

# Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnerships Program – Year One Program Review Report

Tuesday, 12 July 2022  
Council

Strategic Alignment - Thriving Communities

Public

**Approving Officer:**  
Ilia Houridis - Director City  
Shaping

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a review of the first year of the Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnerships and seek Council approval for further improvements to the program.

---

## RECOMMENDATION

### THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the report.
  2. Approves, in principle, an increase of the annual budget for the Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnership Program (CIGSP) by \$90,000 to \$836,000 from 2023/24.
  3. Approves the following changes to the CIGSP program from 2023/24 onwards:
    - 3.1. Increase Quick Response annual budget by \$20,000, from \$50,000 to \$70,000.
    - 3.2. Increase Community Infrastructure annual budget by \$50,000 to \$150,000.
    - 3.3. Introduce a targeted round of Community Impact Grants in 2023/24, for youth led, youth delivered projects, with a total round budget of \$20,000 for proposals up to \$5,000 in value.
    - 3.4. Introduce specific guidelines in relation to project values of the Community Infrastructure category to ensure grants funding support is focused on smaller scale (minor) community projects.
    - 3.5. Divide Community Impact Grants into Programs & Events sub-categories and include the option of multiyear funding capped at two years.
  4. Authorises minor changes to CIGSP Grant Guidelines to be made by the Chief Executive Officer under delegated authority from 2022/23 onwards.
-

## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<b>Strategic Alignment – Thriving Communities</b> This report supports Council's vision of Adelaide as the most liveable City in the world. The Community Impact Grants support the delivery of the Thriving Communities outcomes.
Policy	The recommendations in this report align with the Community Impact Grants & Strategic Partnerships Guidelines [Link 1 view <a href="#">here</a> ].
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Grant recipients are required to provide public liability insurance, sign a grant agreement that identifies the key deliverables of the project and satisfactorily acquit their grant on project completion.
Opportunities	The Community Impact Grants extend the community value achieved by Council by enabling community organisations to deliver the City of Adelaide's strategic priorities according to individual and community needs and opportunities.
22/23 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 23/24 Budget Allocation	\$746,000 already allocated as part of Annual Business Planning process.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Grant recipients are funded on an annual basis and must acquit within two years. Recommendation for multiyear funding, with acquittals at the end of the two year period.
22/23 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Other grant funding contributors, co-contributions and in-kind support from applicants will usually be included in applications for grants.

## DISCUSSION

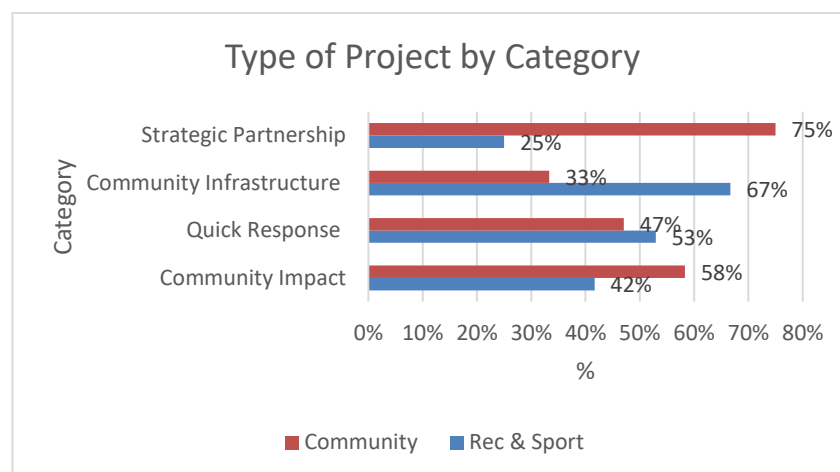
1. At its meeting on 8 June 2021, Council adopted the current Community Impact Grants & Strategic Partnership Operating Guidelines, incorporating Community Development and Recreation & Sport Grants into one new program.
2. The changes to the program coincided with the transition to Smarty Grants as Council's grants administration and management system. This allowed the new program to commence with a revised set of application forms and acquittals.
3. The new Community Impact Grants & Strategic Partnerships Program (CIGSP) launched in August 2021.
4. A notable increase in demand for funding support from Council occurred because of the transition to the new program. A summary of all successful applicants across the four categories is provided in Link 2 view [here](#) and the below provides an overview:
  - 4.1. Across the four categories available, 187 applications were started within Smarty Grants, with 120 applications submitted: a submission rate of 62%.
  - 4.2. Of the 120 applications submitted, 58% were successful in receiving some funding support.
  - 4.3. The total budget for requests exceeded \$3 million. The grants budget allocated in 2021/22 (\$746,000) was able to support just over 20% of these requests. The budget was exhausted by May 2022.
  - 4.4. Where applications identified a target group, the top beneficiaries were Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people (26%), children and young people - aged 0-17 years (22%), and Aboriginal people (22%).
  - 4.5. The table below identifies the key changes presented to Council at its meeting on 8 June 2021 and a summary of the outcomes of these changes, in the first year of the Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnerships.

