

ITEM NO: 9**SUBJECT: CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM 2008****FILE NO: FOO613**

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council endorses the funding option to realign the Cultural Partnerships Program funding round with the new timetable of Arts NSW, as detailed in Option 1 in this report, and as recommended by the Council's Cultural Partnerships Program Advisory Committee.*
 2. *That the Council's funding allocation for the Cultural Partnerships Program of \$50,000 for 2007/2008 be rolled over to the Financial Year 2008/2009.*
 3. *That conditional on the Council's approval of a further allocation of \$50,000 for the financial year 2008/2009 and dependant on receiving confirmation of a contribution of \$50,000 from Arts NSW, that a funding round with a total allocation of \$150,000 be held with the program opening January 2008 and the successful Cultural Partners delivering their projects in 2008/2009.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate:**Background**

The Cultural Partnerships Program was established under the Council's Cultural Strategy 1999-2003 with the funding support of Arts NSW. It is a strategic program seeking to develop and maintain a range of ongoing collaborative partnership activities with arts and cultural organisations in the Blue Mountains.

The program is jointly funded by the Blue Mountains City Council and Arts NSW through the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Program, subject to funding on an annual basis. Funding of \$100,000 is available for allocation under the program, comprising of a \$50,000 grant from Arts NSW and \$50,000 in Council matched funds.

The program is not intended to duplicate State and Commonwealth arts funding programs but to create and strengthen partnerships with artists, the community, the business and corporate sector and the Council. Applicants are encouraged to fully explore other grant opportunities to supplement their partnership proposal.

Funding Timeline

The Cultural Partnerships Program has previously worked on an 18 month timeline from the announcement of funds available from Arts NSW in July. The first six months are dedicated to the opening of the program, community information and assessment of the applications allowing for the partners to conduct their programs in the annual calendar year. Arts NSW have changed their announcement of funds timeframe from June to December, requiring the Council to adopt a different timeframe.

Council officers met with representatives of the Cultural Partnerships Program Advisory Committee to discuss options for the delivery of the 2008 Program on 18 October 2007, for consideration by the Council. Advisory Committee members present at the meeting were Mr Alfred Blakers, Ms Yvonne Hellmers, Ms Judy Pinn, Mr John Marsh and Ms Susie McMeekin.

Two options for the delivery of the 2008 Program were recommended, with Option 1 being the preferred option of the Advisory Committee.

2008 Program Options

Option 1: The Council has allocated \$50,000 towards the Cultural Partnerships Program in the 2007-2008 budget. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Council's 2007-2008 budget allocation be rolled over to 2008-2009, with a further Council allocation of \$50,000 for the financial year 2008-2009. Combining the Council's funding and the allocation of \$50,000 from Arts NSW, the budget for the 2008-2009 Cultural Partnerships Program would be \$150,000.

This option allows for adequate advertising, community consultation, preparation of applications, assessment of the applications and reporting to the Council. It would also ensure the quality of the Cultural Partnership projects, which add significantly to the cultural vibrancy of the City. The funding round would be open from December 2007 with projects delivered in the 2008-2009 financial year. This would realign the Cultural Partnerships Program with the Arts NSW new timetable.

The Advisory Committee recommends **Option 1 as their preferred option** to the Council, to address the special circumstances relating to the change in the Arts NSW funding timetable.

Option 2: To roll out a \$50,000 program in 2007-2008 with Council funds only. Cultural Partnership projects would be delivered from March 2008 to June 2008.

This option would cater for those programs delivered before July 2008 that would miss out on applying for funds due to the new timeframe. This option is problematic however due to the limited timeframe. Advertising the program, community consultation, preparing applications, assessing the applications and reporting to the Council would be onerous in this short timeframe. This option would not be in partnership with Arts NSW as the funds would only come from the Council.

In addition to this limited funding round in 2007-2008, a full Cultural Partnerships Program round, with Arts NSW and the Council's funding, totalling \$100,000, would be conducted with projects being delivered in the 2008-2009 financial year. This option would also realign the program with Arts NSW funding timetable.

Option 2 was the second preference of the Advisory Committee.

