

Attachment E

Engagement Report

Engagement report - draft grants and sponsorship policy and guidelines and addendum to operational plan

Engagement overview

From 28 June 2022 to 26 July 2022, the City placed the following draft documents on public exhibition:

- draft grants and sponsorship policy
- draft grants and sponsorship guidelines
- addendum to operational plan 2022/23

Consultation on the draft documents provided an opportunity for key stakeholders and the wider community to provide feedback on the draft documents before they are finalised and adopted by Council.

This report outlines the community engagement activities that took place to support the public exhibition and summarises the key findings from the consultation.

Purpose of the engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- gather feedback from stakeholders and the community
 - finalise the documents and proceed to Council for adoption
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Outcomes from the consultation

A total of 14 submissions were received during the consultation (12 online surveys and 2 email submissions). We received 7 submissions from organisations and 7 from individuals.

Key themes raised in submissions were focused on the grants management process, including feedback on timeframes for applications, supporting document requirements, auspicing requirements and the grants assessment process.

Organisations we received submissions from included:

- Counterpoint
- New Theatre (Properties) Limited
- OCN (Owners Corporation Network)
- Squabbalogic Independent Music Theatre Inc
- Three organisations asked for their submissions to be anonymous

All submissions are detailed in the submissions table below. Submissions have been summarised by City of Sydney staff

Submissions and responses

Organisation / Individual	Summary of Submission	Response	Recommendation
Organisation (OCN)	<p>Supports the draft 2022-23 policy.</p> <p>Congratulates the City on its vision and mission to leverage the community to deliver on that. Delighted to see the 2022-23 program aligned with Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.</p>	As there were no requests, no response is required from the City.	That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.
Organisation (anonymous)	<p>The need for measurable outcomes and deliverables can be quite challenging for smaller organisations operating in the community.</p> <p>Many outcomes will be soft in financial terms when dealing with the need for inclusive activities. Eg How do you effectively measure the mental well-being of a large group of people in an organisation.</p> <p>Measures of success won't always be evident or reportable in terms of numbers.</p>	The City acknowledges that the success of a project cannot always be measured in terms of numbers. The City works with successful grant applicants to develop suitable performance measures tailored to the scale and scope of the project being delivered, and the capacity of the organisation.	That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.
Organisation (New Theatre (Properties) Limited)	The Green Building Grant excludes entertainment building types. As a NFP Theatre, trying to become fully self-sufficient for energy by 2025 and disappointed that Grant Funding for such initiatives seems to have been excluded.	<p>The Green Building Grants program has been designed to target those sectors who contribute the largest proportion of emissions to the city's carbon footprint and that also can be supported by NABERS. This is why the program is focussed on residential apartments and hotels at this time.</p> <p>Whilst organisations such as small not for profit theatres are not eligible for funding through the Green Building Grant, the City is developing a suite of capacity building</p>	That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.

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		workshops for the creative sector which will include a focus on sustainability.	
Organisation (anonymous)	<p>Having all grants due and assessed at the one time restricts the activities that can be supported. Ideally there would be staggered or two rounds per year, as with other levels of govt grant programs.</p> <p>Project timeframes often need to be fast and responsive to circumstances and personnel, but these grant timelines are not.</p>	The City offers two major funding rounds each year, a Summer and Winter round. A number of other grant programs (including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund, Quick Response, Venue Hire support, Street Banner sponsorship) are open all year or until funds are exhausted.	That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.
Organisation (anonymous)	The grant aims to be culturally inclusive and should therefore be managed by a culturally diverse team.	The City of Sydney is committed to being a diverse, inclusive and accessible workplace, and our shared values help us achieve this. For the community, we have dedicated teams in our business to support our diverse communities. This includes, but is not limited to, the LGBTIQ+ community, international students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, and multicultural communities. The grants team regularly engages staff from these business units as specialist assessors of grant applications.	That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.
Organisation (Counterpoint)	<p>Appreciates the long-standing support received and opportunities from the city of Sydney grants directly and for the many other community groups we support through auspice arrangements. The benefits and partnership approach has a significant impact and outcomes for all the communities we work with and is highly appreciated by all.</p> <p>Congratulates the city on having one of the best frameworks and responsive grant systems compared to other government Departments.</p> <p>Social housing Communities could be more explicitly clear as a priority group.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>There is scope under a range of programs within the grants and sponsorship</p>	The grants and sponsorship guidelines have been amended under the heading Other Information on Page 14 to clarify that the supporting documentation required for multi year funding is a multi year project plan instead of a multi year business plan. Other comments are noted with no change to the document as exhibited.

