

**ITEM 4. SAFE SPACE AND TAKE KARE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM – GRANT FUNDING****FILE NO: S120013.001****SUMMARY**

On 15 September 2014, Council approved a cash grant of up to \$40,000 (excluding GST) that, along with \$30,000 provided by the Department of Justice, jointly funded the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador pilot program.

The program was established in response to concerns about the safety of young people at night, specifically to get kids home safely. The objectives of the program are to:

- improve the safety and amenity of the public domain;
- provide a harm reduction service where vulnerable young people can access support and a safe place;
- reduce the risk of crime, specifically to prevent intoxicated young people from becoming the victims or perpetrators of crime;
- collaborate with key stakeholders to establish a governance model that can enhance the night time environment; and
- support organisations that operate in the City at night (e.g. venue security staff, NSW Police Force and Ambulance Service of NSW).

Operated by the Salvation Army, the pilot program commenced on 5 December 2014 and was initially scheduled to conclude on 21 February 2015. A further resolution of Council on 23 February 2015 approved an additional grant of \$37,500 to the Salvation Army. The City's grant funding was matched by the NSW Department of Justice and enabled the pilot program to be extended until 30 May 2015. This extension allowed for the service to continue to operate whilst an evaluation of the initial three-month pilot program was completed.

The program has resonated with the community, providing a tangible focal point around which the community can come together and make our city safer at night. From volunteers to major corporate entities, the simple aspiration to 'look after our kids' has not only provided an opportunity to come together, it is also helping to build a more resilient and economically sustainable city.

The purpose of the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program evaluation was to evaluate both the operating model and the outcomes of the program. Whilst there is no existing framework for an evaluation of this kind, estimations have provided a base line for a cost benefit analysis (see Attachment A).

Data collected as part of the evaluation revealed:

- 1,856 people were assisted over the three-month pilot program and of these:
  - 67 per cent were 18 to 25 years old; and

- 55 per cent were male and 45 per cent were female;
- over 130 people, ranging in age from 18 to 70 years old, have been trained and worked as Salvation Army volunteers on Friday and Saturday nights during the pilot program;
- over the last four weeks of the pilot program, the number of interventions across four categories included:
  - vulnerability to assault (de-escalation of conflict) – 14;
  - vulnerability to sexual assault – 15;
  - vulnerability to theft – 19; and
  - vulnerability to traffic injury – 18.

The evaluation concluded that the program is meeting its objectives and estimated the cost of the program to be \$60 per person assisted, including in-kind contributions from the City and the volunteers. We understand that this is a considerable saving on the Sobering up Centres, which require up to four NSW Police officers to be on duty and two health practitioners. The evaluation also concluded that the operating model for the program is successful on a number of levels including:

- enhancing the governance arrangements for the city at night, demonstrated by the successful partnership between the Salvation Army, Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, Department of Justice, the City and the community;
- providing valuable support to other organisations, such as the NSW Police Force and licensed premises;
- that the paid staff and volunteer model is viable, with volunteers contributing \$47,246 value-in-kind by providing their time on Friday and Saturday evenings to support the program.

The success of the pilot have also enabled the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation to seek corporate sponsorship towards the program's continuation, including two corporate sponsors that are looking to commit \$100,000 each per year over three years. This funding will enable the program to run year round for a further three years, with the potential to expand beyond George Street to Kings Cross.

The City's current funding for the program finishes on 31 May 2015. The City received an application from the Salvation Army requesting further support for the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program as part of the 2015 Community Services Grant program round. This report recommends that the City provide funding to enable the program to continue for a further three years until 30 June 2017. Grant funding will include \$20,000 to support the program from 1 to 30 June 2015, and \$100,000 per year for the three financial years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

In addition to the proposed grant funding, it is also recommended that the City continue to support the program with power supply to the Safe Space in Sydney Square, a storage area for consumables, parking within Town Hall House for volunteers and provision of two-way radios linking the teams with the City's CCTV Control Room. This communication is integral for safety and effective communication and coordination between the Ambassadors, the City and NSW Police, who are co-located in the City's Control Room each Friday and Saturday night during summer months.

All figures in this report are exclusive of GST.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the findings and recommendations of the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Pilot Program Evaluation Report, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council approve a total cash grant of \$320,000 (exclusive of GST) to the Salvation Army for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program comprising:
  - (i) \$20,000 for June 2014/15;
  - (ii) \$100,000 for 2015/16;
  - (iii) \$100,000 for 2016/17; and
  - (iv) \$100,000 for 2017/18;
- (C) Council approve the City's ongoing value-in-kind support to the program through provision of power supply to the Safe Space, parking at Town Hall House and two-way radios linking the teams with the City's CCTV Control Room;
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to negotiate, execute and administer an agreement with the Salvation Army for the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program funding; and
- (E) the CEO report back to Council on the ongoing progress of the program via the CEO update.

## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A:** Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Pilot Program Evaluation Report

**BACKGROUND**

1. In July 2012, Thomas Kelly, an 18-year old student, was tragically killed in an unprovoked assault while on a night out in Kings Cross. Following his death, his family established the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation. The Foundation's purpose is 'to make sure our children come home safely'.
2. On 29 July 2013, following consideration of a Lord Mayoral Minute, Council unanimously resolved to request the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation on initiatives to reduce alcohol related violence and the risks it presents to young people. Since its inception, the Foundation has advocated for a safe space for intoxicated young people, who may be vulnerable to crime, either as a victim or offender.
3. Similar programs have been operating successfully for over ten years in Brisbane; '*Chaplain Watch: Night Safe*' and in Melbourne; '*Street Safety Ambassadors and Safe Space*'. Both the Brisbane and Melbourne services operate a similar model: a team of outreach workers, made up of paid team leaders and volunteers, work from a static space and engage with the city's night time visitors, providing information and support when required. The service does not take the place of an ambulance call out, an attendance at a hospital Emergency Department or intervention required by the police.
4. Since July 2012, the City has been working closely with the NSW Government to develop and deliver the Kings Cross Plan of Management and, more recently, the CBD Entertainment Precinct Plan of Management. The Department of Justice secured funding through the CBD Precinct Plan of Management to trial a Safe Space in the CBD. The Department of Justice requested that the City of Sydney implement the Safe Space pilot as part of the CBD Entertainment Precinct Plan of Management.
5. On 16 September 2013, Council unanimously resolved to contribute \$60,000 towards the cost of convening a Citizens' Policy Jury to consider the question: 'how can we ensure a safe and vibrant nightlife for Sydney?' On 12 May 2014, Council endorsed the eight recommendations in the Sydney Citizens' Policy Jury's Final report for which the City had responsibility. In response to one of the Jury's recommendations to extend the Precinct Ambassador program to a year-round service, City staff reviewed the program and identified opportunities to improve the service that is provided to the City's late night visitors.
6. On 15 September 2014, Council resolved to approve the receipt of \$30,000 (excluding GST) funding from Department of Justice and provide a further cash grant of up to \$40,000 (excluding GST) to the Salvation Army to pilot a Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program. The pilot program commenced on 5 December 2014 and was initially scheduled to conclude on 21 February 2015.
7. On 23 February 2015, Council resolved to approve further funding of \$37,500, matched by the Department of Justice, to extend the Take Kare Ambassador and Safe Space pilot program for 14 weeks to 30 May 2015. This extension allowed for the service to continue whilst an evaluation report on the initial three-month pilot was being completed.

8. Operated by Salvation Army program manager, team leaders and volunteers, the Safe Space comprises a bus and gazebo located in Sydney Square to provide a safe place for people to take time out from drinking with access to a phone charging, telephone, water and basic first aid. Referrals to the Safe Space are made by Take Kare Ambassadors, NSW Police, licenced premises and friends of vulnerable people.
9. In addition, two paid team leaders and volunteers perform outreach activities as Take Kare Ambassadors in the George Street entertainment precincts from Haymarket to Martin Place. Over 130 people have been trained and volunteered their time as Take Kare Ambassadors. While the Ambassadors may engage with anyone who appears to be vulnerable due to their level intoxication, they have pro-actively engaged with and provided support to young people. Of those people assisted during the period of evaluation, 67 per cent were 18 to 25 years old.
10. As well as giving directions, providing information on late night transport and other advice, Take Kare Ambassadors assist people by:
  - (a) escorting them to transport;
  - (b) referring and or escorting them to accommodation;
  - (c) providing basic first aid including band aides, thongs, bottled water and sick bags;
  - (d) calling an ambulance;
  - (e) mobile telephone charging service at the Safe Space;
  - (f) helping them to find and re-connect with their friends;
  - (g) telephoning their families;
  - (h) referring and or escorting them to the Safe Space to rest and sober-up; and
  - (i) de-escalating potential conflict situations.
11. The City also supports the pilot program by providing power to the Safe Space in Sydney Square, a storage area for consumables, parking within Town Hall House for volunteers and two-way radios linking them with the City's CCTV Control Room.
12. The pilot program is overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from NSW Police, St Vincent's Hospital, Department of Justice, the Salvation Army, Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation and the City. The group meets monthly to discuss progress and outcomes of the pilot and addresses issues as they arise.
13. The detailed data and findings from the evaluation are included in Attachment A, with data collected revealing that:
  - (a) 1,856 people were assisted over the three-month pilot program and of these:
    - (i) 67 per cent were 18 to 25 years old; and
    - (ii) 55 per cent were male and 45 per cent were female;

- (b) over 130 people, ranging in age from 18 to 70 years old, have been trained and worked as Salvation Army volunteers on Friday and Saturday nights during the pilot program;
  - (c) over the last four weeks of the pilot program, the number of interventions across four categories included:
    - (i) vulnerability to assault (de-escalation of conflict) – 14;
    - (ii) vulnerability to sexual assault – 15;
    - (iii) vulnerability to theft – 19; and
    - (iv) vulnerability to traffic injury – 18.
14. The key findings from the evaluation show that the program is meeting its objectives and estimated the costs of the program to be \$60 per person assisted, including in-kind contributions from the City and the volunteers. We understand that this is a considerable saving on the Sobering up Centres, which require up to four NSW Police officers to be on duty and two health practitioners. The evaluation also concluded that the operating model for the program is successful on a number of levels including:
- (a) enhancing the governance arrangements for the city at night, demonstrated by the successful partnership between the Salvation Army, Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, Department of Justice, the City and the community;
  - (b) providing valuable support to other organisations, such as the NSW Police and licensed premises;
  - (c) that the paid staff and volunteer model is viable, with volunteers contributing \$47,246 value-in-kind by providing their time on Friday and Saturday evenings to support the program; and
  - (d) the program enhances the governance arrangements for the city at night and provides valuable support to other organisations, such as the NSW Police Force and licensed premises.
15. The Safe Space pilot has demonstrated the positive outcomes that can be achieved through collaboration of a number of partners, in this case the City, NSW Government, NSW Police Force, the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, the Salvation Army and, importantly, the community, with volunteers who have contributed \$47,246 value-in-kind, providing their time on Friday and Saturday evenings to support the program.
16. The City received an application from the Salvation Army requesting further support for the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program as part of the 2015 Community Services Grant program round. The application was assessed by the Manager Social Programs and Services, Manager City Spaces, Manager Social Policy and Programs and Manager Night Time City against the objectives of the grant program.

17. Based on this application and the evaluation findings, it is recommended that Council approve further grant funding of \$320,000 to enable the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program to continue from 1 June 2015 until 30 June 2018. This will comprise of a one-off cash grant of \$20,000 for June 2015, and \$100,000 per annum from the Community Services Grants budgets for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years.

## KEY IMPLICATIONS

### Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030

18. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. The Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program is aligned with the following strategic directions:
  - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City; and
  - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies.

### Organisational Impact

19. City staff will continue to work closely with the Salvation Army and NSW Police Force to deliver the ongoing program. This work is business as usual now for the City Business and Safety Business Units, and no additional resources are required. The Safe Space action is included in the CBD Entertainment Precinct Plan of Management and the City is a member of the CBD Entertainment Precinct Taskforce.

### Social / Cultural / Community

20. The Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador program provides a benefit for people accessing the City of Sydney at night. The Take Kare Ambassadors act as additional 'capable guardians' in the night time economy and provide an extra set of 'eyes' on the streets late at night. The Safe Space provides a harm reduction service where vulnerable young people can access support and a 'safe place' to take a break from drinking and potential risky behaviour.
21. The program provides a tangible focal point around which the community can come together and make our city safer at night and to build a more resilient and economically sustainable city.

## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. There is unexpended funding available within the Grants and Sponsorship 2014/15 budget to provide \$20,000 funding for June 2015.
23. Provision will be made in the draft Grants and Sponsorship budgets for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 for \$100,000 funding each year over the three years.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

24. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

25. The Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador pilot finishes on 30 May 2015. To ensure there is no disruption to the service, a decision to provide this funding is required as soon as possible.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

26. The pilot was developed in consultation with members of the Sydney CBD Entertainment Precinct Taskforce, who include Department of Justice, NSW Police, NSW Health, Transport for NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. The Taskforce was consulted and unanimously supported extension of the pilot program.
27. The evaluation report and recommendations were developed in consultation with the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Program steering group comprising representatives from NSW Police Force, St Vincent's Hospital, Department of Justice, Salvation Army, Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, and the City.

**ANN HOBAN**

Director City Life

Libby Harris, Acting Manager Night Time City