

**Committee**      Future Melbourne (People and Creative City Portfolio)

**Presenter**      Cr Kanis

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to fund up to \$21,000 in 2011-12 for the implementation of the public dancing program.

### **Consideration at Committee**

2. As a result of consideration at Committee, the following part of the recommendation endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee was dealt with under delegation:

*‘1. That the Future Melbourne Committee supports the delivery of the proposed public dancing project, 1st Friday Dance Club and it supports the project proceeding in 2011-12 and:*

*1.1. refers the funding of the project in 2012-13 to Council’s budget process.’*

3. The remaining part of the recommendation is presented to Council for approval below.

### **Recommendation**

4. That Council funds the implementation of the project up to \$21,000 in 2011-12.

**FUTURE MELBOURNE (PEOPLE AND  
CREATIVE CITY) COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Agenda Item 5.3**

**PUBLIC DANCING PROPOSAL**

**14 February 2012**

**Presenter:** Jane Crawley, Manager Arts and Culture

**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council feedback on a proposed public dancing program for the City.
2. The proposed project, *1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club*, is inspired by outdoor dancing that takes place in many Chinese cities and towns. This practice dates back to the modern foundations of the People's Republic of China. Communities of older and younger Chinese people gather to dance in civic squares and streets on a regular basis and for many of these "dancers" this is an important social and physical activity.
3. The proposed Melbourne project seeks to activate the city and encourage both community engagement and physical activity. The *1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club* is proposed as a free and accessible activity that would take place on a monthly basis, providing an opportunity for anyone in Melbourne to come into the city, learn a dance with a skilled community dancing group and then perform publically with musical backing. The proposal has the potential to engage with both international students and newly arrived migrants.

**Key issues**

4. It is unlikely that this sort of activity will occur in Melbourne, as it does in China, in a spontaneous manner. It will be necessary to actively encourage the community to participate through devices such as an MC and designed programming.
5. It is proposed that this project be delivered over a twelve month period on a monthly basis, weather permitting, in one key site, thereby establishing the activity as part of the cultural landscape of Melbourne. It is recommended that City Square is utilised as this site is central, managed by Council, adjacent to small hospitality businesses and has the necessary event infrastructure. Whilst City Square is the recommended site, there may be some occasions when City Square is required for other events. A dance floor would be required for each event due to the existing surface of the Square. A detailed proposal including alternative or additional sites, and indicative programming and costs is contained in Attachment 2.
6. This project can be produced and managed by the Arts and Culture branch through the Arts and Participation program. The costs of the producer can be met through existing operational budgets.
7. The costs of delivering this project range between \$4,450 and \$7,000 per event depending on the site and whether or not live music is incorporated. The total cost of a twelve month program is between \$48,500 and \$88,000 depending on the site and the number of events.
8. No allocation has been made in the 2011-12 Council budget to support this activity. Should this project proceed this financial year it is likely that the costs involved would be between \$13,350 and \$21,000 in 2011-12 and between \$40,050 and \$63,000 in 2012-13.

**Recommendation from management**

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee consider whether it supports the delivery of the proposed public dancing project, *1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club* and if supporting the project, determine whether the project proceeds in 2011-12 and:
  - 9.1 recommends to Council that it funds the implementation of the project up to \$21,000 in 2011-12; and
  - 9.2 refers the funding of the project in 2012-13 to Council's budget process.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club Proposal

## **SUPPORTING ATTACHMENT**

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### **Legal**

1. There are no perceived legal implications at this stage. Legal advice will be sought if and when required.

### **Finance**

2. There is no provision in the 2011-12 Annual Plan and Budget to implement the project outlined in this report. The Committee may recommend Council approve the additional expenditure if it wishes to proceed with implementing the project. Should Council wish to proceed with this project in 2011-12, additional funds of up to \$21,000 will be required.

### **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 direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### **Stakeholder consultation**

4. Consultation with City Square stakeholders will be necessary to inform them of the project. Consultation conducted to date with community dancing groups indicates strong support for the proposed project.

### **Relation to Council policy**

5. This project reflects Council Plan 2009–13 in particular the following: A City for People and Creative City goals: Objectives 1.1.1 Create an environment that is inclusive and accessible and encourages participation. 1.4.2 Support and celebrate the cultural diversity of Melbourne and 2.2.1 Increase access to and participation in arts and culture.

### **Environmental sustainability**

6. The proposed project will be implemented with minimal impact on the environment including use of LED lighting and little or no printed material.

**1<sup>ST</sup> FRIDAY DANCE CLUB**  
**Social dancing in the public domain of the City**

**Introduction**

This concept is inspired by outdoor dancing that takes place in many Chinese cities and towns. Examples of this can be found on YouTube (Google search *elderly people in china dancing in the street*).

An interesting paper, “Dancing in the street in contemporary Beijing”, by academic Caroline Chen can be found at [http://courses.washington.edu/quanzhou/pacrim/papers/Chen\\_Caroline](http://courses.washington.edu/quanzhou/pacrim/papers/Chen_Caroline).

It needs to be stressed that this Chinese practice is largely cultural and strongly related to both cultural and religious/spiritual beliefs. It also relates to population density and the established practice of older Chinese people spending significant periods of time outdoors in large groups.

It is unlikely that this sort of activity would replicate in Melbourne in a spontaneous and community managed form. Initiating such activity in Melbourne will require strategies to actively encourage the community to participate.

The concept outlined below therefore utilises devices such as an MC and designed programming to encourage participation.

**Ethos**

Free, LowFi, Accessible, Diverse, Community, Active, Fun, Respectful

**Outline**

Every Friday night at the same time in the same place people come together to dance...

Each Friday it's a different genre...

Each Friday anyone in Melbourne can come into the city, learn a dance with a skilled community dancing group, then perform publically with a backing band - the *1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club House Band*...

The site becomes known as a place for dancing...

The 1<sup>st</sup> Friday becomes known as the night for dancing...

<p><b>The 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club</b> <b>First Friday of every month (weather permitting)</b> <b>6.00pm – 9.00pm</b> <b>City Square</b></p>
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6.15 – 7.00pm learning

7.15pm – 8.30pm dancing

8.30pm – 9pm band fires up for freeform dancing

**Community Dance Groups/Genres**

Line dancing

Disco

Ballroom

Waltz  
Hip Hop  
Traditional African  
Twist  
Swing  
Bollywood  
Belly dance

The possibilities are infinite...

The project's producer would work in partnership with AusDance to source the best and most diverse community dance groups, engaging dancers from 5–90 years from a variety of cultural and dance backgrounds.

### **The House Band**

- A live band of great local musicians who provide the backing sound for the dance performances
- Guest musicians/performers depending on the genre being featured
- Audiences are able to stay and listen to the band once the dancing has concluded
- Adds spark, increases engagement, can't be missed

### **The MC**

- A confident, fun, respectful MC who engages passersby, supports the “lesson” component of each event, makes the performance component exciting, and winds down the evening.

### **Christmas**

- Up the ante and program dancing every night of the week in the week leading up to Christmas with a focus on children and families
- Possibly end with a massive Dance Off that brings everyone together

### **Marketing and Promotion**

- This is a lowfi project with no ads, banners, posters
- It needs a simple web and social media presence and ideally a YouTube clip on Council's YouTube site
- A simple logo/brand should be developed and small banners suspended across the Swanston Street pavement from the existing infrastructure between trees – each month the logo goes up to signal the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club is happening this week.

### **Implementation**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club can be produced and managed by Arts and Culture through the Arts and Participation program.
- Bookings for City Square will need to be clarified/confirmed
- The costs of the Producer can be met within existing operational budgets
- The Producer can manage risk assessment and strategy

Additional costs will include:

- House Band fees
- MC fees
- Community Dancing group fees for teaching
- Logo/Brand design and small banner production

An indicative budget is attached.

## **Alternatives**

Should Council wish to implement this project in additional (or alternative) sites, the following have been identified:

- Queensbridge Square (Southbank concourse)
- Les Erdi Plaza
- Travellers Bridge
- End of Bourke Street (Etihad Stadium forecourt)
- Chinatown Square
- Corner Elizabeth and Bourke Streets
- Piazza Italia in Carlton

However our recommendation would be to focus on one site and invest time to establish it so it becomes part of the “landscape” of Melbourne.

City Square is an excellent venue; it is central, owned and managed by Council, identified as “Council”, large enough to dance safely in, surrounded by small hospitality businesses, and has the necessary event infrastructure.

