

Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship - Australian Fashion Council - Curated Sydney 2019

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Summary

In December 2013, Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy, a 10-year plan that aims to strengthen the city economy and support business. At the same time, Council adopted the Retail Action Plan, which aims to strengthen the local retail sector and promote Sydney as Australia's premier retail destination.

Retail in Sydney continues to face numerous challenges, including impacts from the Light Rail construction, an ongoing shift to online purchasing and a general reduction in consumer confidence and retail spending. A key component of the advice received from the City's Retail Advisory Panel is that industry-led programs, supported by Government, will ensure the long-term viability of Sydney retailing.

An application for \$40,000 cash has been received from the Australian Fashion Council under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program to deliver Curated Sydney 2019.

The Australian Fashion Council (AFC) is a not-for-profit membership organisation that is highly regarded by the local fashion industry, with a clear mission to promote the growth of the textile and fashion industry in Australia. They are seeking support for AFC Curated Sydney 2019, a business development program that will nurture local emerging fashion designers to establish viable and sustainable long-term businesses.

AFC Curated Sydney 2019 will teach the "business of fashion" to up to 10 fashion designers through a combination of retail exposure, direct industry mentoring and workshops over 12 months. Participants will have the opportunity to experience their "first shopfront" via a series of pop-ups in vacant retail spaces in Sydney, as well as attend tailored workshops and seminars to enhance their understanding of supply chain transparency, ethics and sustainability, financial management, becoming an employer and fashion law.

The program aligns with both the City's Economic Development Strategy and Retail Action Plan, as it will foster the development of innovative and progressive retail, deliver mentoring to enhance skills and expertise, support the development of creative industry and build Sydney's reputation as a globally competitive and innovative city.

This program has been developed in direct response to industry feedback. It addresses a gap in the market for tailored support for emerging designers who typically face significant challenges in the first five years of business.

This report recommends a Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship of \$35,000 cash (excluding GST) for Australia Fashion Council to produce the AFC Curated Sydney 2019 program.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$35,000 (excluding GST) to the Australian Fashion Council for AFC Curated Sydney 2019; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer sponsorship agreements with each of the applicants.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. The City's Economic Development Strategy recognises that supporting programs that build skills and expertise in small business operators will contribute to their commercial viability and sustainability.
2. In December 2013, Council adopted the Retail Action Plan which aims to strengthen the local retail sector and promote Sydney as Australia's premier retail destination.
3. A key component of the advice received from the Retail Advisory Panel is that industry-led programs, supported by Government, will ensure the long-term viability of Sydney retailing.
4. Successful retail relies on unique world-class designers with global and national recognition, along with memorable experiences that provide sustained reasons to visit the city's retail precincts.

Australian Fashion Council - Curated Sydney 2019

5. Australian Fashion Council (AFC) is the result of the merging of the former Council of Textile and Fashion and Australian Fashion Chamber in 2018. Together they share a history of over 65 years of service to the industry.
6. The Australian Fashion Council is a non-profit membership organisation that promotes the growth of Australia's textile and fashion industry by supporting five focus areas: promoting ethical practice, strengthening supply chains, fostering design and innovation, supporting emerging business and building Australian export.
7. The Australian Fashion Council consults and collaborates with industry members to strengthen linkages, and broaden opportunities and support for new and emerging labels that will be the foundations of Australia's future fashion sector.
8. AFC Curated Sydney 2019 is a business development program supporting local emerging fashion designers and labels, seeking to nurture the next wave of Australian designers and makers to establish viable long-term businesses.
9. The Curated program commenced in Melbourne in 2017 in response to industry feedback identifying the challenges designers face during the first five years of business.
10. In 2018, the program expanded to Sydney with a pilot pop-up retail shop and designers' workshop with support from a major retail shopping centre.
11. In 2019, the Curated program will build on the initial momentum and expand its scope to run consecutively in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane for the first time. Support from the City will be for the AFC Curated Sydney 2019 program only.
12. AFC Curated Sydney 2019 will foster the development of innovative and progressive retail, establish an education platform that promotes sustainable business practices, support the development of creative industry, and enhance Sydney's reputation as a globally competitive and innovative city.
13. The program includes retail exposure, direct industry mentoring and business development workshops and seminars.

