

**CM13.1. Albury Gold Cup Application for Local Half Day Holiday - Stakeholder Consultation Report**

<b>DATE</b>	12 October 2019	<b>FIL REFERENCE</b>	FIL19/00464
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No		
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**Purpose of Report**

This report has been prepared to seek Council's endorsement to continue to support a half day holiday for the Albury Gold Cup, following stakeholder and community consultation.

**Background**

Council last discussed this matter in September 2019, where it resolved to undertake community and stakeholder consultation prior to determining support for a half-day public holiday application to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. Council has resolved to support the holiday on a number of occasions including the periods 2005 to 2008, 2009 to 2012 and 2013 to 2019.

The Albury Gold Cup event has grown in status and significance over the years, excluding 2019, which was significantly impacted by weather. Attendance in recent years has ranged between 15,000 to 20,000 for the two-day carnival. This has resulted in significant economic benefit to the city. Despite the inclement weather challenges of 2019, the total economic output of that event was just over \$1.72M.

The provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 outline that any additional local public holidays apply to all employees within the specified area for which the local public holiday was declared. For the Albury Gold Cup half day holiday, this would be the Albury City Council Local Government area.

**Issues**

Application Process

The declaration for local public holidays is undertaken in accordance with the *Public Holidays Act 2010*. In this regard, as the relevant Local Government authority, AlburyCity is required to make an application to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet for the consideration of a half day holiday specific to the Albury City Council Local Government area. This application must be lodged by 8 November 2019 and will apply to the 2020 and 2021 events.

Historically, the application process has been required to be undertaken on an annual basis, however in recent years (including for 2016 – 2017 and 2018 – 2019) applications that cover two consecutive years could be submitted. A biennial declaration can be considered where:

- The event is held on an annual and ongoing basis;
- The circumstances and arrangements for the event are similar each year; and
- There is substantial economic and social benefit for the local community.

In terms of ongoing planning for the event, both for the community and for the Albury Racing Club, the biennial application provides a higher level of certainty and enables necessary arrangements and appropriate business operations to be scheduled in advance of the day.

The *Public Holidays Act 2010* also contains provisions for local authorities to apply to have the day declared as a “local event day”, however such a declaration does not make the local event day a public holiday. Employee entitlements regarding time off for a local event day would be in accordance with the specific industrial arrangements that apply to their employment. On this basis the option of a local event day would likely result in fewer numbers of people attending the event which in turn would reduce the overall significance and economic impact of the event.

The Albury Racing Club has confirmed the date for the Albury Gold Cup for next year is Friday 20 March 2020. It is anticipated the 2021 event will be held on Friday 19 March 2021, but this is yet to be confirmed by the Albury Racing Club or Racing NSW.

#### Economic Impact

The Albury Gold Cup Carnival has enjoyed significant popularity and national profile for many years and the event has grown in stature to now be recognised as one of the premier regional racing carnivals in Australia. The Albury Gold Cup has attained “listed” status which is firm evidence of the significance of the event and this has further raised the profile and economic impact of the event.

In addition, strong partnerships have been developed with Destination NSW, Tabcorp and Racing NSW to increase event development opportunities. This includes increasing the economic impact of the event by extending the length and breadth of the carnival in order to maximise visitor numbers, their length of stay and spend, and to provide additional opportunities to promote Albury nationally.

It is worth noting that the Albury Gold Cup and overall carnival has gained recognition as a significant event within the tourism sector, with Destination NSW including it in their Events Calendar since 2012.

The two-day 2019 Albury Gold Cup Carnival attracted in excess of 6,300 attendees, which was significantly lower than previous years due to extremely wet and unseasonal weather conditions. In comparison, the 2017 Albury Gold Cup Carnival attracted over 15,500 attendees. The final survey results for the 2019 event have yet to be provided by Destination NSW and are anticipated to be available during December. Historically, approximately two thirds of patrons live in Albury/Wodonga with the remainder attending from outside the region. Independent research funded by Destination NSW has shown that the Albury Gold Cup Carnival results in a significant economic impact for Albury.

Prior to 2012, the gazetted half day Local Public Holiday saw an increase in local patronage to the Albury Gold Cup. However, changes to the Local Public Holiday Act in July 2012 required banks to close on gazetted Local Public Holidays. Anecdotally, this and other changes to the Act have also seen schools close during gazetted Local Public Holidays, which has further impacted patronage at

the Albury Gold Cup due to parents being unable to attend the event prior to collecting children from school at 3.30pm.

The 2019 Albury Gold Cup Carnival generated in excess of \$1.72M in economic output to the local economy including direct, supply chain and consumption effects. This was despite unprecedented inclement weather which subsequently resulted in the cancellation of the actual race meeting on Gold Cup Day. Visitor spend alone is estimated at \$1.095M based on spends of \$160 by domestic day visitors and \$290 by domestic overnight visitors to the city.

