1.2 VICTORIAN SIKH ASSOCIATION USE OF ASHWOOD HALL

Responsible Director: Carolyn McClean

RECOMMENDATION

That Council supports the use of Ashwood Hall by the Victorian Sikh Association by providing an in-kind grant of $12,150 for hall hire as part of the 2011 Community Grants allocations.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s support by way of an in-kind grant of $12,150 for the use of Ashwood Hall by the Victorian Sikh Association as part of the 2011 Community Grants allocations.

BACKGROUND

In 1988, a group of Sikh families formed what was then known as the VSSA (Victorian Sikh Sports Association). Initially the Association was an informal network drawn together by a common interest of sport. This rapidly grew to an Association committed to sharing and celebrating their cultural heritage through sports, social cohesion and active community participation. The Association has been based at Ashwood Reserve, Ashwood, since its inception. It currently provides a number of activities including soccer, hockey, netball, volleyball, golf, social events and youth programs. There are 166 Monash residents who participate in the Association.

On 8 September 2009, Councillors Joy Banerji, Jieh-Yung Lo and Stephen Dimopoulos, Council Officers and members of the VSA, met to discuss the potential for the redevelopment of the pavilion at Ashwood Reserve to provide a Community Centre. In this meeting the VSA indicated that it had also been in discussions with the State Government about the project. The VSA also indicated that it was able to make a contribution towards the project.

The new facility would allow the VSA to expand current programs and services including new educational and language courses, cultural programs, hosting of community ceremonies and a community kitchen.

On 11 November 2009, Councillors Banerji Lo and Dimopoulos, Council Officers and members of the VSA, met with Bob Stensholt MP and Maxine Morand MP, to discuss the future of the proposal. It was agreed that a community planning approach was required for Ashwood Reserve.

Consequently, in May 2010 Council submitted an application for a planning grant through the Department of Planning and Community Development’s Community Support Fund. Council and the VSA was notified on 20 July 2010 that the grant application had been unsuccessful.

Further discussions were held between Officers and the VSA. Ashwood Hall, located in close proximity to Ashwood Reserve, was identified as a facility that
could potentially accommodate the needs of the VSA in the interim. The VSA could operate out of the Hall most Saturdays allowing a variety of new cultural and educational programs for the community.

Unfortunately, the timing of the State Government’s notification has not allowed the VSA to apply for funds through Council’s Community Grants program. An in-kind grant would allow the VSA access to Ashwood Hall for up to 45 Saturdays in 2011.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The provision of this in-kind grant is based on Council’s values and strategic objectives as set out in the 2009 – 2013 Council Plan, in particular “An Inclusive and Connected Community” and “A Supportive Community”.

**FINANCIAL**

The in-kind grant of $12,150 to allow the VSA to utilise Ashwood Hall would be funded as an over expenditure in the Monash Community Grants Hall Hire Allocation.

**CONCLUSION**

Access to Ashwood Hall would enable the VSA to provide a variety of new cultural and educational programs to the community.