

Grants and Sponsorship - Ad Hoc Grant (Value-In-Kind Support) - Sydney WorldPride 2023

File No: X082566

Summary

WorldPride is a biennial international festival that promotes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) issues on an international level through parades, festivals and other cultural activities.

Sydney WorldPride 2023 will celebrate the diversity and unique culture of Sydney, whilst raising awareness of LGBTQIA+ human rights issues across the Asia Pacific region. The event will take place over 2.5 weeks from 17 February to 5 March 2023 and is expected to have a lasting social and economic impact on Sydney. It will be one of the largest events hosted in Sydney since the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. It will offer an immersive opportunity to bring LGBTQIA+ communities and allies to Sydney to generate belonging, pride and connection to our city and its unique culture.

Sydney WorldPride 2023 will provide multiple opportunities for artistic and creative expression through a combined Mardi Gras and WorldPride Arts and Cultural Festival, incorporating stand out events from the Mardi Gras Festival season with new programming specially curated for WorldPride. It will also include a Human Rights conference and several large-scale associated events and activations.

The event is expected to have significant economic benefits with up to 1.2 million people attending and \$845 million contributed to Sydney's economy. The City's hospitality, tourism and retail businesses will be major beneficiaries of the event's economic footprint, as will creatives and artists, with almost all the proposed Sydney WorldPride events to take place within the Local Government Area. Sydney WorldPride will deliver a lasting legacy in furthering LGBTQIA+ human rights in Sydney and across Australia.

While there may be some impact to the number of visitors and spending due to Covid-19, the overall trends and estimations on economic and social impact, and benefits remain relevant, however, the financial risks associated with the uncertainty of visitor numbers and participation due to the Covid-19 pandemic will need to be well managed. The City will work with Sydney WorldPride to manage these risks.

Council approved a cash sponsorship of \$500,000 (plus GST) split equally across the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. The City has entered into a Grant Agreement with Sydney WorldPride Limited with respect to the grant on 11 March 2022. The Grant Agreement anticipates that the City may elect to provide some Value-in-Kind benefits to be notified at a later date by the City in writing (subject to Council approval).

This report recommends up to a further \$650,000 Value in Kind sponsorship to Sydney WorldPride Limited is approved to support pre-event planning and production of WorldPride 2023, with support split across 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years.

The request for Value in Kind sponsorship has been evaluated by City staff and is recommended to Council for approval.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note that on 9 September 2019, Council approved a \$50,000 (excluding GST) cash sponsorship to support the successful bid by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd (SGLMG) to host WorldPride in 2023 as well as a further \$250,000 cash sponsorship on 9 December 2019 to establish Sydney WorldPride Limited as the delivery organisation;
- (B) Council note that on 28 June 2021, Council approved a cash sponsorship of \$500,000 (plus GST) to Sydney WorldPride Limited split equally over two years in 2021/22 and 2022/23 for planning and delivery of Sydney WorldPride 2023;
- (C) Council approve up to \$650,000 Value in Kind sponsorship to Sydney WorldPride Limited over two years in 2021/22 (\$38,000) and 2022/23 (\$612,000);
- (D) Council note that the Value in Kind will be governed under the existing Grant Agreement for the Sydney WorldPride event between the City and Sydney WorldPride Limited; and
- (E) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to notify Sydney WorldPride Limited of the approved amount of value in kind for the Sydney WorldPride event in accordance with the Grant Agreement between the City and Sydney WorldPride Limited.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. The City of Sydney area is home to the largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) population in Australia. The City has a long and proud history of providing support to this community including the employment of a dedicated LGBTQIA+ program officer working for over 15 years to increase wellbeing and support for the community and sector.
2. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) is one of the oldest continuously operating LGBTQIA+ organisations in Australia. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was built on the foundations laid by early community activists who fought for LGBTQIA+ rights in a time of wide-spread, institutionalised oppression and discrimination. From these origins, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has evolved to include a strong focus on celebration while maintaining a commitment to social justice for LGBTQIA+ communities.
3. Over the past several years, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has worked to develop and strengthen relationships with the '78ers, trans and gender diverse people, rainbow families, women over 55, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people under 30 from South Asian and South Pacific communities who identify as LGBTQIA+.
4. WorldPride is a biennial event that promotes LGBTQIA+ issues on an international level through a human rights convention, parades, festivals and other cultural activities.
5. On 9 September 2019, Council approved \$50,000 (excluding GST) cash sponsorship to support the successful bid by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd (SGLMG) to host WorldPride in 2023.
6. On 20 October 2019, at the InterPride (licensee of WorldPride) Annual General Meeting in Athens, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras won the right for Sydney to host WorldPride 2023. Sydney will be the first city in the southern hemisphere to host WorldPride, attracting a wide and diverse new global audience to the event.
7. On 9 December 2019, Council approved a further \$250,000 (excluding GST) cash sponsorship to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras for the pre-event planning for Sydney WorldPride 2023 (Sydney WorldPride) and to establish Sydney WorldPride Limited as the delivery organisation. Destination NSW and Tourism Australia are confirmed funding partners and negotiations are underway with commercial partners to support the festival.
8. Sydney WorldPride Limited was established as a not-for-profit incorporated organisation. The Board has been appointed and executive team and numerous staff recruited, including the appointment of Chief Executive Officer Kate Wickett, Festival Creative Director, Daniel Clarke; and Festival Creative Director – First Peoples, Ben Graetz.
9. On 28 June 2021, Council approved \$500,000 (excluding GST) cash sponsorship to Sydney WorldPride Limited split equally over two years in 2021/22 and 2022/23 for planning and delivery of the festival in 2023. The City has entered into a Grant Agreement with Sydney WorldPride Limited with respect to this sponsorship.

