

Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship - Asia Business Event Series 2018-2020

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Summary

Asialink Business, an affiliate of the University of Melbourne, has applied for a Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship of \$38,000 (excluding GST) per year for three years to support the delivery of the Asia Business Event Series. The Asia Business Event Series aims to equip Sydney businesses to become Asia-ready by developing skills, knowledge and networks, and unpacking the complexities of working with Asian countries.

Asialink Business is a national organisation established in 2013, with a mandate from the Australian Government to develop an Asia capable workforce in Australia.

The City's Economic Development Strategy identifies long-term, sustainable connections with Asia as a priority for the City, to deliver greater benefits to the local community and the economy. Engagement with Asia is integral to Sydney's future economic competitiveness and its ability to facilitate trade and investment outcomes. 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 has sponsored the Asia Business Event Series, delivered by Asialink Business, since 2016, with topics ranging from tourism to sustainability to startups. Feedback from participants indicates they have gained a better understanding of the market opportunities in Asia and become more ready to and capable of engaging with Asia after attending the events.

Asialink will deliver four events each year for three years. They will continue to focus on the City's priority sectors including international education, tourism, tech startups and green economy which will be planned each year, aligning with the City's International Engagement activities and hot topics. For instance, proposed themes in the coming year include "The value of international education to the tourism sector", "China Connections: best practices in sister city relationships", "The commercialisation pathway for expanding into Asia" and "How technology can help Asian cities get cleaner and greener".

Each event will bring together an average of 50 business executives, entrepreneurs and peak bodies to hear from subject matter experts on cultural nuances, trends and opportunities, and learn critical skills to tap the market potential of Asia. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with the speakers to deepen their understanding of tackling Asia.

The assessment of the application shows strong alignment with key outcomes of the City's Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program, in particular the development of strong networks to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange, and the building of capacity in organisations and individuals to develop and maintain sustainable business ventures.

It is recommended that the City sponsors Asialink Business to the value of \$30,000 per year for three years, to cover the cost of content development, marketing and promotion, venue hire, catering, speakers engagement, post event content production and distribution, and evaluation. This amount is on par with previous years' sponsorships on a per event basis.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) per annum for three years to University of Melbourne, for its affiliate Asialink Business, for the Asia Business Event Series; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer a sponsorship agreement with the University of Melbourne for its affiliate Asialink Business.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. Asialink Business is a national organisation established in 2013 with a mandate from the Australian Government to develop an Asia capable workforce in Australia.
2. The Asia Business Events Series, which includes four events a year, targets small to medium businesses. These events aim to equip local businesses to become Asia-ready by increasing their awareness of market potentials and developing necessary skills, knowledge and networks.
3. The event series has garnered positive feedback and is gaining traction in business communities. Over 170 people from various business sectors, including tourism, retail, hospitality, digital, investment and education sectors, and a number of non-government organisations attended the 2017-18 series. Evaluation surveys indicated participants have increased capability and skills to engage with organisations in Asia and overall ability to perform in Asia by attending these workshops. Overall, participants were highly satisfied with the event content, learning outcomes and networking opportunities.
4. Asialink Business will develop the themes for 2018-19 in consultation with the City's International Engagement team. The focused markets and sectors will align with those highlighted in the Economic Development Strategy.
5. Council resolved to approve a cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) in 2016 to Asialink Business to deliver four events and \$26,000 (excluding GST) in 2017 to deliver three events. The City's recommended sponsorship is \$30,000 (exclusive of GST) per year for three years to Asialink Business to support the delivery of the Asia Business Event Series.
6. The sponsorship benefits include a range of acknowledgement opportunities and invitations for councillors and staff to attend the events.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

7. 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 the business community to become Asia ready and internationally competitive will help create more employment, boost Sydney's economy, strengthen global connections and make the city a more desirable place to live, work, visit and invest.
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - Asia ready local businesses can grow into global businesses resulting in economic and employment benefits locally.

- (c) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships - by supporting the Asia Business Events Series, the City demonstrates collaboration through partnership in progressing our 2030 visions and strategic directions.

Environmental

8. The event series may include themes around sustainability, a key sector of focus of the City.
9. The event organiser uses digital documents and laptops for meetings and client engagements. Workshop communications and resources are shared electronically with participants.

Economic

10. Supporting Asia Business Events Series will contribute to the City's economic prosperity and having a vibrant, diverse, innovative and commercially connected economy. The event series will help local businesses strengthen their networks and become Asia ready.

Budget Implications

11. Funding of \$30,000 (excluding GST) is available in the 2018-19 Knowledge Exchange Sponsorships budget.
12. Provision will be made in future Knowledge Exchange Sponsorships budgets for the sponsorship costs incurred in the two subsequent financial years.

Relevant Legislation

13. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that a council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

14. Asia Business Events Series 2018-19 is scheduled to take place between November 2018 and June 2019.

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Director City Life

Karen Ng, International Engagement Coordinator