

**ITEM 3. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE GRANT SPONSORSHIP – ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION 2016-2021 STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN INITIATIVES****FILE NO: X005020.002****SUMMARY**

Three applications have been received for sponsorship under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program from organisations seeking to deliver initiatives that support the City's objectives and commitments in the *Environmental Action 2016-2021 Strategy and Action Plan (The Strategy and Action Plan)*.

- **Transition Sydney Inc**, a not-for-profit organisation, is seeking support for a Bring Your Own Mug public awareness campaign. The applicant has proposed a behaviour change program to significantly reduce the use of single use disposable coffee cups which are an increasing environmental problem for the City of Sydney local government area. The application has been evaluated and support of \$25,000 (excluding GST) is recommended.
- **Energy Action (Australia) Pty Ltd**, a for-profit organisation, is seeking support to trial, finalise and promote standardised reporting templates that will significantly improve compliance to the energy efficiency requirements within the National Construction Code for new buildings and major renovations of non-residential buildings. The applicant proposes to work with construction and compliance industry peak bodies and their members to ensure market acceptance of the templates and drive their uptake. The application for the Section J Energy Efficiency templates project has been evaluated and support of \$33,300 (excluding GST) is recommended.
- **Total Environment Centre Inc**, a not-for-profit organisation, is seeking support to deliver a Marine Plastic Pollution Solution national conference event to address the growing problem of marine plastic pollution. The application has been evaluated and support of \$20,000 (excluding GST) is recommended.

The recommended projects in this report have been assessed as contributing towards the City's commitments in the *Strategy and Action Plan*.

In March 2017, Council adopted the *Environmental Action 2016-2021 Strategy and Action Plan*, a 5 year plan to deliver the City's objectives and targets to be an environmental leader. The *Strategy and Action Plan* sets ambitious targets for its own operations but also for the local government area.

The *Strategy and Action Plan* includes a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70 per cent, and a vision of City of Sydney transitioning to a zero waste and water sensitive city, including healthy waterways. The *Strategy and Action Plan* has set a target to reduce stormwater pollution entering our waterways, including the iconic Sydney Harbour, and an action to drive improved compliance with environmental requirements during design and construction of buildings.

Support for the recommended projects acknowledges the City's recognition of the importance of influencing and collaborating with others to achieve environmental outcomes and targets for the local government area.

The applications have been assessed under the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and sponsorship to each applicant is recommended.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$25,000 (excluding GST) to Transition Sydney Inc for the Bring Your Own Mug public awareness campaign project;
- (B) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$33,300 (excluding GST) to Energy Action (Australia) Pty Ltd for the Section J Energy Efficiency templates project;
- (C) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$20,000 (excluding GST) to Total Environment Centre Inc, for the Marine Plastic Pollution Solution Conference; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer sponsorship agreements with each of the applicants.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**BACKGROUND**

1. In March 2017, Council adopted the *Environmental Action 2016-2021 Strategy and Action Plan (The Strategy and Action Plan)*, a five year strategy outlining priority actions for the City to continue its strong demonstrated performance as an environmental leader. The plan has a range of actions showing how the City will work with its communities to transform the local government area to a:
  - (a) low-carbon city;
  - (b) water sensitive city;
  - (c) climate resilient city;
  - (d) zero waste city;
  - (e) active and connected city; and
  - (f) green and cool city.
2. The *Strategy and Action Plan* recognises that to achieve the objectives and targets set for the local government area the City must influence and collaborate with others. The City supports initiatives delivered by others to leverage their expertise, knowledge, information and capacity that supports and complements its own programs such as CitySwitch, the Better Buildings Partnership, Smart Green Apartments and Smart Green Business.
3. The recommended projects support the City's efforts to drive down emissions, reduce solid pollution and nutrient loads discharged to waterways, and reduce and divert waste going to landfill.
4. As sponsor of these projects, the City will receive sponsorship benefits including acknowledgement in media releases, social media platforms and industry forums/workshops, the opportunity to provide input into the project design and delivery, four tickets to workshops for the Marine Pollution event, and significant data sets resulting from the projects that will inform our existing sustainability programs.

