

Item 3.

Grants and Sponsorship - Economic Grants

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 annual Grants and Sponsorship programs have 2 main rounds: Summer and Winter. The Winter round was open from 8 July to 12 August 2025. This report covers the following funding program:

- Innovation and Ideas grant program

For the Innovation and Ideas grant program, 80 applications were received. This report recommends a total of 10 grants for a total value of \$303,256 in cash and \$11,688 value-in-kind in the 2025/26 financial year.

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 Innovation and Ideas Grant 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 Innovation and Ideas Grant program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council note that all grant amounts are exclusive of GST;
- (D) 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
- (E) 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.

Attachments

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| Attachment A. | Recommended for Funding - Innovation and Ideas Grant Program |
| Attachment B. | Not Recommended for Funding - Innovation and Ideas Grant Program |
| Attachment C. | Data Report on Outcomes of Funding - Innovation and Ideas Grant Program |

Background

1. The City of Sydney's (the City'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 8 July 2025, the City announced the grants program as being open for applications on its website, with grant applications closing on 12 August 2025. This was for a period of 5 weeks.
3. The funding program with key outcomes for the economic pillar is:
 - (a) Innovation and Ideas grant program
4. The Innovation and Ideas grant program is open to eligible not-for-profit organisations, incorporated associations, corporations, co-operatives and trustees of a trust.
5. In the Winter round of the Innovation and Ideas Grant program 35 applications were received from for-profit organisations, and 5 are recommended in this report:
 - (a) Australian School of Entrepreneurship Pty Ltd
 - (b) Creative Plus Business Group Pty Ltd
 - (c) Curiosity Centre Pty Ltd
 - (d) For a Mate Pty Ltd
 - (e) Mapa Art & Architecture Pty Ltd

Grants assessment process

6. 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.
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 Grant program was:
 - Need – why is it needed? This is where you describe what you are doing, why it is important and what will happen as a result of you doing this project.
 - Experience – how will you create the project, your skills and ability and your experience in doing projects. This may include a project plan.
 - Community benefit – who will benefit from your project, how will they benefit and how have you included the diverse communities in the local area.

- City of Sydney funding priorities – your project should consider one of the funding priorities as these are identified areas that need assistance.
9. The assessment meeting for the Innovation and Ideas grant program was held on 17 September 2025. All applications were assessed against the relevant publicised assessment criteria. The assessment panels consisted of City staff from City Life, Strategy and Urban Analytics Teams.
 10. Once Council approves recommended applications, a contract is developed which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.
 11. It is expected that all successful applicants will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
 12. All grants and sponsorships are recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.

Innovation and Ideas grant program

13. The applications recommended for the Innovation and Ideas grant program are outlined in Attachment A to this report.
14. The Innovation and Ideas Grant program budget is set out below:

Total budget for 2025/26	\$1,100,000	
Less: Total cash committed to previously approved applications	\$796,744	
Total remaining cash available 2025/26	\$303,256	
Number of eligible applications received in Winter Round 2025/26	80	
Number of grants recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	10	
Cash recommended in Winter Round 2025/26	\$303,256	
Cash remaining in 2025/26	Nil	
2025/26	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$2,828,323	\$23,824.00
Total recommended	\$303,256	\$11,688.00

2026/27	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$1,093,480	Nil
Total recommended	\$100,500	Nil
2027/28	Cash	VIK
Total requested	\$676,192	Nil
Total recommended	\$55,000	Nil

15. Attached to this report is a high-level summary on the outcomes of the funding if the recommendations are approved. This provides insight into what the applicants have identified as outcomes they can achieve if they receive the funding.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

16. 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 report 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 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 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.
 - (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural 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.

- (d) 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

- 17. 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.

Risks

- 18. This recommendation is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We make decisions that align with our corporate objectives, policies and strategies and are committed to conducting our activities in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations and relevant industry standards.
 - (b) We foster a culture of ethics, integrity and responsible behaviour across our organisation. By creating a strong ethical foundation, we aim to minimise the likelihood of reputation-damaging incidents and enhance our ability to respond effectively when challenges arise.
 - (c) The City has a responsibility to ensure that it has sufficient resources in the short, medium and long term to provide the levels of service that are both affordable and considered appropriate by the community.

Social / Cultural / Community/Environmental

- 19. 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

- 20. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 grants and sponsorship budgets and included in the City's approved operating budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 to support the recommended grants. Details and total values are provided in the tables above.

Relevant Legislation

- 21. 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.

22. 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 Innovation and Ideas grant program
 - (b) the details of the program were included in the Council's adopted operational plan for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26
 - (c) this program's proposed budget does not exceed 5% of Council's proposed income from ordinary rate for financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 and
 - (d) this program applied to a significant groups of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

23. The funding period for the funding programs is for activities taking place 12 months from the project start date. Contracts will be developed for all successful applications after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting.

Public Consultation

24. During July 2025, online and in-person briefing sessions took place where potential applicants were notified about the grants and how to apply. Separate online briefing sessions were delivered for each program, to enable people who were interested in more than one program to attend each.
- (a) Across all programs, a total of 115 attendees participated in the online sessions.
 - (b) Two in-person sessions for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community were held in Redfern and Glebe. A total of 20 attendees participated in these sessions.

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