

14.3 CITY GROWTH

14.3.2 Christmas on the Avenue – Post Event Review – For Endorsement

Council Meeting: 19 February 2024
Author's Title: Jenny Barnes – Events and Tourism Lead **File No.:** 3-48
Directorate: City Growth

Annexures:

- A – Survey Monkey Report
- B – Media and Comms Post Pageant Survey Report
- C – Notes from Christmas on the Avenue Event Debrief
- D – Survey Comments – Open ended responses to question 12

Officer Direct or Indirect Conflict of Interest:

*In accordance with Local Government Act 1999,
Section 120*

Yes No

Status:

*Information classified confidential under
Section 90(2) of the Local Government Act*

Yes No

Reason: Not applicable

PURPOSE

To provide Council with the results from the 'Christmas on the Avenue' post event review.

SUMMARY

The 2023 Christmas Pageant was held on Wednesday 20 December. For the first time, the pageant route was in a central location along Nicolson Avenue, progressing from Russell Street to Ekblom Street and dovetailing into the Christmas Carols and After Pageant Fair at Civic Park.

Immediately afterwards, while the event was still front of mind and engagement levels high, Council Administration went out to the community seeking their thoughts and feedback on the changed event. A comprehensive engagement piece ensued and resulted in 459 people completing the post-event evaluation survey, the results of which are presented in this report. It should be noted that Council acted at short notice as a caretaker/facilitator of the 2023 Christmas Pageant, due to lack of capacity of the previous organisers. The intention is now to seek interested community groups who are willing to take on the organisation of this significant event.

RECOMMENDATION

Council:

1. **accepts this report and notes the feedback received during public consultation;**
2. **affirms that the delivery and co-ordination of future Christmas Pageants is not a Council responsibility and should instead be a community-led event; and**
3. **endorses Administration to commence an expression of interest process, seeking interested parties to take on the organisation of this significant event.**

14.3.2 Christmas on the Avenue – Post Event Review – For Endorsement

REPORT

BACKGROUND

At the end of August 2023, Council Administration became aware that Apex Whyalla, who have previously co-ordinated the annual Whyalla Christmas Pageant, no longer had the capacity to do so. Given the tight timeframe and an existing understanding of the requirements, the Council Events Team proposed to manage a re-imagined pageant for 2023.

A proposal was put before Council, to change the pageant route to a central location and align the events so that the pageant, after pageant fair and carols be held on the same day. There seemed a natural and logical synergy and alignment between the events and the change in location enabled the pageant to be more accessible. Our staff were also able to work closely with the pageant major sponsors GFG Alliance and organisers of the carols to deliver an integrated Christmas experience for the whole community. These Christmas community events were re-badged and promoted collectively as 'Christmas on the Avenue'.

At the 18 September 2023 Council meeting, the following resolution was carried:

C4856-2023

"Council:

- 1. receives and notes the Christmas on the Avenue report;*
- 2. noting Apex Whyalla's lack of capacity to deliver this event and the limited time until the event, endorses for Council's Event Team to co-ordinate this year's pageant;*
- 3. endorses the proposed event format and proposed pageant route to align with the Carols event and Christmas fair, being held at Civic Park on 9 December 2023; and*
- 4. in noting that Council is a caretaker facilitator of this year's Christmas Pageant, that Administration undertakes a post-event review with key stakeholders looking at both past year's pageants and the 2023 pageant to help inform the format of future years' pageants."*

While 'Christmas on the Avenue' was scheduled to be held on Saturday 9 December 2023, at this time most of the State was impacted by extreme weather conditions. A severe weather warning was issued by the Bureau of Meteorology forecasting damaging winds, severe thunderstorms and damaging wind gusts.

Due to the extreme predicted weather conditions, the high likelihood of heavy rain and the risk this posed to electrical equipment and floats, along with the likelihood of significantly reduced crowd numbers, the difficult decision was made to postpone 'Christmas on the Avenue' until Wednesday 20 December.

Due to the change from a weekend to a week day, it was also necessary to change the start time with the re-scheduled pageant commencing at 6.00 pm and followed by Carols at 7.30 pm.

A road closure was put in place along Nicolson Avenue from Norrie Avenue to Ekblom Street, to enable the event to be safely held.

Additionally, in response to the changed date and the gap this would leave in the community calendar, Council acted swiftly and partnered with Country Arts SA to offer an alternative family Christmas activity on Saturday 9 December – a free community screening of the Christmas movie ‘ELF’.

This was an outstanding success, with 573 free tickets issued. Demand was such that the film ran simultaneously in cinema 1 and cinema 2, while the Middleback Arts Centre experienced one of their biggest days in terms of candy bar sales.



DISCUSSION

As per Council’s resolution, a post-event review was undertaken. Our post-event feedback plan kicked in immediately afterwards, while the event was still front of mind and engagement levels were high.

Survey Monkey was used to gather feedback, with a short yet focused survey designed to provide information on demographics, canvass opinions on elements of the 2023 pageant such as location, parking, shade, accessibility, vantage points and floats (these were identified as areas of concern via comments and feedback on our socials prior to the event), and to clarify which location is the most preferred – Nicolson Avenue or Forsyth Street.

As there is a high level of community engagement and investment in the Pageant, a question was included asking if people would like to volunteer with the 2024 Christmas Pageant. The details of any potential volunteers will be passed along to the next organisers of the Pageant.

Promotional posters were created with a QR code taking respondents directly to the survey. These posters, along with hard copies of the survey, were displayed at Council sites including Civic on Grundel, Whyalla Public Library and Whyalla Visitor Centre.

In order to maximise community engagement and capitalise on the pre-Christmas shopping rush, a pop-up information booth was organized for Westland Shopping Centre on Thursday 21 December. As this was the day directly after the Pageant and only a few days before Christmas, the Centre was packed with shoppers and many people had the Christmas Pageant front of mind, this translated to a high number of completed surveys.



The survey was also promoted heavily via Council’s social media channels, featured in a Whyalla News article, discussed on Triple Y and emailed out via Campaign Monitor to Council’s mailing list of approximately 1300 people/businesses.

The survey ran for a period of just over three (3) weeks, from Thursday 21 December 2023 until Monday 15 January 2024. A total of 459 surveys were completed, which is considered a high engagement rate.

A report from Survey Monkey with aggregate responses is attached as **Annexure “A”**.

A post-Pageant survey report from our Media and Communications team is attached as **Annexure “B”**.

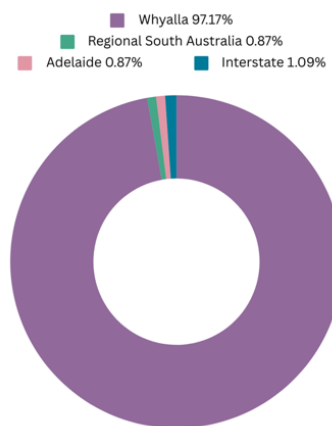
An event debrief was held on Thursday 11 January 2024, this covered successes (what worked), challenges (what didn’t work), and suggestions for improvement (opportunities). Notes from this meeting are attached as **Annexure “C”**.

The survey questions and responses are outlined below, along with key observations and infographics – refer **Annexure “D”**.

Q1 Where do you live?

Key observations:

- As expected, the majority (97.17%) of respondents were Whyalla residents



Q2 Which events did you attend this year?

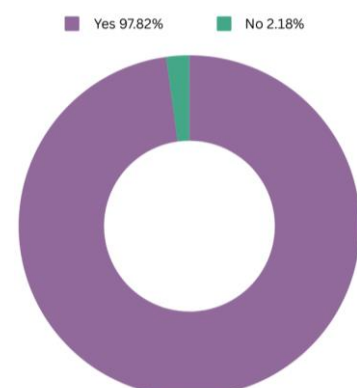
Key observations:

- The majority (88.89%) of respondents attended this year’s GFG Christmas Pageant.
- Around half the respondents attended the After Pageant Fair (50.98%) & Community Christmas Carols (54.90%) of respondents respectively.
- 8.06% of respondents did not attend any of the Christmas on the Avenue events. When considering why they would complete the survey, it seems logical to assume that they have a connection to the Pageant, feel invested and wanted to have a say on its location.