Proposed Change	Anticipated Benefit	Year One Summary
<b>Reduction of categories from seven to four</b>  <b>Minor, Program and Events Grants merge into Community Impact Grants</b>	Improved customer experience  Improved clarity of which category to apply to	Excellent feedback via survey monkey with 83% of applicants saying they would apply again and would recommend the program.  Guidelines have been highlighted as an example of best practice in Best Practice Guide for Grants Management for Local Government in South Australia produced by the LGA.
Merging Community Development and Recreation and Sports Grants into one Community Impact & Strategic Partnerships Grants Program	Presents opportunity to pool resources, continue to provide our valued grants to the community and distribute funds more strategically	In 2021/22, there were 41 more applications (107 received in total) submitted than the previous year, the number of applications approved for funding increased by 13 (65 approved in total). Funds were distributed based on project outcomes capacity to meet strategic needs. More organisations received funding than in 2020/21, many had not received funding before or in the previous twelve months. Customer feedback was positive on suitability of categories and amounts of funding available.
Value increased or stayed the same	Larger maximum amount of funding available to some applicants	Generally, the average funding amount received per successful applicant increased in each category or as a minimum stayed the same (Quick Response \$1,500). In the Community Impact category, the average amount received per successful applicant increased by \$3,000 and within Strategic Partnerships by just over \$2,000.

Proposed Change	Anticipated Benefit	Year One Summary
		Overall, across all categories combined applicants received \$3,800 less funding but an additional 14 grants were distributed.
Eligibility expanded	Open to wider audience Infrastructure Grants broadened to increase eligibility to non-sporting community groups for minor infrastructure improvements enabling greater community outcomes	Except for Strategic Partnerships (a new category), all categories saw an increase in the number of applications received.  New organisations applied in all categories. Community Infrastructure Grants in particular saw applications from community-based organisations for the first time but also an incredibly diverse round. Among the projects submitted, there were: recreation and sport lighting requests, fencing for community gardens, disability access improvements for community buildings and a community cooking classroom.  The majority of applicants were incorporated associations (66%), however 23% of applicants were Australian public companies, 5% were private companies and the remaining were either unincorporated associations (3%) or sole traders (3%).
Priorities expanded	Allows for more outcome focused program and greater impact on delivery of Councils Strategic objectives.	Five clear priorities that each project can clearly be linked to.  Strategic Partnerships allow relationships that contribute to of Councils community impact priorities in a more collaborative way.
All grant categories, with the exception of Quick Response, now assessed by a panel, including a third-party representative where possible.	KPMG recommendation for transparency and consistency across grant programs	Assessment process for all categories now incorporates an assessment panel for final recommendations. A third party was included on the Assessment Panel for the second round of Community Impact Grants in 2021/22, and this process will continue in 2022/23. Terms of Reference for the Assessment Panel can be reviewed in Link 3 view <a href="#">here</a> . External assessors will be confirmed early in the 2022/23 financial year.
Matched funding requirement removed	Removal of this requirement provides an opportunity for new organisations to apply and a potential increase in application numbers, ensuring the grants program is more competitive.	The increase in applications across the entire program indicates that it is now easier to apply, which could be attributed in part to the removal of this requirement. The increase in application numbers made the program more competitive. Customer feedback indicates the process is working well.
Strategic Partnerships replacing Major Community Development Grants.	Allow Council to negotiate agreements directly with organisations receiving the most funding, prioritising who is supported based on outcomes achieved.	The new program has allowed a shift in the way larger grant funding is distributed. Approval allows for notification earlier in the process, giving more time to develop the partnership agreements to maximise benefit not only to Council but for the partner agency as well. For the first time partnership support is more than just financial. Each partnership is managed by

