

5.6. FUNDING SUPPORT FOR THE BETTER TOGETHER CONFERENCE 2022

REPORT AUTHOR	Paul Smyth, Events Officer
MANAGER	Terry Farrelly, Manager People and Community Services
DEPARTMENT	People and Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to:

1. Provide one off funding of \$10,000 cash and In-Kind assistance of waiving of venue hire fees for Sugar Wharf for the Better Together Conference to be held in February 2022.
2. Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments in relation to the funding and In-kind support for the Better Together conference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council was approached with a request for out of round funding for a regional LGBTIQ conference called 'Better Together' to be held in 2022. The conference is hosted by a health promotion charity called the Equality Project.

The funding amount requested is \$10,000 cash to go towards associated costs, and in-kind support for the use of the Sugar Wharf (\$1,550) for the event, to be redirected from the 2021/22 operational budget.

The Better Together Conference is an annual event that regularly attracts 400 delegates from across the nation. The conference has taken place in various host cities nationally, and in 2022, will be held in Cairns. As part of the overall conference agenda, a staging event and a number of workshops will be presented over five days beforehand in Port Douglas. Participants in the conference will be encouraged, and are anticipated, to spend those five days in the Douglas Shire.

Members of the organisation have made contact with the local LGBT event, Hot & Steamy Festival, for the two events to work together during this period. Through collaboration the two groups hope to offer a mutually beneficial experience for their respective delegates and attendees.

BACKGROUND

The Equality project is a health promotion charity. Their primary activity is to:

- Advance the health and social welfare of LGBTIQ+ Australians;
- Advance the education and training of LGBTIQ+ community advocates and leaders
- Promote cooperation, participation and mutual respect between LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities in Australia.

Their mission is to create a space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, non-binary, intersex, queer, asexual and aromantic people and organisations to work together, build bridges, and speak with a common voice, through a national conference called Better Together.

The conference will be Indigenous and feminist in its approach, welcoming the voices of multicultural and faith groups, people with disabilities, the Deaf community, and people of all ages, genders, sexualities, geographical locations and family formations.

They hope to cultivate social and cultural change by creating a training program, the Better Together Training Academy, that will foster the training of a new generation of LGBTIQ+ advocates, change-makers and leaders.

The national LGBTIQ Better Together Conference will be presented in Cairns in 2022. The conference attracts 400 delegates and will be hosted at the Cairns Convention Centre. Over the last 3 years the event has been held in Sydney and Melbourne and Adelaide.

The group also hopes to provide training and consulting sessions for local organisations and businesses who wish to promote diversity in the workplace and in their community.

COMMENT

By encouraging and attracting these types of events to the Douglas Shire, the region can enhance its appeal as a conference destination as well as providing positive outcomes for the broader LGBTIQ community. The conference will be held during a traditionally slow time of the year given the event will be held during the traditional wet season.

A key focus for Council's funding of events is to attract and encourage events that fall outside of the traditional tourist season, primarily from October to June, and this event could bring significant economic benefits during a quiet time of the year.

Economic modeling from the economy.id portal suggests that at a spend on accommodation of \$278 per person per night by 400 delegates over 5 days would have a total economic impact of \$556,627 on the Douglas Shire economy. Please refer to attachment 1.

PROPOSAL

- Provide one off funding of \$10,000 cash and In-Kind assistance (\$1,550 for Sugar Wharf venue hire) for the Better Together Conference to be held in February 2022.
- Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments in relation to the funding and In-kind support for the Better Together conference.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The request for funding is an out of round request and monies will need to be redirected from other projects in the 2021/22 operational budget.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nil

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- Economic:** The event can attract up to 400 delegates injecting over \$500,000 to the area that would provide direct and indirect economic opportunities for the Shire.
- Environmental:** The event would comply with Council's Plastic Free and environmental policies.
- Social:** The Better Together Conference promotes Human Rights and diversity within the business community and the Shire. Educational workshops and activities will create social cohesion to mitigate discrimination.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region. We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

Goal 4 - We will promote arts and cultural programs and events that bring vibrancy to the community and compliment the tourist experience.

Operational Plan 2020-2021 Actions:

1.4.2 - Review Council's Event Strategy and implement actions that attract and encourage additional events to the Shire. Identify opportunities for new events either Council or Community run.

