

Women of Empire Exhibition

TO Thames Community Board
FROM Marlene Perry - Community Development Officer
DATE 3 June 2015
SUBJECT **Women of Empire Exhibition**

1 Purpose of Report

To seek Community Board support for the Women of Empire Exhibition Event planned to be held in Thames between 16 and 26 November 2015.

2 Background

In September 2014 a WW100 community group consisting of the Community Development Officer, Board Member Cassidy, Russell Skeet, Morrie and Geraldine Dunwoodie, Frances Burton and other members of the WW100 Group met with Fiona and Keith Baverstock, Australian historians and costume collectors, to discuss a possible exhibition in Thames. After viewing the portfolio of costumes and talking about some of Thames' stories, the group met on site with Frances Burton at the Thames Historical Museum, Morrie and Geraldine Dunwoodie at The Treasury and John Isdale at the Museum of Mines. The group also looked at a possible event being held at the Thames War Memorial Civic Centre.

The Women of Empire Exhibition takes the viewer into the lives of the women of Australia and New Zealand who were transformed by their experiences in the First World War. This exhibition is a tribute to the women of ANZAC - for they also have a story to tell. Women with medical training - doctors, nurses, masseuses - joined the men on warships, at Gallipoli, in Egypt and on the Western Front. Women with determination drove ambulances became cooks and orderlies, Red Cross aides or motor cycle messengers.

Less well known are the experiences of those who stayed on the home front and replaced the men on farms, in banks and offices or did voluntary work making comforts and clothing for the troops or raised money for the women and children of Europe displaced by the war. This army of resourceful women kept businesses, farms and households afloat and the country running whilst their menfolk were away.

The Women of Empire Exhibition takes some of these women and elaborates on their stories in the original costume of the era.

The Women of Empire Exhibition is an important and evocative 'pop up' exhibition of original WW1 era costume staged by "Dressing Australia - Museum of Costume". These significant pieces have been selected from Seams Old Costume Collection which is one of the most extensive and important private collections of period and vintage costume in Australasia.

The Historical Museum is donating props for the exhibition and The Treasury are writing five local 'her stories' for the exhibition.

As part of the WW100 Commemorative work programme the group has steadily continued to correspond with Fiona Baverstock who is organising to come to New Zealand. This is the only exhibition of its kind in Australasia and it is only stopping in three places in New Zealand in 2015 being Waiouru (free entry), Thames and Nelson. The exhibition will be in Thames from 16 to 26 November 2015.

The Exhibition does provide an opportunity for joint collaboration of many service groups to raise funds for the single cause of commemorating women who have contributed their lives, heart and efforts to WW1.

3 Issue

The total estimated cost to host the exhibition and how they are being/could be covered is as follows:

| Item | Cost | How costs are being/could be covered | Possible shortfall |
|---|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Exhibition | \$3,000 | \$1,300 raised to date | \$1,700 |
| Set up /Close down | \$1,000 | Ongoing fund raising | \$1,000 |
| 14 days accommodation for the Baverstocks | \$2,800 | Billeting has been arranged | \$0.00 |
| Marketing/ticket sales | \$2,000 | Funds secured | \$0.00 |
| Venue Hire | \$1,000 | Requesting waiver of fees by the Thames Community Board | \$1,000 |
| TOTAL | \$9,800 | | \$3,700 |

Since the initial visit with Fiona and Keith Baverstock the Community Development Officer has met with Thames Rotary, Thames Lions Club, the Thames Hospital Manager, Thames Probus Club, Totally Thames, Transition Town Thames, Zonta and the WW100 Group to gain the support and interest of the clubs to contribute to the Exhibition. These groups have been positive about fund raising and are being/have been approached to contribute approximately \$500 per group.

An article will also be written by the Hauraki Herald to gain community and commercial support for the project. The Community Development Officer continues to seek community support and pledges of funding.

4 Discussion

To date the WW1 activities which TCDC have contributed to are focussing on our brave and courageous men of the WW1:

- ANZAC Commemorations and Gallipoli (sign for the Thames men who died in WW1)
- The Battle of Messines (WW1 Memorial Forest commemorating the men killed during the battle)
- The Thames Fallen (signature trees for Thames men who died in WW1 at Rhodes Park)

Hosting this exhibition would put some focus on the contribution of the courageous and hard working women of WW1 and securing the venue hire as sponsorship by the Thames Community Board would significantly support this.

Possible billeted accommodation has been identified and if the Baverstocks are happy to stay there then the accommodation costs would not be required.

To add to the contributions of the community fundraising, ticket sales of \$10 per ticket and coin donations could recover total costs or the balance of costs for the exhibition.

A \$15 combination ticket is also being offered that covers entry to the exhibition and a museum in Thames to encourage people to 'Stay Another Day'.

Thames would need to gain a visitor number of 73.5 visitors a day (income of \$735.00 per day x 14 days = \$10,300). Gold coin donations could also be collected through school trips to the exhibition. A schedule of visitors could be drawn up recruiting community service Clubs, youth groups (guides, scouts, church groups), school visits, special seniors outings etc., to gain the required 73 persons per day.

The WW100 community group could apply for Community Board event funding as a partial solution to the fundraising issue, however the application would not guarantee funding in time to book and market the event and the group or groups would not know the outcome until September 2015.

The opportunity for Thames to showcase this event and women's contributions to WW1 both at war and on the home front would add balance to the WW100 Commemorations and provide a unique event on the Thames calendar.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Thames Community Board:

1. Receives the 'Women of Empire Exhibition' report dated 30 April 2015.
2. Approves waiving of the Thames War Memorial Civic Centre Hireage Fees of \$1,000 for the Women of Empire Exhibition being held between 16 and 26 November 2015.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *Women of Empire Exhibition Costings*

Attachment B *Women of Empire Brochure*

[Attachment A - Women of Empire Costings](#)

Attachment A

Attachment B - Women of Empire Brochure