

10 August 2016

Mr Jordan Williams
Executive Director
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union

requests@taxpayers.org.nz

Dear Mr Williams

Thank you for your request for information pursuant to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Specifically, you have requested information relating to an event hosted by Wellington City Council on 6 July 2016.

Background

The Wellington City Council (Council) and the Australian Capital Territory Government (ACT) have been working, since late February, to develop and implement a sister city relationship.

You may be aware that Singapore Airlines will commence flights from Singapore to Canberra and Wellington on 21 September this year. In light of that, the Council and ACT have worked to ensure that both cities are able to leverage off the significant economic benefit this presents. The flights alone, according to Wellington International Airport figures, will inject an additional \$95 million spend into the New Zealand economy per annum, with an estimated \$44 million contribution to the nation's GDP.

This work culminated in the signing of the sister city agreement between Wellington and Canberra and this significant and mutually beneficial relationship was celebrated at the event on 6th July. This event brought together three key elements; the acknowledgement of the new relationship, an urban activation approach to showcasing the former Public Trust Building and marketing Wellington.

Sister City Agreement

As you have noted, the Mayor and Council have promoted the establishment of the agreement between the two cities. While you have not asked for a copy of the agreement, we have included it for your reference as it provides context for a range of activities associated with its implementation.

The agreement has been developed to focus on delivering benefit to both cities. It is not, therefore, simply an acknowledgement of association - it is the framework for tangible outputs towards shared objectives.

The sister city agreement has already enabled agreements between the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA) and the Canberra Innovation Network and Zealandia and Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary.

You may also have seen that the Council hosted the signing of the Wellington and Canberra Chambers of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding as one of a number of new relationships under the sister city banner.

Since the opening of a dialogue between the Council and the ACT, work has begun to market Canberra to Wellington by *VisitCanberra*, which launched its campaign here recently. That campaign, under the sister city banner, is designed to attract Canberrans to Wellington and Wellingtonians to Canberra. Importantly, collaboration around marketing activities between both cities will be part of a campaign to bring long-haul international travellers to both cities.

Like you, we think ratepayers have a right to know the total cost of the event. The event costed a total of \$51,022.45, which represents excellent value for money.

Discussion

Sister City

The Sister City agreement sets out the areas where the Council and ACT Government will cooperate to generate new activity, share expertise towards improved delivery of service and work together for mutual opportunity.

The agreement has a heavy emphasis on the economy. The agreement sets out expectations of work to be undertaken in events development, tourism promotion, marketing and product development. and the Wellington and Canberra Chambers of Commerce have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding. It creates an expectation that the two cities will work harder to connect businesses in Wellington and Canberra. However, there is also a strong focus on culture and the arts.

As a showcase of Wellington's arts, culture, digital, fashion, food and beverage assets the event brought together a wide range of performers, designers, small local arts companies, local production companies and local digital and audio companies. Many of their services were provided to the Council at heavily discounted rates in support of the event. Their support enabled us to put some of Wellington's newest emerging talent on show and enabled them to market their talent and expertise.

Urban Activation – The Former Public Trust Building

The Council is proud to have been able to, at short notice, bring together several strands of work to enable the event on 6 July at the former Public Trust Building on Lambton Quay. The Council chose to stage the event in the Public Trust Building because the recently seismically strengthened venue presented an excellent marketing and urban activation opportunity.

The Council worked with the owner who generously leased the building for the purposes of the event on 6 July. This was part of an urban activation approach that sought to show the building off and demonstrate its versatility to potential investors.

Marketing

One of the three elements of the event was that it was a marketing opportunity, and on that score it was a huge success. The ACT Chief Minister acknowledged during the event that Canberra would not yet be able to compete with Wellington for the title of 'coolest little capital in the world' – which is of considerable economic benefit to the city.

A key output from the event will be a video that will be available to WREDA, *InvestCanberra* and the Council as part of its marketing campaigns to attract business, talent and tourism in to Wellington from Canberra, Singapore and Asia.

Your Questions

The Council has received three sets of requests from you and I have responded to each in turn below.

