



AGENDA

Committee Meeting

Monday 25 September 2023

The Advisory Committee Meeting of the City of Palmerston will be held in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, NT 0830 commencing at 5:30 PM.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

LUCCIO CERCARELLI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 OPENING OF MEETING

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies

3.2 Leave of Absence Previously Granted

3.3 Leave of Absence Request

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 Elected Members

4.2 Staff

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

THAT the Minutes of the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee Meeting held on 26 June 2023 pages 12 to 16 be confirmed.

5.2 Business Arising from Previous Meeting

6 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

THAT the presentation by Louise McCormick, Commissioner for Infrastructure NT, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics on Infrastructure NT be received and noted.

7 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

7.1 Moving Confidential Items into Open

7.2 Moving Open Items into Confidential

7.3 Confidential Items

Nil

8 OFFICER REPORTS

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM:	8.1.1
REPORT TITLE:	Economic Development Activities
MEETING DATE:	Monday 25 September 2023
AUTHOR:	Finance Manager, Jeffrey Guilas
APPROVER:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

COMMUNITY PLAN

Vibrant Economy: Palmerston is a destination city for employment, it is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow. Future Focused: Palmerston is an innovative city that sustains itself through the challenges of the future.

PURPOSE

This Report seeks to update the Committee on the progress Economic Development activities.

KEY MESSAGES

- There has been progress made on the priority actions under the Palmerston Local Economic Plan (PLEP), being the development of a website and a business survey.
- Palmerston Youth Festival held between 8 and 14 July 2023, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government (NTG). Council spent a total of \$399,873, with NTG contributing \$300,000
- Council has allocated \$26.6 million to the Capital Works Programs in 2023/24. These programs included a broad range of asset renewal programs along with major capital projects from planning and development stages to delivery. This relates to the action in the PLEP 'Bring forward capital investment programs planned for the City of Palmerston.'
- Over the last 12 months Council spent \$40 million with local suppliers out of the combined \$47 million Operational and Capital expenditure between that period presenting 85% significant investment to the continued support and growth of the local economy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report entitled Economic Development Activities be received and noted.

BACKGROUND

Local Economic Development is the transformation of an economy to balance the achievement of quality of life outcome supporting the wellbeing and liveability of the community and to build the capacity of the local community through attracting population growth and job growth, embracing innovation that supports the betterment of the community and supporting environmentally sustainable outcomes.

The City of Palmerston in the NT prides itself as a Place for People, this underpins the key driver of Economic Development. City of Palmerston attraction and retention its population to support the sustainable growth and the business opportunities available to bring in more wealth creation to further support its community's wellbeing and liveability.

This report is to provide an update on work done by Council that is focussed on economic development including an overview of capital projects which highlights Council's current and future investments to the City of Palmerston and how much is spent with local suppliers.

DISCUSSION

A summary of the actions completed and planned by Council to that promotes Economic Development include:

- There are over 100 events coordinated throughout the year by City of Palmerston for the community to engage in, including: Citizenship Ceremonies, children's, multi-cultural, youth, seniors, sport, health, environmental, art, music. library programs and events, stakeholder participation and community development opportunities.
- In June, Hooked on Palmerston was relaunched with 646 residents registered to date and 7 submitting catches to the Competition and will host the first Million Paws Walk to be held at Marlows Lagoon on Sunday 23 June 2023. RSPCA Darwin received a three year sponsorship of \$10,000pa from City of Palmerston's Community Benefit Scheme to run this event in Palmerston.
- City of Palmerston continue to support Property Council NT and Palmerston Region Business Association (PRBA) and Chamber of Commerce through membership and participation at their events.
- On the 3 July 2023, a session about creating a business plan for creative businesses will be held and is called 'The Creative Edge: Sculpting a Strategic Business plan'.
- Council provides funding through the Community Benefit Scheme (CBS) to eligible community groups and organisations to deliver activities, projects and services that benefit the Palmerston community. CBS funding for organisations includes sponsorships, donations, and grants, with Representation Support also available to individuals. The last three recipients were Northern Sharks Rugby League Football Club who received a three-year sponsorship agreement for \$10,000 annually to the total value of \$30,000, Riding for the Disabled Association Top End received \$70,000 over two years, Palmerston Rugby Union Football Club for \$5,000 annually for three years totalling \$15,000
- The Economic Development Website and Business survey have been progressed and are reported separately as they are key activities for the actions within the PLEP.
- Palmerston Youth Festival and the Current Investment into City of Palmerston through capital and operational budget is identified below

Palmerston Youth Festival

City of Palmerston successfully delivered the third Palmerston Youth Festival held between 8 and 14 July 2023, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government (NTG). The Northern Territory Government, Department of the Chief Minister, and Cabinet committed grant funding of \$300,000 to City of Palmerston, to deliver the Palmerston Youth Festival and have confirmed their partnership for another three years, 2024 - 2026. City of Palmerston committed \$50,000 towards the festival.

Over 6000 people enjoyed the Festival, which was made up of seven events, (two major and five bespoke), over seven days and included eight competitions worth \$25,000 in prize money with 66 young people sharing this prize pool.

Geekfest Top End was the most popular drawcard of the Festival with a crowd of over 4000. Over 600 people participated in the immersive experience of the technological highlight "The Cube". Events and activities were designed to be free, accessible, inclusive and to cater to a broad range of interests including culture, music, sports, arts, hobbies, and technology.

Current investment

As at September 2023 Council has allocated \$26.6 million to the Capital Works Programs in 2023/24. These programs included a broad range of asset renewal programs along with major capital projects from planning and development stages to delivery.

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This relates to the action in the PLEP 'Bring forward capital investment programs planned for the City of Palmerston.'

Capital projects are any project where a Council asset is built or renewed. This can include new assets, such as a new shade over a playground, or replacement (also referred to as renewal of assets such as road resurfacing).

Current Large Capital Projects

Updates on the following major capital projects currently under construction include:

- SWELL Construction
- Zuccoli Community Hub – Dog Park
- Archer Waste Management Facility Upgrade

Updates on the following future major capital projects are included below:

SWELL Construction

The SWELL project is Palmerston's largest infrastructure project to date and is set to transform the current aging Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre into an aquatic and leisure precinct, including a refurbished 50m pool with improved accessibility, heated program pool, an adventure play zone, warm water pool, half basketball court, events area, upgraded amenities and plenty of shade. The SWELL construction work commenced 22 August 2022 and is scheduled for completion in November 2023, currently at 68 % completion.



First structure complete for leisure pool and shade structure steel above columns 06/09/23



First delivery of Adventure Playground equipment 06/09/2023

Zuccoli Community Hub – Dog Park

The Master Plan for the Zuccoli and Surrounds Community Hub incorporates an off-leash dog park, walking trails, a skate park and pump track, a playground, children's boutique library, community centre and a garden of reflection. Stage 1 construction which comprised of a dog park featuring a duo of enclosed play spaces equipped with water play amenities, public restroom facilities, and provisional vehicle parking was completed in May 2023 along with Stage 2 which was the installation of Exeloo in June 2023.

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Site Map and photos

Zuccoli Community Hub - Future Stages

The Master Plan for the Zuccoli and surrounds Community Hub incorporates an off-leash dog park (which is now open), walking trails, a skate park and pump track, a playground, library, community centre and a garden of reflection. The project has an estimate cost of \$20 million and is anticipated to be delivered over a 5-year period and commenced in 2022.

The Community Hub will be delivered in multiple stages, the first stage being the Dog Park which is now open. The second stage will be the Skate Park and Pump Track. Prior to works commencing on Stage 2, the design of the civil, landscaping, open space structures and related infrastructure (excluding the buildings) will occur. Procurement for the geotechnical investigation and civil design will occur in the second quarter of 2023.



Zuccoli Community Hub Concept Design

Driver Community Centre

The Driver Resource Centre was constructed in the mid 1980's as a Childcare Facility co-located with the adjacent Driver Primary School. The existing facility is reaching end of life and requires development to better address the needs of the community.

