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15 CELEBRATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE DANDENONG STOCK MARKET

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Summary

This report outlines a proposed program of events, scheduled for late 1998, to celebrate the 150+ year history of Dandenong as the livestock market centre serving southeast Victoria, Gippsland, Tasmania and even farther afield.

It is proposed that the events should be held at about the time that the Dandenong Stock Market is to close. This celebration should be designed to act as a transitional event for the City. It should symbolise the end of the historic phase of Dandenong, the country market town. It should also mark the growth of the City as a regional metropolitan centre, and look to the future strategic redevelopment of the stock market site.

Elements of the program are presented and described along with an associated budget. This report recommends that Council endorse the program of events.

Background*Market Heritage in The City of Greater Dandenong*

Dandenong has been a livestock sales centre from the time that an unofficial market operated on the land between Robinson and Lonsdale Streets in the late 1840s, through many decades at the Cleeland/Clow Street location (now occupied by the Produce Market), and during the past 40 years at the Cheltenham Road site. In addition to livestock, produce and goods were sold at the central city sites until then-Premier of Victoria, the Hon Henry Bolte officially opened the separate "Shire of Dandenong Livestock Market" on 13 January, 1958 at its present location.

The closure of the Dandenong Stock Market, proposed for late October 1998, will see the demise of the last municipal livestock market in Metropolitan Melbourne. Not only will it be the end of an era for Dandenong, but the final chapter in a long and important period in the history of the region and the state. Other private and municipal markets will continue to serve the industry, but the unique history and impact of Dandenong is long-term and far-reaching.

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***Celebrating 150+ Years of Service to the Livestock Industry***

The Heritage Officer is proposing to develop a civic celebration to mark a century and a half of service to the livestock industry by the Dandenong Stock Market and the larger Dandenong community. The celebrations will focus attention on the important and lengthy history of Dandenong as a service centre for rural areas as far afield as southern New South Wales, Gippsland, the Mornington Peninsula and Tasmania. Even today the strong reputation of the Dandenong Stock Market routinely draws cattle trucks from Geelong and Mildura – trucks which bypass other markets on the way. Sellers and purchasers alike are attracted by the excellent facilities and organisation, wide range of animals handled and larger number of buyers paying higher prices.

**Proposed Program of Events**

Elements for the celebration will include

- Exhibit on the full range of produce and livestock markets and the contextual history of Dandenong
- Documentary film about the “Last Metropolitan Market”
- Joint travelling exhibit, co-ordinated with the Stockmen’s Hall of Fame in Longreach, Queensland, to showcase the historic exhibit panels and the film
- Re-enactment of a mid-19th century cattle auction followed by a barbecue on site at the Stock Market
- Stockmen’s’ Ball
- Fireworks display.

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Action and events will take place over the course of one day.

<i>Event/Element</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>On the Day only = √</i>		
√ Heritage Parade – late morning start	From Heritage Hill to the Stock Market; banners up for three weeks	Crowd of people in 1850s dress, Aboriginal Policemen on horses, drovers, teams of oxen, Clydesdales pulling wagons
√ Re-enactment of an 1850s cattle auction	Stock Market (special sale?)	Springvale Branch, Victorian Re-enactment Society; Dandenong Stock Market staff
√ Barbecue	Stock Market; marquee set-up	Sponsored by abattoirs etc. buying from the market over the years
Historic exhibit – later set up permanently at Dandenong Produce Market	In Greater Dandenong for 6 weeks; travelling to Queensland and Northern Territory for 12 months	Produced by Deakin University; co-ordinated with Stockmen's Hall of Fame; unveiled on the day
Documentary film of the Market in action	Launched at the proposed Stockmen's Ball	Linked to travelling exhibit; multi-uses include sales
√ Stockmen's Ball	Springvale City Hall	Closing event
√ Fireworks display	Outside Springvale City Hall	Full City involvement
Oral history interviews	Done by the Heritage Hill Benga Oral History Program	To complete the range of heritage information recorded
Media coverage	<i>The Age</i> and livestock trade papers	To include longer editorial features as well as events cover

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Issues and Outcomes*Responses to Heritage Issues*

It is the Heritage Officer's responsibility to raise the profile of the City's history and to develop creative responses to specific heritage events, particularly when celebrations can involve a variety of people. Council has already indicated that the closure of the Dandenong Stock Market is one such event. The proposed program of events provides elements that acknowledge Dandenong's pivotal role at local, regional and national levels as well as opportunities to promote heritage to the City's residents on the day, through a variety of media and well beyond the boundaries of the municipality.

