

Item 7.

Public Exhibition - Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines

File No: S117676

Summary

The City of Sydney's grants and sponsorship programs support initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.

The current policy and guidelines were adopted by Council in August 2022. These documents align with the strategic directions and actions of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The delivery of support through cash and value-in-kind (VIK) are part of the many ways in which the City partners with the community.

As part of the commitment to review the Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines, this review has been undertaken to ensure that the policy and programs continue to deliver against Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and to meet best practice in grants management.

After review, it is recommended that no changes are made to the Policy as it still reflects the principles by which the grants and sponsorship programs should be governed and align with current strategies.

There are recommended changes to the Guidelines which will support stronger outcomes for the communities of the City.

The recommended changes to the Guidelines are reflected in the Draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines at Attachment B. The current Guidelines are at Attachment C.

This report seeks Council approval to place draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines on public exhibition.

Once exhibited and feedback received, the Guidelines will be brought back to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note that no changes will be made to the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council note that the Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Grants and Sponsorship Policy
- Attachment B.** Draft Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines
- Attachment C.** Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines (current)

Background

1. A review of the Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines has been conducted to ensure that the programs continue to align with the strategic outcomes of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
2. Extensive consultation was delivered through the following mechanisms:
 - (a) Survey of over 700 applicants on their user experience of the City's Grants and Sponsorship application process and support;
 - (b) A Councillor workshop on key themes raised about diversity, eligibility, grassroots access and grants management processes;
 - (c) Two workshops with the Indigenous Leadership Engagement Team to review the impact of the Collaboration Fund and the programs as a whole and how we are engaging with community;
 - (d) 15 workshops with City staff from across teams on each funding program considering outcomes from the first year of current guidelines; and
 - (e) Input from the City's legal team on adjustments to application requirements and the City's communication team on simplifying language and process.
3. City staff have considered the grant practices of other major city's grant programs and the NSW Grants Administration Guide to benchmark the City's grants management processes.
4. As a result of the consultation, there are seven key recommendations for program change outlined below. Over and above this, there are adjustments being made to grant management processes and engagement over the next 12 month period.

Recommended change	Details	Rationale
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund – multi-year option	Three year funding available through the Collaboration Fund	Increase the stability and capacity growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations.
Community Services Grants: open for both Winter and Summer rounds	Community Services grant program will be offered twice a year.	Increased access for community groups and grassroots organisations.

Recommended change	Details	Rationale
Two-tier approach to Community Services Grants and Collaboration Fund: application requirements reduced for applicants requesting less than \$20,000	Applicants requesting less than \$20,000 will have reduced reporting required at the application and acquittal stage	Removing red tape and simplifying processes for applicants
Creative Grants: capital costs increased to \$10k	Alignment with the Quick Response Grants	Consistency in the guidelines
Innovation and Ideas Grants: matched funding for-profits	For-profit applicants must demonstrate a matching contribution in cash and/or in-kind support	Greater demonstrated contribution by profit based organisations.
Innovation and Ideas Grants two stage process	Potential applicants can submit an idea or concept at any time of the year for feedback prior to submitting a full application.	To support new and innovative ideas, applicants initially will be able to pitch an idea or concept first without the commitment to complete an application due to the nature of an idea/concept. It is different to delivering an event or festival or operational delivery which is a known entity.
Quick Response Grants: up to \$5k available to individuals	Individuals can apply for small grants that reflect community benefit or need.	Remove red tape of individual needing an organisation to auspice/manage their grant

5. Grants management changes include regular applicant user experience surveys (after every Summer and Winter round), revision of eligibility language to make it easier for applicants to understand, scheduling of budget allocation across the year for Quick Response Grants to support community need.
6. City staff will continue to evaluate and assess the standards and impact of the Grants and Sponsorship programs to ensure their alignment to the City's strategies and with best practice in grants management.
7. If approved the Draft Guidelines will be put on exhibition for 28 days. Feedback from the community will be reviewed and considered before the final Guidelines are submitted to Council for endorsement.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

8. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision is a vision for the sustainable development of the City into the future. Building on our community's vision for the future, there are 10 directions for 2050, 10 targets to measure progress and 10 ambitious project ideas that bring the vision to life. The provision of grants and sponsorships is a key mechanism for the City to further the aims identified in its social, economic, environmental, and cultural policies. All applications are considered against the 10 strategic directions and how they can directly deliver or encourage the further development of the aims and objectives identified in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
9. The program is aligned to the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - Grants and sponsorships contribute to the City's endeavours in improving environmental performance of our residents and businesses by supporting new and innovative approaches to delivering sustainability outcomes. and strengthening community resilience.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - Grants and sponsorships contribute to the safe and responsible use of public spaces for community access and enjoyment of city residents, workers and visitors.
 - (c) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - Grants and sponsorships contribute to community development and support active participation in civic life. They empower the community to address issues that matter to them and drive projects to create a more inclusive and resilient city.
 - (d) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - Grants and sponsorships contributes to improved wellbeing, well located, inclusive and affordable services that improve social connections and embrace a safe city.
 - (e) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - Grants and sponsorships contribute to supporting artistic and creative endeavours in our city, helping foster initiative, experimentation and enterprise by creative workers and providing new opportunities for audiences to engage in the city's cultural life.
 - (f) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - Grants and sponsorships contribute to helping stimulate business and promote economic activity. They encourage partnerships with other organisations on business development and assist groups of businesses to work together for the collective benefit.
 - (g) Direction 10 - Housing for all - Grants and sponsorships aligns with the City's position on affordable housing, homelessness and social sustainability, as set out in A City For All, the social sustainability strategy, as well as Housing for All, the City's housing strategy.

Organisational Impact

10. As part of the review, it was identified that the Grants Management team required additional resources. This has been put forward as part of the establishment structure and budget process for 2024/25 and ongoing.

Risks

11. The City has a responsibility to manage the distribution of public money to community through an open and transparent process. The need for a Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines document provides this transparency and allows for public input.

Social / Cultural / Community/ Environmental

12. The grants and sponsorship program provides the City with a platform to support social, cultural, economic and environmental initiatives from communities, community organisations and businesses within the local area.

Financial Implications

13. There are no additional financial implications beyond the grant budgets submitted as part of the draft 2024/25 budget and future years' forward estimates.

Relevant Legislation

14. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 regulates how financial assistance can be given by local councils.
15. As part of the Local Government Act 1993 and Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, the City is required to exhibit changes to its grants program.
16. The grants and sponsorship policy (the Policy) provides the governance framework for how the Program is managed, and how decisions about funding are made. The Policy ensures that the City meets the governance requirements of Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 in relation to grant giving.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

17. The proposed revision to the Guidelines will be implemented for the 2024/25 financial year immediately following adoption by Council.

Public Consultation

18. The guidelines will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days ahead .

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