

CT7516 MOUNT EVELYN STATION HOUSE READING ROOM

Report Author: Executive Officer Partnerships & Community Building
Responsible Officer: Director Communities
Ward(s) affected: Billanook;

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information is contained in Attachment 1 to the report. This information relates to contractual matters and contains sensitive information including but not limited to, the name of tendering parties, the evaluation panel members, and the evaluation of the tender received against the published evaluation criteria.

Any disclosure of the information included within the confidential attachment to this report could be prejudicial to the interests of the Council or other parties. If a discussion of any of this confidential information is required, the Council is recommended to resolve that item by having it deferred to the confidential section of the agenda when the meeting is closed to members of the public in accordance with Section 3(1), g(i)g(ii) and 9(2) of the Local Government Act 2020.

SUMMARY

This report summarises the evaluation process and seeks Council approval for the tender for contract CT7516 to operate the Mount Evelyn Station House Reading Room. The tender was opened 18 May 2024, prior to the current contract ending in August 2024. Submissions were invited from locally governed organisations with a demonstrated commitment to community development, lifelong learning and experience in delivering like services, programs and activities that contribute to community wellbeing.

Services to manage the Mount Evelyn Reading Room are required from 1 Sept 2024 or if the tender process is delayed, a mutually agreed date shortly thereafter. A service agreement will be granted until 30 June 2029, with options for two extension of a further two years each, at Council's discretion.

Tenders closed 19 June 2024 and one (1) submission was received. Details of the evaluation process and recommendation are contained in the confidential attachment to this report.

This item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate openness and transparency in Council's decision making. A confidential attachment has been included with the report which contains sensitive information that is not to be disclosed whilst the meeting is open to the public.

RECOMMENDATION

That

- 1. Council awards the tender from Mount Evelyn Community House Inc. for an annual price of \$103,590.00 (exclusive of GST) with an annual increase in line with the rate rise set by Council.**
- 2. A service agreement will commence 1 Sept 2024 until 30 June 2029, with two (2) extension options of a further two (2) years each, at Council's discretion.**
- 3. The Manager Community Support be delegated authority to extend the contract in line with the terms set out in the agreement.**
- 4. The Director Communities be delegated authority to sign the deed and related documents.**
- 5. The confidential attachment to this report remains confidential indefinitely as it relates to matters specified under section 3(1)(g)(i)(g)(ii) of the Local Government Act.**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no prior decisions by Council related to tender CT7516.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

On 18 May 2024, Council invited submissions to enter into an Agreement to manage the Mount Evelyn Reading Room, located at the Station House, 50 Wray Crescent, Mount Evelyn, in partnership with Council and *Your Library* (formerly ERL).

The Station House facility is currently home to the Reading Room, the Mount Evelyn Community House, and a separately operated, social enterprise, Tasty Az.

The Mount Evelyn Community House (the House) is an integral part of the Station House facility offering community development activities and programs. In addition to delivering library services, the Reading Room also supports the delivery of a range of programs such as community development activities, adult classes, carers and disability support, and programs for children and parents.

The tender specifications noted the successful organisation must have the ability to communicate well with and support a diverse range of users and manage expectations around a shared use facility. The training and support of a team of volunteers to help deliver the Reading Room was also central to the specification.

The tender was released in Council's e-Tendering Portal on 18 May 2024 and advertised in the local paper. It specified ensuring the integration of the Reading

Room services and programs with the Mount Evelyn Community House programming and its community development functions to maximise community benefit.

This model has been well developed and delivered by the tenderer, as the current service provider, who have capitalised on the significant opportunity for community benefit that exists with the co-location of the two services and the complementarity of the outcomes sought by both services.

The tenderer provided evidence, against all the criteria, of their capability and commitment to the outcomes of community benefit, managing relationships and the other criteria. A summary from the tender includes:

- The Mount Evelyn Community House has delivered the Reading Room service for the past 7 years and during that time developed many benefits to the community. The tender submission outlines their focus on meeting community needs and opportunities, using a community development approach. The Community House has a team of volunteers who help operate the Reading Room with a part-time, paid staff person. They demonstrate a commitment to delivering quality and community focused programs and activities:
 - The Board of the Community House demonstrate good governance, managing a high functioning organisation that delivers quality programming, support, and connection for community members.
 - The Community House has established innovative programming, including for carers of people with disability. The submission included testimonials from participants and their families about the role the Community House and Reading Room play in reducing social isolation through welcoming, inclusive, and responsive activities.
- The community benefits that have been delivered by the Mount Evelyn Community House through the integrated delivery of both the Reading Room and neighbourhood house programs include:
 - Community-informed programming across all ages: early years learning, health and wellbeing, art, lifestyle and social connection groups, and an ever-growing carers' program. Includes cross generation programs, breaking down stereotypes.
 - Support for people experiencing vulnerability: homelessness, family violence, social isolation, neurodiversity and ageing in place.
 - Important literacy development programming: new parents' groups, children's programming, providing families with accessible connection points with early years activities that immerse children and families in the literacy resources of the Reading Room.
 - Capacity to respond to community need and interest, through a deep connection and enquiring approach.

