

STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
7 APRIL 2008 **POLICY AND PLANNING**

A2	NEW YEAR'S EVE STRATEGY
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	FORESHORE AND ENVIRONS, ACTIVITY CENTRES
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	GEOFF OULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
AUTHOR:	KATE NAGATO, FORESHORE PLACE MANAGER
ATTACHMENTS:	NYE FRAMEWORK

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Executive Summary

New Year's Eve 2007 resulted in a number of incidents and media publicity relating to the impact of crowd behaviour in St Kilda on that night.

Consistent with a key objective of the Community Plan 2007-17, Council needs to consider a way forward for managing the impacts of New Year's Eve on the community to reduce the impact on local amenity and ensure public and staff safety.

It is proposed that a structure be established that enables New Year's Eve to be better coordinated with other key stakeholders and that a management plan for the 'event' be developed.

It is likely that any management plan will include and address the following matters:

- More effective coordination of both internal and external stakeholders
- Implementation of a No Alcohol policy for public areas
- Improved services levels for waste management during New Year's Eve
- Improved compliance audits of existing events in the precinct to ensure they are compliant with permits
- Improved coordination of existing events within the precinct, and consideration of the need for alternative public events to improve crowd management

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Background

- 2.1.1. New Year's Eve 2007 was a very hot evening (minimum temperature 26°C) and saw an estimated 100,000 people visit St Kilda Beach. Victoria Police had to deal with public drunkenness and numerous minor assaults. There were still people on the beach on New Year's Day when beach cleaners arrived which denied beach cleaning equipment access to clean the bottles and rubbish from the beach resulting in them delaying the cleaning of the beach until it was safe to do so. The Life Saving Club closed St Kilda Beach for 3 hours on New Year's Day while the rubbish was being cleaned up and there was media scrutiny of the event.
- 2.1.2. The foreshore in general and St Kilda Beach in particular appears to be becoming more popular on New Year's Eve. New Year's Eve 2007 was a particularly busy year which was in part due to the warm weather conditions and nearby municipalities declaring their public land Alcohol Free zones. The work Council has been undertaking in recent years to improve the foreshore and make it a popular destination has led to increased visitation particularly over the summer months and New Year's Eve is no exception.
- 2.1.3. The foreshore is a premier destination for Melbournians and people will come on New Year's Eve without any encouragement. We have a responsibility to ensure that the people who do come are safe and behave in a responsible manner.

2.2. Context

Key issues that inform this strategy are:

- 2.2.1. Internal Coordination – different departments within Council approve different aspects relating to New Year's Eve and without better internal coordination this results in no one having an overall picture of what is happening
- 2.2.2. External coordination – The activities within the City of Port Phillip impact on other municipalities, Victoria Police, emergency services, private functions and the community.
- 2.2.3. Alcohol – Alcohol is a key factor in unsocial behaviour on New Year's Eve that needs to be managed to ensure a safe environment.
- 2.2.4. Waste management – including management of litter during and after an event and cleaning of beaches and streets.
- 2.2.5. Further details on the specific issues that have been assessed and require a Council response are attached in Appendix 1.

3. RECOMMENDED OPTION

- 3.1. Council should coordinate a management response to New Year's Eve to ensure effective coordination and management and consultation with external stakeholders. At this stage, it is not recommended that Council run a formal event that will attract additional people to the area over New Year's Eve, however if New Year's Eve continues to grow in popularity in the area, one option for Council may be to consider running formal events aimed at improving the experience and managing crowd behaviour.
- 3.2. A coordinated management response to New Year's Eve will require liaison with internal and external stakeholders including managers of other events operating in private venues within the precinct on New Year's Eve, Victoria Police and neighbouring municipalities. A member of the City of Port Phillip Event Management Team should be included as a representative on the City of Melbourne's A-team who organise New Year's Eve and a member of the City of Melbourne's A-team should be invited to join the City of Port Phillip's Event Management Team for New Year's Eve to ensure coordination between the two 'events'.
- 3.3. Council should review its foreshore alcohol policy in consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Victoria Police and Liquor Licensing Victoria with a view to making changes. A No Alcohol Policy for New Year's Eve, similar to the policy in place for the St Kilda Festival, is the most appropriate way to manage unsocial behaviour and would bring the City of Port Phillip in line with most other municipalities in the area.

3.4. Criterion for recommendation

Without any encouragement from Council, people will continue to come to the area to celebrate New Year's Eve and we need to manage these people to ensure their safety and the safety of others and mitigate the impacts they have when they are here and when they leave. This recommendation provides the most cost effective option that does not add to Council's already large calendar of formal events and can be implemented in time for New Year's Eve 2008. It improves the coordination internally and externally and should result in a safer event with less impact on the municipality than the current non-managed arrangement.

Communications around a No Alcohol policy should follow a similar format to those undertaken for the St Kilda Festival in 2008 which were highly successful.

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3.5. Sustainability assessment

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Economic Pillar	Council can coordinate New Year's Eve more effectively, thus minimising use of organisational resources to manage adverse issues after the event.
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ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Environmental Pillar	Council has an opportunity to manage New Year's Eve in a way that minimises litter and protects our foreshore environment.
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CULTURAL VITALITY

Cultural Pillar	Council can improve the visitor experience to the region and community amenity by better coordinating and managing New Year's Eve events.
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SOCIAL EQUITY

Social Pillar	Council can improve the visitor experience to the region and community amenity by better coordinating and managing New Year's Eve events. Council can better prepare for adverse impacts associated with increased visitation on New Year's Eve.
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3.6. Policy and legislative implications

- 3.6.1. Council's Community Plan 2007-17 has as one of its key objectives to "improve event management to reduce environmental impact and better manage the effect on the community". This option fits with this objective.
- 3.6.2. Council's Open Space Strategy 2006 states that "commercial events in parks need to demonstrate net community benefit. The impacts of commercial events upon public access to open space will be monitored and regulated". This option fits within Council's Open Space Strategy.
- 3.6.3. Council's Framework for Festivals and Events outlines the implications different types of events have on Council and the decision framework for whether Council should run different types of events. This option would see Council's role be one of facilitator through the provision of proactive coordination services.
- 3.6.4. Council's Events Policy 2003 outlines the requirements for events of over 500 people run within the City of Port Phillip. An objective of the policy is to recognise and support the wider community's desire to experience the City's foreshore as an inner metropolitan public asset, particularly in summer. This option is consistent with this policy.
- 3.6.5. An Events Strategy is also underway to assess Council's management response to Events more broadly within the City of Port Phillip. How we manage New Year's Eve needs to be undertaken in the context of this.

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3.7. Risk implications

- 3.7.1. People are coming and will continue to come to the City of Port Phillip, in particular the foreshore, to celebrate New Year's Eve. Last year over 100,000 people came to the St Kilda Foreshore and Victoria Police report numerous minor assaults.
- 3.7.2. There is a risk to community amenity and public safety if better coordination is not in place due to under-resourcing or pulling resources from other areas to deal with issues in our municipality.
- 3.7.3. There is also a risk to Council's reputation if New Year's Eve is not managed more effectively in the future. There will likely be strong media interest in how we manage New Year's Eve in 2008 following on from the media coverage received following the issues surrounding New Year's Eve in 2007.

3.8. Resource implications

- 3.8.1. The Council's existing resources with regards to Event Management are limited and the resource implications of responding to New Year's Eve will be considered in the preparation of the City of Port Phillip Events Strategy.
- 3.8.2. Any resource implications are likely to include:
- Increased service levels for waste management
 - Increased service levels for health and amenity enforcement including enforcement of a No Alcohol policy
 - Increased coordination costs
 - Implementation of additional infrastructure
- 3.8.3. There will be a need for Council to reassess the criteria for, and cost of, permitting and licensing venues on New Year's Eve to ensure the costs are reflective of the true costs of providing the service.
- 3.8.4. The detailed costing will be dependant on the outcomes of any New Year's Eve Management Plan and the City of Port Phillip Events Strategy.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. Alternative 1

- 4.1.1. This alternative option is the recommended option of a New Year's Eve Management Plan plus the City of Port Phillip produces a family friendly event on New Year's Eve.
- 4.1.2. Under this option, as for the recommended option, an events management plan would need to be developed incorporating all events being run in the area under the one plan to ensure effective coordination and clear resourcing requirements for emergency services and the Victoria Police.

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- 4.1.3. Manage as a formal event where Council provides family friendly entertainment with a No Alcohol policy. This option would enable Council to market the event to families. The City of Melbourne has implemented a similar strategy for effectively managing large crowds on New Year's Eve by encouraging families to the area through family-friendly entertainment. A similar strategy in the City of Port Phillip could be considered, however such a response is not necessarily going to be effective noting that on New Year's Eve in 2007 the key issues and impacts were between 1 and 3am New Years Day, coinciding with people leaving licensed venues. The provision of entertainment can also assist in separating the crowd and preventing large crowds to develop in one area. The provision of large sections of family programming into the St Kilda Festival in 2008 caused a dramatic change in crowd behaviour compared to previous years.
- 4.1.4. The provision of entertainment in public space can also assist in crowd management in public areas. Any strategy that involves formal entertainment will require an event management plan and extensive coordination with the City of Melbourne, Victoria Police, transport providers and other stakeholders. It would also be essential to liaise with other event partners to ensure coordination and management is appropriate. A formal entertainment event would likely need far greater resourcing which is beyond the current capacity of the City of Port Phillip.
- 4.1.5. There would likely be a significant cost involved in running such an event, particularly staff time and resources, but also costs for an external events manager. There would also be a fee for entertainers, external security personnel, additional waste management contractors, temporary public toilets, additional lighting etc.
- 4.1.6. There are a range of options for how we manage such as event ranging from full cost to run the event borne by Council through to full cost recovery. The viability of each of these options will need to be assessed during the development of the New Year's Eve Management Plan.
- 4.1.7. One of the drawbacks to this option is that it would be another event on the foreshore and residents could consider it further encouragement of people to the foreshore.
- 4.1.8. However, there could also be an adverse community reaction if Council is seen to be doing nothing to address the problem (even if we are). There may also be backlash from traders in the area who are concerned about the negative impact adverse publicity about St Kilda and safety concerns may have on their businesses.

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4.2. Sustainability assessment

Economic Pillar	Increased cost to Council to produce an alternative event on New Year's Eve.
Environmental Pillar	A higher level of management may protect environmental assets along the foreshore.
Cultural Pillar	The City has a history as an entertainment precinct and the management and production of events is part of the cultural fabric of the City.
Social Pillar	Council has provided a commitment in the Community Plan 2007-17 to reduce the impacts of events on amenity. However there is a risk that 'another event' being run by Council concurrent with New Year's Eve is not seen as an appropriate response.

4.3. Policy and legislative implications

- 4.3.1. Community Plan 2007-17 – Another key priority from the Community Plan is to develop safe and affordable cultural events and entertainment opportunities, involving people across age and interest groups, providing alternatives to licensed venues. This option fits in with this priority.
- 4.3.2. Open Space Strategy 2006 - no change.
- 4.3.3. Framework for Festivals and Events - This option would see Council's role be one of producer and would require Council to produce or present the event, but this would fit within Council's Framework.
- 4.3.4. Events Policy 2003 - One of the Economic Objectives is to support and manage the conduct of events within the City on a cost neutral or income generating basis to Council. The St Kilda Festival does not fit within this objective and New Year's Eve under this option would not either, however this is an event that will occur regardless of Council's wishes and council needs to manage the impacts to ensure public safety.
- 4.3.5. Events Strategy – pending and due for finalisation July 2008.

4.4. Risk implications

- 4.4.1. This is complex. A Council-run event may have risk implications for Council if things go wrong, but not taking sufficient action to mitigate current issues may also be a risk for council.

4.5. Resource implications

- 4.5.1. This option would require greater resources to implement both high direct financial costs and high staff resourcing costs.
- 4.5.2. This option would require a higher financial cost to implement than the recommended option.

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5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Internal

- 5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:
- Stephen Cooper, Manager Health and Amenity
 - Ian Hicks, Manager Culture and Recreation
 - Geoff Oulton, Executive Director Community Development and Planning
 - Paul Smith, Manager Environment and Renewal
 - Darren Findlay, Coordinator Beach and Street Cleaning
 - Mauro Vella, Team Leader Waste Management
 - Paul Shea, Festivals and Events
 - Mayor (Cr Cribbes) and Councillors (Cr Bolitho, Cr Gross, Cr Logan, Cr Sait, Cr Klepner)
- 5.1.2. Council staff – feedback from Council staff has been incorporated into the development of this report
- 5.1.3. Mayor and Councillors – Suggested looking at how other municipalities around the Bay deal with New Year's Eve – other Bayside municipalities contacted.
- 5.1.4. Also suggested this issue may not be confined to New Year's Eve but may occur on any warm night in summer as we are now getting more regular crowds due to the raft of foreshore improvement works that have been undertaken by Council, including the Promenade – noted and partly being addressed by Council's additional street and beach cleaning in the evening on days above 25°C. The concentration of impacts though has traditionally been much higher on New Year's Eve.
- 5.1.5. Also suggested looking at family friendly activities in other parts of the foreshore to help spread people out rather than the concentration of people in one part of the foreshore – noted and considered in options.
- 5.1.6. Advised that it is important that we undertake an analysis of events looking at the size, scale and impact and that we don't treat all events the same way – noted and will be considered in the Events Strategy currently being prepared.
- 5.1.7. Also advised that the community perception is that we have too many events and that there may be a need for improved external communications – noted and considered in recommended option.

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5.2. External

- 5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:
- Victoria Police (Major Events and Emergency Management - Region 1)
 - City of Melbourne (New Year's Eve A-team Events Management)
 - Consumer Affairs Victoria - Liquor Licensing
- 5.2.2. Engagement was undertaken to collect information from these external groups as well as seek guidance from them based on their experiences.
- 5.2.3. Victoria Police were targeted in this engagement as they are the most impacted upon by how Council manages New Year's Eve. They need to ensure sufficient resourcing for public safety. The City of Melbourne was targeted as they have dealt with New Year's Eve issues for a number of years and could provide some learnings for Council. Liquor Licensing were contacted seeking their views on a No Alcohol policy for New Year's Eve within the municipality.
- 5.2.4. Victoria Police indicated the need for local police to run a joint operation with Melbourne police to enable them to move resources around and deploy to where they are needed. They would like the City of Port Phillip to try and prevent issues from happening rather than Victoria Police trying to manage the impacts when they occur. They would like a no alcohol policy to be in place as it is very difficult to enforce the current alcohol policy after 11pm. They would like the City of Port Phillip to try and manage crowd numbers, alcohol, transport and facilities.
- 5.2.5. The City of Melbourne advises that in at least the past two years, some of their emergency resources have been deployed to address issues within the City of Port Phillip. The City of Melbourne would like to have better integration with the City of Port Phillip in the development of both municipalities New Year's Eve events. They would like to work together on an integrated event management plan and overarching traffic and transport plans. The City of Melbourne suggested having a City of Port Phillip representative on their New Year's Eve Event Management team and vice versa to ensure integration and coordination is maximised.
- 5.2.6. Consumer Affairs Victoria – Liquor Licensing suggested an appropriate way forward for the City of Port Phillip to address alcohol issues on New Year's Eve would involve education and awareness campaigns including targeting businesses who sell alcohol requesting they be extra vigilant and advise patrons of the No Alcohol policy. They did not anticipate a blanket No Alcohol on streets or along the foreshore would have adverse impacts on businesses as this could potentially be a benefit to licensed venues.

6. RECOMMENDATION

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

- 6.1. Develop a NYE Management Plan that will result in a coordinated management response to New Year's Eve, involving liaison with internal and external stakeholders including Victoria Police, Emergency Service agencies, the City of Port Phillip Licensees' Accord, private event organisers in the precinct and neighbouring municipalities.
- 6.2. A New Year's Eve Management Plan will address matters including, but not limited to:
 - Defining and communicating levels of service for beach cleaning and rubbish management for New Year's Eve;
 - a review of the City of Port Phillip foreshore alcohol policy in consultation with relevant stakeholders including Victoria Police and Consumer Affairs Victoria - Liquor Licensing with a view to implementing a No Alcohol Policy from 12pm New Year's Eve to 7am New Year's Day each year in the St Kilda Foreshore and Environs area;
 - any increased service levels for health and amenity enforcement, including implementation of a No Alcohol policy;
 - any increased coordination costs, including meeting with Victoria Police and neighbouring municipalities prior to New Year's Eve events to ensure development of a coordinated management plan;
 - the need and costs (if any) for implementation of additional infrastructure.
- 6.3. The Council be briefed on the New Year's Eve Management Plan in October.