

**ITEM 4. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SPONSORSHIP – ACCESSIBLE ARTS – ACCESS AND INCLUSION PRINT DIGITAL CAMPAIGN****FILE NO: X001684****SUMMARY**

Accessible Arts is the peak arts and disability organisation across New South Wales. It provides leadership in arts and disability through information, advocacy and the facilitation of excellence in arts practice. Accessible Arts has applied for a Knowledge Grant Sponsorship to support a pilot project: Access and Inclusion Print Digital Campaign.

The Access and Inclusion Print Digital campaign is a city-wide project aimed to communicate, share knowledge and encourage best practice around cultural experiences and creative opportunities for people with disability, in partnership with key cultural leaders and organisations.

Organisations that have confirmed participation include: Sydney Opera House; Sydney Theatre Company; City Recital Hall; Maritime Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art; Belvoir; Sydney Festival; Sydney Writers' Festival; Art Gallery of NSW; Sydney Film Festival and Carriageworks.

The project specifically aims to reduce barriers that prevent participation and engagement in Sydney's cultural and creative life for people with disability and access needs and their carers.

Through this initiative, an Accessible Arts printed brochure (the Z-card) will be distributed and a website will be produced in order to promote the accessibility features of all participating venues. Information in the brochure and website will be presented in a consistent manner and will include specific detail such as (but not limited to) the location of participating venue facility entry points, gradient of ramps, number and type of accessible toilets, interpreter services, hearing loop availability or disability access events included in programs. The key objective in providing this type of information and this level of detail is to allow people with access needs and their carers to plan ahead for their visit and to be confident the venue will meet their needs on arrival.

To ensure the venues provide the best possible experience for their audiences, Accessible Arts will train participating venue staff in order to improve their level of understanding on access issues and highlight the need for clear, consistent communication for people with access needs. They will demonstrate best practice in providing dignified access for all audience members. Accessible Arts will also produce a how-to guide for participating venues on developing best-practice accessible websites. Partner venues will utilise the how-to guide and include the specifically designed campaign logo on their individual sites. The logo will help audiences identify how to easily locate relevant access information.

As this is a pilot project, Accessible Arts will also produce a report with data and analysis on the project, detailing the success for each partner organisation. The data will be monitored throughout the two year life span of the project and quality control monitored.

Accessible Arts request for sponsorship has been evaluated against the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and support is recommended. All sponsorship recipients are required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes, and acquit their sponsorship.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program to Accessible Arts for their Access and Inclusion Print Digital Campaign 2015/16; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer a sponsorship agreement with Accessible Arts.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**BACKGROUND**

1. Accessible Arts is the peak arts and disability organisation across New South Wales. Its mission is to provide leadership in arts and disability through information, advocacy and the facilitation of excellence in arts practice by:
  - (a) facilitating pathways to best practice and artistic excellence in professional arts and disability;
  - (b) engaging and communicating with artists, audiences and other stakeholders in pursuit of arts and disability excellence; and
  - (c) advocating and evaluating sector development across the continuum of arts and disability practice.
2. Accessible Arts key services include:
  - (a) Artists Development – providing professional assistance to organisations and individuals in the arts and disability sectors. Helping to establish or improve programs that enable people with disability to develop their creative potential;
  - (b) Audience Development – consulting to arts organisations to help them with making their venue and services more suitable for people with disability;
  - (c) Training – providing Disability Awareness Training as well as Disability Action Plan and review for arts workers and arts organisations; and
  - (d) Information – providing information to individuals and organisations in the arts and disability sectors via its enquiry service, website, e-newsletter, podcast and resource library.
3. Accessible Arts consults to arts and community organisations to assist them with making venues accessible, services more inclusive, marketing to the disability sector and strategic initiatives that promote access and full inclusion. Accessible Arts has been working in this way through facilitating the Accessing the Arts Group (ATAG) in Sydney for the past 15 years. Accessible Arts regularly audit and consult with organisations regarding communications access. Through this task, it has identified a lack of consistency and uniformity in regards to disseminating and presenting information in a way that meets web accessibility standards and best practice.
4. Accessible Arts has applied for a Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship to support a pilot project: Access and Inclusion Print Digital Campaign. The project aims to engage key cultural organisations across the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) to collectively deliver a campaign designed to improve access for people with disability. The project will encourage best practice around provision of cultural experiences and creative opportunities for people with disability.
5. The trial project will work with participating organisations to share their knowledge and train organisations to deliver best practise in service delivery and communications. The project will deliver a number of outcomes including:
  - (a) a printed Z-card pocket guide featuring at least 12 local institutions and organisations detailing the accessibility of the their programs and facilities;
  - (b) an equivalent digital site with digital access to partner webpages;