It is also worth noting that the Albury Racing Club spends in excess of \$442,000 each year with local organisations through infrastructure, marketing and promotion, with the carnival itself generating employment for in excess of 450 contractors and staff to ensure the delivery of the event.

The growth and significance of the event has resulted in several important benefits for Albury, including:

- Providing an opportunity to reinforce Albury's position in the national tourism marketplace as a major regional NSW centre for key sporting, cultural and conference events;
- Demonstrating that Albury is a city of substance with the capacity to offer a variety of visitor experiences and opportunities;
- Providing opportunities to capitalise on the existence of a nationally recognised event;
- Building on the region's ability to attract visitors from the capital city market to major events; and
- Recognising the value of events and festivals to the local economy and social fabric of the community.

From an AlburyCity perspective, the Albury Gold Cup has strong links to the Community Strategic Plan Albury 2030. The theme *A Growing Economy*, has the following Outcomes and Strategic Actions directly relevant to the event:

<b>Outcome 1.1</b>	<b><i>Increase visitors to Albury and the surrounding region</i></b>
<i>Strategic Action 1.1.1:</i>	<i>Promote tourism and enhance the Albury Wodonga region as a destination of choice.</i>
<b>Outcome 1.2</b>	<b><i>Improve visitors and residents' experiences</i></b>
<i>Strategic Action 1.2.1:</i>	<i>Develop and present a range of events to attract and engage our diverse community.</i>

## Community Engagement

In previous years, AlburyCity has sought feedback regarding the provision of a half day public holiday from tourism partners, the business community via the Albury Northside Chamber of Commerce, and the Australian Industry Group. In addition, feedback had also been sought from the education and banking sectors in Albury. Over the years, the numbers of total responses have been relatively low, however of those received, the majority have indicated support for the half day holiday.

In 2017 the NSW Department of Treasury updated their guidelines and requirements. Since the last NSW Government election, the Guidelines for *Local Public Holiday and Local Events Day Applications* sit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. These guidelines require AlburyCity to undertake a public consultation process to support a biennial application for a half day holiday, with specific information needed. In particular;

- The level of support for and against the application from local businesses and stakeholders;
- The benefits to the local community in terms of employment, business activity, tourism and industry promotion of the region;
- Demonstration of the economic benefits to the local community in terms of employment, business activity, tourism and industry promotion of the region; and
- Details of the importance of the event from a social and community perspective.

Accordingly, AlburyCity undertook stakeholder and community consultation targeting tourism partners (82), Albury Northside Chamber (400) and Australian Industry Group members, the education and banking sector (39) and more general consultation with the community. This process obtained feedback regarding the level of support, benefit and significance of the event across the Albury community. There were 538 online survey responses and one written response received. Results are outlined below.

Question 1. Should AlburyCity continue to support a half-day public holiday for the Albury Gold Cup?

- 78.81% of respondents responded – Yes
- 21.19% of respondents responded – No
- 168 comments received

Question 2. Do you think Albury Gold Cup is an important social event for Albury?

- 82.53% of respondents responded – Yes
- 8.74% of respondents responded – No
- 8.74% of respondents responded with comments
- 47 comments received

Question 3. Do you think Albury Gold Cup is an important tourism/visitor event for Albury?

- 88.10% of respondents responded – Yes
- 11.90% of respondents responded – No
- 91 comments received

Question 4. How would you rate the impact of a half-day local public holiday being declared for Albury Gold Cup?

- 72 comments received

#### Employment

- 52.15% of respondents indicated some or significant positive impact
- 30.65% of respondents indicated some or significant negative impact
- 17.20% of respondents indicated they did not know

#### Business Activity

- 52.72% of respondents indicated some or significant positive impact
- 36.96% of respondents indicated some or significant negative impact
- 10.32% of respondents indicated they did not know