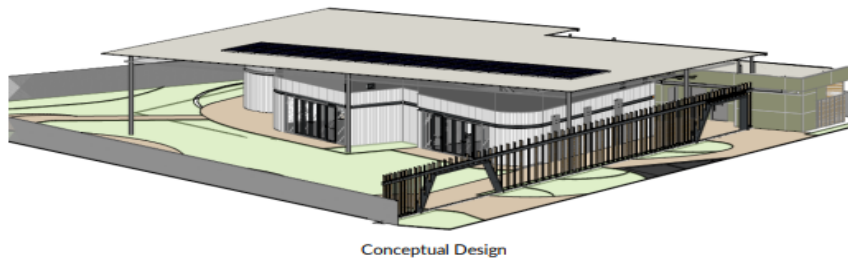
As a summary:

- The building is located on Lot 4196, 19 Driver Avenue Town of Palmerston.
- The lot is 2070 square metres but constrained by significant easements, leaving a 450 square metre (approximately) area available for construction of a building.
- The lot is zoned for Community Purpose.
- The building, owned by Council, is currently used by several groups, and has a main tenant in place who have sole use of some of the space.
- The Centre is no longer fit for purpose or meeting the current and projected needs of the community.

The design contract was awarded in to GHD Woodhead in October 2022 to undertake a preliminary design, including a Needs Assessment for the replacement of the Driver Resource Centre with a modern Community Centre. The Needs Assessment has been completed will be presented to Council, in June

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2023. The draft concept design has been provided by the consultant and is currently being reviewed. The estimated cost for the project based on the concept is in the order of \$2.5 - \$3 million.



FiberSense

FiberSense uses underground fibre optic cables and technology to detect vibrations from machinery, vehicles, pedestrians and more. The vibrations are converted into data that City of Palmerston (CoP) will be able to use for planning and improvements to the city. With this level of detail, Council can better plan for future growth and make improvements so that Palmerston continues to be a 'Place for People' by being safe, welcoming, and livable.

A total of 60km of fiber optic cable has been laid throughout Palmerston Central Business District (CBD) and Tiger Brennan Drive. FiberSense has completed 100% of the cable installation and splicing for the project within the road network. CoP is continuing to work with FiberSense in relation to the implementation and usage of the data. A demonstration of the data usage is being prepared for a workshop in October with a public launch of the product following this.

The initial system will include traffic data and asset protection i.e. excavation and works occurring in public domain. The system will also have the ability to re-enact/simulate events such as accidents with accuracy. Following the launch, work will continue as the next stages as per agreement to include things such as people movement in 2024.

Enterprise Resource Planning Project (ERP)

To successfully deliver services to the community, along with the internal corporate needs of the organisation, Council requires an effective system/s capable of delivering a prominent level of service. The need for an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Project has been identified to enable a strategic approach to updating Council's systems.

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The project has been split into the following stages:

- Project Development and Tender Preparation – interpretation of gap analysis, with development and issuing of public tender for the supply, installation, implementation and operational backup for new operating systems.
- Tender Award and Implementation – award of tender(s) for the implementation of system(s), including change management plan development and implementation.

The project is estimated to cost \$2 million, including project support, tender preparation, contract award and implementation. Council allocated a budget of \$1.1 million to project for 2023/24.

