

11.4 Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. - Robertson Park Farmers Markets

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
TO 19 MAY 2021 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400088, PAR300628

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Community on the Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. - Robertson Park Farmers Markets; and**
2. **endorse a change to the Memorandum of Understanding with Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. to allow up to two markets each calendar month at Robertson Park.**

Executive summary

The Mudgee Farmers Markets have been operating at Robertson Park since July 2019. The move has been successful with visitation numbers increasing substantially. Council has been approached to consider changes to the Memorandum of Understanding with Mudgee Fine Foods so that additional markets can be held throughout the year.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

Mudgee Fine Foods are reporting significant visitation numbers at the Farmers Markets held at Robertson Park. As a result, a request has come from Mudgee Fine Foods asking Council to consider allowing additional markets to be held throughout the year.

Under the current MOU, up to 16 markets are allowed each year. The request is for this to increase to be up to 24 markets.

A number of factors need to be considered with this request. There would be an increase in the usage of Robertson Park and this may lead to increased maintenance being required. Ultimately, the Park (and the Markets) play an important part in the presentation of the town and provide an important economic support for local producers. The investment in our Parks & Gardens team is representative of this investment in ensuring that the town is presented well. It is believed that with the small amount of increased income from the non-exclusive hire of the Park, we can continue to maintain the park to a high standard.

The letter from Mudgee Fine Foods indicates that they would like to have the flexibility to hold the markets on a Saturday or a Sunday. While there is no issue with this, it is important that Mudgee Fine Foods confirm their dates and book with Council. Primarily, this allows staff to be aware of the dates and can plan maintenance and repair activities around dates where possible. It is also because there are other bookings that are taken for the park (and the rotunda in particular).

Another consideration is the impact that the decision may have on other markets in Mudgee. There are markets held at the Anglican Church and Lawson Park once a month and an increase in the

number of markets may well see conflicts emerge with these markets if they are held on the same day. The advice from Mudgee Fine Foods is that this will not cause an issue. However, it may be that Council would prefer to see some consultation and feedback from these markets prior to changing the Memorandum of Understanding.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	Vibrant towns and villages
Strategy	Maintain and promote the aesthetic appeal of the towns and villages within the Region

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Community Plan

Council Policies

Not Applicable

Legislation

Not Applicable

Financial implications

There will be a slight increase in income raised from the markets. This is relatively immaterial but can offset the costs of maintaining Robertson Park to a high standard.

Associated Risks

There is some impact on the park from the increased use. This is mitigated to a large degree by the concentration of the market stalls around the rotunda, meaning that there is less wear and tear on the grassed areas.

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

3 May 2021

Attachments:

1. Mudgee Fine Foods Letter to MWRC Re: MOU.
2. DRAFT - Memorandum of Understanding MWRC and Mudgee Fine Foods May 2021 - With Track Changes.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER



16 April 2021

Simon Jones
Acting General Manager
Midwestern Regional Council
PO Box 56
MUDGEE NSW 2850

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL AND MUDGEE FINE FOODS INC

Dear Simon

Please accept our sincere appreciation for your time at our meeting in Council offices at 11.00 am yesterday (15 April 2021).

As discussed at the meeting the Committee of Mudgee Fine Foods Inc requests that the Council give favourable consideration to - and approve - some important amendments we propose to the Memorandum of Understanding between the MWRC and Mudgee Fine Foods dated 18 January 2021.

Proposed Amendments

1. We propose that Clause 2.4 be amended to:
 - (a) allow for two markets per month to meet increased demand by locals and visitors
 - (b) grant discretion to Mudgee Fine Foods to determine whether these additional markets are held on the first and third weekend or the second and fourth weekend of each month and whether the markets are held on a Saturday or a Sunday morning
2. We further propose that Clause 2.5 be amended to allow a revised Clause 2.4 to apply irrespective of any decisions by previous markets at Lawson Park and the Anglican Church to resume operations.

