



12.1 **DRAFT EVENTS STRATEGY AND OUTDOOR EVENTS
POLICY 2023 - 26**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: **KYLIE BENNETTS, GENERAL MANAGER, CITY GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT**

PREPARED BY: **ADELE DENISON, HEAD OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
LAUREN BIALKOWER, MANAGER CITY GROWTH AND CULTURE
JESS HALL, COORDINATOR EVENTS**

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To present the draft Events Strategy and Outdoor Events Policy 2023 – 26 and seek approval to commence community consultation.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Events within the City of Port Phillip are a defining feature of the municipality; attracting visitation and economic growth, building its character and reputation, and bringing vibrancy, creativity and celebration to everyday life for the community.

2.2 The Events Strategy aims to shape the short-and long-term future of Port Phillip events, presenting a vision and aspiration for the events calendar and actions to ensure its outcomes are achieved.

2.3 The Outdoor Events Policy works in tandem with the Strategy, comprising operational guidelines by which events are approved, supported and assessed.

2.4 The Events Strategy and Outdoor Events Policy were last adopted by Council in 2017 and spanned from 2018 – 2022.

2.5 A number of key achievements were made in this previous period, including:

2.6 Threefold increase in the number of events held in or around activity centres pre-COVID.

2.7 Pre-COVID increase of 40% in the number of events held.

- Improved sound mitigation techniques leading to a reduction in noise complaints.
- Increased focus on amenity protection, including surrounding streets rather than just the event site.
- Increased support for community events, including guidance and development.
- Creation of marketing and tourism assets through which the community and visitors can be notified of what is on and when (Explore Port Phillip, What's On St Kilda and Surrounds).
- Improved commitment and support for events to become more sustainable (Sustainable Outdoor Events Guidelines).
- Improved commitment and resources for events to become more accessible.
- Implementation of a new online booking system for event applications, increasing customer usability.



- 2.8 Much of this progress was made prior to 2020, when restrictions resulting from the pandemic had a significant impact on the events industry. Many events throughout 2020 and 2021 were cancelled or restricted, halting growth and development in the progression of parts of this work.
- 2.9 Ahead of the development of a new Strategy and Policy, targeted consultation was used to seek feedback, input and evaluation from the community, councillors, event attendees, local business groups and event operators themselves, with those results noted in section 4 of this Council report.
- 2.10 This feedback has contributed to the development of the draft Events Strategy, using it to shape a vision, key actions and shape our priorities for the coming period.
- 2.11 Economic benefit information has also been calculated from some events held in 2022, with the intention to continue to gather this baseline data and consider it in evaluating our events and building a sustainable and meaningful calendar into the future. Due to the impact of Covid on events a full year's worth of data has not yet been collected, and this data will be presented into the future.
- 2.12 The attached draft Strategy and Policy would commence from 2023 through to 2026. It is noted that they would be applied to expressions of interest for major events scheduled to be held in 2023/24 and will not yet apply to major events in 2022/23 as they have already been determined.
- 2.13 Key additions or priorities within the Strategy that set it apart from previous iterations include:
- A strong priority on curation of our events calendar.
 - A focus on economic development and visitation as a priority for events both internally and externally produced.
 - Clear pathway on measuring economic benefit from events and data collection.
 - Recognition of the impact of COVID on events and the community and a commitment to support that recovery.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes the results of the initial community and industry consultation on events in the municipality as presented in this Report and as Attachment Three.
- 3.2 Releases the draft Events Strategy and Outdoor Events Policy for community consultation and delegates to the CEO the ability to make changes that do not alter the substantive content of both documents to enable this release to occur.
- 3.3 Notes that community consultation will be opened on 17 June 2022, for a three-week period.



4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The draft Events Strategy and Outdoor Events Policy have been developed following community and industry consultation, consideration of the Council Plan and other relevant CoPP strategies, and assessment of previous approaches and their outcomes.
- 4.2 Outcomes of the Strategy have been identified and are included within the attached draft strategy, as well as actions to achieve their delivery.
- 4.3 Some of the key moves in the Strategy include:
- 4.4 Being clear on the priority areas for events within the municipality to spread the impacts on amenity that can occur through events but also the economic growth and visitation that can be achieved, in response to feedback from Councillors and the business community. Those areas are: Port Melbourne; Balaclava and St Kilda East; St Kilda; Fisherman's Bend and South Melbourne. The Strategy identifies specific sites within each location as key opportunities.
- 4.5 Priority event types, in response to community and business feedback and creative industry priorities from the Creative and Prosperous City Strategy, including music events; games events; events in our high streets; markets; and food & beverage events.
- 4.6 Priority event times, in response to feedback from Councillors and the business community: prioritising events in the colder or shoulder months to build year-round visitation.
- 4.7 Some actions identified as priorities in delivery of the Strategy, include:
 - Expressions of interest and targeted support to build events according to identified gaps/priorities, including mechanisms to attract, build or produce events where the market doesn't meet identified needs.
 - Increased communications with our business community, including a focus on advance notification of what's on to encourage integration and leverage, and formalised ongoing feedback opportunities that are included in annual assessment.
 - Working with key partners to ensure efficiency, transparency and collaboration in our approval and regulation processes, including DELWP, Heritage Victoria, the EPA, Victoria Police and the VCGLR.
 - Continued officer delegation in event approval with some exceptions identified where we will inform Councillors, including:
 - Long stays on heavily contested sites: South Beach Reserve and the Triangle Car Park (two-week occupation, or any triangle occupation in summer).
 - Site occupation longer than one month anywhere in the municipality.
 - Any requirement for road closures greater than the thirteen permitted as part of the Outdoor Events Policy.
 - Any event that would require a wider commitment of funding or resources from Council, such as the Olympics or Commonwealth Games.
 - Continued focus on our communications tools so the community knows what is on when, in response to feedback identified in the community consultation, including