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: Nil

External: Better Together Conference organisers and promoters

ATTACHMENTS

1. Better Together Conference Economy-id [5.6.1 - 2 pages]

Events are very important contributors to local and regional economies. A successful well run event can provide significant value to an area by adding jobs and money to the local economy and providing additional cultural and social benefits. Alternatively, the wrong event may have considerable negative impacts such as a loss of money or reputation.

The event impact calculator has been developed to enable Douglas Shire Council to calculate the potential economic impact of a proposed event. This can be used in conjunction with other methods to help Douglas Shire Council select the most appropriate events to support. This calculator alone cannot predict which events will be successful, however it can indicate the potential economic impact a successful event may have across a range of economic measures such as output, employment, wages and salaries and local jobs.

This tool uses input/output estimates to calculate the impact of an event based on the average spend per day by visitors to the event. Simply enter the type of event, the significance of the event, the duration of the event and the average spend per day to calculate the potential economic impact.

As events can also contribute to an area in other ways, such as socially, culturally and environmentally, it is important that other tools or methods are also used to evaluate the potential or benefit of an event.

Event Impact Summary

Douglas Shire Council - Better together - Modelling the effect of \$556,000 from a Business event with State significance

	Output (\$)	Value-added (\$)	Local Jobs (annual jobs)	Resident Jobs (annual jobs)
Direct impact	444,800	211,738	3.6	--
Industrial impact	70,935	28,811	0.2	--
Consumption impact	40,892	20,753	0.3	--
Total impact on Douglas Shire Council economy	556,627	261,303	4.1	--

Source: [National Institute of Economic and Industry Research \(NIEIR\)](#) ©2019. Compiled and presented in economy.id by [.id](#), the population experts.

Note: All \$ values are expressed in 2016/17 base year dollar terms.

The proposed Better together event is planned to start on the 14/02/2022 and run for 5 days. It is an event of State significance. Attachments 5.1.1 - 5.1.4 are estimated to attract 400 visitors per day for the 5 days, with an average spend per person per day of \$278. This equals a total visitor spend of \$556,000 attributed to this event. Assuming the event will be held in Douglas Shire Council, it is calculated to have the following potential impact:

Impact on Output

The total visitor spend of \$556,000 attributed to staging the Better together would lead to a direct impact on output of \$444,800. This additional direct output from the economy would also lead to an increase in indirect demand for intermediate goods and services across related industry sectors. These indirect industrial impacts (Type 1) are estimated to be an additional \$70,935 in Output.

There would be an additional contribution to Douglas Shire Council economy through consumption effects as correspondingly more wages and salaries are spent in the local economy. It is estimated that this would result in a further increase in Output of \$40,892.

The combination of all direct, industrial and consumption effects would result in total estimated rise in Output of \$556,627 in Douglas Shire Council economy.

Impact on value added and GRP

The impact of an additional of \$556,000 spend to the local economy as a result of running Better together in Douglas Shire would lead to a corresponding direct increase in value added of \$211,738. A further \$28,811 in value added would be generated from related intermediate industries.

There would be an additional contribution to Douglas Shire economy through consumption effects as correspondingly more wages and salaries are spent in the local economy. It is estimated that this would result in a further increase in value added of \$20,753.

The combination of all direct, industrial and consumption effects would result in an estimated addition in value added of \$261,303 in Douglas Shire economy.

Value added by industry represents the industry component of Gross Regional Product (GRP). The impact on Douglas Shire's GRP as a result of staging this event is directly equivalent to the change in value added outlined above.

In summary, GRP in Douglas Shire is estimated to increase by \$261,303.

Impact on Employment (local jobs, 12mth jobs)

The employment impact of an event is expressed in local jobs. For example, an event that generates 4 weeks of work for 13 people (52 weeks of work in total), would have an employment impact equivalent to 1.0 annual local job.

The direct addition of \$556,000 spend to the local economy as a result of staging the Better together event in Douglas Shire is estimated to lead to a corresponding direct increase of employment equivalent to 3.6 annual local jobs across a range of industries. From this direct expansion in the economy it is anticipated that there would be flow on effects into other related intermediate industries, creating an additional employment equivalent to 0.2 annual local jobs.

This addition of employment in the local economy would lead to a corresponding increase in wages and salaries, a proportion of which would be spent on local goods and services, creating a further increase equivalent to 0.3 annual local jobs through consumption impacts.

The combination of all direct, industrial and consumption effects would result in a total estimated increase of employment equivalent to 4.1 annual local jobs located in Douglas Shire.