

Community Services Committee Meeting - 11/01 - 11 December, 2001

***CD 49 - PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES IN ST
PETERS/SYDENHAM AND TEMPE
For Recommendation***

File Ref: 3024-05

Director, Community Services reports:

Synopsis

This report provides Council with an update on the establishment of community programs and facilities in the Sydenham/St Peters/Tempe area. It is recommended that the report be received and noted.

Background

Council was advised at its meeting held on 17 October 2000 (Item GM 91) that a review of the community programs and facilities available in the St Peters/ Sydenham/ Tempe planning area was required to effectively meet the needs of the local community.

Of the 6963 people living in the St Peters/ Tempe/ Sydenham area at the time of the Census, 12.9% were aged 0-12 years, 18.3% 13.24 years, 28.7% 25 – 39 years, 28.8% 40 – 64 years and 11.2% were aged 65 years and over. The main languages spoken at home include English, Macedonian, Greek, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Arabic.

Over the last year Council has been working with a number of other community service providers to increase the level and quality of community services and facilities in the area.

Discussion

1. Progress on the Establishment of Community Programs

A range of community programs have been established over the last 12 months for local residents in the area. These have included activities targeted towards older people, families with young children and young people. The promotion of community programs in the Sydenham, St Peters and Tempe area has been co ordinated through the Communication and Cultural Services Unit with information about activities distributed via:

- fliers;
- media releases in the local press, Marrickville Matters; and
- school newsletters.

The following provides a summary of the range of community programs directly provided or supported by Council currently available in the St Peters/ Sydenham/Tempe area.

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Activities for Children aged 0- 5 years

Story Time

St Peters Library holds story time for Preschoolers on Monday from 10 – 11 am. On average approximately 9 parents and 13 children attend this session each month.

Playgroups

There are a number of playgroups that currently operate in the St Peters/ Sydenham/ Tempe area that are organised by the local Anglican and Uniting churches. Centacare established a playgroup earlier in the year that meets on Tuesday 10 – 12 noon at Tillman Park Children's Centre. Approximately 8 parents and 10 children regularly attend this group each week.

Activities for Children aged 5 – 12 years

Art and Craft Classes

The number of participants in these classes, held on Tuesday afternoon at Tillman Park Children's Centre has remained at 15 and continues to be popular.

Sport and Recreation Activities

The Department of Sport and Recreation continue to facilitate a program at Tempe Public School on Wednesdays between 3.30 and 4.30pm with the average number of children attending remaining at 30. During the colder weather in Term 3 Indoor Tae Kwon Doe classes were organised on Thursday afternoons, these have become very popular with an average of 30 children attending. It is planned to continue with these classes in 2002.

Out of School Hours Care

There are currently 3 students utilising the bus service running from Tempe Public School to Ferncourt for After School Care each day. A review of the use of the bus for this service will be conducted early next year.

Activities for Young People

Staff from Barnardos Marrickville Streetwork Program have been making contact with 12- 18 year olds who are considered to be at risk. The main issue identified by young people to date is concern about the use and availability of drugs in the area. A number of BBQ's will continue to be organised for young people in the area in order to build on contacts made during the year. Marrickville Youth Resource Centre (MYRC) continue to make contact with young people from Tempe High Languages School through the 'Links to Learning' Program.

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Young Women's Video Project

Earlier in the year MYRC worked with some young women in Tempe on a Video project. The young women produced the video entitled 'Cleaning in Progress' which was recently screened at the Auburn International Film and Video Festival for Young Children and Adults where it received 3rd prize in the People's Choice Award. It has since been selected for screening at the 'Mar del Plata International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults' in Argentina and the 12th 'Heydayabad Golden Elephant International Children's Film Festival' in India. MYRC are currently seeking funding to develop a young women's theatre project entitled 'House of Dreams' to commence next year.

Study Assistance

This program at St Peters Library continues to be popular with around 10 children participating each week on Thursday afternoons 4-8pm.

