

ORDINARY MEETING	18
22 NOVEMBER 2023	

## **MAJOR EVENTS PRECINCT - APPLICATION TO REGIONAL PRECINCTS AND PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM**

73/2/53-01 | #7290423

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council:

1. Approves the submission of an application for funding under the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program – Stream 1 for the masterplan of the Major Events Precinct.
2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the application, including the execution of an associated grant agreement/s should Council's application be successful.

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### **INTERESTED PARTIES:**

Cairns Agricultural Pastoral and Mining Association (Cairns Show Association)  
 Cairns BMX Club Inc  
 Cairns Brass Inc  
 Cairns Youth and Recreation Centre Inc  
 Cairns Meals on Wheels Incorporated  
 Cairns Athletics Inc

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

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Australian Government's \$400 million regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP) is now open for applications. Officers propose to apply for grant funding up to the value of \$750,000 under Stream One – Precinct development and planning for the masterplan of the Major Events Precinct (Showgrounds, Barlow Park and surrounds).

The rPPP is an open, non-competitive grants process that supports both the development and delivery of precincts across regional, rural and remote Australia.

The masterplan will build open the previously endorsed Major Events Precinct (MEP) Vision and Development Opportunities Report and the process will include extensive consultation and design.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the 14 September 2022 Ordinary Meeting, Council endorsed the Major Events Precinct Vision and Development Opportunities report. The Report contemplated the following development opportunities as a precursor to a detailed masterplan:

1. Cairns Showgrounds Infrastructure Development
2. Sporting Asset
3. High Performance Hub
4. Open and Inviting
5. Flexible Nodes
6. Streetscape and Public Domain Interaction.

On 27 September 2023, Council received correspondence from Regional Development Australia Tropical North (RDA) outlining the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program. The program will be delivered through two streams, supporting both the development of precincts and delivery of construction-ready precinct projects. Officers propose to submit a grant for the Major Events Precinct Masterplan under stream one – precinct development and planning.

Stream One focuses on a partnership approach, bringing together governments and communities to plan and deliver regional precincts that are tailored to local needs and have a shared vision in how the precinct connects to the region.

Council and the State Government are advancing the redevelopment of Barlow Park and with the significant work completed in the Vision and Development Opportunities Report, the next logical step is a masterplan.

## **COMMENT:**

A masterplan is used to set an aspirational and strategic vision for future land use. The proposed masterplan for the Major Events Precinct will enable Council to:

- inform day to day decision making and long term planning (e.g. LGIP).
- facilitate liaison with land users and support harmony in facility development with stakeholders.
- provide confidence around investment and budget decisions.
- define what Council will be responsible to deliver.
- leverage funding opportunities.

## **RPPP Objectives:**

The objective of Stream One is to activate partnerships to jointly deliver precinct plans. The intended outcomes of Stream One are to:

- **Establish partnerships** comprised of relevant government entities, community organisations and businesses that have a shared vision for a regional precinct.
- **Deliver precinct plans** that are tailored to their local contexts and based on community feedback and engagement.
- Support precinct plants to **become investment ready**.
- **Contribute to the Australian Government's current policy priorities.**

Project Eligibility:

In order for a project to be eligible under rPPP Stream 1 it must:

- have authority for use of the land or infrastructure
- identify the intended project partner/s with supported governance structure
- provide evidence that the State government have been invited to participate
- provide evidence that RDA and Traditional Owners support concept
- have at least \$500,000 in eligible expenditure
- projects are to be completed by 31 March 2026.

*NB – the program is non-competitive and will run over three years from 2023/24 – 2025/26.*

Project Identification:

In identifying the Major Events Precinct Masterplan, officers have:

- reviewed the assessment criteria and consider the project has strong merit and performance against the criterion.
- considered the projects' readiness for application in 2024.
- met with RDA to obtain support for the proposed project.
- indicated that the proposed project and associated funding will greatly inform Council's future budgeting and advocacy strategies.