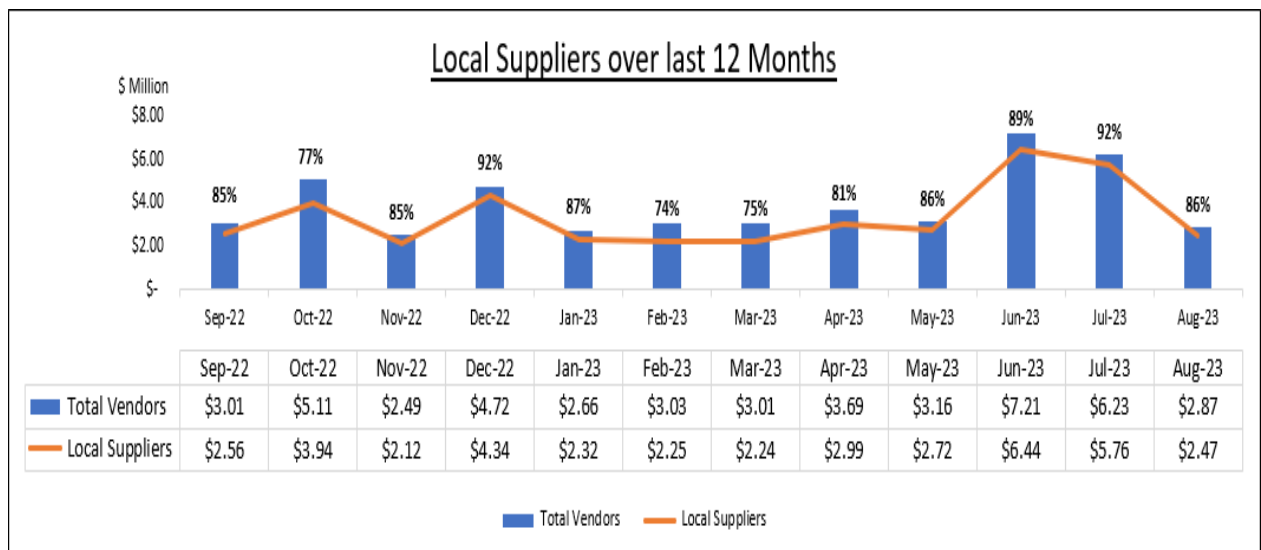
Engagement of the required resources to support the implementation of the project is underway. A Public Request for Quote (RFQ) for Project Management Services has concluded. It is currently in the phase of reviewing references and assessing responses, which is a precursor to the Project Management and Tender Preparation stage.

Local Spend

City of Palmerston supports the local economy by using local suppliers where possible.

Trade Creditors paid in August 2023 amounted to \$2.47 million and 86% (\$2.7 million) of these creditors' payments were paid to local suppliers, the graph below provides an overview of payments made to local suppliers month on month over the last 12 months and in comparison, to our actual spend.

Over the last 12 months Council spent \$40 million with local suppliers out of the combined \$47 million Operational and Capital expenditure during that period presenting 85% significant investment to the continued support and growth of the local economy.



CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following areas were consulted during the preparation of this Report.

- Finance
- Infrastructure
- Community Development

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this Report.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this Report.

RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

5. **Infrastructure**
Failure to plan, deliver and maintain fit for purpose infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this Report.

COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM:	8.2.1
REPORT TITLE:	Update on Economic Development Website
MEETING DATE:	Monday 25 September 2023
AUTHOR:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta
APPROVER:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

COMMUNITY PLAN

Family and Community: Palmerston is a safe and family friendly community where everyone belongs.
Vibrant Economy: Palmerston is a destination city for employment, it is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow. **Future Focused:** Palmerston is an innovative city that sustains itself through the challenges of the future.

PURPOSE

This Report seeks to update the Committee on the progress the economic development website.

KEY MESSAGES

- Two key actions in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan (PLEP) were identified as key priorities as they have been identified as actions that would inform other future PLEP actions.
- These priority actions include the development of an economic development website and a business survey, update on the business survey is included in another report.
- The website aligns either fully or partially to several actions in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan.
- The website development was endorsed by the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee and later by Council as one of the priority actions from the Palmerston Local Economic Plan.
- A timeframe of six (6) months from the March 2023 Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee was meeting was established for completion of the website.
- The shell of the website has been developed and is in test mode, with a number of items still underdevelopment, it is expected that Phase 1 will be completed by November 2023
- This report provides the Committee with an update on the development of economic development website.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Report entitled Update on Economic Development Website be received and noted.
2. THAT the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee notes that the expected completion date for Phase 1 of the website will be November 2023.

BACKGROUND

At the 18 April 2023 Ordinary Meeting Council endorsed the following recommendations from the Palmerston Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee meeting held on 27 March 2023, being:

1. *THAT Report entitled Priority Actions - Palmerston Local Economic Plan be received and noted.*

2. THAT the Committee recommend to Council that the priority actions of the Palmerston Local Economic Plan for the next six months are:
 - a. Development of a website to support and promote Economic Development within Palmerston.
 - b. Conduct a business survey of businesses located within Palmerston.

At the Palmerston Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee meeting held on the 26 June 2023, a report was submitted to Council providing an update on the status of the Development of a website to support and promote Economic Development within Palmerston.

