

ECONOMIC ACTIVATION & TOURISM

5.1. Regional Economic Leadership - (EDAC) Terms of Reference Review

Prepared by: KiraJean Clark, Principal Economic Development Officer

Meeting Date: Thursday, September 26, 2024

Executive Summary:

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) is a cornerstone to regional economic growth. Established to provide strategic input and oversight into the development of the Economic Development Strategy, the EDAC has been instrumental in shaping and implementing the "Growing Stronger Together 2033 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan."

By updating the Terms of Reference, the EDAC can continue to embody the regional economic leadership required to achieve the ambitious targets set forth in the "Growing Stronger Together 2033" strategy. These targets include increasing the Gross Regional Product (GRP) to \$2.2 billion, achieving a 20% growth in employment, and expanding the population by 20%.

The review of the EDAC's Terms of Reference is a proactive step toward ensuring that the committee remains a dynamic and effective force in shaping the future of the Cassowary Coast, positioning the region for long-term prosperity and resilience.

Recommendation:

"That Council:

- 1. acknowledges the significant contributions of the current Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) during their tenure, particularly their pivotal role in developing the region's economic strategic vision, goals, and actions as outlined in the "Growing Stronger Together 2033 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.**
 - 2. adopts the amendments to the current Economic Development Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, as detailed in Attachment A, to ensure that the committee's structure and mandate align with the region's evolving economic leadership needs.**
 - 3. endorses the Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the Economic Leadership Committee (ELC), as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Attachment A), for the selection of new members, ensuring a diverse and skilled committee capable of driving the region's economic objectives forward."**
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Background:

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) has played a driving role in guiding the economic development initiatives of Council. Since its inception, the EDAC has convened regularly, holding a total of 9 meetings over the course of its tenure. The attendance rate for these meetings has been commendable reflecting the high level of commitment and engagement from the committee. The EDAC throughout its tenure held representation from the following committee members and representation groups:

EDAC Committee Member	Representation
Annette Swaine	Innisfail District Chamber of Commerce Industry and Tourism
Robyn Smith	Cardwell Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Godfrey	Tully Chamber of Commerce
Kerry Clow	Cassowary Coast Women's Business Network
Patrick Bluett	Cassowary Coast Tourism
Sandra Heinrich	Innisfail CANEGROWERS
David Singh and Elisha La Fauci (Proxy)	Tully CANEGROWERS
Dean Sinton	Cassowary Coast Banana Growers
Steven Bailey	Agricultural Services and Retail

Desiree Lake	Accommodation Services - Tourism
Sam Charlton	Accommodation Services - Tourism

The importance of the EDAC lies in its unique position as a bridge between the Council and the business community. The committee has provided invaluable input and feedback, shaping the "Growing Stronger Together 2033 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan." Through its strategic guidance, the EDAC has helped define the region's economic vision, set ambitious goals, and identify key actions necessary to achieve sustainable growth. The collaborative efforts of the EDAC have ensured that the economic strategy is both comprehensive and responsive to the needs of the local economy.

As the region looks to the future, there is a growing recognition of the need for the EDAC to evolve into a more independent body. This shift is essential to enhance the committee's capacity to provide regional economic leadership, free from the constraints that may arise from its current structure. Moving towards a more independent model would empower the EDAC to act with greater autonomy, fostering innovative solutions and stronger advocacy for the region's economic interests.

By transitioning to this new model, the renamed Economic Leadership Committee (ELC) can continue to play a pivotal role in driving the Cassowary Coast's Economic Development Agenda, while also positioning itself as a strong economic leadership body. This evolution is aligned with the overarching goals of the "Growing Stronger Together 2033" strategy, ensuring that the region remains resilient and competitive in the face of future economic challenges.

The proposed amendments to the EDAC's Terms of Reference, along with the introduction of the new name - Economic Leadership Committee (ELC) and a refreshed Expression of Interest (EOI) process for membership selection, are crucial steps in this transition. These changes will help to attract a diverse and skilled group of individuals who are well-equipped to lead the region toward its economic objectives.

The importance of the EDAC cannot be overstated. As a body composed of local business leaders and experts, the committee provides vital insights and feedback that guide the Council's economic initiatives. By representing a broad spectrum of community interests, the EDAC ensures that the region's economic development strategy is not only ambitious but also grounded in the realities and opportunities of the local economy.

Link to Corporate Plan:

OUR ECONOMY - OUR FUTURE

Our Aspirations

We have a resilient economy leveraging opportunities through strategic partnerships and collaboration between all levels of government, community and industry. We meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of our region to provide long-term inclusive and sustainable socio-economic outcomes using a place-based, community-first approach.

Our Objectives

- E1 - We provide an environment that encourages and facilitates new investment in our region
- E2 - Through our leadership we advocate for sustainable economic opportunities that leverage existing industries and provide opportunities to diversify our economic base
- E3 - We continue to develop and promote tourist experiences through our strategic partnerships
- E4 - We build regional vibrancy through activities and major events with a collaborative community focus
- E5 - Our town and village centres are revitalised and activated through engagement and partnerships with our community
- E6 - Our community has accessible and inclusive opportunities for lifelong learning.

Consultation:

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Consultation undertaken in the development of the Economic Development Strategy has produced:

Action No.	Pillar	Action Description	Target	Timeframe
1.1	Strong Economic Leadership	Define and establish the regional economic leadership structure and governance framework to implement the Economic Development Strategy	Establish and adopt the regional economic governance structure by the end of 2024	Immediate 0-18mnths

Legal Implications (Statutory basis, legal risks):

Nil.

Human Rights Act 2019 - Considerations

The *Human Rights Act 2019* provides that it is unlawful for a public agency to act or make a decision in a way that is not compatible with human rights, or to fail to give proper consideration to a human right. This necessitates understanding the human rights that are protected. When making decisions or taking actions, consideration needs to be given to how that may impact on a person's human rights. Where there is a restriction on a person's human rights the restriction must be no greater than is justifiable to protect the rights of others or the community at large.

The contents of this report do not infringe upon the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Policy Implications:

Advisory Committee Policy - ORG026 and associated forms and procedures including:

CCRC Advisory Committee Standard Terms of Reference

CCRC Advisory Committee Standard Expression of Interest Application

Risk Implications (Corporate, Operational, Project risks):

The following Action is outlined in the Growing Stronger Together 2033 - Economic Development Strategy Action Plan. The recommendations brought to Council today if not resolved do pose a risk to achieving the endorsed strategy action item within the identified timeframe below:

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Financial & Resource Implications:

There is a financial implication in regards to Training and Professional Development for the EDAC members in order to ensure good governance. This item is an action outlined in the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan and as such the budget allocation for Economic Development Strategy Implementation will be utilised to support this for 2024-2025. Resource implications include the Executive Support component of the Terms of Reference which is currently undertaken by the Principal Economic Development.

Report authorised by:

Chris McNamara, Director Development and Environmental

Supporting Documents:

1. Economic Leadership Committee (ELC) - Terms of Reference