In summary, officers believe the proposed Major Events Precinct Masterplan is eligible and will be considered favourably.

**OPTIONS:**Option 1 (recommended):

That Council:

1. Approves the submission of an application for funding under the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program – Stream 1 for the masterplan of the Major Events Precinct; and
2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the application, including the execution of an associated grant agreement/s should Council's application be successful.

Option 2:

That Council does not approve the submission of an application for funding under the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program – Stream 1 for the masterplan of the Major Events Precinct.

## **CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **Risk Management:**

Council has previously endorsed the Vision and Development Opportunities Report, which reviewed the myriad of former planning undertaken for the site and set a foundation for the proposed masterplan. A masterplan will enable Council to move forward with its vision to create an iconic precinct for Cairns. As the proposed project is a planning process, the risks will be managed through a competitive market approach (if the funding application is successful).

### **Council Finance and the Local Economy:**

As a tourism-oriented economy, Cairns is rebounding from the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, which has restricted the movement of people across borders and social distancing measures, resulting in a loss of jobs, incomes and businesses in the region. To meet the needs of the community and support the region's recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic, projects like the Major Events Precinct Masterplan are important to provide an opportunity to increase economic activity through improved attractiveness of the region for hosting major events, leading to increased visitation, support for local businesses and employment in one of Cairns' key sectors.

Officers have undertaken a review of similar sized masterplans and believe that the cost associated with the delivery of a project of this scale will be in the order of \$750,000. Whilst the funding opportunity requires no contribution from Council, the project will need to be incorporated and recognised in the capital works program. As such, officers recommend the project be included in the 2024/25 budget process. If there were a gap in the grant allocation and the final cost, Council would be required to fund the difference.

A masterplan will inform construction costs and enable targeted advocacy for funding for future construction activities.

### **Community and Cultural Heritage:**

Ultimately, upgrading existing facilities at the Showgrounds and Barlow Park has the following community benefits:

- Enhanced community pride: The attraction of major sporting and entertainment events to Cairns can improve the pride and importance of local residents in the community and region they live in.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing of the community: Hosting major events at can also improve the wellbeing of the community. It offers additional positive leisure opportunities and experiences for local and regional residents.
- Improved reputation of Cairns: With improved and reliable facilities, both the venues and Cairns are expected to increase their favourability within the community through reduced negative public relations.
- Improved social and community interaction / reduced social isolation: The project will provide an opportunity for increased social interaction, and participation in team sports. This will help build community cohesion and inclusion.

- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour: By increasing the profile of sports in the region, the project has the potential to increase participation in sports, especially among young people who may be attracted to and encouraged to continue participation in sports because they experience high-level sporting events in person.

### Natural Environment:

The masterplan and any subsequent development will consider the natural environment and contemporary urban design.

### Corporate and Operational Plans:

The recommendation of this Report supports Council's Corporate Plan in particular:

- Focus One – Robust Economy.
- Focus Three – Design for Liveability.
- Focus Four – Community and Culture.

### **CONSULTATION:**

The preparation of the Major Events Precinct Masterplan will include extensive community and stakeholder consultation, including, but not limited to:

Traditional Owners

External Community Leaders:

- Member for Leichardt.
- Member for Cairns.
- Advance Cairns.
- Enterprise North.
- Chamber of Commerce.
- TTNQ.

Government Departments:

- Department of the Premier and Cabinet.
- Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning.
- Economic Development Queensland.
- Stadiums Queensland.
- Olympic Venues.
- Department of Resources.

Education Providers:

- TAFE Queensland.
- Central Queensland University.

Precinct Stakeholders:

- Cairns Show Association Inc.
- Cairns BMX Club Inc.
- Cairns City Kennel Club Inc.
- Meals on Wheels.
- Cairns Athletics Club Inc.

- FNQ Rugby League Inc.
- Northern Pride Rugby League Ltd.
- Cairns Youth and Recreation Centre Inc.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Nil.



Tim Dendle  
Executive Manager Community Spaces



Destry Puia  
Lifestyle and Community