

INNER WEST

Annual
Grant Program
Guidelines
2026





Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges that these projects funded from this annual grant program will be undertaken on the land of the Gadigal Wangal peoples and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Pictured: Creative Toolbox, 2025

Background

Inner West Council offers annual grants to provide community benefits to the residents of the Inner West.

The annual grants provide financial support to help achieve the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan including: an ecologically sustainable Inner West; liveable, connected neighbourhoods and transport; creative communities and a strong economy; healthy, resilient, and caring communities; and progressive, responsive, and effective civic leadership.

More information is available on Council's website.

Timeframes

Grant round opens	9am, Monday 13 April 2026
Grant round closes	4pm Friday 15 May 2026
Recommendations to Council	August 2026
Projects delivered	October 2026 – October 2027 (one year grants)
	October 2026 – October 2028 (two year grants)

Who can apply?

Grant Stream		Eligible Entities
Active Inner West		Local unincorporated groups (Not-for-profit Auspice required), incorporated not-for-profit organisations
Arts	Artist support	Local individual artists
	Arts projects	Local arts organisations, individual artists and groups of local artists
Business Chambers		Incorporated business chambers and associations within the Inner West LGA, with ≥ 30 financial members, and have been operating for 12+ months
Community history		Local individual historians, researchers or archivists, unincorporated groups (Not-for-profit Auspice required), incorporated not-for-profit organisations
Circular economy		Local unincorporated groups (Not-for-profit Auspice required), incorporated not-for-profit organisations
Community wellbeing		
Environment		
Multicultural		
Disability support		Individuals, unincorporated groups (Not-for-profit Auspice required), incorporated not-for-profit organisations

General eligibility

To be eligible you must:

- ▶ be a legally registered, incorporated not-for-profit organisation or group. Unincorporated groups must be auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit organisation. This eligibility varies for Arts grants, Business Chamber grants, Community History grants, Disability Support (Individual) grants
- ▶ be a resident of or delivering services in the Inner West Council area or offer a project that benefits residents of the Inner West
- ▶ meet the grant stream eligibility criteria
- ▶ address the grant stream objectives
- ▶ demonstrate your project is in accordance with Council's Community Strategic Plan, policies and regulations
- ▶ apply for a specific project (i.e. grants do not offer a permanent source of funding)
- ▶ only submit one application to the Inner West Council Grants Program
- ▶ Parents & Citizens' Associations are eligible to apply for projects that can demonstrate they benefit the Inner West community.

Ineligibility

Inner West Council does not provide grants for:

- ▶ applicants who have not satisfactorily completed any previous Inner West Council grants and met all contractual obligations
- ▶ applicants who have outstanding debts of any kind to Inner West Council
- ▶ NSW or Federal government departments
- ▶ For-Profit organisations and sole traders. Note this eligibility varies for Arts grants, Community History grants, Disability Support (Individual) grants
- ▶ applicants who represent a school or tertiary institution
- ▶ projects that have already commenced or already taken place (i.e. retrospective funding)
- ▶ projects that duplicate existing services already provided in the Inner West Council area
- ▶ capital works will not be funded unless meeting eligibility criteria for Circular Economy and Environment grants. Equipment such as laptops, iPhones, cameras etc will not be funded
- ▶ financial assistance for interstate or overseas travel, or other costs where the applicant would derive excessive personal benefits
- ▶ salaries of permanent employees who will be supervising or working on the project as part of their usual duties. Grants may fund additional staff to deliver the project
- ▶ operational expenditure such as fixed overheads and administrative costs
- ▶ general donations to charities
- ▶ activities that could be perceived as benefitting political parties or associated groups.

Active Inner West grants

Active Inner West grants of up to \$5,000 per year for two years (multi-year).

Overview

Active Inner West grants provide financial support to local community and non-government groups to offer sport and/or active recreation programs. These programs must involve physical activity or movement for Inner West residents. The grants support two-year projects, with the goal of the activity continuing beyond the grant funding.

Objectives

The objectives of the active inner west grant program are to:

- ▶ Address and remove barriers to participation and engagement
- ▶ Promote an active, inclusive and healthy community
- ▶ Increase and/or enhance regular and ongoing participation opportunities in sport, active recreation or structured physical activity in a sustainable manner
- ▶ Build the capacity of the organisation to enhance the provision of sport and active recreation services (provide training to develop the skills of volunteers).

