

Armidale

Regional Council

BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

To be held on

Wednesday, 22 March 2017
9am

at

Guyra Council Chambers

Members

Administrator, Dr Ian Tiley

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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Item: 7.2.4 **Ref:** AINT/2017/04750
Title: Stronger Communities Fund - Community Grant Program and Major Projects Program **Container:** ARC16/01113-3
Author: Heather Sills, Corporate Services Officer
Attachments: 1. Minutes - Stronger Communities Assessment Panel - 17 March 2017

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) **That Council allocate funds to the projects supported by the Stronger Communities Assessment Panel for the Community Grant Program \$1m, as per the minutes of the Stronger Communities Assessment Panel meeting held on 17 March 2017.**
- b) **That Council allocate funds to the projects supported by the Stronger Communities Assessment Panel for the \$9m Major Projects Fund, as per the minutes of the Stronger Communities Assessment Panel meeting held on 17 March 2017.**

Introduction:

In accordance with the NSW Government Guidelines Armidale Regional Council is to consult with the community to allocate and deliver the Stronger Communities Fund through two programs, including:

- Community grant program, allocating up to \$1 million in grants of up to \$50,000 to incorporated not-for-profit community groups, for projects that build more vibrant, sustainable and inclusive local communities.
- Major projects program, allocating all remaining funding to larger scale priority infrastructure and services projects that deliver long-term economic and social benefits to communities.

Report:

The Stronger Communities Assessment Panel met on Friday, 17 March 2017, to assess any outstanding applications for funding through the two streams of the Stronger Communities Fund: Community Grants Program and Major Projects Program.

To be successful for funding, community projects must be from incorporated not-for-profit groups and must meet the following criteria:

- deliver social, cultural, economic or environmental benefits to local communities
- address an identified community priority
- be well defined with a clear budget
- demonstrate that any ongoing or recurrent costs of the project can be met by the community group once grant funding has been expensed
- the organisation must demonstrate the capacity to manage funds and deliver the project.

The Minutes of the Stronger Communities Assessment Panel held 17 March 2017, including a list of successful and unsuccessful applications, are attached to this report.

All applications have now been considered and reserves from the Stronger Communities Fund have now been allocated, pending Council approval.

Community Engagement and Internal Consultation

The application process was open to the community groups that fit the criteria. Applications are now closed, but were available on the Armidale Regional Council website or by contacting the Armidale or Guyra offices. Media releases have been issued about the program.

Financial Implications

The Stronger Communities Funding has been provided to councils that have undertaken mergers in NSW.

Good Governance

Council has followed the NSW Government's guidelines in the grants process. Council is meeting its statutory obligations under the funding agreement.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The projects identified for the major projects program are considered as part of Council's Community Strategic Plan and IP&R processes.

Sustainability Assessment

Applications have been considered on the basis of providing benefits to the community and long term sustainability.

Legal Issues:

Council is meeting its statutory obligations under the funding agreement.

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|---------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Item: | 7.3.1 | Ref: AINT/2017/04679 |
| Title: | Armidale City Mall Vibrancy Plan | Container: ARC16/1419 |
| Author: | Lindsay Woodland, Group Leader, Organisational Services | |
| Attachments: | 1. Armidale City Mall Vibrancy Plan 2017 | |

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) **That Council adopt the Armidale City Mall Vibrancy Plan.**
- b) **That a total amount of \$558,000 be approved to fund the Mall Vibrancy Plan**
- **50% contribution from the Stronger Regions Fund (\$279,000)**
 - **The balance to be funded from Council's budget over 4 years (\$279,000).**

Introduction:

The draft Armidale Mall Vibrancy Plan was initially submitted to Council for adoption on 8th February 2017. The Administrator requested that further consultation with a variety of community stakeholders be undertaken to ensure that the Plan had broad community support. Once the consultation process was completed, the Mall Vibrancy Plan could then be adopted by Council and submitted to the Stronger Regions Fund Committee requesting approval for a financial contribution of 50% of the total cost of the project. Community consultation has since occurred with a workshop held on 22 February 2017 where some 40 participants including mall property/business owners and traders, Council Advisory Group, access groups, aboriginal groups and other community interest groups attended. In response to the feedback from community stakeholders, the Plan has now been revised and finalised; funding of \$279,000 has been granted by the Stronger Regions Fund Committee on 17 March 2017 to support the Plan; and the Plan is now ready for adoption by Council.

Report:

The Armidale City Mall Vibrancy Plan has been developed in collaboration with the local community, CBD businesses and other key stakeholders to reinvigorate Armidale's CBD and create a modern and vibrant Mall precinct. Our vision is to create a dynamic urban environment that combines the core elements of retailing, entertainment and dining in the Central Mall; and promotes the establishment of residential unit developments within the Eastern Mall precinct.