outdoor promotions – while this wasn't necessarily valued by event providers it was identified as a priority for our community.

- Trialling and testing new sites across the municipality, to ensure opportunities are maximised and events locations are diverse, while amenity is protected, and any feedback and concerns are addressed.
- 4.8 The strategy also commits to annual reporting on the events calendar through Councillor briefing and the CEO Report, increasing our transparency and allowing for ongoing assessment through the life of the plan.
 - 4.9 It is anticipated that additional resources would be required for 2023/24 to support key initiatives in the Strategy and this would be considered by Council at that time, namely:
 - 4.10 Resourcing to attract, procure or support events that meet identified priorities, whether that be site location, event timing or event type (ongoing expense).
 - 4.11 Resourcing additional communications tools, including the potential for outdoor advertising or promotion (one-off expense with potential to earn revenue if leased to third parties) to meet community expectation.
 - 4.12 Premium sites established as South Beach Reserve, Catani Gardens and the Triangle car park, with additional criteria to ensure these sites are permitted to the right events and the contest for space is regulated.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

Community Surveys

- 5.1 Consultation was held with the broader community in early 2022, once events had restarted and COVID restrictions were largely removed.
- 5.2 Engagement ran 8 Feb – 2 March, and included:
- 5.3 Postcard seeking feedback given out at activity centres.
- 5.4 Short intercept surveys at CoPP activity centres (269 responses).
- 5.5 Have Your Say online engagement (85 responses).
- 5.6 Short Survey Results:
 - 5.6.1 When asked how frequently they attended local events, the most common response was "about once a month" (19%), however close to 16% responded "less than once a year".
 - 5.6.2 Respondents were asked which type of event they'd like to see more of, with the three most popular being markets (49%), food and beverage (48%) and music (46%). Respondents were able to select more than one option.
 - 5.6.3 When asked what would encourage them to attend more local events, 55% said they wanted more information about what is on and when. 42% said different types of events, and 39% said lower cost or free events. Respondents were able to select more than one option.
- 5.7 Long Survey Results:
 - 5.7.1 61% had attended local events in the previous 12 months – particularly encouraging given the reduction in events due to health restrictions.



- 5.7.2 The most common types of events attended were markets (55%), music (46%), entertainment (45%) and arts (44%).
- 5.7.3 Respondents were also asked which types of events they were aware of, with most responding educational (94%), fundraising (90%) and public forum / speaker (88%) – these event types had the three lowest attendance rates.
- 5.7.4 Most respondents noted they most heard about events through social media (71%) followed by word of mouth (66%) then posters or signage (51%).
- 5.7.5 46% of respondents noted that the number of local events was about right, while the numbers who said too few (18%) were very close to those who said too many (20.5%).
- 5.7.6 65.5% of respondents said events make them feel proud of their local area, and 69% said attending local events makes them feel part of their local community.
- 5.7.7 The most valued benefits for CoPP in hosting events were “support for local business/economy 79%, opportunities for the community to come together 63%, and opportunities for local talent or artists to perform or exhibit 55%.
- 5.7.8 The highest impacts of events were “anti-social behaviour” 53%, road closures 52% and litter 46%.
- 5.7.9 The short survey, conducted through interception at activity centres, takes a more random sample than the extended surveys, which were completed by those who actively went to Have Your Say to contribute. The demographics of the longer survey responders shows that 23% of responses came from St Kilda and a further 17% from Elwood, compared to 11% from Port Melbourne or 5% from South Melbourne. Only 6% of responses came from the combined areas of Balaclava, St Kilda East, Middle Park, Ripponlea, Southbank or Windsor.
- 5.7.10 The results also show 61% of responders were aged between 35 and 58 years, with only 13% of responses coming from those ages under 34 years.

