

**ITEM 16. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SPONSORSHIP - 2018 ASIA INSIGHTS WORKSHOPS**

**FILE NO: X003413**

**SUMMARY**

An application for sponsorship under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program has been received from a not-for-profit organisation, Asialink Business, to produce three Asia Insights Workshops in Sydney in 2018 for small to medium businesses. The application has been evaluated and support of \$26,500 is recommended in this report.

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

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. 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 programs 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. It does 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 businesses, including the popular City Thought Leaders seminar series and the Future Asia Business Summit.

Asialink Business will deliver three Asialink Insight Workshop Series to address a gap in the market to directly engage with small business and provide critical advice, networks and support to which they may not otherwise have access. The workshop series is free for Sydney businesses in the local government area.

The new series will build on previous workshops by expanding on the rich content and markets covered, as well as build on key learnings to improve aspects of workshop design, to achieve greater scale and impact for the City.

In particular, to engage a broader cross section of businesses in addition to the face-to-face workshops, it will create a dedicated landing page on the Asialink Business website for the series, to enable participants to access additional information, including the details of the workshops, videos and additional resources. Key components of each workshop will be recorded. These recordings could be made available online through the City of

Sydney or Asialink Business website to ensure those unable to attend can still access the workshop content.

The application has been assessed as part of the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and sponsorship of \$26,500 (excluding GST) is recommended.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$26,500 (excluding GST) to Asialink Business for the Asia Insights Workshop Series 2018; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer a sponsorship agreement with Asialink Business.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**BACKGROUND**

1. In December 2013, Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy, a 10 year strategy that aims to strengthen the City's economy and support business.
2. 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.
3. 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, education, diplomacy and business.
4. 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.
5. In June 2016, Council resolved to approve a cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) to Asialink Business for the Asia Insights Workshop Series 2016/17. Asialink Business aims to equip businesses to become Asia-ready by developing skills, knowledge and networks through practical training programs, research and events.
6. The Asia Insights Workshop Series included four workshops targeted towards small to medium businesses, to help them break down the complexities of working with Asian countries. The planning of the workshops took into consideration the City's Economic Development Strategy and focussed on key sectors of focus for the City's business community.
7. Support for this initiative complements the existing work of the City to build the capacity of local business, including the popular City Thought Leaders seminar series and the Future Asia Business Summit. Four key workshops delivered during the series include: China Market Entry; India Market Entry; Singapore and Hong Kong – your launch pads into Asia; and Negotiating with Asian counterparts.
8. The workshops featured a panel of experts each with significant business experience relevant to the four topic areas. The panel members provided first-hand perspectives on what it takes to be successful in Asian markets and were able to share unique market entry insights to participants.
9. Feedback from evaluation surveys indicated participants felt panel members demonstrated a sound knowledge of the content and were able to share insights and knowledge about the topics within given timeframes. Survey results also indicated participants were very likely (7.9/10 rating) to recommend the training programs to relevant business stakeholders.

10. There were a number of beneficial learning outcomes for participants. These included: learning about different regions in Asia; understanding different cultures; the importance of marketing; introduction to Asian markets; relevant contacts in Asia; start-up ideas; the value of global thinking; and frameworks for negotiation. Participants provided feedback on areas for improvement and possible topics for similar workshops in the future.
11. In 2018, Asialink will be delivering three workshops in the new series and building on previous workshops, expanding on the rich content and markets covered, and building on key learnings to improve aspects of workshop design to achieve greater scale and impact for the City.
12. The workshops will focus on practical Asia related themes relevant for businesses considering expansion into Asia. Themes will include:
  - (a) liveable and sustainable cities in Asia;
  - (b) capturing the Asian student market;
  - (c) Asian tourist ready; and
  - (d) how to pitch to Asian investors.
13. Workshops will be developed and delivered specifically for small-to-medium businesses and organisations supporting businesses within the City's local government area for whom attendance will be free. 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. In addition to this, digital platforms will be explored to capture workshops and engage broader audiences.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. 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.

17. 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 invitations, event signage, social media and media releases.
18. This opportunity provides the City with valuable access to experts for our local businesses and to significantly broaden their networks and knowledge of growth markets, particularly those within Asia.
19. 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 businesses now into the future.

## **KEY IMPLICATIONS**

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

20. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City 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 grow innovative businesses will potentially create more employment, boost Sydney's economy, strengthen global connections and make the City a 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**

21. Supporting Asialink business will directly benefit local business by providing participants with insights and perspectives across a range of Asia-ready focussed 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**

22. Funding of \$26,500 (excluding GST) is available in the 2017/18 Grants budget.

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

23. Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

24. Subject to approval, planning for the 2018 Asia Insights Workshop Series will need to commence in November 2017 to enable design, development and delivery of this series before the end of the 2017/18 financial year.

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