

Item : **Mayoral Report - Beslan Children Christmas Toy Appeal**

Author: Councillor Michael Platt - Mayor

Reason for report: For Council to consider supporting the Beslan Children Christmas Toy Appeal.

Recommendation:

That Council support the Beslan Children Christmas Toy Appeal as detailed in the report.

Background

1. Councillors will recall the horror of watching events unfold in the attack by terrorists on school children, parents and teachers in Beslan in early September.
2. The video images of frightened children watching wide-eyed as men with black hoods and camouflage fatigues turned their school gymnasium into a deadly booby trap were horrifying.
3. The terrorists were responsible for the death of over 336 people, many of whom were children when they triggered a wave of explosions that saw the gymnasium roof collapse and soldiers storm the school when terrorists began firing on fleeing hostages.
4. The devastation to the Beslan community will take decades to heal. Many children fortunate enough to survive have suffered both physically and mentally from the ordeal.
5. Recently I was approached by Dick Caine, the operator of the Carss Park Memorial Swimming Pool Complex seeking Council's support in a Christmas Toy Appeal for the Children of Beslan.
6. Dick has had discussion with Kostya Tszuyu, his wife Natalie and sister Olga, who have family ties in Russia about demonstrating support from the Kogarah community for the children and their families from Beslan as they come to terms with the devastation caused by the terrorist act.
7. Similar to the Community Day Appeal for the families of the Bali victims held at Carss Park Pool a few years ago, Dick has sought Council's support in organizing another "open day at Carss Park Pool" with all funds raised going towards the purchase of toys that would be sent over to the children of Beslan for distribution at Christmas time.
8. The Beslan children Christmas Toy Appeal would be seeking to involve all of the Schools in the St George area to participate in raising funds for donating toys.

9. The fundraising activity would culminate in a Community Day at Carss Park Swimming Pool where the community would have the opportunity to enjoy entertainment, food and meet a host of sports stars, who Dick would have present on the day for photograph and autograph opportunities.
10. Council's involvement would be to assist in organizing the event, promoting the event. It is estimated that Council would need to allocate \$5,000 to cover printing, advertising and administration costs.
11. I am sure that everyone in our community was touched by the images of the children and their families in the aftermath of the Beslan tragedy. I would like to provide the children and families of our community with an opportunity to reach out and show support to the Beslan Community at Christmas and provide some joy to those children who survived at a time when their families will be further saddened.

Budget Impact

12. \$5,000 – unrestricted funds

End of Report