10. WorldPride is the flagship global event for the LGBTQIA+ community and will contribute positively to Sydney's reputation as an inclusive and diverse city and increase our global competitiveness in attracting visitors. Sydney WorldPride will provide opportunities to celebrate, strengthen and empower our diverse LGBTQIA+ communities through participation in a global celebration of pride.
11. Sydney WorldPride Limited will work collaboratively with Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras to produce a comprehensive event program comprising new Pride Events, combined with existing signature Mardi Gras events.
12. WorldPride 2023 will also include a Human Rights and Health Conference focussing on LGBTQIA+ rights and issues. The Human Rights Conference will take place over three days and will feature a diverse range of speakers with interactive sessions and workshops. The Conference and other signature events are expected to reach a global audience of up to 100 million people through live streaming and broadcast.
13. The event aligns with outcomes of the City's Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan: A City for All, including harmony and social cohesion; diverse thriving communities; vibrant creative life; collaboration and partnerships; sense of belonging and connection to place.
14. Sydney WorldPride Limited will work with Just Gold Digital Agency, an accredited LGBTQIA+ social enterprise, to develop the first ever WorldPride Social Impact Strategy and measurement system to monitor the social benefits of the event.
15. Major events make an important contribution to the City's economy and cultural life. Sydney WorldPride will be a strong driver of visitation during 2023 and a significant contributor to the economic prosperity of Sydney's hospitality, tourism and retail businesses over this period.
16. Sydney WorldPride aligns with the action plans under the Economic Development Strategy, including creating great experiences for city workers, residents and visitors to Sydney to motivate them to shop in central Sydney and the villages.
17. A 2019 study by Deloitte indicated that Sydney WorldPride would result in an uplift above expected Mardi Gras numbers estimated at up to an additional 570,000 visitors to the local government area, or a total estimated 1.2 million people. The uplift in economic benefit to Sydney's economy was estimated to be up to \$815 million more than Mardi Gras, or a total of \$845 million. While there may be some change to the number of visitors and spending due to Covid-19, the overall trends and estimations on economic and social impact, and benefits remain relevant.
18. The positive economic forecasting from Deloitte is supported by the experiences of previous host cities, which have all seen a considerable increase in visitation compared to previous years: 67 per cent for Toronto, 100 per cent for Madrid, 50 per cent for New York. Moreover, a study of the economic impact of WorldPride Toronto 2014 found a multiplier indirect benefit of 3.5, that is, for every \$100 million in direct economic impact there was an indirect economic impact of \$350 million. Sydney WorldPride Limited is committed to creating and running sustainable events and will work with suppliers to achieve carbon neutral events wherever possible including ensuring, at the least, one carbon neutral event and that all events are single-use plastic free.

