
STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
6 APRIL 2009 **POLICY AND PLANNING**

A2 **URBAN STUDIES CENTRE REFERENCE GROUP (USCRG)**

LOCATION/ADDRESS:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **GEOFF OULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING**

PREPARED BY: **IAN HICKS, MANAGER, CULTURE & RECREATION**

FILE NO.: **06/08/10**

ATTACHMENTS: **1. USCRG TERMS OF REFERENCE**
2. TARGET AUDIENCE FRAMEWORK

1. PURPOSE

This report provides Council with information on the process followed in calling for nominations for an Urban Studies Centre Reference Group (USCRG), in order to enable Councillors to select the 6 community representatives to be appointed to the USCRG as proposed in the attached Terms of Reference.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve to:

- Note the process followed in calling for nominations for membership of a Reference Group for the Urban Studies Centre (USC) at Emerald Hill
- Establish the Urban Studies Centre Reference Group and endorse the Terms of Reference in the attachment, noting the proposal that the USCRG will cease operation following the approval of the USC Operations Plan by Council.
- Endorse the appointment of the following 6 community members for the Urban Studies Centre Reference Group; noting these candidates suitably represent the stakeholders and target audiences identified for the USC and meet the selection criteria:

Michael Sabada

Adair Bunnett

Meyer Eidelson

Joan Maxwell

Dr. Katharina Benzler

Elizabeth Buckle

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Urban Studies Centre (USC) is expected to open in late 2010 in Bank Street, South Melbourne. It will offer integrated library and history services on site at Emerald Hill, off-site in the community and on-line.
- The Centre will incorporate a renewed library space to meet the existing and future needs for residents of South Melbourne and the surrounding neighbourhood.
 - In addition it will provide an accessible heritage and history research and display centre and associated services for residents, students and researchers.
- 3.2 A briefing to update Council on the topic of the USC was most recently presented in February of this year. The briefing provided history and context in terms of the life of the project to date. It also indicated the next key step to conclude the design process and enable the construction phase to commence was the identification and appointment of a builder.
- A further outcome of the briefing discussions was a re-affirmation of Council's commitment to maximizing utilization of the building (as a significant Council asset), and the project as a major initiative in terms of innovation in service development and delivery.
- 3.3 Sean Godsell Architects (SGA) - a high profile and award winning Melbourne based architecture firm - has been engaged to refurbish the existing heritage component of the building (Emerald Hill Post Office and Annexe), complimented by new building work which will house the core elements of the library collection and associated services.
- The design for the refurbishment and additional building work has been completed, with demolition and subsequent construction anticipated to commence by mid-2009.
- 3.4 The focus of the project is about to shift to operations, in particular completing the development of an Operational Plan for the Centre that will address the need for an appropriate range of programs and services to be delivered from the Centre. This mixture of programs and services is being framed with end-user groups very clearly in mind.
- The target audiences associated with the USC are outlined in the attached Audience Table.
- 3.5 To help facilitate this phase of the project, the City of Port Phillip undertook a process to engage interested members of the community to participate in an Urban Studies Centre Reference Group.
- 3.6 The key role of the Reference Group is to provide feedback on the library and history programs and services planned for the Urban Studies Centre, and offer advice on a public information campaign for engaging with all stakeholders.

- 3.7 Note that a further four members will be invited to participate in the Reference Group to provide subject specialist input from a professional/ cultural sector perspective (as described in the attached Terms of Reference).

4. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

In order to progress work on formulation of the USCRG, the following actions were undertaken:

- Terms of Reference for the USCRG were prepared in consultation with the Mayor, Cr O'Connor, Cr Bolitho, Coordinators Library Services and Arts and Festivals
- A Target Audience Framework has been developed to help guide the selection of members for the USCRG and ensure that participants have a good understanding of the diverse requirements of the people expected to use the Centre (see attached)
- Notices calling for Expressions of Interest in nominating for the Reference Group were placed in the Emerald Hill Weekly and the Port Phillip Leader newspapers on the 9/3/09 and on the CoPP website on the 10/3/09.
- Advice of nominations was circulated to networks in the community, including the Urban History Consultative Committee and some library users, and notices were also placed across Port Phillip Library branches. The closing date for nominations was 19/3/09.

Six responses were received by the closing date from individuals nominating for the USC Reference Group, all of which responded to the selection criteria on the nomination form as required.

The USCRG will also include four invited members with professional expertise in relevant topical areas such as public library use, community museums or history/heritage.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 OPTIONS

The formation of the USCRG as indicated is presented as the only option.

The proposed Reference Group membership and structure is the most efficient and viable means by which to progress the operational requirements of the centre while construction work on the physical building commence, and to ensure both community and sector input is included in the process.

5.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The expression of interest process identified the following selection criteria to be met for selection to the reference group, being:

- resident in CoPP
- availability for a minimum of 3 meetings from April until and the end of June 2009.
- passion for the successful delivery of a sustainable and innovative heritage and library centre offering traditional, new and integrated programs and services for diverse audiences
- knowledge as an active user of specific library or heritage services and programs, including those using new technologies
- awareness of what constitutes excellence in local library and history services
- commitment to local community building
- ability to work collaboratively and with complex issues

The above criteria are met by all candidates expressing interest.

The key policy driver that most directly relates to this project is the Creative Futures framework. This document clearly identifies the Urban Studies Centre project as both a significant strategic priority for Council, and a major contributor to the current and on-going work around place management in the neighbourhood, i.e. re-imagining Emerald Hill.

5.3 FINANCE / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant financial or resource implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report

5.4 LEGAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

The key risk associated with this phase of the USC project is the potential for a lack of alignment between the physical building and the services and resources provided for the range of user groups who will be accessing the Centre.

The formation of a USCRG as proposed aims to directly address this potential risk by engaging with a representative group of users and industry experts in the drafting of an operational Plan for the USC

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 TIMELINE

Subsequent to Council endorsement, successful applicants will be advised of their appointment to the Reference Group in the first week of May 2009.

6.2 COMMUNICATION

The key messages relating to the recommendations contained in this report are:

- Council is committed to the development of the Urban Studies Centre at Emerald Hill
- Council is committed to community consultation and engagement
- The USCRG membership will represent the range of audience groups anticipated to use the Centre