

9.5 Financial Assistance - GP Respiratory and Vaccine Clinic

REPORT BY THE FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COORDINATOR
TO 15 JUNE 2022 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400098, PUB600025

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Financial Operations Coordinator on the Financial Assistance - GP Respiratory and Vaccine Clinic;**
2. **provide in kind financial assistance in the financial year 2021/22 for the GP Respiratory and Vaccine Clinic as set out in this report, at a value of \$82,003; and**
3. **amend the 2021/22 budget as follows:**
 - 3.1 **increase showground revenue by \$82,003**
 - 3.2 **increase financial assistance expenditure by \$82,003**

Executive summary

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020 through until February 2022 there has been a GP Respiratory clinic and Vaccine clinic run at Council's Mudgee showground facility, this report outlines the in kind financial assistance provided and summarises the success of these clinics.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

In response to COVID-19 the Commonwealth Health Department established a new organisation known as GP Respiratory and Vaccine Clinics and early in the pandemic they called for expressions of interest to which Dr Moore and Dr Ghanem responded to.

This saw the establishment of a respiratory clinic at the Mudgee Showground and this was one of 141 clinics that were established in rural and regional areas across the country. Up until its closure at the Mudgee Showground site in February 2022 the clinic conducted 13,700 consultations and this meant that our region was able to successfully divert assessment and care of unwell respiratory patients away from general practices and hospitals to a separate safe medical facility.

Later on in the pandemic the clinic was able to expand its operation and conduct a vaccination clinic over a number of months using Council's main pavilion at the Mudgee Showground, the clinic was able to secure higher numbers of vaccines than it would if it was distributed out of ordinary general practice. This clinic administered 23,728 vaccinations and was instrumental in our region's response to the pandemic.

Whilst obtaining information and figures for this report it is to be noted that Dr Gary Moore expressed that he would like to give his gratitude to Council for being so supportive and willing to assist our pandemic response.

Council can waive fees, however waiver of fees requires a category of hardship, which this does not meet, or another category to be developed, and advertised for 28 days. A category for fee waiver is not recommended as this is likely to be a one-off situation. It is therefore recommended that the pavilion hire be treated as financial assistance, with no net impact to Council (see financial implications).

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	A safe and healthy community
Strategy	Support networks, program and facilities which promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy lifestyles

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Not applicable

Council Policies

Not applicable

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 Sections:

356 Can a council financially assist others?

- (1) A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
- (2) A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.
- (3) However, public notice is not required if—
 - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.
- (4) Public notice is also not required if the financial assistance is part of a program of graffiti removal work.

610E Council may waive or reduce fees

- (1) A council may waive payment of, or reduce, a fee (whether expressed as an actual or a maximum amount) in a particular case if the council is satisfied that the case falls within a category of hardship or any other category in respect of which the council has determined payment should be so waived or reduced.

- (2) However, a council must not determine a category of cases under this section until it has given public notice of the proposed category in the same way as it is required to give public notice of the amount of a proposed fee under section 61F(2) or (3).

Financial implications

Hire of Mudgee Showground's main Pavilion is \$463.63 per day excluding GST (2021/22). During the 2021/22 financial year the cost for the hire of the main pavilion was \$63,981.81 excluding GST. Hire of Mudgee Showgrounds grassed area along Douro Street is \$76.36 per day excluding GST (2021/22). During the 2021/22 financial year the cost for the hire of the grassed area along Douro Street was \$18,021.82 excluding GST. There will be no impact to the ratios or unrestricted cash, as the expenditure and income is received by Council.

Associated Risks

Nil

TRISH ELSEGOOD
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

NEIL BUNGATE
ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

25 May 2022

Attachments: Nil

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

SIMON JONES
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER