

### **3. MAYORAL MINUTES**

#### **3.1. MAYORAL MINUTE - TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

“That Council:

1. Notes the implementation of the Tourism and Economic Development Officer position within Council’s structure and express support for the process undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer in the recruitment of a Tourism and Economic Development Officer.”

#### **BACKGROUND**

The economy of the Douglas Shire faced strong headwinds before Covid-19. As part of the 2018/19 Operational Plan, Council conducted a review of the current economic strategy through the Economic Strategic Review Committee (ESRC). The ESRC was chaired by the former Mayor and included stakeholders from across the business community. Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD), the Chamber of Commerce, and Jabalbina were key members.

As part of the ESRC, the committee identified over 30 initiatives for the Shire to support a prosperous economy and advocate for the Shire to invest in new opportunities that help diversify the economy other than tourism and sugar cane. ESRC strongly advocated the importance of an economic development officer that would support new investment to the Shire, drive and advocate for additional funding for economic projects, infrastructure and tourism.

At the conclusion of the ESRC, Covid-19 arrived in Australia. It has severely damaged an already perilous economy and the impact may last for years. Economics ID estimates that the Gross Regional Product may decline by -25.3% and local jobs loss falling by -12.7% in the June 2020 quarter.

The Tourism and Economic Development Officer (TEDO) will play an integral role in shaping the local sector to better respond to tourism trends, working closely with Regional and Local Tourism Organisations to support them in targeted destination management and branding, leading strategic Council initiatives that will enhance job opportunities in the sector and supporting local businesses that depend either directly or indirectly on tourism.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has commenced the process of recruiting for a TEDO which has seen a high calibre of applicants. It is envisioned the position will work within the Community and Economic Development Section and work closely with other departments to find innovative ways to support the economy.

The ESRC and CEO has deemed this an essential position that will advance the Shire and support small businesses and the community through the COVID-19 recovery efforts. Some have questioned whether the CEO has acted appropriately in recruiting for this role. The Mayor’s view is that the CEO is not only within his rights to recruit for this critical position and other positions that are deemed essential, but the move is essential and urgent. This motion seeks to support this initiative.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil