

ORDINARY MEETING	9
21 DECEMBER 2023	

CAIRNS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Enters into a Corporate Sponsorship Agreement with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025 with a further two year option, exercisable at Council's discretion, at a sponsorship value of \$30,000 (ex GST) per annum; and
2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters arising from the above.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc – Management Committee:

- Enver Selita – President (Optus Business Centre)
- Vanessa Allen – Vice President (ADhesive Communication)
- Matthew Tickner – Vice President (Progression Design & Development)
- Andrea Fogarty – Treasurer (Diocese of Cairns)
- Ben Cole - Cairns Young Chamber Chair (Fowler's Group)
- Alaina Anderlini (Freedom Planning)
- Stephanie Campbell (The Cairns Post)
- Luke Hare (Astute Financial)
- Mark Quinn (President, Far North Queensland Amateur Turf Club)

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Council adopts a collaborative approach to advocacy and economic development, working with key advocacy and economic development partners to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for Cairns and the broader region. The Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc is a key partner in this regard.

To formalise collaboration on Strategic Advocacy and *Small Business Friendly Council* Charter initiatives, the Chamber has proposed to enter into a Corporate Sponsorship Agreement with Cairns Regional Council. Corporate Sponsorships offered by the Chamber are customised arrangements and as such, a proposed Sponsorship Agreement has been negotiated to ensure mutual benefit.

'Small Business Support' is identified as one of the Economic Initiatives in Cairns Regional Council's Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026, and Council and the Chamber are co-signatories to the Queensland Government's *Small Business Friendly Council Charter*, which was endorsed by Council on 10 February 2021.

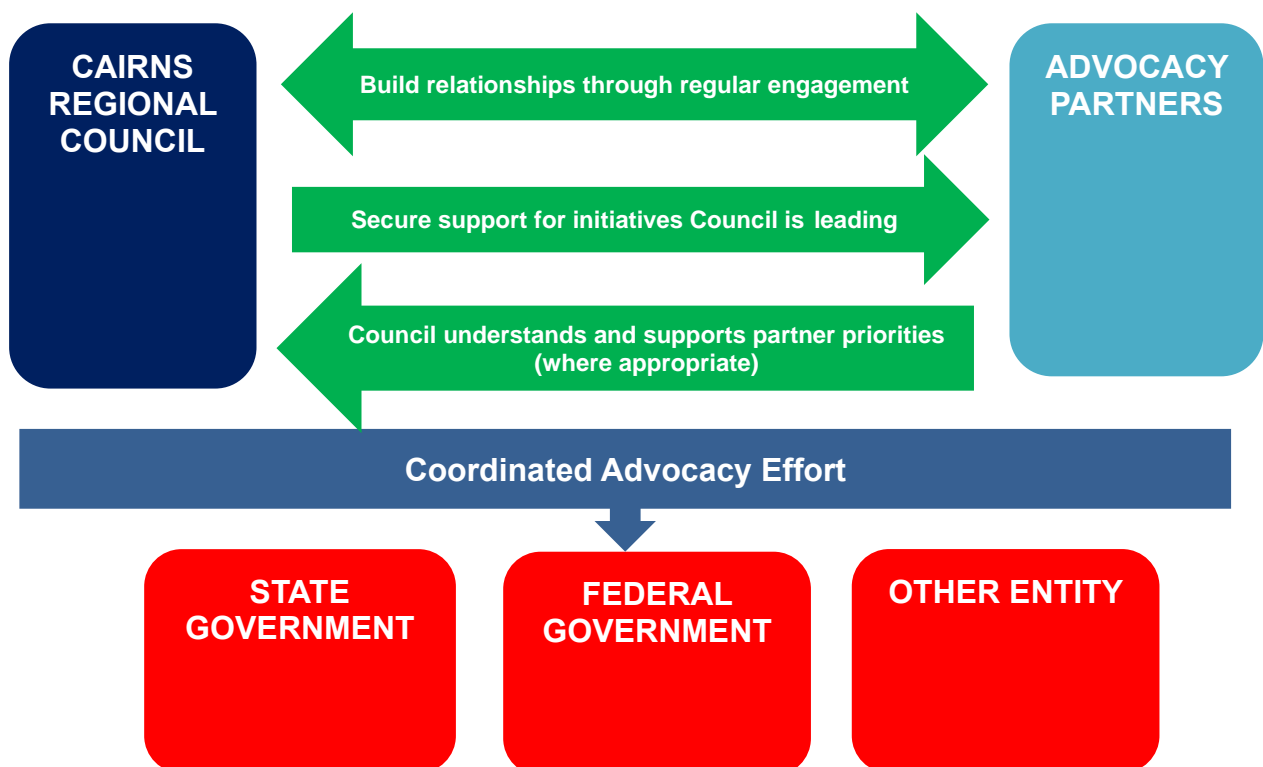
This report outlines the benefits to Council and the broader community of Corporate Sponsorship of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and Council Officers recommend that Council enter into a sponsorship agreement with the organisation for an initial two-year term ending 31 December 2025 at an annual sponsorship value of \$30,000 (ex GST) with a further two-year option exercisable at Council's discretion.

BACKGROUND:

Council has an important role to play in advocating to State and Federal Governments and other stakeholders on matters that impact the quality of life and liveability of the Cairns community. To ensure advocacy is linked to diversifying and strengthening the economy, this requires consideration of the specific needs of the small business community.

Effective advocacy also requires close collaboration with Advocacy Partners (as highlighted in the diagram below), as a coordinated advocacy approach is more likely to deliver successful advocacy outcomes for the city.

Figure 1: Collaborative Advocacy Approach



The Cairns Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the peak body for business representation in the Cairns region. The Chamber aims to help small businesses grow by connecting them to opportunities and acting in the best interests of the Cairns region

business community. The Chamber is also affiliated with Business Chamber Queensland (formerly Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland) who are recognised as the peak body representing businesses across Queensland. The Chamber and Business Chamber Queensland work collaboratively on a range of initiatives including small business-related advocacy and education. Depending on the level of Chamber membership a business chooses, Chamber members are also able to access a range of Business Chamber Queensland services.

The Chamber is a key advocacy partner for Council and Council has worked collaboratively with the Chamber on a range of advocacy initiatives, including Council's *Cairns Water Security – Stage 1* project where support from the Chamber and several other advocacy partners helped deliver \$215 million in State and Federal funding commitments (\$107.5 million each) to the project.

An opportunity has arisen for Council to become a Corporate Sponsor of the Chamber, which would further support ongoing collaboration between the organisations on projects and initiatives of mutual benefit. This report provides an overview of that opportunity and associated recommendations.

COMMENT:

In negotiating a Corporate Sponsorship arrangement, the Chamber's approach is to customise a package to ensure that the arrangements are mutually beneficial to both parties. Council has therefore worked closely with the Chamber to determine sponsorship inclusions and deliverables for the proposed Sponsorship Agreement, and these are provided below.

Advocacy collaboration

- Quarterly meetings between the Mayor and CEO of Council and the President and CEO of the Chamber to discuss advocacy and small business priorities and identify/progress areas of mutual interest.
- Council CEO (or appointed Director/Officer) to join the Chamber's Advocacy Sub-Committee as a non-elected member.
- Council Director Economic Development & Advocacy to be a member of the Chamber-led Regional Jobs Committee.
- When appropriate, Mayor and CEO of Council to be invited to Chamber-hosted Ministerial meetings to discuss small business priorities for the community.
- Council to collaborate with the Chamber in actively promoting advocacy priorities relevant to small business.
- Joint promotion of advocacy priorities of mutual interest.
- Chamber President and CEO to be invited to provide annual briefings to Councillors on issues relevant to small businesses.

Small Business Friendly Council Charter initiatives

- Council and the Chamber to jointly deliver and report on *Small Business Friendly Council* Charter initiatives, including:
 - Annual survey of Chamber members to inform Council on how it can work more effectively with small businesses.
 - Delivery of disaster resilience training and support for small businesses.
 - Delivery of Ecobiz workshops to educate small businesses on low carbon procurement and initiatives that support building a smart green economy.
 - Promotion of and support for business relevant events such as “Meet the Buyer” and “Indigenous Business Month”.
 - Promotion of Buy Local campaigns to encourage locals to continue to shop local.
 - Collaboration on initiatives related to indigenous small business support.
 - Promotion of the [Choose Cairns website](#) to Chamber members as a resource to assist with workforce attraction.
 - Council logo and Small Business Friendly Council logo displayed at Chamber events and included on all Chamber collateral.

Emerging Leaders’ program

- For the duration of the partnership, the Chamber’s Emerging Leaders’ program will include a Council sponsored position for a First Peoples program participant. Council will partner with the Chamber to identify the emerging leader through an annual Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

Anticipated benefits to the community

- Formal collaboration on strategic advocacy initiatives for the city.
- Formal collaboration on *Small Business Friendly Council* Charter initiatives.
- Additional funding and resourcing (including Council Officer knowledge) to support Chamber in meeting the needs of the Cairns small business community.
- Formal avenue for small business issues to be raised directly with the Mayor, Councillors and CEO to inform Council decision making.
- Formal avenue for Council issues to be raised directly with the Chamber of Commerce Board to improve transparency of Council processes/decisions and inform Chamber Board decision making.

The cost of the Corporate Sponsorship is \$30,000 (exclusive of GST) per annum. The arrangement is also in addition to Council’s sponsorship of the annual Business Excellence Awards (currently \$3,500 ex GST per annum) which Council has sponsored for the past five years, with three years in support of the Innovation Excellence Award. The Business Excellence Awards will remain under a separate sponsorship agreement to allow Council to assess the value of the event annually.

In securing the arrangement, it is proposed that Council enter into a Sponsorship Agreement with the Chamber for an initial two-year term (2024 and 2025 calendar years) with a further two-year option able to be exercised at Council’s discretion.

The benefits outlined above would support the implementation of Council's own advocacy strategies and objectives through stronger collaboration and engagement, including via a Council representative taking up a position on the Chamber's Advocacy Sub-Committee. There would also be complementary benefits to the implementation of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026, particularly in the area of small business support.

Through formal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported annually by the Chamber to Council, the Corporate Sponsorship will also provide for greater transparency and stronger governance around the delivery of joint advocacy and *Small Business Friendly Council* Charter initiatives.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

That Council:

1. Enters into a Corporate Sponsorship Agreement with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025 with a further two year option, exercisable at Council's discretion, at a sponsorship value of \$30,000 (ex GST) per annum; and
2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters arising from the above.

Option 2

That Council notes this report but **does not** enter into a Corporate Sponsorship Agreement with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc at this time or approves a Corporate Sponsorship Agreement for a different value or duration.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

The Chamber has existing Corporate Sponsorship arrangements in place with The Cairns Post, TripleM/HitFM Cairns and 7News Cairns. There are no known conflicts of interest in this regard.

Chamber Vice President Matthew Tickner (Managing Director, Progression Design & Development) is running as a candidate for Cairns Division 2 in the 2024 Local Government elections. The Board of the Chamber has acknowledged that this represents a potential conflict of interest and is managing the conflict in regard to its decisions surrounding the proposed Corporate Sponsorship arrangement.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

There is capacity within Council's advocacy operating budget for the 2023/24 financial year to accommodate the cost of the sponsorship (\$30,000 ex GST per annum) for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. If Council approves the recommendation in this report, provision would need to be made in Council's 2024/25 operating budget for the cost of the sponsorship (\$30,000 ex GST per annum) for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Effective advocacy is critical to the delivery of Council's Corporate Plan with the aim of delivering the investment and policy change needed from both State and Federal Government to support the following strategic focus areas in the Corporate Plan: Robust Economy; Natural Assets; Design for Liveability; Community and Culture.

Cairns Regional Council is a signatory to the Queensland Government *Small Business Friendly Charter*, which was endorsed by Council on 10 February 2021 and jointly signed with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce. Partnering more closely to deliver this commitment will enable Council and the Chamber to more fully meet the requirements of the Charter, which include:

- We will communicate and engage with small businesses
- We will raise the profile and capability of small businesses
- We will support small business resilience and recovery
- We will simplify administration and regulation for small business (red tape reduction)
- We will ensure fair procurement and prompt payment terms for small businesses
- We will develop and promote place-based programs for small businesses
- We will promote and showcase small businesses
- We will measure and report on our performance

Policy:

Cairns Chamber of Commerce Incorporated has been assessed as a Community Organisation, therefore this transaction falls under the remit of the Resource and Performance Agreement Section of the Community Grant Policy.

CONSULTATION:

Cairns Chamber of Commerce Inc



Nick Masasso
Director Economic Development and Advocacy