

## 9.11 Financial Assistance - AREC

REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
TO 21 APRIL 2021 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400087, PUB600025

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Financial Assistance - AREC;**
2. **not provide financial assistance to AREC of \$10,000, for the following reasons:**
  - 2.1 **the request for funds does not meet the Events Assistance Policy requirements; and**
  - 2.2 **the request for funds does not meet the Community Grants Program Policy requirements.**

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### Executive summary

The board of AREC have forwarded a request for financial assistance to assist with the costs of hiring a Telstra Cell on Wheels for the 2021 Mudgee Small Farm Field Days.

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

### Detailed report

AREC have advised that in previous years, exhibitors and guests have reported issues with mobile coverage and this will be exacerbated this year due to the increased reliance on telecommunications.

To combat this, they propose to hire a Telstra Cell on Wheels to improve coverage. The cost of this cell is about \$20,000, and AREC have requested funding for half of those costs.

The Mudgee Small Farm Field Days has been a large and successful event in the region for over 40 years. As such, the Mudgee Small Farm Field Days does not meet the requirements of the Events Assistance Policy or the Community Grants Program Policy. Further, the financial situation for AREC is not known as a Community Grant or Events Assistance Application has not been completed.

It is noted that Council has already provided financial assistance to AREC of \$10,000 in the 2020/21 financial year (July 2020).

For these reasons, it is not recommended to provide financial assistance to AREC.

### Community Plan implications

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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Building a Strong Local Economy</b>
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Goal	A prosperous and diversified economy
Strategy	Support the attraction and retention of a diverse range of businesses and industries

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## 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.

## Financial implications

Should Council choose to provide the requested funding of \$10,000, it is recommended to fund this amount from the financial assistance budget which would leave a balance of \$11,003.

## Associated Risks

Not Applicable

LEONIE JOHNSON  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

13 April 2021

*Attachments:* 1. AREC letter requesting financial assistance.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER



9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Re: Improving telecommunications during Mudgee Small Farm Field Days**

Dear MWRC Councillors,

As you are aware, COVID-19 put extreme financial pressure on our not-for-profit organization and will change the way we have to operate in the future. One of the major changes to the 2021 event will be online ticketing and more cashless sales.

In previous years, exhibitors and guests have reported issues with mobile coverage and this will be exacerbated this year due to the increased reliance on telecommunications.

AREC have sought a quote to hire a Telstra Cell on Wheels to improve coverage, however, these cost approximately \$20,000. AREC Board of Directors would like to ask Council to consider giving AREC a \$10,000 payment from unrestricted cash as a co-contribution towards this project.

The Mudgee Small Farm Field Days have been one of the largest annual events for the region for over 40 years. Using the Local Government Area Profile Key Tourism Statistics for Mid-Western Regional, we have estimated a boost to the local economy of over \$5.5 million each year. These are purely visitation figures, not including the income local businesses receive from the event, local region staff wages that go back into the economy, as well as the donations AREC provides to local community groups for undertaking duties at the event.

We do hope you look favourably on our request and we look forward to your reply.

King Regards,  
James Sullivan  
Chairman