



Port of Echuca Precinct

Investigation of alternative management and operational models

Consultancy Brief



Echuca Moama Alliance



Summary:

The primary purpose of this consultancy is to explore potential models for the management and operation of the Port of Echuca Precinct through an 'arms-length' management structure.

'The Port' as it is known to locals, is central to the identity, and a key economic driver of the Echuca Moama region. It is universally regarded as the centrepiece to the local tourism industry and visitor economy.

The precinct is currently managed by the Campaspe Shire Council.

In recent times, the local community has become concerned about falling visitation and reduced activation of the precinct.

There is mutual agreement that the Port must be kept vibrant and active as the primary tourism drawcard for the region, whilst continuing to grow to meet changing local and visitor trends.

The recent 'Port of Echuca Future Report May 2018' by Hirst Projects with Terroir Architects (often referred to as the 'Hirst Report') commissioned by the Shire of Campaspe has acted as a catalyst for community conversation regarding the revitalisation of the Port of Echuca and its broader precinct.

This consultancy proposal is the result of Echuca Moama Alliance meetings and dialogue with both Campaspe Shire Council (CSC) and to a lesser extent Murray River Council (MRC) given the interrelated nature of regional tourism development.

It signifies a very collaborative step forward in exploring the future possibilities for the Port of Echuca

Commissioning Agent

The commissioning agent of this consultancy is the Echuca Moama Alliance (EMA) on behalf of the Port Precinct Working Group (PPWG); a time limited working group formed by Campaspe Shire Council.

EMA is an informal coalition of local business, community and association member representatives from both sides of the river brought together by a common desire to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the Echuca Port Precinct.

Known as 'The Alliance'; the time-limited group has joined together to explore a new model of management that seeks to address concern within the local community regarding the management, cost, direction and activity within the whole precinct area.

The members of EMA are:

1. Echuca Moama Accommodation Association,
2. Echuca Moama and District Tourism Association,
3. Port Precinct Progress Association,
4. Committee for Echuca Moama,
5. Perricoota Grape Growers Association,
6. Moama Bowling Club,
7. Echuca Historical Society and the

8. Echuca Moama Arts Initiative.

The Alliance is chaired by an independent community member; free from commercial or personal interests in the precinct.

For the purpose of transacting this consultancy; the written agreement and financial relationship between the consultant and commissioning agent will be undertaken by Alliance member; Committee for Echuca Moama (C4EM).

Consultancy Partners and Context

In response to ongoing meetings and correspondence from the EMA, CSC resolved to convene an independent working group to establish a Terms of Reference for a future report to explore potential models for the management and operation of the Port of Echuca Precinct through an 'arms-length' management structure at its meeting of 16 July 2019.

The membership of the working group comprised CSC, MRC and EMA representation as well as an independent community member.

As a result of the collaborative process and three successful meetings of the working group, CSC voted to adopt the jointly developed Terms of Reference at its meeting of 15 October 2019. The terms form the basis of this consultancy.

Moving forward, this consultancy project and the quotation assessment panel will be led by the EMA in collaboration with the PPWG.

The final report will be presented to the PPWG before being submitted to CSC.

The EMA vision for the Port of Echuca Precinct:

A vibrant, engaging and active community precinct destination that reflects the past, celebrates the present and embraces the future of the Echuca Moama region.

The Port of Echuca Precinct will become a great place to spend time; both as a local or visitor to relax, enjoy food and wine of the region, experience the environment, learn about a shared history, be active, share stories of the community and do business.

Why is this Important?

The Port of Echuca, riverboats, native forests, historic buildings, golf clubs, aquatic sports, restaurants and surrounding tourist attractions are a key economic driver to our community. The estimated annual spend associated with the tourism industry in the Echuca Moama Region is \$396 million and employs an estimated 1,500 people.

The Echuca Moama Region receives an estimated 795,000 Domestic Overnight visitors and visitors spend over 2 million nights. (EMT2019)

An effective operational model is required to ensure that the Port is a vibrant precinct as the primary tourism drawcard for the region, whilst continuing to grow to meet changing visitation trends.

Effective planning, activation, management and governance of the precinct will balance the needs of local people, visitors, business, the environment and local government.

It is broadly agreed that the current model lacks community acceptance and presents an opportunity to embrace changing consumer demands, re-look at the business model and undertake better engagement with the local community.

The PPWG endorses the strategic direction articulated in the 'Port of Echuca Future Report May 2018' by Hirst Projects with Terroir Architects (often referred to as the 'Hirst Report') as the basis for an agreed way forward.

Assumptions and Parameters:

The primary purpose of this consultancy is to explore potential models for the management and operation of the Port of Echuca Precinct through an 'arms-length' management structure.

It is noted that the Campaspe Shire Council (Council) has not made any decisions regarding changes to the future management of the Port of Echuca Precinct. The following assumptions and parameters will apply to the scope of the investigation/review:

- Council will retain an active ongoing role in the future management of the Port of Echuca.
- Council will retain responsibility for the ownership and management of the various freehold assets it owns in the Port Precinct all of which are located on Western side of Murray Esplanade.
- Council will retain responsibility for the ownership and management of the three Council owned paddle steamers being PS Pevensey, PS Adelaide, and PS Alexander Arbuthnot.
- Council will retain ownership of heritage assets including steam engines and other Port Precinct artefacts.
- Council will retain responsibility as asset manager for the streets, footpaths, public infrastructure and open spaces in the Port Precinct noting that in some cases Council has Committee of Management responsibility over Crown Land e.g. the Discovery Centre, the Wharf and the Aquatic Reserve.
- Council will continue to auspice a Working Group to manage and oversee the investigation of the future management options for the Port Precinct.
- The funding of the investigation into Port Management Options will be shared between the Campaspe Shire Council, the Echuca Moama Alliance, and (potentially) the Murray River Council (yet to be confirmed).
- The scope of this investigation will assume that there is a broad consensus on the strategic direction for the Port Precinct as set out in the widely-accepted Port Precinct Plan Background Report (Hirst Projects May 2018) (the 'what').
- The Port Precinct is the land area defined in the Port Precinct Plan 2018 (Copy attached).

The following items are *not included* in the scope of the review:

- Management of Murray River moorings
- Management of buildings used for municipal or government purposes e.g. Council Library, Council Administration Centre, and Magistrates Court.

Scope of investigation and recommendation:

A. The scope of investigation is to include:

- Alternative management and operational structures to deliver on the Port Precinct Plan 2018 vision for the Port (the ‘how’).
- Investigation of management models that may be applicable for the Port Precinct including (but not limited to) include:
 - Bendigo Tramways Trust
 - Sovereign Hill Ballarat
 - Mildura Heart
 - Swan Hill Pioneer Village.
- Investigation of a status quo option with the Council remaining as manager
- Assessment of each management model rated against the following criteria:
 - Operating structure- how it would work in practice
 - Role delineation/demarcation (Council/new entity?)
 - Governance
 - Costs/financial sustainability/funding sources
 - Accountability/reporting/KPIs
 - Risks (including competitive neutrality principles)
 - Costs and benefits
- Evaluation of the following components of the current Port of Echuca operations (not necessarily exhaustive):
 - All areas and assets on the east side of Murray Esplanade (including the Discovery Centre and Port facilities).
 - The operation of the Port facility itself.
 - All areas of public open space and foreshore area within the Port Precinct.
- Investigation of all aspects of the future management and operation of the Port of Echuca, including:
 - Policy and strategic planning and oversight
 - Communication, liaison and coordination between all parties with a role in the management and operation of the Port area
 - Asset, open space and infrastructure management and maintenance
 - Custodianship arrangements for heritage assets
 - Operation of the existing Discovery Centre (including employment of staff in relation thereto)
 - Use/operational lease of the Council-owned paddle steamers e.g. marketing, ticketing and staffing
 - Precinct marketing, promotion and activation
 - Event planning, scheduling, approvals and execution
 - Community engagement/business community engagement
- Investigation of the governance structure and management/staffing structure of preferred management models.
- Assessment of the likely costs and financial impact of the various model options on the Campaspe Shire Council.
- Investigation of future funding sources for any ‘arms-length’ management model.
- Review and consideration of Council policies and reports in relation to the Port Precinct

B. Taking into account all of the above factors, the investigation will objectively weigh up the costs, benefits and risks (with reference to past reviews and reports) of all future management options and make a recommendation to Council.