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Impact and quality of the project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan, 'Recreation Strategy and Action Plan 2023-32' and the grant objectives
- ▶ Provide sporting and/or active recreation benefits to Inner West communities
- ▶ Ability to improve access, inclusion, diversity and participation in sport and/or active recreation activities with sustainable outcomes
- ▶ Applicant's capacity to deliver the project, including relevant applicant experience, skills and time
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Matthew Baigent**, Coordinator Recreation on (02) 9392 5515 or **Sue Shand**, Office of Sport Coordinator on (02) 9335 2102 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.

Arts grants

Artist support grants of up to \$5,000 and Arts project grants of up to \$10,000 per application.

Overview

Arts grants provide funding for local artists, groups of artists or arts organisations. The funding may support projects that deliver:

- ▶ The production and presentation of new creative work
- ▶ Professional and creative development for artists
- ▶ Opportunities for audiences to engage with arts and culture
- ▶ Strengthened capacity and sustainability for Inner West creative industries
- ▶ Creative benefits to the local community, including cultural identity.

Categories

Category One: Artist support grants for individual practicing artists based in the Inner West.

To support creative practice and career development across a range of disciplines including:

- ▶ Skill development (e.g. courses, training, mentorship)
- ▶ Creative development (e.g. developing or showcasing concepts or work)

Category Two: Arts project grants for arts organisations or individual artists or a group of artists.

For the production and presentation of new work, creative partnerships or significant cultural projects that benefit the Inner West community.

Objectives

The objectives of the arts grant program are to:

- ▶ Promote a vibrant street life, support business, and encourage visitors
- ▶ Increase opportunities for community participation in arts and culture, including access to art in the public domain
- ▶ Encourage creative excellence and innovation in the content and delivery of arts projects and programs
- ▶ Contribute to the development and sustainability of artists and creative industries.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Excellence and innovation in arts and creative practice and/or delivery of arts projects
- ▶ Impact of project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan and grant objectives
- ▶ Demonstrated capacity to deliver the project including relevant experience, supporting material, skills and time
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant.

Category One only

Benefits to the artist's creative practice, career development or career sustainability.

Category Two only

Creative community benefits (including access to art in the public domain); and/ or benefits to the creative sector.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Creative Communities team on (02) 9392 5031 or email creative.programs@innerwest.nsw.gov.au before applying. Grant applicants requiring support with their application are encouraged to reach out to Council on the above numbers to discuss their needs.

Business chamber grants

Business Chamber grants of up to \$60,000 each

Overview

The business chamber grant stream supports sector projects delivered by local business chambers and industry associations that grow the skills and capacity of local and diverse businesses, connect businesses to networking opportunities and promote local precincts.

Project examples include:

- ▶ cluster development initiatives
- ▶ engagement of administrative support to deliver projects
- ▶ initiatives that educate businesses on improving accessibility
- ▶ social media or marketing campaigns to attract visitors
- ▶ special events to encourage out-of-area visitation and customer spend
- ▶ capacity building activities such as business workshops and networking events
- ▶ activities aligned with Council's economic development strategies
- ▶ capital works on main streets and in the public domain, subject to approvals and collaboration with Inner West Council.

Objectives

The objectives of the business chamber grant program are to:

- ▶ increase accessibility
- ▶ drive new visitation and customer spend
- ▶ build the skills and capacity of local businesses
- ▶ benefit diverse businesses including Aboriginal and multi-cultural enterprises
- ▶ promote and showcase local precincts and the unique experiences they offer.

Stream-specific eligibility

- ▶ Business chambers and business associations within the Inner West LGA that are legally incorporated, have a minimum of 30 financial members, and have been operating for at least 12 months.
- ▶ Chambers and associations that receive funds under the Urban Centres Program or have a direct grant allocation to support the operation of the Chamber / Association are not eligible.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Activities that align with Council's economic development strategies
- ▶ Economic activities that improve accessibility, showcase local precincts and benefit diverse businesses.
- ▶ Capacity to deliver the project, including relevant experience and skills.
- ▶ Detailed budget that demonstrates value for money and what is to be funded by this grant.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Bernadette Selfe**, Senior Economic Development Officer on (02) 9392 5871 before applying. Support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on economic project ideas.

