



Previous Confidential Reports now publicly available

Ordinary Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, 25 May 2026

Date Released: Thursday, 28 May 2026

2 Notification of Acceptance of Grant Funds - Library Services

This item has been referred to Confidential Business, as the report refers to commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it; or (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council; or (iii) reveal a trade secret and discussion of the matter in open meeting would be, on balance, contrary to the public interest.

Compiled by: Sarah Dean, Head of Library Services

Authorised by: Sandy Davies, Director Community Connection

Outcome	<i>Support our wellbeing</i>
Strategy	<i>Support equitable access to community services and facilities</i>
Principal Activity	<i>Deliver library services that support a vibrant, connected community</i>

Executive Summary

Penrith City Council has been awarded \$471,964 through the State Library of NSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant Program 2025-26 for the Penrith Library Learning and Literacy Garden.

The project will be funded by the State Library grant and a \$200,000 contribution from the Library Reserve to deliver an accessible and flexible outdoor learning space supporting literacy, wellbeing and community connection.

The funding advice was issued to Council under an embargo on 14 April 2026 and Council was provided with seven business days to accept the grant which meant the grant was accepted prior to reporting to Council and communicated to Councillors via memorandum on 1 May 2026. This report seeks Council's endorsement and acceptance of \$471,964 in grant funding.

Background

The State Library of NSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant Program provides capital funding to NSW councils to support improvements to public library infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing library spaces, accessibility, community use and service capacity. In the 2025–26 funding round, a total of \$6 million was available, with councils able to apply for up to \$500,000 per project.

Council applied for grant funding to support delivery of the Penrith Library Learning and Literacy Garden project. The project responds to increasing demand for library program and study spaces and aligns with the Penrith Library Strategy 2023–2028, Strategy 1, which focuses on upgrading existing library facilities to ensure they are welcoming, accessible and modern.

The project proposes the transformation of the 188m² underutilised enclosed courtyard at Penrith library into a flexible and accessible outdoor learning and program space. The revitalised garden will include shaded seating, movable furniture, turfed areas, native

landscaping, acoustic treatments, level decking and automatic sliding doors to create a seamless indoor-outdoor connection with the library.

The total project cost is estimated at \$671,964, based on an Opinion of Probable Cost (OPC) prepared for the grant submission, inclusive of a 10% contingency. As the maximum grant amount available per project was \$500,000, Council applied for \$471,964, with the remaining \$200,000 to be funded from the Library Reserve.

Current Situation

Council was advised on 14 April 2026, under embargo, that the grant application had been successful, with funding of \$471,964 offered and seven business days provided for acceptance.

Council's Grant Applications Policy requires grants over \$250,000 to be reported to Council. Due to the embargo on public reporting and the short acceptance timeframe, the grant was accepted prior to Council reporting. Councillors were advised of the acceptance via memorandum on 1 May 2026, which also noted that a formal report would be presented tonight at the 25 May 2026 Ordinary Meeting, and that the matter would be considered in a Confidential session as the embargo remains in place at this time.

Due to the timing of the notification, the project was not included in Council's draft 2026-27 Operational Plan but subject to Council endorsing the grant tonight, it will be incorporated as part of the post-exhibition report to Council.

The grant requires funds to be expended by 30 June 2027. The State Library of NSW has advised that Council may apply for an extension to the expenditure timeframe (if required) at the six-month project reporting milestone, scheduled for December 2026.

Financial Implications

Council will receive \$471,964 in grant funding from the State Library of NSW, which is required to be expended by 30 June 2027. The total project cost is currently estimated at \$671,964, with the remaining \$200,000 to be funded from the Library Reserve.

The project will result in ongoing maintenance and asset renewal costs. It has been determined that these costs can be accommodated within the existing Library operational budget and managed through Council's long-term financial planning and asset management frameworks.

Risk Implications

Acceptance of this grant funding supports delivery of library service outcomes aligned with the Penrith Library Strategy 2023–2028. There is a risk associated with the requirement to expend the grant funds by 30 June 2027 however, this will be managed through existing project governance arrangements, with the option to seek an extension at the six-month reporting milestone in December 2026, if required. No other new or material risks have been identified.

Conclusion

Penrith City Council has been awarded \$471,964 through the State Library of NSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant Program 2025–26 for the Penrith Library Learning and Literacy Garden.

The project will be funded by the State Library grant and a \$200,000 contribution from the Library Reserve and will deliver an accessible and flexible outdoor learning space supporting literacy, wellbeing and community connection.

The funding advice was issued to Council under an embargo on 14 April 2026 and Council was provided with seven business days to accept the grant. The grant was accepted prior to Council reporting and communicated to Councillors via memorandum on 1 May 2026. This report seeks Council's endorsement and acceptance of \$471,964 in grant funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Notification of Acceptance of Grant Funds - Library Services be received.
2. Council endorses acceptance of the grant.
3. A copy of the report be made public when the embargo on the release of the information ceases to be in place.
4. The appropriate budget and action be incorporated into the 2026/2027 Operational Plan.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

There are no attachments for this report.