

Major Events and Festivals Charity Partnerships

File No: X024197.004

Summary

The City appoints a Charity Partner for each of its three major events: Sydney Christmas, Sydney New Year's Eve and Sydney Lunar Festival. The charity and its event activation is promoted through event marketing and communication.

Association with each of these major events provides these charity organisations with an exclusive and highly visible platform. The partnership allows charities to build awareness of their work and integrate their fundraising activities into event programming. It also gives event audiences the opportunity to reflect on broader community issues and needs.

Charity Partners for each event are chosen through an open, competitive process. The recommended Charity Partners for the 2019/20 event season are:

Sydney Christmas - Surf Life Saving New South Wales

This is the state's peak water safety and rescue organisation. It provides volunteer surf lifesavers, staffs an Emergency Response System 24 hours / 365 days and provides lifeguards to 15 local government authorities. Surf Life Saving New South Wales provides opportunities to improve lifesaving skills and offers community education and First Aid training. Surf Life Saving New South Wales has proposed several concepts that align with Sydney Christmas and the City's objectives.

Sydney New Year's Eve - the Refugee Council of Australia

The Refugee Council of Australia is the national peak body on refugee policy and promotes humane and compassionate policies for people seeking safety in Australia and around the globe. Their proposed program to promote messages and awareness of refugee policies in Australia and around the globe provides a unifying message for humanity.

Sydney Lunar Festival - Fred Hollows Foundation

The Fred Hollows Foundation is an international development organisation which focuses on blindness prevention and Indigenous Australian health. The organisation was established 26 years ago by Professor Fred Hollows, an internationally acclaimed eye surgeon and activist for social justice. The Foundation now operates in more than 25 countries and has restored sight to over 2.5 million people. They are committed to ending blindness in Asia and building the capacity of local eye doctors, nurses and community workers in countries they work with.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the appointment of Surf Life Saving NSW as the Charity Partner for Sydney Christmas 2019;
- (B) Council approve the appointment of Refugee Council of Australia as the Charity Partner for Sydney New Year's Eve 2019;
- (C) Council approve the appointment of The Fred Hollows Foundation as the Charity Partner for the 2020 Sydney Lunar Festival; and
- (D) authority to be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into agreements with Surf Life Saving NSW, Refugee Council of Australia and Fred Hollows Foundation to establish their Charity Partner status for the respective events.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. An Expression of Interest was advertised seeking proposals from suitable charitable organisations to partner with Sydney Christmas 2019, Sydney New Year's Eve 2019 and the Sydney Lunar Festival 2020.
2. The Expression of Interest was advertised on the City's Creative City website on 8 April 2019 until 5.00pm on Monday 29 April 2019, and advertised in the Early General News sections of the Daily Telegraph, Australian and The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday 8 April 2019.
3. The benefits offered by the City to Charity Partners include incorporation in the City's event marketing materials and event collateral, the opportunity to provide on-site event activations, speaking opportunities (as appropriate), and leveraging opportunities through other event partners (where possible).
4. The City received 19 submissions. They responded to the criteria for each of the events, which had been provided via an information sheet.
5. Applications were assessed by:
 - (a) Acting Head of Programming, Major Events and Festivals;
 - (b) Audience Manager, Major Events and Festivals; and
 - (c) Community Programs Officer (LGBTIQ).
6. Organisations had the opportunity to apply for more than one event.

Sydney Christmas

7. Sydney Christmas runs the last Saturday in November through to Christmas Day and consists of up to six outdoor family concerts, a choir program, decorations throughout the CBD and villages including the Martin Place Christmas Tree, decorative lighting installations, and a program of associated events.
8. Previous charity partners include Variety the Children's Charity (2017 and 2018), Guide Dogs NSW / ACT (2015 and 2016); Australian Children's Music Foundation (2011 to 2014); Monika's Doggy Rescue (2009 and 2010); RSPCA (2006 to 2008); State Emergency Service (2005); Guide Dogs NSW / ACT (2004) and Canteen (2003).
9. In the selection of a Charity Partner for Sydney Christmas, the following five criteria are considered:
 - (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the charity is reputable;
 - (c) the charity has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the charity's work produces significant benefit to the community; and
 - (e) the charity's operation and organisational focus is compatible with the City of Sydney's values and the Sydney Christmas program.

10. The recommended Charity Partner for Sydney Christmas 2019 is Surf Life Saving New South Wales, whose values of providing education to build better communities, promote change, honesty and integrity, to build a happy, healthy environment align well with Sydney Christmas and the City's values.
11. Surf Lifesaving New South Wales demonstrated its capacity to deliver above and beyond the minimum requirements of the Sydney Christmas Charity Partnership with a strong response which outlined new activities and opportunities for promotion and fundraising within the Sydney Christmas program. This includes opportunities for audiences to interact and engage with beach safety and lifesaving messages as well as creating sustainable Return and Earn initiatives as part of their fundraising.
12. By providing the opportunity to build awareness and educate the community, Surf Life Saving New South Wales helps to reduce coastal drownings and provide a safe environment for all beachgoers in the peak summer holiday period at Christmas time and throughout the year. They are a registered charity whose history dates back to 1907, with over 129 clubs throughout NSW. The organisation manages up to 2,300 rescues each year with over 131,000 preventative actions recorded and over 20,600 volunteer hours contributed each year.

Sydney New Year's Eve

13. Sydney New Year's Eve is an annual event viewed by more than 1 million people around the harbour foreshore and an estimated 1 billion people worldwide via television and online broadcasts.
14. Previous Charity Partners include UNICEF (2017 and 2018), Habitat for Humanity (2015 and 2016), Engineers Without Borders (2013 and 2014), The Fred Hollows Foundation (2012), CARE Australia (2011), WWF (2007 and 2010), Australian Conservation Foundation (2009), Planet Ark (2008), Mediciens Sans Frontieres (2006), and Oxfam (2004 and 2005).
15. In the selection of a Charity Partner for Sydney New Year's Eve, the following eight criteria are considered:
 - (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the charity is a member for the Australian Council for International Development ;
 - (c) the charity has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the charity is reputable and internationally recognised;
 - (e) the charity's work produces significant benefit to the global community;
 - (f) the charity has offices in Australia;
 - (g) the charity's operation and organisational focus is compatible with the City of Sydney's values and Sydney New Year's Eve as an event; and
 - (h) a proposal for a program and / or activations that align with Sydney New Year's Eve.

16. The recommended Charity Partner for Sydney New Year's Eve 2019 is the Refugee Council for Australia. With this partnership, the Refugee Council for Australia aims to leverage the use of both organisations to raise awareness of humane and compassionate policies for people seeking safety in Australia and around the globe. Refugee Council for Australia works to ensure people arriving seeking sanctuary, find the safety and support they deserve in order to be able to start and rebuild their lives with dignity. Using the message 'Choose Humane', they have proposed a campaign to include stories and messages across social media. The charity provides a unifying message for humanity to take audiences into the new year with positivity and hope for a combined future together.
17. Refugee Council of Australia was formed in 1981 and works with over 190 member organisations and thousands of individual members, supporters and Australia's refugee communities, leading national research, policy development, advocacy and community education on refugee issues. The charity aligns well with the City's values in fostering values and reward creative thinking to help achieve their goals. The charity are committed to providing exceptional customer service, best practice and continual improvement in everything they do, providing an independent voice for refugees and people seeking asylum.
18. The Refugee Council of Australia works across all issues bringing benefit to communities through its campaigning for transformation of Australia's asylum policies, supporting the development of refugee-led advocacy networks, building refugee speaker hubs and hosting Refugee Week .