Sustainability Assessment: Option 1

Effects	Positive	Negative
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports community wellbeing in general by adding to the cultural vibrancy of the City. ▪ Strengthens and builds the capacity of local arts and cultural organisations. ▪ Individual programs support specific communities including artists, young people, women and the Aboriginal community. ▪ One off funding round of \$150,000, with projects rolled out in 2008/2009. The funding round would return to \$100,000 in 2009/2010, with \$50,000 from Arts NSW matched by the Council. ▪ Allows for optimal lead up time to coordinate the funding round. ▪ Avoids having two funding rounds in 2008. ▪ Partnership maintained with Arts NSW. ▪ Realigns the Cultural Partnerships Program funding round with Arts NSW new funding timetable. 	Inability to support Cultural Partnership projects March- June 2008
Economic	<p><i>The Program assists with economic sustainability by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging artists and organisations to collaborate with the opportunity to share resources, marketing, promotion and insurance. ▪ Encouraging partners to supplement their partnership proposal with other opportunities. ▪ Endorsing more established proposals for funding from other agencies. ▪ Providing opportunities for collaborations between partners and other community and cultural organizations and the business sector. Many partnerships add significantly to building the capacity of the local economy. 	No negative financial impacts
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of the Cultural Partnership projects address issues relating to environmental sustainability and environmental education. 	No negative environmental impacts

Sustainability Assessment: Option 2

Effects	Positive	Negative
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports community wellbeing in general by adding to the cultural vibrancy of the City. ▪ Strengthens and builds the capacity of local arts and cultural organisations. ▪ Individual programs support specific communities including artists, young people, women and the Aboriginal community. ▪ Enables the program to fund cultural partnership projects rolled out in March - June 2008. ▪ Realigns the Cultural Partnerships Program funding round with Arts NSW new funding timetable. 	<p>The March – June 2008 program would not be in partnership with Arts NSW.</p> <p>There is a very short timeframe to coordinate the funding round for 2007/2008. This would allow for limited lead up time and consultation and preparation for the funding round.</p> <p>Two funding rounds would be held back to back.</p>
Economic	<p><i>The Program assists with economic sustainability by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging artists and organisations to collaborate with the opportunity to share resources, marketing, promotion and insurance. ▪ Encouraging partners to supplement their partnership proposal with other opportunities. ▪ Endorsing more established proposals for funding from other agencies. ▪ Providing opportunities for collaborations between partners and other community and cultural organizations and the business sector. Many partnerships add significantly to building the capacity of the local economy. 	<p>No negative financial impacts</p>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of the Cultural Partnership projects address issues relating to environmental sustainability and environmental education. 	<p>No negative environmental impacts</p>

Financial Implications

The Council has allocated \$50,000 for the Cultural Partnerships Program in the 2007-2008 budget. It is also recommended that the Council continue to match the Arts NSW funding of \$50,000 in the financial year 2008-2009.

Legal and Risk Management Issues

There are no legal and risk management issues to note.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the Council endorse the preferred funding option of the Cultural Partnerships Program Advisory Committee as detailed in Option 1 in this report. Option 1 would provide for a funding program of \$150,000 with projects being delivered in 2008-2009.

This is due to the need to realign the Cultural Partnerships Program with the Arts NSW changed timetable of funding announcements. This is proposed due to these special circumstances and would be a one-off. The program for 2009-2010 would return to a funding round of \$100,000, with a contribution of \$50,000 from Arts NSW, matched with the Council's funding of \$50,000.

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ITEM NO: 10

SUBJECT: BLACKHEATH VACATION CARE

FILE NO: F01736

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council notes the progress report on the future management of the Blackheath Vacation Care program.*
 2. *That the Council receives a further report on the results of negotiations with the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre or any other identified sponsor on or before March 2008.*
 3. *That the Council receives a report on future options for provision of care during vacation periods for families in the Blackheath area, in the event that a re-auspice is not achieved.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community & Corporate:

Report Summary

This report provides the Council with information about progress regarding the future management of the Blackheath Vacation Care program. This report has been prepared collaboratively by Council's Corporate Planning Branch and Blue Mountains City Services Family Day Care Scheme.

At the Council meeting of 5 June 2007, the Council resolved as per Minute Number 140 regarding Blackheath Vacation Care as follows:-

"That the Council supports the identification of alternative community based agencies that might take on the auspice of the Blackheath Vacation Care program.

That the outcomes of negotiations with Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre or any alternative provider be the subject of a further report to the Council prior to the entering of any contract".

It had been expected that a firm proposal for the re-auspice of the Blackheath Vacation Care program could have been made to the Council by this time. This has not been possible and this report details the negotiations that have been undertaken to date with their results.

The report also provides the Council with information about the operation of the program so that an assessment can be made about it's future operation.

