

ORDINARY MEETING	12
21 DECEMBER 2023	

MAJOR EVENTS SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION – REEF TO REEF 2024-2026

52/1/16 | #7291772

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. Enters into a three year funding agreement with Event Management Solutions Australia to the value of \$75,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$25,000 per annum, to support the Reef-to-Reef event from 2024 to 2026 under Council’s Major Events Sponsorship program;**
- 2. Resolves in accordance with section 235(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, it is satisfied that the event provider is a Specialised Supplier and that they be added to the Sole Supplier Register for the remainder of the 2023/24 financial year; and**
- 3. 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.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

- Event Management Solutions Australia (EMS)
 - Ian Harwood
 - Rebecca Harwood
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ)

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Event Management Solutions Australia (EMS) have applied to Council seeking Major Events Sponsorship of \$25,000 (ex GST) cash per annum over three years (2024-2026) for their newly acquired event Reef to Reef. The 2024 event is proposed to be held from 25-28 July 2024.

Council Officers have assessed the application against the relevant assessment criteria for Major Events Sponsorship. The event performed well in this assessment, aligning with Council’s strategy to support events that deliver strong economic impact to the region and foster community pride.

Based on this assessment, it is recommended that Council enters into a three-year funding agreement with the event proponent to the value of \$75,000 (ex GST) cash (\$25,000 ex GST per annum) to support Reef to Reef from 2024 to 2026.

BACKGROUND:

The Reef to Reef mountain biking event has been held in the region since 2018 and is a multi-day mountain bike stage race. The event is scheduled to be held in the region annually in July/ August and includes the RRR event that has been held in the Douglas Shire for thirty years.

The course will transition through a variety of trails within rainforest, tablelands, farmlands and mountain bike parks providing participants with a broad range of riding surfaces, trail types and environments over four days including one day in the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA):

- Day 1: Smithfield MTB Park
- Day 2: Davies Creek
- Day 3: Mt Molloy
- Day 4: Mt Molloy – Port Douglas

Reef to Reef was previously owned by USM Events Pty Ltd (USM) and has been supported by Council since 2018 (2020 and 2021 cancelled due to COVID). EMS has recently acquired the Reef to Reef event, having previously worked in the Cairns region delivering events such as the Cairns Adventure Festival (now IRONMAN Cairns) and the UCI Mountain bike World Championships in 2017.

EMS has applied to Council seeking \$25,000 (ex GST) cash per annum in Major Event Sponsorship to support the delivery of Reef to Reef in 2024-2026. This report provides an overview of Council Officers' review of the funding request and associated recommendations.

COMMENT:

The objective of Major Events Sponsorship funding is to attract and partner with a range of events that provide the following benefits to the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA):

- Drive regional direct economic benefits;
- Increase external visitation to the region;
- Enhance the profile and appeal of the Cairns region;
- Build local business opportunities, profile, and experience;
- Create and build community pride; and
- Provide links and promotional opportunities for Council's broader strategic goals.

The assessment criteria have a strong focus (weighting) on the economic benefits that an event is expected to deliver through visitation and destination profile.

Cairns has a strong history of delivering world-class mountain biking events, including the 2014 and 2016 Mountain Bike World Cup, the 2017 Mountain Bike World Championships, and Crankworx Cairns 2022 and 2023 . The legacy of these events has paved the way for an increase in mountain biking tourism, with growth opportunities identified across the

region including the potential expansion of the Smithfield MTB trail network (concept plan funded by the Department of Tourism Innovation and Sport in 2022).

Reef to Reef has previously demonstrated the ability to attract out of region visitation and deliver destination profiling of our unique tropical environment. Under new ownership, the event has the potential to expand via increased participation and community engagement.

A panel of two Council Officers has undertaken an assessment of the application, which scored well against assessment criteria and corresponding objectives outlined in the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2025. Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has been consulted regarding the event and will provide marketing support on TTNQ owned channels. TEQ has previously funded the event, and the event proponent has an application pending for TEQ's Queensland Destination Events Program.

Based on the application assessment, Council Officers recommend that Council enter into a three-year funding agreement with the event proponent to the value of \$75,000 (ex GST), representing \$25,000 (ex GST) cash per annum.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended):

That Council:

1. Enters into a three year funding agreement with Event Management Solutions Australia to the value of \$75,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$25,000 per annum, to support the Reef-to-Reef event from 2024 to 2026 under Council's Major Events Sponsorship program;
2. Resolves in accordance with section 235(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, it is satisfied that the event provider is a Specialised Supplier and that they be added to the Sole Supplier Register for the remainder of the 2023/24 financial year; and
3. 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.

Option 2:

That Council **does not** support the Major Events Sponsorship funding application for Reef to Reef at this time.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Currently there is an increase to the costs to deliver events, activities and projects across the events industry and particularly in regional areas.

The event proponent will be required to provide an external economic impact report for each year they receive Council funding, Council may contribute to this cost at its

discretion.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The economic benefits the event is expected to deliver were considered by Council Officers as part of the application assessment.

Option 1 in this report (the recommended cash contribution of \$25,000 (ex GST)) can be accommodated within Council's 2023/24 operating budget for major events. In addition, if the recommendation contained in this report is endorsed by Council, the 2025 and 2026 event funding will need to be included in Council's future OPEX budgets.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The assessment of applications for Major Events Sponsorship is directly aligned with Focus Area 1 (Robust Economy) of Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2026. It is also aligned with Council's Operational Plan 2023-24 where implementation of the newly adopted Cairns and Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2025 in collaboration with Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Tourism and Events Queensland is a key action.

Policy:

Council's Major Events Sponsorship Policy has been applied in the assessment of the application. Consistent with that policy, section 235(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 allows an exemption to inviting written quotes or tenders where Council resolves that there is a specialised supplier, who is reasonably available to meet operational needs. Specialised Suppliers are used in instances where due to the specialised or unique services (in this instance a unique event), or where services are confidential in nature, that makes it disadvantageous or impractical to undertake a competitive procurement process.

CONSULTATION:

Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Tourism Event Queensland were consulted during the assessment of the funding application.



Nick Masasso
Director – Economic Development & Advocacy