Grants Report 2025-26

PORT ADELAIDE ENFIELD

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative insights to measure the overall impact of the City of PAE's grant offering during a chosen financial year.

In 2025-26 the City of PAE offered a suite of 17 grant programs to support local community groups, sporting clubs, businesses, artists, residents and individuals. The total budget allocated to grants for the year was $960,737, among the higher grant budgets across the South Australian local government sector.

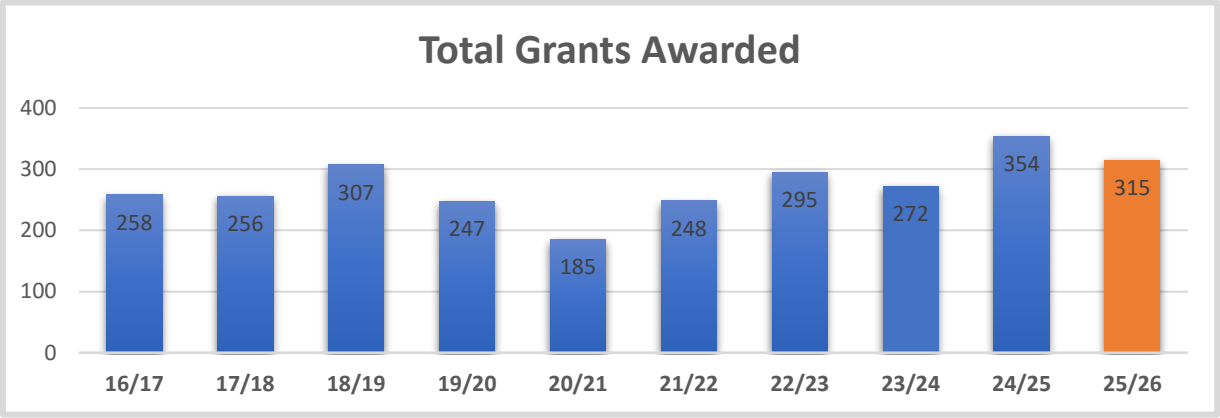
The 17 PAE grant programs are listed in the table below:

Community and Individual Grants	Arts, Placemaking and Events Grants	Heritage, Environment and Business Grants
Individual Grant	Placemaking Grant	Heritage Grant
Equipment Grant	Events Grant	Significant and Regulated Trees Assistance Scheme
Community Impact Grant	Commemorative Event Fund	Environmental Grant
Sport and Recreation Grant	Business Activation Grant	Green Business Incentive Scheme
Quick Response Grant	Creative Industry Grant	Small Business Growth Grant
Lightsview Community Fund	Arts Organisation Fund	

The total number of grant applications received in 2025-26 was 426, the second highest number ever recorded by the City of PAE. Although a 10% decrease from the peak reached the previous financial year, the number of grant applications demonstrates the continued demand from the community on the PAE Grants Program.