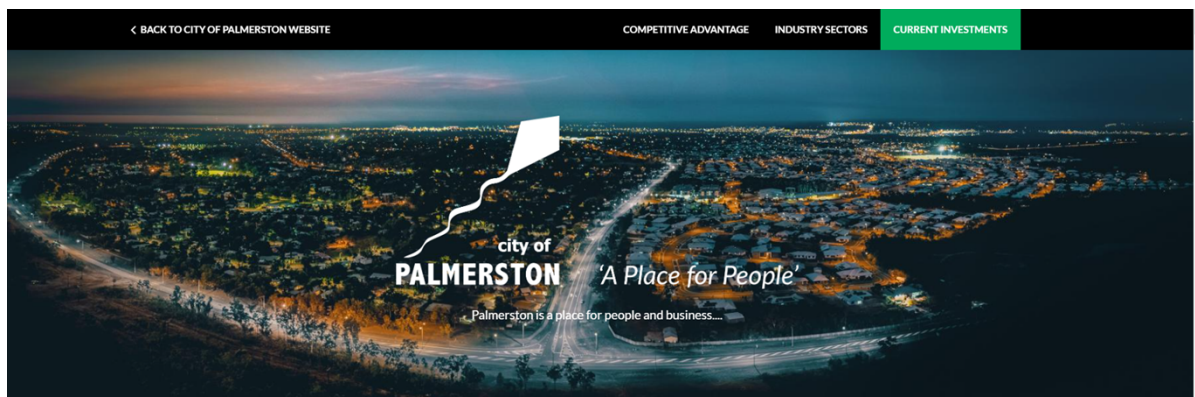
This report will provide the Committee with a further update.

DISCUSSION

The proposed economic development website is an investment and attraction tool and will offer resources to help businesses to evaluate relocation within or to the municipality which includes assessing the liveability of the region. This will also assist in encouraging individuals and families to live and work in the area,

Having the economic development website as a standalone website opens opportunities for search engine optimisation in the future and allows businesses to find information without having to navigate via the main council website. The most cost-effective and timely method of doing this is having a standalone URL but hosted by City of Palmerston's existing website.

Currently Council is facing a skill shortage and trying to attract suitably qualified staff has been difficult, to address this Council is currently implementing an attraction and retention strategy. This has impacted Council's ability to deliver this project and delaying the completion of the project, however the development of the website has commenced and is progressed and is being developed in 3 Phases.



Commencement of the website development.

Phase 1 of the development of the website is more of the strategic overview and the high level information to bring attention to the potential investor what Palmerston has to offer. This content is currently being developed by a consultant. The website will go live once Phase 1 has been completed.

Phase 1 includes:

1. Overview of Palmerston and Competitive Advantage: Provide a brief introduction to the city, highlighting its key features, location, and unique selling points.
2. Economic Data and Statistics: Include up-to-date economic data, such as GDP, employment figures, and industry sectors, to showcase the area's economic strength.
3. Industry Profiles/Sectors: Highlight key industries and sectors that thrive in the area, along with success stories and case studies.

4. Infrastructure and Transportation: Describe the area's transportation networks, including highways, airports, ports, and public transit options.
5. Quality of Life: Showcase the region's quality of life, including housing options, healthcare, education, cultural amenities, and recreational opportunities.
6. Contact Information: Make it easy for visitors to get in touch with economic development officials, business support organizations, and relevant government departments.
7. Current Projects/Investment: Provide details of the projects recently finalised or currently underway through the investment by Palmerston by Council and other funding Partners such as Federal and Territory Government.

Research of other economic development websites have indicated that providing specific tangible information for the potential investor such as contact details, business planning tools, incentive programs, available property listings within Palmerston makes it easier for the investor to make investment decisions. This information is considered Phase 2 and Council will work with Territory Business Centre, Property Council and Chamber of Commerce to ensure that there is localised information available to be included on the website, or links made available to the relevant websites

Phase 2 includes:

8. Investor Resources: Offer resources for potential investors, such as investment guides, business plans, and contact information for economic development agencies.
9. Business Services: Detail the services and support available to businesses, including permitting processes, business registration, and licensing.
10. Incentives and Programs: Outline any financial incentives, tax benefits, or grants available to businesses, as well as programs to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.
11. Real Estate and Property Listings: Include listings of available commercial properties, industrial spaces, and land for development, with details on zoning and infrastructure.
12. Workforce and Talent: Provide information about the local workforce, educational institutions, and training programs, emphasizing the availability of skilled labour.