However, using City Square requires hiring of a floor as the surface is not flat and it is unsafe to dance on the existing granitic sand. This has cost implications.

An alternative site is Queensbridge Square in Southbank. This site would not require hire of floors and has the room and infrastructure to deliver the event.

## **A little more about proposed styles...**

All tuition of dance styles would be tailored for participants with little or no experience.

### ***Chinese Line Dancers***

Currently, members from the *Federation of Chinese Associations* have a weekly line dancing class in the North Melbourne Town Hall. This involves short, easy-to-learn line dancing pieces danced to well known country and western songs which have been translated into Mandarin. Most members of this dance group are 55 and over.

### ***Tango***

The team from *Tango Tambien* teach modern tango, a versatile partner dance, being completely improvised and 'in the moment'. Tango is a fluid, sensual and dynamic dance with a strong emphasis on connection between two people. The most popular styles of Argentine tango: traditional, vals, milonga and nuevo.

### ***Salsa***

Led by *Melbourne Salsa*, this style is a fusion of informal dance styles having roots in the Caribbean (especially in Cuba and Puerto Rico), Latin and North America. Salsa is usually a partner dance, although there are recognized solo steps and some forms are danced in groups of couples, with frequent exchanges of partner. Improvisation and social dancing are important elements of Salsa but it appears as a performance dance too.

### ***Hip Hop***

Local lioness, *Demi Sorono* of “So You Think You Can Dance” fame, facilitates hip hop classes which include the hip hop basics, popping, locking, strobing and a little bit of funk.

### ***Traditional West African***

Local maestro, *Lamine Sonko* teaches traditional Sierra Leonian dance deeply connected to traditional drumming rhythms. Lamine’s tuition is highly energetic and infectious.

***Twist***

A revolutionary dance which allowed people to dance on the floor solo, the “Twist” heralded a new era of popular dance in the 1960s. Great for all ages.

***Bollywood***

*Natya Bollywood* teach classes for all ages and dancing backgrounds. Students are taught the meaning of each song and the importance of gestures and expressions based on the message/mood of the songs. Dancing evolved from the diverse Indian culture played through the Mumbai movie industry.

***Swing***

A playful, rigorous partnering dance style inspired by the jazz of the 1920–1950s, local teachers from *Swing Patrol* teach classes for beginners.

***Waltz***

Elegant, flowing and graceful, the Waltz is a timeless dance that involves both the dancers and their audience alike led by *Rio Dance Studio*.

***Dancehall***

*Afro Funk* teach dynamic moves fused in contemporary Jamaican rhythms. A very grounded, rhythmical dance style.

***Broadway Jazz***

Inspired by the tradition of Broadway musicals, local musical theatre professional can inspire your inner Broadway star to emerge on the dance floor.

***Ukrainian Folk***

Local troupe, *Verchovyna* teach traditional Ukrainian dance focussing on large group choreography.

# **1<sup>st</sup> Friday Dance Club** **Indicative Budgets**

## **Option A: City Square**

This option:

- Requires hiring of a dance floor
- Utilises live music and therefore hiring in of a “house band”
- Involves some lighting, whether lanterns in trees or simple lights on the stage area

## **Option B: Southbank Concourse**

This option:

- No House Band
- No dance floor required
- No additional lighting
- Will still require a sound operator for recorded music

Option A	Option B
\$2,000 Production Costs Inc Dance Floor (9mx9m profloor antislip), Sound, Lighting \$1,500 Dance Talent \$900 MC \$1,000 Live Music Talent/House Band \$500 Sound Operator \$300 Sundries/Green Room/Local Travel \$600 Event Marshalls \$200 Permits/Licences  <b>TOTAL: \$7,000 per event</b>	\$600 Production Costs (no floor - requires a venue with stable/flat floor i.e. Southbank concourse) \$1,500 Dance Talent \$900 MC \$500 Sound Operator/DJ \$150 Sundries \$600 Event Marshalls \$200 Permits/Licences  <b>TOTAL: \$4,450</b>

**10 events per annum \$44,500 - \$70,000**

**12 events per annum \$53,400 - \$84,000**

## **Please note:**

- Additional dancing for the Christmas season and/or a Dance Off would require additional funds
- Marketing and promotion costs are estimated at approximately \$4000

**Total indicative expenditure is therefore estimated at \$48,500 - \$88,000 depending on site and number of events.**