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MINUTES OF THE WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD FRIDAY, 17 JANUARY 2020 COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM

16 January 2020

Dear Councillor

NOTICE is hereby given that an **EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SHIRE OF WEDDIN** will be held in the Council Chambers, Grenfell on **FRIDAY, 17 JANUARY 2020**, commencing at **10.30 AM** and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully

GLENN CARROLL
GENERAL MANAGER

BUSINESS:

To consider the 2020 Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Event and options for an event for 2020

AGENDA:

1. Attendance
2. Correspondence
3. General Manager's Report
4. Closure

PRESENT: The Mayor Cr M Liebich in the Chair, Crs C Bembrick, S O’Byrne, P Diprose, J Parlett, C Brown and J Niven.
General Manager (G Carroll).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

The Mayor read out the following:

“I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land.

I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal Australians who are present.”

APOLOGY: Crs P Best and S McKellar.

219 RESOLVED: Cr Niven and Cr O’Byrne that the apologies be accepted.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Disclosure of Interest form has been forwarded with the Business Paper, for completion prior to the meeting.

Completed forms may be declared and handed in at this point.

Nil

**CORRESPONDENCE TO BE PRESENTED TO THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING
OF THE WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL HELD, 17 JANUARY 2020.**

SECTION C - Matters for consideration

1. The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Committee, C2.6.32: Advising the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival Committee at its December 2019 meeting resolved to stall the 2020 Festival.

Copy forwarded to Councillors

The General Manager declared a non-pecuniary conflict of interest as Acting President of the Henry Lawson Festival Committee and stayed in the room.

220 RESOLVED: Cr Diprose and Cr O'Byrne that Council accept the Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Committee's correspondence.

June 2020 Long Weekend Event/s

Report to: Council
From: General Manager
Date: 14 January 2020
Attachments: Nil

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a proposed approach to holding an event/events on the June 2020 long Weekend.

Background:

At its December 2019 meeting The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Committee (Festival Committee) resolved as follows:

- “ i) the Henry Lawson Festival go into recess for 2020 pending evaluation in July 2020;
ii) Council delegate to the General Manager the authority to coordinate the preparation of a funding submission to the Drought Communities Program (DCP) Extension for up to \$100,000 including \$30,000 for a major concert.”

and

“that a community drought event be held at the Grenfell Railway Station precinct on the June long weekend 2020.”

This Festival Committee advised that this was a difficult decision and not one that was made lightly. The Committee's decision was due to various factors such as the proposed Main Street redevelopment, the drought's effect on the Committee's fundraising capacity and the inability to elect a full executive and fill all the coordinator positions. Other rural towns are currently experiencing similar issues.

There is an expectation in the community that Council will continue to support an event/events on the June long weekend but there is no clear direction as to what this is.

Issues:

Staff conducted a strategic planning session in order to try and achieve some clarity as to what Council can do. Issues that came up during the discussion were as follows:

Time frame –

There is **limited time frame** available in order for Council to deliver an event (particularly given Council's lack of resources). Setting up an event committee and using volunteers with which to assist in running an event will see a further reduction in time with which to put together a successful event.

Resources available –

Council has limited resources available with which to manage an event. Council could consider buying in event management resources with which to run an event however having not actually determined what it is that we are going to do makes it difficult to successfully engage an event coordinator. To successfully engage event management resources requires some direction as to the type and content of any proposed event.

Budget constraints –

At this stage **Council has limited confirmed budget available** with which to fund a June 2020 event.

There is existing operational budget of \$15,000 allocated to Henry Lawson Festival expenses and Council also usually donates \$1,500 towards the Henry Lawson Festival Acquisitive Arts prize. Council could choose to allocate this funding toward an alternate event.

There has been some discussion of using some of the Drought Communities Program Round 2 (DCP) funding. However, we are still waiting on the submission of project ideas due by 31 January 2020. Allowing time for a decision by Council as to the successful list of projects and completion of the application means a likely application submission date of late February/early March. In the last round we submitted our application in 26 June 2019 and were advised of the outcome 8 August 2019 a time frame of 1 ½ months. If we apply the same time line to the current situation that would mean if we apply for the DCP funding late February early March, we are unlikely to be advised of the outcome of our application until mid-April leaving no time in which to organise an event. In order for Council to proceed in organising an event it is important that we obtain a commitment from Council to utilise DCP funding in advance of the determination of the funding submission.

There is a political risk using DCP funds if it is oversubscribed as other projects may miss out on funding which may result in community resentment. However, as with any previous funding there are always projects that miss out on funding and accordingly this is a risk we have dealt with before.

