

ORDINARY MEETING 24 JANUARY 2018	2
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OUTCOMES FROM CAIRNS UNCONVENTION 2017

Belinda Hutchinson | 1/8/5 | #5637849

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes this report which details the Council sponsorship provided in support of the Unconvention event held in Cairns on 16 September 2017 and the benefits and outcomes that this event delivered.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an overview of outcomes from the Cairns Unconvention 2017.

Cairns Unconvention 2017 was held in Cairns on 16 September 2017. The full day event featured high-profile speakers, including Michelle Bridges. Cairns was the first regional centre in Australia to host an Unconvention. Business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs came together to learn new strategies to build better businesses and be inspired by some of Australia's leading entrepreneurs. The majority of the 600 attendees were from Cairns and the surrounding region, demonstrating a strong local interest in this type of event.

Federal, State and Local Government provided financial sponsorship to enable Unconvention to be held in Cairns. Cairns Regional Council contributed \$15,000 (ex GST) in sponsorship to the event.

Council was promoted as a sponsor of the event and a strong supporter of innovation and business. The Mayor delivered the welcome address, which provided an opportunity to promote Cairns as an entrepreneurial city and Council's efforts in encouraging innovation and supporting small business.

Overall the event was a success and highlights the city's and Council's commitment to foster and develop innovation and entrepreneurship.

BACKGROUND:

Cairns Unconvention 2017 was held at the Pullman Cairns International on Saturday, 16 September 2017. The full day event featured high-profile speakers, including Michelle Bridges. Michelle is one of Australia's most influential personal trainers and founder of a multi-million dollar fitness empire. She is also an author and television personality, best known for her role as a trainer on 'The Biggest Loser'.

Unconvention started in 2010 as an initiative of The Entourage, a leading business and entrepreneurship educator. It is reported as being Australia's largest event for entrepreneurs. At the conference, business owners learn strategies for building better businesses from some of Australia's most successful entrepreneurs and innovators. It has previously been held in capital cities, with Cairns being the first regional centre to host an Unconvention.

Federal, State and Local Government provided financial sponsorship to enable Unconvention to be held in Cairns, at no cost for standard registration. Cairns Regional Council contributed sponsorship of \$15,000 (ex GST) to the event.

Young Entrepreneurs Project (YEP) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Far North and North Queensland (CCIQ) were instrumental in coordinating sponsorships.

COMMENT:

In a report commissioned by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, "Queenslanders' perceptions & attitudes to innovation" (March 2017), it was identified that Far North Queensland residents express a much greater desire to be actively involved in innovation compared to the Queensland average, and believe that anyone can be an innovator. This positive attitude towards innovation was reflected in interest in this event. Attendance was higher than the original projection of 500 attendees:

- Approximately 600 people attended.
- 541 people had registered (including three international and 31 interstate). This represented significant local engagement.
- Attendees also came from the Tablelands, Townsville and the surrounding region.
- Five Councillors attended.

Comments received by attendees at the Council booth were very positive. Speakers were well-received by the audience. The Entourage conducted a post-event survey from 120 attendees, which indicated an overall rating for the day of 8.2 out of 10.

Council was promoted as a sponsor of the event and a strong supporter of innovation and business. The Mayor delivered the welcome address, which provided an opportunity to promote Cairns as an entrepreneurial city and Council's efforts in encouraging innovation and supporting small business.

A number of complimentary VIP tickets were provided to Council for the community. Council ran a competition on Facebook asking "what is the best piece of entrepreneurial or business advice you've ever received?" Over 50 entries were received.

Overall the event was a success and highlights the city's and Council's commitment to foster and develop innovation and entrepreneurship.

OPTIONS:

This report is for noting.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

This was the first time Council has sponsored an Unconvention. Given the popularity of previous Unconvention events held in other locations and the strong innovation and entrepreneurial culture in Cairns, the risk of the event being unsuccessful was considered low.

A Sponsorship Agreement was in place to define the obligations of The Entourage to ensure that Council was effectively promoted as an event sponsor.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Council provided \$15,000 (ex GST) in financial support. Provision was made for this funding within the Economic Development budget for 2017/18. Evidence of expenditure was provided by The Entourage. Staff members from Council's Economic Development team also provided assistance in support of the event including planning, promotion and coordination of the Council booth at the event. Council officer time spent in relation to these activities is estimated at 50 hours.

Direct economic benefit was received from international, interstate and intrastate visitors staying overnight in Cairns; payments to the venue and suppliers; and attendees purchasing food and beverages from surrounding businesses throughout the day. Catering was not provided, as the intent was for attendees to support local businesses.

Through encouraging and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, the event also has indirect positive ongoing benefits for this segment of the Cairns economy.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

Hosting Unconvention in Cairns enabled the local community the opportunity to attend this unique event and hear from high-profile speakers, without the time and expense required to travel to Sydney or Melbourne.

Business owners gained ideas to implement in their business to improve performance and profitability. Business intenders were inspired to follow their dreams of starting a new business. The creation of new businesses and improvement of existing business will have a positive, ongoing effect for the economy of Cairns and the region which has flow on benefits to general community wellbeing.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

This event supported Council's Corporate Plan and Operational Plan Strategic Goal

1. Economy. Strategic Objectives supported include:

- Grow and sustain employment and education opportunities;
- Deliver events, activities and performances that bring economic and social benefits to the community; and
- Embrace a smart communities agenda and inspire innovation and entrepreneurship through access to technology and resources.

Statutory:

The *Local Government Act 2009* outlines key principles including good governance and transparent and efficient processes and decision making in the public interest. This report aims to provide good governance through transparent reporting of outcomes achieved as a result of Council support.

CONSULTATION:

Consultation was undertaken with YEP, CCIQ and The Entourage.

Belinda Hutchinson
Economic Development Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Masasso', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Masasso
Executive Project Officer