

**STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**7 JULY 2008**

**POLICY AND PLANNING**

A7

**CITY OF PORT PHILLIP - EVENT  
STRATEGY 2008**

**LOCATION/ADDRESS:**

**RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

**GEOFF OULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND  
PLANNING**

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**FILE NO.:**

**16/01/239**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**DRAFT EVENT STRATEGY 2008**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. In Port Phillip, there is a paradox between the role that staging/hosting community events plays in an 'Active and Creative City' and the potential for such events to have a negative impact on community / amenity;
- 1.2. The Event Strategy 2008 has been developed to specifically respond to two of the ten priorities of the Port Phillip Community Plan:
  - *Improving event management to reduce environmental impact and better manage the effect on the community;*
  - *Developing safe and affordable cultural events and entertainment opportunities, involving people across age and interest groups, providing alternatives to licensed venues.*
- 1.3. The draft Event Strategy 2008 should be read in conjunction with Council's existing *Event Policy (Guidelines) 2003* that details the operating constraints on the number of events and details of how events should be managed and run.
- 1.4. The draft Event Strategy attempts to strategically find a balance between the potential for community impact as a result of event hosting and management while continuing to promote the City as an 'Active and Creative City'. The draft Event Strategy 2008 attempts to deal with this paradox by:
  - 1.4.1. Keeping externally produced events cost neutral to residents;
  - 1.4.2. Improving governance processes that reduce risk to council and encourage increased investment in servicing our community (by event organisers);
  - 1.4.3. Suitably managing the capped number of 'on-road' events;
  - 1.4.4. Increasing awareness of the community benefit derived from staging / hosting events in the city;
  - 1.4.5. Increasing and targeting investment in capacity building / working with the community in the production of their 'local' events involving people across age and interest groups.

- 1.5. The purpose of the Events Strategy is to outline Council commitments with regard to hosting and staging events and look at where resources should be targeted in the future to ensure such events are well managed and have minimal community impact.
- 1.6. The Strategy focuses on the following key areas:
  - 1.6.1. Improve Governance Processes and Systems
  - 1.6.2. Improve Communications
  - 1.6.3. Develop capacity within the workforce and community
  - 1.6.4. Invest in Events and Infrastructure.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1. The City of Port Phillip has a long history as host to community and major events. The *Events Policy (Guidelines) 2003* provides guidance in the number and management of events within the City.
- 2.2. There has been substantial growth in demand to locate events, promotions, launches within the City of Port Phillip - particularly along the foreshore - by external event coordinators and community groups with over 300 events taking place last year.
- 2.3. In the City of Port Phillip every year there are over 20,000 people that engage in the events within the City.
- 2.4. With growing demand for the City as a location for staging events there has been growing community concern, as expressed through the Community Plan, as to the scale of events and how their impact on amenity needs to be managed.

## **3. RECOMMENDED OPTION**

### **3.1. Criterion for recommendation**

While the Event Strategy functions as a statement of Council's continued commitment to events as part of an 'Active and Creative City', it also outlines Council's ongoing priorities for delivering on the Community Plan with regard to concerns raised about the impact of events. The assumptions for the recommendation are:

- A cost neutral financial impact with regard to the staff and other resources required to deliver on the event strategy
- An ability to realign existing resources to match new strategic directions.

The strategy should deliver on the following Outcomes and Benefits:

#### **Improved governance processes and systems**

- Aligning the findings in the community plan with the support of events by demonstrating to the community a proactive approach towards concerns over reducing/managing event impact;
- Implementing a 'community impact' assessment that will assess and implement strategies to minimise impact on community;

- Implement a 'community benefit' model that ensures that events are clearly aligned with the strategic objectives of the City and community;
- Adoption of a post-event evaluation process that measures and monitors compliances and satisfaction from both events participants and effected community.

### Improved communication

- Improve penetration of event marketing and communication into the community keeping them informed and empowered;
- Establish an Events Gateway and Helpline for community events.
- Establishing a web presence for events across the city that provides easier access to and understanding of the range of events across the City.

### Develop capacity within the workforce and community

- To position council as being event ready and responsive to community concerns via a community events workforce that will act as a one-stop shop for external events.
- Develop internal processes and procedures that mitigate risk and lessen impact on the environment through better compliance procedures and communication;
- Provide more dedicated resources, support and time to events organised by the local community for the local community.

### Invest in events and infrastructure

- Identify key preferred sites for events and plan for the infrastructure needs of that area so as to minimize impact and deliver greatest community benefit.
- The **Targets** to be achieved from the adoption of this strategy over the next 4 years are:
  - Retaining participation rates in community events at current levels (ie: ~20,000 people per annum)
  - 85% satisfaction rates for Participants in events
  - 85% Community satisfaction rating with management of events in public space
  - Retain low complaint levels.
  - Reducing environmental impact
  - Demonstrating community benefit (value for money) derived from events.

4. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

<p>Social Equity Pillar</p>	<p>The social impact of the strategy will be to;</p> <p>Increase community engagement through the support of community groups and council units responsible for key community events in our city; Seniors Week, Harmony Day, The Civic Awards, etc</p> <p>Build community capacity to produce safe and affordable cultural events and entertainment opportunities</p> <p>Enable a more considered process of programming, placement and diversity of events to ensure balance and avoid event fatigue within our community</p> <p>Plan, coordinate and promote access to services for residents with extra needs</p>
<p>Economic Viability Pillar</p>	<p>The current Council approved fees and charges that apply to events and promotions do not equate to market value, do not adequately address cost, and do not deliver an appropriate return to Council.</p> <p>Higher fees are justified through the need to provide a higher level of service and management to the foreshore and can and should be funded through event fees.</p> <p>Higher fees can be implemented by increasing the range and definition of event components that attract fees</p> <p>The introduction of an Events Team would be primarily resourced from realignment of existing Foreshore Events role; existing Esplanade Market income and an increase in foreshore event fees making it a cost neutral exercise for council.</p> <p>The event team will ensure our events remain economically viable and that services remain relevant, responsive and focused on community needs and priorities</p>

<p>Environmental Responsibility Pillar</p>	<p>Very few of the events directly delivered by the City and external event managers are currently accredited as waste wise events reaching gold standard, nor are they carbon neutral in line with council objectives.</p> <p>Adopting the events strategy would support the movement towards better environmental management of events through;</p> <p>Greater accountability and control over external operators,</p> <p>Implementation/enforcement of strict environmental assessment criteria as part of reform of Event Application Process.</p> <p>Introducing an incentive based environmental scheme (discount on event fee for those that demonstrate best environmental practice)</p>
<p>Cultural Vitality Pillar</p>	<p>Well managed events contribute to the quality of life of City of Port Phillip residents.</p> <p>The events strategy supports the councils cultural pillar as it ;</p> <p>supports a way of life that is dynamic, creative and participatory (key actions being to streamline processes in order to remove barriers to participation)</p> <p>greater community consultation/ownership</p> <p>Improved scheduling, marketing and promotion of events (allowing for greater awareness of events calendar)</p> <p>supports innovation and diversity in programming</p>

**4.1. Policy and legislative implications**

- 4.1.1. The Event Strategy is a response to the Port Phillip Community Plan with the specific aims of a commitment to further improve the community benefit and reduce the community impact of events in our City.
- 4.1.2. The Event Strategy has been created within the context of relevant council policies: or planning documents:
- 4.1.3. The Community Plan (based on 2007 Community Summit);
- 4.1.4. The Port Phillip Health and Wellbeing Plan;
- 4.1.5. The City of Port Phillip Open Space Strategy 2006
- 4.1.6. The Port Phillip Tourism Strategy.

**4.2. Risk implications**

- 4.2.1. The risk entailed in not endorsing the *Event Strategy & Commitment Statement* is that the concerns raised regarding events at the Community Summit and expressed in the Community Plan will not be addressed.
- 4.2.2. As well, not endorsing the Strategy would reduce opportunities to consistently maintain our corporate knowledge and high standards of our own events; of enhancing Port Phillip's reputation and profile; for ensuring sound compliance; of developing ways of lessening environmental impact; and of limiting the scope of great cultural outcomes in internal and external events and gatherings.

**4.3. Resource implications**

- 4.3.1. Alongside the Event Strategy an organisational action plan has been developed -the assumptions of which have been tested/discussed with the Executive Team.
- 4.3.2. It is planned that the Strategy will be delivered on a cost neutral basis to council. This will be achieved through the implementation of a fees schedule that will be both financially sound and fair to commercial and community event coordinators/contractors and local communities as well as the users of Port Phillip's event localities.

**5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Internal

- 5.1. Consultation was conducted with the relevant staff across the many and diverse service areas related to the accommodation of and support for events; key findings include;
  - 5.1.1. There has been steady growth in the activation of events that drive core business outcomes such as the Civic awards, the Cultural Diversity Dinner dance, the Harmony Day event, World Environment Day event and Youth Week events;
  - 5.1.2. Representatives of local community organizations are able to share information, be inspired by others and feel connected to the rest of the community by holding events;
  - 5.1.3. Quite often community groups operate in isolation, so well managed and marketed events are fabulous opportunities for them to come together, network and discover what is happening in the rest of the community;
  - 5.1.4. Events are the types of projects that require multidisciplinary and specialist skills that often involve the hiring of professionals - making them an expensive exercise for council and/or the community;
  - 5.1.5. A designated person to assist with ideas, strategies, procedures, marketing, reviewing processes and overall event support would be of huge value internally. From a community perspective, working collaboratively with someone with specific event

management expertise would help achieve the full potential of an event, minimize bureaucracy and tap into areas otherwise unknown to community and internal event organisers.

