

<b>ORDINARY MEETING</b>  <b>24 JANUARY 2018</b>	<b>3</b>
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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AND CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY – PROGRESS UPDATE

B Hutchinson | 1/8/2 | #5642561

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council notes this report which outlines the projects and initiatives that have been delivered between 4 November 2016 and 31 December 2017 under the Memorandum of Understanding between Council and CQUniversity Australia.**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Council and CQUniversity Australia (CQU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 4 November 2016. The aim of the MOU is to establish a collaborative relationship around issues and opportunities of a mutual interest to create lasting benefits for the broader Cairns Region Communities.

The core areas of interest included within the MOU reflect a Triple Bottom Line approach under which possible projects are considered in the context of their contribution to our economy, community and environment. Collaboration has focused on areas in which CQU has particular expertise including Tourism, Creative and Performing Arts, Engineering and Social Innovation.

Some of the key projects where collaboration has occurred include:

- State of the Arts – a five year joint research project
- Our Cairns Community Survey and Industry Consultation
- New Years Eve community event
- Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards
- Transition to electric vehicles workshop
- Creative arts support
- Engineering support
- Busk at Dusk
- CQU Indaba
- CQU 25 year celebrations
- Tourism industry support
- Film industry support
- Small business support
- Advancing Regional Innovation Program

Further detail on the initiatives listed above is contained in the body of this report.

**BACKGROUND:**

CQU first established a presence in Cairns with the opening of the CQUniversity Distance Education Support Centre in 2012. The centre experienced rapid growth, which led to the decision by CQU to open a full-size campus in Cairns in October 2015. The Cairns campus now supports more than 1,000 on-campus and online students across the Cairns region.

Council and CQU work collaboratively to enhance and progress mutually beneficial outcomes to benefit the broader Cairns Region Communities. This collaboration was formalised through the establishment of the first MOU between Council and CQU, which was signed on 4 November 2016. The MOU runs for a period of four years, expiring 4 November 2020. There is an option to extend for a further four years by mutual agreement.

The agreed outcomes sought through the MOU are to:

- Collaborate around issues and opportunities of a mutual interest to create lasting benefits for the broader Cairns Region Communities;
- Plan and implement projects of mutual interest through individual collaboration agreements;
- Facilitate effective dialogue to gain information, knowledge and insight to inform decision making and change;
- Foster best practice through skills development, education, training and knowledge transfer;
- Collaborate to establish Cairns as a nationally and internationally renowned education city;
- Identify opportunities to undertake research and development in areas of University strength including but not limited to; Engineering, Information Technology, Agriculture, Creative Arts, Tourism and Social Innovation;
- Seek to establish a partnership to further the development of a School of Performing Arts to develop the region's artistic capacity and realise the shared vision for Cairns to achieve national and international recognition as the 'Arts Centre for Northern Australia';
- Seek to partner on opportunities to support social enterprise development in Cairns;
- Cooperate and collaborate to identify and secure funding opportunities, from a wide range of sources, to progress initiatives of mutual and community benefit;
- Explore the opportunity for Council to provide internships to CQU graduates; and
- Where appropriate, develop programs and pathways of entry for Council management and staff to further their own higher education qualifications.

**COMMENT:**

Collaborative projects/initiatives undertaken in the period 4 November 2016 to 31 December 2017 and supported under the MOU include:

<b>Project Name / Initiative</b>	<b>Synopsis</b>
State of the Arts – a 5 year joint research project	Working with CQU and identified stakeholders to achieve an evidenced-based and holistic understanding of the value of Council's investment in the five-year planning cycle.
Our Cairns Community and Industry Consultation	CQU participated at an industry forum for Our Cairns as part of Council's Corporate Plan development.
New Years Eve community event	CQU are the fireworks sponsor for New Years Eve community celebrations held at the Esplanade. Council and CQU worked together on a competition for New Years Eve.
Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards	CQU supported and sponsored Council's 2016 Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards.
Transition to electric vehicles workshop	Council hosted a workshop with Economic Development Queensland and Mitsubishi Motors Australia to discuss opportunities for transitioning to electric vehicles in FNQ. CQU participated in this workshop.
Creative arts support	Council provided use of the Tanks Art Centre for lecture and workshop purposes.
Engineering support	Council provided support to CQU Engineering students by allowing them to undertake survey work on the Cairns Esplanade.
Busk at Dusk	Council provided support to CQU in planning for the "Busk at Dusk" event held on 25 August 2017. This event was held to celebrate the first year of the Bachelor of Creative Arts degree.
CQU Indaba	Representatives from Cairns Regional Council participated in the CQU Indaba held on 8 September 2017, contributing to discussions on developing Cairns for the next generation.
CQU 25 year celebrations	The Mayor attended the CQU 25 year anniversary dinner in Rockhampton to show support for CQU's decision to invest so heavily into Cairns.
Regional perceptions of the GBR bleaching event and its impact on tourism and coastal communities	A representative from Cairns Regional Council participated in a CQU project designed to determine industry and community perceptions of the impacts of the 2016 and 2017 Great Barrier Reef (GBR) coral bleaching event on coastal communities and the tourism industry.
Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities Workshop	Representatives from Cairns Regional Council participated in CQU's Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities Workshop held on 21 November 2016 to discuss motivations of visitors.

Project Name / Initiative	Synopsis
Film industry support	Council worked with CQU to provide information and support to the film industry as part of their creative and performing arts focus.
Small business support	Council has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland to deliver small business masterclasses. CQU supported this initiative by hosting four masterclasses.
Advancing Regional Innovation Program	Council has actively worked with CQU and other stakeholders to build the innovation ecosystem in Far North Queensland and facilitate the establishment of Ignite FNQ Ltd. Social innovation will be one of the focus areas of this program.

### **OPTIONS:**

The report is for noting.

### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

#### Risk Management:

CQU's established reputation and standing mean the reputational risk of collaborating with CQU via the MOU is considered low.

The risks of individual projects developed under the MOU are considered and managed on a case by case basis. Individual collaboration agreements will be established in relation to specific projects where appropriate.

#### Council Finance and the Local Economy

The MOU provides a platform for a vast array of collaborations to occur which may result in potential savings through shared project ownership, operational efficiencies, investment attraction, research partnerships etc.

The MOU states that 'each party shall agree to be responsible for its own respective costs associated with undertakings of the MOU and subject to their own internal approvals processes thus not imposing any cost on either organisation as a part of the MOU.

#### Community and Cultural Heritage

The MOU between Council and CQU enhances and progresses mutually beneficial outcomes for the broader Cairns community.

#### Corporate and Operational Plans:

The MOU with CQU aligns with and assists in the delivery of all of Council's strategic goals as outlined in Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022, being:

1. Economy
2. Natural Assets
3. Liveability
4. Community and Culture
5. Serving the Community

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 the collaboration that has occurred between Council and CQU pursuant to the MOU.

**CONSULTATION:**

CQUniversity Australia

Belinda Hutchinson  
Economic Development Officer



Nick Masasso  
Executive Project Officer