, assessments include expert advice and guidance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees. Assessments are made independent of both Council members and the Grants team.

The City may use industry experts and/or City of Sydney Employees to complete assessments of applications.

All assessors are required to make a conflict-of-interest declaration as part of the assessment process. Any potential or perceived conflict of interest will be managed in accordance with the City of Sydney's Code of Conduct.

Unsuccessful applications

Grant programs are highly competitive and while an application may meet the program criteria, it may not be competitive against other applications. Feedback can be made available to any applicants to the Grant program.

Approval

The CEO can approve Grants consistent with City of Sydney policies and delegations from Council for the following programs:

- Quick response Grant
- Creative live/work spaces Grant
- Short-term empty properties Grant
- Venue hire support Grant and;
- Street banners.

All other grants are approved by resolution of Council.

Many projects require bookings, approvals and consents from the City of Sydney (such as development applications or event approvals), NSW Police and other government agencies. Approval of a Grant does not imply that the City of Sydney has given any other required consent, authorisation or approval. If the necessary approvals cannot be obtained, the Grant may be revoked.

Approval of a Grant does not imply that the City of Sydney has given any other required consent, authorisation or approval.

Approval of value-in-kind is not a guarantee of a booking, as all bookings are subject to availability and must be made through the usual booking process for the facility, space or location requested.

Funding agreements

All Grant recipients will be required to enter into a formal funding agreement with the City of Sydney. The funding agreement is a contract that sets out the terms and conditions under which the funding is provided. The funding agreement also outlines the responsibilities of both parties, including reporting, acquittal and compliance requirements.

Variations

Variations involve changes to the agreed terms of an approved funding agreement. Variations will be considered where they are lodged via the Grants management system in consultation with the Relationship Manager and the Grants team when appropriate. Variations are assessed to ensure the scope and outcomes of the project remain consistent with its stated objectives and that any change still represents value for money.

All variations must be approved prior to implementation. Failure to obtain prior approval may constitute a breach of the funding agreement.

Reporting and acquittals

All Grant recipients are required to report on and acquit their project as detailed in their funding agreement. The acquittal may include the submission of financial information, documentation and evidence of expenditure.

- Acquittals are to be submitted using the Grants management system.
- The City of Sydney may audit Grant recipients at any time.

Grant recipients that fail to acquit their Grant in accordance with the relevant program requirements may be required to repay funding (either in full or in part) to the City of Sydney and may be considered ineligible for any further funding under the Program or any other program managed by the City of Sydney.

Responsibilities

Detailed responsibilities are outlined in the Grants Guidelines

City of Sydney Employees:

- Will be aware of and comply with their responsibilities under this policy and the Grants Guidelines and act in accordance with the City of Sydney's Code of Conduct and all relevant legislation.

Manager Grants

- Will ensure the effective management of policies, procedures, decision-making processes in line with the key principles and that all Grants recommended to Council are in accordance with the requirements of those policies, procedures and processes
- Negotiate, execute and administer Grants agreements

Executive Director City Life

- Ensures transparent and effective Grants management systems, policies, procedures and decision-making processes are in place
- Negotiate, execute and administer Grants agreements.

CEO

- May approve Grants in accordance with authority delegated by Council under the Local Government Act.

Councillors

- Approves Grants in accordance with requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.

Consultation

This policy has been developed in consultation with key Employees across the organisation including the First Nations Leadership team and with external community groups, the creative sector, local business and industry associations.

References

Laws and Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Policies and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Program Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A City for All: Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan 2018-2028
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative City - Cultural Policy 2025 - 2035
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Strategy 2025 - 2035
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Strategy 2025 - 2035
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eora Journey Economic Development Plan 2016 - 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing for All – Local Housing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025 - 2035
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing waste from events and services: Guidelines for single use items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient Sydney
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Policy: Fees and charges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Slavery Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Sydney Code of Conduct

Review period

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Approval Status

The Council approved this policy on [DD MONTH YYYY].

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	Original Policy	Original Policy	Original Policy
Reviewed	10 December 2012	Approved by Council	2009/111025
Reviewed	15 September 2014	Approved by Council	2014/434658
Reviewed	11 December 2017	Approved by Council	2018/278803
Reviewed	22 August 2022	Updated to strengthen alignment with Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, key pillar strategies and the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. Approved by Council.	2018/278803
Reviewed	28 April 2026	<u>(to be inserted)</u>	<u>(to be inserted)</u>

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Manager, Grants
Owner	Executive Director, City Life
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council