COASTAL COUNCILS ADAPTATION TASKFORCE (C-CAT)

M Grenfell: 8/24/18-01: #4050125

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council resolves to be a financial member of the LGAQ Coastal Council Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The LGAQ Coastal Council Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT) aims to collectively improve the capacity of coastal Queensland local Councils to adapt to coastal climate change challenges. It aims to do this by creating an alliance where local governments can speak and influence the broader State policy agenda and improve the capacity to adapt in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

The C-CAT aims to facilitate a professional forum to meet the needs of Queensland coastal Councils with regards to coastal adaptation challenges such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, storm tide inundation, natural disaster resilience and recovery and communications. There is much confusion among Queensland Councils on how to plan, communicate and afford climate change adaptation especially with a changing legislative landscape.

Council has been participating on the C-CAT Establishment Committee, providing input on governance structures and priorities since April 2011. Since June 2011 the Establishment Committee has developed a Strategic Plan, a comprehensive Local Government Survey which informed the Two Year Action Plan, an Operating Model, and Terms of Reference.

Ultimately the C-CAT proposes to use economies of scale to discuss and provide operational outcomes to coastal adaption issues facing coastal councils in Queensland. It is anticipated that by becoming members of C-CAT, Council will mitigate the need for external consultancies. The annual fee payable for membership will be between $12,000 and $17,000 depending on the number of local governments that subscribe.

BACKGROUND:

Council resolved to participate in the development of C-CAT and commit to C-CAT membership in April 2011 and again in April 2012. Membership to date has not required a financial commitment. The Establishment Committee was formed in June 2011 and has comprised representatives from 21 Queensland coastal Councils.
The Cairns region, which includes many low-lying coastal communities, is one of the most vulnerable areas in Australia to climate change impacts. In addition the Cairns region is home to internationally significant ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforests. To date Council has developed a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and a Climate Change Strategy which have been directing and consolidating Council’s response to climate change.

**COMMENT:**

The primary role of C-CAT is to act as a focus and forum for the discussion of issues, needs and to share legal, technical, environmental, social and economic information and identify actions to assist coastal councils in the effective adaptation to coastal climate change adaptation challenges.

In this regard the Taskforce aims to produce operational outcomes, specific to local government, which benefit the organisation and the community. Attachment A outlines the outcomes and aligned actions identified in response to the survey which was circulated to Queensland Councils to assist C-CAT prepare a proposed two year Action Plan. Attachment A also provides a proposed Terms of Reference for the governance structure of C-CAT.

Council intends to create Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategies for the region to reduce risk in areas identified in the recent coastal hazard background studies which will inform the new planning scheme. Participation on the C-CAT will assist Council with this process and project methodology.

Collective groups of Councils have been found to have more success in receiving funding from the Australian Government especially with regards to coastal hazards. An example of this is the Sydney Coastal Council Group which was established with a similar intent as C-CAT.

**CONSULTATION:**

Consultation with LGAQ’s Principal Advisor - Natural Assets, NRM & Climate Change, Manager Planning Strategies and Officers on the C-CAT Establishment Committee have provided consultation on this report.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

Risk Management (including financials):

An annual subscription will contribute to the operation of the C-CAT secretariat and fund the initiatives prioritised by the C-CAT members. The LGAQ itself will also be a contributing partner. The exact subscription fee for membership and participation will be determined by the cost of maintaining the secretariat, less LGAQ's contribution, divided by the number of local government's that formally commit. LGAQ will apply its sliding scale membership formula to determine the exact amount to be paid by each local government. As an indication, Council may pay between $12,000 and $17,000 per annum depending on the number of local governments that subscribe. The LGAQ are seeking contribution for a period of two years at which time progress would be reviewed.
The 2013/14 contribution has been allocated as part of the Planning Strategies Operational budget.

**Corporate and Operational Plans:**

The recommendation is supported by the following Strategic Outcomes in Council’s Corporate Plan:

1.5 An effective disaster management response  
2.3 Infrastructure and utilities that facilitate an enhance sustainable growth  
2.4 An integrated approach to town and regional planning that strengthens local identify and lifestyle  
3.2 A quality and well planned built environment that meets basic community needs  
3.5 Ensure climate change impacts on our community, natural and built environment are minimised  
4.5 Strong National, State and Regional advocacy

**Statutory:**

No statutory obligation is associated with this report.

**Policy:**

No policy obligation required.

**Sustainability:**

**Resources:** There are no negative resource impacts by commencing formal membership as meetings are held via teleconference and the recommendation relates to membership as opposed to a product.

**Environment:** C-CAT membership will have no adverse effect on the natural environment however may assist in mitigating some of the risks inherent in coastal hazards (such as coastal erosion).

**Community:** Membership is aligned with the Disaster Management Plan and will assist build capacity in the organisation to improve community resilience.

**Governance and economic management:** The membership fee has been accounted for in the current operational budget of Planning Strategies.

**Options**

1. That Council resolves to be a financial member of the LGAQ Coastal Council Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT) at a fee of up to $17,000.
OR

2. That Council resolves not to become a financial member of the LGAQ Coastal Council Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT).

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