Sydney Lunar Festival

19. The City's Sydney Lunar Festival is attended by up to 1.3 million people in January or February each year and includes the Lunar Lanterns exhibition at Circular Quay, the Dragon Boat Races in Darling Harbour and a program of over 80 associated events.
20. Previous Charity Partners include Surf Life Saving NSW / ACT (2019), Cure Brain Cancer Foundation (2016 and 2017), Barnardos Australia (2015), Chinese Parents Association - Children with Disabilities (2014), the Taronga Foundation (2012 and 2013), the Fred Hollows Foundation (2011), WWF (2010), Oxfam (2009), and Guide Dogs NSW / ACT (2006).
21. In the selection of a Charity Partner for the Sydney Lunar Festival, the following five criteria are considered:
 - (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the charity is reputable;
 - (c) the charity has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the charity's work produces significant benefit to the community; and
 - (e) the charity's operation and organisational focus is compatible with the City of Sydney's values and the Sydney Lunar Festival.

22. The recommended Charity Partner for the 2020 Sydney Lunar Festival is The Fred Hollows Foundation. They have presented a submission which uses the event as a platform for audiences to take action and produce effective global outcomes. They propose to do this through activations such as pop-up art exhibitions including displaying images from award-winning photographers who have documented the Foundation's sight-saving work, as well as a specially designed display of Chinese lanterns including artwork by local artists. In addition to this they would use the opportunity of the Sydney Lunar Festival to engage with children and families by providing art activities demonstrating vision impairment, as well as an exhibition space where these groups can learn more about avoidable blindness and vision impairment. The Foundation has proposed a blindfold dining experience for the duration of the festival and an interactive 'sight simulator' on touchscreen digital billboards around Chinatown and Darling Harbour where people can experience the effects of vision impairment.
23. The Fred Hollows foundation focuses on work in the most marginalised communities in Australia and more than 25 countries around the world. They have an international profile with a diverse network of supporters. They work closely with other Non-Government Organisations throughout the world to ensure the broadest reach and greatest possible outcome for those most in need.
24. The organisation is also an active participant in Lunar New Year activities in Sydney and Hong Kong and has been working in China for the past 21 years, with offices in Beijing, Kunming and Hong Kong. During this time they have performed more than 1.1 million eye operations and treatments in China and trained approximately 30,000 people in eye health.

Key Implications

Social / Cultural / Community

25. The appointment of Charity Partners each year is intended to engender a favourable community sentiment for the selected charity, the City and the event.
26. As noted in the City's Cultural Policy, not only do festivals and special events add to a city's cultural layer, but they also bring economic benefits to businesses in the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors. Visitors come from interstate and around the world to be part of events such as Sydney New Year's Eve and Sydney Lunar Festival, which is the largest outside Asia. Through a charity partnership, not-for-profit organisations can leverage community awareness from the cross-promotional possibilities associated with these large international events.
27. As outlined in the City's Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2017-2021 Direction 1: Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviours, the City aims to increase the understanding of the importance of social inclusion through community programming at City events. The role of the Charity Partner provides an opportunity for charities to increase opportunities for clients to participate in events, and a forum to conduct community awareness programs.

Budget Implications

28. Any activity or program delivered by the Charity Partner will be paid for by them. Additional activities undertaken by the City in alignment with the Charity Partner's programs is provided for within the 2019/20 budget of the Major Events and Festivals Unit.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

29. Signed Letters of Agreement with the appointed Charity Partners are required by mid-July 2019, to enable:
- (a) public announcement of the appointment as part of the first release of event information;
 - (b) sufficient timing to produce effective initiatives and attract sufficient numbers of volunteers to plan and implement such initiatives; and
 - (c) integration of partnership opportunities into event programming for the 2019/20 event season.

EMMA RIGNEY

A/Director City Life

Stephen Gilby, Head of Programming, Major Events and Festivals

Joanne Chan, Audience Manager, Major Events and Festivals