- Cross promotion of the Reading Room and Community House programs has increased participation in both, and a “one-stop” offer to the community of Mount Evelyn.

In summary the tender submission evidenced a commitment to quality service delivery that understands, responds to, and delivers on community needs and opportunities.

Options considered

The Tender process resulted in one submission. The panel considered and scored the submission independently before meeting to assess the tender.

Prior to letting the tender, several procurement options were examined, with the decision being to go to tender as the most transparent method of commissioning this service. The tender process also best meets Council’s Procurement Policy.

Tenders Received

No	Name	Suburb, State	Price (ex. GST)
1	Mount Evelyn Community House	Mount Evelyn, VIC	\$103,590.00

Tender Conformance

The tender was assessed for conformity with the tender documents. Mount Evelyn Community House lodged a conforming submission.

Evaluation Criteria

Tenderers were asked to provide one total lump sum price. The evaluation panel evaluated the tender against the criteria using pre-established weightings as published in the tender document.

Selection Criteria	Weighting
Commitment to Risk Management	5%
Commitment to OH&S	5%
Similar Projects/Activities	5%
Financial Stability	10%
Operating Structure & On-Site Resourcing	10%
Promote Relationships with Facility Users	5%
Community Benefit	25%
Local Sustainability	5%

There was one tender submitted however a comprehensive evaluation process was completed with evaluation panel members assessing independently before meeting

to determine the final recommendation. This was overseen by a Procurement Officer.

A thorough verification process will be completed to the satisfaction of the evaluation panel by Council's Child Safety Business Partner to ensure compliance for direct contact with children.

A summary of the recommended tenderer is outlined in Attachment 1.

Recommended option and justification

Scoring established the preferred tenderer as Mount Evelyn Community House Inc. with a final score of 88%. The evaluation panel was unanimous in their decision to recommend them as the preferred tenderer. This was based on their strong record of delivering community benefit and a valued Reading Room service to the community and on the scores against all the criteria.

Following the evaluation process, detailed in Confidential Attachment 1, the evaluation panel request that Council adopts the recommendations within this report.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Council has operational budget for the new financial year of \$100,000 for this service. The tender price is \$103,590 with increments matched to the rate base increase, annually. The shortfall of \$3,590 will be met through operational savings.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

No regional, state or national plans and policies are applicable to the recommendation in this report.

This report contributes to the strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan to promote healthy and connected communities and deliver quality infrastructure. It also helps deliver the following strategic plans:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 through supporting social connection, lifelong learning, volunteering, parent supports, reducing social isolation and loneliness, building skills and strong local governance.
- Access, Equity, and Inclusion Plan through support for parents and carers of children with disability. The Pathways for Carers program is a partnership with Council, disability services and the carers.
- Asset Management Policy - the Reading Room service at the Station House maximises community benefit from this facility. Further, in line with the policy this contract supports services to current and future generations within the community, providing quality infrastructure and developing assets that are responsive to the changing environment.

RELEVANT LAW

This report seeks Council approval to award a contract that complies with Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2020. Section 108 of the Act outlines the requirement for Council's Procurement Policy. The tender was conducted in line with Council's policy which complies with Section 108.

A Gender Impact Assessment for this service will be completed in the coming six months. The recommended tenderer has a strong record of inclusion and diverse participation evidenced in their programming and policies.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The tender submission notes use of local businesses and employment of local people as tutors. The volunteers are also mostly locals, with this being a pathway to employment for some. The programs at the Reading Room support literacy development starting with new Mum's groups at the facility. A lifelong love of reading supports future economic opportunities.

Social Implications

The tenderer demonstrated a range of outcomes from the integrated Reading Room and Community House at the Station House location. Stories and testimonials of breaking down social isolation, connecting people through programming and volunteering all speak to strategic outcomes in health and wellbeing.

The tender outlined a commitment to engaging with the community to understand interests, opportunities, and needs. This is pivotal to the increased participation in the Reading Room and Community House. The through the Pathways for Carers program showed that inclusion and targeted supports for vulnerable community members is also a priority.

Environmental Implications

The Station House is a site for community support in an emergency, it has generator capacity and is a source of service referral and trusted information about an emergency to the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not undertaken specifically for the tender process. Reports from the current Reading Room provider indicated a high level of participation in the Reading Room and ongoing benefit to community of this Council service. The tender submission included feedback from participants about the programs and the positive impact of the Reading Room.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not relevant.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Contract Compliance process ensures any risks related to Child Safety and OHS are mitigated. The tenderer demonstrated thorough OHS and Risk policies are in place. The evaluation panel was satisfied that the tenderer demonstrated commitment to managing risks related to the service.

Risks for Council associated with the Reading Room tender process are tabled below with mitigations.

Risk	Mitigating Actions
Procurement process does not meet standards	Tender documents set out service specification and tender process was in line with Council's policy and procedures.
Poor quality submissions leading to delay in service deliver	Tender specification was detailed and provided a clear outline of the service expected.
Reputational Risk	The tender process was conducted in a robust manner, fairly and following Council procurement protocols.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Contract No. CT7516 Tender Evaluation