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City in-kind support options could be more explicit in the application process and expanded through the current offerings.

Support unincorporated groups being able to apply for grants however, we would suggest strengthening the requirement for them to seek auspice agreement or support with a recognised community organisation as good practice and health governance perspective.

Suggest that geographic allocations caps may be beneficial and suggest involving local people and recognised representative agencies in the decision-making process to ensure that the allocation of grants reflects more localised priorities and needs and increases local ownership over the process.

guidelines for the City to support projects that deliver a range of outcomes for our diverse communities including social housing residents, such as the Community Services Grant, Innovation and Ideas, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund and Quick Response Grant programs.

City staff are undertaking a separate project to identify how we can improve the grants experience for our community . This feedback will be considered as part of that project.

Through the grants and sponsorship guidelines, we encourage applicants working with an auspicing organisation to choose an organisation that is relevant to the sector and can support the development of their proposal.

Grant applicants are assessed in accordance with the assessment criteria for each grant program as outlined in the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines. Geographical location within the local government area is not considered as part of the assessment criteria. All grant applications are assessed objectively against the policy and program guidelines. All grant applications are assessed by at least three City of Sydney staff, including those with knowledge and experience relevant to the grant application. Some grant applications may be assessed by external parties who have skills and professional experience which will benefit the assessment process. When an external assessor is required, we will

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Based on November 2020 to November 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures, volunteers are now worth \$46.62 per hour, whereas city policy's suggested value is \$25. This may be worth reviewing.

The requirement for a Multi-year business plan is a sensible approach for ensuring the governance health of an organisation, but we suggest that it be listed as a strategic plan as NFPs generally do not have business plans.

To reduce duplicate reporting, we suggest that if supporting documentation is already publicly available through other avenues such as the ACNC website, then the grantee should not be required to submit these through the application process. The application process could also be less onerous through a prefill or agency profile system.

The Accommodation Grant process is fantastic; however, proposals can often fall over because they can not be matched with operational funds. Therefore Accommodation grants, in some circumstances, could be considered to also have revenue stream options.

Appreciate, welcome and support the need for an innovation stream. However, some of the work doesn't require re-inventing but requires resourcing stability. A process for recurrent funding

select a representative from one of the City of Sydney's established advisory panels with the relevant skills, experience, and availability.

The grants and sponsorship guidelines provide two rates that cover a range of volunteering roles. These are simply provided as a guide to assist organisations when preparing budgets.

Applicants seeking multi year funding are required to submit a project plan specific to the delivery of the project for which they are requesting funding from the City. The City has amended the grants and sponsorship guidelines to reflect that the supporting documentation required for multi year funding is a multi year project plan.

City staff are undertaking a separate project to identify how we can improve the grants experience for our community. This feedback will be considered as part of that project.

When applying for an Accommodation Grant, organisations are not required to match the waived or reduced rental charges requested with operational funding.

Through the grants and sponsorship program the City of Sydney partners with the community and business to further the strategic directions of Sustainable Sydney

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	<p>for annual, well-run, and respected community events and other initiatives should be explored.</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting should be proportionate; time spent managing small grants can often outweigh the value of the grant. We are happy to report that the city appears to have got this balance right.</p> <p>Outcomes cannot always be counted in units of numbers of people, sessions, hours or days, and qualitative data needs to be valued as much as agreed KPIs. The full impact of a grant may not be realised until long after it reaches its conclusion.</p> <p>Policy is unclear as to how the city processes or accepts unsolicited or sponsorship proposals.</p>	<p>2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The City of Sydney has 14 grants and sponsorship programs to support initiatives and projects that strengthen the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city. In general funding is not available for operational costs or overheads for the core business of an organisation.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>The City acknowledges that the success of a project cannot always be measured in terms of numbers. The City works with successful grant applicants to develop suitable performance measures tailored to the scale and scope of the project being delivered, and the capacity of the organisation.</p> <p>Council may approve ad hoc grants and sponsorships outside of the City's established grants and sponsorship program which further the strategic directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030-50 Continuing the Vision and in accordance with other endorsed Council Policies.</p>	
<p>Organisation (Squabbalagic Independent Music Theatre Inc)</p>	<p>1) Lead times</p> <p>In the past, there has been too long a gap between the closing dates for applications and project commencement dates. Long lead times are often essential for a project. Within those lead</p>		<p>The grants and sponsorship guidelines have been amended under the heading Tier 2 – Major Festival and Events on page 27 to clearly state in the program overview that this</p>