Circular economy grants

Circular economy grants of up to \$5,000 each

Overview

Circular economy grants support projects that contribute to a circular economy in the Inner West community. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects that focus on one or more of the following:

- ▶ Zero Waste
- ▶ Circular Economy
- ▶ Reuse, repair, upcycling or recycling.

There is a separate funding stream available to support projects that focus on climate change, renewable energy, sustainable transport, healthy waterways, water sensitive urban design and biodiversity. Learn more about Council's Environment grant stream on [page 11](#).

Objectives

The objectives of the circular economy grant program are to:

- ▶ Develop circular economy pathways or services within the Inner West.
- ▶ Support local new initiatives in the circular economy community to enable innovation in using materials otherwise seen as waste.
- ▶ Provide reuse, repair, upcycling and/or recycling to enable materials to be continually used in a circular economy and move away from the linear concept of 'produce > use > dispose'.
- ▶ Create support for community sharing of knowledge, skills and opportunities for a circular economy.
- ▶ Increase awareness, improve access, inclusion, diversity and participation in circular economy initiatives.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Impact and quality of the project and contribution to Council's Zero Waste Strategy 2036 and grant objectives
- ▶ Extent of the project's reach in terms of moving materials from a linear to circular economy
- ▶ Identification of and pathways for specific wastes – priority will be given for household materials without adequate reuse and recycling opportunities/capacity in place. Demonstrated reuse, repair, upcycling or recycling of these identified materials.
- ▶ Well-designed project including clear project purpose, goals and activities
- ▶ Capacity to deliver the project, including relevant experience, skills and partners
- ▶ Clear, detailed budget that demonstrates value for money, including all sources of project income (and what is to be funded by this grant for the benefit of the Inner West community specifically) and relevant quotes.

Stream-specific eligibility

Inner West Council provides grants for projects that have not yet commenced, and in limited cases, people who have not yet acquired a previous grant may be eligible to apply again. In addition:

- ▶ Applications are accepted for innovative capital works and equipment where they benefit the broader community and directly result in keeping materials in circulation, reducing landfill.
- ▶ Application budgets can include an auspice/project administration fee of up to 15% of the Inner West Council grant contribution
- ▶ Council may fund Parents and Citizen organisations but does not fund projects for schools.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Helen Bradley**, Resource Recovery Planning Manager on (02) 9335 2130 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.

Community history grants

Community history grants of up to \$5,000 each

Overview

The community history grants stream supports projects that identify and interpret the Inner West's historically significant events, places and people. This includes the exploration of activism, architecture, business, culture, economy, parks, places of historical significance, politics, and recreation.

Projects include research, archiving, conservation and preservation of significant objects, publications, and exhibitions about social and cultural history (including current activities). Funded projects will build on Council's physical and digital collection that provides a rich information source to inform and educate current and future generations.

Objectives

The objectives of the community history grant program are to:

- ▶ Build on Council's Community History Collection (physical and digital) for future and current historians, researchers, and generations
- ▶ Support original research and interpretation of the area's history
- ▶ Support original research and interpretation of current issues, place, social, people, political, and urban changes.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Impact and quality of the project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan and grant objectives
- ▶ The relevance the project will bring to Council's Community History Collection
- ▶ How the project or outcome fills an identified gap in the Collection
- ▶ Applicant's capacity to deliver a well-planned project, including relevant experience, skills and time
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Aleem Aleemullah**, Community History Librarian on (02) 9335 2167 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.

Community wellbeing grants

Category One: Community wellbeing grants of up to \$5,000 each

Category Two: Community wellbeing grants of up to \$10,000 per year for two years (multi-year)

Overview

The community wellbeing grants stream supports projects that address local issues, promote social justice, enhance wellbeing, strengthen the sustainability and capacity of the Inner West community and foster inclusion, equity, and social connection.

Council's multi-year grant funding offers community organisations the opportunity to develop innovative projects which require longer timeframes to achieve outcomes. In 2026, Council will offer multi-year grants over two years for community wellbeing grants.

