

5.2 SIR JOHN MONASH AWARDS (LIAS101:JL)

Responsible Director: Andi Diamond

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Sir John Monash Awards ceremony to be rescheduled to an evening held no later than September, each year, commencing in 2018.

INTRODUCTION

The Monash Awards (comprising eight categories), recognise and celebrate the community's achievements at an awards ceremony which is currently held in May each year at the Monash Gallery of Art.

This is the fifth year of the awards.

It is proposed to change the timing of the awards to a date no later than September, to increase community participation and promotion of the awards, particularly to sporting and community groups, and allow greater time for judging of the awards.

BACKGROUND

Following a Council resolution in 2013 to consolidate eight individually held Council Awards, part of the resolution was that the Award ceremony be held annually in May, to coincide with National Volunteer Week.

The process for the award is that following a public call for nominations, a two part judging process takes place to determine the category winners and high commendations:

- Nominations are sent to the respective judging panels to determine their shortlist for each category.
- Judges' recommendations are then sent to the Monash Awards Committee, who meet to determine the winner and high commendations, and the overall winner for Outstanding Leadership.

The current very tight timeline sees the average time allowing for both levels of judging to be from one to two weeks. Committee members would like to see this timeframe extended to allow more consideration of nominations.

DISCUSSION

It would be very beneficial to allow more time to call for nominations particularly for the Active Monash award which has not attracted high numbers in recent years. Part of the issue with this section of the awards is that under the current process, the call for nominations goes out early in the year and a number of clubs are still in hiatus during the holiday period. This influences their ability to nominate recipients and may contribute to the few nominations put forward in this category.

As part of this review of the awards, we will change the Active Monash category, from recognising sports clubs, to recognising individuals within clubs.

In 2017, no Active Monash submissions were received by the closing date, requiring an extension of the nomination period with only one Sporting Club responding. In changing the criteria to acknowledge various individuals, some who have volunteered their time over decades, this new focus will be a more sustainable way to continue Council's recognition of people in the sports arena.

Additionally, in one year we saw a welcome increase in nominations in other languages for other categories. This too has impacted on timelines requiring translations to English. Generally speaking, the majority of submissions arrive within the last few days of the closing date. Allowing time to translate material can potentially place a strain on meeting the target to send nominations to judges.

When the awards were first launched, nominations were high but they have dropped in the past two years. We believe that extending the time frame for nominations will result in higher numbers of nominees:

2014 - 51 nominations

2015 - 59 nominations

2016 - 40 nominations

2017 - 40 nominations

FURTHER DISCUSSION

As Council now has a dedicated Volunteering Monash Team Leader, recognition of Monash volunteers, such as various lunches and social inclusion outings, is being progressively rolled out. Consequently, holding the Monash Awards will not be the only way Council acknowledges its volunteering community.

Furthermore, as part of our continuing improvement of the awards process, an online program for nominating and judging is being investigated. Such programs are being used by both corporate and government and have proved to be easy to manage and use, while providing an efficient evaluation process.

CONSULTATION

During the 2017 Monash Awards Committee meeting, the Committee discussed a proposal to hold future Monash Award ceremonies later in the year.

The Awards Committee was receptive and suggested ceremonies could potentially be held as late as September.

Discussions have also been held with Council officers who oversee the eight categories, each see value in moving the ceremony date out, allowing for more time for their judging panels.

Additionally on speaking with the MGA, August and September are available to take bookings.

CONCLUSION

The Sir John Monash Awards are an important way for the Council to recognise those in our community who have dedicated their valued time to improving the lives of others.

Holding the awards later in the year, commencing in 2018, will allow greater interaction with the community, to ensure that we capture all those hardworking community members who deserve recognition.