

## **ADDITIONAL ITEM**

12 October 2011  
To the Ordinary Meeting

Director's Report  
Corporate Services Department

### **5.9 SEGRA Conference 2012**

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TRIM REFERENCE: F2004/06517 - D02796938

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#### **SUMMARY**

On Friday 30 September 2011 Council was invited by Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDACC) to a presentation regarding a bid proposal to host the 2012 Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) Conference on the Central Coast.

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1 That Council provide funding of \$5,000 to Regional Development Australia to support their bid to secure the 2012 SEGRA Conference.**
- 2 That Regional Development Australia be requested to enter into a sponsorship agreement with Council prior to payment of the funding.**

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#### **BACKGROUND**

SEGRA is committed to profiling a different regional location each year to capture local flavours and enable greater participation from specific regions. Hosting the conference offers economic benefit to businesses within the host region as well as the opportunity to promote the wider destination and location of the conference. This year's conference is being held in Geelong, Victoria

The event has been held annually since 1997; on average the conference attracts 300 delegates from around Australia with representation from Academia, Government and Industry, and host region 'champions. It is estimated that the event would inject in excess of \$400,000 into the local community.

SEGRA must operate on a full cost recovery basis and has requested an amount of \$90,000 to enable the event to be conducted on the Central Coast.

The Central Coast has positioned itself to win the bid to host a premium regional economic development conference - SEGRA 2012. Regional Development Australia Central Coast together with Central Coast Tourism are leading a consortium of Central Coast organisations, including Wyong Shire and Gosford City Councils, who are working together to present a bid for the Central Coast to host leaders from around Australia at the SEGRA Conference 2012.

The proposed theme of the conference includes topics such as: Innovation; Asset Based Community Development (ABCD); best practice economic growth strategies; and Social Enterprise.

RDACC and Central Coast Tourism are convinced that this event will have truly regional benefits and will showcase four regional projects, the Landing, Mt. Penang, Warnervale Town Centre and Wyong Shire's Iconic Sites initiative.

Direct economic value is estimated at \$400,000 from the event alone. Potentially the most substantial value to the community and businesses of the Central Coast will result from the positive profiling of the region and the future potential for business investment, tourism and events.

Initially, funding for the event was to be resourced as follows;

Regional Development Australia	\$10,000
Councils (\$5,000 each)	\$10,000
University of Newcastle	\$10,000
Central Coast Tourism	\$10,000
NSW T&I Matched funding	\$40,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

After reviewing the funding arrangements it was found that some partners could not provide the funding committed and an amended schedule was compiled as listed below;

Principle Supporters (\$12,000 each)

- Gosford City Council
- Wyong Shire Council
- RDA Central Coast (\$10,000 confirmed)
- Central Coast Tourism (confirmed)
- Trade and Investment NSW
- University of Newcastle
- Department of Regional Australia (DORA) – [TBC]

Partners (\$5,000 each)

- Central Coast Regional Development Corporation (confirmed)
- TAFE

The amended schedule raised the amount to be provided by Wyong Council from \$5,000 to \$12,000.

Because of their ability to deliver conferences of this size, the Crown Plaza Terrigal was chosen as the conference venue.

Whilst the event is an excellent opportunity to promote business and development relocations or expansions, as well as showcase the central Coast to a wider audience, much of the immediate benefit will be directed towards the local economy of Terrigal and Gosford City and for this reason it is recommended that Council commit \$5,000 as identified in the original request for support.

Gosford City Council has resolved to provide \$12,000 as identified in the second schedule, subject to Wyong Shire Council also contributing \$12,000. Should Wyong Shire not commit the equivalent amount the opportunity to secure the event may be placed in jeopardy.

If Council considers that the event is regionally significant and the failure of Council not to provide the revised contribution may result in the event not proceeding, the \$12,000 funding requested if approved, will be provided from WSC's economic development budget.

## **OPTIONS**

The three options available to Council are to provide to provide funding of \$5,000 towards the staging of the conference, match the \$12,000 offered by Gosford Council or not support the event.

## **STRATEGIC LINKS**

### **Link to Shire Strategic Vision**

- The community will be well educated, innovative and creative. People will attain full knowledge potential at all stages of life.
- There will be a strong and sustainable business sector and increased local employment built on the Central Coast's business strengths.
- Communities will have access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services.

### **Financial Implications**

Funding for the event is available within the Economic and Property portfolio should Council decide to provide funding of \$5,000 or \$12,000. The estimated injection of \$400,000 into the Central Coast community will assist a number of businesses in the hospitality industry. However organisers hope that the conference will ultimately attract new business to the Central Coast, particularly as a result of showcasing the initiatives being undertaken by both Council's.

## **CONSULTATION**

A number of State Government Agencies, Local business group and Gosford and Wyong Council's have held regular discussions to advance the tender to secure the conference for the Central Coast region.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The conference is a well established and accredited event that would produce no known risks to Council's policies.

**CORPORATE RISKS**

The sponsorship agreement to be signed by Regional Development Australia and Council will minimise any risk to Council.

**CONCLUSION**

The hosting of SEGRA 2012 will support the goal of building profile and confidence in the Central Coast as a venue to host events, do business and invest, visit and live.

The bid by the CCRDA is dependent, on support from a number of partners.

Wyong Shire will benefit from the profile boost however direct economic benefit from the conference itself is difficult to assess given the attendees will be accommodated at Terrigal.

The deadline for confirmation of support is 13 October 2011. The winning region to host SEGRA 2012 will be announced at the SEGRA conference this year in Geelong on 26 October 2011.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

*Nil.*