Objectives

The objectives of the community wellbeing grant program are to:

- ▶ Connect local people to each other and place
- ▶ Foster an inclusive and diverse community and encourage community participation
- ▶ Develop community strengths, capabilities and lifelong learning
- ▶ Encourage community collaborations and partnerships.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Impact and quality of the project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan and grant objectives
- ▶ Benefit to the Inner West community
- ▶ Applicant's capacity to deliver a well-planned project, including relevant applicant experience, skills and time
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Stephanie Alchin**, Community Wellbeing Officer on (02) 9392 5054 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.

Disability support grants

Category One: Disability support grants of up to \$5,000 each for individuals

Category Two: Disability support grants of up to \$10,000 per year for organisations, available for one year or for two years (multi-year).

Overview

The disability support grant stream provides funding for organisations and individuals to specifically support local people with disability.

Council welcomes applications across its whole grant program that align with our Disability Inclusion Action Plan priorities including:

- ▶ Improving access to recreation, sports, learning, leisure and volunteering opportunities and healthy lifestyles
- ▶ Expanding opportunities for artists, creatives, and audience members with disability
- ▶ Growing entrepreneurship, local employment for people with disability and improving access to local businesses as consumers.

Objectives

The objectives of the disability support grant program include:

- ▶ Support new initiatives to enable greater participation by people with lived experience of disability
- ▶ Create support for community sharing of knowledge, skills and opportunities
- ▶ Increase awareness, improve access, inclusion, diversity and participation in initiatives
- ▶ Build leadership capacity among people with disability.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the evaluation of applications:

- ▶ Impact of project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2026
- ▶ Demonstrated capacity to deliver the project including relevant experience, supporting material, skills and time
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant

Application support

Applicants are invited to speak with **Glenn Redmayne**, Access and Inclusion Planning Leader on **(02) 9335 2074** to discuss their proposal before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas, and drafting assistance.

Environment grants

Environment grants of up to \$5,000 per year for two years (multi-year) are available

Overview

Environment grants support projects that contribute to an ecologically sustainable Inner West. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects that focus on one or more of the following: climate change, renewable energy, sustainable transport, healthy waterways, water sensitive urban design and biodiversity.

There is a NEW funding stream available to support projects that focus on product/materials reuse, recycling, or repair. Learn more about Council's Circular economy grants on [page 7](#).

Objectives

The objectives of the environment grant program are to:

- ▶ Benefit the environment through local sustainability projects
- ▶ Support the community to share sustainability skills and knowledge
- ▶ Build community capacity to take action on environmental issues
- ▶ Improve access, inclusion, diversity, and participation in sustainability.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Impact and quality of the project and contribution to Council's Community Strategic Plan and grant objectives
- ▶ Extent of the project's environmental benefit
- ▶ Well-designed project including clear project purpose, goals, and activities
- ▶ Capacity to deliver the project, including relevant experience and skills
- ▶ Clear, detailed budget that demonstrates value for money, including all sources of project income and relevant quotes.

Stream specific eligibility

Inner West Council provides grants for projects that have not yet commenced, and in limited cases people who have not yet acquitted a previous grant may be eligible to apply again. In addition:

- ▶ Applications are accepted for some capital works where the works benefit the broader community. Examples include the installation of renewable energy infrastructure, rainwater or stormwater harvesting infrastructure as well as water sensitive urban design landscaping
- ▶ Application budgets can include an auspice/project administration fee of up to 15% of the Inner West Council grant contribution
- ▶ Council does fund Parents and Citizen organisations but does not fund projects for schools.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Kate Jackson**, Coordinator Community Sustainability on (02) 9335 2147 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.

Multicultural grants

Multicultural grants of up to \$5,000 each

Overview

The multicultural grants stream provides funding for projects that contribute to wellbeing for multicultural communities. Projects that support new and established migrant communities to stay connected and projects that promote intercultural connection are particularly encouraged.

We accept a broad range of projects, however, see below for ideas to inspire you.

Previous project examples include:

- ▶ A forum or activity that raises awareness of a certain issue that impacts community members
- ▶ Intercultural connections, such as intercultural sports programs, a music event or art projects
- ▶ Education sessions that provide support and guidance on an issue that is affecting community members
- ▶ Social gatherings that encourage connection and understanding
- ▶ An event or activity to celebrate an important date or milestone.

