

Grants and Sponsorship - Ad Hoc Festivals and Events Sponsorship - Rabbitohs Grand Final Live Site and Fan Days

File No: X084995

Summary

Souths Cares PBI Ltd ("Souths Cares") is an independent not-for-profit public benevolent institution affiliated with the South Sydney District Rugby League Football Club - The Rabbitohs. It was established to support the local community and address social needs across the South Sydney region. Its charter is to support disadvantaged, marginalised and Indigenous youth and their families with a specific focus on education, training, health and employment.

The local community support and popularity of the Rabbitohs is strong, and the club has a long-standing relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Redfern. The Rabbitohs' emblem and the red and green colours on the club's jersey are symbolic to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and widely recognised throughout Australia. In 2008, the club was given recognition as a National Trust Community Icon for their historical, sporting, social and cultural significance.

Since 2012, the Rabbitohs have made it as far as the NRL preliminary finals seven times, won the premiership in 2014 and were runners-up in 2021. They remain a strong and competitive club with good prospects for future seasons.

In 2019, with the potential for the Rabbitohs to make the finals, Souths Cares recognised the importance of providing fans an opportunity to be involved in the NRL Grand Final, and requested support from the City for a series of activities to showcase the Grand Final itself if the Rabbitohs were successful in qualifying and to celebrate their success with the local community if they were crowned champions. This included a Grand Final Day Live Site, and Trophy Presentation at Redfern Oval, and Champions Parade through Redfern.

In response to the Souths Cares request, Council approved a cash sponsorship and venue hire fee waiver for three years (2019, 2020, and 2021) subject to the Rabbitohs qualifying for the Grand Final in the relevant year.

This report seeks Council's approval to extend support to the Rabbitohs for a further three year period on the same terms, with the addition of waiving of fees for banner pole hire, banner manufacture, installation/dismantlement and associated banner fees.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve cash sponsorship of \$60,000 (excluding GST) per year for three years and community venue hire value in kind of \$1,000 per year for three years to Souths Cares PBI Ltd for Grand Final qualification and celebratory activities in 2022, 2023 and 2024, subject to the Rabbitohs qualifying for the Grand Final in the relevant year;
- (B) in line with the City's adopted Revenue Policy, allowing for the waiving of fees in accordance with a decision by Council to grant financial assistance, that Council approve the design and manufacture of 60 Rabbitohs themed banners to the value of \$6,000, and waive street banner hire fee to the value of \$8,000 per annum to Souths Cares PBI Ltd, for the installation and dismantling of street banners subject to the Rabbitohs qualifying for the Grand Final in the relevant year;
- (C) Council note that the 2022/23 funds, if required, will be drawn from the General Contingency Fund, and should funds be required for future financial years, they will be drawn from the General Contingency Fund in the relevant year; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, enter into and administer a grant agreement with Souths Cares PBI Ltd to give effect to this resolution.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. The South Sydney District Rugby League Football Club (the Club) was formed at a meeting on 17 January 1908 at Redfern Town Hall.
2. The local community support and popularity of the Rabbitohs is strong, and the Club has a long-standing relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Redfern. The Rabbitohs' emblem and the red and green colours on the club's jersey are symbolic to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and widely recognised throughout Australia.
3. Souths Cares PBI Limited (Souths Cares) continues to support the local community with programs such as a Deadly Youth Mentoring Program, Indigenous oral health program, and other projects supporting local students and young people in health, wellbeing, and employment skills training. The Club also provides important sports opportunities for young people from the local area and surrounds, with the Pathways team and Women's team developing junior and women players to compete in rugby league across Sydney.
4. On 12 November 2000, an estimated 80,000 people marched from Redfern to Sydney Town Hall to protest against the Club's expulsion from the NRL. Re-admission to the NRL was granted in 2002, and in 2008, the Club was given recognition as a National Trust Community Icon for their historical, sporting, social and cultural significance.
5. In 2014, South Sydney Football Club organised a Grand Final live site at Redfern Oval, however, the live site was for Rabbitohs Members only and cost \$10 to enter. This meant that members of the public who supported the Rabbitohs but who were not club members could not enter, and as such, members of the community went to surrounding pubs to watch the match.
6. In 2019, Souths Cares recognised the importance of providing fans an opportunity to be involved in the NRL Grand Final, and requested support from the City for a series of activities to showcase the Grand Final if the Rabbitohs were successful in qualifying and to celebrate their success with the local community if they were crowned champions.
7. Since the City agreed to provide Souths Cares support in 2019, the Rabbitohs have reached the NRL Grand Final once in 2021. Due to Covid restrictions, a live site was not able to proceed and the Rabbitohs were unsuccessful in winning the grand final. Therefore no funds were expended under the previous grant..

