

ADDITIONAL ITEM



Item No: 4.10
Title: Working Together Staying Strong Funding Support Program
Department: Connected Communities

27 April 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2020/00039 - D13938898
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Summary

This report provides details of a new, time-limited quick response community grant program, Working Together Staying Strong, to be established to assist local community groups and organisations providing critical support services to vulnerable and at-risk community members in response to COVID-19.

A decision of Council is required for the service to progress. The impact on service delivery without a resolution of Council is as follows:

- Local community groups and organisations will not have access to receive critical funding to continue supporting vulnerable and at-risk community members during COVID-10

Recommendation

- 1 That Council endorse the Working Together Staying Strong grant program as outlined in the following report and Guidelines (Attachment 1).**
- 2 That Council allocate \$300,000 towards the program identified from savings via projects not able to be undertaken due to COVID-19.**
- 3 That Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate) through delegated authority to make final determination and allocation of funding on each application based on staff assessment to ensure quick allocation of funds.**
- 4 That Council receive a monthly information report providing an update on the program and details on funded applicants.**

Context

The Working Together Staying Strong grant program has been developed in response to the increased local demand on critical support services due to the COVID-19 situation. The aim of this program is to assist organisations, which deliver essential support to vulnerable and at-risk groups, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a time-limited, rapid response funding program for service providers who are currently facing increased demand and/or operational difficulties supporting vulnerable and at-risk Central Coast community members. The funding would be available to community sector groups: not-for-profits, non-government organisations and charities.

The grant program will also allow service providers to adjust their delivery methodologies so they can still support their clients while complying with social distancing requirements.

The Central Coast Region has already seen increased unemployment, social isolation, financial pressure, incidences of domestic violence, rough sleeping and risk of people becoming homeless since the pandemic began. Service providers need practical assistance now to support the increased number of people in need, and to do it in a safe way.

This grant program is a practical way of supporting and strengthening our front-line service providers to support our community members who are worst hit by this crisis. This will ensure that the community is best placed to begin its recovery post COVID.

Current Status

The Working Together Staying Strong grant program is time-limited and will remain open for applications until 30 September 2020 or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first.

The Working Together Staying Strong grant program provides up to \$10,000 per project in combined funding and in-kind Council services to applicants who are a legally constituted not-for profit organisations, or auspiced by one.

Projects that directly support physical health and mental well-being, social connection and the safety of vulnerable and at-risk groups will be considered. For example, this could include things like:

- Food hamper preparation and delivery
- Swags for rough sleepers
- Mental health support
- Counselling services
- Organisational volunteer support
- Helping people get around (e.g. transport support)
- Small equipment purchases (e.g. to facilitate education, telehealth etc.)

All grant conditions are consistent with Council's adopted Community Grants Policy.

Guidelines for the Working Together Staying Strong grant program have been developed (Attachment 1).

Assessment

The success of this program will lie in rapid response times. Using the current Community Support Grant program model, applications will be assessed by relevant staff and the Unit Manager Community Partnerships. These will be determined on a weekly basis for approval by the Director Connected Communities. A monthly Council information report will be prepared providing a program update and details on funded applicants.

Consultation

Information on this program will be provided on Council’s website, promoted through Council’s social media platforms and distributed to the community grants database.

Council staff will also provide information and individual appointments with interested applicants to assist with their submissions where required.

Options

- 1 Establish and implement a new time-limited grants program in response to COVID-19 to assist local critical services provide services for vulnerable and at-risk community members. This is the recommended option.

- 2 Do nothing. This is not recommended due to the ongoing social and economic impacts and challenges faced by vulnerable and emerging at-risk groups within our community as a result of the pandemic.

Financial Impact

No additional funding is sought for the implementation of this program. The initiative will be funded through the redirection of \$300,000 within the Community Partnership Unit’s current operation budget for 2019/20.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

Theme 1: Belonging

Choose Focus Area

B-A1: Work within our communities to connect people, build capacity and create local solutions and initiatives.

Risk Management

All successful applications will receive a letter of offer outlining Council's requirements of funding, service delivery and accountability for both Council and the funded organisation.

All successful applicants are required to submit a final project acquittal report no later than twelve weeks after the agreed completion date of the activity/project with copies of any photos, promotional materials and evidence of payment/purchase for each funded item.

Critical Dates or Timeframes

The success of this program will lie in rapid response times. Hence, the model proposed is for the Director Connected Communities to be delegated authority to allocate funding.

Should decisions be delayed or not supported projects may not be undertaken.

The implementation and delivery of this program will be continuously reviewed and monitored throughout its lifecycle to ensure that it addresses the needs of the community sector.

Attachments

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| 1 Guidelines - Working Together Staying Strong Funding Support Program | D13938924 |
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Working Together Staying Strong Funding Support Program

1 WHAT IS THE COVID 19 – Working Together Staying Strong Funding Support Program

This program has been developed in response to the increased local demand on critical support services due to the COVID-19 situation. Funding is being redirected from programmes that cant be undertaken due to COVID-19 restrictions

The Central Coast Region has already seen increased unemployment, social isolation, financial pressure, domestic violence, rough sleeping and risk of people becoming homeless since the pandemic began. Service providers need practical assistance now to support the increased number of people in need, and to do it in a safe way.

