

## **5.8. DOUGLAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESOURCE & PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT 2021-2024**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **That Council**

- 1. Resolves to contract the Douglas Chamber of Commerce as a specialised service provider under S235(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* for specialist business support under terms set out in a Resource and Performance Agreement, for the following years and amounts:
 
  - i. \$20,000 (Ex GST) year 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022; and**
  - ii. \$10,000 (Ex GST) year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, and**
  - iii. \$10,000 (Ex GST) year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.****
- 2. Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer, to finalise any minor amendments and execute the Resource and Performance Agreement.**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Douglas Chamber of Commerce (DCC) is an important industry and advocacy association in the Douglas Shire, under the strategic direction of a volunteer Management Committee. Much like the Chamber's Membership base, the Management Committee includes representatives from throughout the Shire and across a variety of industries, business sectors and professions.

A unified and collaborative approach to economic development between Council and representative organisations such as the Chamber, enhances the region's advocacy to State and Federal bodies and improves planning and prioritisation of development in Douglas. Such an approach is also a necessary part of Council's response to economic recovery from local impacts of COVID-19.

In the 2020-2021 financial year, Council established a Resource and Performance Agreement with DCC, providing the organisation with the financial and in-kind support needed to establish structure within the organisation's business model, allow them to undertake essential strategic planning and enabling them to deliver necessary support to small businesses.

It is recommended that Council continue its support for the Douglas Chamber of Commerce with a Resource and Performance Agreement over a period of three years, with KPIs to be developed through negotiation between DCC and Council officers.

## BACKGROUND

At an Ordinary Council Meeting on 30 June 2020, it was resolved to enter into a Resource and Performance Agreement with Douglas Chamber of Commerce to assist them to increase their membership and committee capacity, with funding of \$50,000 (Ex GST) for a period of one year dated from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. The Resource and Performance Agreement was adopted at the DCC AGM on 17 September 2020 and effective from this date.

To allow DCC to have a full twelve-month period to achieve their KPIs, an extension on the Resource and Performance Agreement by three months (from 30 June 2021 to 30 September 2021) was granted at an Ordinary Council Meeting on 29 June 2021.

DCC were asked to deliver five (5) KPIs that would work towards establishing structure within the Chamber's business model, allow them to undertake essential strategic planning and enable them to deliver necessary capacity to support small businesses.

Achievements in-line with KPIs include:

- Established greater industry representation across all sectors and regions within the Shire, through the appointment of a more balanced Management Committee.
- Development and delivery of Douglas Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan 2021-2024.
- Established a paid employment position to build working systems, structure and procedures for a future ongoing role.
- Delivery of a new, automated web platform to better serve and manage the organisation's needs.
- Increased membership by 134%
- Hosting more than ten (10) capacity building and industry events including the Douglas Business Expo, which attracted more than a hundred attendees and exhibitors.
- Represented the Douglas business community at numerous community and government events, advocating for the Shire and lobbying on behalf of their members and in support of major Council initiatives.

DCC has requested that their achievement of KPIs be recognised by Council with continued support for the organisation and the establishment of a Resource and Performance Agreement over a period of three years.

A three-year agreement is preferred by the Chamber to allow for the implementation and delivery of long-term organisational goals, including the secure employment of a paid coordinator position. Establishing confidence and continuity in the Chamber increases their ability to deliver outcomes for the business community and their members, grow their membership base, attract additional funding sources through grants and partnerships and ultimately be less reliant on Council funding for operational support.

Council officers will continue to work with the Chamber as a strategic partner in the delivery and implementation of its own Economic Development Strategy, projects and campaigns.

## COMMENT

Actively supporting businesses in the Douglas Shire means investing in the business community and providing the tools required to enable prosperity. With 97% of locally owned businesses in the Douglas Shire identifying as a small business, they truly are at the heart of the Queensland economy and our own regional community.

Small businesses create local jobs, grow the local economy, and provide essential goods and services. But just as importantly, small businesses help create attractive, livable communities. They also foster civic pride and help attract people and investment into the area.

Now more than ever, in the face of unprecedented natural disasters and the economic ripple effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is vital that Douglas Shire Council supports small businesses to survive and thrive.

Council's Economic Development Strategy 2021-2024, adopted in May 2021, supports decisions that relate to the provision of financial and in-kind support to the Douglas Chamber of Commerce, on the basis that this organisation builds the capacity of small businesses in the Shire and addressing skill shortages and knowledge gaps within the local workforce.

## PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council enter a three-year (3) Resource and Performance Agreement with the Douglas Chamber of Commerce, for the following amounts:

- \$20,000 (Ex GST) year 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022; and
- \$10,000 (Ex GST) year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023; and
- \$10,000 (Ex GST) year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The proposed Agreement will contain all the terms and conditions applicable in the adopted standard Agreement with KPIs to be developed through negotiation between DCC and Council officers. Quarterly activity reporting and event / project specific reporting requirements will be implemented to reflect progress against identified milestones to ensure a coordinated approach to economic and business development in Douglas.

## FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The funding for the Agreement has been allocated in the current and future budget forecasts.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Clear terms, conditions and reporting requirements will mitigate the inappropriate use of public funds. Quarterly activity reporting and event / project specific reporting requirements and an annual review will ensure the objectives of Council are met.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

**Economic:** A strong and coordinated approach to economic development is essential to rebuild the economy of the Douglas Shire post-Covid.

**Environmental:** Nil

**Social:** Business support is necessary in the Douglas Shire. Small businesses create local jobs, grow the local economy, and provide essential goods and services. But just as importantly, small businesses help create attractive, livable communities. They also foster civic pride and help attract people and investment into the area.

## CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

#### Theme 2 - Fostering Sustainable Economic Growth

A robust economy is at the heart of a thriving community and enables investment in environmental protection. While our remoteness is a key attribute, it also presents challenges for attracting new business and investment. We must also meet the challenges of fierce competition in the tourism sector. Council will partner with industry to build, diversify and promote the Douglas economy. Council will design and deliver infrastructure, strategies and services that support the local economy and businesses.

**Goal 2** - *We will work with partners to promote the Shire as the World's leading sustainable tropical destination and encourage business investment.*

**Goal 3** - *We will develop strategies that seek to diversify the Shire's economic base.*

## COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

**Funder** Council often partly funds services, events or community organisations through grants, donations, subsidies and in-kind support. Council will apply robust governance to ensure that such funding is fair and appropriate.

## CONSULTATION

**Internal:** Finance

**External:** Establishing financial and in-kind support for the Douglas Chamber of Commerce is an action item in Council's Economic Development Strategy 2021-2024.

The KPIs will be developed in conjunction with the DCC.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nil.

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil.