

3. EVENT SEEDING FUND REQUESTS

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Subcommittee's decision on support for the following proposed event.

NEW YEAR'S EVE OUTDOORS 2004/05

Introduction

An application for event seeding funding has been received from the Christchurch Music Society for a New Year's Eve event for 2004/05. The request is for a grant of \$27,657.

Background

The Christchurch Music Society is a voluntary organisation which has run music and other events for over seven years including free outdoor concerts held in Cathedral Square, 24 hour dance events, beach concerts, festivals and afternoon free concerts. It trades under the name Massive Productions and its main objective is to encourage youth involvement in contemporary original music and cultural events in Christchurch. The contact and event organiser is Marcus Puentener.

New Year's Eve Outdoors (NYE Outdoors) is a New Year's Eve event for youth organised by the Christchurch Music Society to be held at Orton Bradley Park all night and day from New Year's Eve until the evening of New Year's Day. The day will include music from bands, DJ's, outdoor film/art exhibition and activities. Performers include seven headline acts and 25 DJ's plus other performers (jugglers, stilt walkers roving performers etc).

The number of participants is estimated to be approximately 1,000 and ticket prices will be approximately \$60.

Event Evaluation

Validity and Need

In recent years there have been a number of youth-orientated New Year's Eve events of similar ilk in the South Island which have started up and been cancelled for one reason or another; Alpine Unity at Flock Hill, Visionz in Golden Bay (although this has just been postponed for a year due to venue issues), and the Gathering in Takaka which has left a gap in the provision of such an event. Although NYE Outdoors is not aiming to attract as many people as these events were in its first year, if it is successful and well managed there is the possibility it could grow to rival these eventually.

The Christchurch City Council Events Team have been consulted on this application and are satisfied that this event is sufficiently different to their planned New Year's Eve Event and aims at a different market. The CCC event "The Anthony Harper Lawyers New Year's Eve Party" runs for three hours, has two live bands, primarily caters for family attendees and finishes shortly after midnight.

Council youth advocacy staff and other non-council people involved in the youth sector say there is not enough happening for this sector of society generally and especially around this time and consensus was that there was a need for an appropriate, safe New Year's Eve event for youth.

Location

The event is planned for Orton Bradley park in the Banks Peninsula District Council area. This is an issue for consideration given the fact that this is outside Christchurch City Council boundaries. There may be some justification for this decision based on:

1. The availability of suitable venues within the boundaries;
2. The fact that the majority of attendees will be Christchurch youth; and
3. It is at a venue that the Council has historically supported financially through this Subcommittee and has done so again in 2004/05. The income for the use of Orton Bradley Park will assist the Trust in meeting its financial targets for the year and will also assist in lifting its profile.

However this will mean those attending will have to arrange transport or find their own way there as there is no provision to provide transport by the organisers. Whilst this in itself is not necessarily a problem it does trigger the usual logistical and safety problems that a “walk-up” event does not have. It may also mean careful planning involving the Land Transport Safety Authority and Police if the event does attract large numbers.

Economic Impact

One of the criteria for assessment of an application to the Event Seeding Fund is the anticipated economic benefit to the city from this event. By holding the event at Orton Bradley Park, there would be limited economic benefit to the city through participant spending and through income for Council facilities.

In the initial few years there would be few outside Christchurch visitors for the event and most people would stay at the venue in tents or other such accommodation without spending much in the city. However, if the event can survive and gain a reputation over its first few years the benefits could flow further down the track could it become the next major New Year’s Eve event for the South Island.

Possible Risks

- Social Risks

Whilst the applicant states that the event would be “well supported by a broad audience including youth, families and cultural groups” it is likely that it will attract a significant percentage of youth around the 15–25 age group. An all day and night New Year’s Eve event at an open air venue with up to 1,000 people will need a significant investment in security, medical support and safety planning. The organiser will have to prove that he has the intention, capacity and organisational skill to put sufficient plans in place to adequately cover these aspects of the event.