Phase 3 focuses on interaction with the end user and are being considered in the planning of the website development. However the collation and sourcing of the information is resource intensive and can only be actioned once the information from Phase 1 and 2 are completed and implemented on the website.

Phase 3 includes:

13. News and Updates: Keep the website current with news articles, press releases, and updates on economic developments, projects, and success stories.
14. Events and Conferences: Promote business-related events, conferences, and networking opportunities happening in the area
15. Interactive Maps: Include maps that highlight key business districts, available properties, transportation hubs, and amenities.
16. Multimedia Content: Enhance engagement with videos, images, and interactive content that visually showcase the area's assets and opportunities.
17. Language Options: If applicable, provide content in multiple languages to accommodate a diverse audience.
18. Accessibility: Ensure that the website is accessible to people with disabilities and adheres to web accessibility standards.

The following websites were viewed to assist in developing the website are as follows:

<https://perth.wa.gov.au/en/live-and-work/businesses/small-business-advice>
<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/governance-and-strategy/business-in-brisbane>
<https://invest.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/>
<https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/business>
<https://www.investsalisbury.com.au/>

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<https://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Community/Businesses/Doing-business-in-the-Surf-Coast>

<https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/property-and-business/business>

<https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/property-and-business/business/invest-in-cairns>

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this Report:

- Communications Manager

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this Report.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The cost of a consultant is being funded from within existing budget leveraging off another project.

RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Due to the skill shortage affecting Council, the website has not delivered on time, however it is leveraging off another project which enables Council to deliver within budget. Council has engaged a consultant to undertake a number of projects to help promote Palmerston, this work will provide the high level information to bring attention to the potential investor what Palmerston has to offer

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

3. **Economic Development**
Failure to articulate, provide and promote the value proposition for Palmerston as an economic centre to attract investment.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this Report.

COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM:	8.2.2
REPORT TITLE:	Update on Business Survey
MEETING DATE:	Monday 25 September 2023
AUTHOR:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta
APPROVER:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

COMMUNITY PLAN

Vibrant Economy: Palmerston is a destination city for employment, it is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow.

PURPOSE

This Report seeks to update Council on the progress of the business survey to help understand how we can attract, retain and support businesses within Palmerston.

KEY MESSAGES

- Two key actions in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan (PLEP) have been identified as key priorities as they have been identified as actions that would inform other future PLEP actions.
- One of these priority actions included the development and implementation of a business survey.
- The business survey not only would provide insight on how City of Palmerston can attract, retain and support local business, it also helps inform the direction of several actions within the Palmerston Local Economic Plan.
- The Business survey was endorsed by the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee and later by council as the priority actions from the Palmerston Local Economic Plan.
- A timeframe of six (6) months from the March 2023 Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee meeting for completion of the business survey.
- The current economic and resource climate has presented challenges in securing resources to deliver this project that said, City of Palmerston has engaged a consultant, Action Research, to deliver the business survey and will be finalised by November 2023
- The Territory Business Confidence Survey conducted by Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade has been analysed to understand the business confidence and performance of Palmerston Businesses and will be further analysed and considered as part of Palmerston Business Survey
- This report provides the Committee with an update on the status of the business survey.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report entitled Update on Business Survey be received and noted.

BACKGROUND

At the council meeting of 18 May 2023, council endorsed the website and business survey activities as the priority focus for work towards actions contained in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan.

THAT Council endorses the recommendations from the Palmerston Vibrant Economy Committee meeting held on 27 March 2023, being:

Priority Actions - Palmerston Local Economic Plan

1. *THAT Report entitled Priority Actions - Palmerston Local Economic Plan be received and noted.*
2. *THAT the Committee recommend to Council that the priority actions of the Palmerston Local Economic Plan for the next six months are:*
 - a. *Development of a website to support and promote Economic Development within Palmerston.*
 - b. *Conduct a business survey of businesses located within Palmerston.*

CARRIED 10/799 - 18/04/2023

Council's Community Satisfaction surveys identified that the Palmerston community rated highly the importance of encouraging and supporting local businesses. The surveys also indicated that the community would like to see Council do more to promote Palmerston and grow the local economy. Economic health and prosperity are recognised as vital to supporting a successful and prosperous community. The Palmerston Community plan states 'When businesses thrive, families also thrive and our city becomes more liveable'.

