

**ITEM 5. COMMUNITY SERVICES GRANT - WESTCONNEX ACTION GROUP
- COMMUNITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN****FILE NO: S116523****SUMMARY**

On 29 February 2016, Council resolved to grant \$15,000 in funding to the WestConnex Action Group to help them raise community awareness of the NSW Government's WestConnex Project.

WestConnex Action Group has utilised the funds to increase public understanding of the WestConnex Project through developing and maintaining information on a website and through social media channels, publishing and distributing awareness raising materials and hold awareness raising events.

The WestConnex Action Group has submitted an out-of-round grant application requesting funding of \$25,000 to maintain and develop the community awareness campaign regarding issues surrounding the WestConnex Project for the period February 2017 to January 2018.

The application was assessed under the Community Services Grant Program by an assessment panel comprising the Manger Social Programs and Services, Manager Social Policy and Programs and Manager Community Programs. The assessment meeting was chaired by the Manager, Grants.

The funds would enable the group to provide ongoing information via web and social media channels as well as developing and distributing awareness raising materials and events.

This work would include raising awareness of the impacts of the project on local residents, community members and visitors to St Peters and surrounding areas and other suburbs in the City of Sydney including Newtown, Alexandria, Erskineville, Forest Lodge and Glebe. Staff will seek a more detailed program of activity from the group as they complete their planning.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the ongoing work of the WestConnex Action Group to raise awareness of the WestConnex Project and associated issues, including impacts for the City of Sydney local government area;
- (B) Council approve a cash grant of \$25,000 (excluding GST) to the WestConnex Action Group to continue their community awareness raising activities in 2017; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer a grant agreement with WestConnex Action Group for the project under terms consistent with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

1. WestConnex is a NSW Government project to widen and extend the M4 motorway, duplicate the M5 motorway and join them together (M4-M5 Link) to form a continuous motorway with connections to the city, airport and port.
2. The WestConnex M4 widening and M4 East widens and extends the existing M4 motorway. Two new 5.5 kilometre tunnels, with three lanes in both directions will extend from Homebush to Haberfield, connecting to the City West Link.
3. The New M5 is being constructed between Beverly Hills and St Peters. The St Peters Interchange will have significant negative impacts on residents and businesses located in the City of Sydney local government area, including:
 - (a) the new toll on the existing M5 and the increase in road capacity on Euston Road from four lanes to up to six lanes, and Campbell Road from two lanes to six lanes, will see tens of thousands of additional cars pouring into already congested major urban renewal areas of Green Square, Alexandria, Erskineville, Ashmore and Redfern;
 - (b) air quality, even at existing levels, is close to the allowable limits, and will only get worse with a major interchange, road upgrades and ventilation stacks at the St Peters Interchange and surrounds. If new air quality standards as proposed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2012 are implemented, the New M5 will exceed allowable air pollution levels putting thousands of young children and the elderly at risk; and
 - (c) the proposed project will have unacceptable impacts on Sydney Park. As well as surrounding it on three sides with large, high-volume roads, and the removal of hundreds of trees, the Government has acquired land on the southern side of the park for a construction compound.
4. The WestConnex Action Group is made up of residents from western, inner and south-west Sydney who are working to raise awareness of the WestConnex Project and its implications. The work of the group has expanded over the past 12 months, particularly with the commencement of construction of the New M5 and the St Peters Interchange.
5. On 29 February 2016, Council resolved to grant \$15,000 in funding to the WestConnex Action Group to help them raise community awareness of the project. The group has implemented a number of awareness raising events including the Adopt-a-Tree Launch in Sydney Park, an art exhibition and regular local meetings. They have also produced and distributed approximately 15,000 flyers and maintained a website and social media presence.
6. The WestConnex Action Group operates primarily through volunteers, however, growing awareness has increased the time and expenses required for the group to continue to operate. The group has submitted an out-of-round grant request for \$25,000 to continue their community awareness work in 2017. The request is aligned with the funding priorities for Community Services Grants, particularly:
 - (a) building community capacity through encouraging participation in civic and community activity.

7. The funding will allow the group to provide information about the issues impacting the City of Sydney local government area and develop new partnerships to assist in the provision of information including coordinating with other community groups. Specifically, the group will:
 - (a) provide information about WestConnex and associated issues through maintaining a website and through social media channels including Facebook and Twitter;
 - (b) develop and maintain a database of volunteers;
 - (c) hold events to raise awareness regarding issues associated with WestConnex; and
 - (d) prepare, publish and distribute printed awareness raising materials.
8. Consistent with the City's grant management processes, WestConnex Action Group will enter into a grant agreement. The agreement will specify requirements for information and awareness raising activities to be undertaken (as outlined above), a detailed budget, performance measures, progress reporting, regular review and acquittal of funds.

KEY IMPLICATIONS**Social / Cultural / Community**

9. Providing funding will enable the WestConnex Action Group to continue to provide information and awareness raising activities so that the City's residents are informed about the issues surrounding the WestConnex Project.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

10. Funding for the grant is available in the Grants and Sponsorship 2016/17 budget.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

11. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

ANN HOBAN

Director City Life

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