
0.0 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - COMMUNITY EVENT SUPPORT

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For Discussion

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

This report responds to a Council decision in February 2024, requesting that officers provide information regarding what Council can do to assist organisations that would like to host a community event and how organisations can access that assistance. Outcomes from the Fairfield Traders Association's multicultural community event, and Council's support is also provided in this report.

The report considers the scale and variety of community-based events, the range of infrastructure required, and the legislated requirements against which these elements are assessed. The report also considers Council support for these requirements, including promotions, such as advertising on Council's social media platforms.

The report was not able to be prepared as originally requested by March 2024 given a range of service delivery requirements, Council Plan actions and other unscheduled requests. It has however been developed in time for Council to consider the information contained within as part of its final deliberations on the 2024/25 Council Plan and Budget.

KEY MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. Consideration of the ways in which Council currently supports community event organisers.**
- 2. Consideration of the options analysis on the provision of Council support through its corporate channels of communication, and infrastructure services.**
- 3. Determination of any further investigation required and provision of operational budget to complete feasibility studies and what would need to be reprioritised to provide funding to an initiative of this nature.**

ARE THERE ANY KEY SENSITIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS MATTER THAT COUNCILLORS / ELT MUST BE AWARE OF

To increase service levels in this area would require Council to reduce service levels or expenditure for other projects or initiatives. Council should also carefully consider the role it plays in this space so as to not unintentionally transfer liability or add to insurance costs and premiums for Council.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The City of Darebin has a commitment to supporting the arts, multiculturalism, local businesses, and community events. Council produces and funds events that involve members of Darebin's diverse communities, align with Council's values, services, and programs, and/or are a mandated requirement of local government authorities. Council also provides advice to community organisations and individuals who are interested in producing their own events.

Council issues Events Permits for a range of events and activities that take place within the municipality and provides support to community-based organisations, businesses, and individuals to determine their event permit requirements, including advice on risk management, public liability insurance, and event logistics.

Civic Events produced by Council provide opportunities for the community to gather, celebrate and engage with each other, this includes Citizenship Ceremonies. Many Council departments produce community events and activities which involve members of the local and broader community and are aligned to the Council Plan priorities.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 1 February 2024, Council resolved:

That Council

1. *Notes that Darebin has committed to supporting the arts, multiculturalism, local businesses, and community events.*
2. *Notes that the Fairfield Traders have reached out to Council for support and assistance with the Fairfield Village Multicultural Festival to be held in April/May 2024.*
3. *Notes that the last event organised by the Fairfield Traders at the Gillies Street carpark in October 2023, Council did not provide toilets, rubbish bins or other necessities such as tables, chairs, safety barriers, despite Council having these in storage for community events.*
4. *Supports the Fairfield Traders in hosting a multicultural festival at Fairfield Village along Station Street in Fairfield.*
5. *Receives a report at the March 2024 Council meeting outlining what Council can do to assist organisations that would like to host a community event and how organisations can access that assistance. The report should include, but not be limited to Council providing access to toilets, rubbish bins, safety barriers, tables, chairs, and advertising on Council's social media platforms about community run events.*

ALIGNMENT TO 2041 DAREBIN COMMUNITY VISION

Strategic Direction 2: Prosperous, Liveable and Flourishing

ALIGNMENT TO 2021-25 COUNCIL PLAN

Strategic Direction 2: Prosperous, Liveable and Flourishing

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.6 We will ensure our festivals, events and functions are inclusive and respond equitably to, and value the diverse needs and aspirations of, our community

2.9 We will focus on our economic assets to ensure that Darebin is a great place to do business

DISCUSSION

Traders Associations and local business networks produce events and request permits to run their own events through Council. Traders Associations are supported by Council through the administration of a special rates levy which is used to fund these events, including marketing, promotions, and social media advertising. The administration of these funds is overseen by an MOU and Funding Agreement with each Traders Association to ensure the funds are used for the intended purposes of the levy.

Additional Council resolution support

On Saturday 20 April 2024, the Fairfield Traders Association hosted 'A Cultural Festival' which included live performances and activities for the community. Planning for this event was in place since February 2024, with Council officers engaging with the Association and providing support and advice.

