

6.2 COMPLETION OF MONASH COMMUNITY SAFETY SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COMMENCEMENT OF 'MEET YOUR STREET' CAMPAIGN

Submitting Councillors: Crs Klisaris, Paterson and Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the completion of the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee' meeting tenure [the Committee];*
- 2. Notes the intention of the Committee to become a Council officer-led Working Group to meet bi-monthly and to report its progress to Council;*
- 3. Notes the commencement of the 18-month 'Meet Your Street' campaign on July 1 2018; a direct outcome of the Committee's work and advocacy to Council;*
- 4. Notes the intention of Committee officer representatives to apply for funding through State Government grant streams to further resource the 'Meet Your Street' campaign;*
- 5. Notes the letter enclosed to be sent to all State and Federal Local Members seeking their support for the 'Meet Your Street' campaign endeavours; and*
- 6. Notes the letter enclosed to the Minister for Police, The Hon. Lisa Neville MP, bringing the 'Meet Your Street' campaign to the Minister's attention and to seek her support for the campaign and Council's intention to apply for a number of State Government grant funding streams to further resource the campaign.*

INTRODUCTION

On November 2017, Council commenced the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee [the Committee] chaired by Dr Susan Alberti AC. The purpose of the Committee was to develop a new and innovative response to community safety with a specific focus on tackling unrealistic perceptions of crime in Monash.

The Committee has met monthly for a fixed-term tenure between November 2017 and June 2018 with senior representation by Council, Victoria Police, Monash University, the Department of Justice and Chaired by prominent Victorian, Dr Susan Alberti AC.

The Committee has achieved its purpose of developing a community safety and social cohesion campaign plan, 'Meet Your Street', which commenced on July 1 2018.

In concluding the Committee's official tenure, the Mayor, on behalf of the Committee, will write to State and Federal Local Members and the Minister for Police, the Hon. Lisa Neville MP to seek support for 'Meet Your Street' and to signal Council's intention to apply for a number of State Government grant funding streams to further resource the campaign.

BACKGROUND

On November 2017, Council commenced the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee [the Committee] chaired by Dr Susan Alberti AC.

The genesis of the Committee came as a response to a front cover article published by the Monash Leader newspaper in early 2017. The article displayed elderly Wheelers Hill residents wielding baseball bats as a symbol of arming themselves against a perceived increase in local crime. Whilst Monash is considered a safe community (Monash ranked 57 out of the 79 local government areas for the rate of reported criminal offences in the year ending 31 December 2017), some sections of the community have reported feeling unsafe in recent times.

Cr Lake and Cr Paterson submitted a Notice of Motion in February 2017 to seek Council's support to establish a high-level, strategic Committee to respond to a heightened fear of crime and to develop an innovative response to communicate to the Monash community that Monash is generally a safe place to live.

Over the course of seven meetings, held between November 2017 and June 2018, senior representatives from Council, Victoria Police, Monash University and the Department of Justice unanimously devised an evidence-based, robust and innovative campaign response, 'Meet Your Street'. The 'Meet Your Street' campaign commenced on July 1 2018 and will address unrealistic perceptions of crime in Monash and will foster social cohesion across communities in Monash.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the 18-month 'Meet Your Street' campaign is two-fold; to foster stronger connections between residents within local Monash neighbourhoods and to positively impact residents' perceptions of their own safety (personal and property), the safety of their neighbourhood and their safety within the City of Monash. Council Officers from Community Strengthening and Communications will work in partnership with external agencies to achieve the campaign objectives and community development intervention strategies.

'Meet Your Street' will undertake two strategies to achieve its objectives:

Strategy 1 - Rollout of 'Meet your Street' Campaign - small area trials of specific interventions in a maximum of 4 neighbourhoods

This is the main focus of the project and will require significant resourcing, including the appointment of an 18-month part-time Council Project Officer. The Project Officer will work across four precincts in Monash, building engagement between neighbours and their local areas through community meetings, innovative marketing campaigns and targeted community events. Research highlights that people who live in their communities where they know their neighbours and regularly engage with one another are more connected and often report feeling safer in their home and neighbourhood. The four trial sites will be chosen based on 2018 Monash Community Satisfaction Survey evidence, Crime Statistics Agency data, selected Monash University data and areas of known heightened perceptions of crime felt by residents.

Strategy 2 - Building community awareness and understanding of facts about crime and safety in Monash

Through communication channels including articles in the Monash Bulletin and website, Council social media, Victoria Police Eyewatch, local newspapers/community newsletters and community events and forums, Council will promote evidence, facts and tackle myths about the prevalence and nature of local crime in Monash.

This process will be supported by a strong research base including pre and post surveys, crime statistics data, Monash-wide survey collection and support from Monash University undergraduate and postgraduate students assisting Council with the data collection, research and process evaluation components of the campaign.

It is the intention that at the conclusion of 18 months, if the campaign is successful and can secure further funding, it could be rolled out across Monash as a whole.

NEXT STEPS

At the May 2018 meeting of the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee, it was determined that the Committee will seek further funding through State Government grant opportunities to strengthen the resourcing of the 18-month campaign. It was also determined that the Committee writes to State and Federal Local Members and the Minister for Police, the Hon. Lisa Neville MP to introduce the Meet Your Street Project, seek their support and signal Council's intention to apply for further funding.

The Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee completed its tenure on June 4, 2018 and will become a Council officer-led Working Group to meet bi-monthly and to report its progress to Council.

All agencies represented on the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee have made a united, long-term commitment to promote Monash as the generally safe place it is and to foster a socially cohesive Monash through the 'Meet Your Street' campaign. Selected representatives on the Committee will have a permanent role on the Working Group and/or be invited guests to attend bi-monthly Working Group meetings at milestone intervals.

CONCLUSION

Through the fixed-term tenure of the Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee, the Committee has achieved its purpose of devising an innovative campaign plan to tackle unrealistic perceptions of crime in Monash.

The Council-funded 'Meet Your Street' campaign commenced on July 1 2018, with partnership support by Victoria Police, Monash University and the Department of Justice and will seek to build social cohesion and a sense of safety across Monash communities. Council will write to all local members and the Minister for Police to seek their support for the 18-month 'Meet Your Street' campaign and will seek additional funds through external grant opportunities.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: NOM Letter 'Meet Your Street' campaign to the Hon. Lisa Neville MP Minister for Police, State and Federal Local Members.

Attachment 2: Officers' Report to NOM Completion Of Monash Community Safety Special Advisory Committee And Commencement Of 'Meet Your Street' Campaign