

Recreational & Cultural Services: Event Management Policy

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define Council's role and resources required to assist with management and operation of tourism events held in the Glen Innes Severn region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Celtic Festival has been identified as a potential Hallmark event that has the capacity to build significant economic value for Glen Innes and the region.

Hallmark status secures the event to Glen Innes, meaning the event appeal would reduce if transferred to another location as the event is intertwined with the destination brand and experiences.

To secure and build value from the Australian Celtic Festival Council, Council now needs to allocate further administration and operational resources to this event. Council resources for Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, Land of the Beardies Festival, Gourmet in the Glen and Glen Innes Show need to be maintained as identified within the 2008/2010 Council Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Glen Innes community, in partnership with Council has hosted numerous annual and one off events for many years. Past branding of Glen Innes has reflected the community support for festivals with promotional activities including town entrance signage, advertisements and car stickers promoting the slogan 'Glen Innes Festival Town'.

We now have five major annual events, all at different levels of maturity that collectively attract significant media exposure. These events are assisting to build Glen Innes 'Celtic Country' into a year round holiday destination. These five major events are as follows;

- Australian Celtic Festival;
- Minerama Gem & Mineral Show;
- Land of the Beardies Festival;
- Gourmet in the Glen, incorporating the New England Wine Show; and
- Glen Innes Agricultural Show.

To assist Council Lorick Management was commissioned, in partnership with State and Regional Development, to provide a review of its present and future role in strategically supporting community and tourism events. This review has included extensive consultation with the above event committees, Council and industry knowledge. Lorick Management has subsequently made a number of recommendations to Council on how to better manage, plan and resource events.

Significant elements of the Lorick report include the need for Council to prioritise resources provided to events. The Australian Celtic Festival has been identified as the event of greatest priority based on economic capacity and inturn risk. With this in mind the opportunity to expand on economic value or the potential loss through miss management needs to be urgently addressed by Council.

COMMENTARY

A key outcome of the event review was to guide Council on how to better manage, plan and resource events. This guide is summarised in the following recommendations proposed by Lorick Management.

Recommendation 1.

Strategically manage and develop the Australian Celtic Festival into a Hallmark event through providing;

- 1. Pre planning and event operational guidance and support;**
- 2. Financial management;**
- 3. Marketing services; and**
- 4. Administration support.**

Present - Australian Celtic Festival, 355 committee of Council

Presently Council is assisting the Australian Celtic Festival 355 committee with limited services in the above four categories. Within these limited services emphasis has been placed on Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S), traffic control and presentation of Centennial Parkland (Australian Standing Stones). An amount of \$46,193 has been allocated in the 2008/2010 Management Plan to provide these limited services.

In the area of marketing these services has been fully provided through Council economic development/tourism section partially achieved through the support of a casual tourist/events assistant (14 hours per week). Within these 14 hours, the tourist/events assistant also supports with limited marketing for the Land of the Beardies Festival, Minerama, and Gourmet in the Glen. In addition recent event grant funding has been secured through Council's Economic Development Officer for both the Australian Celtic Festival and Land of the Beardies Festival.

The Australian Celtic Festival 355 committee has expressed concern that they do not have the capacity to provide the secretarial and financial administration required to conduct the event in the long term. The Committee has struggled to provide these resources for the 2007 festival. As a result, staff within the Economic Development & Tourism section has had to carry out the additional workload. This position is unsatisfactory for both parties and needs to be addressed by either additional resources being provided by Council or the ultimate scaling down of the festival to a size that can be managed by volunteers, with minimal support by Council.

Future - Australian Celtic Festival

To achieve the consultants recommendations in making the festival a Hallmark event Council would need to:

- Fully manage traffic control both throughout public streets and within the festival site;
- Co-ordinate preplanning, delivery and post management of event sites including Grey Street activities and the Centennial parkland site;

- Manage all occupation health and safety responsibilities including development and updating of insurance/risk documentation;
- Develop event budgets, sponsorship proposal's, manage financial control and financial reporting; and
- Administer community involvement through Council 355 committee structure with additional contract/casual labour to implement event management plans, committee minutes, correspondence, and co-ordination of stakeholder communication and development of a central record system.

An additional \$24,000 per year is required to be allocated in the Management Plan for secretarial support to the Australian Celtic Festival Committee. This would also address the concerns of the Australian Celtic Festival 355 committee regarding the on-going sustainability of the event. However for the event to remain sustainable in the long term the volunteers and the 355 Committee are essential stakeholders.

Recommendation 2.

Prioritise, identify and communicate event resources available through Council for;

- 1. Minerama Gem & Mineral Show;**
- 2. Land of the Beardies Festival;**
- 3. Gourmet in the Glen; and**
- 4. Glen Innes Show.**

Further event prioritisation requires careful consideration and should be measured outside of economic value as the four above events have significant community, cultural and social impact in addition to economic value.

Present - Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, 355 committee of Council

Minerama Gem & Mineral Show should not be undervalued as this event strongly connects to our mining history, fossicking promotion, investment in the Emmaville Mining Museum and potential for the region with Inverell branded as 'Sapphire City' being only 45 minutes drive from Glen Innes.

For Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, a 355 committee of Council has provided minimal support in the area of parkland, event set up, marketing and financial control. An amount of \$10,396 has been allocated in the 2008/2010 Management Plan to provide these limited services.

Present - Land of the Beardies Festival, incorporated committee

Land of the Beardies Festival offers growth through attracting motor, car and bike enthusiasts connecting to a quirky Beardsy experience. The community value of the Beardies Festival has recently been supported by a Federal Government's Festivals Australia grant, valued at \$10 000.

Council staff provides minimal support to the Land of the Beardies Festival, primarily through parkland presentation, OH&S guidance, parade traffic control and marketing. Council has also allocated an amount of \$16,680 in the 2008/2010 Management Plan to provide these services.

Present - Gourmet in the Glen, Quota and Show Society committee

The potential economic value of the Gourmet in the Glen to the local agricultural and hospitality industry has been recognised by a successful 3 year \$25,000 funding application to State and Regional Development continuing through to 2009.

Council has primarily supported the Gourmet in the Glen through submitting and management of a grant application and event marketing. Council has allocated an amount of \$7,205 in the 2008/2010 Management Plan to assist in the delivery of Gourmet in the Glen.

Present - Glen Innes Agricultural Show, Show Society committee

Our rural showcase, the Glen Innes Agricultural Show is extremely well supported by businesses, volunteer and the community support. The event location needs greater involvement by Council as the future management of showgrounds infrastructure continues to be an area of concern for the Showground Trust and inturn the community. In the medium to long term this may significantly affect the sustainability of the Show. No direct allocation of funds has been made for assistance in marketing.

Future – Prioritise, identify and communicate event resources

At this time Council has directly prioritised resources to the above events, with the exception of the Glen Innes Show, within the Management Plan. An amount of \$34,281 has been allocated to Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, Land of the Beardies Festival and Gourmet in the Glen in the 2008/2010 Management Plan. This funding will meet the operational needs such as parking control, site preparation and limited marketing.

These four (4) events have been identified as important to the community and Council, giving different economic, social and cultural values. The level of funding to these events may differ from year to year due to various funding and marketing opportunities. However Council should encourage these Committees through training and networking to forward plan their growth strategies. These four (4) events should continue to be the priority events for Council after the Australian Celtic Festival.

Monitoring economic success of these events and the value of resources provided by Council needs to be ongoing and re-evaluated within two (2) years. Activities such as; media exposure, visitor expenditure, visitor satisfaction levels and industry satisfaction levels are important indicators to monitor.

Recommendation 3.

Monitor economic success of events and value of resources provided by Council through activities such as;

- **Media exposure;**
- **Visitor expenditure;**
- **Visitor satisfaction levels; and**
- **Industry satisfaction levels.**

Present

Limited visitor expenditure and satisfaction surveys have been collected for the five major events. During the 1999 Australian Celtic Festival, Southern Cross University assisted Council tourism staff benchmark visitor and community satisfaction levels. In recent years in-house quarterly visitation surveys have been conducted to gauge accommodation occupancy and retail spend which have included event periods. Although these surveys have been limited in all instances they have reflected the importance of such events to the local economy.