**Transition Sydney**

5. Transition Sydney, a not-for-profit organisation, has approached the City seeking funding for a behaviour change campaign in the City's Central Business District to significantly reduce the use of single use disposable coffee cups.
6. Take-away disposable coffee cups represent a considerable problem waste, with 100 million cups of coffee sold annually in the City of Sydney alone. Cups take approximately 50 years to decompose. Because disposable cups are lined with polyethylene they are not recyclable in our current recycling systems. Consumers often place these cups in recycling bins assuming they can be recycled when in fact they contaminate otherwise recyclable waste streams.
7. This behaviour change campaign will be delivered through a partnership between Transition Sydney, Common Lab, Responsible Cafés, Edge Environment and Annie Hamilton Designs. The groups involved bring to the project considerable experience and skill across campaign development, community engagement, environmental communications and messaging, graphic design and web design.

8. The project will connect and promote cafés in the City of Sydney that are keen to help reduce their environmental impact with like-minded customers. Member cafés offer a discount to customers who bring in reusable cups. The project will recruit 100 new CBD cafés to the Responsible Cafes network to increase the number of local cafés actively encouraging their customers to make the switch; reduce disposable coffee cup use through awareness raising initiatives; educate the community about the impact of disposable cups through an associated social media campaign and 'challenge'; and engage universities and students through final year projects and student-led initiatives.
9. The Responsible Cafes network works directly with cafés to reduce disposable coffee cup use by promoting those cafés that provide a discount for customers that bring their own coffee cup. There are currently 380 cafés registered with the Responsible Cafes network.
10. The project represents strong strategic alignment to the City's *Strategy and Action Plan* ambition to be a 'zero waste city' by reducing waste to landfill, including through support and education for business owners to improve waste avoidance, re-use, recycling and recovery performance. The strategy includes a specific target for improved resource recovery of waste from City parks, streets and public places. The NSW Environment Protection Authority estimates paper or paperboard cups and takeaway containers make up 12% of the total litter volume in NSW. This is likely to be higher for City of Sydney given our high concentration of coffee kiosks and commuters. Reducing the number of coffee cups will help reduce the total volume of non-recyclable waste and litter generated in our public spaces.
11. The project application included letters of support from long term organisations with considerable expertise in waste campaign, including Clean Up Australia, Boomerang Alliance, and Planet Ark. Along with FBi Radio, 107 Projects and others, organisations have committed to provide in-kind support ranging from hours provided for campaign development/peer review, to social and traditional media promotion.

#### **Energy Action – National Construction Code JV3 Compliance Templates Assessment**

12. Energy Action, a for-profit-organisation, has approached the City seeking funding to test and promote standardised reporting templates for building certifiers to complete. These templates are aimed at improving consistency and compliance of new building work and refurbishments with the National Construction Code.
13. The National Construction Code is a uniform set of technical provisions and requirements for building work throughout Australia, and provides the minimum necessary requirements for safety, amenity and sustainability in design and construction. Section J of the National Construction Code regulates the energy efficiency of new construction and major refurbishments.
14. City of Sydney and the Better Buildings Partnership have longstanding concerns about existing compliance with Section J for new development and refurbishments. There are a number of issues with current simulation and compliance verification methods which result in non-residential buildings being certified when they may not actually comply. This is likely creating a significant legacy of poor building performance which will impede the City's ability to meet its greenhouse gas emissions targets.

