

ORDINARY MEETING	5
5 JUNE 2024	

MAJOR EVENTS SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION – AFLW NORTHERN NEST 2024-2026

52/1/16 | #7408167

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Approves a cash contribution of up to \$150,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$50,000 per annum for the AFLW Northern Nest 2024-2026 under Council's Major Events Sponsorship program;
2. Resolves in accordance with section 235(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, it is satisfied that the event provider is a Specialised Supplier and that they be added to the Sole Supplier Register for the remainder of the 2023/24 financial year and the 2024/25 financial year; and
3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the above.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

- Hawthorn Football Club
 - *Andy Gowers (President)*
 - *Anne-Marie Pellizzer*
 - *Ian Silk*
 - *Maria Lui*
 - *James Merlino*
 - *Katie Hudson*
 - *Owen Wilson*
 - *Tim Shearer*
 - *Luke McCabe*
- AFL Cairns Ltd
 - *David Williams (Chairman)*
 - *Craig Lees*
 - *Reg Lillywhite*
 - *Tom Jones*
 - *Stephen Olle*
 - *Rosie Douglas*
 - *Wendy Goody*

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Hawthorn Football Club (Hawthorn FC) have applied to Council seeking Major Events Sponsorship funding of \$150,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$50,000 (ex GST) per annum for the AFLW Northern Nest event in 2024-2026. The 2024 event is proposed to be held on 24 October (premiership game), with the 2025 and 2026 events to be held between August and October each year, dependent on the AFL fixture.

Council Officers have assessed the application against the relevant assessment criteria for Major Events Sponsorship. The event performed well in this assessment, aligning with Council's strategy (Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2025) to support events that actively profile the region and foster community pride through dedicated community engagement activities.

Based on this assessment, it is recommended that Council enters into a three-year funding agreement with the event proponent to the value of up to \$150,000 (ex GST) cash, comprised of \$50,000 (ex GST) per annum, to support the AFLW Northern Nest 2024-2026.

BACKGROUND:

In 2023, the Northern Nest was created in collaboration with the Queensland Government as a home away from home for Hawthorn AFLW based in the high-performance environment of Cazaly's Stadium. Hawthorn FC are looking to extend this opportunity for their Women's team over the next three years.

The Northern Nest is an elite women's AFL Premiership match proposed for Cairns, supported by a Community Engagement strategy that provides participation and pathway opportunities for young women who aspire to participate in sport and community football. The AFLW Hawthorn team will get out and about in the region undertaking activities such as:

- AFL Cape York House visit
- Yarrabah Community visit
- 'She Can Coach' workshop & forum
- Talent pathways for Under 17s
- Game Development/ Auskick with 5–11 year-olds
- Football clinics
- Game Day activations
- Cultural Education
- Ambassador media activities in region to profile and promote TNQ

The event has a comprehensive marketing plan that includes EDM's, paid media, organic social media, radio, TV, outdoor, website, App, and local area advertising (i.e. Council and TTNQ). The marketing report for the 2023 event demonstrates the events' capacity to deliver effective content and results.

Hawthorn Football Club (Hawthorn FC) have applied to Council seeking Major Events Sponsorship funding of \$150,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$50,000 (ex GST) per annum for the AFLW Northern Nest event in 2024-2026. The 2024 event is proposed to be held on 24 October (premiership game), with the 2025 and 2026 events to be held between August and October each year, dependent on the AFL fixture.

This report provides an overview of Council Officers' review of the funding request and associated recommendations.

COMMENT:

The objective of Major Events Sponsorship funding is to attract and partner with a range of events that provide the following benefits to the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA):

- Drive regional direct economic benefits;
- Increase external visitation to the region;
- Enhance the profile and appeal of the Cairns region;
- Build local business opportunities, profile, and experience;
- Create and build community pride; and
- Provide links and promotional opportunities for Council's broader strategic goals.

The assessment criteria have a strong focus (weighting) on the economic benefits that an event is expected to deliver through visitation and destination profile.

Hawthorn FC have a strong following in Victoria, and plan to market the event broadly across owned channels to attract out of region visitation that is expected to positively impact the local economy. They have demonstrated effective marketing activity from the 2023 event and have plans to use event ambassadors to deliver destination profiling of our unique tropical environment. The event will be required to measure and commission an external report on the economic benefits delivered to the region.

A panel of two Council Officers has undertaken an assessment of the application, which scored well against assessment criteria and corresponding objectives outlined in the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2025.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has been consulted regarding the event and will provide marketing support on TTNQ owned channels and assistance with tourism activities for marketing initiatives. The Queensland Government, through the Department of Tourism and Sport (DTS) recently announced a three-year partnership with Hawthorn FC to support the Northern Nest event. The partnership includes community engagement initiatives focused on fostering social inclusion and broader community health benefits.

Based on the application assessment, Council Officers recommend that Council enter into a three-year funding agreement with Hawthorn FC to the value of up to \$150,000 (ex GST) cash to support the AFLW Northern Nest 2024-2026. The funding will comprise up to \$50,000 cash (ex GST) per annum, and will include a \$40,000 (ex GST) base payment and a \$10,000 (ex GST) performance payment with the latter payable subject to performance against agreed KPIs.

OPTIONS:**Option 1: (Recommended and consistent with applicant request):**

That Council:

1. Approves a cash contribution of up to \$150,000 (ex GST), comprised of \$50,000 per annum for the AFLW Northern Nest 2024-2026 under Council's Major Events Sponsorship program;
2. Resolves in accordance with section 235(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, it is satisfied that the event provider is a Specialised Supplier and that they be added to the Sole Supplier Register for the remainder of the 2023/24 financial year and the 2024/25 financial year; and
3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the above.

Option 2:

That Council **does not** support the Major Events Sponsorship application for AFLW Northern Nest 2024-2026 at this time.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Risk Management:**

Currently there is an increase to the costs to deliver events, activities and projects across the Events industry and particularly in regional areas.

The event proponent will be required to provide an external economic impact for each year they receive Council funding, Council may contribute to this cost at its discretion.

The annual investment will be split across two payments, with the second payment being conditional on the performance (out of region visitation) of the event. This structure provides a level of mitigation against the risk of event underperformance.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The economic benefits the event is expected to deliver were considered by Council Officers as part of the application assessment. The recommended option outlined in this report can be accommodated within Council's endorsed 2023-24 operating budget to the extent any payments are required to be made within that financial year. Payments falling outside the 2023-24 financial year would need to be drawn from major events funding allocations made in Council's future OPEX budgets.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The assessment of applications for Major Events Sponsorship is directly aligned with Focus Area 1 (Robust Economy) of Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2026. It is also aligned with Council's Operational Plan 2023-24 where implementation of the Cairns

and Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2025 in collaboration with Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Tourism and Events Queensland is a key action.

Policy:

Council's Major Events Sponsorship Policy has been applied in the assessment of the application. Consistent with that policy, section 235(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 allows an exemption to inviting written quotes or tenders where Council resolves that there is a specialised supplier, who is reasonably available to meet operational needs. Specialised Suppliers are used in instances where due to the specialised or unique services (in this instance a unique event), or where services are confidential in nature, that makes it disadvantageous or impractical to undertake a competitive procurement process.

CONSULTATION:

TTNQ, DTS, Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ) and other stakeholders were consulted during the assessment of the funding application.



Nick Masasso
Director – Economic Development & Advocacy