

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2022

12**CIRCA CAIRNS RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT**

Fleur McMenamin | 79/4/1 | #6991697

RECOMMENDATION:**That Council:**

1. **Approves establishing a one-year Resource and Performance Agreement with Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd; 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 above agreement.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd Board of Directors & Staff:

Chair: Michael Lynch AO CBE

Treasurer: Ric Roach

Company Secretary: Courtney Tuttle

Directors:

Christopher Brady, Kerry Comerford, Anita Heiss, Alanna Herbst, Ian Walker

Artistic Director & CEO: Yaron Lifschitz

Executive Director: Shaun Commerford

Executive Producer: Danielle Kelly

Circa Cairns – Creative Lead: Harley Mann

Circa Cairns – Creative Producer: Rebecca Youdell

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

Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd (Circa), a not for profit major performing arts company, has received seed funding through the Australian Government's arts and cultural development program Return Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE). This seed funding will establish Circa Cairns – and will see the first major performing arts company with a regionally based ensemble.

Circa Cairns presents an opportunity to build on a longstanding partnership with Circa, which has to date generated many significant community engagement projects and audience development projects, presentations and activities in the region.

Circa Cairns will have a First Nations focus to develop and perform local work which can then be toured nationally and internationally.

The following report outlines recommendations to enter into a one-year R&P Agreement with Circa to provide up to \$40,000 in-kind (not cash) support which will comprise of office space to establish a base for operations at the Tanks Pumphouse; and in-kind venue hire and resources for presentations at Council venues to provide a guarantee against loss in the pilot phase of the Circa Cairns program. Circa has plans to secure further funding from state and federal funding bodies and their well-established philanthropy base to implement their strategic plan for Circa Cairns from 2023-26.

The proposed in-kind support from Council will be funded through using existing budget allocated to the Arts and Culture Partnerships Grant stream funds for the 2022/23 financial year. The proposed activity fits within the intent and purpose of the Community Grants Policy Grant stream's objectives to partner with arts and cultural organisations to present bold and innovative new works and increase collaborative programming that attracts new audiences and provides employment opportunities in creative industries.

Proposed R&P Agreement - Circa Cairns:

22/23 Arts & Culture Partnerships (In-Kind)	Budget
22/23 Arts & Culture Partnerships (In-Kind)	\$70,000
22/23 Proposed R&P Circa Cairns (In-Kind)	\$40,000
22/23 Remaining Budget	\$30,000

BACKGROUND:

Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd is one of the world's leading performance companies and has toured the world to over 40 countries performing to around 1.5 million audience members since their foundation in 2004 and is a regular fixture at the world's leading festivals.

Circa's performances are at the forefront of a new wave of contemporary Australian circus and continue to push the boundaries of the art form blurring the lines between movement, dance theatre and circus. Circa promote, foster and practice the art of circus-based theatre and initiate and encourage training and research, and promote public education in the arts.

Circa's longstanding relationship with Council has generated multiple successful community engagement projects and Circa Cairns aims to increase visibility for the artform and capacity in the local arts sector; provide enhanced training pathways; increase the diversity of the contemporary circus talent pool; and prioritise pathways for First Nations performers.

The strategic plan for Circa Cairns includes an ambitious program of productions already developed including regular cabaret nights and a series of community workshops involving diverse participants. Circa is currently preparing to roll out its CircAbility program

at Bulmba-ja Arts Centre at the end of July 2022 with activities specifically designed by and for those who identify as living with disability.

Circa has already employed a number of Cairns based arts workers including a local creative producer and secured rehearsal space establishing a partnership with local group CYCAS Circus. Circa has been in discussions with Council officers around their Circa Cairns company headquarters to ideally be located at the Tanks Arts Centre Pumphouse building as a base for operations in order to utilise the centre's venues and work in partnership with the Creative Life Programming Team on presentations throughout the year within Council's venues.

The proposed Circa Cairns program content is already in development with a focus on connecting community with place and includes the creation of mainstage, special events, and site-specific collaborative productions along with a workshop series. The program will be First Nations led and infused with a goal of 50% First Nations performers and creatives.

