

Major Events and Festivals Charity Partners - 2021/22

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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 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 use the events program as an opportunity for fundraising. 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 2021/22 event season are:

Sydney Christmas – The Kids' Cancer Project

The Kid's Cancer Project is an independent national charity supporting childhood cancer research. Since 1993, they have contributed towards research projects to help children with many types of cancer. The charity works closely with the community, funding 27 medical research projects across 18 leading institutions Australia-wide and they are currently funding six studies to help children with brain cancer. Their work enables hundreds of Australian children access to cutting-edge treatments through the funding of clinical trials.

Sydney New Year's Eve – The Smith Family

The Smith Family is a national independent education-oriented charity. Their goal is to support children living in poverty to create better futures for themselves, while focusing on education as the key to unlocking a young person's potential. They help young Australians in need, to break the cycle of poverty through education. Their history dates back to 1922, with a national reach of 57,847 students who are sponsored on their Learning for Life program, and 170,901 children and young people participating in their supporting programs.

Sydney Lunar Festival – The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society are committed to empowering people and communities to change their lives. The organisation works with children and families, people with disability, older people and carers to support them to realise their goals. The Benevolent Society's vision is for a just society where all Australians can live their best life. They undertake work which is of significant benefit to our communities through the provision of high-quality services, advocacy and campaigning for social change, quality research, collaboration and investment in innovative programs. They foster community development to grow knowledge, capacity and leadership for lasting impact.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the appointment of The Kids' Cancer Project as the charity partner for Sydney Christmas 2021, with the option to extend to 2022;
- (B) Council approve the appointment of The Smith Family as the charity partner for Sydney New Year's Eve 2021, with the option to extend to 2022;
- (C) Council approve the appointment of The Benevolent Society as charity partner for Sydney Lunar Festival 2022, with the option to extend to 2023; and
- (D) authority to be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into agreements with The Kids' Cancer Project, The Smith Family and The Benevolent Society 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 2021 (with the option to extend one year), Sydney New Year's Eve 2021 (with the option to extend one year) and Sydney Lunar Festival 2022 (with the option to extend one year).
2. The Expression of Interest was promoted through the City of Sydney News announcement and email digest, Instagram story, LinkedIn advertising and posts, targeted sends to industry media, Twitter and through the City's corporate webpage on Monday 12 April 2021, and was open until 5pm Monday 26 April 2021.
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 support on-site event activations and conduct fundraising at the event, speaking opportunities (as appropriate), and leveraging opportunities through other event partners (where possible).
4. The City received 34 submissions. They responded to the criteria for each of the events, which were provided on the City's corporate webpage.
5. Applicants were assessed by:
 - (a) Head of Programming, Major Events and Festivals;
 - (b) Audience Manager, Major Events and Festivals, and;
 - (c) Social Programs Officer (LGBTIQ), Social Programs and Services.
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 seven 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: OzHarvest (2020), Surf Lifesaving Australia (2019), Variety – The Children's Charity (2017 - 2018), Guide Dogs NSW / ACT (2015 – 2016) and the Australian Children's Music Foundation (2011 – 2014).
9. In the selection of a charity partner for Sydney Christmas, the following criteria were considered:
 - (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the organisation is reputable;
 - (c) the organisation has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the organisation undertakes work which produces significant benefit to our communities;
 - (e) the organisation has an operational and organisational focus that is compatible with our values and the Sydney Christmas event;

- (f) the organisation is able to provide and manage employees or volunteers to operate a minimum of three interactive paid activations on site (minimum of two employees per activation) at each of the Sydney Christmas village concerts and the Green Square Christmas Fair;
 - (g) the organisation is able to provide working with children checks for employees;
 - (h) the organisation has a Covid-safety plan for fundraising; and
 - (i) the organisation has a cash handling policy.
10. The recommended charity partner for Sydney Christmas 2021 (with the option to extend one year) is The Kids' Cancer Project. Their values around their commitment to excellence through scientific research, support of innovative science, while embracing new ideas and technologies to support children with cancer and their families, as well as providing equal access to care through support of clinical trial align well with Sydney Christmas and the City's values.
11. The Kids' Cancer Project demonstrated its capacity to deliver above and beyond the minimum requirements for the Sydney Christmas charity partnership with a strong response outlining their understanding of operational aspects of the event including the managing of activations and providing fundraising support. They demonstrated the ability to be able to recruit and manage volunteers.
12. By providing the opportunity to build awareness around their work and continue to support kids with cancer through research projects, the charity will be able to continue to provide access to cutting edge treatments. They are a registered charity dating back to 1993, with 22 staff and regular volunteers who pride themselves in their organisational values and significant benefit to the community.

Sydney New Year's Eve

13. Sydney New Year's Eve is an annual event viewed by more than one million people around the harbour foreshore and an estimated 425 million around the world.
14. Previous charity partners include: Refugee Council of Australia (2019), UNICEF (2017 – 2018), Habitat for Humanity (2015 – 2016), Engineers Without Borders (2013 – 2014), the Fred Hollows Foundation (2012) and CARE Australia (2011).
15. In the selection of a charity partner for Sydney New Year's Eve, the following criteria were considered:
- (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the organisation is reputable;
 - (c) the organisation has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the organisation undertakes work which produces significant benefit to our communities;
 - (e) the organisation has an operational and organisational focus that is compatible with our values and the Sydney New Year's Eve event;

- (f) the organisation is able to provide and manage employees or volunteers to support fundraising in the lead up to the event at two locations in the city centre and on the event day at up to six locations in the city centre with a minimum of two employees per location.
 - (g) the organisation is able to provide working with children checks for employees;
 - (h) the organisation has a Covid-safety plan for fundraising; and
 - (i) the organisation has a cash handling policy.
16. The recommended charity partner for Sydney New Year's Eve 2021 (with the option to extend one year) is The Smith Family. With this partnership, The Smith Family aims to leverage the use of both organisations to raise awareness on education and supporting children living in poverty to create better futures, allowing them to unlock their potential. Their Learning for Life program as well as education around school numeracy, literacy and careers reaches over 91 communities across the country. The financial support they provide for students' educational needs, the provision of support coordinators to work with families and their ability to provide extra education support programs have an enormous impact for those involved in their programs. The partnership would boost the charity's work around their Centenary Year, transform their ability to meet their goals and continue their work, while celebrating one hundred years of commitment.
17. The Smith Family was formed almost 100 years ago in 1922. They have a national reach of 57,847 students being sponsored on their Learning for Life program, with a further 170,901 children and young people participating in their supporting programs. The charity works with 91 communities across Australia and is a well respected and highly trusted charity brand. The Smith Family values of respect, integrity, collaboration, excellence and innovation are strongly aligned to the City's values. They have played an important role in Australian society, supporting those in our community in greatest need, the vulnerable – children and their families.
18. The Smith Family have the ability to draw on their significant experience in event and campaign management to provide a successful charity partnership, building a positive experience for our audiences and the community. Their application demonstrates a successful volunteer base working on fundraising programs as well as a solid understanding of logistic, and operational management.

Sydney Lunar Festival

19. The Sydney Lunar Festival is attended by more than 1.4 million people who enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of Asia. The City's Sydney Lunar Festival is the biggest Lunar New Year celebration outside Asia and will include the Lunar Lanes Haymarket street party, decorative installations, community performances and associated event programs.
20. Previous charity partners include: OzHarvest (2021), The Fred Hollows Foundation (2020), Surf Lifesaving NSW (2019), Guide Dogs NSW / ACT (2018), Cure Brain Cancer Foundation (2016 – 2017), Barnardos Australia (2015), Chinese Parents Association – Children with Disabilities (2014) and Taronga Foundation (2012 – 2013).

21. In the selection criteria for the Sydney Lunar Festival charity partner, the following criteria are considered:
 - (a) the organisation is an official registered charity or public benevolent institution;
 - (b) the organisation is reputable;
 - (c) the organisation has no religious affiliation;
 - (d) the organisation undertakes work which produces significant benefit to our communities;
 - (e) the organisation has an operational and organisational focus that is compatible with our values and the Sydney Lunar Festival event;
 - (f) the organisation is able to provide and manage a minimum of two employees or volunteers to operate an on-site activation;
 - (g) the organisation is able to provide working with children checks for employees;
 - (h) the organisation has a Covid-safety plan for fundraising; and
 - (i) the organisation has a cash handling policy.
22. The recommended charity partner for the 2022 Sydney Lunar Festival is The Benevolent Society. This charity has presented a submission which highlights the significant benefit they provide to communities through the provision of high-quality services, advocacy and campaigning for social change, quality research, collaboration and investment in innovative programs and community development to grow knowledge, capacity and leadership in communities for lasting impact.
23. The charity works with children, young people, families, people with disability, older people, carers, people experiencing domestic violence and around mental health and wellbeing to help community development and connectivity.
24. The Benevolent Society demonstrated their ability to effectively manage an activation project with well-established systems in place to assist with fundraising and operational aspects. The charity partnership would raise awareness across the areas of support they provide for including children, young people, families, people with disability, older people, carers, people experience domestic violence, mental health and wellbeing and community development. Over 2019/20 year they supported over 30,900 vulnerable Australian's through their services.

25. The Benevolent Society operates across 57 locations in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Their values have a strong alignment with the City's vision for "a socially just and resilient city where people from all walks of life can live, work, learn, play and grow". Their application has a strong focus towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and demonstrates their commitment to reconciliation.

Key Implications

Social / Cultural / Community

26. The appointment of charity partners each year is intended to engender a favourable community sentiment for the selected charity, the City and the event.
27. As noted in the City's Cultural Policy, not only do festivals and events add to a city's cultural layer, but they also bring economic benefits to businesses in the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors. A charity partnership allows not-for-profit organisations to leverage community awareness from the cross-promotional possibilities associated with the City's major events and festivals.
28. 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 clients ability to participate in events, and a forum to conduct community awareness programs.

Financial Implications

29. Any activity or program for the charity partner will be undertaken by the City and is provided for within the 2021/22 draft operating budget of the Major Events and Festivals Unit.

Risks

30. Given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there is a risk events may not proceed or will proceed in a modified form. Any agreements with charity partners will ensure there are adequate termination and public health clauses to protect the City.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

31. Signed Letters of Agreement with the appointed charity partners are required by mid-July 2021, to enable:
 - (a) public announcement of the appointment as part of the first release of the event information;
 - (b) sufficient time 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 2021/22 event season.

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