

Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship - City Business Initiatives

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Summary

Three applications have been received under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program from organisations seeking to deliver initiatives that support key objectives under the City's Economic Development Strategy.

These three initiatives are especially relevant given the current Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on businesses, universities and our local communities. These initiatives focus on upskilling businesses and local communities around innovation, collaboration and resilience, as well as providing international students affected by Covid-19 an opportunity to connect to our local industries and gain work experience.

Sydney Commons Lab is a Sydney-based initiative led by InCollaboration Pty Ltd and a number of renowned professionals and university academics. Part of a global movement, their focus is on growing community-led initiatives for the common good, including sharing of resources, regenerative ecologies and building sustainable local wealth. InCollaboration Pty Ltd is seeking support for a one-day "Community Wealth Building" forum that will include a full-day of keynote speakers and capacity building workshops to promote and encourage sustainable models of commons initiatives from Australia and the world. The application has been evaluated and support of \$12,000 cash (excluding GST) is recommended.

Prismatik Pty Ltd offers consulting, innovation labs and recruitment services for scaleups and corporate clients to improve their digital capabilities. Prismatik is seeking support to deliver the Local Innovator Program, a three-part event series to share skills, knowledge and real experiences of successful local innovators from the tech startup and corporate world. The application has been evaluated and support of \$10,000 cash (excluding GST) is recommended.

Intersective Pty Ltd is an experiential learning and technology provider that works with Australian universities to deliver employability programs for students. Intersective Pty Ltd is seeking support for a six-month program to connect international students impacted by Covid-19 with Sydney businesses through a range of online research-based projects. The program will help 20 universities deliver industry-related projects online at scale for 335 international students. The application has been evaluated and support of \$30,000 cash (excluding GST) is recommended.

The recommended projects have been assessed as contributing towards the City's commitments in the Economic Development Strategy, Tech Startups Action Plan, Social Sustainability Action Plan and International Education Action Plan and are especially relevant given the devastating impact of the current crisis on the local economy.

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

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$12,000 (excluding GST) to InCollaboration Pty Ltd to produce the Community Wealth Building forum;
- (B) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$10,000 (excluding GST) to Prismatic Pty Ltd to produce the Local Innovators Event Series;
- (C) Council approve a cash sponsorship of \$30,000 (excluding GST) to Intersective Pty Ltd to produce the industry project program; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer sponsorship agreements with each organisation described in clauses (A) to (C).

Background

1. Sponsorship of the InCollaboration Pty Ltd, Intersective Pty Ltd and Prismatic Pty Ltd programs meet objectives of the City's Economic Development Strategy as well as the Tech Startups Action Plan, Social Sustainability Action Plan and International Education Action Plan.

InCollaboration Pty Ltd - Community Wealth Building Forum

2. The Social Sustainability Action Plan seeks to enable collaboration and partnerships, recognising the power of local government to act as a facilitator and enabler of community-driven change. This requires deeper dialogue with communities and the co-design of initiatives to ensure a more equitable and inclusive future for all.
3. Sponsorship of the InCollaboration Pty Ltd program aligns with the City's efforts to support community driven initiatives to ensure inclusive economic growth.
4. Sydney Commons Lab is a Sydney-based initiative led by inCollaboration Pty Ltd and a number of renowned professionals and university academics. Part of a global movement, their focus is on growing community-led initiatives for the common good, including sharing of resources, regenerative ecologies and building sustainable local wealth.
5. The Community Wealth Building Forum is a one-day event that will include a full-day of keynote speakers and capacity building workshops around the themes of existing models for commons initiatives, and the role of cooperatives and community wealth building groups for a more inclusive future. It will also include an interactive session to ideate one or more place-based community wealth building pilot project ideas.
6. The project will help build the capacity and networks of residents and professionals driving local initiatives and help drive more inclusive, sustainable and resilient communities into the future.
7. InCollaboration have identified Covid-19 as a risk for this event and have proposed holding a digital event or postponing the event if an in-person event on the date proposed is not possible.
8. InCollaboration Pty Ltd seeks funding of \$12,000 under the City of Sydney's Knowledge Exchange Grant to produce the Community Wealth Building Forum. This will supplement in kind contributions from P2P Foundation, the Democracy Collaborative and Sydney Commons Lab.

Prismatic Pty Ltd

9. The Tech Startup Action Plan recognises that supporting entrepreneurs is integral to the vision for the city's economy and outlines the City's commitment to exploring opportunities to influence the success of entrepreneurs and small business operators.
10. Sydney's tech startup ecosystem is in the early stages of development. The barriers to its growth include the low number of entrepreneurs starting high-growth businesses, and limited access to investment, talent and a skilled support network.
11. Sponsorship of the Prismatic Pty Ltd program supports the City's efforts to build a strong and diverse entrepreneurial community, and provides support for entrepreneurs to start and grow successful global businesses.