Set 1

Your email "The cost of drag queens and toga-wearing male models"

Your question 1

"An [sic] programme of the event's proceedings"

Response:

Attached.

Your question 2

"A breakdown of all costs associated with the event, including (but not limited to) venue hire; entertainment; performers, food, alcohol; speakers fees, and travel"

Response:

As noted above, the suppliers of all aspects of the event including the hiring of the venue, gave significant discounts to the Council in support of the event.

Catering (excl. beverages)	\$ 3,431.20
Beverage costs	\$ 2,661.87 (Alcoholic and non-alcoholic)
Production costs	\$ 30,079.38
Performance/display	\$ 14,850.00
TOTAL	\$ 51,022.45

1. No expenses relating to travel were approved, charged to or paid by the Council or any of its suppliers for this event. Overseas artists who performed on 6 July paid their own travel costs.
2. No expenses were incurred for any speakers.
3. Production costs included venue hire as well as venue set-up costs such as power, waste management, logistics, rigging, security, loading, furniture and lighting as the venue is currently a shell.

Your question 3

"Descriptions of the nature of the entertainment, dancers, and performers at the event"

Response:

Attached.

Your question 4

"Any multimedia or photographs of the event held by the Council"

Response:

At the time of your request, no multimedia or photographs were held by the Council. You may wish to refer to the social media accounts of the Australian High Commission, Biz Dojo or Steamliner's website. Multimedia being produced from the event is not yet with the Council.

Your question 5

"Who approved the entertainment, and was the Mayor or Deputy Mayor consulted (if so, please specify which)?"

Response:

Final decisions on the event were made by officers.

Neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor had a decision-making role in any of the three elements of the event on 6 July as this was an operational matter.

Your question 6

"We are informed that the event included drag queens and toga-wearing male models feedings each other grapes. Is that correct? If so, were those drag queens and toga-wearing male models ratepayer funded and, if so, why?"

Response:

There were no "toga-wearing male models" as you advise you were informed. Those we believe you may be referring to were both wait-staff and performers, the majority were women none of whom were wearing a "toga".

The event was supported by Pollyfilla who is a well-known, professional and respected drag-queen performance artist. Pollyfilla attended the event at their own expense and was regarded as a highlight by attendees because their inclusion demonstrated the diversity, culture, fun and progressive-appeal of Wellington.

Pollyfilla's performance was well-received by the Australian delegation as one of a large number of vibrant Wellington performances. We also note the performance of ballet dancers, local fashion designers who incorporate performance in showing their clothes, two contemporary performance groups, *Illuminated Bikes*, singers, classical musicians as well as digital display.

Your question 7

"Finally, we request a list the elected officials at the event."

Response:

- ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA
- Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington Celia Wade-Brown
- Deputy Mayor Justin Lester
- Economic Growth and Arts Committee Chair Councillor Jo Coughlan
- Transport and Urban Design Committee Chair Councillor Andy Foster
- Community, Sport and Recreation Committee Chair Councillor Paul Eagle
- Central Business District Projects Portfolio Leader Councillor Nicola Young.

Set 2

Your follow-up email to "The cost of drag queens and toga-wearing male models" refers.

Your question 1

“What was the total number of people who attended the event?”

Response:

131 people were at the event on 6 July.

Your question 2

“How many of these people work for the Council?”

Response:

In total, 10 officers attended, seven of whom had duties on the night. Three of those as guests on behalf of Council:

- The Chief Executive
- The Director Strategy and Communications
- The Mayors’ Office Chief of Staff.

Your question 3

“Were council officers allowed to take their partners to the event?”

Response:

Partners of Council officers were not invited. One Council officer’s partner was in attendance in their own capacity, another to pick up their partner from the event.

Your question 4

“How many of these people were from the Canberra council?”

Response:

Canberra does not have a “council”. However, we assume you mean representation from the ACT Government, the titles of those who attended are:

- ACT Chief Minister
- Chief of Staff to the Chief Minister
- Director General of Economic Growth
- Senior Manager *InvestCanberra*
- Press Secretary to the Chief Minister

Your question 5

“Who were the invitations to the event sent from?”

Response:

Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington Celia Wade-Brown

Your question 6

“Was the Mayor’s office consulted in relation to the event?”

Response:

Only insofar as the Mayor’s role at the event was concerned. The Deputy Mayor was not consulted.

Your question 7

“Were there trapeze artists at the event? If so, why, and who paid for these?”

Response:

No.

Set 3

Your final follow-up email to “The cost of drag queens and toga-wearing male models” refers.

Your question 1

“From what budget or fund were the costs of the party allocated from?”

Response:

You have referred to “the party”, as has been outlined to you the event served multiple purposes and we would not accept your characterisation.

Costs arising from the event will be met from across a range of operational budgets.

Your question 2

“Was it a budget administered by the same committee that oversees the Wellington Economic Initiatives Development fund? If so, who sits on that committee?”

Response:

No.

Your question 3

“We also request a list of the public and NGO organisations represented at the party (and the number of attendees invited from each organisation).”

Response:

You have referred to “the party”, as has been outlined to you the event served multiple purposes and we would not accept your characterisation. Organisational representation is set out below:

Australia:

- ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA (*Australia*)
- Chief of Staff to Chief Minister (*Australia*)
- Director General Economic Growth ACT (*Australia*)
- Senior Manager Invest Canberra (*Australia*)
- Managing Director Canberra Airport (*Australia*)
- Chief Executive of the Canberra Chamber of Commerce (*Australia*)
- Helm Wines (*Australia*)
- Press Secretary to the Chief Minister (*Australia*)
- Canberra Times Reporter (*Australia*)
- ACT Government Minister Rattenbury (*Australia*)
- Chief of Staff to Minister Rattenbury (*Australia*)
- Alison Duncan Australian High Commission (*Australia*)
- Amelia Harris Australian High Commission (*Australia*)

Diplomatic Core:

- High Commissioner for Australia (2)
- High Commissioner for Singapore (2)
- Deputy High Commissioner for the United Kingdom (2)
- Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of Japan (2)
- Representative from the Embassy of France (1)

Senior Representatives:

- Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington Celia Wade-Brown
- Deputy Mayor Justin Lester
- Economic Growth and Arts Committee Chair Councillor Jo Coughlan
- Transport and Urban Design Committee Chair Councillor Andy Foster
- Community, Sport and Recreation Committee Chair Councillor Paul Eagle
- Central Business District Projects Portfolio Leader Councillor Nicola Young
- Chief Executive Wellington Chamber of Commerce
- Wellington Tenth Trust (4 – official welcome party)
- Fairfax media (4 invited, 1 attended)
- NEC (3)
- Wingnut Films
- Ministry of Culture and Heritage (3)
- Zealandia (2)
- Collider (2)
- Biz Dojo (2)
- New Zealand Sister City Association
- Te Papa
- Victoria University of Wellington
- World of Wearable Arts (3).

In Summary

Working with a range of small Wellington companies, performers and artists, the Council is proud of the event it hosted. It brought together three elements that leverage off the exciting new relationship with Canberra. One we believe will bring significant economic growth opportunity and is worth showcasing. Importantly, the cost to ratepayers in delivering this successful event, was value for money given the level of expertise, exposure to the international market and commercial relationships established that are already resulting in new activity.

I trust this adequately addresses your questions. However, if you are not satisfied with my response, you may wish to write to the Ombudsman with your complaint.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Baker
Director Strategy and Communications

6 July 2016

**Sister
City
Agreement**

The City of Wellington, New Zealand and Canberra, Australia

Specifically, the agreement will be delivered through a commitment to the following activities:

- Cultural exchanges that connect arts communities, events development and national institutions
- Partnerships that facilitate tourism promotion, marketing and product development
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing about urban renewal and sustainable growth
- Jointly supporting innovation and technology start-up ecosystems
- Collaboration on opportunities, to secure events, grow partnerships and increase participation in sport.
- Programs that support opportunities for Indigenous people from both countries
- Biodiversity initiatives and nature based partnerships
- Mutual exchange regarding smart city technologies and implementation
- Collaboration for the development of community services and affordable housing solutions
- Collaboration on capital civic programs for building Nationhood
- Collaboration for the development of sustainable transport solutions
- Mutual exchange regarding renewable and sustainable energy supply
- Mutual exchange of delegations that connect Wellington City Council and the ACT Government
- Mutual exchange of delegations that connect businesses of each city

