

Grants and Sponsorship - Round Two 2021/22 - Environmental 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 and assist in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. To achieve the objectives of the Community Recovery Plan and Sustainable Sydney 2030, genuine partnership between government, business and the community is required.

The provision of grants and sponsorships is a mechanism to further the aims identified in the City's social, cultural, economic and environmental policies. Applications are assessed against these policies and against broad City objectives and plans. In this way, the City and the community act collaboratively to achieve the goals of the Community Recovery Plan and Sustainable Sydney 2030.

The City advertised the following two Environmental Performance Grant Programs in Round Two of the annual Grants and Sponsorship Program for 2021/22:

- Environmental Performance – Innovation: funding is available to assess or demonstrate new technologies or processes that are currently not being implemented in the local market but have the potential to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions and resource efficiencies that could be rolled out at scale within the local area.
- Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments: funding is available to undertake building performance ratings and certifications, energy audits and assessments to enable a building or facility owner to understand their opportunities to improve environmental performance.

For the Environmental Performance - Innovation Grants Program, 28 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of seven grants to a total value of \$268,582 for the 2021/22 financial year.

For the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments Grants Program, 21 eligible applications were received. This report recommends 18 grants to a total value of \$150,041 for the 2021/22 financial year.

On 22 February 2021, Council adopted a revised Grants and Sponsorship Policy. All grants in this report were assessed in accordance with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, the priorities set out in the Community Recovery Plan 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 recommendations for the Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program as per Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applications not recommended for a cash grant for the Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program as per Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve the cash recommendations for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program as per Attachment C to the subject report;
- (D) Council note the applications not recommended for a cash grant for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program as per 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 to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Recommended for Funding - Round Two 2021/22 Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program
- Attachment B.** Not Recommended for Funding - Round Two 2021/22 Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program
- Attachment C.** Recommended for Funding - Round Two 2021/22 Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program
- Attachment D.** Not Recommended for Funding - Round Two 2021/22 Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant 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 19 July 2021, the City announced Round Two of the annual grants program for 2021/22 as being open for application on the City's website, with grant applications closing on 23 August 2021.
3. The two Environmental Performance Grants promoted were:
 - (a) Environmental Performance - Innovation; and
 - (b) Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments.
4. Information about these grant programs (such as application dates, guidelines, and eligibility criteria) was made available on the City's website. The City actively promoted the program through corporate website, e-newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, AdWords, ArtsHub, Google display ads and Koori Radio. Third parties who supported the grant call out through their networks include Supply Nation and Sydney University. Email campaigns were utilised to target interested parties who have applied previously for grants at the City or who have expressed an interest in the City's programs.
5. Following adoption of the revised Grants and Sponsorship Policy on 22 February 2021, the Environmental Performance - Innovation program is open to incorporated for-profit organisations with 200 employees or less, not-for-profits and owners corporations. The Ratings and Assessments program is open to accommodation (including hotels, hostels and serviced apartments) and residential property types.
6. Nine applications were received this round from for-profit organisations through the Environmental Performance Grant - Innovation program and the following three for-profit organisations are recommended for grant funding:
 - (a) Eco Shield Systems Pty Ltd;
 - (b) Cercle Co Pty Ltd; and
 - (c) Esgchain Pty Ltd.
7. Twenty-one applications were received this round from for-profit organisations and strata plans through the Environmental Performance Grant - Ratings program, 18 applications are recommended for grant funding inclusive of the following for-profit organisation (the remainder being strata plans):
 - (a) Base Backpackers Pty Limited.
8. There were a total of 49 grant applications received under the Environmental Performance Grants. Twenty-five are recommended for funding as detailed in this report.

9. It is expected that all successful applicants will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding. Some applicants will be required to meet with City staff and further define the strategic outcomes of their project prior to receiving the grant and commencing their project.
10. All grants and sponsorships are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.
11. 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.
12. The assessment process includes advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The applications are scored against defined 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. Once recommended applications are approved by Council, a contract is developed, which includes conditions that must be adhered to, and acquitted against.
13. In assessing the grant applications, the assessment panels included in their considerations and recommendations:
 - (a) Community Recovery Plan 2020;
 - (b) Environmental Strategy and Action Plan;
 - (c) Grants and Sponsorship Policy;
 - (d) Sustainable Sydney 2030, and;
 - (e) alignment with other core City strategic policies and action plans.
14. Assessors consider the cash and in-kind contribution from the applicant and other sources in reviewing applications. Applicants are asked to demonstrate a capacity to match the grant investment with other sources of funding or contribute their own cash resources to the project.
15. Applicants are requested to list their project's project partners, confirmed funding sources and the contribution the organisation is making to the project (cash or in-kind) to demonstrate their contribution.

Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program

16. The Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program supports the feasibility or demonstration of new technologies or processes that are currently not being implemented in the local market but have the potential to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions and resource efficiencies that could be rolled out at scale within the local area.
17. Following adoption of the revised Grants and Sponsorship Policy on 22 February 2021, the Environmental Performance - Innovation program for Round Two was limited to encompass small and medium businesses only, in addition to not-for-profit entities of all sizes.

18. Twenty-eight applications have been received and assessed. Seven are recommended for support to a value of \$268,582. Nine applications were received from the incorporated non-profit sector and nineteen applications were received from the incorporated for-profit sector.
19. The assessment panel for the Environmental Performance - Innovation program consisted of members from Sustainability Programs and City Sustainability, with specialist assessors from City Greening & Leisure, City Access & Transport, Planning Assessments, Construction & Building and Cleansing Waste and Services.
20. The recommended applications for the Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program are outlined in Attachment A to this report. The applications not recommended are outlined in Attachment B.

Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments grant program

21. The Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments grant program aims to address barriers to the uptake of building performance ratings and assessments across energy, water, waste and other sustainability aspects. Ratings and assessments enable a building owner or facility manager to understand their building's environmental performance and to identify efficiency opportunities. Applicants are required to implement efficiency measures based on the recommendations of the assessments.
22. Following adoption of the revised Grants and Sponsorship Policy on 22 February 2021, the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments grant was amended to limit eligibility to works on buildings within the Residential Strata and Accommodation (Hotel, Hostel and Serviced Apartment) sectors only, regardless of their size or turn-over.
23. Twenty-one applications have been received and assessed. Eighteen are recommended for support to a value of \$150,041. Seventeen applications were received from the residential building sector and four applications were received from the accommodation sector.
24. The assessment panel for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program consisted of members from the City's Sustainability Programs team.
25. The recommended applications for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program are outlined in Attachment C to this report. The applications not recommended are outlined in Attachment D.

Environmental Performance Grant Program Budget

26. The 2020/21 Environmental Performance Program budget is summarised as follows:

Total cash budget for 2021/22	\$850,000
Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$431,377
Total cash amount available for 2021/22	\$418,623
Total number of eligible applications this allocation	49
Total cash value requested from applications	\$1,643,312
Total number of applications recommended for cash support	25
Total amount of funding cash recommended from budget 2021/2022	\$418,623
Remaining funds from 2021/22 budget	\$0

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

27. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This program 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 City's endeavours to work with our business and residential communities to reduce greenhouse emissions and potable water use and encourage diversion of waste from landfill across the local government area.

Organisational Impact

28. 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.

Environmental

29. The recommended environmental grants under the Innovation Program will enhance knowledge sharing, skills uptake and capacity in best practice environmental performance, approaches and solutions in the local area.

30. The recommended environmental grants under the Ratings and Assessments Program will provide energy and water savings as a result of improved monitoring and applicants implementing efficiency measures as a condition of the grants.

Financial Implications

31. There are sufficient funds allocated in the Environmental Grants program budget included in the City's operating budget for 2021/21 to support the recommended grants. A total value of \$418,623 in cash is recommended from the 2021/22 budget, as follows:
- (a) Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program - \$268,582; and
 - (b) Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program - \$150,041.

Relevant Legislation

32. 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.
33. 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) Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program; and
 - (ii) Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessments grant program;
 - (b) the details of the Environmental Performance grant programs have been included in Council's operation plan for financial year 2021/22;
 - (c) the program's proposed budgets do not exceed five per cent of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2021/22; and
 - (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

34. The funding period for Round Two of the Environmental Performance Grants for 2021/22 is for activity taking place from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting in January.

Public Consultation

35. For all Round Two programs open to application, one information session was held over Zoom on Wednesday 28 July 2021. One information session was held over Zoom for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants on Thursday 29 July 2021.
- (a) One hundred and seventeen prospective applicants attended the general information session, followed by individual pillar sessions for advice from City staff about their project proposals and the application process;
 - (b) four prospective applicants attended the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information session; and
 - (c) seventy-eight per cent of these attendees advised they had not applied for a City of Sydney grant previously.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Isabella Barker, Grants Officer