The report proposes that there be an extension to March 2008 for final reporting to the Council.

Background

As reported to the Council meeting on 5 June 2007, the Blackheath Vacation Care program is operated by the Council's Blue Mountains Family Day Care scheme. The Council only operates three direct early childhood services: Blackheath Vacation Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care, all under the management of the Blue Mountains Family Day Care scheme.

Following a review of the general operations of Blue Mountains Family Day Care as a result of nation wide reductions in Federal Government funding assistance, it was concluded by the Council that an alternative community auspice should be located for the Blackheath Vacation Care program.

The Blackheath Vacation Care program operates 10 weeks per year in school holiday periods for school aged children. The program is licensed by the Department of Community Services for 30 children though actual attendance has been lower than the licensed quota for a number of years. On average, an equivalent to 16 full time children attend the program on any one day. Income is derived from fees from parents (currently set at \$31 per day with an option to enrol children for half days), subsidies through the Federal Child Care Benefit (CCB) scheme and a minor contribution from the Department of Community Services. The Council makes a contribution through the Family Day Care Service Level Agreement (SLA).

There are a number of reasons for the Council to consider a re-auspice for the Blackheath Vacation Care program, including;

- New nationally applicable funding regimes for Family Day Care and a subsequent restructure has meant that Blue Mountains Family Day Care needs to deploy resources into service promotion and attracting new carers in order to maintain and develop its market share.
- Vacation Care programs are commonly attached to community based Out of School Hours programs. This management arrangement results in programming and resource efficiencies as well as ongoing avenues for community connections and promotion.
- The Blackheath Vacation Care program currently operates at a loss. This loss has been carried by the Council through the Family Day Care SLA contribution. It is projected that a community based provider such as an Out of School Hours Service would be able to operate the program at a lower cost.

Family Day Care continues to provide the program and initial planning has been undertaken for service delivery until the end of this financial year. At this stage, there are no plans for FDC to continue to offer the program beyond July 2008.

Progress on Negotiations with Community Based Providers

The most suitable alternative auspice for the Blackheath Vacation Care program is the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC). BANC currently manages the Blackheath Out of School Hours program which provides after school hours services during the school term.

Preliminary discussions have been held between BANC and Council Officers regarding taking on the auspice and management of Blackheath Vacation Care. Most recently, on 26

September 2007, Council Officers met with representatives from BANC staff and Management Committee. BANC requested additional information be supplied regarding financing and staffing arrangements for the program to assist them to assess the Council's proposal. BANC have since indicated their interest in considering the Council's proposal and that they would require financial assistance to take over management of the program.

Due to the extended nature of discussions with BANC, the Council has also sought expressions of interest from other potential auspice bodies. Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre was formally approached and they have declined. Further, invitations for expressions of interest have been circulated to local primary schools and early childhood services. These have not generated options for the Council to pursue to date.

The Operation of Blackheath Vacation Care within the Council

As indicated above, there are several reasons for the Blackheath Vacation Care program to be outsourced to a community based provider. Blackheath Vacation Care is one of the last stand alone vacation care services across NSW. In addition, FDC needs to focus on its core activities and the operation of Blackheath Vacation Care diverts attention from core business. In addition, The Blackheath Vacation Care has been operating at a deficit and the most sustainable long term outcome will be achieved through the transfer of the program to a community based auspice.

The Council's assessment is that the operation of the program will be less costly in a community setting due to different staffing arrangements, savings in rental of premises as well as savings in operational overheads for resources and equipment. However, based on the financial history of the program, it is forecast that the program will continue to operate at a deficit in the transition period. It is expected that, should the auspice be transferred to a community agency, the Council will assist the re-establishment of the program with transitional financial support.

Should a re-auspice not be achieved, the Council needs to consider the financial viability of running a Vacation Care program in the Blackheath area.

What is happening at other Vacation Care Programs?

All other Vacation Care programs across the Mountains are managed within Out of School Hours services (OOSH).

OOSH services face viability issues generally. Sponsor agencies can be required to cross subsidise at times of shortfall. Financial information gained from other local Vacation Care programs indicates that a community based auspice will be able to sustain the Blackheath Vacation Care program more cost effectively than has been the case for the Council.

Participation rates vary across the Mountains. As a comparison, a similarly licensed program will average daily attendances of between 18-20 children.

Do we need a Vacation Care Program in Blackheath?

