

6.1 UPDATE ON MANNA INC. MEAL SERVICE AT WELD SQUARE

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. APPROVES** Manna Inc.'s request to continue their meal service at Weld Square in 2021;
- 2. NOTES** the demographic information obtained during a recent survey conducted in September 2020 of those currently accessing the Weld Square meal service; and
- 3. NOTES** that Administration continues to work with Manna Inc. and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to transition the Manna Inc. meal service from Weld Square as well as identify potential partnerships with other agencies that continue to meet the needs of meal service clients.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider the update on Manna Inc's meal service at Weld Square.

BACKGROUND:

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 September 2020, Council resolved:

"That Council:

- 1. NOTES this update on the status of the Manna Inc. Meal Service at Weld Square;*
- 2. NOTES that re-location of the Manna Inc. meal service to Tranby Engagement Hub or the Moore Street Accreditation Trial Site is unlikely at this time, with Manna Inc. expressing concerns that not all of those accessing the meal service identify as homeless, which would still result in the need for service provision in the area;*
- 3. NOTES that Administration is currently working with Manna Inc., Uniting WA and other stakeholders to gather further information about the demographics of those accessing the Weld Square meal service to assist in making further recommendations to Council; and*
- 4. NOTES that Administration continues to liaise with Manna Inc. and other key stakeholders regarding this matter, and will provide a further update at the 20 October 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Council."*

Manna Inc. is a non-denominational, non-for-profit organisation founded in 1996, who have grown to become one of the largest providers of meals to the homeless and disadvantaged in the metropolitan area.

Manna Inc. moved their free meal service to Weld Square in August 2008 and Council have granted successive twelve month approvals for the use of Weld Square since that time, with a range of associated conditions that aim to address concerns raised by nearby residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The Manna Inc. meal service at Weld Square consists of about 15% of the charity's total service provision, which also includes school breakfast programs, food and care hamper distribution and provision of meals for distribution at a number of facilities across the metropolitan area.

During the current approval period, there have been many changes to the provision of homeless services in the public realm within the inner city area, in line with the Action Plan of the City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plan in which the City participates.

Of most significance, the City of Perth launched their Moore Street accreditation site early in 2020, to support the coordination of homeless service provision in the city. The Moore Street site currently operates an evening service on weekdays between 4:30pm and 8:00pm, and Sunday mornings between 8:00am and

11:00am, with no plans to expand the service beyond these times at present. The City of Perth is currently re-developing the site with the Public Transport Authority to enhance service provision and amenity for all attending, with the initial twelve month trial ceasing in February 2021.

Uniting WA's Tranby Engagement Hub initially expanded their operating hours to 7am-7pm, seven days a week for a period of twelve months however this has recently ceased. In late 2019, Administration met with both Uniting WA and Manna Inc. to discuss the potential to re-locate the Weld Square meal service to Tranby, however Manna Inc. are concerned that the demographics of their clientele and their needs differs to that of Tranby, and that they have not been able to reduce the need for their service at Weld Square.

The City received written (email) confirmation from Manna Inc. on 9 October 2020 that they were seeking renewal of their approval to provide a meal service at Weld Square in 2021, whilst they explore potential partnerships with other agencies within the area that may be more aligned to their core services.

DETAILS:

Manna Inc surveyed regular Weld Square meal service clients between 21-25 September 2020 to better understand the needs and demographics of those who access the service, and assist Administration in making further recommendations to Council.

The survey provided the following insights:

Regular meal service attendees	68
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male – 41 • Female – 25 • Other – 2
Indigenous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - 48 • Yes – 16 • Unknown – 4
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-34 years - 17 • 35-54 years – 29 • 55 years and above – 22
Homeless status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not homeless - 28 • Homeless – 25 • Sometimes homeless – 15
Where they reside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vincent – 24 <i>(19 of these in North Perth)</i> • Outside of the City – 18 <i>(Belmont (6), Maylands (6), Bayswater (2), Carlisle (1), Dog Swamp (1), Two Rocks (1), Victoria Park (1))</i> • Inner City/Perth area – 14 • West Perth and East Perth – 12
Accessed Tranby Engagement Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - 39 • Yes - 27 <i>(a similar number to those who identified as homeless)</i> • Unknown - 2
Access other food services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No – 44 • Yes – 32 (can provide more than one answer) <i>(Moore Street accreditation site (16), Ruah (5), St Patrick's Fremantle (5), HOPE Church (5), St Alban's Church (1))</i>
Why clients come to Weld Square meal service (other than for food - can provide more than one answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social opportunity, meeting family and friends – 26 • So that there is money left to pay rent and bills, to make the pension go further – 19 • From overseas and ineligible for other supports - 6

Administration are currently working with Manna Inc. and other stakeholders to identify any further targeted assistance and supports that can be offered to meal service clients at Weld Square, including various COVID-19 relief initiatives for specific groups, including non-Australian residents, those visiting from other areas and those which have identified as housed but in financial distress and not accessing other crisis services and support.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Administration continues to work with Manna Inc., Uniting WA, City of Perth and other key stakeholders regarding homeless service provision in the inner City area and in the referral of those frequenting Weld Square to appropriate services and support.

A communication plan will be developed by Administration to communicate any changes to the Manna Inc. meal service at Weld Square that may occur, to keep clients, other service providers and key stakeholders, outreach services, local businesses and residents informed during the transition.

LEGAL/POLICY:

The following Local Laws and Policies are relevant to the approval of the Manna Inc. meal service:

- City of Vincent Local Government Property Local Law; and
- Council Policy 2.1.7 Parks Reserve and Hall Facilities – Conditions of Hire and Use

The City's commitment to the provision of support to organisations working with people experiencing homelessness and the maintenance of an interagency approach through collaboration with outreach services and other community organisations are key actions of the Safer Vincent Plan 2019/2022 and the Action Plan of the City Homeless Framework Committee in which the City participates.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**Public Safety:**

Medium: Weld Square and the surrounding area experience anti-social behaviour associated with both close proximity to licensed premises and support services, and the prevalence of vulnerable persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness within the inner City area. This cohort often present with complex needs relating to mental health, health, cognitive impairment, drug/alcohol use and trauma. The City continues to work collaboratively with WA Police, outreach services and other stakeholders to manage these risks.

Negative Community Perception:

Medium: There is divided opinion amongst the local community regarding the provision of homelessness services at Weld Square, with some residents and businesses perceiving that anti-social behaviour in the area is linked to service provision at this location.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Enhanced Environment

Our parks and reserves are maintained, enhanced and well utilised.

Connected Community

We are an inclusive, accessible and equitable City for all.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Through the Leederville Gardens Trust Fund / COVID-19 Relief Fund, the City provided funding to Uniting WA for three months of assertive outreach services within the City, with a key focus on Weld Square. This program is due to end in October 2020.

Any re-location of Manna Inc.'s food service from Weld Square is unlikely to resolve the ongoing need for outreach services in the area, given the large number of support services located within close proximity to this location, and its long history as a meeting place for Aboriginal people in particular.

COMMENTS:

Administration continues to participate in a number of forums focussed on homeless outreach and collaboration, as well as City of Perth led work to identify opportunities and models for safe homeless spaces within the inner City in partnership with the State and broader homeless sector.