

Docklands Firelight Festival 2022

17 May 2022

Presenter: Louise Scott Director, Tourism and Events

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to present the planning phase for Docklands Firelight Festival (DFF) 2022.
2. DFF is a key winter event for City of Melbourne and especially the Docklands precinct. It is designed to provide a unique and compelling event experience to drive visitation to the Docklands during winter, provide a platform for local businesses to leverage from and to enhance the visitor and community experience.
3. The event last occurred in 2019 attracting 75,000 attendees across three nights, and injected an estimated \$4 million of economic impact into the municipality as a direct result of the event being staged. The event was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Key issues

4. The 2022 DFF is proposed to be a celebration of winter, with a focus on family, community, food, music, fire and light. The three day festival runs from 5pm to 11pm, Friday 1 July and Saturday 2 July and then 5pm – 10.30pm Sunday 3 July.
5. The 2022 DFF intends to build on the success of the previous event model, encouraging visitors to stay and engage with the Docklands precinct, businesses and event. Management proposes that the programming will include:
 - 1.1. The three promenades surrounding Victoria Harbour transformed with fire drums and flames, pop-up stages, large fire sculptures, and roving performers.
 - 1.2. Musical performances from a range of genres filling the promenades, including performances from: audience favourites, Mariachi Los Romanticos; local jazz group, The Sugarfoot Ramblers; drumming by Kofi Kunkpe, a West African drummer; and The Brunswick Women's Choir.
 - 1.3. A spectacular liquid, light and laser show delivered at two sites across Victoria Harbour, accompanied by lasers, LED lighting and water jets. Four 6 minute shows to be presented each night.
 - 1.4. An immersive lighting installation to activate Docklands Central Park across the three nights, further extending the event footprint in 2022.
 - 1.5. Warm and exciting food offerings, including smoked meats, soup, woodfire pizza, hot chocolate, and s'mores to be available across the site. Docklands businesses will be invited to theme and present a Firelight specific menu.
6. The 2022 DFF Marketing Campaign is proposed to position the festival as a unique winter offering and as a destination event, profiling the broader Docklands precinct. It will include outdoor, digital, radio/podcast, content partnerships and social media advertising.
7. Consultation with Docklands Chamber of Commerce and their members has taken place, ensuring businesses across the precinct can take advantage of the event and attendees within the area.
 - 7.1. Businesses will have access to the campaign materials to promote their own activations and offers. For example, accommodation partners will be able to promote packages to increase overnight stays across this time.

Recommendation from management

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses the event model for Docklands Firelight Festival 2022

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 2)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from the management. Legal advice will be provided as and when required.

Finance

2. All programming outlined in this report will be delivered within Council's approved 2021-22 budget, which includes \$1.003m for Council funded operating, marketing and labour expenditure.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. The Occupational Health and Safety of the staff, contractors, and event attendees is at the forefront of the planning of DFF. A number of strategies are put in place to ensure visitors experience the event in a safe and enjoyable environment. City of Melbourne and the DFF risk manager are responsible for all safety and emergency management plans for this event.

Stakeholder consultation

5. During the planning phase of DFF consultation has occurred with Docklands Chamber of Commerce, transport authorities, key stakeholders and suppliers, ensuring all stakeholders are across the event model and operational and safety plans.

Relation to Council policy

6. DFF aligns with Council strategic plan objectives - Economy of the Future, Melbourne Unique Identity and Place, Access and Affordability, and Safety and Wellbeing.

Environmental sustainability

7. Tourism and Events will engage with internal and external sustainability leaders for feedback, collaboration and innovative approaches to sustainable event practises, including engagement of service suppliers that undertake environment and social practises