Q3 Have you attended the Whyalla Pageant in the past?

Key observations:

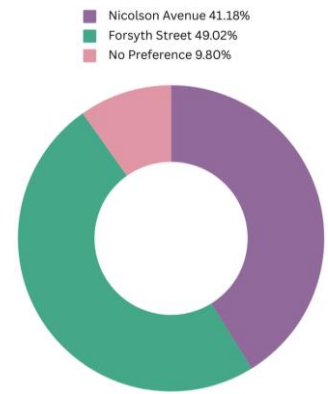
- The majority (97.82%) had previously attended a Pageant held on Forsyth Street.



Q4 If you've attended this year's Pageant (Nicolson Ave), and a previous Pageant (Forsyth St), which did you prefer?

Key observations:

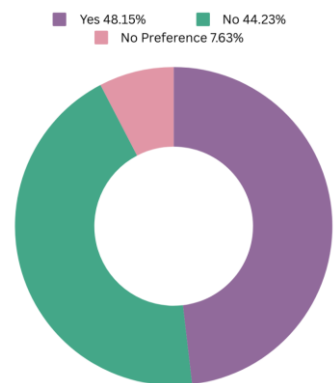
- There was a trend towards Forsyth St, with 49.02% preferring this option.
- 41.18% preferred Nicolson Avenue
- 9.80% had no preference



Q5 Did you like the Pageant and Christmas Carols being held on the same date?

Key observations:

- This was very close to half and half, with 48.15% answering yes and 44.23% answering no
- 7.63% did not have a preference



Were you satisfied with the following elements of the Pageant:

Q6 Central Location

Key observations:

- An overwhelming majority (63.81%) of respondents preferred the location.
- This contradicts the response to question 4 which indicated most (49.02%) preferred Forsyth Street.

Yes 63.81% No 36.19%



Q7 Shade

Key observations:

- Just over half of respondents (53.83%) were not satisfied with the amount of shade on Nicolson Avenue.
- It should be noted that the weather on the day of **Christmas on the Avenue** was quite mild. Shade could be an issue for future

Yes 46.17% No 53.83%

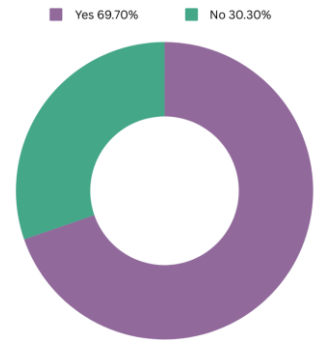


Pageants at this location, particularly if they are to be held on a hot summer day.

Q8 Parking

Key observations:

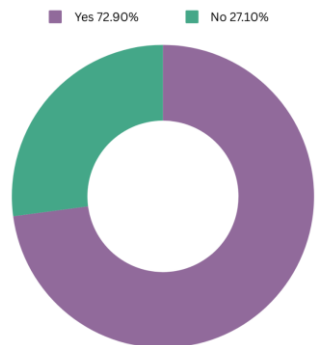
- A clear majority (69.70%) were satisfied with the parking options.



Q9 Accessibility

Key observations:

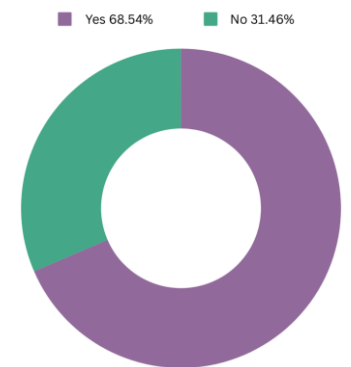
- A clear majority (72.90%) of respondents were satisfied with the event's accessibility.