Activities for Seniors


St Peters/ Tempe Seniors Group

The St Peters/ Tempe/Sydenham Seniors Group has four activities per month. Each month the seniors enjoy two gentle exercise Tai Chi classes, a morning tea hosted by the St Peters Sydenham Branch Library and a visit to Tom Foster. The monthly bus trip is always well attended with up to 20 seniors visiting various parts of Sydney. The program offers door to door transport and is provided at low cost. The seniors who attend are regularly consulted as to what activities they would like to have in the program.

Macedonian Men's Group

A long standing group of Macedonian men meet twice weekly for an informal time to play cards, chat. They are assisted by a worker from the St George Migrant Resource Centre and continue to enjoy the social contact of the group.

2. Community Facilities

 Council currently owns four community facilities in the St Peters/ Sydenham/ Tempe area. The St Peters Town Hall, Tillman Park Child Care Centre, 'Stone Cottage' and the Coptic Church on Railway Parade, Sydenham, which was recently transferred by the Commonwealth to Council.

A number of community groups currently use St Peters Town Hall, Tillman Park Child Care Centre and 'Stone Cottage' for activities ranging from playgroups for parents and young children, art and craft classes, Tae Kwon Do, Seniors Social Support Groups, Christian Fellowship, Folkloric Dancing, and English Classes.

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Council's recent acquisition of the Coptic Church in Sydenham has created an opportunity to increase the amount of space available for community use in the St Peters, Sydenham, Tempe area. Expressions of Interest in operating activities from this site were advertised earlier this year. Each proposal was considered in terms of its:

- viability
- ability for the proposed activities to be accessible to all members of the community
- suitability in relation to the nature of the building; and
- level of support required from Council.

A total of 4 expressions of interest were received, which included:

1. MTC Work Solutions (in partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice, Barnardos, Rosemount Youth Services, Marrickville Youth Resource Centre, Broadway Shopping Centre, and Newtown Police), to provide a range of services for young people including a Drug free recreation centre, employment training and support, mentoring and specialist counselling and support;
2. Central Christian Fellowship to use the facility as a church, youth counselling centre and soup kitchen;
3. Marrickville State Emergency Services to use the facility for a Control Room, vehicle storage, storage of disaster recovery resources, meal preparation, training rooms, office and administration; and
4. Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia, to use the facility for a Pharaonic and Coptic Cultural Museum.

A summary of the assessment of each proposal is listed at **ATTACHMENT 1**.

In order for the building to be available for community use a significant number of repairs and upgrades will need to be made. These include fire upgrades, access provisions, electrical rewiring and the installation of a security system. This work is expected to take at least 6 months to complete once a development application and budget for the works have been approved by Council.

It is proposed that the upstairs of the building be offered to the Coptic Church to establish a Pharaonic and Coptic Cultural Museum with the downstairs to be made available for use by MTC Work Solutions and the general community. This would enable Council to share the costs of maintenance and repairs of the building with the Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia.

The strength of this proposal is that it maximises the range of services available to residents in the St Peters/ Sydenham /Tempe area and recognises the cultural significance of the former Coptic Church to the local Coptic community. Young people who live in the area and are in need of social support or assistance with finding employment will be able to access services local to where they live.

A further benefit is that the proposed Centre would offer a large, accessible space on ground level. There are very few large, indoor spaces in the local government area on ground level. The only other large space in Sydenham/ Tempe/ St Peters is upstairs in the St Peters Town Hall. People with disabilities, frail seniors and parents with young children would all benefit from access to a ground

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floor meeting space. The space would suit playgroups, art and craft activities, vacation care, concerts, functions, gentle exercise classes, elderly social groups, small church groups and could be easily utilised by range of community groups.

MTC Work Solutions are strongly committed to offering programs in the St Peters/Tempe/Sydenham. While they have been unsuccessful in attracting funding under the local CDSE Scheme they have indicated that they have sufficient funds within their organisation to trial the project for 6 months starting from January 2002. In order to build on this commitment, and maximise opportunities for future ongoing funding, it is recommended that in the short term they be offered use of the vacant office space and upstairs meeting room of St Peters Town Hall while repairs of the Coptic Church are undertaken.