12. Prismatic Pty Ltd offers consulting, innovation labs and recruitment to help scale ups and corporates deliver effective technology to meet their business goals.
13. Owner, Adriana Belotti, co-organises two of the oldest crypto meetups in Australia, Bitcoin Sydney and Blockchain Professionals, with a combined community of nearly 4,000 members.
14. Following a very successful event at Spark Festival 2019, The Local Innovators Program proposes a series of free events for entrepreneurs and future founders, highlighting some of Sydney's best local innovation talent.
15. During the Covid-19 pandemic, innovation and shared learnings are key for the ecosystem to adapt, recover and thrive. These events will share lessons and knowledge from local innovators to support others. If physical events cannot be held, Prismatic will explore digital versions of the events, which the tech startup ecosystem is very comfortable attending. Digital events will also allow for larger amplification and reach without the limits of room size.
16. Prismatic's goal is to create an event series that can run every year to continue to highlight Sydney's experts and connect the ecosystem. The events will run in June, August and September 2020.
17. Prismatic Pty Ltd seeks funding of \$10,000 under the City of Sydney's Knowledge Exchange Grant to produce the Local Innovators Program.

Intersective Pty Ltd

18. The International Education Action Plan seeks to enhance the capacity of the international tertiary education sector. One of the key focuses of the plan is to develop opportunities for students to gain meaningful work experience with an industry or community partner.
19. The quality of the international education sector enhances Sydney's position globally as a leading education and research destination. The sector delivers direct and indirect benefits to local economies, creating jobs and contributing to the community.
20. Sponsorship of the Intersective Pty Ltd program aligns with the City's efforts to support international students and help them form meaningful connections with Sydney.
21. Intersective is an experiential learning programs and technology provider that works with 20+ Australian Universities to deliver employability programs.
22. Universities are currently exploring how to support international students, predominantly from China, whose 2020 studies have been impacted by Covid-19. In response, Intersective Pty Ltd are proposing to deliver 'bridge' programs to provide alternative and value-add experiences for students to mitigate potential impacts.
23. This project leverages Intersective's existing and demonstrated strength and capability to deliver a wide range of experiential learning programs and products, including authentic, digitally-enabled industry project experiences for international students.
24. This proposed program will expand the scope and scale of the employability opportunities available to international students studying with City of Sydney education providers, particularly those whose 2020 student experience has been impacted by Covid-19 travel restrictions.

25. The proposed program will offer approximately 335 students an opportunity to do research projects for tech start-ups and local businesses from June to December 2020.
26. These research projects will emphasise the value in the student's diverse cultural, geographic and linguistic backgrounds and ability to bring a variety of perspectives, both local and global.
27. Intersective Pty Ltd seeks funding of \$30,000 under the City of Sydney's Knowledge Exchange Grant to produce this program. Intersective Pty Ltd are contributing \$96,000 to the program.

Sponsorship

28. These applications have been assessed under the City's Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program. The Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program recognises that, for the city to thrive, we must support and create an environment that fosters collaboration and learning.
29. The applications have 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.
30. Evaluation of each 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.
31. Sponsorship benefits to be negotiated include acknowledgement of the City of Sydney in media releases, on social media platforms, in blogs and on-line advertisements, and on signage at the opening or closing event; the City of Sydney logo included in all marketing materials including direct mail, t-shirts, bags, videos and website; and invitations to attend as guests any opening and closing events associated with the programs.
32. Under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, as well as social enterprises, are eligible to apply. InCollaboration Pty Ltd, Intersective Pty Ltd and Prismatik Pty Ltd are all for-profit organisations.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

33. 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 entrepreneurs and international students through increased knowledge and skills will potentially create more employment, boost Sydney's economy, and strengthen global connections.
 - (b) Direction 2 – A Leading Environmental Performer & Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – InCollaboration's commons based economics is focused on sharing, thus reducing water and energy use, material consumption and waste. The commons approach supports working towards a regenerative economy, social inclusion and local and global connectedness.
 - (c) Direction 10 - Implementation Through Effective Partnerships - A key approach of Sydney Commons Lab is to foster an enabling relationship with City of Sydney as well as relationships and networks between different organisational types including coops, NGOs, social enterprises, businesses and government.

Budget Implications

34. This report recommends a total sponsorship amount of \$52,000 cash (excluding GST) across the three recommended programs.
35. \$44,000 will be funded from the 2019/2020 financial year. \$8,000 will be funded from the 2020/2021 financial year.
36. There are sufficient funds available within the Knowledge Exchange Grants and Sponsorship 2019/2020 budget and provisions will be made in the 2020/2021 budget.

Relevant Legislation

37. 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 person for exercising its functions.
38. Section 356(3)(a) - (d) is satisfied for the purpose of providing grant funding to for-profit organisations because:
- (a) the funding is part of the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship program;
 - (b) the details of this program have been included in Council's draft operational plan for financial year 2019/20;
 - (c) the program's proposed budget does not exceed five per cent of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2019/20; and
 - (d) this program applies to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

39. Subject to Council approval, the recommended projects are scheduled for:
- (a) InCollaboration Pty Ltd Community Wealth Building Forum to take place in June 2020.
 - (b) Prismatic Pty Ltd Local Innovators Program to be undertaken between 1 June and 30 August 2020
 - (c) Intersective Pty Ltd program to commence 1 June 2020 with three cohorts running from July 2020 to December 2020.

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Director City Life

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