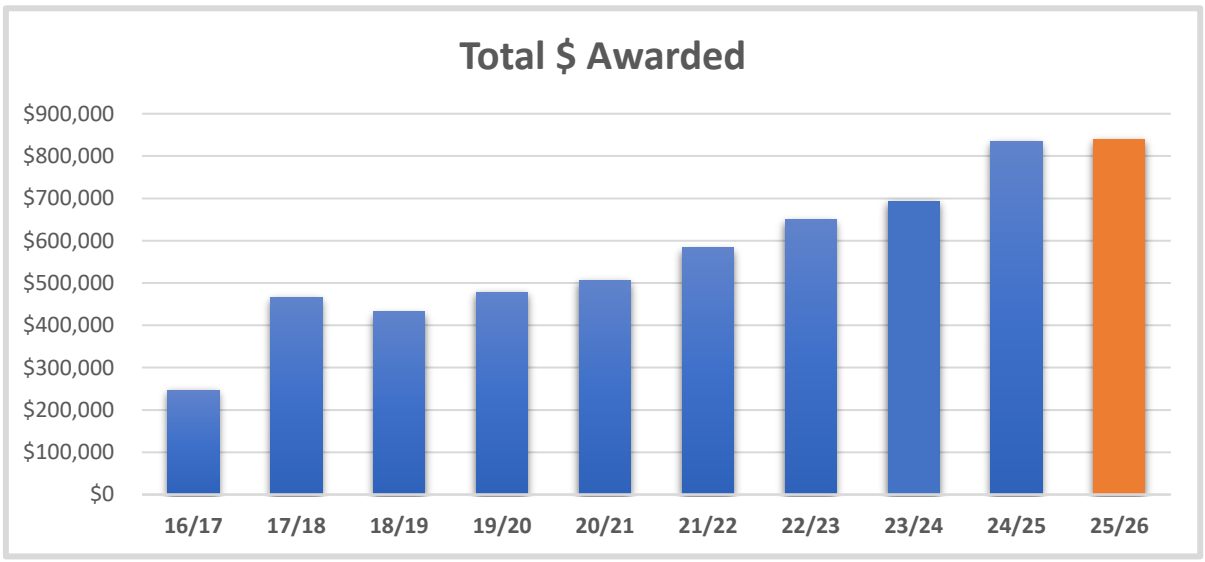
ANALYSIS

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED



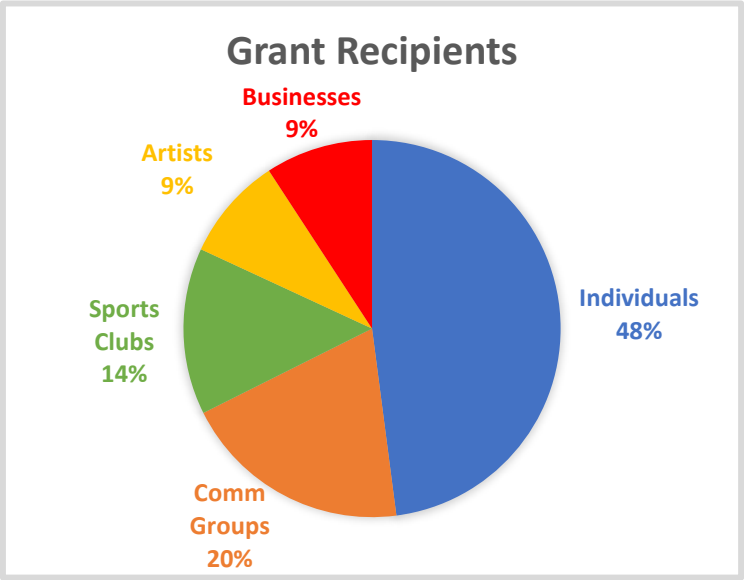
A total of 315 grants were approved and awarded, a 10.7% decrease on the previous financial year. Total approvals remain above the average of total grants approved each year since 2016-17, continuing the upward trend from the lowest number reached during COVID-19 where the ability to support activities, projects, events and purchases was significantly impacted.

TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED



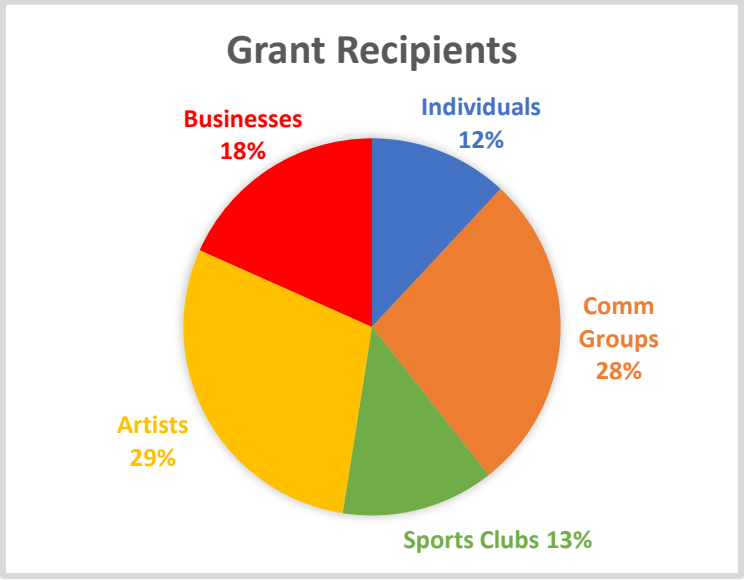
A total of $839,867 in grant funds was approved and awarded, exceeding previous annual funding allocations. This is consistent with both the growth in demand for grants as well as with the increased yearly overall grants budget, which has more than tripled since 2016-17. Each dollar spent in grants has the potential to lead to a fivefold investment back into the PAE community and economy.