Based on Council resolution, the Fairfield Traders Association was provided tangible support for the festival with \$5000, which was used to pay for the road closure and associated traffic management, an Italian Band, and the sound and stage setup.

Current supports that Council provides for community events**Public event planning guidance**

Council provides detailed advice on its website for those who wish to run a public, private or community-based and public events on Darebin land.

Information available on the website includes:

- Event management plan template
- Risk management plan template
- Emergency management plan template
- Site map example
- Event permit application links and assessment advice

The permit requirements for events are informed by legislation governing participant and third-party safety and environmental impact.

Council also provides an Event Planning Guide and an Events Permits Officer function to support community event organisers and to ensure they are considering all of the elements that are required to run an event safely, sustainably, and that will conform to legislated requirements.

Neighbourhood street parties

Neighbourhood street parties are a great way for communities to get to know their neighbours. Council encourages communities to host street parties and offers free resources, including public liability insurance coverage (limited number available), and road closure permits, at no cost.

Free bin cap loans

Darebin City Council is conscious of the environmental impact of events and has a small number of bin cap lids available for loan to community event organisers. These lids enable waste to be segmented into general, recyclable, and organic waste, and can be collected from and returned to the Preston Customer Service Centre.

Events in parks and open spaces

Parks and open spaces in the City of Darebin are available for the community to use and casual gatherings of less than 200 people do not require an Event Permit. Sporting events, group fitness activities, BBQs, birthday parties and Christmas parties of under 100 people that do not involve temporary structures, amplification, or amusements, may not require a permit.

Signage

Community groups or individuals can apply to Council to erect temporary signs on Council land to promote their events. Signage may require a planning permit first, as all signage must comply with the Darebin Planning Scheme. This includes real estate signs which are often used to advertise community events.

Grant Funding

Council provides funding to support community organisations and individuals to produce their own events and activities through the FUSE Festival and Events grants program. This is coordinated through Council's Community Grant Program and provides \$50,000 annually to community organisations and individuals for externally produced events and activities.

Options for support that Council could provide for community events

Each option provided within this section has been allocated an indicative budget category as per the following legend. Further costing, scoping, and feasibility studies would be undertaken should Council determine to progress with any options. Council would also need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- \$0 – can be delivered in current resources
- \$ - up to \$5,000 of resource investment may be required
- \$\$ - \$5,000-\$10,000 of resource investment may be required
- \$\$\$ - \$10,000-\$30,000 of resource investment may be required
- \$\$\$\$ - \$30,000-\$75,000 of resource investment may be required
- \$\$\$\$\$ - above \$75,000 of resource investment may be required
- XX – not possible

Communications

Council's communication of events is focussed on promotional support for events that are produced or funded by Council (i.e. events that are organised by groups that have received a Council grant, or with whom Council has an existing partnership).

Council would not be able to support the promotion of all community run events through its social media channels as these channels already have at least one, and usually two posts per day, promoting Council and/or Council activities. Unfortunately, there is not enough capacity on those channels without diluting Council's core messaging.

Council could consider developing a page on Council's website to promote community events however this would require the development of a framework around what would and would not be promoted by Council and why; how officers would assess whether an event met these guidelines and how to manage changes to event information to ensure it remained current. This would require resourcing to establish and maintain. These resources are currently not available and would require Council to determine what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- \$\$\$ - \$5,000-\$10,000 of resource investment may be required and would be an ongoing requirement to ensure that it could be appropriately maintained.

Power and water

Only some parks and gardens in the City of Darebin have a power supply, with existing provision of utilities for park users inconsistent across the municipality based on localised considerations. Water is supplied to parks and gardens via standard tap fittings which run from toilet blocks or are installed for watering, community amenity and maintenance purposes. This hardware is not designed for event purposes. The appropriateness of these tap fittings would need to be explored further to determine their feasibility to provide water for community event organisers.

In order to make power boxes, or other power sources, and/or water supplies available to external community event organisers, Council would need to provide resourcing into risk mitigation and possible outlet design modifications and provide resourcing to develop a process to support access by the community.

Council would also need to ensure that event organisers left Council equipment and assets in a suitable state upon the conclusion of their use, which would require resourcing for post-event inspection.

Consideration of a user pays fee structure may be required if further investigation demonstrated that an equitable access model would be necessary.