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	<p>times, many significant details relating to the development of the project emerge. Therefore, it is important to get a good balance between the closing dates for grant applications and the commencement date for the project.</p> <p>We recommend applications have provision for subsequent variations if the City of Sydney needs to keep to its early closing dates.</p> <p>2) Feedback, communication and transparency We request more transparency around the full amount of funding available for each grant. Publication of retrospective data around how many applications are received would help applicants understand the expectations which shape the decision-making process.</p> <p>In the lead up to grant rounds, note the draft guidelines mention two options for direct communication - "We also hold information</p>	<p>The City has processes in place to support successful grant applicants who may need to make changes to their funded project such as project details, budget, project end dates and reporting dates.</p> <p>The City's grants and sponsorship guidelines provides details on each grant program including the program overview, funding available, funding priorities and assessment criteria. All grant recommendations are approved by Council, and the relevant Council reports are made available to the public on the City's website. The Council report includes the total budget approved and number of applications received for each grant program, as well as a list of all recommended applicants including grant applicant name, project details and recommended funding.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	<p>sponsorship program provides support for significant and/or recurrent festivals or events.</p> <p>Other comments are noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>
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sessions during the year. We encourage you to come to an information session or speak with our staff before applying". Support this approach and note that unfortunately in our experience it is not always possible to reach staff directly.

Following the completion of grant rounds, a commitment to useful feedback for both successful and unsuccessful applicants is important.

3) Access to space

There is an opportunity for the City of Sydney to offer greater access to space. The reduced rental charges on offer via the Short term empty properties grant and Creative live/work spaces grant both go some way toward this.

Recommend the City develops programs similar to those offered by other Councils which offer in-kind use of underutilised spaces.

A further recommendation is a stream involving administrative residencies or partnerships to ease the burden on the City and create longer term arts-government partnerships.

The City might also conduct a specific consultation process in relation to the space requirements the Sydney creative community needs. Musical theatre would benefit from access to spaces such as Town Halls for example.

4) Scope of major events

Every grant applicant is notified in writing of the outcome of their grant application and provided with details on how to request feedback from City of Sydney staff.

The City offers several grant programs which provide access to a range of City owned facilities and spaces with support available in the form of waived or reduced rental charges. These include the Accommodation grant, Creative live/work spaces grant and Short-term empty properties grant programs. In Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, the City's renewed vision and community strategic plan, the City has committed to increase cultural infrastructure and creative space by 40,000 square metres by 2036. The City is exploring multiple avenues for meeting this target and delivering more spaces for artists in our area, through City owned property, private development and public-private partnerships. This work includes a comprehensive audit of the floorspace already available to creative production in our area and a supply and demand study to inform the types of new spaces most needed.