GRANT RECIPIENTS (BY APPLICATION COUNT)



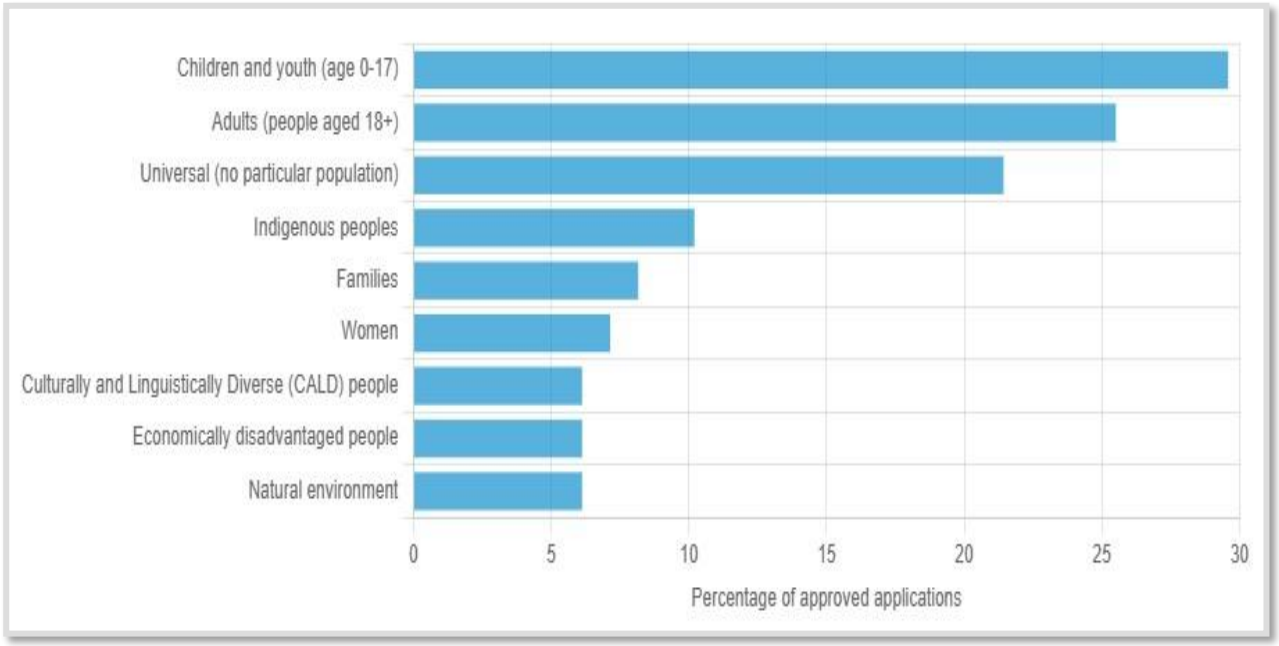
The majority of grants were awarded to individual residents (48%), mostly due to the popularity of the Individual Grant program.

GRANT RECIPIENTS (BY DOLLAR AMOUNT)



Over half of the overall grant funding was awarded to artists/art organisations (29%) and community groups (28%). The proportion of funds to the arts sector increased by 8% from the previous year. This is in direct correlation with the establishment in recent years of the Creative Industry Grant and the Arts Organisation Fund which have provided a mechanism for sustaining, growing and developing creativity, arts and culture in PAE.

TOP BENEFICIARIES (COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS ONLY)



The breakdown of grants approved under the Community and Individual Grants category (with the exclusion of the Individual Grant program) shows that these grants have proportionally benefitted children and young people, adults, First Nations people, families, and women.

APPLICATION APPROVAL RATE (BY APPLICATION COUNT)

Of the 426 applications received, 315 were approved, resulting in a 74% success rate. Remaining consistent with the previous year (75%), this rate is relatively high and indicates a high proportion of applicants were successful in applying for a City of PAE grant.

APPLICATION APPROVAL RATE (BY DOLLAR AMOUNT)

A total of $1,261,980 was requested, with $839,867 approved and awarded, resulting in a 66.5% approval rate. While the organisation's ability to fund remains high due to the overall capacity of its grants budget, this indicates increased demand for PAE grant programs, particularly for the Creative Industry Grant, Events Grant, Equipment Grant, Commemorative Event Fund, Sport & Recreation Grant and Small Business Growth Grant programs.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION RATE

A total of 662 grant applications were started, with 426 being subsequently completed, resulting in a 64.3% submission rate. This indicates that the majority of applicants did not likely have issues or barriers originating from the grant application processes. There is further opportunity to build community capacity by supporting those who have partially completed their application, and through a deeper consideration of removing barriers in accessing grant programs as part of the continuous improvement of grant making.

COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

Individual Grant: program supports PAE residents 25 years old and under, or who hold a low-income Health Care Card, to participate in personal development, leadership or competition opportunities. Funding supports intrastate, interstate and international opportunities.