Community Expectations –

There are many expectations including:

- The common expectation that Council will do something to fill the gap left as the HLF will not be held.
- The business community wants attraction of visitors for the economic contribution it provides.
- Community members are looking for an event to provide community connectedness and to facilitate the bringing together of friends and relatives.
- Community groups want the opportunity to raise funds to support their activities.

Given the above expectations there is a large focus on what will be done and this leaves Council open to criticism when expectations are not met. This also leaves Council in a very difficult situation being tasked with meeting expectations but with no ability to inform those expectations.

It is inevitable that comparisons will be made with past events in particular with the Henry Lawson Festival but also including Spirit of the Bush Concert in 2007 and these past events will influence expectations. Noting that this benchmarking is likely to occur it would be wise if holding an event to **hold something new and different from past events** to not only avoid unconstructive comparisons but to provide something fresh to engage our community. Given the accommodation constraints with which our shire is faced, Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) is an important target market to maximise the economic contribution of any event. Community involvement and ownership is thus not only critical to avoiding criticism of Council but also vital in attracting and accommodating VFR and the economic benefit that goes with this.

What are the Options?

There are many alternatives open to Council including numerous variations of each option however the staff discussions identified the following as credible options:

1. Council can do nothing
2. Council can organise an event
3. Council can provide a funding program for Community groups to hold an event/events

THE GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Option Analysis

1. Do Nothing	
<u>Further Detail:</u> Council could (in theory) do nothing. Whilst this does not meet with Community Expectations no option available to Council is risk free and this may be determined as the least risky option in terms of political damage.	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires minimal Council resources• Would allow Weddin Shire residents to be free to do other things on the June long weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not meet with community expectations• Will mean loss of the June long weekend date for Grenfell• No opportunity for Community groups to fundraise• No economic contribution• Leaves no direction for the 2021 year and beyond• May damage the ability of Council to bring back an event in the future• High level of local political risk

2. Council Organised Railway Station Event
<u>Further Detail:</u> Staff discussions have gone some way to defining an event so that this option can be considered with some clarity. It is wise to move away from the historical Henry Lawson Festival format due to the constraints associated with this format (Main St project, lack of volunteers and limited Council resources etc.), to avoid unconstructive comparisons/criticism, to provide a fresh approach in which to engage our community and so as to not damage the Henry Lawson Festival Brand for future. There has already been some guidance provided by our community in that the preferred site for an event is the Railway Station. Via this location there is a desire to see the economic contribution to local businesses maximised. Talks have been held with the COORIDOOR Project team who are putting a proposal together for Council's information with a view to incorporating relevant elements of their previous event into this event. Whilst initially this was considered a possible stand-alone option after speaking with representative of this organisation it is not considered a stand-alone option but rather elements that may be incorporated as part of an event program. At this stage there is flexibility in the program which can facilitate further community events and can incorporate funding opportunities for community groups. Importantly with control over the program Council with support can design a coherent program and support activities that meet specific objectives. Incorporated as part of the overall budget and delivery of this event is use of external event management resources including a strategic planning element that can assist in future planning for 2021 and beyond. It would be proposed to incorporate a headline music act in order to provide marketing clout but also to incorporate a kid friendly act to enable attraction of families being a key part of the VFR market. Obviously planning for such an event is only in its infancy and cannot be undertaken in earnest until we obtain Council approval for the proposed path forward.

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Noting all the information outlined above an event format along the following lines was seen as the best option:

Location – Railway Station

Date – Saturday mid-afternoon/early-evening (Note – Car Show to be held on Sunday)

Theme – Fire & Ice (Potentially “Home Fire”?)

Format – Music, Food and drinks at the Railway Station finishing with a Fireworks display

Other Info – Headline music act in order to attract visitors but also a child friendly artist

Food and drinks

Outsource the management of the whole event but with Council assistance

Support other community events as part of the weekend program

(e.g. John Shuman Concert, Comedy Act, Car Show etc.)

Incorporate weekend passport promo where visitors have to get a passport ‘stamped’ at local businesses in order to enter a draw for a major prize which can be drawn at the Car Show on the Sunday

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses outsourced event management resources making it achievable given Council's limited staff resources. This also provides a skill development and learning opportunity for Council staff working alongside specialised event management resources • Can still support other community events and community involvement • Passport promo cover business visitation and facilitates economic contribution. It also possible increases length of stay. • Could provide a format that could be used in the future • Meets community expectations in so far as holding an event at the railway station and hopefully by this maximising the economic contribution to Main Street businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event may still not meet community expectations • Weather may impact the event given outdoor location (but this cannot be controlled and is the case for any event) • Some local political risk but possibly less than other two options?

