14. Growth & Strategy

Item 14.1 Growth & Strategy Report for August 2024

Reporting: **Growth & Strategy Manager – Helen Thomas**

SUMMARY:

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

REPORTING

On-going

- Council is progressively and continuously working towards embedding its Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032 goals, strategies, planning, and projects adopted within its Annual Plan FY24/25.
- This report aims to highlight to all stakeholders the work undertaken under elements managed by the Growth & Strategy Manager.

3.4 Economic Development – Strategic Goals

- Facilitate the growth & 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.

Update:

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

- Work with Yellow Rock Consulting continues with more information being sought from the Island's farming community. It is anticipated that the initial analysis will be complete by the end of September.

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

- Met with the North West Tasmania representative for Regional Development Australia (RDA) Tasmania to discuss a number of potential projects and grant opportunities arising over the coming months.
- Submitted an application to the Federal Housing Support Program to fund footpaths linking three residential sub-divisions to the centre of Currie.

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

- Progressed development of the King Island Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Month 2024, including conversation with a number of potential government-funded presenters.

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

- Funding application submitted under the Housing Support Program would provide three private sub-divisions in various stages of development with direct pedestrian access to the centre of Currie. This project was chosen to provide practical support to the private developers, hopefully improving the viability of their investment.

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

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

- Reviewed the terms of reference for the Federal Senate's inquiry into the Tasmania Freight Equalisation Scheme and began gathering evidence to inform a submission from King Island Council

3.4.7 Promote, support and facilitate worker attraction

- Discussed the potential of a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) for the North West of Tasmania, including King Island, with Cradle Coast Authority. DAMA's allow for sponsorship of migrants in specific industries and roles within a designated geographical area with a lower skills threshold than normal skilled migrant visas.

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

- Attended the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) annual conference in Launceston.
- Met with the CEO, Visitor Information Network Tasmania, to discuss how they can support inclusion of King Island operations in their network.
- With Council's Airport Manager, met with General Manager, Sharp Airlines to explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships between the airline and King Island operators.
- Discussed outcomes of visitor survey data analysis with attendees at the August KITI meeting.

3.4.9 Acquit Tourism Tasmania funding for King Island Incentive Scheme

- Awaiting response from Department of State Growth regarding permission to install visitor signage around the Island
- Briefed Aviation Destination Prospectus consultants to ensure alignment with broader King Island Tourism Marketing Plan.

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.

- Work with Yellow Rock Consulting is focused on identifying the impacts of the drought on the King Island beef farming industry, with an emphasis on identifying and quantifying the potential ongoing economic effects of the drought.

Project Management Updates

King Island Hub

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

- Construction program
- Budget management
- Power connections

Construction program

The manufacture of the cross laminated timber (CLT) panels to be used for the main structure of the new Hub building was due to commence on 29 August at the NexTimber plant in South Australia. Unfortunately, an accident at the neighbouring timber plant meant manufacture has been delayed. The project team are working with NexTimber and the managing contractor to identify the impact of this on the forward construction program. Early indications are that there will be a delay which could see practical completion of the new building achieved early in 2025, rather than pre-Christmas 2024.

Budget management

The cost of labour, materials and freight continues to increase for all businesses, including this project. The project team are exploring every opportunity to eliminate budgetary risks and avoid unnecessary spend wherever possible. For example, the lookout planned for the roof of the main Hub building has been removed to save on the cost of steel, and the earth berm between the Hub and the Lighthouse re-shaped to avoid the need for a gabion wall. In the Annexe, a performance solution is being sought to avoid the cost of a fully DDA-compliant accessible bathroom, relying instead on the facilities which will be provided 30 metres away in the main Hub building.

At the time of writing, the project is on track to complete within the $5,330,058 approved budget, comprising of $5,000,000 funded by the Commonwealth government, and $330,058 resolved by King Island Council at its December 2023 ordinary meeting and committed in its approved FY2024-25 Capital Budget.

Power connections

Hydro Tas confirmed in August that the provision of a new in-ground connection from the Currie Harbour to the new Hub building will commence in early September. The works will take approximately 3 weeks to complete, requiring them to close the walking track between the Harbour and the museum, and the track around Little Beach connecting the Harbour to the Boathouse at various points through the work.

Further discussion with the leaseholder at the Currie Boathouse has confirmed their agreement to the installation of solar panels and a battery in late September / early October. Discussion continues on their preference to not place a gas barbecue permanently at the site, with the project team researching ways to achieve a solution which satisfies the leaseholder's safety fears.

Currie Courts Improvements

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

- Update on works program
- Budget management and grant funding

Update on works program

A container of materials to facilitate the first stage of work at the Currie courts was delivered to the Island in August. Travel and accommodation arrangements were confirmed for the contractor to come to the Island in early September to conduct the initial work on site, due to include erection of the new fencing and installation of new infrastructure to support netball and basketball hoops and tennis nets.

Synthetic turf for installation on the single bottom court was also included in the container. It is hoped that this will be completed in September also, subject to favourable weather conditions.

Budget management and grant funding

At the time that Council's capital budget for FY2024-25 was approved, the total cost of this project was set at $500,000. Of this, $100,000 was allocated to be funded by the Commonwealth's Community Development Grants Program (CDGP) and the remaining $400,000 from the Local Roads & Community Infrastructure (LRCI) program. Council received formal acknowledgement from the LRCI grant administrators in August that use of the funding for this project was approved.

Negotiation is still under way with CDGP administrators to confirm if their funding can be increased to cover the full value of the project. If that negotiation is successful, then the LRCI money will be reallocated to another priority community project.

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

Recommendation:

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

Moved Cr V Philbey
Cr I Cooke
That the Growth & Strategy Report for August 2024 be received and noted.
CARRIED unanimously

231/24