



Burwood Inc.1874
Burwood . Burwood Heights . Croydon . Croydon Park . Enfield . Strathfield

Ordinary Meeting

Late Items

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of Burwood Council will be held in the Conference Room, 2 Conder Street, Burwood on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 6:00pm

Tommaso Briscese
General Manager

(Item 72/23) Small Business Month 2023 - Subsidised Facility Hire

File No: 23/39764

Report by General Manager

Summary

The small business sector is one of the main drivers of Burwood's economy. To further the provision of support for businesses, Council is proposing to subsidise the cost of facility hire for small business owners during NSW Small Business Month from 1 – 31 October 2023.

Operational Plan Objective

C.1.2 Facilitate equitable access to services and facilities at all stages of life

C.2.1 Provide access to formal and informal life-long learning and recreation opportunities, facilities and services

C.8.2 Facilitate the growth and prosperity of local businesses and target the growth of business sectors and growth industries

Background

NSW Small Business Month (SBM) is a program that brings together industry associations, small business advocates and government to upskill and connect small business owners. The month-long event also promotes the importance of small businesses to the community and NSW economy.

The theme for SBM 2023 is 'My Small Business' with events tailored to help owners and operators learn new skills and strategies to improve their business.

Proposal

Burwood Council will be hosting a 'Connect for Success Information and Networking' event in October 2023 as part of NSW Small Business Month.

Industry leaders will deliver presentations on consumer engagement and digital marketing to equip local businesses with tools to help increase their patronage and reach across the Burwood LGA and Greater Sydney, with a particular focus on efficient and budget-friendly resources and strategies.

To further this provision of support Council is proposing to once again subsidise the cost of facility hire for small business owners who operate in the Burwood LGA. Subsidised rates would be offered at category C rates (25% of the overall fee) for a maximum of 20 hours a month from 1 to 31 October 2023 in an effort to increase access to local working and meeting spaces for small businesses while promoting Council venues as long-term practical spaces for hire. This is in line with the provision of support offered as part of SBN in 2022–23.

Consultation

Council has a strong track record of conducting meaningful consultation and engagement with local businesses to better understand their needs.

As a result of this engagement Council has built a sound understanding of the challenges that continue to be faced including:

- Access to additional resources including grant funding, meeting and event spaces and accessible venue hire for business-related activities.
- Opportunities to test co-working spaces

- Opportunities to network, ask questions and seek advice from other businesses

Internal consultation with staff from the Customer Experience and Business Improvement service area was undertaken to determine the appropriate provision of support for small businesses.

Planning or Policy Implications

Burwood Council owns and manages a number of venues, facilities and meeting rooms which are available for hire for commercial, community and private purposes. The Hire of Community Facilities Policy applies to all Council owned community facilities currently available for periodic hire.

Hirer categories have been established to ensure Council accommodates a diverse range of activities and users that meet the needs and interests of the community. For the month of October 2023, it is proposed that small businesses be charged Category C rates in line with Burwood Council's Fees and Charges 2022-23.

Facilitating equitable access to community facilities and providing a range of venues for residents and community groups that accommodate diverse and changing needs is a key principal activity outlined in Council's *Delivery Program 2022 – 2026*.

Furthermore, the provision of subsidised facility hire for small businesses addresses action A.78 of the adopted *Operational Plan 2023 – 2024*, which specifies the need to 'undertake research and consult with stakeholders to deliver business support programs'.

Financial Implications

The hire of Council owned community facilities generates a minimal level of income for Council that contributes towards the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of these community assets. It is important to note that income from bookings does not generate a profit or break even position for Council as they are heavily subsidised.

Specific fees and charges for hire are set out within Council's adopted Fees and Charges Schedule and are reviewed annually as part of Council's budgeting process.

The proposed subsidy is anticipated to have no to minimal impact on existing hirers as it seeks to increase small businesses access to vacant and available facilities throughout October 2023.

Conclusion

Burwood Council is committed to enhancing support for local businesses and entrepreneurs. By doing so, we aim to not only increase access to local working and meeting spaces for small businesses but also promote Council venues as viable long-term practical spaces for hire.

Recommendation(s)

That Council endorse the provision of subsidised facility hire for small business owners in the Burwood LGA at Category C rates from 1 – 31 October 2023 as part of NSW Small Business Month.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.