In assessing the level of risk, a comparison has been made with the events quoted above (The Gathering, Visionz and Alpine Unity). These events have all had chequered financial and some cases legal and social histories and all struggled to get on to their feet in the early years. Although the organisers do not promote the use of drugs and alcohol at the event it will be very difficult to 100% ensure this does not happen with such an open area as Orton Bradley Park over such a long time and throughout the night. The organisers do not know exactly how many people they will get attending – estimated numbers are 1,000 but this will not be known exactly until very much closer to the time from ticket sales and many people leave this decision until the last minute. If numbers do swell the planned security and safety provisions could quickly become inadequate. A worst case scenario could involve the Council backing the event then something happening causing injury or harm to an attendee which then becomes public along with the associated Council connection.

Further risk involves the funding of an event which is not under the control of our own regulatory authority. Normally, we will work closely with the organisers of a Council-funded event to ensure the many appropriate regulatory constraints are considered and upheld. With the event being held at Orton Bradley Park this control will fall under the Banks Peninsula District Council whose ability and responsibility to ensure the event is planned and managed to our satisfaction is something we cannot control. Exposure without the ability to manage could be risky.

- Financial Risk

Financially, the event will need the backing of a major sponsor or alternative income source to supplement the income from ticket sales.

As mentioned above, most of these types of events have experienced some sort of financial crisis in their early days and it is the opinion of the writer that the organisers should not underestimate the appetite for such events for consuming income. In terms of financial risk should the Council wish to support the event this would be limited only to the value of the grant made and this would be ensured in the form of a signed contract. There would be no further connection to the event organisers or to any debts or creditors associated to the event should it run at a loss.

Financial Assessment

The organisers should have sufficient grasp of the costs of running this type of event having run many similar but smaller events over the years. An event budget will be circulated at the meeting.

The applicant is requesting \$27,657 from the Council which is the estimated deficit for the event. This request if granted would be the next most significant income item (after ticket sales) for the event with the Christchurch Music Society contributing \$10,000 and only \$5,000 in sponsorship indicated at this stage.

There should be many potential sponsors who would be interested in such an event and it is suggested that any Council support should be leveraged by linking this dollar for dollar to the amount of (cash) sponsorship secured. The youth market is one that many manufacturers are constantly trying to reach. However, these commercial backers may not be willing to come forward until the event has proven itself initially.

There are some alternative sources of funding for youth events which the organisers could access including possible Council sources such as the Creative Communities Scheme and the Community Development Scheme. However, funding from one Council source would inhibit funding from any other due to restrictions on "double dipping" for the same event. For the level of funding requested and the type of event the Event Seeding fund is the best option. Non-Council sources for such an event are numerous but the applicant has not shown evidence of applications to these sources. The potential for corporate sponsorship is very realistic and provision for an amount of \$5,000 is made in their budget. This target should be achieved and could actually be set higher.

Summary and Level of Council Support

The Christchurch Music Society has requested an Event Seeding Grant of \$27,657 towards the provision of a New Year's Eve event for youth at Orton Bradley Park for this year.

There is a gap in the market for a youth-orientated New Year's eve event. However, it is debatable as to whether this proposal is one that Council should buy into to fill this gap. There is always an inherent risk in this type of event which should be considered along with the fact that it is not within the city boundary and has limited economic impact for the city. However, if it is well run and successful financially as well as in attendance, it has the potential to grow rapidly and eventually become a major drawcard.

Whilst it is the officer's recommendation to decline the request based on the limited benefits to the city and the level of risk if the Subcommittee *does* wish to support the event this should be in the form of a capped grant which is linked to the level of other cash sponsorship secured on a pro-rata basis. Further, any funding should also be tagged towards security, medical support and safety planning in order to minimise the risks outlined above.

By way of comparison, the Tasman District Council funded the "The Gathering" in Takaka in the early stages by way of a seeding grant of around \$2,000-\$3,000 plus some support for infrastructure (portaloos etc) and they funded the Visionz event to the value of approximately \$1,500-\$2,000 plus a Creative Communities Grant for a sculpture workshop at the event.

It would seem that an appropriate level of funding for this event, should the Subcommittee wish to support it, would be a maximum of \$5,000.

Marcus Puentener will be addressing the Subcommittee at the beginning of the meeting.

Staff

Recommendation: That the request be declined.