

Grants and Sponsorship - Creative 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. To achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, 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 Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.

The City advertised the Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program in July 2024:

- Tier 1: General Festivals and Events; and
- Tier 2: Major Festivals and Events.

A total of 100 eligible applications were received. This report recommends a total of 37 grants to a total value of \$751,600 in cash and \$213,267 value-in-kind for payments in the 2024/25 financial year with commitments of:

- \$227,500 in cash and \$125,273 value-in-kind in 2025/26;
- \$205,500 in cash and \$226,290 value-in-kind in 2026/27; and
- \$100,000 in cash and \$ 212,200 value-in-kind in 2027/28.

The NSW State Government has also made changes to departments responsible for administering previously approved grants. In line with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, this report also recommends a change of recipient for funding for 'Australia Day in Sydney 2024-26', from the Premiers Department to Destination NSW.

On 22 August 2022, Council adopted a Grants and Sponsorship Policy. All grants in this report were assessed in accordance with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, the Grants and Sponsorship Program Guidelines, the priorities set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision 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 and value in kind recommendations for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant or value-in-kind for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve Destination NSW as the recipient of a Festival and Event Grant 2023/24 for the second and third year of the project where funding was previously paid to Premier's Department;
- (D) Council note that all grant amounts are exclusive of GST;
- (E) 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
- (F) 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 - Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program

Attachment B. Not Recommended For Funding - Festivals and Events Sponsorship 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 23 July 2024, the City announced that the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program was open for application on its website, with grant applications closing on 20 August 2024.
3. 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 grant programs through the corporate website, e-newsletters, advertising through paid social ads, paid LinkedIn, AdWords, Radio and an ArtsHub partnership. 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.
4. As per the Grants and Sponsorship Program Guidelines, the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program is open to not-for-profit organisations, for-profit organisations and Government departments or agencies (Tier 1 and Tier 2), sole traders and individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit or for-profit that is eligible to apply in their own right (Tier 1 only).
5. Out of a total of 100 Festivals and Events applications, a total of 33 eligible applications were received from for-profit organisations and sole traders and the following eleven are recommended in this report:
 - (a) Ard Operation Pty Limited;
 - (b) Bespok3 Pty Ltd;
 - (c) Just Gold Digital Agency Pty Ltd;
 - (d) Mci Australia Pty Ltd;
 - (e) Reco Enterprises Pty Limited;
 - (f) Smartfone Flick Fest Pty Ltd;
 - (g) Sorry Thanks I Love You Pty. Ltd.;
 - (h) SXSW Sydney Pty Ltd;
 - (i) Sydney Comedy Festival Pty Ltd;
 - (j) Sydney Symphony Orchestra Holdings Pty Limited; and
 - (k) USM Events Pty Ltdx.

Grants assessment process

6. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program is highly competitive. Applications that are not recommended either did not score as highly against the assessment criteria as the recommended applications or had incomplete or insufficient information. The City's Grants and Sponsorship team provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

7. The assessment process includes advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The applications are scored against defined assessment 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.
8. The assessment criteria for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program requesting up to \$20,000 cash per year are:
 - evidence of the need for the festival or event and proposed outcomes;
 - capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the festival or event; and
 - evidence of diversity, inclusion and equity in the planning and delivery of the project.
9. Applicants who requested more than \$20,000 in cash per year are also assessed against the following additional assessment criteria:
 - how the project delivers against the funding priorities.
10. Applicants to the Festival and Events Sponsorship - Tier 2 program are also assessed against the following additional assessment criteria:
 - evidence of track record, organisational viability for multi-year funding, large scale audience or market reach and national or international brand awareness.
11. The assessment meetings for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program were held on 17 and 19 September 2024. Separate assessment meetings were held for Tier 1 – General festivals and events and Tier 2 – Major festivals and events to ensure grant applicants were assessed against the relevant assessment criteria. The assessment panels consisted of City staff from the City Business and Safety, Creative City, Social City and Venue Management Teams, with specialist input from staff from the City Business and Safety, Indigenous Leadership and Engagement, Social City and Venue Management Teams.
12. Once recommended applications are approved by Council, a contract is developed which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.
13. All successful applicants are expected to cooperate with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
14. All grants and sponsorships are recommended provided the applicant obtains any required approvals, permits, and development consents.
15. On 26 June 2023, Council approved a grant to Premier's Department (ABN 34 945 244 274) for 3 years for the delivery of the 'Australia Day in Sydney' event. They were approved for a total of \$450,000 cash and \$146,640 in value-in-kind over 3 years: \$150,000 cash and value-in-kind of \$48,880 per year (Year 1 - 23/24, Year 2 - 24/25, Year 3 - 25/26). Since the completion of the first event in 2024, Destination NSW (ABN 52 890 768 976) has become the department responsible for administering the 'Australia Day in Sydney' event in 2025 and 2026.
16. Approval is sought for the remaining grant to be paid to Destination NSW, rather than Premier's Department.