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	<p>The former Commercial and creative business events sponsorship had elements that were of particular interest for the musical theatre industry.</p> <p>Recommend the Festival and events - Tier 2 sponsorship program includes the option of a one-off funding for a single major event of \$100,000 or more and expanding the definition of major event to include a major production. This is particularly pertinent to the musical theatre industry where a large-scale musical will be of the same scale and benefit as a large festival.</p> <p>5) Greater flexibility in terms of Creative grants</p> <p>This is welcome. In the past the Creative grants have had very specific eligibility requirements for projects to relate to the area. The new eligibility in the draft guidelines provides greater flexibility, while still being clear that projects must benefit the City of Sydney.</p>	<p>The Tier 2 - Major Festivals and Events sponsorship program is designed to provide support for significant and/or recurring events with funding available for up to four years .</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
Individual	<p>Make the 'auspice' section easier. I understand the need for an auspice. Unfortunately they are really hard to find and usually they want 10% of the sponsorship - can we get the cash without an auspice?</p>	<p>This is not possible as grant recipients are generally required to enter into a valid grant agreement with the City in order to receive funding. Auspices must enter these grant agreements on behalf of applicants where an applicant (for example a community group) is not a legal entity in and of itself and therefore cannot enter into a grant agreement.</p>	<p>That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>
Individual	<p>The grant applications are extremely long and very detailed. For small businesses, it is a huge investment of time and resources for an uncertain outcome. For big businesses, they can usually have a specialist who will write an appealing application.</p> <p>It would be better for the process to be broken into two stages:</p> <p>Stage One: the concept - which outlines the positive outcomes and impact on the community and only requires a basic budget and none of the additional support documentation requirements..</p>	<p>City staff are undertaking a separate project to identify how we can improve the grants experience for our community. This feedback will be considered as part of that project.</p>	<p>That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>

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	<p>Stage Two: Shortlist - focus on provision of proof that the applicant can deliver the project. This would include a full budget including, quotes, letters of support, and other supporting documents. It could also include a specific question that the panel could ask that relates to the application and gives a good application an opportunity to shine.</p>		
Individual	<p>This respondent indicated they were opposed to the decision to terminate the Feminist Legal Centre's tenancy under the Accommodation Grant program.</p>	<p>The City of Sydney's grants and sponsorship program and associated policies do not support any activities or entities that 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.</p>	<p>That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>
Individual	<p>This respondent indicated they were opposed to the decision to terminate the Feminist Legal Centre's tenancy under the Accommodation Grant program.</p>	<p>The City's grants and sponsorship program and associated policies do not support any activities or entities that 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.</p>	<p>That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>
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Individual	<p>There should not be internal assessors used to assess grants at the City.</p> <p>There are several large organisations that have received multiple grants from the City.</p> <p>This submission objected to grants previously given to Mercedes Fashion Week, the Olympics team and universities. The submission raised concerns about the City's processes and priorities in giving grants.</p>	<p>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. Through this program the City partners with the community and business to further the strategic directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The City seeks to optimise the use of public funds through effective and efficient grant processes, and clear grant program objectives linked to the organisation's strategic goals.</p> <p>All grant applications are assessed objectively against the policy and program guidelines. All grant applications are assessed by at least three City of Sydney staff, including those with knowledge and experience relevant to the grant application. Some grant applications may be assessed by external parties who have skills and professional experience which will benefit the assessment process. All assessors are required to make a conflict of interest declaration on each application as part of the assessment process.</p> <p>Some of the City's grant programs are open for application to for-profit</p>	<p>That the submission is noted with no change to the document as exhibited.</p>

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		organisations. These are advertised and assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.	
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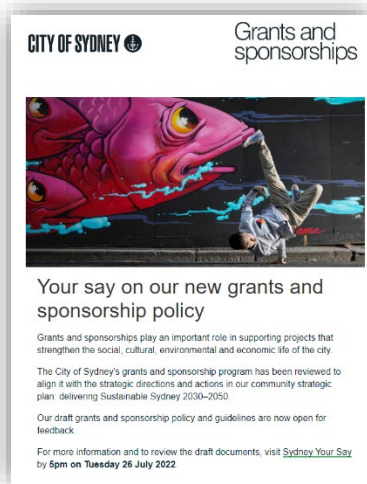
Appendix A: activities to support the consultation

Sydney Your Say webpage and survey

- Open for feedback from Tuesday 28 June to Tuesday 26 July 2022
- 421 unique page views
- 199 document downloads

eNewsletters

An item was included in the City's Sydney Your Say eNewsletter, sent on Thursday 7 July to 7,152 subscribers and to the Grants and Sponsorship notification list sent to 8,089 subscribers on Monday 18 July.



Screenshot of email to grants and sponsorship subscribers

Social media

Posts were shared on Twitter (1 retweet, 3 likes) and LinkedIn (2 shares, 21 likes).



Screenshot of tweet from @cityofsydney

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