Total amount requested: $37,424	Total amount awarded: $30,000
Applications submitted: 139	Number of recipients: 120
Background of recipients	51% male, 49% female 71% within the 12-17 years old age group 17.5% health care card holders (which is indicative of living in a low-income household) 7% self-identified as Aboriginal 7% self-identified as living with a disability

Outcomes supported: residents' participation in an array of sporting tournaments/competitions, arts performances and exhibitions, STEM competitions, leadership programs, diplomacy programs, UN conferences, international cultural immersion experience and exchange programs.

Impact: this was PAE's most popular grant program, and Council's financial support helped recipients to achieve lifelong goals, foster physical and mental wellbeing, develop pathways to high performance and excellence, grow motivation, confidence and self-belief, improve discipline, communication and social awareness, enhance personal exposure, develop problem-solving skills, learn and be inspired by others, and appreciate the value of teamwork.

Community Impact Grant: program supports not-for-profit community groups and organisations with projects and initiatives that help local communities thrive by building community wellbeing, cohesion and capacity for PAE residents. Previously known as Community Grant, the name was updated together with other minor changes as part of a recent review.

Total amount requested: $98,007.30	Total amount awarded: $71,422.30
Applications submitted: 16	Number of recipients: 11

Outcomes supported: delivery of diverse community-led initiatives from dog safety education outreach programs, community gardens and urban greening projects, interactive environmental education programs, to men's and women's mental health support groups, health literacy initiatives for First Nations young people, as well as training programs to teach furniture repair skills, and after-school activities for children with additional needs.

Impact: increased participation in community life and enhanced opportunities for people to connect through shared interests and experiences. Collectively, these projects fostered a stronger sense of belonging, wellbeing and social inclusion, while helping to reduce social isolation and strengthen community networks. The initiatives empowered individuals to actively engage in their communities, promoted respectful relationships, celebrated diversity, and created more inclusive opportunities for participation across a broad range of community groups.

Equipment Grant: program supports not-for-profit community groups and organisations to purchase urgent or necessary equipment required to deliver services, activities, or supports to the PAE community.

Total amount requested: $75,864.73	Total amount awarded: $53,977.40
Applications submitted: 44	Number of recipients: 32

Outcomes supported: purchase of a variety of equipment including defibrillator, computer/laptop, printer, kitchen appliances, marquees, first aid kit, filing cabinet, gardening tools, security cameras, PA system and projector.

Impact: equipment purchases allowed grassroots organisations to deliver efficiencies and replace outdated equipment, improving service delivery, encouraging participation and providing health and wellbeing benefits to participants and volunteers.

Quick Response Grant: program supports not-for-profit community groups and organisations with emerging or unexpected needs and opportunities that will make a positive difference to the PAE community.

Total amount requested: $7,544.94	Total amount awarded: $5,876.98
Applications submitted: 17	Number of recipients: 13

Outcomes supported: provision of educational resources for families of children recently diagnosed with neurological conditions, a cultural wellbeing initiative for seniors, a community badminton program, transport support for vulnerable women to access service provision, equipment replacement/upgrade to meet sudden surge in demand or unforeseen challenges, securing venue hire and addressing unexpected expenses.

Impact: the round enabled grassroots organisations to build stronger relationships within the community and enhance their capacity to deliver future initiatives, address urgent or unexpected needs which would have otherwise impacted their service/program delivery, trial and facilitate activities enhancing public participation without compromising on safety, comfort and compliance.

Sport & Recreation Grant: program supports sport and recreation clubs in the PAE Sport Network by building strong and sustainable clubs through good governance practices, as well as participation programs and pathways for the benefit of the PAE community.

Total amount requested: $69,982.51	Total amount awarded: $39,312.95
Applications submitted: 37	Number of recipients: 22

Outcomes supported: establishment of long-term strategic plans, Constitution review, policy development, building volunteers' capacity through training (i.e. First Aid, Responsible Service of Alcohol, Mental Health), coach education, participant education (i.e. Health & Wellbeing Youth Mentoring Workshops, Club Culture Development), implementation of new participation programs, purchase of new equipment and uniforms.

Impact: improvement in governance and club operations, upskilling and training of club volunteers and coaches, providing education to club members to improve club culture and wellbeing, providing opportunities for the community to participate in new sport programs, supporting the growth of juniors/women participation through the purchase of new equipment and uniforms.

Lightsview Community Fund: program supports Lightsview residents with the delivery of community-led activities, projects, initiatives, civic programs and events that encourage community use of public spaces and continue building the story of the Lightsview community. The City of PAE administers this fund on behalf of the Lightsview developer (CIC Northgate Pty Ltd).