Circa Cairns strategic goals are:

- To create great art from the encounter of culture and place
 - New forms and processes from a dynamic engagement
- To lead engagement with consciousness and care
 - Bringing depth and authenticity to engagements
- To be an integral part of Cairns' cultural landscape
 - Embedded in and drawing nutrients from Cairns and FNQ
- To have massive impact
 - Growing audiences and enhancing visibility
- To create a sustainable organisational model
 - Enabling the ongoing growth of the Circa Cairns initiative

Circa plan to tour Cairns created content in increments (ie regionally in year one and internationally by year four) with turnover of \$1m by 2025. This will have significant flow on effects for local creatives, First Nations engagement and skills development and could see substantial social and economic benefits for the region, as well as fuelling the reputation of Cairns as a cultural and creative hub.

COMMENT:

Circa Cairns aligns with Council's Strategy for Culture and the Arts 2022 and Circa is named as one of the organisations Council will continue to develop and fortify partnerships and collaborations with, in order to align our flagship venues to produce programs that provide entertainment and cultural experiences as good as any Australian capital city. The First Nations focus also aligns strongly with Council's cultural strategy and Circa Cairns presents an opportunity to partner with an initiative that could have significant social and economical benefits for the region.

Circa is planning a media announcement on 14 July and would like to include general details (not specific) around building on the existing partnership with Cairns Regional Council. Council officers recommend establishing the R&P ahead of this date in order to be able to announce specific details of Council support alongside Minister Enoch and other government representatives.

OPTIONS:**Option 1: (Recommended)**

That Council:

1. Approves establishing a one-year Resource and Performance Agreement with Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd; 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 above agreement.

Option 2:

That Council requests the supply of further information.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Risk Management:**

The terms and conditions of the R&P Agreement will clearly outline agreed operating arrangements and the responsibilities of both parties.

Council officers will work with Circa to mitigate any programming risks and cross-promote events and activities through Council's media channels to ensure program viability ie to ensure all events have the potential to reach the target audience.

Circa is already in discussions with Arts Queensland and an established base of donors around securing funding for 2023–26. Council officers will provide support through letters and evidence of major partnership and R&P Agreement for pilot phase in 22/23 in order for Circa to leverage this support in their funding applications for future years.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

It is proposed that the budget for the R&P come from the Arts & Cultural Partnerships Budget allocation for 2022/23 financial year as the funding fits the intent and purpose of the grant stream within the Community Grants Policy. The Circa investment through RISE funds is a significant contribution to the local creative industry and will see the employment of a number of local artists and artworkers as part of the operations team and ensemble throughout the 2022/23 year. Circa is already in discussions to secure funding to establish the program in future years which will have further substantial impacts on the local economy and profile of Cairns as a creative and cultural hotspot.

Proposed R&P Agreement - Circa Cairns:

Summary	Estimated cost of Council venue hire and resources	Council contribution (In-Kind)	% of venue & resources costs covered by Council	Circa contribution to Circa Cairns (from other funding sources)
Level of support as part of R&P	\$40,000	Up to \$40,000	100%	\$600k – RISE funding secured by Circa Cairns.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

The proposed new funding agreement to provide in-kind support to Circa Cairns is aligned to the cultural, heritage and community development aspirations of Council's Strategy for Culture and the Arts 2022 as outlined below:

Priority 3.1 Programming, Promotion and Audience Development:

- Strategy 3.1.1: Align Council's flagship venues to produce an annual performing and visual arts program that provides entertainment and cultural experiences as good as any Australian capital city and promote Cairns as an international creative powerhouse.
- Action: Continue to develop and fortify our partnerships and collaborations with Arts Queensland, Queensland Theatre, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd and other state, national and local performing and visual arts organisations.

Priority 3.2 Indigenous Arts Development:

- Strategy 3.2.1: Strengthen the region's national and international reputation as a vibrant marketplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and creative expression.
- Action: Develop new partnership models to support the growth and sustainability of regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and enterprises and support programs and projects that add value to the city's portfolio of Indigenous arts and cultural experiences.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The proposed new funding agreement is aligned to Council's corporate and strategic goals, in particular:

- Promote Cairns as the arts and cultural capital of Northern Australia.
- Support diverse sport, cultural and community groups that contribute to wellbeing.
- Provide spaces and programs for the wellbeing of the community.

The funding also aligns with Operational Plan strategy actions:

- Deliver vibrant cultural events and activities for locals and visitors.
- Mentor and support community groups, clubs and organisations.

CONSULTATION:

Council Officers have consulted with Circa Contemporary Circus Ltd and will continue to liaise with the Circa Cairns Lead and Creative Producer in the roll out of the pilot phase of the program.



Stephen Foster
Executive Manager Creative Life



Destry Puia
Director Lifestyle & Community