Objectives

The objectives of the multicultural grant program are to:

- ▶ Encourage community collaborations and partnerships between and across communities
- ▶ Build on community strengths and capabilities
- ▶ Encourage participation and community connections.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in the process of assessing applications:

- ▶ Ability to strengthen community collaboration, connection and partnerships
- ▶ Capacity to plan and deliver a well-planned project
- ▶ Realistic budget, including all sources of project income and quotes where relevant.

Application support

Applicants are encouraged to speak with **Bridgette Syrus**, Community Wellbeing Officer on (02) 9392 5523 or multicultural@innerwest.nsw.gov.au before applying. Grant applicants requiring support with their application are encouraged to reach out to Council on the above number to discuss their needs.

Quick response small grants

Quick response small grants of up to \$500 each

Overview

The quick response small grants stream supports groups to establish, develop or expand community wellbeing activities with materials or resources within the Inner West.

Objectives

- ▶ Connect people to each other and place
- ▶ Develop community strengths, capabilities and lifelong learning
- ▶ Foster an inclusive and diverse community and encourage community-wide participation
- ▶ Encourage community collaborations and partnerships.

Application support

Applicants are invited to speak with **Claire Allon**, Grants and Engagement Officer on (02) 9392 5842 before applying. One-on-one support is available to provide grant applicants with advice on your project ideas.



Pictured: Baking 101, Stanmore

Preparing an application

The budget in a grant application must identify the amount requested, including project income and expenditure. Indicative quotes need to be included for any items over the value of \$500. Please discuss your budget with your grant stream officer to ensure it includes:

- ▶ Expected project income, including any contributions (donations of goods or services) or other funding sources
- ▶ Expected expenditure, including specifying which items you intend to purchase with Council grant funds.

Community facility hire for projects

Council may provide fee waivers for hire of Council facilities to undertake projects that receive grant funding. Please discuss your needs for a project venue, park or sporting ground/facility with a grant stream officer.

Supporting documentation

Applicants will need to provide supporting documentation, and these documents will need to be uploaded to the SmartyGrants software with your proposal, when prompted by the application form.

Supporting documentation may include:

- ▶ Quotes for any budget items over the value of \$500
- ▶ Project plans
- ▶ Letters of support from community partners
- ▶ Examples of previous projects, including online links, images, multimedia, or pdf document uploads
- ▶ Resume of key personnel
- ▶ Certificate of Incorporation or Constitution
- ▶ Audited financial statement or statement of income and expenditure
- ▶ Public liability insurance or a quote for public liability insurance
- ▶ Where an auspice is required, a letter of agreement supporting the project.

Auspice arrangements

Unincorporated groups must be Auspiced by an incorporated not-for-profit organisation to be eligible to apply. The Auspice must agree to receive, administer and manage the grant on behalf of the successful applicant.

This requires the Auspice to:

- ▶ enter into the relevant agreement with Inner West Council
- ▶ accept the grant funds and pay the auspiced grant recipient
- ▶ manages the grant funds during the project
- ▶ be responsible for the delivery of all obligations set out in the relevant agreement.

The Auspice should have the technical skills to guide and support the successful applicant in the project delivery, while acknowledging project decisions remain with the recipient.

Grants administration process

Application process

All applications must be submitted online. The grants page on Council's website provides a link to the application form for each grant stream: innerwest.smartygrants.com.au.

Application support

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposal with a Council grant officer before applying. One-on-one sessions provide grant applicants with tailored support.

Assessment

All applications will be assessed by Council staff against the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in these guidelines. Some applications may also be assessed by an expert panel that includes one or more external community representatives with expertise relevant to individual grants streams.

Approval

Grant funding recommendations are made to the elected representatives of Council for consideration and approval.

Notification

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application within five business days of Council approval.

Funding agreements

Successful applicants will be offered a funding agreement confirming the conditions of the grant.

The funding agreement will include:

- ▶ A brief description of the project for which funding is being provided
- ▶ The amount of cash funding to be received
- ▶ Performance measures for each project
- ▶ The deadline for final submission of the acquittal report.

Contact

For more information about Council's grants program, go to innerwest.nsw.gov.au/contribute/grants or contact Council's grants team by phone on (02) 9392 5842.

