

ORDINARY MEETING	2
24 APRIL 2019	

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AND CQUNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA - PROGRESS UPDATE

B Hutchinson | 1/8/4 | #6050486

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the projects and outcomes that have been delivered under the Memorandum of Understanding between Cairns Regional Council and CQUniversity Australia from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cairns Regional Council and CQUniversity Australia (CQU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 4 November 2016. The MOU provides a framework for collaboration to occur around issues and opportunities of a mutual interest to create lasting benefits for the Cairns region.

Collaborative efforts during 2018 focused on knowledge sharing, strategic planning, student support and sustainability. Some of the projects delivered include:

- Cairns 2050 Shared Vision: CQU participated in the development of the Shared Vision and are represented on the Shared Vision Advisory Committee.
- Lae delegation: CQU supported the program for a high level delegation visiting from sister city, Lae.
- 2018 Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards: CQU was a sponsor of these awards.
- CQU Cairns Region Engagement Committee: A Councillor is a member of this committee.
- State of the Arts: Collaboration with CQU to develop a year one baseline for this five-year joint research project on the strength of the cultural and creative industries in Cairns.
- Council provided practical support for studies or research in creative arts, film, tourism and engineering.
- Clean Up Australia Day & Plastic Free July: Council provided support for CQU's inaugural Clean Up Australia Day event and Plastic Free July campus challenge.

Further details on the projects listed above and other projects are contained in the body of this report.

BACKGROUND:

The education and training sector is an important contributor to the diversification of the Cairns economy and the fifth largest employer. The tertiary education sector employs over 1,000 people and contributes \$170 million to the Cairns economy.

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 the Cairns CBD in October 2015. The Cairns campus now supports 1,390 on-campus and online students across the Cairns region.

Council has worked collaboratively with CQU for many years. This collaboration was formalised through the establishment of the first MOU between Council and CQU, which was signed on 4 November 2016. The MOU is in place for a period of four years, expiring 4 November 2020. There is the option to extend for a further four years by mutual agreement.

A summary of actions sought through the MOU is as follows:

- Collaborate to create lasting benefits for the broader Cairns region;
- Facilitate dialogue to inform decision making and change;
- Foster best practice through skills development, education, training and knowledge transfer;
- Collaborate to establish Cairns as a renowned education city;
- Identify opportunities to undertake research in areas of University strength including but not limited to Engineering, Information Technology, Agriculture, Creative Arts, Tourism and Social Innovation;
- Support students and staff in developing knowledge and skills; and
- Cooperate to identify and secure funding opportunities.

COMMENT:

CQU continues to invest in Cairns and expand industry engagement and course offerings. In October 2018, CQU opened their high-tech Exercise and Sport Sciences laboratories. CQU invested close to \$1 million towards this project. In September 2018, CQU announced a commitment to invest \$4.8 million to establish stage one of the Asia-Pacific Aviation Education and Research Hub to be based at Cairns Airport. Both of these projects were identified in the CQUniversity Cairns Impact Plan. The Impact Plan is a \$54.7 million funding proposal released in mid-2017 designed to stimulate new industries.

Collaborative activities undertaken from 1 January to 31 December 2018 include:

Project/activity	Description
Cairns 2050 Shared Vision	CQU representatives participated in stakeholder workshops held during the development of the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision. CQU Associate Vice Chancellor, Cairns and Far North Queensland Region, is a member of Council's Shared Vision Advisory Committee.

Project/activity	Description
Economic Development	CQU representatives participate in Economic Development Priorities and Deliverables stakeholder meetings coordinated by Council.
CQU Cairns Region Engagement Committee	Cr Brett Moller participated as a member of the CQU Cairns Region Engagement Committee.
Study Cairns	CQU, Council and other stakeholders are partners of Study Cairns, the peak body for international education in Cairns.
Lae delegation	Council arranged a program for a high level delegation visiting from sister city, Lae. CQU hosted one of the sessions for the delegation.
State of the Arts	Collaborated with CQU and identified stakeholders to develop year one baseline for evidenced-based and holistic research project on the strength of the cultural and creative industries in Cairns. This is a five-year joint research project.
Film Industry Support	Council promoted CQU's digital media information evening.
Creative Arts studies	Council supported Creative Arts studies through the provision of teaching venues.
Creative Arts Open Day	Approval provided for musical performance as part of CQU's Creative Arts Open Day.
Activation of Shields Street	CQU student performed as a singer/ guitarist to assist Council in the activation of Shields Street.
Innovation	Council, CQU and other stakeholders work with Ignite FNQ to build the innovation ecosystem in Far North Queensland.
2018 Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards	CQU was a sponsor of the 2018 Tropical North Queensland Innovation Awards.
Student Engineering Survey Support	Council provided permission for CQU engineering students to complete surveying practicals on Council land.
PhD student support	Supported PhD student Terry Cummins with an investigation into the major factors impacting the long-term sustainability of recreational scuba diving tourism in the Cairns section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
Clean Up Australia Day & Plastic Free July	Council provided support, such as tools, materials and guidance, for CQU's inaugural Clean Up Australia Day event and Plastic Free July campus challenge.
Cairns Taipans	CQU and Council both provide support to the Cairns Taipans, Cairns' only national sporting team. CQU announced in September that its naming rights sponsorship would continue for at least another five years.

OPTIONS:**Option 1 (recommended)**

That Council notes the projects and outcomes that have been delivered under the Memorandum of Understanding between Cairns Regional Council and CQUniversity Australia from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

Option 2

That Council requests further information and an updated report from Council Officers in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding between Cairns Regional Council and CQUniversity Australia.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Risk Management:**

CQU's established reputation and standing means that the reputational risk of collaborating with CQU via the MOU is considered to be 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 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.

The MOU provides a platform for a variety of collaborations to occur, which may result in financial and time savings through shared project ownership and operational efficiencies.

Collaborative activities intended to encourage industry development would result in an economic benefit for Cairns.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

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

The MOU makes specific reference to collaboration in the area of creative arts.

Natural Environment:

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.

Council and CQU recognise the importance of embedding principles of sustainability into the operational function of each organisation. The CQUniversity Sustainability Framework 2016 – 2030 aims to phase in a culture of sustainability and promote better use of resources within the university.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The MOU aligns with:

- all five strategic goals as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022;
- Operational Plan 2018/19, strategic goal “Economy”, operational initiative number six: “Active engagement and collaboration with James Cook University and CQUniversity in the implementation of Council’s Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with both universities”; and
- Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022, key action number six “foster and support innovation and entrepreneurship”, specified activity: “Oversee and promote Council’s existing Memorandums of Understanding with both James Cook University and CQUniversity to ensure close collaboration between Council and the region’s two leading tertiary education institutions”.

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:

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