Total amount requested: $1,000	Total amount awarded: $500
Applications submitted: 2	Number of recipients: 1

Outcomes supported: purchase of treats for children on Halloween at the Rotary Club of Lightsview Trick or Treat event.

Impact: contribution to a community-led social activity and provision of a focal point for residents and neighbours to interact and socialise.

ARTS, PLACEMAKING AND EVENTS GRANTS

Placemaking Grant: program supports the delivery of collaborative projects in public spaces across the City to enliven and activate local places for the benefit and wellbeing of our communities and visitors.

Total amount requested: $63,870	Total amount awarded: $48,420
Applications submitted: 10	Number of recipients: 8

Outcomes supported: public murals, a community micro-gallery, immersive arts experiences, cultural storytelling, digital place-promotion, interactive environmental installations, and inclusive community gatherings.

Impact: projects enhanced the vibrancy, attractiveness and activation of public spaces, creating new opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with local places in meaningful ways. The grants fostered collaboration between artists, First Nations contributors, businesses, community groups and local residents, strengthening community cohesion and local pride. Creative activations encouraged participation from people of diverse ages, backgrounds and abilities, while supporting local artists and cultural practitioners to develop and share their work. Collectively, the projects increased access to arts and cultural experiences, celebrated local identity, and contributed to a stronger sense of connection, belonging and place across the community.

Creative Industry Grant: program supports creative practitioners to grow their practice and deliver projects that contribute to PAE's vision for a strong, creative, impactful and sustainable arts ecology. This was the most oversubscribed grant program this year, with demand significantly outweighing available funds.

Total amount requested: $179,211.48	Total amount awarded: $50,000.17
Applications submitted: 38	Number of recipients: 12

Outcomes supported: the creation, development and presentation of new work across visual arts, film, documentary, literature, theatre, dance, cabaret and contemporary interdisciplinary practice. Highlights included interstate gallery exhibitions, an audiobook for global distribution, independent film and documentary production, Adelaide Fringe and Feast Festival presentations, a First Nations group exhibition during NAIDOC Week, contemporary dance development, and ambitious visual arts projects presented in partnership with leading cultural organisations.

Impact: projects strengthened the professional capacity of artists, writers, filmmakers, performers and creative producers by supporting new creative production, industry engagement and audience development. Local creatives gained opportunities to present work to interstate, national and international audiences, increasing the visibility and reach of PAE's creative sector. The program fostered collaboration between artists, galleries, festivals, curators and cultural organisations, while supporting innovative and experimental creative practice across a range of artforms. First Nations, culturally diverse and LGBTQIA+ voices were elevated through dedicated exhibitions, performances and screen-based projects, contributing to a more inclusive and representative cultural landscape. Collectively, the projects enhanced the region's reputation as a centre for artistic excellence, creative innovation and cultural leadership, while building sustainable pathways for future creative and professional growth.

Arts Organisation Fund: program supports PAE based professional not-for-profit arts organisations operating at a national level to contribute to the City of PAE creative ecology. It provides a mechanism for sustaining, growing and developing creativity, arts and culture in line with PAE's City Vision by attracting and supporting professional arts organisations to the region.

Total amount requested: $148,000	Total amount awarded: $108,000
Applications submitted: 4	Number of recipients: 3

Outcomes supported: a year-round public program of performances, residencies, exhibitions, and events offered by Vitalstatistix at Waterside Workers Hall in Port Adelaide (3-year funding) and by Post Office Projects at their POP Gallery and Studios in Port Adelaide (3-year funding), as well as the expansion of the Iwiri Arts studio programs and arts events supporting First Nations artists.

Impact: skills development and mentorship, industry leadership, local engagement, career pathways, cultural expression and connection, revenue generation and strategic partnerships which collectively contributed towards a strong, creative, impactful and sustainable arts ecology in PAE.

Events Grant: program supports event organisers to deliver innovative, creative and sustainable events that align with PAE's City Vision to enhance economic, social and cultural life in PAE. These grants remain highly popular, with the funding being offered across three rounds per year following a review of the program. Together with the Event Sponsorship program and the Commemorative Event Fund, the funding of events held by community organisers continues to be well supported by the City of PAE.

Total amount requested: $280,395.50	Total amount awarded: $191,030.50
Applications submitted: 36	Number of recipients: 28

Outcomes supported: diverse community-led events, from sports, music festivals, cultural celebrations, First Nations, community arts, and access and inclusion. Hosted by a variety of community and business organisations, the grants saw events delivered across the City of PAE, with many new event organisers accessing the program.