Trader Feedback

- 5.7.11 Local business representatives have also been consulted in preparing the draft Strategy.
- 5.7.12 This consultation was undertaken with the Business Advisory Group, Acland and Fitzroy Street Traders Associations, and foreshore traders within St Kilda.
- 5.8 In general, all traders expressed support for events to increase patronage to business and/or visitation to the area.
- 5.9 Events were additionally seen as a key mechanism to aid and accelerate economic recovery.
- 5.10 Businesses advised they would benefit from more information about what was on when, so that they could be better prepared and leverage from events.
- 5.11 Post-event feedback was also seen as a key opportunity, to allow businesses to express which events had a positive impact and which had challenges.
- 5.12 Additional feedback included:
- 5.13 Encouragement to support strategic events that would better aid patronage and visitation (e.g. waive fees, provide in kind support).



- 5.14 Make it easier and simplify application and permitting processes.
- 5.15 Avoid use of sites adjacent to businesses unless events would deliver benefit and avoid closure of these sites for longer than necessary.
- 5.16 Road closures can be high impact for businesses, preventing patrons from accessing their premises.
- 5.17 Increased transparency on the events calendar, so businesses can see benefits and reporting on its successes and challenges.
- 5.18 Increased support to leverage from existing events, particularly major events such as the Grand Prix.
- 5.19 Increased support for trader associations to run their own events, and leverage from existing.
- 5.20 Maintain St Kilda's image as Melbourne's playground through events.

Event Operator Surveys

- 5.21 Surveys were also sent to event providers, including those who already stage events in Port Phillip and those who produce events we'd like to attract, with 21 responses received.
 - 5.21.1 84% of respondents had held an event within CoPP in the last twelve months, 15% had but 1-5 years ago, and 5% hadn't held an event here before.
 - 5.21.2 When providers were considering locations for their events, the most important factors were:
 - Outdoor site amenities (such as power, water and shade).
 - Size of the site and its capacity.
 - External amenities such as public transport and parking.
 - Cost of site hire and suitability of site.
 - 5.21.3 When asked what attracted them to hold an event within CoPP, the most common responses were a specific site, the area/location, and Council's openness to events.
 - 5.21.4 When asked what issues are experienced when delivering events within CoPP, the most common answers were noise restrictions and anti-social behaviour, though 70% said they didn't experience any issues.
 - 5.21.5 Local government assistance seen as most helpful were fee waivers, financial support and ease of the permitting process.
 - 5.21.6 Local government assistance that was seen as least valuable were opportunities for collaborations, marketing support and liaison between stakeholders.
 - 5.21.7 22% of providers said they were receiving direct funding from CoPP, and 27% of providers said they were already receiving in kind support from CoPP.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Risk management and assessment is required for each event held within the municipality, from both internal and external providers.



- 6.2 Legal advice and additional risk assessments are conducted as needed throughout events seasons.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Events permitted on public space are an income source for Council, with a forecast revenue of \$575k in 2023/24.
- 7.2 Council produces its own major events annually: St Kilda Festival, St Kilda Film Festival and a First Peoples music and cultural festival, with a combined net cost of \$1.86m in 2021/22.
- 7.3 It is anticipated that additional resourcing would be required for 2023/24 to support key initiatives in the Strategy (which would be considered by Council and prioritised as part of the 2023/24 Council Plan and Budget), namely:
- Resourcing to attract, procure or support events that meet identified priorities, whether that be site location, event timing or event type (ongoing expense).
 - Resourcing additional communications tools, including the potential for outdoor advertising or promotion (one-off expense with potential for ongoing revenue if leased to third parties).

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The Outdoor Events Policy contains numerous measures to lessen environmental impact from outdoor events in public space.
- 8.2 All events within the municipality are expected to comply with environmental protection measures and a reduction in footprint.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Events carry a range of community benefits and impacts, both of which are monitored throughout events in the municipality.
- 9.2 Community and amenity impact are mitigated where possible, and feedback and complaints are actioned for continuous improvement.
- 9.3 The Outdoor Events Policy contains numerous measures to lessen community impact from outdoor events in public space.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The Events Strategy is aligned with and delivers on the Vibrant Port Phillip direction of the Council Plan.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

If the recommendation is adopted, the following timeline will apply:

- 17 June – 7 July: Community consultation period
- 7 September: Community consultation presented, final Strategy and Report presented for adoption
- Mid September: expressions of interest for 2023/23 major events opens



11.2 COMMUNICATION

- Community consultation will be available through Have Your Say and the opportunity will be promoted to the community through City of Port Phillip assets including social media and Divercity
- Targeted communications will be sent to key stakeholders for the strategy and policy, including event operators and trader associations

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Events Strategy 2023 - 2026
2. Draft Outdoor Events Policy 2023 - 2026
3. 2021 Community Consultation - Events Strategy & Policy