15. Growth & Strategy

Item 15.1 Growth & Strategy Report for September 2024

Reporting: Growth & Strategy Manager – Helen Thomas

SUMMARY:
This report aims to inform the Council of the Growth & Strategy activities for September 2024, in line with the *King Island Strategic Plan 2022-2032.*

OPERATIONS REPORTING:

3.4 Economic Development Strategic Goals

- Facilitate the growth and sustainability of the King Island economy across a diverse range of industries, thereby ensuring the long-term viability of the King Island community
- Support the further development of King Island as a destination for visitors and residents
- Protect and promote the King Island brand to ensure the economic viability of our core industries

3.4.1 Gather and review data on economic drivers for King Island to identify priority areas for action

- Outputs from the economic analysis conducted by Yellow Rock Consulting were reviewed by staff in late September. A report to share key findings with Councillors is being prepared for distribution in mid-October.
- As well as the detailed analysis around beef farming and shipping, Yellow Rock have created a visual model to show the impact that a range of different scenarios will have on our Island's economy, community and population. Presentation of this to Councillors will be planned in October.

3.4.2 Advocate to make connections with relevant state and federal bodies to improve the Island's availability of suitable housing

- In discussion with the Tasmanian Office of the Coordinator General regarding the potential sale of the King Island Dairy, provided information on the location and make up of vacant residential land around the Island.
- Following release of the State Budget confirming allocation of $1.2M to facilitate large scale residential sub-division on King Island, reviewed the guidelines for the state-wide Affordable Residential Land Rebate Scheme to identify how these might be customised to address our particular King Island context.

3.4.3 Facilitate increased access to on Island skills, training and development

- Worked closely with King Island Chamber of Commerce President, Heidi Weitjens, to develop the program for Small Business Month 2024.

- Met with TasTAFE to continue discussions on future on-Island skills and qualification course delivery.
- Discussion with King Island Tourism Inc., West by North West and Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) regarding delivery of a Great Customer Experience program for King Island businesses.

3.4.4 Promote, support and investigate opportunities to seek private sector investment opportunities on the Island

- Part of a discussion with the Tasmanian Office of the Coordinator General regarding the potential sale of the King Island Dairy and identification of other investment opportunities on the Island.
- In discussion with State Government regarding the allocation of funding to facilitate large-scale residential sub-division on King Island, reviewed opportunities to invite investment which would be eligible for this funding stream and improve availability of residential housing on King Island.

3.4.5 Protect and promote the King Island brand to ensure the economic viability of our core industries

- Met with Brand Tasmania to discuss the opportunities to support King Island businesses in promoting their produce as part of the Tasmanian and King Island brand. Secured an on-Island workshop and meeting with Brand Tasmania CEO, Todd Babiak, to be delivered as part of Small Business Month.

3.4.6 Advocate for improvement to sea, air, logistics and state roads on King Island, including the adoption of a more equitable freight equalisation scheme

- Wrote Council's submission to the Federal Senate Inquiry into the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme, attached for reference.

3.4.7 Promote, support and facilitate worker attraction

- Undertook some correspondence with Cradle Coast Authority regarding the development of a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) for the North West of Tasmania, including King Island.
- Following receipt of a service request regarding support of remote workers, approached a Tasmanian-based co-working space and innovation incubator hub about expanding their operations to King Island. These conversations will be progressed further in October and November.

3.4.8 Implement the recommendations of the King Island Tourism Strategy in partnership with West by North West and King Island Tourism Inc.

- With West by North West and the King Island Tourism Inc President, co-presented an update on progress against the King Island Tourism Strategy to the September KITI meeting.
- Met with WxNW and KITI to craft a plan for the future of visitor information at the King Island Hub, including design and delivery of a Great Customer

Experience program for individuals staffing the Hub and a review of requirements to be part of the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network.
- Secured an on-Island visit from Tourism Tasmania's Director – Visitor Economy to provide an industry briefing to tourism industry operators in October.
- Negotiated to include visitor experience development workshop as part of the Small Business Month program, focusing on engagement with producers and not for profits to create diversification options for their operations.

3.4.9 Acquit Tourism Tasmania funding for King Island Incentive Scheme

- Reviewed progress on the King Island Aviation Destination Prospectus, King Island Tourism Marketing Plan and options for direction of funding to implement the King Island Tourism Strategy. Working with Council Depot staff to chase Department of State Growth regarding new visitor information signage across the Island.

3.4.10 Continue development of the King Island Hub to support economic development on King Island

- Refer to project management updates below.

3.4.11 Continue to provide advocacy and support, in conjunction with other organisations and government agencies, for the agricultural sector throughout the drought and subsequent economic recovery.

- Refer to comments above in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.6

PROJECT MANAGEMENT REPORTING:

King Island Hub

This report provides an update on activity for the King Island Hub through September 2024. This includes:

- Construction program
- Virtual classroom
- Hub operations
- Additional funding opportunities

Construction Program

Further to the incident at the CLT manufacturer's site, Council has now been advised that the projected date of practical completion of the new Hub building is scheduled for mid-April 2025.