Impact: encouraging community-led and local activations across the broader council area, resulting in a cumulative economic and visitation boost to the area, together with celebrating and fostering access to social and cultural diversity, community participation and identity.

Commemorative Event Fund: program supports RSL sub-branches (and other eligible organisations) operating within the City of PAE to deliver events which align with a nationally recognised commemorative date and acknowledge Australia's wartime heritage or significant service contributions in civilian life.

Total amount requested: $25,000	Total amount awarded: $25,000
Applications submitted: 6	Number of recipients: 6

Outcomes supported: community-led events commemorating ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day across the City of PAE.

Impact: meaningful public recognition and remembrance of Australia's wartime heritage.

Business Activation Grant: program supports local businesses and venues to activate their space, in alignment with select large-scale Council events delivered across the year, to enhance the economic, social and cultural life in PAE. It encourages businesses to work with performers and creative practitioners to deliver a critical mass of activity around significant events.

Total amount requested: $4,000	Total amount awarded: $4,000
Applications submitted: 4	Number of recipients: 4

Outcomes supported: a diverse range of activations associated with the New Found Sound Festival in Port Adelaide and New Year's Eve celebrations at Semaphore foreshore including artist talks and exhibitions, footpath activations, live music performances and curated DJ sessions.

Impact: the local business community was able to participate in Council-led initiatives without significant financial risk, with activations strengthening collaborations between business, arts, community and Council, and driving additional visitation to the area.

HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT AND BUSINESS GRANTS

Heritage Grant: program supports owners of Local Heritage Places and Representative Buildings to maintain, conserve or restore places of local heritage significance.

Total amount requested: $62,583.55	Total amount awarded: $56,774.01
Applications submitted: 19	Number of recipients: 18

Outcomes supported: undertaking of 'like for like' works for structural timber repairs, verandah restorations, restoration of decorative ironwork, and brickwork repointing/repairs. The majority of funded properties were located in Semaphore and Alberton. 68% were Local Heritage Places with the remainder being Representative Buildings.

Impact: the majority of works have provided a structural benefit to the listed property that will significantly add longevity to the place, whilst the remaining works provided strong conservation benefit adding to the heritage value and streetscape appearance.

Significant and Regulated Trees Assistance Scheme: program supports the retention and protection of large trees in our neighbourhoods by helping landowners with tree maintenance costs on their properties.

Total amount requested: $22,624	Total amount awarded: $13,070
Applications submitted: 17	Number of recipients: 12

Outcomes supported: pruning and tree maintenance works.

Impact: the grant program was first launched as a trial in 2023-24 and subsequently it was offered on an ongoing basis for the last two financial years, recognising the role that significant and regulated trees play in the urban setting of suburban Adelaide. It is noted that some applications for pruning were for quite good tree specimens where the value of the grant to the amenity of the locality was considered optimal. The maintenance and retention of these mature trees bring many benefits to our community in terms of scenic amenity, habitat provision, streetscape appeal, shading, and cooling effects.

Environmental Grant: program supports community groups to deliver environmental projects and initiatives that will protect and enhance the sustainability and environment of the local area by assisting in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improve greening, manage resources more efficiently, protect our waterways and empower community-led approaches to climate change.

Total amount requested: $33,919	Total amount awarded: $17,000
Applications submitted: 8	Number of recipients: 4

Outcomes supported: sustainable biodiverse community garden landscaping, bush tucker garden for First Nations students, and sustainable fashion repair and upcycling workshops.

Impact: collectively these projects delivered strong positive environmental outcomes by increasing local greening, improving biodiversity, supporting urban cooling and promoting more climate-resilient community spaces. Hands-on participation, education, public activities and shared garden spaces will build environmental awareness and encourage long-term sustainable behaviours within the community.

Plantings, including native and climate-appropriate species, provide shade, reduce heat impacts, support pollinators and local wildlife, and contribute to cleaner air. Water-efficient approaches such as targeted drip irrigation and low-maintenance planting reduce water loss, improve plant survival during hot and dry periods, and demonstrate sustainable landscape practices that can be adopted more broadly across the community. The repair and upcycling activities divert textiles from landfill,

extend the life of clothing, reduce demand for new materials, and lower the water, energy and emissions associated with garment production.

Green Business Incentive Scheme: program supports small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the City of PAE to implement sustainability initiatives that reduce environmental impact and enhance long-term resilience. The Scheme provides targeted financial support for projects involving renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, emissions reduction planning, on-site greening, water-efficiency, circular economy practices and waste and/or energy efficiency audits. This grant program will be paused in 2026-27 to provide time to review its effectiveness in meeting its stated objectives and identify potential alternatives.

Total amount requested: $81,183	Total amount awarded: $75,000
Applications submitted: 10	Number of recipients: 9

Outcomes supported: nine local businesses installed over 180kW of solar PV and 400kWh of battery storage, as well as associated electrical infrastructure upgrades. As well as reducing operating costs for these businesses, the projects are expected to avoid emissions of over 58 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) annually. The round attracted co-investment of $260,139 from a diverse range of local SMEs including a furniture manufacturer, tattoo shop, pilates studio, diesel repairer and takeaway food shops.

Impact: the Scheme helped participating businesses improve their environmental performance and financial resilience. Battery storage systems provided greater energy independence and blackout protection, while solar installations lowered day-to-day operating costs, making these businesses more competitive and future ready. The Scheme also strengthened relationships between Council and businesses, laying the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and future partnerships in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Small Business Growth Grant: program supports the growth and success of small businesses by supporting them to invest in three categories: market expansion, product/service diversification, and digital transformation. The program was initially offered as a pilot during 2024-25, and was subsequently reviewed and endorsed by Council to continue as an annual program through to 2028-29.

Total amount requested: $71,370.27	Total amount awarded: $50,482.97
Applications submitted: 19	Number of recipients: 12

Outcomes supported: investment in new or upgraded equipment, updating digital assets, and building capabilities to meet increasing customer demand and position themselves for the future. The scope of investment was broad, ranging from commercial manufacturing machinery, commercial kitchen appliances, to website design and development, food delivery service expansion and other business development activities.

Impact: the grant program enabled local businesses to invest in critical growth activities without placing excessive strain on their finances. Investments in upgraded equipment to scale up and meet growing customer demand, adopting technology to streamline operations, and developing digital infrastructure to respond to emerging market needs have strengthened business resilience and sustainability. These improvements have also supported increased local workforce participation, contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic economy in PAE.

GRANTS IN FOCUS

Of the 17 grant programs offered by the City of PAE in 2025-26, three are highlighted here using case studies showcasing the outcomes achieved through each funding stream.

CASE STUDY 1 – SPORT AND RECREATION GRANT

- Recipient – Port Adelaide Sailing Club Inc
- Purpose – comprehensive review and update of the club's Constitution and governance framework
- Amount awarded – $2,500
- Outcomes – the grant contributed towards engaging external governance and legal support to assist the club with drafting a modern Constitution aligned with current legislative requirements and contemporary sporting club governance best practice, resulting in:
    - increased clarity for committee members and volunteers regarding roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes
    - improved volunteer confidence, engagement and succession planning through stronger governance structures
    - greater member participation and ownership through consultation workshops and stakeholder engagement
    - enhanced organisational sustainability and reduced governance risk for the club



CASE STUDY 2 – CREATIVE INDUSTRY GRANT

- Recipient – Bryce Kraehenbuehl (experimental filmmaker)
- Purpose – Wombat Workshop Film Club
- Amount awarded – $4,956
- Outcomes – the grant supported a local experimental filmmaker to facilitate a “film club” series of workshops on 16mm and other celluloid practices, resulting in:
  - the upskilling of 26 artists from various creative and social backgrounds participating in the program and learning to create a group project film, being able to shoot it, develop it and edit it
  - a screening of these works at the 2026 Adelaide Film Festival, further promoting this initiative and its participants
  - the activation of a vacant church building in Semaphore serving as the workshop location which has been promoted as the only place in South Australia where artists can learn about celluloid motion picture film
  - a developmental opportunity for the lead artist to teach and mentor other creatives leading to his first solo SALA exhibition titled Red Earth featuring multimedia work with 16mm and film prints



CASE STUDY 3 – HERITAGE GRANT

- Recipient – Property Owner, Semaphore
- Purpose – repointing stonework with lime mortar
- Amount awarded – $5,000
- Outcomes – the grant contributed towards required structural conservation works on the exterior of a Representative Building, resulting in:
  - removal of cement rendered plinth which was trapping moisture in the walls and causing damp issues and deteriorating the stones
  - repointing with a breathable lime mortar
  - positive impact on the longevity of the heritage property
  - significant improvement to the heritage value and streetscape appearance



CAPACITY BUILDING

The City of PAE is committed to offering appropriate and responsive grant programs that support the delivery of strategic outcomes for the benefit of the Port Adelaide Enfield community. It is also committed to assist with building the capacity of businesses and community to successfully apply for grants by providing information, resources and support to grant applicants.

