

**ITEM 16. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SPONSORSHIP – ASIALINK BUSINESS**

**FILE NO: X003413**

**SUMMARY**

An application for sponsorship under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program has been received from not-for-profit organisation, Asialink Business, to produce four Asia Insights Workshops in Sydney in 2016 and 2017 for small to medium businesses. The application has been evaluated and support of \$30,000 (cash) is recommended in this report.

On 9 December 2013, Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy, a 10-year strategy that aims to strengthen the city economy and support business. It focuses on further improving the solid foundations for success that exist within the city economy, as well as creating opportunities for individuals, businesses and the community.

The strategy states that the City will develop and deliver programs, seminars and forums to enhance the skills of business owners, increase their awareness of business opportunities and trends, and discuss strategic issues. The City is also committed to supporting Sydney's business community to maximise opportunities in China and other Asian growth markets. As Australia's leading global city and the gateway to Asia, Sydney is the destination of choice for international corporations, business leaders, tourists and students.

To achieve these outcomes, the City delivers programs, and supports those delivered by others to ensure access to expertise, knowledge, information and capacity building opportunities for our local businesses.

Asialink Business aims to equip businesses to become Asia-ready by developing skills, knowledge and networks. They do this by developing practical training programs, research and events that enable businesses to enter, grow and boost Australia's economic performance and the strategies that drive business to Asia.

Support for this initiative complements the existing work of the City to build the capacity of local business, including the popular Business 101 seminar series and the Future Asia Business Summit.

Asialink Insight Workshop Series addresses a gap in the market to directly engage with small business and provide critical advice, networks and support that they otherwise may not have access to. The application has been assessed as part of the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) is recommended.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) to Asialink Business for the Asia Insights Workshop Series 2016; and

- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a sponsorship agreement with Asialink Business.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**BACKGROUND**

1. On 9 December 2013, Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy, a 10-year strategy that aims to strengthen the city economy and support business.
2. The strategy states that the City will develop and deliver programs, seminars and forums to enhance the skills of business owners, increase their awareness of business opportunities and trends, and discuss strategic issues.
3. In 2016, the City surveyed more than 800 local businesses and found that 70% are interested in communication from the City about running their business. Of these, 46% were looking for the City to run events that would assist them to run their business or provide business information.
4. The City aims to complement the work of other government agencies and work collaboratively with these agencies, industry groups and the business community to build business capacity locally and strengthen the City's international connections.
5. As part of the National Centre for Asia Capability, Asialink Business was established in 2013 with a mandate from the Australian Government to develop an Asia-capable workforce. This mandate was the result of the recommendations of a taskforce convened by Asialink to examine the capabilities required by Australian organisations in the region. Asialink Business is part of Asialink, which has been leading Australia-Asia engagement for over 25 years across arts, educations, diplomacy and business.
6. As Australia's leading centre for building Asia capability, Asialink Business offers a market-relevant suite of practical training programs, information, products and advocacy initiatives that enable organisations to expand into Asian markets with confidence and achieve their objectives.
7. The curated Asia Insights Workshops will involve senior Asialink Business representatives alongside local and international experts. The workshops will increase the knowledge and understanding of Asian markets for participants across a broad range of relevant business-related themes, including business protocols, history, economics, politics and cultural awareness.
8. Key themes for the workshops have been identified as priority areas for the City. The highly practical topics have been developed specifically with the target audience in mind. Topics include doing business with China and India, considerations and approaches to entering or expanding into Asia and negotiations in Asia.
9. The workshops will be delivered to up to 50 attendees per workshop with interactive components and, with the City's support, will be free to attend for businesses located in the City's LGA.
10. Workshops will be developed specifically for small to medium businesses within the City's LGA. Participants are likely to represent established businesses that may have a base level understanding of Asia, or be considering engaging with a particular Asian market for the first time.
11. The application for support has been assessed under the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program, one of the 15 programs under the Grants and Sponsorship Policy adopted by Council in September 2014.

12. The program supports the exchange of ideas and knowledge, the showcasing of local expertise and encourages dialogue on local and global issues. Under the program, eligible projects can be supported to a maximum of \$40,000 cash and applications can be received ad hoc throughout the year.
13. The application has been assessed as contributing to the following program outcomes:
  - (a) adoption and implementation of best practice approaches by organisations and individuals;
  - (b) strong networks where participants share resources and acquire new knowledge and skills; and
  - (c) improved capacity in organisations and individuals to develop and maintain sustainable business ventures.
14. If Council resolves to support Asialink Business, the sponsorship benefits for the City of Sydney include logo acknowledgement on all promotional material for the program in Australia on webpages, fact sheets, newsletters, event invites and event signage, social media and media releases.
15. This opportunity provides the City with an opportunity to provide valuable access to experts for our local business, and to significantly broaden their networks and knowledge of growth markets, in particular, those within Asia.
16. The City will work closely with Asialink Business to jointly build the profile of the services offered by Asialink to local businesses. Support for this workshop series provides an opportunity to extend the breadth of support services offered to local business now into the future.
17. The request for sponsorship has been evaluated against the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and support is recommended. All sponsorship recipients are required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes, and acquit their sponsorship.

## **KEY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision**

18. Sustainable Sydney 2030 (SS2030) is a vision for the sustainable development of the City of Sydney to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This sponsorship is aligned with the following SS2030 strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – supporting business community to start and to grow innovative businesses will potentially create more employment, boost Sydney’s economy, strengthen global connections and make the City are more desirable place to live, work and visit.
  - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – innovative businesses can grow into global businesses resulting in swift economic and employment benefits locally.

**Economic**

19. Supporting Asialink Business will directly benefit local business by providing participants with insights and perspectives across a range of Asia-ready focused topics. It will support local businesses to strengthen networks, share knowledge and develop global businesses, while contributing to a vibrant and diverse local economy.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

20. Funding of \$30,000 cash (excluding GST) is available in the 2015/16 Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning business unit budget.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

21. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

**ANN HOBAN**

Director City Life

Alice Chatwood, Business Precincts Manager