

ITEM 3. SYDNEY FESTIVAL USE OF HYDE PARK 2009**FILE NO: S060346****SUMMARY**

Sydney Festival has presented a Festival Garden in Hyde Park North, on the British lawn, in 2007 and 2008. The Garden encompassed the Spiegel tent (which hosted free and ticketed events), a bar area which was open to the public, and in 2008, a second tent which hosted a French company, Cirque Ici.

The Festival Garden has provided the Festival with a visible presence in the city, which resulted in total attendances at ticketed and free events of 23,000 people. The Festival Garden adds to the cultural vibrancy of the City at an otherwise quiet time during January, and it generates increased awareness of the other Festival events which take place inside theatres, concert halls, galleries etc.

The 2008 Festival experienced heavy rainfall during the last few days. This impacted on the Festival's ability to bump out containers of equipment without doing damage to the turf. In consultation with the City, the containers were removed on 18 February and the site was returfed at the expense of the Festival.

At the request of Councillors, Sydney Festival investigated other sites for the Festival Garden, including Cook and Phillip Park, Belmore Park, the Domain precinct and Prince Alfred Park. For a variety of reasons outlined in this report, the Festival seeks Council's approval to again hold the event in Hyde Park North.

The Festival proposes to hold the event from 10 – 31 January 2009, with bump in starting on 5 January and bump out finalised by 8 February. This is a shorter period than in 2008, when the performances went through to 8 February. The event would use the same footprint as the 2008 event. As in previous years, the Festival will schedule a range of free and ticketed events, and the area will be open to the public during the day.

Last year, part of First Night was also held in Hyde Park North.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) approval be given to Sydney Festival to use Hyde Park North for the Festival Garden for the 2009 Festival, provided that the Festival is responsible for costs of remediating any damage to the park caused by the event; and
- (B) a further report be provided on the use of Hyde Park for First Night 2009.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Sydney Festival proposal for 2009

BACKGROUND

1. Sydney Festival has presented a Festival Garden in Hyde Park North, on the British lawn, in 2007 and 2008. The Garden encompassed the Spiegeltent (which hosted free and ticketed events), a bar area which was open to the public, and in 2008 a second tent which hosted a French company, Cirque Ici.
2. The Spiegeltent hosted 17 early evening concerts by artists from Australia and around the world. Later in the evening were performances of La Clique, one of the most popular shows in the Festival. Later at night were free performances by Australian bands and DJs.
3. During the afternoons, inside and outside the tents, free performances were given by Festival artists for children and families. These included the casts of Ngapartji Ngapartji and murundak, who introduced the children to indigenous language, song and dance.
4. The second tent hosted performances by Cirque Ici.
5. Attendances at all the events totalled around 23,000 people, of which around 1,850 were for the children's events. In addition, many people attended the bar area for food and drink and free late night music.
6. The Festival Garden has given the Festival much greater visibility in the City by providing critical mass of Festival events within the City precinct. This has provided cultural vitality to the City at a time of year which is usually very quiet due to the school holidays. It has also increased the awareness of the Festival and its other events inside concert halls, theatres and galleries.
7. In 2007, the Festival was able to bump in and out within the agreed times, with little damage to the park.
8. In 2008, Sydney experienced heavy rainfall towards the end of the Festival period. This caused some difficulty to the Festival organisers who were unable to complete the bump out during this rainy period, due to the possibility of damage by the trucks collecting containers. In consultation with City staff, the Festival delayed the removal of the last two containers until mid February. The City then undertook remediation work to the turf, which was paid for by Sydney Festival.
9. There have been no noise complaints relating to the Festival Garden.
10. At the request of some Councillors, Sydney Festival has investigated other potential sites for the Festival Garden.

Cook and Phillip Park

11. The load limit of this plaza area is 500kg per square metre. The load of a tent such as the Spiegeltent is 2,700kg per square metre. As a result, it would not be possible for the event to take place on this site.
12. The lawn terraces are of a size and shape that would not accommodate the tents required for the Festival Garden.

Belmore Park

13. One of the aims of the Festival Garden is to increase awareness of the Festival, and the many other events inside theatres, concert halls and galleries. For this, it needs to be close to other Festival events and in a place where many people are aware of its presence. This park is isolated from other Festival events, and would not provide the critical mass that results in increased visibility for the Festival. It is also closer to residential density which would limit its operating hours significantly with apartment high rises in Chinatown.

Prince Alfred Park

14. As for Belmore Park, this park is also isolated from other Festival events and does not have good passing pedestrian traffic which would ensure the Festival's visibility.

Domain car park roof

15. This site has EPA limits on noise which would restrict performances till 11pm. In addition, all equipment would have to be craned on to the site, which would increase the costs significantly.

Adjacent to the Art Gallery

16. The space is not big enough for the whole Festival Garden. The site also has EPA noise restrictions.

Hyde Park

17. Hyde Park has many advantages:
 - (a) the Plan of Management provides for events to take place in the park, and identifies the British Lawn as an appropriate site for event infrastructure;
 - (b) the event has not caused noise problems for residents in the past;
 - (c) toilets can be plumbed into the sewer line, reducing the need for pump trucks; and
 - (d) it provides visibility for the Festival to the greatest number of people.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

18. The proposal is in line with the Hyde Park Plan of Management.
19. It supports the objectives outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030 around a Cultural and Creative City and a Globally Competitive and Innovative City.
20. It provides a range of free events for people who may otherwise not be able to attend the Festival, including children.
21. The Festival brings people into the City during the day and evening, to support the CBD economy.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. Nil.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

23. Nil.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

24. The Festival is well into planning for the 2009 event. It is essential to confirm venue bookings in order to make commitments to artists as soon as possible.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

25. Public consultation was undertaken in the development of the Plan of Management for Hyde Park.

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