As relevant scheduled works are considered in Council's parks and gardens this could be considered in a staged way over time.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- \$\$\$\$\$\$ - above \$75,000 of resource investment may be required.

Toilets

Council does not have the necessary measures in place to operate a portable toilet service for community event organisers. Council does not have the necessary permits and licences in place for the disposal of faecal waste and urine. Council does not have the space to store portable toilets, specialised transportation required to move portable toilets, facilities to clean portable toilets, or facilities required to maintain portable toilets, according to the relevant legislated Australian Standards and Guidelines.

Should these services be required by Council to support community events, these services would have to be outsourced to a provider with the required registration and accreditation against the associated standards.

If Council wished to fund or part-fund the commercial hire of toilets for community events it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- XX – direct provision not possible by Council, commercial hire could be considered but this would require allocation of funds

Bins

In the past, Council provided bins to schools for fetes. The bins that were supplied under this scheme were old bins, that were no longer being used for residential waste services. This program was discontinued by previous managers due to budget impacts, which not only required the delivery of the bins but also resulted in additional waste, administration, and staffing costs. Council did not have the resources to clean and prepare the bins that were loaned out, and there were issues with returning the bins. These bins were sometimes damaged and / or stolen.

The bins that Council owns and that are used for Council's kerbside collection service for residential and private waste are not designed for festivals and major events. Supplying bins to community events would require additional resourcing as drivers would need to be rostered on for additional shifts outside their regular hours, and there would be additional transport costs associated with the location of the community event. There is a risk that this would interrupt the standard waste schedule and compromise the regular kerbside collection service.

If Council wished to fund or part fund waste management services for community events it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including \$ & staffing cost:

- \$\$\$\$\$ - \$30,000-\$75,000 of resource investment may be required on an ongoing basis

Safety barriers

Council does not currently own water-filled safety barriers and currently has no room to store this type of infrastructure. Council does not have the capacity to fill, transport, install and de-install safety barriers and ensure that this meets relevant safety standards and compliance requirements.

Providing this type of infrastructure for community events would need to be through arrangements with external providers.

If Council wished to fund or part-fund safety barriers for community events it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects, they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- XX – direct provision not possible by Council, commercial hire could be considered but this would require allocation of funds on an annual basis

Street parties

Currently Council offers residents free road closures on residential scaled streets in the [Neighbourhood Street Parties](#) program that encourages communities to host street parties through offering resources including free public liability insurance policies (limited number available) and road closure permits at no cost. Community events and large scale events on major roads are not eligible for the Street Parties Program.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- \$0 – already delivered in current resources

Traffic management

Traffic management is undertaken by Council's Infrastructure Maintenance Team for operations on Council owned roads and footpaths. Roads and footpaths involve multiple owners and stakeholders, and any form of traffic management requires significant and detailed communication and liaison with these stakeholders.

Traffic management requires a ticket which some Council staff do have, but these tickets are only for the equipment that Council owns and uses, and this equipment is related to minor road maintenance projects. Larger scale road maintenance and traffic management is outsourced to registered suppliers.

Traffic management involves high risks associated with vehicles, transportation, egress, public transport corridors, businesses, retails strips and pedestrians. Traffic management requires an awareness of other infrastructure, such as light poles, post boxes, park benches and signage. It is against Council policy for Council to provide external parties with fleet vehicles, small plant, or traffic management equipment, or to allow Council staff to use Council equipment for personal uses.

Council would need to engage an external supplier to provide traffic management support to community event organisers.

If Council wished to fund or part-fund traffic management for community events it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- XX – direct provision not possible by Council, commercial arrangements could be considered but this would require allocation of funds on an annual basis

Tables and chairs

Council does not have tables and chairs available for loan or hire. In order to provide these assets to community event organisers, Council would need to purchase suitable tables and chairs, which would require storage, maintenance, and transportation. Resourcing would be required to develop a policy and process to supply this equipment directly to community event organisers. Risk assessments, insurance and furniture transport costs demonstrate that this will require higher levels of resourcing that is perhaps expected.