The 2-week closure of the CLT plant has had a knock-on effect to our program. Erection of the CLT in mid-October gave us two clear months before Christmas to get the bulk of the internal works completed, hence a practical completion date by the end of the year. The delays instigated by this incident in South Australia has meant we have missed that window. To elaborate:

- The later manufacture date means a later shipping date, moving into a busier period for freight and requiring us to add another two weeks to our projected freight time as a contingency.
- The need to reschedule our subcontractors for the CLT installation has meant an additional delay, with install now scheduled for 14 November (previously scheduled to start 7 October).
- The delay in erecting the main structure of the building means rescheduling sub-contractors to conduct the internal works, such as electrical and plumbing, stonemasonry, flooring. This rescheduling has been impacted by their existing work commitments elsewhere and exacerbated by the summer break.

The mid-April 2025 date is a conservative one, with the project team continuing to put every effort into condensing the program and delivering the new Hub building as early as possible. Further updates will be provided as trades and materials are locked in.

Virtual Classroom
Discussion with TasTAFE in September confirmed their provision of AV equipment to create a virtual classroom is progressing well. A final provision of budget and scope to the TAFE management team in mid-October should result in approval for the Hub project team to purchase the AV equipment and include installation in the scope for our existing trades sub-contractors.

This partnership will provide some relief for the Hub budget, allowing the team to maintain the current scope and quality of finish despite increasing costs for freight and labour.

Hub Operations
Meetings were held during September with KITI, KIRDO, WxNW, Tasmanian Visitor Information Network, Study King Island, TasTAFE and Tasmanian Hospitality Association to design the future operations of the Hub were productive, with an action plan in development to transition operations into the new building.

Although construction of the new Hub building has been delayed, works in the Annexe are on track for completion pre-Christmas. This should allow Study King Island and TasTAFE to commence operations in this building for the start of the 2025 academic year, subject to a partial occupancy permit being secured.

As noted in the Growth & Strategy Report section 3.4.7 above, following receipt of a service request from the King Island community, discussions have commenced with a Tasmanian co-working space and business incubator operator to explore opportunities to expand their operations to King Island, located within the King Island Hub. Securing such a partnership could provide an important amenity to King Island remote workers, as well as positively impacting the operating budget of the Hub facility.

Additional Funding Opportunities

To better leverage off the investment in the King Island Hub project, a new grant application is being completed through Heritage Tasmania's Built Heritage Grants Scheme. The scope will provide for the extension of landscaping work and interpretive signage across the Hub precinct, creating a clear link between the Currie Museum, Hub, Lens Room and Lighthouse. If successful, design and content of heritage signage will be developed in consultation with the King Island Historical Society and information signage about the planting and landscaping of the site will be developed in consultation with King Island Landcare.

The application for this grant will be submitted by the deadline of 11 October 2024 with an outcome scheduled for January 2025.

Currie Courts Improvements

This report provides an update on activity for the Currie Courts Improvements through September 2024. This includes:

- Construction program
- Court design

Construction Program

September 2024 saw work commence in earnest at the Currie Courts. New fencing was erected and the infrastructure for new nets and hoops was installed. The team are planning on coming back in early October to install the synthetic turf on the single bottom court.

As noted in earlier updates, the resurfacing of the four hard courts will occur in early 2025 when weather is anticipated to be more agreeable.

Court design

The configuration of the courts has been based on community feedback sought during the early consultation around the project and through development of the King Island Recreation Plan 2019-29. Both rounds of consultation indicated a desire in the community for a range of sports to be serviced. This objective was shared with potential contractors through the procurement process and the detail of their response contributed to identifying the successful contractor.

As the subject matter experts in the configuration, marking and layout of multi-use courts, the contractor's advice regarding the most efficient configuration to achieve the desired multi-use courts was adopted.

The top pair of courts will be set up with line marking and infrastructure for netball and tennis. The bottom pair of courts will be set up with line marking and infrastructure for tennis and pickleball, with each court also having a single basketball hoop and associated line marking. The single bottom court will have line marking for futsal incorporated into the synthetic turf surface and moveable goal nets.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

Environmental issues are part of the considerations in every activity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

As per the budget. Please refer to the Finance Report.

STAKEHOLDERS:

King Island Council
Community members
State and Federal Government
Local Businesses and Organisations
Study King Island
King Island Chamber of Commerce
King Island Tourism Inc
West by North West
Tourism Tasmania

ATTACHMENTS:

- Submission to Senate Inquiry on Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

Recommendation:

That the Growth & Strategy Report for September 2024 be received and noted.

Moved Cr I Cooke
Cr G Green
That the Growth & Strategy Report for September 2024 be received and noted.
CARRIED unanimously

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