Deliverables:

- 1) A written report detailing (at least) three models of management and operation for the Port of Echuca Precinct, reflecting:
 - Part A) Scope of investigation
 - Part B) Recommendation for an operational model including an indicative budget
- 2) A presentation of the final report to the PPWG

Methodology:

The consultancy must be conducted with a minimum of three site visits to Echuca Moama. It may also be conducted by phone or online consultations with agreed representatives from the PPWG and CSC.

No external community engagement or consultation is required.

The successful contractor must not provide comment via any media, supply information relating to the project to external parties, or speak on behalf of any project partners during the undertaking of the consultancy.

Resources:

For the purpose of carrying out this consultancy the EMA agree to provide an informal meeting space, photocopying and access to a shared desk space environment at no cost while undertaking work in Echuca.

All other communication, consumable, travel, accommodation and publication costs must be met by the contractor.

CSC agree to ensure officers of council are available to meet with contractor in order to develop an informed view of current operations.

An indicative budget of \$35,000 exists for this project.

Ownership of intellectual property:

All documentation and intellectual property supplied by project stakeholders in the undertaking of this consultancy remains the property of its owner and is only provided to ensure an informed approach is undertaken in forming the final recommendation of the report. It may not be re-used, re-distributed or re-published in any way. Information provided may be confidential and sensitive in nature and should be treated accordingly.

The intellectual property contained in the interim and final report becomes the property of project funders (CSC and the EMA) once payment has been made to the contractor.

The report will not be published until it has been considered by both the PPWG and CSC.

Background Documents:

Key background and policy documents to be considered include:

- Council budget and financial reports for the Port area (Discovery Centre, general open space/foreshore maintenance etc.)
- Port Precinct Plan (2018)
- Port Precinct Background Report (2018)
- Discovery Centre Operational Review (Urban Enterprise 2016 Update)
- Council Report on Implementation of the Port Precinct Plan (20 August 2019)
- Alliance Report -Future Management Options

Timing

Expressions of Interest to undertake the consultancy will be advertised via email, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram), local print media and web latest news (Council and C4EM) for a minimum of 3 weeks.

EOI submissions including a detailed fee proposal must be received by email to ceo@c4em.com.au by **5pm Friday 20 December 2019**.

The EOI and criteria for assessment include:

- Evidence of previous work relating to the planning, management and governance of cultural heritage facilities, community organisations and public space activation.
- Evidence of knowledge and experience relating to regional economic development and tourism.
- Key Personnel and their experience/qualifications
- Financial quotation and indicative structure of report
- Evidence of appropriate insurances to undertake the consultancy.
- Referees
- Acceptance that agreed consultancy fee will be paid in three parts as per the following schedule;
 - 25% on signing contract,
 - 25% on receipt of progress report No. 1, and
 - final payment of 50% on acceptance of completed final report by the PPWG.

Key Project Dates:

- Advertise: Friday 29 November to Friday 20 December 2019 (3 weeks)
- Shortlist: Week of Monday 6 January 2020 (1 week)
- Tender recommendation and adoption by Port Precinct Working Group: Friday 10 January 2020
- Notify successful contractor by Monday 13 January 2020
- Completed execution of contracts: 5pm Friday 17 January 2020
- Consultancy: Monday 20 January to Friday 28 February 2020 (6 weeks)
- Interim Report due/Progress payment 1: 5pm, Friday 7 February 2020 (mid-point)
- Delivery of Final report: 5pm Friday 28 Feb 2020
- Presentation to the PPWP: Wednesday 4 March 2020
- Council Briefing by end March 2020
- Report to Council: Mid-April 2020

Key Contact

Chairperson: Michael Delahunty mj52delahunty@gmail.com 0419 105 836

Alternative: Nina O'Brien ceo@c4em.com.au Ph: 0409 804 415

Supporting documentation:

The Port of Echuca Future Report; and this consultancy defines the Port of Echuca as the wider High St area including the area from the Aquatic Reserve to Riverboat Dock; a section of land known to exist within 'the red-line' as illustrated below:

Port Precinct Boundaries Map - Defined

