

## ITEM 10

## LATE REPORT - RELOCATION ASSISTANCE FOR LICENSEE GROUPS - WARRAWONG COMMUNITY CENTRE

Final stages of planning for the demolition and construction of Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library are currently underway. The existing not for profit Licensees, Warrawong Residents Forum (WRF), Vietnamese Association of Wollongong (VAW) and Illawarra Legal Centre (ILA) are finalising arrangements for temporary accommodation to continue service delivery whilst the new Southern Suburbs Community Centre & Library (SSCC&L) is built. These groups have sought financial assistance to offset some of the costs for the relocation period, March 2024 to August 2025.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council provides financial assistance grants to the proposed recipients as outlined in this report, for the purpose of relocation assistance during the development of the Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Sarah Taylor, Manager Libraries and Community Facilities

Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

### ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report

### BACKGROUND

Negotiations have been ongoing with WRF, VAW and ILC for some time to find temporary accommodation during the construction of the new SSCC&L due to commence in May 2024. These groups have been advised that they must vacate the existing Warrawong Community Centre by the end of March 2024. ILC & VAW have successfully found alternate premises to meet this timeframe.

WRF have also found alternate premises but are yet to sign a lease pending confirmation of funding to cover the lease costs. Council has worked extensively to identify alternate (external) funding options, to no avail. A review of existing operational budgets has identified suitable funds to provide certainty for the Licensees and ensure continuity of service to community.

An extension in the vacate date for WRF to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 has been negotiated to ensure continuation of their services to the public.

### PROPOSAL

Warrawong Resident's Forum is currently negotiating with a local real estate agent to secure a lease for premises 1/210-222 Cowper Street, Warrawong. This site will require a fit out to enable WRF to continue to provide essential services to the local community, noting that the lunch program will not be able to continue as there is no kitchen facility within this building. WRF have applied for a grant to fund the fit out.

WRF has applied to Council for a financial contribution of \$33,000 per annum to cover the rent for the period March 2024 to August 2025.

VAW has secured temporary accommodation at The Temple, Wollongong. VAW has also applied to Council for a financial contribution of \$18,200 per annum to cover the rent for the period March 2024 to August 2025.

ILC have secured a site in Market Street Wollongong and are seeking a contribution of \$5,000 p.a. for the period March 2024 to August 2025.

The total contribution from Council of \$52,200 p.a. is to be funded from existing budgets within Library & Community Facilities (PJ 121517).

In accordance with the Local Government Act s356, a Council resolution is required to provide financial assistance. This report meets the necessary legislative requirements.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The following Council Divisions were consulted and provided input for this report:

- Library and Community Facilities Division
- Infrastructure Strategy & Planning (Building & Facilities Planning)
- Property & Recreation (former)
- Community Culture & Engagement (Engagement)
- Legal Division
- Finance Division

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 4 *We are a connected and engaged community*. It specifically delivers on the following:

| Community Strategic Plan 2032                                   | Delivery Program 2022-2026 |
|---|----------------------------|
| Strategy  | Service                    |
| 4.6 Support and strengthen the local community services sector. | Community Facilities       |

## RISK MANAGEMENT

The risks associated with each site/option include:

### Licensee

- Lack of relocation assistance funding will see their valued community services interrupted or cease for a period
- Reputational risks in not delivering services
- Financial

### Council

- Reputational risks in not maintaining services
- Financial, particularly if the construction of SSCC&L does not meet suggested timeframes

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget for the proposed financial assistance for the Licensees will be sourced from redirection of existing funds (PJ 121517).

## CONCLUSION

Council recognises and acknowledges the valuable social services provided by these groups. Ongoing support by way of the relocation contribution will assist these groups to continue to provide services and maintain strong community connection in this vulnerable area.