8. The following three events have been proposed in the event that the Rabbitohs are successful in making the NRL Grand Final in 2022, 2023 and 2024:

Live site (pending qualification for the Grand Final)	Redfern Oval	Day of the Grant Final (Sunday) 1:15pm to 10:00pm
Trophy presentation day (pending winning the Grand Final)	Redfern Oval	Day after the Grand Final (Monday) 11:30am to 2:20pm
Parade (pending winning the Grand Final)	Redfern local area	Tuesday or Wednesday in the week immediately proceeding the Grand Final Time to be advised

9. Souths Cares previously estimated the cost for all activities at \$97,925. A high proportion of these costs are associated with the Live Site activities on Grand Final Day and the infrastructure provided for this would then also be used in situ for the Trophy Presentation pending the outcome of the Final. In the event that the Rabbitohs do make the grand final, Souths Cares would work closely with an event management company to organise and conduct the proposed activities.
10. Souths Cares plan to provide free entry to the live site and other events, giving fans and the local community an accessible opportunity to enjoy the game in the local area. The live site will include a large screen for viewing the game, on site food and beverage offerings including a licensed area and activities such as a drill and skill clinic. Live site attendance is expected to be 4,000 people, with half estimated to come from outside the local area. As the grand final is usually played on the October Long Weekend with the Monday being a public holiday and the following days when the parade is planned being school holidays, young people from the community will have the opportunity to attend.
11. In the event that the Rabbitohs reach the preliminary finals (usually a week before the grand final) and are successful therefore securing a place in the grand final, the City will install 60 Rabbitohs-themed banners in Redfern Street and South Dowling Street. These will be installed the first available working day after the preliminary final and will stay up for the duration of the week leading up to the grand final. In the event that the Rabbitohs win the grand final the banners will remain in-situ for an additional week. If they are unsuccessful, the banners will be removed the first available working day after the grand final.
12. A further three-year in principle sponsorship, contingent each year on the Rabbitohs making the Grand Final in any specific year, would allow the City and Souths Cares to better plan and budget for potential Grand Final events in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

13. The Festivals and Events Sponsorship Program aims to support festivals and events that celebrate, develop and engage the City's communities. The City provides support for festivals and events under two categories: Artform or Village and Community.
14. Village and Community festivals and events celebrate the spirit of a community and build opportunities to share its cultural characteristics with a wider public. Events may nurture and amplify the unique characteristics of the city and village precincts, meet the City's broader place-making objectives and/or showcase a local community, including local business.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

15. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - Supporting the Rabbitohs reflects the deep-held passions of large portions of the local community and will attract not only locals, but also persons from outside who are drawn to the atmosphere of the events.
 - (b) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City - Supporting the Rabbitohs reflects the cultural significance that Rugby League and sport in general plays in our community.

Organisational Impact

16. Coordination of the events will involve key staff across the City of Sydney including the Outdoor Events Team, Traffic Management Team, Cleansing & Waste, City Greening & Leisure, as well as the Grants Team who will be required to provide assessment and oversight of the program.

Risks

17. Not supporting the event financially would mean that Souths Cares would be unlikely to be able to deliver the event, or would have to outlay significant costs which would likely result in financial hardship. If the City did not support the event, or chose not to install banners, there is likely to be significant negative community feedback as was the case in 2021 in response to what the community felt was a lack of an appropriate level of banner theming and decoration.

Social / Cultural / Community

18. The benefits to the community are the opportunity to participate in the atmosphere of the grant final amongst the community and without financial constraints, and in the event that the Rabbitohs win, it also provides the community opportunity to celebrate the victory. There is a social and cultural benefit to the community, bringing all demographics together under the banner of sport, reflecting the deep social and cultural connection that the community, especially to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, has with the club.

19. Other community benefits are that the event would receive significant publicity, showcasing the Redfern area and community and positively contributing further to its reputation and village attractiveness.

Environmental

20. There are no significant environmental impacts. The events would be required to comply with the City's Event Guidelines which includes that the organiser comply with sustainable event practices and address issues of waste management produced by their event through a detailed waste management plan.

Economic

21. Businesses engaged by Souths Cares to facilitate the three events would likely include an event management company, audio-visual providers, event infrastructure providers, food vendors and food and beverage suppliers, security and traffic management services, marketing and promotional services, and temporary event staff. Given Souths Cares existing community relationships and sponsors, many of these businesses would likely come from the local area.
22. Additionally, due to the influx of people on event days, local businesses are likely to benefit from incremental patronage both before / after the events.

Financial Implications

23. A total of \$60,000 in cash, \$1,000 in community venue hire value-in-kind and \$8,000 banner pole hire value-in-kind, and \$6,000 banner manufacture costs is recommended for allocation from the 2022/23 General Contingency Budget.
24. Commitments of \$60,000 cash and \$9,000 value-in-kind will, if required, be drawn from the General Contingency for the 2023/24, and 2024/25 financial years.
25. Elaborating on the costs for banners, the \$8,000 annual cost covers two week pole hire for up to 60 banners (value of \$2,880 which is revenue foregone and no hard cost to the City). The remaining \$7,120 are hard costs for installation / dismantlement, washing and storage and only be incurred in the event that the Rabbitohs make the grand final and the banners are installed. The \$6,000 cost for banner manufacturing would be incurred once every three years to replace the banners (or on an as-needs basis).

Relevant Legislation

26. 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.
27. As Souths Cares PBI Ltd is a not-for-profit, public notification prior to making this grant is not required.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

28. The 2022 NRL Grand Final is currently scheduled to be held on the evening of Sunday 2 October 2022. If successful in qualifying the proposed Rabbitohs Grand Final event dates are:

- Banner installation - Monday 26 September 2022;
- Live site - Sunday 2 October 2022;
- Trophy presentation day - Monday 3 October 2022;
- Parade in Redfern - Tuesday 4 or Wednesday 5 October 2022; and
- Banner dismantlement - Monday 10 October 2022.

The above dates may be subject to change.

29. Dates for future years of the grant will be established based on the dates of competition as determined by the NRL.

Public Consultation

30. Consultation has been undertaken with Souths Cares.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

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