

## 8.8. Review of Community Awards

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**ENDORSED BY:** Rebecca Aukim, Director Community and Library Services

**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

To present to Council recommendations arising out of a review of the Community Awards event.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

North Sydney Council conducts an annual community awards event which recognises citizens and groups who have made outstanding contributions during the year to the life and soul of the North Sydney community.

Up until and including 2019, these awards mirrored the national Australia Day awards, offering awards in the same categories, and took place on Australia Day after Council's Citizenship Ceremony. In 2020 and 2021, the Awards were held separately.

At its meeting held 27 June 2022, Council resolved:

1. *THAT a review be undertaken of the North Sydney Community Awards (Citizen of Year) and a report to Council provided with a view to the future structure of the program, including the possibility of establishing a quarterly North Sydney 'Legacy Awards' where members of the community who have performed great services continuously over the decades – minimum 20 years, be awarded for their dedication to the North Sydney Community.*
2. *THAT the identification of any additional budget requirements beyond those currently provided in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan be made for this award program.*

A review has now been undertaken with an intent to give the awards a revitalised North Sydney character and brand, better championing Council's new Community Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, with the aim to increase the pool of nominations the program will attract and raise the profile of the event in the community.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The former budget allocated to this event of \$1,500 was moderate and limited. Now that the event is held separate to the Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony, it is envisioned that a larger budget will provide the funding to enhance and develop the awards program to become

prestigious and the awards more highly regarded, thereby increasing nominations and enthusiasm in the community.

A cost estimate of \$8,000 including contingencies has been developed for 2022/23. An annual budget of \$10,000 is sought for 2023/24 and beyond, to include a guest speaker and any further miscellaneous costs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1.THAT** the North Sydney Community Awards are maintained as a distinct Council delivered program, independent from Australia Day.

**2.THAT** all nominees receive a North Sydney Community Awards certificate in recognition of their achievement.

**3.THAT** a new 'Local Legend' award is included in the annual Community Awards to recognise individuals who have demonstrated a sustained and long-term commitment to servicing the community.

**4.THAT** a Selection Committee is established and includes the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and key staff for the purposes of making recommendations to Council for determination

**5.THAT** at the next quarterly budget review, the North Sydney Community Awards budget be increased from \$1,500 to \$8,000 for 2022/23.

**6.THAT** the annual North Sydney Community Awards budget be increased to \$10,000 for 2023/24 and beyond.

## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

### **4. Our Social Vitality**

4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe

### **5. Our Civic Leadership**

5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting held 27 June 2022 Council resolved that a report be provided on the structure of the Awards including the possibility of establishing a quarterly North Sydney 'Legacy Awards' where members of the community who have performed great services continuously over the decades – minimum 20 years, be awarded for their dedication to the North Sydney Community.

Relevant Council departments participated in the review including Communications and Events, the Oval Events team, Sustainability and Environmental Services, Corporate Planning and Engagement, and Governance.

The striking quality of the environment and social fabric of North Sydney has for many decades been formed by countless resident initiatives and civic activity designed to connect and care for each other and the environment.

Historically, this generosity and altruism has been acknowledged under the banner of Australia Day. Recently, Council broke away from this framework to develop its personal and Council driven expression of thanks and acknowledgment.

As the program was in its early stages, a review has been conducted to examine and enhance its practice and mode of celebrating its selfless often silent community. The findings of this review form the basis of the report and recommendations.

The first North Sydney awards ceremony is proposed to take place in March next year on a date to be determined, and to be held at the North Sydney Oval function Centre.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

## DETAIL

### Findings of the Review

- That the value and prestige of Council's awards was enhanced by separating them from the national awards and allowing them to take on an identity of their own. There were several reasons for this finding, but most notably the desire to make the awards North Sydney specific by removing them from the shadow of the national awards and imbuing them with a distinctly local flavor and character.
- That, in recognition of sensibilities within the community, the awards should be set apart from Australia Day, a day which holds distressing associations for first nations people and has sparked a public debate around the day and its dual perspectives.
- That, as the current awards process creates both winners and losers, and to make the awards a positive experience for all participants, all nominees should receive tangible recognition of their achievement whether as the principal award winner or as a runner up, in the form of a certificate.
- That a Selection Committee for the Awards include the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and key staff who will consider the nominations against the selection criteria for the purpose of making a recommendation to Council.
- That the promotion of the nominations process which has been to date mainly limited advertising, distribution through community service networks and word of mouth be expanded by the introduction of new outreach channels and a more sophisticated marketing program guided by Council's Communications team, including unique branding.
- That the nominal budget of \$1500 is increased to allow for a larger, revitalised event.
- That the North Sydney Community Awards include a 'Local Legend' Award, the subject of a recent Council resolution of 27 June 2022 which will recognise individuals who have demonstrated a sustained and long-term commitment to serving the community in the 2022-23 Awards.
- The timing and frequency of the ceremony was examined in response to the Council resolution of 27 June 2022. It was concluded that the unique status and sense of celebratory occasion was best expressed as an annual event. If it were to occur more frequently staff resources would require to be drawn away from delivery of other significant projects in the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan under Social Vitality.
- Community Development will retain overall responsibility for managing and administering the awards program, and for convening the selection panel which will evaluate award nominations and make recommendations as to winners as well as the runners up in each category.

- A mechanism for generating ideas for new awards categories and for re-evaluating existing categories, should be introduced into the annual awards process.