19. Sydney WorldPride will take place in Sydney commencing on Friday 17 February 2023, with the Mardi Gras Flag Raising Ceremony and conclude on Sunday 5 March with the Pride March from North Sydney, across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to The Domain, where the Closing Ceremony will take place. There are a range of events coproduced by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride, and others produced by each individual organisation in a cohesive festival calendar.
20. Almost all Sydney WorldPride events will take place within the City of Sydney. Other key events include the Opening Ceremony on Friday 24 February 2023 to take place in the Domain; the InterPride Reception proposed for Sydney Town Hall; the Human Rights Conference at the International Convention Centre, Darling Harbour; a First Nations Hub and Gala Concert in Prince Alfred Park dedicated to showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture; Oxford Street Mardi Gras Parade; and a party on Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach.
21. There remains some ongoing uncertainty on the status of the Covid-19 pandemic and what public health measures may be imposed in 2022 and 2023. In particular, it is unknown if international borders will remain open and what impact uncertainty may have on advance bookings for travel by international visitors. Attraction of WorldPride participants to Sydney in person is contingent upon borders remaining open and Sydney remaining free from restrictive public health orders that stifle mass gatherings.
22. The Board and Executive of Sydney WorldPride Limited will monitor these risks closely in planning, and incorporate contingency planning for Covid-19 and other risks. The City will continue to work with Sydney WorldPride Limited in the lead up to the event to ensure that appropriate risk assessment and contingency planning is in place.
23. City staff have worked with Sydney WorldPride to assist in quantifying the Value in Kind support required. Value in Kind support will be contingent upon satisfactory progress reporting and subject to availability, as outlined in the attached Grant Agreement.
24. The City is recommending Value in Kind up to \$650,000 (excluding GST) split across the 2021/22 (\$38,000) and 2022/23 (\$612,000) financial year as required to support the delivery of Sydney WorldPride 2023. The sponsorship package offered is designed to provide access to City assets and services and includes:
 - (a) outdoor venue hire for key public domain locations including, but not limited to, Prince Alfred Park (inclusive of turfing costs of up to \$200,000), Taylor Square North, Customs House Forecourt and street banner poles (subject to availability and conditions of use);
 - (b) street closure fees including, but not limited to, Oxford Street, Pelican Street, Riley Street, Crown Street, Liverpool Street, Alfred Street, Macquarie Street, Prince Albert Road, Hospital Road and College Street;
 - (c) indoor venue hire fee waiver for use of, but not limited to, Sydney Town Hall for marquee WorldPride events, Barnett Long Room, and other community venues. Applicable for venue hire only (subject to availability);
 - (d) adjustment of the 2023 Living Colour Display to incorporate the Sydney WorldPride theme and inclusion of displays within the Oxford Street Pride Village;

- (e) provision of cleansing and waste services across the event footprint including Pride March, but excluding event sites;
 - (f) marketing support in channels such as social, digital and print assets; and
 - (g) support through provision of services at relevant visitor information kiosks, including staffing of a kiosk provided by Sydney WorldPride.
25. The City's sponsorship of Sydney WorldPride (including the previously approved cash sponsorship and the Value in Kind for approval under this report) is subject to a range of performance indicators as outlined in the Grants Agreement between the City and Sydney WorldPride Limited. These indicators include outcomes related to sustainability, media and marketing, community safety and participation, social impact, business impact, economic impact, and access and inclusion.
26. The City will receive recognition as a sponsor of this event including logo acknowledgment across all media platforms and other promotional materials.
27. Requests for value-in-kind from third party events associated with Sydney WorldPride but not included as part of this value-in-kind proposal will be directed to apply to other relevant City grants programs, where appropriate. Noting that the City cannot guarantee third party events will be awarded value-in-kind through other grants programs as the City needs to consider the broad community usage of its venues, impacts on revenue forgone and that Sydney WorldPride Limited have already received substantial cash and value-in-kind support (subject to the recommendations in this report).

