

ITEM 5. FRIENDS OF THE SYDNEY TOWN HALL INCORPORATED AND THE CHRISTMAS AT THE SYDNEY TOWN HALL ORGAN CONCERT 2016-2020

FILE NO: X002617

SUMMARY

The Friends of the Sydney Town Hall Incorporated (the Friends) is a not-for-profit organisation that, through tours and other fundraising activities, generates income which is used to conserve items in Town Hall, as well to acquire works of art and other items of historical interest for the building.

In 2006, a nominal ticket fee was charged for the Christmas Organ Concert to manage the ticketing more efficiently. 250 tickets were made available for free distribution through the City's community networks, and the remainder were made available for sale. The proceeds were given to the Friends for undertaking free tours of Sydney Town Hall in conjunction with the annual organ concert program. The Friends also promote the annual organ concert program through their other tours and their own networks.

This arrangement was successfully repeated in 2007. In 2008 and 2009, Sydney Town Hall was closed for renovation. On 27 June 2011, Council approved the proceeds of the annual Christmas Organ Concerts for 2010 to 2012 being directed to the Friends.

On 23 November 2015, when Council approved the donation of the concert proceeds for the intervening years to 2015, it was noted that City staff would work with the Friends to reach agreement to provide funding for future years, and that this agreement would be the subject of a further report to Council.

This report recommends that the City continues its current arrangement of support of Friends by donating the ticket sale proceeds from the annual "Christmas at the Town Hall" Organ concert for the next five years (2016–2020). This support is in recognition of the work of the organisation in the building and to assist in the funding of the annual program of tours and curatorial acquisitions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council enter into an agreement with the Friends of the Sydney Town Hall Incorporated to enable the donation of the proceeds of the annual "Christmas at the Town Hall" Organ concert for the years 2016 to 2020.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

1. The Friends of the Sydney Town Hall Incorporated (the Friends) is a not-for-profit organisation that, through tours and other fundraising activities, generates income which is used to conserve items in the Sydney Town Hall, as well as acquiring works of art and items of historical interest for the building.
2. The annual organ concert program in Sydney Town Hall is made up of 10 lunchtime concerts each year, a Young Organists' Day and the Christmas Organ Concert.
3. The Christmas Organ Concert (the concert) is always sold out, with approximately 2,000 attendees. A nominal fee for the concert tickets has been charged since 2006 to manage the ticketing more efficiently (\$16 adults, \$13 children and concession, including GST). 250 concert tickets are made available each year for free distribution through the City's community networks, and the remainder are available for sale.
4. Proceeds of the concert have been given to the Friends and, in return, the organisation is required to undertake free tours of Sydney Town Hall in conjunction with the annual organ concert program. The Friends also promote the organ concert program through the organisation's tours and its own networks.
5. On 23 November 2015, when Council approved the donation of the concert proceeds for the intervening years to 2015, it was noted that City staff would work with the Friends to reach agreement to provide funding for future years, and that this agreement would be the subject of a further report to Council.
6. The Friends receive no other financial support from the City. The history of the amount paid to the Friends for the last three years is in the table below (ex GST).

2013	\$14,751.42
2014	\$15,963.66
2015	\$15,394.67

7. In all the promotional activity associated with the concert, it is clearly stated that the proceeds of the concert are to be given to the Friends. The Friends actively sell the tickets and promote the concert to tour attendees.
8. All items purchased for the Sydney Town Hall collection by the Friends is done with the support of the City's Curatorial Advisory Panel and in keeping with relevant City of Sydney policies and procedures.

KEY IMPLICATIONS**Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030**

9. *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 work of the Friends is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) *Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Community and Economies and Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City* – the work of the Friends is an excellent opportunity to show the Sydney Town Hall and its collection, and provides a cultural experience popular with a broad range of the community.

Organisational Impact

10. The delivery of the concert is managed by the Venue Management Unit within approved operational budgets.

Social / Cultural / Community

11. Involving the Friends with the concert program increases community awareness of the organ and the free building tours at the end of each concert enhances the event experience.
12. Since the Friends have been conducting the tours in conjunction with the concerts, and promoting the concerts as part of its other tours, patronage at organ concerts throughout the year has increased.
13. The Friends deliver a strong message about the heritage value of the Sydney Town Hall in an entertaining and accessible format.
14. The Friends target seniors and children in the tour program. The organisation is careful to make all exhibitions welcoming to all communities.

Environmental

15. While there are no direct environmental benefits, the primary message in the Friends activities is about respecting and valuing the City's heritage, which contributes to broader environmental education and awareness.

Economic

16. Many of the concert and tour participants, both residents and visitors, are known to attend local retail outlets, restaurants and cafés prior to, and after, the events. However, the economic benefits have not been quantified.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

17. The amount remitted to the Friends is based on actual ticket sales, less advertising and ticketing costs.
18. Production costs associated with the concert program are included in the City's current operational budget.
19. No funds will be transferred to the Friends until a grant agreement has been finalised.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

20. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

21. The Organ Christmas Concert for 2016 is scheduled for 20 December. Dates for future years are set on an annual basis, based on availability of the Centennial Hall and performers.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

22. Positive feedback for the Friends' activities is evidenced by increased participation in their tours and positive responses from patrons who have completed the tours of the building.

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