- 5.1.6. Events have been acknowledged across Council as being effective ways of communicating a message, or creating awareness around an issue that has a lasting impact;
- 5.1.7. Well activated events targeting the business community break down the stereotypes of what local Council does. Rather than the common perception of seeing Council through the prism of administering compliance, events allow Council to demonstrate leadership and innovation; a 'buzz factor' around an event sticks in the memory and triggers engagement around issues that might otherwise difficult to achieve;
- 5.1.8. From a tourism perspective: events are an economic driver- directly they provide jobs and deliver 'new money' into the local economy. Indirectly, a high proportion of part-time and casual jobs are created in retail, trade, accommodation, cafes and restaurants.
- 5.1.9. The coordination of events has grown organically and resulted in an inconsistent approach; there an urgent need of reform and centralisation in order to meet the increase in councils events workload and maintain our high standard of service delivery;

#### External

- 5.2. The external people and/or organisations who have been be engaged with in developing the Event Strategy include:
  - 5.2.1. Local Government Pro Events Network
  - 5.2.2. Giacomina Pradolin – Linden Arts
  - 5.2.3. Josie Kelly - Events Coordinator, Sacred Heart Mission
  - 5.2.4. Peter Stewart & Andris Blicavs Program Manager - Events Melbourne
  - 5.2.5. Michael Ward -Community and Civic Events Officer (YARRA)
  - 5.2.6. Brett Hayhoe Secretary – Pride March Victoria
  - 5.2.7. Crusader Hillis - Director of Gasworks.
  - 5.2.8. Parks Victoria
  - 5.2.9. Neil Croker – Palais Theatre
  - 5.2.10. St Kilda Seabaths
  - 5.2.11. St Kilda and Elwood Traders Organisations
  - 5.2.12. City of Brisbane, Fremantle, Waverley, Gold Coast, Bass Coast
  - 5.2.13. Kelly Dickson –Victoria Major Events Company
  - 5.2.14. Dave Harper - Executive Officer, Victorian Coastal Council
  - 5.2.15. Claude Baxter – WorkSmiths
  - 5.2.16. Andrew Saunders – usmevents
  - 5.2.17. Natalia Italia - Federation Square

Consultation was conducted either through an emailed questionnaire or face to face informal workshop.

- 5.3. As well, staff will conduct specific information sessions with key stakeholders to inform them of the intention and implementation of the Strategy and to ensure that implementation is easy to understand and does not set up a perception of administrative 'blocks'; key findings include;
- 5.3.1. Events have really taken a foothold across local government nationally, evidenced by the growth of dedicated event teams in nearly all metropolitan Councils surveyed as part of the events strategy;
  - 5.3.2. Stakeholders communicated various benefits of events including creating jobs, driving economic activity, branding our city, destination marketing, tourism inducement, increase visitation, social benefits and legacies, tolerance, understanding, civic pride and a sense of identity;
  - 5.3.3. With a dedicated events team in place council will have the capacity to leverage numerous add-on benefits from the cities events calendar i.e facilitate meetings with new stakeholders, bring a focus to a particular competency offered, delivered or provided by the City, help to change anti -social behaviour etc
  - 5.3.4. With the programming of marquee events visitation business thrives, residential appeal improves, and community services build, the impact of these visitors bolsters the well-being of the local residential and business community overall and adds to council's ability to expand its non-discretionary spending on services, welfare, culture and heritage.
  - 5.3.5. From a purely financial perspective major events attract 230,000 international visitors to the State every year – no less than 42% of all international events visitors to Australia. It is estimated that events generate economic benefit of over \$1 billion to the State.
  - 5.3.6. Of greater benefit though is the ability of events to manifest a sense of belonging, a sense of community and shared celebration of place.
  - 5.3.7. The trend for large proportion of lone person households also supports the activation of a healthy, vibrant and strong events calendar as events increase socialisation and connection with community its people and its assets;

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1. The event strategy will be phased in over a 3 year period beginning with broad consultation with key stakeholders of the Strategy's action plan. The first stage will be consultation with key commercial event managers past and present, as to the reform of the event application process and the new community benefit measure.
- 6.2. Implementation of the strategy will also require a realignment and acquisition of some additional resources in order to improve service levels.

**7. KEY COMMUNICATIONS**

- 7.1. CoPP is an 'Active and Creative City'
- 7.2. The Event Strategy responds to two of the ten priorities of our Community Plan, while also continuing our commitment to the benefits that events bring the City.
- 7.3. The Event Strategy is a Council commitment to further improve the community benefit and reduce the community impact of events in our City

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1. That the Council resolves to lay the draft Event Strategy 2008 on the table for a period of one (1) month and that during this time the draft Event Strategy be made publicly available for comment prior to being formally considered by Council in the August cycle.