To commence this program of work to achieve our vision for the Mall precinct, a number of infrastructure/engineering improvement projects focused on upgrading the existing mall, in addition to a range of marketing, events and tourism initiatives have been identified. Many of these initiatives are described in the attachment "Armidale City Mall Vibrancy Plan – Key focus Areas".

Infrastructure/Engineering items include:

- Design and construct a new covered stage to attract/enable a range of music and artistic events;
- Provide sound and power throughout the mall to support a range of mall events;
- Update lighting fixtures and improve/replace signage and banner poles;
- Remove outdated shade structures and erect and relocate new shade structures;
- Upgrade access-ways to the Mall and stage area;
- Erect an overhead awning for Cinders Way;
- Review and upgrade facilities such as waste bins and tree-boxes;

- Eliminate or disguise obstacles (electricity and telephone boxes);
- Create shared access for use by emergency vehicles;
- Review parking facilities in the CBD through a parking and mobility study.

Marketing, tourism, and events activities include:

- Create/attract a range of events and promotions (utilising the new stage and sound facilities) to attract people back to the mall;
- Encourage and support al fresco dining in the mall;
- Improve and/or introduce new technology into the mall (eg Wi-Fi, flat screen outdoor monitors);
- Attract new retail businesses back to the mall – including anchor retailers such as department stores.

Residential and accommodation development activities include:

- Attract and enable residential living in the mall precinct (East Mall);
- Work with architects, prospective developers and property owners to create a contemporary urban residential environment;
- Attract Boutique hotels and accommodation providers to the East Mall precinct.

Community Engagement and Internal Consultation

The Draft Plan has been socialised with the Community and a workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders on the 22 February 2017 in Armidale's Town Hall, and included mall property/business owners and traders; Council Advisory Group, access groups; Aboriginal groups; and other interested stakeholders.

The workshop aimed to:

- Seek further feedback on how to make the Central and Eastern sections of the Mall a more vibrant place and prioritise areas for improvement; and
- Start a deeper conversation with key stakeholders to better understand issues, with a view to working together to develop solutions.

The community feedback can be categorised into three main areas:

- Aesthetics and Infrastructure Improvements
 - Clean, safe and secure mall precinct
 - Signage and wayfinding
 - Access and Parking
 - Aesthetics – such as trees, lighting, street art and shade structures
- Activities and Events
 - Markets
 - Entertainment and events
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Outdoor dining
- Bigger Picture Items
 - Residential developments
 - Attract more businesses
 - Precinct for dining

From this feedback, Armidale Regional Council has created a vision for the mall precinct which will instruct the program of work and prioritisation of initiatives:

Our Vision is to create a dynamic urban environment that combines the core elements of retailing, entertainment and dining in the Central Mall; and promotes the establishment of residential unit developments within the Eastern Mall precinct.

Financial Implications

A summary of the proposed programme of works and estimated costs is as follows:

| Year | Activities | Estimated Cost |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|
| 2017-18 | New Covered Stage | 50,000 |
| | Sound & power throughout Mall | 15,000 |
| | Remove old shade structures | 20,000 |
| | Install/relocate new shade structures | 40,000 |
| | Marketing, tourism, events | 40,000 |
| | Residential development planning | 50,000 |
| | Parking and Mobility Study | 50,000 |
| | Total for year | 265,000 |
| 2018-19 | Review/upgrade facilities (eg waste bins, tree-boxes, lighting) | 40,000 |
| | Cover Cinders Lane | 70,000 |
| | Upgrade accessways | 10,000 |
| | Review/upgrade signage | 25,000 |
| | Marketing, tourism, events | 40,000 |
| | Total for year | 185,000 |
| 2019-20 | Review/address 'Obstacles' within the Mall | 20,000 |
| | Create 'Shared Access' Space | 10,000 |
| | Marketing, tourism, events | 30,000 |
| | Total for year | 60,000 |
| 2020-21 | Upgrade existing Fountain | 18,000 |
| | Marketing, tourism, events | 30,000 |
| | Total for year | 48,000 |
| Total Mall Upgrade | | 558,000 |

The Mall Vibrancy Programme of \$558,000 is to be funded by a 50% contribution (\$279,000) from the Stronger Regions Fund, along with matching funding from Council's budget over four years.

Good Governance

A Project Team will be established to coordinate the implementation the Mall Vibrancy Plan with the Group Leader Organisational Services as Project Sponsor; the Director Regional Infrastructure will lead the implementation of the infrastructure initiatives; and the Program Leader Economic Development will lead the implementation of the marketing and events initiatives. Project management disciplines will be adopted to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the project.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Mall Vibrancy Project will be aligned with Council operational planning and regular project reporting will be maintained to ensure that key project milestones are met, and project spend is managed within budget and meets planning requirements.

Sustainability Assessment

Funding for 50% of the Mall Vibrancy Plan Project has been granted by the Stronger Regions Fund Committee (\$279,000) with the remaining 50% to be funded by Armidale Regional Council over a four year period (\$279,000) from Council's General Fund.