Conclusion

Over the last twelve months the number and range of services available to residents living in the Sydenham, St Peters, Tempe area has increased as a result of improved co ordination of existing services and additional funding. This trend is likely to continue as more community space is made available and major community organisations move into the area.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT

1. the report be received and noted;
- X 2. Council enter into negotiations with the Coptic Church of Australia and MTC Work Solutions regarding the future use of the former Coptic Church in Railway St, Sydenham;
3. Council negotiate a lease with MTC Work Solutions for use of the office space and upstairs meeting room in St Peter's Town Hall; and
- † 4. detailed costings for the repair and upgrade of the former Coptic Church for community use be prepared for consideration in Council's 2002/2003 budget.

ATTACHMENTS: Total 4 pages

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ATTACHMENT 1
Summary of Expression of Interest for Use of Coptic Church in Sydenham

Name of Organisation	Type of activity	Contribution	Support from Council	Comment
<p><i>MTTC Work Solutions in partnership with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept Juvenile Justice • Barnardos • Rosemount Youth and Family Services • Marrickville Youth Resource Centre • Broadway Shopping Centre • Newtown Police 	<p>Range of services for young people including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Free Recreation Centre • Training • Employment Service • Mentoring • Specialist Counselling and Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co ordination of Site Manager (will seek funding for 6 month trial) • Co ordination of Management Committee • Develop of services and new business opportunities • Seek ongoing funding from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept Family and Community Services (Commonwealth) • Dept Community Services (NSW) • ClubsNSW CDSE Scheme • GROW • DETYA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 5 years • Refurbishment and fitout of the building including noise insulation and air conditioning in accordance with heritage/building plan • Ongoing maintenance of premises • Rent free use of premises • Payment of rates and utilities • Representation on management committee 	<p>Proposal strong and in line with Council's commitment to provision of youth services in the area. Would ensure that services were accessible to all members of the community</p> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only able to commit to 6 month trial at this stage and this dependent on funding through the ClubsNSW CDSE Scheme • Would require financial commitment from Council to repair and maintain facility

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Central Fellowship	Christian	Upper floor - church services and counseling Lower floor - youth counseling, soup, tea and food for needy and homeless	For 5 years • Voluntary contribution to repairs, renovations, upkeep of building by carpenters, electricians and qualified tradespersons who are members of the church	unclear	<p>Proposal goes some way to addressing Council's commitment to the provision of youth services in the area.</p> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited information available re ability of organisation to manage and maintain the facility • Offer of volunteer services of tradesmen to undertake repairs, however unlikely that organisation would have the skills to undertake the repairs needed. • Limited opportunity for general community access
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<p>Marrickville Emergency Service</p>	<p>State</p>	<p>Use of entire facility for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control room • Vehicle storage • Storage of disaster recovery resources • Meal preparation • Training rooms • Office and administration 	<p>Renovation including construction of garage to the side of the building to \$250 000</p>	<p>unclear</p>	<p>Proposal includes commitment to meet some of the costs of repairs and maintenance</p> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ability for organisation to use the facility as it requires given heritage listing • Limited opportunity for general community access
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<p><i>Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia</i></p>	<p>Use of entire facility for Pharaonic and Coptic Cultural Museum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational programs will be developed for the HSC Ancient History Syllabus • General cultural, educational and information facilities to the community • Top level – museum • Lower level – lecture hall which can be hired by other members of the public as required, library and resource room 	<p>Cost of repairs and fitout up to \$438 850</p>	<p>99 year lease</p>	<p>Proposal strong, organisation able to provide for costs to upgrade and maintain facility.</p> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal allows for some general community access, but appears this will be limited if offered entire facility • Proposal is for a lease of 99 years – limited ability for Council to commit to this – further negotiation required.
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