

ORDINARY MEETING	6
21 FEBRUARY 2024	

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AND CQUNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA 2023 PROGRESS REPORT

58/6/1 | #7328854

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the contents of this report.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

CQUniversity Australia (CQU)

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cairns Regional Council and CQU signed a four-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 17 December 2020 with the intent of establishing a collaborative relationship to enhance and progress mutually beneficial outcomes of relevance to the Cairns community and Tropical North Queensland.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of projects and activities which have been delivered during the period 1 January to 31 December 2023. Attachment 1 includes a more comprehensive list; however, some notable areas of collaboration have included the following:

- CQU's participation and contribution within the *Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy*.
- Council and CQU's ongoing work towards realisation of the new CQU Cairns city campus on Council owned land at Hartley Street.
- Council's Animal Management team collaborated with Digital Media students to develop an on-line game to help primary school aged children to care for and interact with their pets safely.
- Joint contribution to *Study Cairns' International Education Familiarisation*, which brought twenty international education agents to the region from Cairns' priority and emerging markets.
- Employment of CQU Student Engineers as part of the student's mandatory industry placement.

BACKGROUND:

CQU was welcomed to Cairns in 2012 when it opened a modest study centre to better service the 500-plus distance education students who were enrolled with the University in the Cairns region at the time. Today, CQU's Cairns Square campus supports more

than 2,200 students across the region and includes fit for purpose facilities such as the CQU Aviation Centre at the Cairns Airport and the Exercise and Sport Science Lab at the Cairns Basketball Association headquarters in Manunda.

CQU delivers more than 250 education and training offerings, from short courses and certificates, through to undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees.

The Cairns region has been a major point of investment for CQU, delivering a direct, tangible, and positive impact on the prosperity of Cairns and the Far North. CQU are currently working with stakeholders, including Council, and the Federal Government to establish a new state-of-the-art, university campus in the Cairns CBD.

The MOU between Council and CQU commenced on 17 December 2020 for a four-year period and provides a broad framework under which joint initiatives and projects can be undertaken. The MOU may be extended by a further four-year period prior to the expiration date, on the same terms and conditions, with agreement by both parties.

This report provides a summary of the activities and projects where collaboration between Council and CQU has occurred pursuant to the MOU during the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

COMMENT:

With reference to the agreed aims in the MOU, the projects, and activities that delivered outcomes during the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 are set out in Attachment 1.

OPTIONS:

Option1 (recommended):

That Council notes the contents of this report.

Option 2:

That Council **does not** note the contents of this report at this time and requests additional information from Council Officers before reconsidering this matter.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

The risks of individual projects progressed under the current and proposed new MOU are considered and managed on a case-by-case basis. CQU has a well-established reputation as a provider of quality education in the domestic and international marketplace. As such, the reputational risk of collaboration with CQU via an MOU is low.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

There are no direct costs associated with the MOU. Financial and budgetary implications of collaborative projects are considered by Council on a case-by-case basis.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Council's *Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026* identifies Education and Training as a priority industry sector, and Innovation, Research, and Design as an economic initiative. This MOU with CQU supports and progresses both those priorities.

CONSULTATION:

CQUniversity

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Project / Activities attributable to the MOU between Council and CQU for the period 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023 (complete and ongoing)



Nick Masasso
Director Economic Development & Advocacy

Attachment 1 – Project / Activities attributable to the MOU between Council (CRC) and CQU for the period 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023 (complete and ongoing)

Specific MOU Aim	Project/Activity
<p>Collaboration around issues and opportunities of a mutual interest to create lasting benefits for the broader Cairns Region Communities (Outcome 6.1.1)</p>	<p><i>Entrepreneurship, Small Business, and Innovation Ecosystem Leaders' Round Table</i> – Chaired by YEP Cairns, Council and CQU are active members of the Round Table, which progresses entrepreneurship, small business and innovation in Cairns by bridging the gap to success for those who access relevant programs in the region.</p>
	<p><i>Smart Green Economy</i> – A body of work to position Cairns and Far North Queensland as a leader in the smart green economy by investigating the benefits of projects that could deliver economic returns as well as environmental and social dividends. Council recognises CQU's continued support in the Project as a member of the Collective Working Group.</p>
	<p>Council hosted an exhibition booth at the <i>International Business, Environment and Climate Conference</i> with CQU, showcasing research projects within the Smart Green Economy.</p>
	<p><i>Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy</i> – A strategic project designed to establish a clear and coordinated long term plan for the growth and development of the Cairns local government area. Council recognises the importance of CQU's involvement in this Project through the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Stakeholder Group Panel • Participation in community workshops and summits • Promotion of participation in the Community Panel to students.
<p>Planning and implementation of projects of mutual interest through individual collaboration agreements (Outcome 6.1.2)</p>	<p>CQU plan to establish a new Cairns city campus on Council owned land at 20-30 Hartley Street. Council and CQU continue to work towards realisation of this new campus.</p>

