

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Department of Community Services, Better Futures Program (A02/0417)

Report dated 14 September from the Director, Library and Community Services about approval for the Service Agreement Annexure from the Department of Community Services for 2 projects under the Better Futures Program. This addition to annual service agreements previously adopted by Council will deliver \$66,407 for 2 projects over the next 12 months.

Recommendation: That Council authorise the Mayor and the General Manager to sign and affix the Common Seal to the 2 copies of the annexure to the Service Agreements with the Department of Community Services for 2004-2005

Purpose of Report

An annexure to the Service Agreements for 2004-2005 with the Department of Community Services has been received. Council already receives funds from the Department of Community Services and these subsidise the positions of Community Worker Youth and the Community Programs Co-ordinator as well as programs like the Family Support Service and child care centres. The Department has asked Council to further auspice 2 projects under the Better Futures program for the next 12 months. Service agreements and the Annexure require the signature of the Mayor and General Manager and the application of the seal.

Background / Introduction

The Better Futures program was originally reported on to Council in October 2003 when in principle support was given to 2 projects, which Council had been asked to auspice.

Families First and Better Futures are linked initiatives led by the State Government under the Cabinet Office with involvement by the Department of Health, Community Services, Education and Training and Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Police. Local Government is involved at the Management Reference Group level with representation from Sutherland and Waverley Council. Families First focuses on 0-8 year olds and Better Futures on 8-18 year olds. Both programs seek to improve the way in which services are delivered to families so that better outcomes are achieved in, for example, areas like school progress, child protection, or mental health outcomes. Higher levels of co-operation between departments is critical to the success of these programs and the fact that senior officers from each department are involved is important. Funding is also available to fund a range of projects over the period 2003-2006. Both initiatives have a preventative focus.

Community Services staff and community representatives have been involved in consultations and in strategic plan development at various stages throughout the past year and a half. Strategic directions have been developed for 2003-2006 and some initial projects are commencing. Many of these are research - action based with a strong focus on improving existing services and primarily on providing preventative interventions.

Waverley has been invited to auspice two related projects commencing in late 2004. Both projects are aimed at 9-13 year olds living in the local government areas of Randwick,

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Botany, South Sydney, Sydney, Woollahra and Waverley. Specific details of these projects are as follows:

- The first project will aim to identify ways in which young people 9-13 can be assisted to access Out of School Hours services. This will include examination of the relevance of these services to this age group and of the processes needing to be put in place to support them becoming involved in planning the services. Support for parental involvement and the connection to schools of services will be addressed. Service models will be developed and where possible strategies will be implemented.

The need for an alternative service model for this group and the difficulties created by their alienation from traditional models has long been identified as an issue in Waverley in social planning processes. This project would employ a worker 3 days per week for 6 months.

- The second project will focus on building the capacity of the Youth Networks in the area to work together to promote a more positive image and a better understanding of young people and their needs. The project aims to ensure young people are valued members of the community and provision is made for their needs in public spaces and community facilities.

This second project coalesces well with issues raised in the Community Safety Plan and with the developments arising out of the Bondi Junction Strategic Plan Focus Group consultation with youth and businesses from the area. The development of a shopping centre protocol for young people, which has already been separately funded by Attorney Generals, is an example of this. This project provides funds for an additional day per week for Councils' Community Worker Youth for 12 months.

Analysis

- **Financial**
Additional funds of \$66,407 will be received. No further funding or direct Council contribution would be required for implementation of the projects.
- **Management Plan**
Both projects reflect priorities identified in the Social Plan, the Community Safety Plan and current Management and Operational Plans in the area of Community Well Being. Both will provide information able to be included in social planning and strategic planning processes being carried out over the next 12 months. The second project has particular relevance to the Bondi Junction Strategic Plan and the Community Safety Plan and will complement work to be done arising from those plans. The project crosses local government boundaries but youth networks are cross regional in most cases. There are particular benefits arising for Waverley from the two projects because of the amount of work already done on these issues.
- **Consultation**
Community services staff, youth services regional and sub regional youth networks and young people have been involved in the development of the Better Futures Strategic Plan. A regional committee with representatives from a range of youth services has been involved in

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the detailed development of these projects.

Timeframe

The 6 month project is expected to be completed by May 2005 with the second project running through to September 2005.

Recommendation: That Council authorise the Mayor and the General Manager to sign and affix the Common Seal to the 2 copies of the annexure to the Service Agreements with the Department of Community Services for 2004-2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Meredith Wallace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Meredith Wallace *per e.p.s.*
Director Library and Community Services

Author: Maree Girdler
Community Services Manager