*Schedule*

Two factors influence the scheduled date for the program of events.

1. The exact date for closure of the Dandenong Stock Market is in part dependent on completion of a new, privately-operated market at Pakenham. It is possible that our City Market may have to remain open and continue to provide services to the industry beyond the proposed closing date of 28 October, 1998. The Heritage Officer is co-ordinating with City of Greater Dandenong officers and the Cardinia Shire Planning Office on this matter.
2. Negative feelings about the closure of the Market run deep, across the full spectrum of individuals encountered at the sale days. The Heritage Officer is mindful that any celebrations must be seen to mark the City's long and venerable history of service to the livestock industry, not to be confused with celebrating closure of the Market itself.

Consideration of these larger issues, as well as a number of others, suggest that the day of events should not coincide with the final day of sales at the Market. The Heritage Officer will continue to consult with stakeholders to determine the most appropriate date.

The historic exhibit; oral history interviews; documentary film; co-ordination with the Dandenong Historical Society, Deakin University and the Stockmen's Hall of Fame; submissions for funding proposals; search for sponsors and corporate support and associated matters can proceed immediately.

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**Consultation**

Consultation has taken place, and will continue, with:

- Andrew Connell, Superintendent of the Dandenong Stock Market
- Wally Turner, City of Greater Dandenong representative to the Municipal Sale Yards Association of Victoria
- Dandenong District Historical Society
- Victorian Re-enactment Society
- Brian Osborne, Director, Stockmen's Hall of Fame, Longreach, Queensland
- Additional members of an informal advisory group to City Officers – J. and P. Rae (graziers), M. Jarvis (Dandenong Bacon)
- Rachel Fagotter, Museum Studies Program, Deakin University
- John McCaffrey, Corporate Manager Planning, Cardinia Shire
- Tom Gibson/Graeme Kershaw of the oldest Dandenong auction firm, Alex Scott and Staff
- Victorian Stock Agents Association
- Municipal Sale Yards Association of Victoria
- Doug Savige, Manager LCRS
- Michael Tonta, Manager Council Business
- Council planning units
- Records office

A steering committee is being formed to help plan the program of events. It is proposed that any Councillors interested should volunteer to be part of the steering committee.

**Financial Implications**

*What can Council accomplish with existing resources?*

The Heritage Unit and Heritage Hill recurrent budgets to end of financial year 1997/98 can cover initial project development costs for:

- Deakin University professional fees for the historic exhibit
- consultants' fees for oral histories (tape and video) of individuals central to the history of the Market
- co-ordination of media coverage
- general project and events co-ordination

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*What program elements can attract external funding/corporate support?*

The Heritage Officer will work to develop in-kind support, direct funding and corporate support from a combination of sources, including:

- Cinemedia PACE Scheme (Film Victoria) for the documentary film
- State departments of Agriculture, Premier's Office, Tourism
- Visions of Australia program for exhibition travel grants (Federal Department of Communications and the Arts)
- Stockmen's Hall of Fame for exhibit co-ordination and support
- Local abattoirs associated with the Market for the barbecue
- Local stock agents for the souvenir programs

It is acknowledged that if sufficient external support is not available to undertake some or all of the above elements of the celebration, that those elements should not form part of the celebration.

*City of Greater Dandenong Budget 98/99*

The remaining costs for this major civic celebration would need to be covered in Council's 1998/99 budget. It is estimated that total expenditures would amount to \$34,000. This amount will be included for Council consideration during the development of the 1998/99 budget.

Policy Implications

There are no direct policy implications.

Links to Community Charter and Corporate Plan

The proposed program offers opportunities to:

- Build awareness of and promote the City's history and heritage sites
- Respond to issues raised by the community
- Form a variety of partnerships, including a role for the local historical society
- Promote the City's image in the region, the State and across the country

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These outcomes respond to the following objectives within the Community Charter:

- Promote Dynamic Community/Council Partnerships
- Enhance Natural and Built Environments
- Develop Arts and Culture

**Conclusion**

The Heritage Officer is developing a dynamic program of events that will focus attention on the important role played by the City of Greater Dandenong Livestock Market, as well as the City's other markets. This will be a major civic celebration with a variety of short-term and long-term beneficial outcomes.

**Recommendation**

**That:**

1. **Council endorse in principle the proposed program of celebrations and refer an amount of \$34,000 for consideration as a new initiative in the 1998/99 budget; and**
2. **any Councillors interested volunteer to be part of a steering committee to plan the program of events**