Proposed Change	Anticipated Benefit	Year One Summary
		a steering group who will meet quarterly, so that Council is involved throughout delivery and contribute to project planning and implementation. This is a move away from the traditional format of granting a large sum of money and awaiting an acquittal 12 months later. Each partnership steering group has clear Terms of Reference. The group may identify further opportunities and mutual benefits that may extend beyond the original project proposal.
Community Impact Grants (Up to \$25,000) can now be delivered over a two-year period	More flexibility in delivery terms allowing applicants to use funds to make their project more sustainable.	Organisations have welcomed this opportunity, especially with the uncertainty around delivery timeframes due to the COVID19 pandemic.
Multiyear agreements only available for Strategic Partnerships	Council not tied into long term commitments. Allows for flexibility and adaptability. More diversity and innovation in delivery.	A commitment to a smaller number of multiyear agreements makes more financial business sense for Council. Feedback from the customer survey has not signalled any concerns about this change, however feedback from several unsuccessful Strategic Partnership applicants indicated the lack of opportunity for alternative multiyear funding options has presented them with project planning challenges as they do not have the security of knowing they have funds beyond one year. This has been addressed by proposing the introduction of two-year agreements in the Community Impact category.

5. The Community Impact and Strategic Grants Program was oversubscribed in every category in 2021/22, with the full \$746,000 budget expended by May 20221. A summary of the first year of the new program by category is provided in Link 4 view [here](#).
6. There were more applications submitted and more successful applicants than the previous year under the two former grant programs. There was an increase in the average amount of funding received per applicant across each category except for quick response grants, which remained consistent with the previous year.
7. All program priorities were addressed, however the two most common primary priorities identified by successful applicants were participation (37%) and social inclusion (37%).
8. Merging the two programs did not appear to have a negative impact on the type of applications received or approved. Over the first year of the program 52% of the organisations granted funding were community based/focused, with 48% recreation and sport based/focused.
9. The table below shows the percentage of successful applications by type (community focused or sport and recreation focused), across all four categories. Quick response and Community Impact categories are balanced; however, community focused applications were more common for Strategic Partnerships and sport and recreation focused applications were more common in the Community Infrastructure round. This follows the pattern of the previous programs, as these two categories essentially were reproduced in a different format, with major community development grants unavailable to recreation and sport groups and infrastructure grants unavailable to community organisations. These results may indicate that more promotion to eligible groups is needed but could also be a sign of the differing priorities of the two types of applicants.



10. Grant acquittals are due for completion over the next six months, for most applications funded in this first year. The acquittals will provide further insights into what has been achieved with the grants budget and how the outcomes are being met through case studies, attendance numbers, photographs, and videos. They will also provide valuable feedback on the program and application process.
11. In the absence of acquittals to provide insight for this report, a short anonymous online survey was sent to all grant applicants to seek feedback on the first year of the CIGSP. The survey sought feedback on three main areas:
  - 11.1. General questions - category applied for, was the application successful, other grants applied for, would you apply again.
  - 11.2. The application process – pre application information, online application, staff support.
  - 11.3. Suitability of categories – categories and amounts available.
12. The survey was open from 5-17 May 2022 and received 29 responses (27% of all applicants). At least one response came from each of the four grant categories, but the majority were from either Community Impact (58%) and Quick Response (41%) grants, with 62% of total respondents being successful applicants. A full summary of the survey results is available in Link 5 view [here](#) and the below provides an overview:
  - 12.1. Sliding scale questions were used to determine if respondents would apply to the program again and if they would recommend the program to others. Of the answers received the average answer for both questions, was 5 (out of 5); very likely. Perhaps the most informative feedback in this section was qualitative, with comments including:
    - 12.1.1. *“The process was uncomplicated and obviously designed to support genuine applicants.”*
    - 12.1.2. *“The ease of the application process and availability of CoA staff to discuss ideas and make recommendations has been the best we have experienced compared to other council/local government grants we have applied for.”*
  - 12.2. Feedback on the application process was positive; in particular, customers felt that the information in the guidelines was very helpful. Smarty Grants was well received but a common comment was that application forms are too onerous or repetitive. Customers were very appreciative of the support provided by the grants team throughout the process.
  - 12.3. Feedback suggests that the program is meeting the needs of the community with over 79% of respondents indicating that the categories available were either suitable or very suitable for their project:
    - 12.3.1. Nearly 87% of respondents felt that the amount of funding available in the category they applied for was reasonable, suitable, or very suitable.
    - 12.3.2. In terms of the number of years funding is available for, 87.5% of answers indicated that this was reasonable, suitable, or very suitable.
  - 12.4. Qualitative data received from the survey will inform minor changes to the Grant Guidelines as part of ongoing continuous improvement.
13. The Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnerships Program has updated timeframes for delivery for 2022/23, considering caretaker period, where no funding can be distributed:
  - 13.1. An e-news detailing this information was distributed to elected members on 2 June 2022, see Link 6 view [here](#).