It is a time-limited, rapid response funding program for service providers who are currently facing increased demand and/or operational difficulties supporting vulnerable and at-risk Central Coast community members.

This grants program is a practical way of supporting and strengthening our front-line service providers to support our community members who are worst hit by this crisis.

2 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Total funding available – up to \$300,000.

- Applications can be made for funding of between \$1,000 to \$10,000.

3 KEY DATES

The program will open 1 May 2020 and close 30 September 2020 or prior if all funds have been expended.

4 ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed as they are received. Successful applicants will be notified within two weeks of submitting their application.

Applications will be assessed by specialist Council staff, with recommendations provided by Council’s Community Partnerships Unit Manager for approval by the Director Connected Communities. A monthly Council information report will be produced providing a program update and details on funded applicants.

This approach is consistent with other Council’s Community Grants programs.

5 EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOME

Through access to timely funding assistance, this grants program will enable direct service providers to provide support to the increased number of vulnerable and emerging at-risk communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants will also allow service providers to adjust their delivery methodologies so they can still support their clients while complying with social distancing requirements.

6 TYPES OF ACTIVITIES / PROJECTS SUPPORTED

This program is designed to assist service providers who are supporting vulnerable people.

Projects that directly support physical health and mental well-being, social connection and safety of vulnerable and at-risk groups will be considered.

For example, this could include things like:

- Food hamper preparation and delivery
- Swags for rough sleepers
- Mental health support
- Counselling services
- Organisational volunteer support
- Helping people get around (e.g. transport support)
- Small equipment purchases (e.g. to facilitate education, telehealth etc.)

7 ELIGIBILITY

7.1 Applicants must be a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation, or be auspiced by a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation, and facing a demonstrated increased demand and/or operational difficulties due to COVID-19.

7.2 Applicants must be based and operate within the Central Coast Local Government Area (LGA) and the proposed activity must be undertaken in the Central Coast LGA and benefit residents of the Central Coast.

7.3 Applicants must meet the grant program eligibility criteria and address the program outcome.

8 THE FOLLOWING ARE INELIGIBLE

8.1 Incomplete applications.

8.2 Retrospective funding of any project or activity.

8.3 General fundraising appeals.

8.4 Profit generating activities.

8.5 Applicants in a position to self-fund the project.

8.6 Proposals from Government Departments, agencies or any Council.

- 8.7 Activities which have been assessed by Central Coast Council as presenting an unacceptable risk and do not comply with current COVID-19 health and government requirements, advice and guidelines.
- 8.8 Applications that require a Development Application.

9 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Each application that meets the eligibility criteria will be assessed as follows:

- 9.1 The project or activity clearly relates to increased demand and/or operational difficulties related to COVID-19.
- 9.2 The project or activity addresses needs of the most vulnerable, emerging risk, and at-risk members of the community
- 9.3 The organisation's demonstrated capacity and reliability in delivering the project in the local community (e.g. show how you are resourced, equipped and experienced to deliver the project).
- 9.4 The project demonstrates how goods, equipment and / or services purchased from grant funding are required for delivery of the proposed activity.

10 WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 10.1 Applications are only accepted online through Central Coast Council's website www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au and the appropriate online application form. Assistance is provided to any group or individual if requested to ensure access and support with the online system.
- 10.2 Applications will be assessed by specialist staff with final recommendations presented to the Director Connected Communities for endorsement.
- 10.3 Central Coast Council reserves the right to request further information in considering any application as well as the right to reject any application that does not meet the criteria.
- 10.4 Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their grant application within 10 working days of Council receiving an application.
- 10.5 Council reserves the right to award an amount less than that applied for if it is assessed that the amount requested is not justified by the information provided in the application or the full amount is not available at the time of the request.
- 10.6 All decisions of Central Coast Council are final and no negotiations will be entered into.

11 NOTIFICATION AND PAYMENT

- 11.1 All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within 10 working days.
- 11.2 Payment will be made within 7 days of a tax invoice and signed agreement being received.
- 11.3 An offer made to an applicant may be less than the amount applied for.
- 11.4 All successful applicants are required to provide an acquittal of the funds allocated as per their Letter of Agreement.
- 11.5 CCC will require all successful recipients to publicly acknowledge the Central Coast Council as supporter of the activity / project. This requirement will be included in the Letter of Agreement.

12 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 12.1 In addition to the completed application form, the following must be provided:
- A copy of your most recently audited financial statements (or a statement of income and expenditure signed by your finance manager, if your organisation is not subject to audit requirements).
 - A copy of your organisation's Certificate of Incorporation or evidence of being a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation or Authority to Fundraise from the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.
 - A copy of your organisation's public liability insurance certificate or a written quotation for public liability insurance cover for \$20 million.
- 12.2 Offer of funds by Council in no way implies any ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Central Coast Council.
- 12.3 Organisation and proposed activity must comply with all COVID-19 government and health requirements, advice and guidelines. Please refer to NSW Health and Federal Government Health COVID-19 web sites for current advice.

12.4 Awarding of grant funding does not imply that Central Coast Council has given any other consent. Applicants should note that many activities require approvals and consent from Central Coast Council, NSW Police and other state government agencies and that the organisations are wholly responsible for obtaining such approvals.