THE GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

3. Funding Program for Community Group Events	
<p>Further Detail:</p> <p>Council could run a special June long weekend event funding round inviting event organisers to apply for funding for events held around the June long weekend.</p> <p>Pool of funding available allowing a number of events to be funded and assessed using a modified version of the existing Community Project Support Application forms and process referencing the Weddin Shire's existing Community values to filter inappropriate events out.</p> <p>Funding agreements would be incorporated into the application form to outline Council expectations and provide a mechanism ensure appropriate use of funds or refund to Council.</p>	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires minimal Council resources• Puts the onus back onto the community• Could be a way of providing funding to a diverse group of community organisations and businesses• It leverages existing community groups and volunteers• It may be a catalyst for identifying new ideas and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seen as Council passing the 'buck'• Council has no control and little input into the events held• Events may not meet community expectations• There may be no events put forward• Short time frame may invite criticism• Oversubscription may mean some projects missing out• Program of events may be incoherent making marketing and visitor attraction difficult• Relies on Community groups and volunteers• Overall a reasonably high level of local political risk

Policy Implications:

Nil

Financial and Resource Implications:

Obviously the Option 1 Do Nothing requires the least amount of financial and resource input from Council however there is high risk associated with this approach.

The Option 3 Community Funding Program could potentially be a pool of say \$50,000 but it is unknown what value of proposals may be sought from Council. Thus whilst an initial estimate of \$50,000 there is no final certainty surrounding the overall budget demands of this option. It would also be prudent of Council to have an amount set aside to aid in the marketing and other support provided to any community events.

As Option 2 Council Railway Station Event involves the use of external resources it requires the largest budget. However, given the limited time frame and limited Council resources it is not considered achievable without these resources. A budget of approximately \$120K is an initial estimate given approximately \$100K could be sourced from the DCP funding but further detail can be provided as event planning progresses and budget items are confirmed. This would include funds to craft a future look and feel as well as an action plan for 2021 and beyond.

THE GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

For Option 3 Community Funding Program and Option 2 Council Railway Station Event it is proposed for Council to resolve to utilise existing budget items associated with the HLF being \$15,000 of existing operational budget for HLF Expenses and \$1,500 existing operational budget for donations usually given for the HLF Acquisitive Arts Prize a total of \$16,500.

In addition to this amount it is proposed to apply for event funding under the Drought Communities Program (DCP) for any additional amount required. The time frame surrounding this grant funding would require Council to commit to a budget amount prior to confirmation of this grant funding. Examination of the DCP guidelines does indicate that event funding is eligible (and the funds are allocated) however until the approval is given there are risks.

Council may also consider the use of other sources of funding however this is not considered the preferred approach.

Internal/External Consultation:

To date there has not been any consultation carried out on the specific options as outlined above. However, consultation carried out as part of the Henry Lawson Festival deliberations which whilst not prescriptive in terms of the event theme or format did indicate a desire to hold an event at the railway on the June long weekend and also a desire to see an application submitted as part of the DCP funding.

Conclusion:

Determination of the best available and achievable Option requires consideration of current community expectations, the time frame available, the Council and community resources available and the risks associated with each Option.

It is evident that there is no one option that is completely without risk.

Taking these factors into account Option 2 – Council Organised Railway Station Event is considered the preferred option.

Next Step:

Once Council has committed to a preferred option the following is proposed:

1. Planning and action can begin immediately in order to provide as much time as possible for the successful delivery of the option chosen. This would be done under the General Managers delegated authority.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council:

- i. confirm that it will hold an event at the Grenfell Railway Station on the June 2020 Long Weekend
- ii. transfer the existing \$15,000 Henry Lawson Festival Expenses Operational Budget to a June 2020 Long Weekend Event budget
- iii. allocate \$1,500 of the Donations Operational budget to a June 2020 Long Weekend Event budget
- iv. allocate \$4,500 of the economic development reserve to a June 2020 Long Weekend event budget
- v. include a June 2020 Long Weekend Event as part of the Drought Communities Program (DCP) grant funding application requesting \$100,000

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RESOLVED: Cr Bembrick and Cr Diprose that Council:

- i. confirm that it will hold a Community Drought Event at the Grenfell Railway Station on the June 2020 Long Weekend
- ii. transfer the existing \$15,000 Henry Lawson Festival Expenses Operational Budget to a June 2020 Long Weekend Event budget
- iii. allocate \$1,500 of the Donations Operational budget to a June 2020 Long Weekend Event budget
- iv. allocate \$4,500 of the economic development reserve to a June 2020 Long Weekend event budget
- v. include a June 2020 Long Weekend Event as part of the Drought Communities Program (DCP) grant funding application requesting \$100,000.

GLENN CARROLL
GENERAL MANAGER

CLOSURE: There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.56am.