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

28. 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 - World Pride is the flagship global event for LGBTQIA+ pride and for the past 20 years has promoted and advocated for LGBTQIA+ issues on an international level. This event offers a unique opportunity to showcase Sydney and our region more broadly as this will be the first time WorldPride has ever been hosted in the Southern Hemisphere.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre - Sydney WorldPride is expected to attract over 1 million visitors to Sydney over a 17-day period. The event footprint extends across multiple locations across the city.

- (c) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - Parade audience data indicates that of those surveyed over 60 per cent were from Inner, South or Eastern Sydney, supporting Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras as an active local LGBTQIA+ community. Of the 19 Australian Members of InterPride, nine are in the Sydney Local Government Area, including Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.
- (d) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City - Currently Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Festival employs over 1700 people, over 450 artists, over 1600 volunteers, 12,500 parade participants and over 300 000 people viewing the parade. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has diversified their program over the past two years and is offering events and activities to diverse groups such as women over 55, rainbow families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, people with a disability, people under 30 from South Pacific or South Asian backgrounds and trans and gender diverse people. The diversity of offerings throughout the festival is indicative of the support that Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras provides to community and gives a platform to those individual communities for self-expression.

Organisational Impact

- 29. An internal project team has been established to ensure appropriate planning and coordination of the City's support to the event.

Risks

- 30. There is a risk that international travel and visitation will be impaired as a result of Covid-19.
- 31. Given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there is a risk events may not proceed or will proceed in a modified form in response to the public health situation at the relevant time.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 32. Sponsorship of Sydney WorldPride 2023 will promote the City of Sydney as an inclusive global and welcoming city for all.
- 33. WorldPride will showcase the City of Sydney to the world and is a demonstration of the support that the LGBTQIA+ community has from the City of Sydney.
- 34. With an emphasis both on celebratory activities and a conference stream, Sydney WorldPride will bring together thought leaders, creatives, cultural icons and activists to debate current social and cultural issues that cross borders and are relatable to LGBTQIA+ people globally.
- 35. Communities will feel a sense of belonging and connection to place as Sydney celebrates Sydney WorldPride as a part of the 2023 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival. This sense of belonging comes from feeling safe and supported, having access to events and activities across the local government area and having representatives from LGBTQIA+ communities around the world visit Sydney to celebrate.
- 36. Sydney WorldPride will be working collaboratively with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to develop the artistic and cultural program to ensure visitors to the City will be a part of the vibrant creative life of the City. Currently, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras employ over 450 artists, and this will be a significantly higher figure by 2023.

Environmental

37. Sydney WorldPride have engaging a qualified sustainability professional to provide advice and build upon the work of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to minimise the environmental impact of the event. Sydney WorldPride will work with suppliers to achieve carbon neutral events wherever possible and ensure at least one carbon neutral event and that all events are single use plastic free.

Economic

38. The combined Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride 2023 festival has the potential to deliver strong economic benefits to the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors with a potential combined economic benefit to Sydney of up to \$845 million.

Financial Implications

39. The value-in-kind of up to \$38,000 has been forecast in the 2021/22 financial year and is offset by \$38,000 in value-in-kind expenditure largely representing fees and charges foregone.
40. In addition, this report includes forward income and commitments of up to \$612,000 in value-in-kind for 2022/23.
41. The additional direct operating costs associated with the delivery of these events have been included in individual Divisional budgets within the City's draft 2022/23 Operating Budget. This budget, which in turn forms part of the City's next iteration of the Long Term Financial plan, will be presented to Council in May 2022 prior to going on public exhibition in May with final approval anticipated in late June 2022.

Relevant Legislation

42. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that a council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
43. Public exhibition of this sponsorship is not required because the funds are being paid to a not-for-profit organisation that is not operating for private gain.
44. Not-for-profit organisations have been approved by Council for the waiving, discounting or reduction of fees under s610E of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), provided that:
 - (a) it holds Not For Profit status;
 - (b) the fee is for a service that will enable the achievement of the applicant's objectives and betterment for the City of Sydney community; and
 - (c) the payment of standard fees or charges would cause financial hardship for the applicant.
45. Sydney WorldPride Limited is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

46. Sydney WorldPride 2023 will take place over 2.5 weeks from 17 February to 5 March 2023.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Libby Harris, Night Time City Manager