
Service and Operational Matters - 26 February 2019

ITEM 8.3 Ramadan Nights

AUTHOR City Future

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Council meeting held on the 24 July 2018, it was resolved that Ramadan should be developed as one of the City of Canterbury Bankstown's signature events. Since then Council and the Ramadan Reference Group have been meeting to discuss improvement for the 2019 event.

ISSUE

Following community engagement and discussion with the Ramadan Reference Group a new name has been proposed for the event – Ramadan Nights - Lakemba.

Council's current fees and charges for operating a street stall at Ramadan in Lakemba are set at \$1,000 (incl. GST). In order to deliver this signature event and continue to manage the impacts of the activities in Lakemba this report suggests a fee increase. The increase will assist in covering some of the costs associated with the street lighting and the safe food handling kit.

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council note the improvements to the Ramadan Signature Event.
2. Council adopt in principle the increase for the cost of the Ramadan Street stall application fee from \$1,000 to \$2,250 to deliver the required improvements.
3. Council exhibit the amended application fee for the cost of a street stall application for a period of 28 days in accordance with the Local Government act 1993, and a further report be submitted to Council following the exhibition period.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

POLICY IMPACT

The adoption by Council of the recommendations contained within this report will require a change to the fees and charges.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is estimated that the income received from the current street stall application fee will be approximately \$80,000.

This is estimated income based on 2018 applications. With the fee increase, the estimated income would be \$150,000 assisting in enabling enhancements and reinvestment into the signature event with the increasing cost to council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Council has worked with local businesses, the police and fire brigade to develop a unique approach that supports local business vitality, ensures public safety, and protects public infrastructure during the Ramadan festivities. Businesses may obtain approval from council to set up a street stall in Lakemba Town Centre, to sell food and drink or other goods during Ramadan. They must abide by strict conditions. Council's food safety and enforcement officers undertake additional patrols in Lakemba during Ramadan to ensure stall holders meet the conditions of their approval. Local police also work with Council officers to patrol the Town Centre during this period.

The approach has been very successful, with hundreds and thousands of people from all over Sydney coming to Lakemba during Ramadan to sample the great food on offer, and local businesses significantly benefiting from this influx. At the same time community safety has been greatly improved, and complaints from local residents have reduced to a fraction of what they were previously.

DETAILED INFORMATION

In 2018 the night-time activity over the 30 days of Ramadan attracted over 250,000 visitors, and value added \$5 million and 40 long term jobs to the local economy.

Furthermore Lakemba is transformed into a vibrant Bazaar like atmosphere offering a unique destination to experience Ramadan in Australia leading to positive exposure from local and national press.

In 2018, 67 stalls were approved to use the footway and trade until 3am during the month of Ramadan.

Increased foot traffic and extended trading hours has naturally increased commercial and street litter as well adding huge pressure on public infrastructure resulting in the following actions by council to manage these issues:

- Daily patrolling of the town Centre was conducted by six to eight Council Compliance Officers until midnight each night
- 100 bins placed along Haldon Street.
- Daily street cleansing conducted from 4am.
- A waste truck onsite to allow bins to be emptied at any time throughout the day or evening.
- Cleaners operating during the event evenings
- Environmental Health Officers conducted inspections to ensure safe food handling practices are exercised by the food vendors.
- All stallholders attended compulsory Safe Food Handling workshop conducted by council compliance staff, prior to receiving their stall permits
- Road closures on the Saturday nights of Ramadan.
- Temporary Toilets
- Professional First aid

Council's involvement in Ramadan 2018 has had positive impacts including:

- A reduction to zero of reports of unauthorized street stalls in Belfield, Punchbowl and Greenacre Town centers.
- General complaints to council dropping from over 100 in 2013 to just 2 in 2018.
- Zero reports of incident reported by Police, Security and first aid services operating at the event.

Additional items for Ramadan 2019 currently be investigated following discussions with the Ramadan Reference Group that will incur additional expenses include:

- Increased Street lighting in Haldon street to raise pedestrian safety
- A Park and ride service
- The issuing to each stall holder a Safe Food Handling Kit containing: a 250ml spray degreaser, a grease mat, a food safety hand sanitiser, a wash basin, hand towels and food grade gloves at a total cost of \$250.
- Possible additional road closures
- Possible entertainment options during road closure nights

- Additional event collateral linked to the branding of the event

To cover some of these additional costs it is recommended that an increase to the Ramadan street stall application fee from \$1,000 to \$2,250 (incl. GST). Changes to cost structure are calculated with a goal of cost recovery not income generation.

In addition, Council seeks to solidify Ramadan in Lakemba in the wider public, conscious as other councils are looking to replicate its success. As a signature event for the city it is important that it has its own identity. As a result various branding of the event were tested with the community through social media and an online poll. The result of this resulted in a clear preference for the name *Ramadan Nights - Lakemba*. This was endorsed by the Ramadan Reference Group. This will be used on all future marketing and promotion material.