While the attendance at Blackheath Vacation Care has averaged 15.5 children per day, 85 families used the service during the last 12 months. Of this number, 57 families are using care because they work and 28 families for socialisation purposes. Many children attend the program part-time. The program provides relief care for foster parents and supports grandparents in the caring role.

There are no alternative options for local families for local group based care within the Blackheath area. Other options include Family Day Care (care in private homes with small numbers of children) or otherwise families with transport could attend other programs located across the Mountains. The nearest program is at Katoomba. There is no program offered at Mt Victoria.

With a closing date of 26 October 2007, the Council undertook a survey of participating families to assess their intentions to enrol their children in 2008 and their other options for care. A reply paid envelope was enclosed to facilitate returns. The response to the survey was disappointing with only twelve responses received. Seven respondents said that they would have no alternative source of care if the Blackheath Vacation Care program was not provided. Respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program (4 indicated high satisfaction; 6 satisfaction; 1 could be improved). Asked if families were able to sustain an increase in fees, 7 respondents said “yes” and 5 indicated “no”.

Children of working parents do need access to Vacation Care programs. Many parents also use Vacation Care because of the particular needs of the children for specialised care (e.g. children with special needs) and for their children to be able to socialise with others. For many families, transporting children out of the area in which they live presents particular problems and local care is needed.

Financial implications for the Council

Council Officers are investigating alternative auspices for the Blackheath Vacation Care program. It is anticipated that this will require transitional financial support. This will be detailed in the report to the Council in March 2008.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

The Council will receive further advice if there are any legal issues involved in the potential reauspice.

External consultation

Discussions have been held with BANC as a potential auspice. In addition other organisations have been approached to see if they are interested in considering auspicing Blackheath Vacation Care.

Conclusion

A further report will be presented to the Council on the results of negotiations with the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (or any other identified sponsor if necessary) in March 2008. This report will include any financial implications for the Council of a re-auspice.

Should a re-auspice not be achieved, the report will include a recommendation regarding the future operation of the Vacation Care service in the Blackheath area. It is Council Officers' assessment that it is no longer viable for Blue Mountains Family Day Care to continue to manage the program and that their future operation of the program should be finalised by June 2008.

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ITEM NO: 11

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE / DONATIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS
BY COUNCILLORS

FILE NO: C00944

Recommendation:

1. That the Council approve the following donations from the Councillors' Minor Local Projects Vote:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<i>Warrimoo Public School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Springwood Public School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Ellison Public School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Faulconbridge Public School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Winmalee Public School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Winmalee High School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Springwood High School</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Rotary Club of Central Blue Mountains</i>	<i>\$100.00</i>
<i>Rotary Club of Central Blue Mountains</i>	<i>\$100.00</i>
<i>Hazelbrook – Lawson District Guides</i>	<i>\$100.00</i>
<i>Hazelbrook – Lawson District Guides</i>	<i>\$100.00</i>
<i>Hazelbrook – Lawson District Guides</i>	<i>\$100.00</i>
<i>Rotary Club Central Blue Mountains</i>	<i>\$ 50.00</i>
<i>Rotary Club of the Lower Mountains</i>	<i>\$200.00</i>

Report by General Manager:

On 11 July 2000 the Council adopted a revised Policy for Councillors' Minor Local Projects allocations for the provision of community assistance/donations. The following recommendations for donation, which appear to fall within the ambit of the Policy, have been received and are submitted for approval.

Minor Local Projects

<u>Recommending Councillor</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Cr McLaren	Warrimoo Public School	Presentation Night Award	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Springwood Public School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Ellison Public School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Faulconbridge Public School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Winmalee Public School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Winmalee High School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr McLaren	Springwood High School	Awards for Presentation Night	\$50.00
Cr Van der Kley	Rotary Club of Central Blue Mountains	Assist with Carol costs in the park	\$100.00
Cr Searle	Rotary Club of Central Blue Mountains	Assist with Carol costs in the park	\$100.00
Cr Van der Kley	Hazelbrook-Lawson District Guides	New hand railing at the hall	\$100.00
Cr Searle	Hazelbrook-Lawson District Guides	New hand railing at the hall	\$100.00
Cr McInnes	Hazelbrook-Lawson District Guides	New hand railing at the hall	\$100.00
Cr McInnes	Rotary Club of Central Blue Mountains	Carols in the park costs	\$50.00
Cr Angel	Rotary Club of the Lower Blue Mountains	Australia Day celebrations	\$200.00

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