Specific MOU Aim	Project/Activity
Facilitation of effective dialogue to gain information, knowledge and insight to inform decision making and change (Outcome 6.1.3)	CQU Associate Vice President presented an update on the new CQU Cairns city campus at Council's <i>Economic Development Round Table</i> , a forum for stakeholders to discuss economic development projects and initiatives occurring in Cairns and the region. The round table is held twice a year, and CQU is an active member of the group.
	CQU participated in stakeholder engagement sessions by Council's Economic Development and Advocacy team to help inform Council's long-term approach to Investment Attraction.
	The Cairns Mayor and Mayoress hosted an official Welcome Reception for CQU's new Chancellor, Mr Graeme Innes AM and CQU's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Nick Klomp.
	CQU Vice-Chancellor presented an update to Councillors on the status of CQU's new city centre campus project as well as the operations of the university more broadly.
Support initiatives to increase education outcomes, including participation rates, for the region and foster best practice through skills development, education, training, and knowledge transfer (Outcome 6.1.4)	Council supported CQU's application for funding through the <i>Micro-Credentials Pilot in Higher Education Program</i> for the design and development of a new micro credential course entitled "Communication and Cultural Leadership in Business".
	Council's Animal Management team collaborated with Digital Media students by providing an authentic learning opportunity for consideration as a capstone experience for advanced level undergraduates. The students developed a simple on-line game called <i>Getting To Know Your Dog</i> to help primary school aged children to care for and interact with their pets safely.
	Council's Coordinator Sustainability and Climate Change presented at CQU's Engineering Open Day on the topic of <i>Council's Climate Change Strategy 2030</i> .

Specific MOU Aim	Project/Activity
<i>(continued)</i>	Council's Sustainability team collaborated with first-year Engineering students by providing an introductory real-world engineering problem for students work through. The students were asked to provide indicative advice to strengthen Council's Minimum Energy Performance Specifications with consideration of updates to the National Construction Code and consider current best practice.
Support initiatives that assist with retention of and attraction of human and intellectual capital to the Cairns region (Outcome 6.1.5)	<p>Council and CQU jointly hosted the <i>Department of Education, Small Business and Training (DESBT)/ Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) Cairns Energy Skills and Training Roundtable</i>, a forum to discuss and deliver insights from the region on current and future energy skills, training and workforce development needs to inform the Future Energy Workforce Roadmap.</p> <p><i>Cairns Regional Jobs Committee (Cairns RJC)</i> – The Cairns RJC aims to create more jobs, improve training pathways and raise investment in businesses and workforces across the state. The RJC brings together local business, government, community leaders, training providers, industry representatives, high schools, and unions to develop regional job and training plans.</p> <p>Council's Director of Economic Development and Advocacy is a member of the Cairns RJC, which is chaired by CQU Associate Vice-President for the Cairns and Far North Queensland Region</p>
Collaboration to establish Cairns as a nationally and internationally renowned education city (Outcome 6.1.6)	<p><i>Study Cairns International Education Familiarisation</i> – Council worked with Study Cairns to host international agents from Cairns' priority and emerging markets in the region.</p> <p>Council and CQU contributed to the familiarisation program through participation in the Coordinating Committee and by hosting various events, activities, and tours for the agents.</p>

Specific MOU Aim	Project/Activity
<i>(continued)</i>	Along with CQU Associate Vice President, Council participated in an International Education Training Roundtable Queensland Trade and Investment Commissioner – ASEAN and other key members of the Trade and Investment Queensland team. The round table provided an opportunity for IET Industry partners in Cairns to discuss opportunities and challenges for international education and training in the region and identify synergies within ASEAN.
Promote the regions research strengths and capacity in higher education to domestic and global audiences (Outcome 6.1.7)	<i>State of the Arts Research Project</i> – An independent analysis of the Cairns Strategy for Cultural and the Arts highlighting the insights of why Cairns is the Arts and Cultural Capital of the North.
Work in partnership to identify opportunities to undertake research and development in areas of significant University strength including but not limited to; Engineering, Information Technology, Agriculture, Creative Arts, Tourism, Allied Health, Sports Science and Social Innovation (Outcome 6.1.8)	<p>Council’s Creative Life team hosted the Cairns Curators’ Symposium, inviting visual arts organisations (and those contributing to the field) based in Cairns to come together, share recent achievements and to discuss future projects and potential partnerships. CQU’s is an invited member of the Symposium.</p> <p>Council’s Project Management Office employs CQU Student Engineers in the following discipline in FTE / casual capacity as part of the student’s mandatory industry placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)(Civil) and Diploma of Construction Management • Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)(Civil) and Diploma of Building Design
Cooperate and collaborate to identify and secure funding opportunities, from a wide range of sources, including Federal and State funding, to progress initiatives of mutual and community benefit (Outcome 6.1.10)	Council supported CQU’s request to the Federal Government that committed funding be expedited to ensure project delivery of the new CQU Cairns city campus.

Specific MOU Aim	Project/Activity
Explore the opportunity for CRC to provide internships to eligible CQU graduates, in areas that CRC are able to provide opportunity, with a reasonable remuneration package that is reflective of business needs and commensurate with the level of experience of the graduates (Outcome 6.1.11)	Council's Workforce Development Officer presented to students at CQU's Virtual Engineering Careers Fair Presentation and networking session on employment pathways and career opportunities graduates at Council.
Where appropriate, develop programs and pathways of entry for CRC management and staff to further their own higher education qualifications (Outcome 6.1.12)	Council's People & Organisational Performance team have had ongoing discussions with CQU regarding micro-credential opportunities for Council staff.