14. Sustainable development is an area of focus for the Australian Fashion Council. Participating mentors, designer members and established labels are typically industry leaders in sustainability and ethical practice.
15. Seminar topics for participants will include supply chain transparency, ethics and sustainability, financial management, becoming an employer and understanding employee awards, and fashion law.
16. Up to 10 designers and labels will participate in the AFC Curated Sydney 2019 program.

Sponsorship

17. In November 2015, Australian Fashion Council was approved as a tenant at 66 Oxford Street as part of the Oxford Street Creative Spaces Program. Their three-year lease will expire in November 2019.
18. In 2016, Australian Fashion Council were awarded \$40,000 sponsorship through the Village Business Grant. In 2018, the Australian Fashion Council was awarded \$26,990 sponsorship through the Business Support Grant – Place and Industry.
19. The Village Business Grant program objectives include improved communication within the industry sector, information exchange and strengthened business networks.
20. In 2016 and 2018, the Australian Fashion Council delivered capacity-building seminars for industry on topics such as ethical fashion and manufacturing, exporting fashion to the US, business planning, finance, and the future of the Australian fashion industry.
21. The benefits included:
 - (a) 235 representatives attended seminars covering business and finance planning, tech in fashion, ethical fashion and manufacturing, the future of Resort collections, and export;
 - (b) 87 per cent of participants indicated they increased their knowledge about business in the fashion industry; and
 - (c) 89 per cent of participants indicated they will apply the knowledge learnt into their business.
22. The Australian Fashion Council are now seeking cash sponsorship from the City in support of AFC Curated Sydney 2019 under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program.
23. The Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program supports the exchange of ideas and knowledge 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 throughout the year.
24. The City wants to work with industry and government partners to strengthen the ecosystem to enable more entrepreneurs to start and grow successful global businesses. It aims to contribute to building a strong entrepreneurial culture and community, and creating more skilled and connected entrepreneurs.

25. Evaluation of the sponsorship will include a report containing results from a participant survey, participant feedback, website analytics and media mentions. The evaluation requirements will be included as part of the City's standard sponsorship agreement.
26. Under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, as well as social enterprises, are eligible. Australian Fashion Council is a not-for-profit organisation.
27. 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;
 - (c) improved capacity in organisations and individuals to develop and maintain sustainable business ventures; and
 - (d) increased recognition of Sydney as an innovative and creative city.
28. Sponsorship benefits to be negotiated include acknowledgement of the City in media releases, on social media platforms, in blogs and on-line advertisements, and signage at the opening or closing event; the City's logo included in all marketing materials including direct mail, t-shirts, bags, videos and website; and invitations to attend as guests opening and closing events associated with the program.
29. The Australian Fashion Council has sought sponsorship from the City of Sydney in support of Curated Sydney 2019 for \$40,000. The application has been assessed against the criteria for the Knowledge Exchange program, and \$35,000 has been recommended.
30. The City's recommended sponsorship of \$35,000 is to support the delivery of capacity-building seminars for industry. The application identified capital expenditure items that do not meet the sponsorship guidelines and the recommended funding reflects this.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

31. 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 program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City - AFC Curated Sydney 2019 provides an education and sales platform for the local fashion industry, helps to strengthen business competitiveness and enhance the branding of Sydney as a global fashion destination.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre - AFC Curated Sydney 2019 will help provide recognition for Sydney's unique world-class designers, and create memorable consumer experiences providing reasons to visit the city's retail precincts.

- (c) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - AFC Curated Sydney 2019 will deliver mentoring to build skills and expertise, and share knowledge and develop best practice in business.
- (d) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City - AFC Curated Sydney 2019 will showcase Sydney and Australian designers and position Sydney as a major creative hub in the Asia Pacific region.

Budget Implications

- 32. Funding of \$30,000 (excluding GST) in cash has been provided in the adopted 2018/2019 budget.
- 33. Funding of \$5,000 (excluding GST) will be provided in the 2019/20 budget.

Relevant Legislation

- 34. 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

- 35. Subject to council approval, the recommended program will be undertaken between May and November 2019.

ANN HOBAN

Director City Life

Anitra Morgana, City Business Coordinator