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory

Celia Wade-Brown
Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington



ACT
Government



CANBERRA

**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

10	7.56pm	Mayor Celia Wade-Brown, Wellington City	At lectern	Lectern mic	Lectern	Grand Room	Aprx 7 mins	(May be a spontaneous waitata afterwards) Mayor then introduces Andrew Barr
11	8.03pm	Andrew Barr, Chief Minister, ACT (Canberra)	Dockway (or on stairs): Solo MC outro/intro	Lectern mic	Lectern	Grand Room	Aprx 8 mins	(May be a spontaneous waitata afterwards)
12	8.10pm	MC introduce MOU signing	Main stage	Lectern mic	Wider stage	Grand Room	Aprx 1 mins	May only be 30 secs!
13		MOU document signing	Main stage at table, sitting and signing one at a time. MOU document on table - with special pens.	Lectern mic	Wider stage	Grand Room	Aprx 3 mins	May only be 30 secs!
14	8.14pm	Niho Taniwha Performance	Wide area in front of stage. Total dancer numbers TBC. May be 3 x conch players around the room for start who may join the haka at end.	Niho Taniwha soundtrack	In front of stage. Can be fast moving and very colourful at times. Follow mood of video and music.	Niho Taniwha video	Aprx 4 - 4.30mins	Check bar leaners in front of top stage aren't too close for number of dancers.
15		MC tells guests formalities are over		Lectern mic	Lectern	Static Niho Taniwha end image	Aprx 30 secs	
16		SLIGHT PAUSE AS MC AND PERFORMERS EXIT						
17								
18		DJ: The Nomad	DJ desk	DJ (bring in gently)	DJ (bring in gently)	The Nomad video - Nick's choice. Strong colours.	Until Fashion Show starts	Bring in DJ lights and music gently while/after MC performers exit. So it's clearly not another 'show piece'
19								
20								
21								
22	TIME	ACT	STAGING	SOUND	LIGHTS	VIDEO	LENGTH	EXTRA NOTES
23								

24		PAUSE: ROOM SET UNTIL SM QUE		DJ	Atmosphere low lights	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.		
25	8.30pm	Fashion Show	Performers enter room 1 at a time, proceed from one 'spot' to the next until all 9 are around the room.	DJ (slow & sexy)	Performer 'spots'. Plinths and the fern/red curtain and centre chair are the key spots.	Suzzane's photos very slowly. Accumulate images 1 at a time until all 6 are on screens.	Aprx 15 mins	Ensure all performance 'spots' are clear and clear enough walking path between (first model - Jayden) will help create their own path)
26		PAUSE: ROOM SET UNTIL SM QUE		DJ	Atmosphere low lights	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.		
27	8.55pm	Java Dance Performance	Stage: Solo MC outro/intro	cello mic	In front of main stage, incl on top of barrels. Earthy colours. Very slow or static.	Wine cellar	Aprx 3-4 mins	Set barrels, stairs, 'cello's chair
28		PAUSE: ROOM SET UNTIL SM QUE		DJ	Atmosphere low lights	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.		
29	9.10pm	Pollyfilla SM Lip Sync -	3 x plinths by columns	DJ	Faster / disco colours ok	Polly/kylie video	Aprx 3-4 mins	Ensure 3 x plinths by columns are clear
30		PAUSE: ROOM SET UNTIL SM QUE		DJ	Atmosphere low lights	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.		
31	9.20pm	Jamie McCaskill	2 singers, at fern/red curtain 'lounge'	N/A be on standby to bring DJ music up and down as needed	Fern/red curtain lounge. Atmos level only	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.	Aprx 3-10 mins. End cued by David Daniela	
32								
33		PAUSE: ROOM SET UNTIL SM QUE END OF ROOM SCENCE		DJ	Atmosphere low lights	The Nomad video - Nick's choice.		

