

Item 3.

Grants and Sponsorship - Ad Hoc Grant - NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series - ACON Health Limited

File No: S117676

Summary

This report proposes that an ad hoc grant to ACON Health Limited for the NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series be approved by Council.

On 26 June 2023, a Lord Mayoral Minute was put to Council which resolved that Council agree in principle to support an LGBTIQ+ Local Government Summit which would be attended by community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies. Council also resolved to endorse ACON's proposal for a NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series and requested the Chief Executive Officer consider what support the City can provide.

Over recent years there has been an increase in hate crimes targeting LGBTIQ+ festivals and events held at local government venues across Australia. Extremists and fringe groups have started to target Drag Story Time events at council libraries in Sydney, Newcastle, Goulburn and in other regional centres across NSW. Performers and council workers have experienced harassment, intimidation, and hate speech, with many performances needing to be cancelled.

In response to these incidents, the Lord Mayor will host an LGBTIQ+ Summit for community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies. The summit will be held in late 2023 or early 2024 and will provide an opportunity to identify LGBTIQ+ community issues and concerns.

ACON has also proposed to host an online seminar series in early 2024, that will bring together representatives from NSW local government and LGBTIQ+ community organisations. The seminar series will be informed by consultation with key stakeholders in attendance at the Summit. The seminar series will provide practical assistance in delivering a coordinated response to address instances of LGBTIQ+ hatred, violence, and threats to safety. The seminar series will be designed to ensure council staff and LGBTIQ+ community organisations are equipped with the skills required to ensure ongoing safety and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ individuals, council staff, and stakeholders, when organising and participating in local community events.

This report recommends an ad-hoc grant of \$40,000 in cash funding to ACON for delivery of the NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series. The seminar series will be held online so that these issues are addressed in a timely manner and local governments and community organisations from across NSW are able to participate.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the 26 June 2023 Resolution of Council put forward via a Lord Mayor Minute, requesting the Chief Executive Officer consider what support the City can provide to ACON Health Limited for an NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Summit;
- (B) Council note that the Lord Mayor will host an LGBTIQ+ Summit for community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies. The summit will be held in late 2023 or early 2024 and will provide an opportunity to identify LGBTIQ+ community issues and concerns;
- (C) Council approve an ad-hoc grant of \$40,000 in cash funding for ACON Health Limited to deliver the NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series;
- (D) Council note that the grant amount is exclusive of GST;
- (E) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer the grant agreement with ACON Health Limited under terms consistent with this resolution and the Grants and Sponsorship Policy; and
- (F) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to correct minor errors to the matters set out in this report, noting that the identity of the recipient will not change, and a CEO Update will be provided to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Lord Mayoral Minute - Proposal for a Statewide LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Summit

Background

1. Over recent years, LGBTIQ+ festivals and events have experienced significant growth and visibility across NSW. These festivals and events play an important role in fostering a sense of place and connection for LGBTIQ+ communities and people. Smaller local events, often run by councils, such as Drag Story Time, Trans Day of Visibility, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and Wear it Purple Day, are becoming increasingly important to support and raise awareness of the diversity in our communities.
2. There has been an increase in hate group attacks targeting LGBTIQ+ festivals and events held at local government venues across Australia. Extremists and fringe groups have started to target Drag Story Time events at council libraries in Sydney, Newcastle, Goulburn and in other regional centres across NSW. Performers and council workers have experienced harassment, intimidation, hate speech, with many performances needing to be cancelled.
3. On 26 June 2023, a Lord Mayoral Minute was put to Council which resolved that Council agree in principle to support an LGBTIQ+ Local Government Summit which would be attended by community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies. Council also resolved to endorse ACON's proposal for an NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series and requested the Chief Executive Officer consider what support the City can provide.
4. In response to these incidents, the Lord Mayor will host an LGBTIQ+ Summit for community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies. The summit will be held in late 2023 or early 2024 and will provide an opportunity to identify LGBTIQ+ community issues and concerns.
5. ACON has also provided a project proposal for a NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Safety Seminar Series which will provide practical advice to local government practitioners and community organisations to address the increasing acts of violence, disruption, and intimidation targeting LGBTIQ+ communities, individuals and events.
6. The seminar series will be informed by consultation with key stakeholders in attendance at the LGBTIQ+ Summit hosted by the Lord Mayor.
7. The seminar series will be held online so that these issues are addressed in a timely manner and local governments and community organisations from across NSW are able to participate.
8. The seminar series will be hosted online in early 2024, with three separate sessions delivered over a period of three weeks. Each session will run for 1.5 hours. Two iterations of the seminar series will be delivered - the first for local governments and the second for LGBTIQ+ community organisations.
9. It is proposed that Mayors from across NSW will be asked to participate, with an introduction from the Lord Mayor. The seminar series will include video presentations and discussions in a workshop format.

10. The seminar series will focus on practical strategies for hosting community festivals and events with LGBTIQ+ communities, including an overview of current threats and challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people; sharing voices and stories from LGBTIQ+ community members and local government staff affected by harassment, intimidation, and hate speech; public safety and security measures for community events; creating safe and inclusive spaces; and the importance of collaborative approaches and partnerships.
11. The seminar series aims to achieve a joint statement from participating councils and community organisations condemning the violence that has occurred and a coordinated plan to respond and combat future instances of violence at local festivals and events.
12. ACON will conduct a post-event evaluation to collect feedback from participants and assess the effectiveness of the seminar series.
13. The proposal has been reviewed by City staff and considered an appropriate strategy for providing timely and practical advice to local government practitioners and community organisations to address the increasing acts of violence, disruption, and intimidation targeting LGBTIQ+ communities, individuals and events.

Grants assessment process

14. The assessment process for this ad hoc grant included advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The application was scored against defined assessment criteria as well as the integrity of the proposed budget, project plan, partnerships, contributions and connection to the local community and industry sectors.
15. The assessment criteria used for this ad hoc grant were:
 - evidence of the need for the project and proposed outcomes;
 - capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the project;
 - demonstrated connection and benefit to the local area and community;
 - evidence of diversity, inclusion and equity in the planning and delivery of the project; and
 - how the project delivers against the funding priorities.
16. The assessment meeting for the ad hoc grant was held on 31 August 2023 to ensure the grant applicant was assessed against the relevant assessment criteria. The assessment panel consisted of City staff from the City Business and Safety and Strategy and Urban Analytics Teams.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

17. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This grant is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the recommended grant in this report will support a project that contributes to community development and active participation in civic life. It will empower the community to learn about and address issues that matter to them and create a more inclusive and resilient city.
 - (b) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - the recommended grant in this report will support a project that contributes to wellbeing, inclusive and affordable programs, services and events that improve social connections and embrace a safe city.

Organisational Impact

18. The grants and sponsorships contract management process will involve key staff across the City of Sydney. Identified staff will set contract conditions, performance measures and review project acquittals.

Social / Cultural / Community

19. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program provides the City with a platform to support social and cultural initiatives for our diverse communities. The seminar series will provide an opportunity for local government workers and LGBTIQ+ community organisations to hear real life stories and gain practical advice on how to address acts of harassment, violence and intimidation at local LGBTIQ+ festivals and events.
20. A grant in support of this seminar series provides the City with an opportunity to demonstrate leadership amongst local government in NSW and the City's commitment to safety and equality for LGBTIQ+ communities.

Financial Implications

21. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2023/24 grants and sponsorship budget, included in the City's operational plan for 2023/24 to support the recommended grant.

Relevant Legislation

22. 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.
23. Public exhibition of this grant is not required because the funds are being paid to a not-for-profit organisation.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

24. The Lord Mayor will host an LGBTIQ+ Summit for community organisations, including ACON and other government agencies in late 2023 or early 2024.
25. It is proposed that the NSW LGBTIQ+ Local Government Seminar Series will be hosted online in early 2024.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

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