As part of these ongoing efforts, Council's Administration facilitated the following grants workshops and info sessions in 2025-26:

- A PAE Business event titled 'Grant Writing for Business Success' was held on 31 October 2025 at the Parks Library, supporting local businesses interested in government funding opportunities. Guest speaker David Rawlings, an award-winning writer and business coach, delivered a practical session on writing stronger grant applications. The event was well received by the business community with 21 people attending on the day.
- A Port Precinct Drinks event was held on 13 November 2025 at the South Australian Maritime Museum in Port Adelaide promoting Events Grant, Creative Industry Grant, and Business Activation Grant opportunities to support local artists and traders. Approximately 60 people were in attendance.
- An Intro to Local Government Grants Info Session was held online on 16 and 18 December 2025 in collaboration with Welcoming Australia to provide their Community of Practice an overview of PAE grant programs as well as practical grant-writing tips and case studies. The session was attended by over 50 people representing multicultural community groups.
- A Grant Writing Workshop was held on 4 February 2026 at Enfield Community Centre to provide an overview of PAE grant programs as well as practical grant-writing tips and case studies. The session was attended by approximately 20 people from as many local grassroots organisations.

In addition to the above, prospective applicants are encouraged to contact PAE's Grants Team to receive tailored support and advice before submitting an application. These one-on-one interactions are often the best opportunity for community to learn more about PAE grants and how these align with their priorities, to improve their grant-writing skills and submit quality grant applications which, in turn, would maximise their chances of a successful grant outcome.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The City of PAE's focus on continuous improvement in grant making highlights its ongoing commitment to reviewing its grant programs and processes to ensure they are aligned with the City of PAE's strategic vision as well as with community priorities and needs.

In 2025-26 a number of continuous improvement opportunities were identified and implemented including:

- Significant standardisation across grant guidelines/information sheets to ensure consistency and clarity of grant-related information and design.
- Significant standardisation across online grant application and acquittal forms to ensure a smoother and more user-friendly experience.
- Monitoring, review and standardisation of internal grant assessment and approval processes to meet probity requirements.
- Streamlining the management of acquittals across all grant programs with the aim of reducing the number of outstanding acquittals.
- Review of two existing grant programs – namely the Community Impact Grant (formerly known as Community Grant) and the Small Business Growth Grant.
- Coordination of grants reporting to both Council and community to report on outcomes and impact of the City's grants offering.
- Exploring the use of a dedicated 'Grants Success Stories' webpage featuring case studies of past grant recipients to promote the existing suite of PAE grant programs.

- Using acquittals to embed opportunities for grantees to provide feedback and constructive criticism on Council's grant programs and grant making processes and to shape future decision-making in these areas. Below are extracts taken from a sample of grant acquittals:

  "Having operated businesses for around 15 years and been based within the City of PAE for over a decade, this experience has reinforced how supportive the Council is of local businesses. We felt well supported throughout and are very grateful for the opportunity to be part of this program." – Small Business Growth Grant recipient

  "The application and acquittal process was clear and easy to follow, and the online forms were straightforward to use. The guidelines were helpful in understanding what was required, and communication from PAE staff was responsive and supportive. Overall, the experience was positive. One small improvement could be allowing slightly more flexibility in word limits for some sections to better capture community context." – Quick Response Grant recipient

  "The application process was clear, well structured, and easy to navigate, with guidelines that were straightforward and proportionate to the size of the grant. The online system was intuitive, and the questions helped clearly articulate project need, outcomes, and community benefit." – Equipment Grant recipient

  "Overall, the grant program is well designed and provides valuable support for community-led placemaking. With minor refinements to budgeting and payment processes, the experience could be even more streamlined for applicants." – Placemaking Grant recipient

LOOKING AHEAD

The current social, economic, and political climate is likely to continue to put ongoing pressure on individuals, families, community organisations and businesses. This has translated to increased demand on funding providers, including the City of PAE through its suite of grant programs. In this context, the City of PAE's grants offering continues to be a strategic tool to support community needs and aspirations, ensuring funding categories are consistently aligned to community priorities while the overall grants budget as well as levels of funding for each grant program are reviewed regularly to factor in changes in cost of living and inflationary trends.

From an operational perspective, the challenge is to do more to build community capacity in the grants space and to continue to redesign grant programs across the board to remove barriers to participation and enabling all individuals to have equitable opportunity to access and benefit from the programs. Simultaneously, it is important to identify, provide recognition to and amplify the local success stories that are made possible with the contribution from PAE grants, showcasing what can be achieved through strategic collaborations and shared purpose.