

8.5 CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS FOR GLEN WAVERLEY ACTIVITY CENTRE

Submitting Councillor: Cr Lake

NOTICE OF MOTION

That Council:

1. *allocates a further \$30,000 from Council's reserves to expand the Christmas/Festive Season decorations to be displayed in the Glen Waverley Activity Centre during December 2008;*
2. *immediately consults with the Glen Waverley Traders Association regarding:*
 - (a) *the display and form of the Christmas/Festive Season decorations currently proposed for the Centre; and*
 - (b) *other potential decoration options that could be realised with the extra funding; and*
3. *agrees to review Council's approach in relation to the display of Christmas decorations by May 2009. This review is to include:*
 - (a) *consultation with all trader groups in Monash;*
 - (b) *an opportunity for feedback from residents;*
 - (c) *consideration of the appropriate level of financial subsidy to be provided by Council towards the provision of Christmas/Festive Season decorations across Council's activity centres;*
 - (d) *investigation of whether a trader contribution should be encouraged and provided incentives by Council to supplement a 'base' provision of decorations by Council; and*
 - (e) *recommendations to Council about the provision of Christmas/Festive Season decorations in 2009 and beyond.*

INTRODUCTION

Council has been criticised for the dreary and uninspiring Christmas/Festive Season decorations which have been displayed around its retail and activity centres in recent years. This criticism has been particularly evident in the Glen Waverley Activity Centre. In my view, Council has failed to take appropriate action to respond to these criticisms.

ANALYSIS

In response to community and trader criticism, I recommend that Council responds by ensuring that we provide a more adequate Christmas/Festive Season display in the Glen Waverley Activity Centre during December 2008.

Given the Glen Waverley Activity Centre is one of Melbourne's principal activity centres and given it attracts a wide range of visitors from both within and outside

Monash, it is not only appropriate, but indeed essential, for the Centre to be appropriately presented during the festive season.

The current program for decorations in the main retail centres of Monash is to place banners on the flag poles that have been installed in these centres. Decorative tree surrounds are also proposed. Glen Waverley is differently positioned to the other activity centres in Monash because it has not had permanent flag poles installed. The decorations in Glen Waverley are currently proposed to instead focus on banners displayed from portable flag poles.

Regrettably, restrictions imposed on Council on the use of electricity power poles prevents Council from installing traditional decorations that residents may be accustomed to from previous years.

Given the significance of the Glen Waverley Activity Centre, I believe Council has a responsibility to ensure that any Christmas/Festive Season decorations which are displayed are at least of a minimum level of quality and prominence.

The current budget for this work is contained in the Capital Works program with approximately \$26,000 committed to the proposed program of installations across Monash.

A further allocation of funds could be used to extend the festive cheer and quality of offering in Glen Waverley.

It is appropriate for Council to consider the wider issues of equity amongst activity centres and future funding allocations in greater detail. It is proposed that this occur in the first half of 2009 as part of a comprehensive review. In the meantime, it is recommended that Council respond to the widespread community and trader criticism in 2007 by ensuring a suitable decorative display is available for December 2008 in Glen Waverley.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of further decorations will not exceed \$30,000.

CONSULTATION

The Glen Waverley Traders Association has been consulted. In large part, this report responds to their feedback. In addition, this report also responds to the significant community feedback received in relation to the 2007 Christmas/Festive Season decorations.

It is proposed that a further consultative meeting be held as soon as possible between Council and the Glen Waverley Traders Association to discuss how the \$30,000 in extra funding can best be deployed in the Centre. It is noted that due to the proximity of Christmas, there will be some limitations on the scope of what further options are available.

Wider consultation with other trader groups in Monash will also follow during the review proposed for the first half of 2009.

CONCLUSION

The community expects a reasonable level of Christmas/Festive Season decorations during December in the lead up to the holiday and New Year period.

If Council is to provide decorations it is important that it is done with sufficient quality in mind and in line with the standard of urban environment we seek to create in our activity centres. Anything less lets Council, local traders and our community down.

It is considered that with this further injection of funds, the offering in 2008 will be a more satisfactory offering than what was provided in 2007.