Festivals and Events Sponsorship

17. The applications recommended for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program are outlined in Attachment A to this report.
18. For noting, of the two applications for Tier 2 support, one was seeking funding from 2025/26, not from 2024/25. This report reflects a recommendation for support of \$100,000 per year for three years from 2025/26.
19. Additional funds for the Festival and Events Sponsorship program were made available due to underspends in the Green Building grant program 2024/25 and the Community Services grant program 2024/25.
20. The Festivals and Events Sponsorship program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2024/25	\$5,315,000
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$4,803,000
Plus: Cash amount remaining from the Green Building grant program 2024/25 underspend	\$228,436
Plus: Cash amount remaining from the Community Services grant program 2024/25 underspend	\$11,562
Total cash available	\$751,998
Total number of eligible applications this allocation	100
Total cash value requested from applications	\$3,567,571
Total value-in-kind support requested from applications	\$255,899
Total number of applications recommended for cash and/or value in-kind support	37
Total amount of cash funding recommended for payment in 2024/25 (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2025/26 - \$227,500) (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2026/27 - \$205,500) (Future-year funding recommended for payment in 2027/28 - \$100,000)	\$751,600
Total amount of value in-kind support recommended for 2024/25 (Future-year funding recommended for 2025/26 - \$125,273) (Future-year funding recommended for 2026/27 - \$226,290)	\$213,267

(Future-year funding recommended for 2027/28 - \$212,200)	
Cash amount remaining for payment in 2024/25	\$398

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

21. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This sponsorship is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the recommended grant projects in this report 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.
 - (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - the recommended grant projects in this report 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.
 - (c) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the recommended grant projects in this report 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.

Organisational Impact

22. 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.

Cultural / Economic / Environmental / Social

23. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program provides the City with a platform to support cultural, economic, environmental and social initiatives from the communities and business, within the local area.

Financial Implications

24. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2024/25 grants and sponsorship budget to support the recommended grants. Details and total values are provided in the table above.

Relevant Legislation

25. 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.
26. 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 Festivals and Events Sponsorship program;
 - (b) the details of the program have been included in the Council's draft operational plan for financial year 2024/25;
 - (c) the program's proposed budgets do not exceed 5% of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2024/25; and
 - (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

27. The funding period for the Festivals and Events Sponsorship program for financial year 2024/25 is for activity taking place from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting in January 2025.

Public Consultation

28. During July 2024, online and in person briefing sessions took place where potential applicants were notified about the grants and how to apply. For this Winter round of grants, separate online briefing sessions was introduced for each program, to enable people who were interested in more than one program to attend each:
- (a) An online briefing session for Festivals and Event sponsorship was held on 25 July 2024. A total of 70 attendees participated in the session.
 - (b) An in-person briefing session for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community was held at 119 Redfern St Community Centre on 23 July 2024. A total of 6 attendees participated in the session.
 - (c) An in-person briefing session for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community was held at Juanita Nielsen Community Centre, Woolloomooloo on 29 July 2024. A total of one attendee participated in the session.
29. The combined number of people engaged in online and in person briefing sessions for Winter round is 205, which is an increase of 17 compared to the summer round grant sessions earlier in the year.

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