If Council wished to fund tables and chairs it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- **\$\$\$\$\$** - \$30,000-\$75,000 of resource investment may be required initially and further investment would be required throughout the life of providing the service to ensure it is managed, maintained and repaired

Community event kits

A small-scale event kit where a collection of games, reusable crockery/cutlery/cups etc are available for community could be easily actioned. Responsibility for storage and management of kit would need to be determined, and budget would need to be made available for regular topping up of kit as contents go missing.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- **\$\$\$** - \$5,000-\$10,000 of resource investment may be required initially and then further investment throughout the life of offering the service

A more complex community event kit that featured the above items, table & chairs, shade marquee, BBQ & gas bottle would require more serious resourcing and a costed analysis of the risks, insurance impacts, and ongoing administration and operational maintenance costs. Risks associated with BBQ gas bottle usage and transport to be explored in further detail and would not align with Council's Climate Emergency commitment. The provision of this kit could be outsourced to a community-based provider through an EOI or RFQ process.

Implications, including budget & staffing cost:

- **\$\$\$\$** - \$10,000-30,000 of resource investment may be required initially and then further investment throughout the life of offering the service, some elements of this service may not be possible following insurance / risk assessment

General assessment of the options to support community events

Resourcing feasibility and ongoing operations

Most options would require additional funding for various Council departments to proceed with further investigation, risk assessment, insurance review, and policy and process development. Some options may not be possible following further investigation.

If Council wished to fund or part-fund additional support for community events it would need to provide advice on what other services or projects they would seek to reduce to fund an increase in service levels in this area.

Cost Implications

Cost implications provided are indicative only. Issuing of any kind of equipment or assets to community event organisers would involve similar requirements and due diligence from Council, as has been outlined above, regardless of scale. This includes logistics such as storage, maintenance, transport, provisions for loss, damage and repair, and risk management in terms of the safety of event organisers, event participants and other non-involved persons who may be adversely affected by the event.

Indirect provision options

Various local and regional businesses are in operation that provide these goods and services to event organisers. Resourcing could be provided to further explore the opportunity to establish additional grant funding for community event organisers, or grants to equitably provide discounted goods and services agreements through the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy for preferred event management companies. Again, Council would need to re-prioritise funds from other services or projects to support this endeavour.

CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020) PRINCIPLES

Financial Management

The costs associated with providing additional support to community events are significant, and include, but are not limited to staffing, procurement, storage, transportation, maintenance, risk management, and administration.

In the provision of any support Council must ensure that it meets all safety, risk, and compliance requirements and that it does not create additional exposure for its insurer.

Council is obliged to manage assets to maximise their lifespan and to be available for services provided to the community. Adding additional requirements to existing service delivery would accelerate the depreciation of assets and could compromise the quality of current and mandated service delivery.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has not been undertaken to provide Council with this information. Internal consultation on the supply of power and water has been completed on the basis that the Events Permits process has determined that this support from Council is frequently requested.

Other Principles for consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

(a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;

Public Transparency Principles

(c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community;

Strategic Planning Principles

(c) Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation;

Service Performance Principles

- (a) services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community;

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**Environmental Sustainability Considerations (including Climate Emergency)**

Any additional event support would need to be tested against Council's policies in relation to water and power consumption, circular economy, waste management, sustainable transport, and environmental legislation governing noise and neighbourhood amenity, amongst many other considerations.

Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights Considerations:

An Equity Impact and Gender Impact Assessment on the provision and impact of the proposed service delivery would be undertaken if Council determined to investigate further.

Economic Development and Cultural Considerations

Darebin's Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy guides Council in the engagement of suppliers who are local and sustainable, as well as supporting businesses that are run by priority groups.

Council entering into any new direct goods and service provision relating to event management equipment and infrastructure would reduce business revenue for local suppliers.

Operational Impacts

Operational impacts of additional service provision by Council in support of community event has been outlined above. These include procurement, administration, maintenance, storage, transportation, staffing, and specialist advice and consultation. There is a risk that additional service provision may compromise the quality of existing services.

Legal and Risk Implications

Risk management frameworks and event planning permissions are progressed through Council's events permits function. As a local government authority, Darebin is mandated to issue permits and to monitor event, risk, and emergency management plans before issuing permits and Local Laws are mandated to respond to illegal or non-compliant activity.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

After Council consideration of the information provided in this report, officers will act on any further instruction.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Not applicable.