15. The project will test, promote and finalise draft Section J templates developed by Better Buildings Partnership with key industry stakeholders to drive their uptake. The project leaders have an outstanding proven record in the design and delivery of energy efficiency initiatives, including development of NABERS energy and water ratings. Energy Action will partner with the International Building Performance Simulation Association Australasia, the lead professional body in relation to building simulation in Australia and AIRAH, the peak professional organisation in the area of mechanical services on this project.
16. This project directly addresses the *Strategy and Action Plan* action to “support improved compliance with environmental conditions during design and construction” of buildings.

### **Marine Plastic Pollution Solution Conference**

17. The Total Environment Centre (TEC), a not-for-profit organisation, has approached the City seeking funding for a Sydney-based Marine Plastic Pollution Solution national conference 30 October to 1 November 2017 addressing the growing problem of marine plastic pollution.
18. Plastic pollution results from the accumulation of plastic products in the environment, adversely affecting marine wildlife and their habitat. Larger plastic items break down over time into smaller plastic particles which can be ingested and accumulate in the bodies and tissues of many organisms. The absorption of these micro plastics and associated chemicals by marine life in our food chain is thought to ultimately impact on human health.
19. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), has estimated that two thirds of the marine debris found along the Australian coastline is plastic, mostly from local sources. The City’s stormwater systems as well as Sydney Water’s sewerage system enable micro plastics to move into marine environments such as Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay (via Alexandra Canal and the Cooks River).
20. Sydney Harbour is a vibrant, iconic waterway with cultural, geological and biological diversity and heritage. As pressures on the Harbour increase, it is even more crucial to protect, enhance, maintain and restore this valuable asset.
21. City staff have identified an increase in levels of concern via letters, emails and social media posts from City of Sydney communities about the extent of plastic pollution.
22. The conference will include keynote speakers, panels and delegates from business, government and non-government-organisation stakeholder groups. TEC estimate attendance of approximately 400 specialists, business, government and community members.
23. Conference delegates will share the latest local, national and regional information on the environmental and economic impacts of plastic in our marine environments. A key focus of the three day conference will be the sharing of practical solutions and action to be adopted and implemented by national, state and local community members, business and government. The conference will be held in inner Sydney.

24. The event represents strategic alignment to the City's *Strategy and Action Plan* which sets an ambition to be a 'zero waste City' by reducing waste to landfill, including through support and education for business owners to improve waste avoidance, re-use, recycling and recovery performance. The plan includes a specific target for 50 per cent reduction in the annual solid pollution load discharged to waterways via stormwater by 2030. Much of the waste collected in public spaces is plastic from food or beverage containers. When not disposed of correctly this material can end up in the stormwater pipes and goes directly into the Harbour.
25. The objectives and outcomes of the Marine Plastic Pollution Solution conference align with the City's commitment to use funding and grants programs to support academic and non-profit initiatives that promote energy and water efficiency, improved stormwater quality, water recycling, waste minimisation and renewable and low-carbon energy. The conference will significantly raise the profile of the problem and solutions to marine plastic pollution, complementing the City's work to reduce litter and stormwater pollution.

## KEY IMPLICATIONS

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

26. *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 *Sustainable Sydney 2030* strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 2 provides a road map for the City to become a leading environmental performer – the recommended projects address key identified energy efficiency, water and waste impacts.

### Environmental

27. The Bring Your Own Mug Public awareness campaign offers significant potential to drive down the use of single use disposable coffee cups in the City of Sydney local government area. The Section J Energy Efficiency templates project recognises and addresses issues related to the construction of new buildings (and refurbishments) having a major impact on the ability of the City to achieve its intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030. The Marine Plastic Pollution Solution Conference supports the City's transition to a zero waste and water sensitive city.

## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

28. This report recommends funding to a total value of \$78,300 (excluding GST). Funding support is provided within the draft 2017/18 budget of the Environmental Performance Grant Program.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

29. Section 356 of the *Local Government Act*. Section 356 (3) (a) to (d) is satisfied for the purpose of providing grant funding to for-profit organisations.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

30. The recommended projects will be undertaken between August 2017 and July 2018.

**ANN HOBAN**

Director City Life

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