Media value has been monitored through Council's membership to the Regional Tourism Organization, which has provided tracking of event media exposure and value.

Future

As the potential growth and risks associated with hosting the Australian Celtic Festival has become evident, Council has commissioned the services of Australian Travel Research Centre to clarify and measure the economic value of the 2007 event. Results from this survey are to be with Council by end of the June 2007. This will be an independent and credible study into the value of this event to the economy.

The templates created through the 2007 Australian Celtic Festival survey will be the guide used for future event measuring of local economic value. In addition media exposure will also need to be assessed and valued.

Recommendation 4.

Further events outside of the five major events identified;

- **Council's relationship with Mosman Council;**
- **Freedom of the City; and**
- **Grafton to Inverell Cycle race.**

If Council is to commit to the events identified above, additional resources are required to support and manage these activities. It is recommended that a minimum of 35 hours per additional event for casual labour would be required to assist with meeting Council's expectations. An amount of \$4,095 is allocated in the 2008/2010 Management Plan however this amount allows for no marketing or administration activities. To achieve this a further \$2,625 is required to be allocated to assist with administration of these events.

Recommendation 5.

Event committee strategic management;

The need for Council to assist the five major event committees with volunteer training in the areas of event management, marketing, networking etc. was identified within the Lorick Management event review. This support can be provided within Councils existing Economic development and tourism section. This will assist in building on volunteer skills, event sustainability and succession planning. This support can be provided within existing resources.

(a) Policy Implications

If Council adopts the recommendation then it will provide strategic direction and resources for the next two (2) years for event management within Glen Innes Severn local government area.

(b) Financial Implications

The cost of providing additional administration and event management resources for the Australian Celtic Festival is estimated at \$24,000. This allows for the employment of an additional part time person as well as administration set up costs of \$3,000. This amount has not been allocated for in the 2008/2010 Management Plan.

The delivery of Occupation Health and Safety, Traffic management and financial control is included in the 2008/2010 Management Plan. However not all labour costs for finance, traffic and risk management administration has been directly allocated to event management.

The cost of additional event management, such as the Mosman Friendship, is estimated to be \$875 per event. This cost excludes marketing and site and traffic control. No allocation in the 2008/2010 Management Plan has been made for these activities.

(c) Legal Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

If Council is to secure and build on the value of the Australian Celtic Festival, Council needs to take a leading role in event management, planning and research. The further development and value of Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, Land of the Beardies Festival, Gourmet in the Glen and the Glen Innes Show needs to be evaluated over the next three year to clearly determine their event value.

If Council is to adopt further events required to be managed by Council's Economic Development and Tourism section then additional resources will need to be allocated. A copy of the Lorick Report is Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council support the Australian Celtic Festival Committee by committing to the management of the Australian Celtic Festival through;

- i) Providing additional secretarial administration and event management support for the Australian Celtic Festival at an estimated cost of \$24, 000 per year for the next two (2) years.***
- ii) Provide traffic control both throughout public streets and within the festival site.***
- iii) Co-ordinate preplanning, delivery and post management of event sites including Grey Street activities and the Centennial parkland site.***
- iv) Manage all occupation health and safety responsibilities including development and updating of insurance/risk documentation.***
- v) Develop event budgets, sponsorship proposal's, manage financial control and financial reporting.***

- 2. Council continue to support the Minerama Gem & Mineral Show, Land of the Beardies Festival, Gourmet in the Glen and Glen Innes Agricultural Show within resourced identified within the 08/10 Management Plan. That a similar level of support be also provided in the 2009/2001 Management Plan.**
- 3 Additional resources is allocated in the 2009/2011 Management Plan for administration & marketing of events such as Council's relationship with Mosman Council, Freedom of the City and Grafton to Inverell Cycle race.**
- 3. That the economic success of events and the value of resources provided by Council through activities such as media exposure, visitor expenditure, visitor & industry satisfaction levels continue to be monitored.**
- 4. That Council continue to assist the event committees with volunteer training in the areas of event management, marketing and networking.**
- 5. That Council review all Festival & Events support in conjunction with the 2010/2012 Management Plan.**

Adopted June 2007.