

**ITEM 13. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SPONSORSHIP – GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FILE NO: X003414.005

SUMMARY

An application for sponsorship under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program has been received from the for-profit organisation, General Assembly, to produce four capacity building events in Sydney within 2016 and 2017 aimed at small-to-medium businesses. The application has been evaluated and support of \$20,000 cash (excluding GST) is recommended.

On 9 December 2013, Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy, a 10-year strategy that aims to strengthen the city's economy and support businesses. The strategy states 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.

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.

General Assembly is a global education company which aims to encourage local communities to pursue work they love through education and opportunity in technology, entrepreneurial business and design. By focusing on the most relevant and in-demand skills across data, design, business and technology, General Assembly is addressing a skills gap through in-class instruction and providing access to opportunities.

General Assembly also works with organisations as partners to develop specific course and training needs to assist them to stay competitive within a digital market place.

This report recommends a Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship of \$20,000 (excluding GST) to General Assembly to produce The General Assembly Event Series, a series of four free workshops, targeting more than 1,000 local small to medium business participants to provide advice, support and insight.

The series addresses a gap in the market for the provision of free and direct engagement with industry experts on relevant topics covering technology, entrepreneurship and innovation. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$20,000 cash (excluding GST) to General Assembly Australia Pty Ltd for the General Assembly Event Series 2016; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a sponsorship agreement with General Assembly Australia Pty Ltd.

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. Feedback from business and chambers/associations indicate that local business is looking for the City to host events that would assist them to run their business or provide business information.
4. The City aims to deliver programs, and support those delivered by others, to ensure local businesses have access to expertise, knowledge, information and capacity building opportunities which will strengthen their global competitiveness, entrepreneurship and promote innovation.
5. Founded in 2011 as a co-working space and community for entrepreneurs in New York City, General Assembly is now a global education company with a mission to empower people to pursue the work they love through education and opportunity in technology, entrepreneurial business and design.
6. General Assembly partners with skilled practitioners to create innovative educational offerings in the fields of technology, business and design in the form of courses, classes, workshops and events. By doing this, they provide students with the opportunity to learn the in-demand skills they need to thrive and innovate in today's new economy.
7. As a global education company, General Assembly offers a market-relevant suite of practical training programs, access to industry experts, real world case studies and information that enables organisations to innovate with confidence and achieve their objectives.
8. The curated General Assembly Event Series will involve senior General Assembly representatives alongside local and international experts from a range of industries. The events will provide an inspirational forum in which participants will increase their knowledge and understanding across a broad range of relevant business-related themes, including building a business people love, starting a startup, using data to grow your audience, and bouncing back from failure.
9. The series of four workshops will be delivered to up to 300 attendees per event with interactive components and, with the City's support, will be free to attend for businesses located in the City's LGA. This considerably expands opportunities for small to medium businesses in the City to access free training and education programs, building on the City's own 101 series.
10. Workshops will be developed specifically for small-to-medium businesses within the City's LGA. Participants are likely to represent both new and established businesses from across a wide range of industry sectors.
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 General Assembly, the sponsorship benefits for the City of Sydney include logo acknowledgement on all promotional material for the program on webpages, fact sheets, newsletters, event invites and event signage, social media and media releases.
15. This opportunity provides the City with access to experts for our local businesses, and to significantly broaden their networks and knowledge of building a successful, creative and innovative business.
16. The City will work closely with General Assembly to jointly build the profile of the services offered to local businesses. Support for this workshop series provides an opportunity to extend the breadth of services offered to local businesses now and 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 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 General Assembly will directly benefit local businesses by providing participants with insights and perspectives across a range of broad range of relevant business-related themes. It will also 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 \$20,000 cash (excluding GST) is available in the 2016/17 Business Precincts business unit budget.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

21. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. General Assembly Australia Pty Limited is a for-profit company, however public notice of the grant is not required as this grant satisfies the requirements of s356(3) of the Act, as follows:
 - (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.

ANN HOBAN
Director City Life

Julie Giuffre, Business Precinct Coordinator