

Ordinary meeting of council, Tue 19/3/19

Item 8.2.5

Dear councillor

I ask you to consider the following points when deliberating on this item of business.

In the five years to 2018-19 the total funding available through the two current sources has ranged between \$63k and \$22k. This scattergun approach has created general confusion and possibly caused worthy projects to be junked or carried over in the hope of funding 'next year' – with no indication of how much funding might be available. For groups that budget to run annual programs this has been incredibly frustrating.

The officer suggests that combining the two existing funds will “reduce duplication and double handling”. Why is there duplication and double handling under the current arrangement? How can two funds, each designed with a distinctly different purpose and eligibility criteria, be any more prone to duplication and double handling than *one* fund which has no such distinctions?

If, as the report states, there are failings in the current system, then fix them. There's no need to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

The existing funds were designed for different purposes – one for community arts and culture, and one for “general purposes”. If you support the officer's recommendation that distinction will disappear. The arts have already suffered significant funding cuts under council's Corporate Business Plan, so that amalgamating the CDF and CFAC will only make that situation worse, by making the new fund open to all comers.

Community funding is not simply a way of making life more convenient for the administrator; it's about identifying, assessing and underwriting community needs and expectations.

The officer “considered the requirement for consultation and/or engagement with persons or organisations that may be unduly affected by the proposal ...” but evidently decided against it, instead choosing to “consult” with staff and the elected group. That's like asking the fox to help design a new henhouse.

Meanwhile, the views of those who receive council's largesse, who each year come cap in hand to beg for crumbs, were ignored. Why? How does this modus operandi conform with council's consultation policy?

The recommended annual contribution to the combined fund of \$35k (One year? Two years? Every year?) represents the average of the past five years. Is that how the amount was calculated? Did the officer pull a rabbit out of a hat, or is there some rationale behind the figure? How would the officer know what figure is realistic, when the affected groups weren't consulted?

But the real sting is in the tail of the recommendation: that \$10k of the annual amount – ***one third*** – automatically be spent on the Xmas parade. That leaves \$25k for eligible community purposes – a gnat's hair over the *lowest* amount in the five-year overview.

Why is the Xmas parade included? There are only one or two local organisations capable of running the parade, which in any case is a civic event sponsored by council and should therefore be funded out of general revenue or a specific-purpose contribution. It's ludicrous to pay Peter from his own bank account, but the report gives no explanation or justification for this retrograde and inappropriate recommendation.

Regards

Craig Chappelle