- (c) disability awareness training pre-campaign launch including a guide on how to present information on participant websites;
  - (d) an integrated event listing featuring accessible events;
  - (e) distribution of the Z-cards at local outlets, Sydney airport and hotels and visitor centres;
  - (f) development of campaign logo for easy identification and access to information; and
  - (g) a visibility campaign to launch and promote the project.
6. As this project is a pilot, Accessible Arts will also produce a report with data and analysis on the project, detailing the success for individual partner organisations and the overall project. Accessible Arts will monitor participants throughout the two year life span of the project and regulate the quality to keep each partner organisation to standard.
7. All partner organisations attended a campaign briefing session in July 2015 and were talked step by-step across the vision and requirements of participation. The organisations who have confirmed participation include:
- (a) Sydney Opera House;
  - (b) Sydney Theatre Company;
  - (c) City Recital Hall;
  - (d) Maritime Museum;
  - (e) Museum of Contemporary Art;
  - (f) Belvoir Street Theatre;
  - (g) Sydney Festival;
  - (h) Sydney Writers Festival;
  - (i) Art Gallery of NSW;
  - (j) Sydney Film Festival; and
  - (k) Carriageworks.
8. The National Museum was unable to attend the briefing session, but are also considering their involvement in the project.
9. The application has been assessed under the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program. The program recognises that for the city to thrive, we must support and create an environment that fosters collaboration and learning.
10. The program supports the exchange of ideas and knowledge, the showcasing of local expertise and encourages dialogue on local and global issues. Under the program, eligible projects can be supported to a maximum of \$40,000 cash and applications can be received ad-hoc throughout the year.

11. The application has been assessed as contributing to the following program outcomes:
  - (a) adoption and implementation of best practice approaches by organisations and individuals;
  - (b) strong networks where participants share resources and acquire new knowledge and skills;
  - (c) improved capacity in organisations and individuals to develop and maintain sustainable business ventures; and
  - (d) increased recognition of Sydney as an innovative and creative city.
12. Under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program, eligible organisations include not-for-profit and for-profit organisations as well as social enterprises. Accessible Arts is a not-for-profit organisation.
13. The application has been assessed by a panel of City staff, which comprised the Cultural Projects Coordinator, Strategy Advisor Culture, Social Policy Officer and the Grants Team. The application was assessed against the City's Grants and Sponsorship criteria, with reference to the City's Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan and Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan.
14. The project targets Priority Area 4 under the City's Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan. It aligns with the City's vision that '*cultural experiences and creative opportunities are valued and accessible*' in the city. The project strengthens the City's position as a cultural centre that invests in and values the engagement and contributions that people with disability make to the cultural and creative economy. It will produce marketing collateral that will not only be valued by the Sydney-based community, but will also be of great value and importance to the visitor economy.
15. Accessible Arts has requested a cash sponsorship of \$37,945 as seed funding to deliver this pilot project, which is expected to run for two years. It is expected the participating organisations will budget and fund future iterations of this project.
16. Having assessed the application, the panel recommends an amount of \$30,000 be funded. The full amount sought to be funded under the application is not recommended, as the panel considered that some items in the proposed budget are core costs of Accessible Arts and therefore should not be funded under the program.
17. The City acknowledges the valuable contribution the project will deliver to the accessibility of cultural activity in the City LGA.

## 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. This sponsorship is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – this project supports an initiative to ensure our prominent cultural organisations are accessible to all residents and visitors and the information on the accessibility of the services and facilities of each organisation is delivered to a high and consistent standard in line with international best practise.
  - (b) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – this project addresses barriers people with disabilities have identified in engaging in the city’s cultural events and facilities.
  - (c) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – this project strengthens the City’s position as an inclusive cultural centre that invests and values the engagement and contributions that people with disability make to the cultural and creative life of the city.

### Social / Cultural / Community

19. The application also aligns with the City’s Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan. Direction 6: *City life is accessible and inclusive for everyone* and in particular Action 27 - Promote participation of people with disability as audience members and artists in arts programs through implementation of the Creative City Strategy.
20. Many cultural organisations and venues are making great progress in providing accessible venues and cultural experiences. However, without adequate and consistent promotion of accessible features of venues and events, people with disability and their families may be reluctant to participate. They need to know with confidence that their access needs will be met before they can make an informed decision to participate.
21. While many organisations currently have good access features and practices, confirming the detail of these features is often difficult. Even if the information is on the venue’s website, it may not be detailed enough for a person with disability to make an informed decision. Often the barrier is that the information is difficult to locate on a venue’s website.
22. This project aims to address these issues by training staff and providing templates for information to be listed in publications and websites in order to achieve a “one click” approach to locating venue and event information.

## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

23. This sponsorship can be funded within the existing 2015/16 Grants and Sponsorship Budget.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

24. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

25. The project will require a considerable lead time to set up and to prepare the participating organisations. Ideally the project will be ready to launch for the approaching 2015/2016 summer tourist season. As the City is the major funding partner of this project it is important that Accessible Arts is informed of Council's decision on the application as soon as possible to allow the project to start within a suitable timeframe.

**ANN HOBAN**

Director City Life

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