#### Tourism

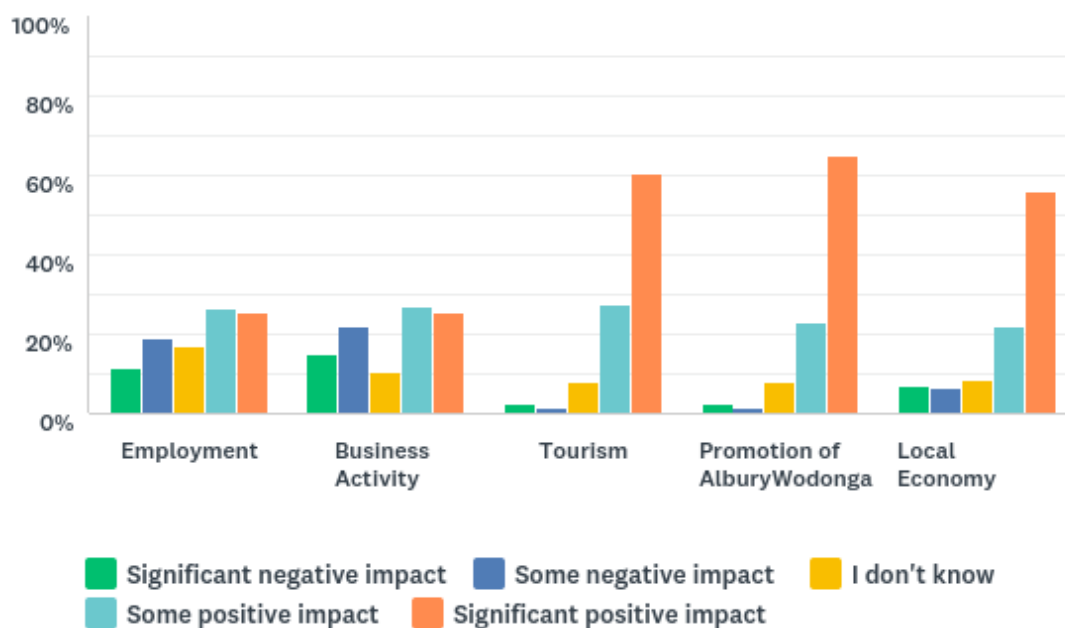
- 87.69% of respondents indicated some or significant positive impact
- 4.17% of respondents indicated some or significant negative impact
- 8.14% of respondents indicated they did not know

#### Promotion of Albury/Wodonga

- 88.03% of respondents indicated some or significant positive impact
- 3.93% of respondents indicated some or significant negative impact
- 8.04% of respondents indicated they did not know

#### Local Economy

- 78.08% of respondents indicated some or significant positive impact
- 13.49% of respondents indicated some or significant negative impact
- 8.43% of respondents indicated they did not know



Question 5. Please provide any additional feedback relating to the impact of the Albury Gold Cup half-day local public holiday.

- 218 comments received

Of the 218 responses, 10 respondents wrote “Could Council please do a full economic impact assessment which includes, the cost of wages paid at holiday rates to those businesses that must stay open but do not receive direct benefit from the event – e.g. freight companies; wages paid and lost sales from all the businesses that close”.

The economic impact analysis calculated by Council officers has traditionally focussed on the economic benefit of the event, as opposed to the economic impact of the half day public holiday. It is recognised that any public holiday may have broader financial implications for business and industry, accordingly while this body of work could be undertaken in the future there is insufficient time to do so prior to lodging this application.

We understand that the Australian Industry Group advocated for its members to reference this in their feedback to Council, accordingly we propose to hold further discussions with its regional representatives to explore the scope and methodology that may be applied to such an analysis. We will also discuss the suggestion with the Albury Northside Chamber of Commerce.

While we appreciate the half day public holiday is not supported by all businesses, there is an overwhelmingly positive response by stakeholders and the community as indicated in the survey results.

As identified elsewhere in this report and in feedback from the community, the benefits of the event and half day public holiday extend beyond the economy.

### **Options**

In determining its position on this matter, Council has the following options:

1. Support the half day public holiday for the 2020 and 2021 events; or
2. Not support a half day public holiday.

### **Conclusion**

AlburyCity has supported the half day public holiday for the Albury Gold Cup for many years and has made the necessary applications to the NSW State Government in this regard.

Evidence obtained over the years indicates that the declaration of a half day public holiday has been a key factor in the increased attendance at the event, its subsequent growth and the flow on benefits to the broader Albury community.

The Albury Gold Cup provides a significant opportunity to showcase Albury as a quality regional centre and one that recognises the value of events to the community, especially from an economic, social and cultural perspective.

Should Council wish to seek a declaration for the 2020 and 2021 events, an application must be made to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet by 8 November 2019. Seeking an application for the coming two years will allow for improved planning by businesses and industries impacted by the declaration, and facilitate event planning and promotion.

In September 2019 Council resolved to undertake community and stakeholder consultation prior to determining support for a half-day public holiday application to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. In response to the consultation there were 538 online survey responses and one written response received. Results were overwhelmingly positive with almost 79% of respondents supportive of Council continuing with a half day public holiday. 10 respondents requested further investigation of the economic impact of the half day public holiday be explored, which will be investigated in consultation with the Australian Industry Group and local Chamber of Commerce prior to applications being made for 2022 and beyond.

Council's support for a half day holiday has been a key factor in the success of the event and ongoing benefits to the community. Having regard to this, and the overwhelming community support for its continuation, it is recommended that Council support the half day public holiday for 2020 and 2021. This would not only allow an application for a local public holiday to be lodged for a two-year period, but also confirm Council's commitment to the event as a major event on Albury's calendar.

### **Recommendation**

That Council support the half day public holiday for the 2020 and 2021 Albury Gold Cup.

### **Attachments**

1. Albury Gold Cup – Half day Holiday – Survey Results 2019
2. Have Your Say – Gold Cup Public Holiday – Max Luff – Border Express