

1.2 **BATESFORD RESERVE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY HUB APPLICATION FOR COMMONWEALTH FUNDING REGIONAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM – STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

(FIN77; FH)

Ward: Mount Waverley

Responsible Director: Carolyn McClean

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes that an application has been submitted to the Commonwealth Funding – Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program – Strategic Projects for Batesford Youth and Community Hub.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is for Council to note that an application has been submitted to the Commonwealth Funding - Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program – Strategic Projects (RLCIP).

On 13 February 2009 the Federal Government announced an additional \$500 million for regional and local community infrastructure (RLCIP) to the \$300 million announced on the 18 November 2008. Applications must be submitted by 4pm on 6 March 2009.

Of the \$800 million, \$250 million has been allocated directly to municipalities as previously advised. The remaining \$550 million is available to municipalities for strategic projects for which applications are now being sought.

Municipalities are limited to one application per Council and each project must seek a minimum \$2 million Commonwealth contribution with construction works commencing within 6 months from executing of the grants contract. Larger projects and projects that include partnership funding will be given preference.

It is considered that the Batesford Youth and Community Hub is an appropriate project which Council could submit for funding under the RLCIP-Strategic Projects Program.

BACKGROUND

On 7 October Council approved the commencement of a project to explore the potential to develop a Youth and Community Hub within Batesford Reserve, Ashwood to support the needs of the surrounding community.

Previous consultations and community reports have identified a lack of appropriate community infrastructure and services within the Ashwood/Chadstone Community. Reports have highlighted the need for:

- Accessible services and support for disadvantaged families
- Counselling and support services for families, young people and adults who experience anxiety, depression and the effects of trauma
- Services that address social inclusion, isolation and other health and well-being issues
- Examining opportunities for the provision of a locally based community Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- Improving access to services that reduce vulnerability due to inadequate income or poor emotional and physical health
- Increased group space for the neighbourhood houses to enable additional programs to be offered that reduce vulnerability, meeting rooms for self-help or facilitated groups that tackle sensitive issues
- Community meeting space
- Community learning opportunities

DISCUSSION

Council was successful in securing \$30,000 from the Department of Community Planning and Development, to develop the initial design concepts and Cost Plan A for the Hub. To assist with the development of the design, further one on one interviews were conducted with all potential service agencies that would utilise the space.

The following agencies were interviewed in December 2008:

- Monash Youth and Family Services
- MonashLink
- Amaroo Neighbourhood House
- Mission Australia
- Monash Oakleigh Legal Service

In addition, the University of the 3rd Age (U3A) had written to Council seeking support for the identification of a longer-term site for its on-going operations. Given the aging population of Chadstone/Ashwood, and the breadth of activities currently offered by U3A, their inclusion in the project provides an exciting opportunity to compliment the proposed service mix. As a result U3A have been consulted to examine their requirements for possible inclusion in the concept plan.

Discussions with each of the stakeholders form an initial component of the Consultation Plan for the proposed Hub. All agencies interviewed have expressed interest in locating and/or providing outreach services from the proposed Hub and all have agreed to participate in further planning for the Hub.

The purpose of the discussions was to identify from each stakeholder agency the infrastructure requirements they would need in the Hub. In particular, what services and programs would be delivered from the Hub and therefore the room and space requirements of each agency. This also provided the opportunity to highlight specific agency requirements.

An Architect was engaged to undertake the initial design work. A further round table meeting was conducted, which included all services, representatives from Department of Human Services, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), Neighbourhood Renewal, Councillor Joy Banerji and Bob Stensolt MP. These stakeholders have provided initial feedback, which has been included in the development of the concept plan.

SERVICE MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Initial discussions have been held with all services to determine the exact service mix that would be offered in the proposed Hub. Whilst further service model development will be required, the proposed hub is likely to offer:

- Youth Counselling and Support services
- Youth programs and activities
- General Counselling
- Community Health Services
- Computer training and associated Neighbourhood House activities
- Community meeting space
- U3A training and activities

Further discussions will be conducted to determine how the facility will be supported by administration and reception services, to ensure appropriate levels of community engagement and customer service.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council Plan (2006-2010) identifies 'An Inclusive and Connected Community' and 'A Supportive Community' as key objectives, with a specific focus on community participation (1.1), equitable access (1.3) and services for Children, Youth and Families (2.2).

The development of the Batesford Reserve Youth and Community Hub is also consistent with recent Council infrastructure developments, which have brought together a mix of co-located community services in the one central location.

The Commonwealth RLCIP-Strategic Projects Program provides an opportunity to progress the project.

FINANCIAL

The Cost Plan for the project shows that the initial estimate for the total construction and design costs for the building will be \$4.8 million. Additional costs for the project will be:

- The construction of an additional 23 car parking spaces at \$13,000 each.
- The cost of land (to be provided by Council)
- Project management costs (to be met by Council)
- Furniture, fittings and equipment

This results in the following initial estimate for the total project cost:

Project Costs

Component	Cost
Design & Building construction cost	\$4,800,000
Furniture, fittings and equipment and Other Costs	\$500,000
Additional car parking spaces	\$ 300,000
Cost of land	\$ 640,000
Project management	\$ 100,000
Total Cost (Excluding GST)	\$6,340,000

Potential Project Funding

The following funding sources have been identified as potential opportunities to realise the project:

CONTRIBUTION	IN KIND	CASH	TOTAL
Victorian Government – Monash Link Community Health		\$1,300,000	
Department of Human Services – Neighbourhood Renewal Infrastructure Fund		\$150,000	
Department of Planning and Community Development Victorian Community Support Grants)		\$130,000	
Council Land Value	\$640,000		
Council Project Management Costs	\$100,000		
RLCIP Funding		\$4,020,000	
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$740,000	\$5,600,000	\$6,340,000

CONCLUSION

Batesford Reserve Youth and Community Hub is a significant project and has the potential to co-locate a number of local community service providers in a new purpose built facility for a high needs area of the municipality.

The new facility will be complementary and add value to existing community infrastructure on Batesford Reserve and help to improve service access for some of the most disadvantaged residents of the Monash community. The project is based on a high degree of co-operation and support between the City of Monash, the Community Health Service MonashLink, local Neighbourhood Houses and Waverley University of the 3rd Age and other agencies.

The RLCIP Strategic Projects Program is an appropriate source of funding for this program.