Q10 Vantage Points

Key observations:

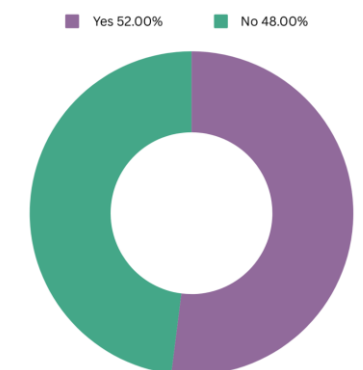
- A clear majority (68.54%) of respondents were satisfied with the vantage points offered on Nicolson Avenue.



Q11 Pageant Floats

Key observations:

- Respondents were split around half and half with this question, with 52% satisfied and 48% not.



Q12 Any Other Comments

Key observations

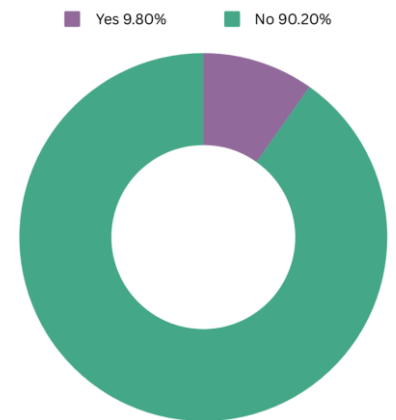
- This was an open field for free range answers and a large variety of responses were received.
- There are some consistent themes in the comments - such as lack of Christmas music, floats, schools' participation, lollie distribution, change of route etc.
- The detailed feedback is welcome as it reflects the general community feelings for and investment in the Pageant.

- All comments are attached in their entirety at **Annexure D** (redactions have been made where identifying information such as phone numbers were included).

Q13 Would you like to volunteer to help with the 2024 Christmas Pageant?

Key observations:

- The majority of respondents (90.2%) did not want to volunteer.
- 45 people indicated they would like to volunteer and provided their name and contact details. This information will be passed onto the next organisers.
- 11 of those who people indicated that they would like to volunteer did not provide any contact information.



Financial Implications - Nil

Strategic Plan

Objective 1.2 - To create a vibrant, diverse, actively engaged community with a sense of belonging

Strategy 1.2.1 - To host, promote and support events and activities which encourage community involvement, celebrate our diverse multicultural heritage, and foster a sense of pride in the community

Strategy 1.2.2 - Promote and encourage artistic/cultural endeavours in the community

Strategy 1.2.3 - Encourage the participation of youth in our city by providing opportunities for leadership, social, community and economic and business participation

Strategy 1.2.4 - To develop and foster a community that provides opportunities for social, recreational, cultural and educational interactions

Legislation – Nil

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest – Nil

Risk Assessment – Nil

Social Considerations – Nil

Community Engagement

The pageant provides a positive social impact by bringing our entire community together for one big celebration, installing community pride and inclusivity.

Council recognises that the pageant is very much a community event and that many residents have strong feelings for and investment in the Pageant and its associated traditions.

Significant effort was put towards ensuring a high level of community engagement, which was reflected in a response rate of 459 completed surveys.

Environmental Implications – Nil

Communication

Council Administration planned a thorough and comprehensive campaign to ensure engagement and opportunities to provide feedback and help shape the event going forward.

A post-pageant survey report from our Media and Communications team is attached as **Annexure “B”**.

Conclusion

Immediately after ‘Christmas on the Avenue’, while the event was still front of mind and engagement levels high, Council Administration went out to the community seeking their thoughts and feedback on the changed event. A comprehensive engagement piece ensued and resulted in 459 people completing the post-event evaluation survey, the results of which are presented in this report.

It is important to note that Council acted at short notice as a caretaker facilitator of the 2023 Christmas Pageant due to lack of capacity of the previous organisers. The intention is now to seek interested community groups who are willing to take on the organisation of this significant event.