- 13.2. An eDM was distributed to stakeholders notifying them of rounds changes for the new financial year on 9 June 2022.
- 13.3. The grants webpage identifies key dates for the coming year, grant guidelines will be amended in time for the opening of the next round.

## Recommendations

14. Increase Quick Response annual budget to \$70,000, an increase of \$20,000 for 2023/24. Based on monthly averages for 2021/22, this will ensure adequate funds to service demand until the final period of the financial year. This would improve transparency, as applications received in July/August would be more likely to receive funding (or full funding) than those received in April/May solely because of budget available.
15. Increase Community Infrastructure annual budget to \$150,000, an increase of \$50,000 in 2023/24. This will allow more organisations to be supported in line with the increase in number of applications because of expanding eligibility.
16. Introduce more specific guidelines in relation to project values. If a project is creating a new asset, then the asset value should be no more than \$100,000. If renewing or upgrading an existing asset, then allow for a \$250,000 limit. This will be clearly identified and implemented in the grant guidelines immediately:
- 16.1. This will ensure that applications received are smaller and more focused on community rather than major infrastructure projects, that do not fit with a community grants program.
- 16.2. Contribution to funding larger community infrastructure projects is a separate consideration that sits outside of the scope of this review, and this grants program.
17. Introduce a targeted round of Community Impact Grants in 2023/24, for youth led, youth delivered projects, with a total round budget of \$20,000, for proposals up to \$5,000 in value:
- 17.1. As Council does not have a dedicated youth officer or resource, this would support delivery of greater youth outcomes in the city community. These projects should be applied for and delivered by organisations that represent young people, through youth reference groups, or by young people themselves that want to deliver youth projects, under the auspices of an organisation. An example could include a project providing weekly workshops held in the city, for city high school students to attend after school.
- 17.2. Through developing partnerships with groups such as Headspace Adelaide, Youth Inc. and Study Adelaide, a targeted round would be simple to administer. This could be incorporated into existing application processes and would not require a new category to be created.
18. Split Community Impact grants into Programs & Events subcategories and include the opportunity of multiyear funding capped at two years:
- 18.1. If managing as a subcategory, applicants would have to identify through the application process whether their project is an event or program and would be assessed against similar projects. One of the aims in the development of the CIGSP program was to reduce the number of categories, so simplifying this process would be most beneficial to the customer.
- 18.2. Feedback from Assessment Panel discussions indicated difficulty assessing the impact and benefit of events against those of an ongoing program.
- 18.3. Although the customer survey did not indicate a requirement for multiyear opportunities, feedback from the chamber throughout 2021/22 has suggested multiyear community events funding be reintroduced.
- 18.4. Two years is recommended rather than a longer time so that the grants funding available each financial year is not pre-committed to a point where flexibility and responsiveness is lost.
19. CIGSP is designed to focus on small to medium size event or projects:
- 19.1. Suggest adopting a definition of a community event that is clearly articulated in the grant guidelines.
- 19.2. This could be:
- ‘A small or medium sized event with a total cost of no more than \$100,000. The event should be organised by community, or organisers should consult closely with a community reference group and articulate a clear benefit to the City of Adelaide community.’
-

## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** - Community Impact Grants & Strategic Partnerships Guidelines

**Link 2** - Successful Community Impact Grants & Strategic Partnerships 2021/22

**Link 3** - Assessment Panel Terms of Reference

**Link 4** - A summary of 2021/22 by Grant Category

**Link 5** - Summary of Customer Feedback Survey Responses

**Link 6** - E-News - Key Dates for Community Impact Grants and Strategic Partnerships in 2022/23 Financial Year

---

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil

---

- END OF REPORT -