

Grants and Sponsorship - 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 categories of the Environmental Performance Grant Program in the annual Grants and Sponsorship Program for approval in 2021/22 and payment in 2022/23:

- Environmental Performance - Innovation Grants; and
- Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grants.

For the Environmental Performance grants, 43 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of 25 grants to a total value of \$402,513 for the 2022/23 financial year.

For the Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant program, nine eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of five grants to a total value of \$222,000 in cash.

For the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant program, 34 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of 20 grants to a total value of \$180,513 in cash.

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 shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applicants who were not successful in obtaining a cash grant for the Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve the cash recommendations for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (D) Council note the applicants who were not successful in obtaining a cash grant for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program as shown at Attachment D to the subject report;
- (E) Council note that all grants 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 - Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program
- Attachment B.** Not Recommended for Funding –Environmental Performance - Innovation Grant Program
- Attachment C.** Recommended for Funding –Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grant Program
- Attachment D.** Not Recommended for Funding –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 22 February 2022, the City announced the grants program for approval in 2021/22 and payment in 2022/23 as being open for application on the City's website, with grant applications closing on 11 April 2022.
3. The two Environmental Performance Grant Programs promoted were:
 - (a) Environmental Performance - Innovation; and
 - (b) Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment.
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 Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, What's On, and ArtsHub. Supply Nation, Multicultural NSW, Digest, Sydney University and Haymarket Chamber of Commerce also promoted the program through their networks. The City Business team worked closely with industry stakeholders to promote these grants and delivered a dedicated virtual briefing for business intermediaries such as local chambers of commerce, industry organisations and Liquor Accord associations to promote these programs through their channels and networks. 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 grant program is open to incorporated for-profit organisations with 200 employees or less, not-for-profits and owners corporations. The Ratings and Assessment program is open to accommodation (including hotels, hostels and serviced apartments) and residential property types.
6. Eight applications were received this round from for-profit organisations through the Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program and the following four for-profit organisations are recommended in this report:
 - (a) Buildings Alive Pty Ltd;
 - (b) Hey Fritz Pty Ltd;
 - (c) Tackle Lab Pty. Ltd; and
 - (d) Wise Sustainability Pty Ltd.

7. Thirty-four applications were received this round from for-profit organisations and strata plans through the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program, 20 applications are recommended for funding inclusive of the following for-profit organisations (the remainder being strata plans):
 - (a) QT Hotels and Resorts Pty Limited;
 - (b) Stanley Home Units Ltd;
 - (c) Starhill Hotel (Sydney) Pty Ltd; and
 - (d) Winadell Pty Ltd.
8. There were a total of 43 grant applications received under the Environmental Grants. Twenty-five are recommended for funding as detailed in this report.
9. It is expected that all successful applicants will work co-operatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
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 when requested.
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 community 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 Grants

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 grant program was limited to encompass small and medium businesses only, in addition to not-for-profit entities of all sizes.
18. The assessment panel for the Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program consisted of City staff from the Sustainability Programs, Sustainability and Resilience, and Cleansing and Waste teams, with specialist assessors from City Greening and Leisure, and Sustainability Programs teams
19. Applicants for the Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program were also invited to meet with the assessment panel on 4 May 2022 to present their projects. All organisations applying for this grant program participated in this opportunity.
20. The applications recommended for the Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program are outlined in Attachment A to this report. The applications not recommended are listed in Attachment B to this report.

Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Grants

21. The Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment 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 Assessment grant program 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. Thirty-four applications have been received and assessed. Twenty-one applications were received from the residential building sector and thirteen applications were received from the accommodation sector. Twenty are recommended for support to a value of \$180,513.
24. The assessment panel for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program consisted of City staff from the Sustainability Programs team.
25. The applications recommended for the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment Program are outlined in Attachment C to this report. The applications not recommended are listed in Attachment D to this report.

Budget

26. The 2022/23 Environmental Performance Program budget is set out below:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Total draft budget for payment in 2022/23 | \$600,000 |
| Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications | (\$0) |
| Total cash available | \$600,000 |
| Total number of eligible applications this allocation | 43 |
| Total cash value requested from applications | \$864,495 |
| Total number of applications recommended for cash support | 25 |
| Total amount of cash funding recommended | \$402,513 |
| Cash amount remaining for payment in 2022/23 | \$197,487 |

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 grant 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.

Economic

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

30. The recommended grants under the Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant 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 amounts allocated in the Grants and Sponsorship Environmental program budget, included in the City's draft operating budget for 2022/23, to fund the recommended amounts. A total of \$402,513 in cash is recommended from the 2022/23 (draft) cash budget of \$600,000, as follows:
 - (a) Environmental Performance - Innovation grant program - \$222,000; and
 - (b) Environmental Performance - Ratings and Assessment grant program - \$180,513.

Relevant Legislation

32. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. 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 Assessment grant program
 - (b) the details of these grant programs have been included in Council's adopted operations 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; and
 - (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

34. Funding for the Environmental Performance Grants is approved in 2021/22 for activity taking place from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting in July.

Public Consultation

35. During February and March 2022 three briefing sessions took place where stakeholders were notified about the grants and how to apply:
- (a) An in-person business collaboration session called Revitalising Sydney was held at Mary's Underground on 22 February 2022. A total of 38 participants, including creative producers, artists, business chambers and local businesses attended this session.
 - (b) An online grant briefing session specifically for Business Chambers was held on 2 March 2022. A total of 17 attendees participated in the session.
 - (c) An online briefing session for general grants enquires was held on 3 March 2022 for potential grant applicants. A total of 173 attendees participated in the session.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Evie Smyth, Grants Officer