

Relevant Information for Committee

FILE: S117677 **DATE:** 9 March 2020

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Emma Rigney, Director City Life

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 8.2 - Grants and Sponsorship - UTS
Indigenous Residential College and Item 8.4 - Grants and Sponsorship -
Housing All Australians Economic Study

Purpose

To confirm that the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund is the most appropriate source of funding for the proposed grants to both UTS and Housing All Australians.

Background

The Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines provide a diverse program of funding streams containing objectives, outcomes, assessment criteria and eligibility criteria. This program allows the City to assess and prioritise the hundreds of grants and sponsorship applications it receives each year. Council may at discretion however, approve any grant outside of the Grant and Sponsorship Policy and has done so recently with support for Sydney WorldPride, the Australian Paralympic Team and Tribal Warrior's entry to the 2019 Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

The Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund promotes the development of affordable and diverse rental housing in our local area by partnering with community housing providers, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations. Under the current criteria funds can be used for acquiring land, design and construction and associated development costs. The fund's priority is to leverage private finance for affordable rental housing and it is expected that the total amount of funding for any individual project will not exceed \$3 million. Funding cannot be used for consent authority fees and charges.

In February 2020, Council approved two grants that did not meet all of the Fund's criteria, but supported progression through the housing continuum.

Wesley Mission's redevelopment of the Wesley Edward Eagar Centre was provided with a \$1M grant towards the renovation of the existing crisis accommodation facility. While the City's investment does not contribute towards the creation of new affordable housing dwellings, it ensures no loss of existing facilities by making sure that the facility is of sufficient quality to maintain service delivery and secures the facility as affordable housing noting that a caveat or similar instrument over the land title will protect the subsidised land use.

St George Community Housing's work to improve affordable housing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Persons was provided with a \$150,000 grant to fund a position for a shared capacity development project with three of the area's largest Community Housing Providers. Again the City's investment does not directly contribute towards the creation of new affordable housing dwellings, however it does reduce barriers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to access existing and upcoming affordable housing opportunities.

There are two grants recommended for funding from the Affordable and Diverse Housing within the March round.

UTS' application seeks to create student housing targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationally. While the funds will be used for design and construction costs, the City's investment will create student housing as opposed to long term rental housing envisioned by the Fund. The City's 2015 registry week indicates more than 17 per cent of people experiencing homelessness in Sydney identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our draft Homelessness action plan commits the City to reducing homelessness and alleviating its impacts in Sydney. The City invests in a range of services and initiatives seeking to reduce and prevent homelessness in the inner city. The NSW Homelessness Strategy states that a person's pathway into homelessness is impacted by a number of factors including employment opportunities. This grant also contributes towards reducing the barriers for accessing tertiary education that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People encounter by providing affordable housing. This investment will therefore provide significant opportunities for local residents to live and study at a tertiary education level who would not otherwise be able to afford to do so.

Housing All Australians' application seeks to promote the development of affordable and diverse rental housing long term, through exploring the role and opportunities that exist with partnering with the private sector. Action 1.3 of the City's draft homelessness action plan asks the City to advocate for the Australian and NSW Governments to deliver a sustainable supply of social and affordable rental housing. The City's investment of \$10,000 will support Housing All Australians' study to quantify the costs of not providing sufficient public, social and affordable housing nationally and determine a cost benefit ratio which can be used by governments and other sectors for investment decision purposes.

In contemplating potential future actions as part of the forthcoming Sustainable Sydney 2050 plan, it is proposed that Council consider extending and renaming the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to the Supported Accommodation, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to explicitly encourage the development of new accommodation to support people exiting homelessness as noted in Item 6.2 Sustainable Sydney 2050 Update - Affordable and Equitable.

These projects demonstrate an ongoing need to fund projects which do not fully comply with the current criteria for the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund, but which do have the capacity to improve housing affordability and access to housing across our community. As a result, staff will review the current criteria for the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund within the Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines and report back to Council with proposed amended criteria, if that is considered appropriate.

Prepared by: Jeremy Kelshaw, Manager Grants

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M. Barone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MONICA BARONE

Chief Executive Officer