Supporting the Proposed Changes

As important context in support of this request, both Council and Mudgee Fine Foods have worked in a very constructive and collaborative partnership to deliver a highly successful program of Farmers' and Makers' Markets ever since the markets – with Council's approval and support – moved to Robertson Park in July 2019. Since the move:

- Market patronage by local residents and visitors has grown by more than 100%. Depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the Farmers Market attracts between 1,500 and 4,000 patrons, with even higher patronage on Easter and public holiday weekends and at the December Christmas market

- At the first two markets after the 2020 Covid lockdown was lifted, our Covid check in app recorded more than 4000 patrons in June and over 3000 patrons in July 2020
- At the most recent Easter 2021 Makers Market, some 5,176 patrons were checked in to the market using our Covid-Safe check-in process
- Visitor numbers continue to grow since the Covid-19 lockdowns were eased in NSW in June 2020 and these visitors have a high expectation that one of NSW's most popular tourist towns will hold regular farmers markets
- Anecdotal evidence from Mudgee accommodation providers is that their visitor guests view our Farmers' and Makers' markets as a key highlight of their visit to our region, but that many visitors miss this opportunity because the market is only held once per month.
- Depending on the time of year, the split between local and visitor attendance ranges from 50/50 to 70% visitors 30% local residents.
- With the co-operation of stallholders - and by employing strict management practices to ensure full compliance with all requirements under the Memorandum of Understanding - there has been minimum disturbance to the amenity of Robertson Park. A key factor has been the use of groundsheets and weights by all stallholders, and the policy of restricting Farmers Market stalls to the gravelled area surrounding the rotunda.
- Our Farmers and Makers Markets have been assessed as being best-in-class in implementing Covid-safe check-in, distancing and health procedures.

On behalf of Mudgee Fine Foods, I trust that Council will give approval to our request and may I take this opportunity to again thank you for your guidance regarding our proposal.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sweeney
ACTING PRESIDENT
Mudgee Fine Foods Inc



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Memorandum of Understanding Mid-Western Regional Council and Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. From May 2021

Deleted: January

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to facilitate the use of Robertson Park Mudgee for the Mudgee Fine Foods Incorporated Farmers Markets and Makers Markets.

Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. will have permission to use the Robertson Park facilities and be responsible for the operation and co-ordination of the Mudgee Farmers Markets and Makers Markets.

2. Terms and Conditions of Use

- 2.1 Robertson Park Mudgee is located on community land managed by Council.
- 2.2 MWRC agrees to the use of Robertson Park for the Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. (MFFI) Farmers Markets and Makers Markets.
- 2.3 1 set of keys for access to the storage area at the toilets and the electricity box at the Rotunda will be provided to Mudgee Fine Foods Inc. on permanent loan for the duration of this MOU.
- 2.4 Up to two markets can be held each calendar month. These market days must be booked in advance with Council's Customer Service to ensure availability.
- 2.5 MFFI will be required to complete a booking form for these regular monthly bookings and for the Makers Markets bookings.
- 2.6 The fee for the use of Robertson Park will be \$250 (ex GST) per market. This fee will be reviewed periodically with an expectation of a CPI increase each financial year.
- 2.7 Any approvals required for the use of Robertson Park in the running of the markets are solely the responsibility of Mudgee Fine Foods to organise. This will include, but may not be limited to, any licencing requirements for the service or sale of packaged alcohol products or the suspension of alcohol free zones for the Park. This may also include any requirements for permanent or temporary signage.
- 2.8 Any works related to additional electricity or signage will be at the expense of MFFI and can only proceed with the agreement of MWRC.
- 2.9 Any maintenance issues are to be reported promptly to Mid-Western Regional Council's Building Services Department.

Deleted: Farmers Markets will take place on the third Saturday of the month unless otherwise notified to Council

Deleted: 2.5 It is noted that there are also four Makers Markets held per year. However, should other markets held at Lawson Park and the Anglican Church grounds not be operating, Makers Markets can also operate on the first Saturday of the month in a temporary capacity.†

- 2.10 At no times can any vehicle be driven on any area of Robertson Park.
- 2.11 No stakes or pegs will be placed in the ground of the Robertson Park area without negotiation with MWRC Parks & Gardens staff.
- 2.12 At the conclusion of each market, MFFI are to ensure that the Park is left in a clean and tidy state with all litter and rubbish removed or placed in bins.
- 2.13 MFFI is to provide MWRC with a copy of its current public liability insurances (minimum \$20,000,000 coverage) and professional indemnity (\$5,000,000 coverage) with Council listed as an interested party. MFFI is required to ensure all individual stallholders have adequate public liability coverage.
- 2.14 This MOU extends for the period until June 2021 but can continue beyond that time until either party requests a further MOU to be negotiated. Alternatively, if the agreement extends beyond June 2021, either party can terminate this MOU with three months, or it can be terminated at any time if agreed by both parties.

Signed:

~~BRAD CAM~~ _____ ~~PAUL WILLOUGHBY~~
~~GENERAL MANAGER~~ _____ ~~PRESIDENT~~
~~MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL~~ _____ ~~MUDGEES FINE FOODS INC.~~

Date:

Date:

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