



Expression of Interest

Date: 25 July 2019

Project: Feasibility study to assess the commercial viability of establishing an Arts Centre in the town of Elliott, Northern Territory

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Background

Barkly Regional Council (BRC) is a Regional Council, providing infrastructure, services and programs to individuals, couples and families, children's groups, schools, businesses and agencies across the Barkly. The Region, located in the Northern Territory, covers 323,514 square kilometres, and has a resident population of 7,530 (ABS 2016). There are two (2) towns (Tennant Creek and Elliott), and five (5) communities, as well as mining operations and commercial properties within the Barkly region. BRC operates out of six (6) service delivery centres plus a head office located in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory.

In April 2019, all three levels of government launched the Barkly Regional Deal, a \$78.4 million investment and 10 year commitment in the region to drive positive change in the community and improve economic and social outcomes for the region. This investment is being split over three community priority areas – economic development, social development and culture and place-making, and broken down across 28 initiatives.

One of these 28 initiatives, supporting culture and place-making, is the development of an Arts Centre in Elliott. The intent of this initiative is to help revitalise towns and communities by improving local amenities, investing in community infrastructure and promoting local events and cultural attractions to attract business growth and tourism. These initiatives will strengthen the Barkly region as a great place to live, work, and visit.

Objectives

With a clear objective, Council is seeking a Consultant to conduct a feasibility study on the Kulumindini (Elliott) Art Centre (located at North Camp Building 21, Elliott) to assess if there is justification for a new centre to be built on the Stuart Highway to further attract tourism and raise the Art Centre's public profile as a destination and showcases of Aboriginal Arts in the Northern Territory.

The feasibility study should look to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Identification of key planning issues including opportunities and constraints, visitor, demand and revenue analysis (**Interim report**);
- Vision for Arts Centre (**Feasibility study**);
- Exploration of options for Arts Centre inclusions, service offerings, location, size, development, technology considerations, future use (**Options analysis**);
- Management models including staffing, and administration;
- Financial impacts including capital works and operational costs, grants and subsidies;
- Design and spatial requirements (**Master plan**); and
- Marketing strategy.

Supporting Evidence

Tourism is one of Australia's largest and fastest growing industries, built on an abundance of natural beauty and cultural heritage. Tourism makes an important contribution to rural and regional economies throughout Australia, embracing a diverse range of service providers including accommodation, transport, hospitality and tour operators.

Research indicates that the Territory is considered as the destination with the best Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences in Australia. The Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data indicates that 1% (726,000) of all domestic and 12% (945,000) of international visitors to Australia participated in Aboriginal cultural activities in 2017. By comparison, the participation rate in the Northern Territory (NT) was much higher across both at 15% (238,000) of domestic visitors, and 71% (209,000) of international visitors. As percentage share of the Australian market the NT accounts for 33% of the domestic visitor participation and 22% of the international visitor participation in the sector.

Within the NT, the contribution to the economy for actual spend on Aboriginal tourism related activities was estimated as \$206.6 million, comprising \$128 million from international visitor expenditure and \$78.6 million from domestic visitor expenditure.

With Aboriginal ownership of approximately 50% of land and around 84% of the coastline in the NT, there is a wealth of opportunity to provide visitors with Aboriginal tourism experiences across the Territory.

Research indicates that approximately 13.9% of the population is made up of visitors who are classed as potential “immersive” visitors that look for authentic cultural experiences that involve a deep connection that is of a high quality that is consistent and available during their travel.

Elliott Profile

- 398 population (ASB:2016) 90% Indigenous
- 250km north of Tennant Creek
- Commercial accommodation – Elliott Hotel; Midland Caravan Park
- Sealed aerodrome
- Mobile phone/internet access

Scope of work

Acting upon a request from Aboriginal members of the Elliott community, BRC is seeking an experienced consultancy to undertake a fulsome feasibility study that:

- Demonstrates consultations with key stakeholders and identifies any others that should be engaged if this work progressed further;
- Analyses any existing art works and production, various products, marketing practices and revenue of art by Aboriginal artists of Elliott or nearby communities with an interest to market their works within Elliott;
- Identify likely visitor numbers and revenue projections (current and future, seasonal);
- Evaluates an online art sales strategy to compliment an Art and Culture Centre;
- Engages artists and other stakeholders in the design of an Art and Culture Centre in Elliott;
- Considers and recommendations for other revenue options to underpin ongoing viability, including a Café, retail outlet, meeting space (for hiring) and performances and workshops or training space;
- Evaluates how a community Art and Culture Centre might work, such as operating model and governance structure;
- Identify any potential industry support programs nationally or Territory specific, including a linkage to the NT ‘arts trail’;
- Identify existing operational capacity in Elliott and any gaps;
- Identifies any potential problems and opportunities;
- Consider all leases and licences relevant for initial construction and beyond;
- Prepares high level outline of a Master Plan based on recommendations; and,
- Lists options and makes clear recommendations on a course of action, including an estimate of projected construction costs and ongoing operational costs based on the recommendations.

Expected outputs

At a minimum, BRC is seeking the following outputs from the Contractor:

1. Recommendations on whether the solution is feasible or not, and why;
2. Indicative 10 year budget and sustainability of development in short and long term future;
3. Vision for Arts Centre in Elliott;
4. Framework for development of Arts Centre;
5. Recommendations for implementation;
6. Management model;

7. Costings, budget, financial viability; and
8. Work within constraints of funding amount and timeframes.

Funding

Funding available to carry out full scope of works contained within this document is \$97,000 (excl. GST).

Timeline

It is expected that a Contractor will be appointed by 1 September 2019. The study is expected to be completed within three months of appointment and must be finalised by 1 December 2019. Final report with findings and recommendations to be submitted not later than 14 days after this date.

Specifications of the skills and expertise required

BRC is seeking a Contractor who meets the following requirements:

- Previous demonstrated experience working with local or regional Councils, or similar sized organisations (with approximately 200 FTE);
- Demonstrated understanding of arts, culture, tourism and infrastructure portfolios;
- Strong understanding of “NT Arts Trail” campaign;
- Demonstrated understanding of location and challenges associated with remoteness;
- Strong understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, art and cultures;
- Solid technical knowledge of Council or commercial long-term plans;
- High level of organisational and presentation skills;
- High level of attention to detail;
- Friendly, personable nature with adaptable communication techniques;
- Ability to produce quality work within a deadline and under pressure;
- Ability to produce succinct reports, in plain English, that are easy to read and follow.

Study reporting requirements

The report should be succinct, flow easily, be in plain English, and contain the following:

- Interim report (internal and external analysis);
- Feasibility study;
- Options analysis;
- Master plan; and
- Summary of recommendations.

Confidentiality

Information considered may be of a sensitive nature. Some of the material may also be commercially sensitive. It is important that Contractors maintain confidentiality where necessary. The Contractor commits to ensuring Council’s reputation is upheld always and acts in a professional manner when dealing with all parties.

Additional documentation

In 2014, a feasibility study was conducted in Elliott for the viability of a multipurpose centre located on the Stuart Highway in Elliott. This study has some valuable information that is still relevant and can be used to support the proposed feasibility study for an Arts Centre in Elliott. We expect that this information is used and captured within the 2019 feasibility study, to avoid double up of work already carried out. This document is available upon request.