DISCUSSION

The business survey will seek to confirm challenges, strengths and priority business support services for current business but also seek to identify what would attract potential businesses to relocate to Palmerston what are the potential barriers and what are the challenges that led businesses to cease or relocate from Palmerston.

As mentioned in previous Committee reports, Northern Territory produces a business confidence report on a quarterly publication which highlights confidence levels of Territory-wide businesses. The June Quarter is found at **Attachment 8.2.2.1**. It indicates that confidence has decreased since the last quarter which coincides with the concerns about community safety and antisocial behaviour.

The survey covers urban and regional areas of the Territory and captures different industry sectors and business sizes (small, medium and large).

Monitoring business confidence levels is important as it is a key barometer and a leading indicator of business conditions and the overall health of the economy. Business confidence drives business growth and investment, supports employment opportunities and attracts people to the region.

While this publication provides a good indicator of the business community in Greater Darwin, the publication does not breakdown the data further to identify the confidence of Palmerston businesses. Council reached out to the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism who undertake the survey were able to drill down the data specifically related to Palmerston business.

In order to understand the results its also best to understand the method of how the surveys is conducted and the questions asked.

The Small Business Champions employed by the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism meet with businesses to connect them with support, programs, information they need to assist them in their business – including start-ups. At the time of connecting with the businesses they ask key questions which are used as the basis of the survey which include:

1. How confident are you about your business prospects for the next 12 months? Options are: Extremely confident / Fairly confident / Neutral / Fairly Worried / Extremely Worried
2. How is your business performing this year compared to last year? Options are: Better / Same / Worse

The business can then give reasons behind these sentiments, and there are examples provided such as, strong local economy, good profitability, or lack of suitably skilled workers, decrease in public works, or they can also capture free text.

In the June Quarter Survey, there were 522 businesses that were surveyed, of which 224 were from the Greater Darwin Region while it is 43% of the total surveyed it represents 1.9% of the total number of business registered in the Greater Darwin Region.

Of the 224 that were surveyed in the Greater Darwin Region, fifty-one (51) were Palmerston Businesses that participated in the survey of these surveyed, ten (10) were new start-ups. A summary of the data on how confident Palmerston businesses were and their business performed are identified below, noting that it excludes the ten new start-ups. The March Quarter data is also presented for comparison purposes, noting that that they are responses from different businesses.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE	Q3	Q4
Extremely Confident	4	4
Extremely Worried		4
Fairly Confident	18	17
Fairy Worried	3	7
Neutral	4	9
Total	29	41

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE	Q3	Q4
Better	18	18
Same	7	11
Worse	4	12
Total	29	41

For many of the businesses feeling confident or evidencing better business performance year on year, increased works and opportunities was the key driver.

For those feeling worried or who had experienced a decline in business performance, the key drivers noted include:

- Continuous crime
- Increasing business costs vs decreasing sales / low profitability
- Government red tape
- Living costs impacting consumer spend

A consultant has been engaged to deliver the City of Palmerston Business Survey, and will be required to take this publication into consideration so that Council are not replicating the same survey. It is envisaged that the City of Palmerston Business Survey will complement the Territory Business Confidence Survey and that Council will work closely with the Business & Workforce unit at the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade

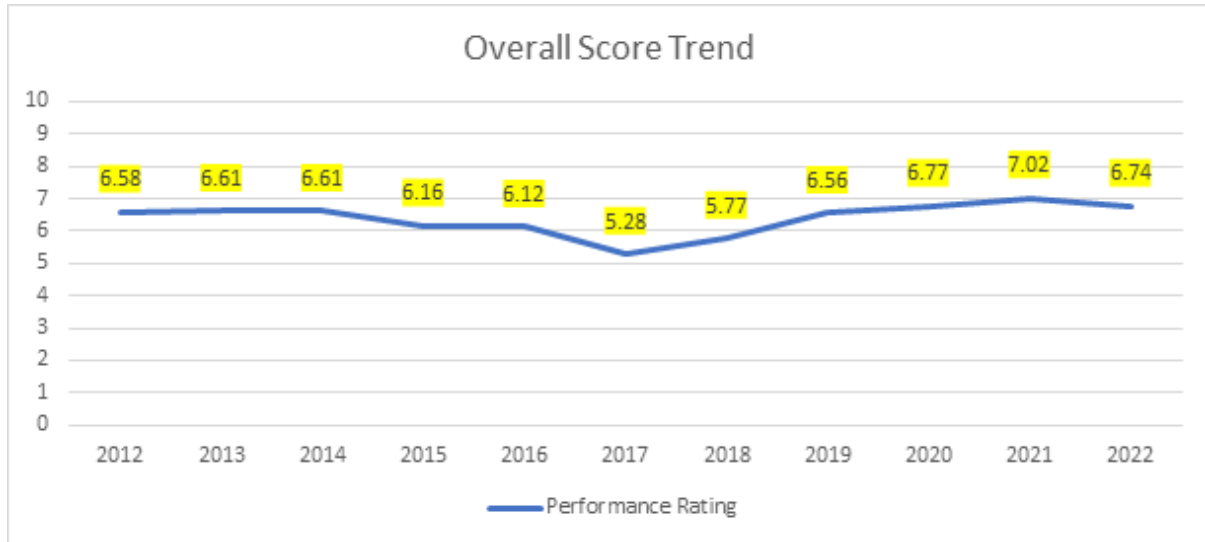
The outcome of the Business survey will inform a suite of data to better understand the business confidence and identify the challenges, strengths and priority business support services within City of Palmerston to maintain and increase Business Confidence.

This survey will be completed by November 2023.

Council has just recently conducted its annual community survey which will be published as part of the Annual Report as a scorecard against Council's Community Plan. The 2023 results are yet to be published, however the 2022 and prior results are presented below. In 2022 66% of the Community rates Council's overall performance as good or very good, compared with 70% last year, 69% in 2020 and 63% in 2019.

A Place for People

The results of the 2023 community survey will be finalised shortly and will also be considered in our overall attraction strategy of promoting Palmerston as “the Place for People”.



As part of the survey, we ask specific questions regarding vibrant economy. The table below represents score history; noting that these views are those from community members, but will further inform the work we are doing.

Measure	Score 2019	Score 2020	Score 2021	Score 2022
Awareness of Council's slogan 'A place for people'	36.62%	42.74%	40.28%	43.61%
Agreement that: Palmerston is 'A place for people'	6.83	6.80	6.83	6.56
Agreement that: Council has a long-term vision for Palmerston economy	5.95	6.37	6.70	6.34
Performance in: Supporting and attracting new and existing businesses	5.25	5.68	6.11	5.83
Overall:	6.01 / 10	6.28 / 10	6.55 / 10	6.24 / 10

Rating Scale for the Survey:

Very Good 10-9

Good 8-7

Neither 6-4

Poor 3-2 Very Poor 1-0

Business Survey Timeframe

The indicative timeframe for the delivery of the business survey is as follows:

Activity	Dates	Comments
Design Questionnaire	20 September – 6 October 2023	Its important to get the questionnaire right
Fieldwork	9 October – 27 October 2023	Sample 100 online (expected) 100 telephone (guaranteed) 25 businesses outside of Palmerston (guaranteed)

Analysing and Reporting	30 October to 17 November 2023	Draft report will be provided to Council management for review and comment
Final Draft Report	21 November 2023	This will be presented to the 27 November Committee meeting for comment

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following consultation process will be undertaken:

- Develop a promotional campaign for the Business Survey
- Communicate through Facebook and LinkedIn of the upcoming business survey and provide overview of the approach and the purpose and encourage businesses to participate particularly when they are selected to conduct the survey over the phone.
- Encourage businesses to opt in for the phone survey and register their details
- A method to reach-out to businesses that are self-employed and work from home is being considered which may include a mail out to all households
- When the survey is live Council will promote the Survey QR code / link through Facebook and LinkedIn and made available on Council Website.
- The Survey QR code / link will also be circulated to various partners such as Property Council, Palmerston and Regional Business Association and Chamber of Commerce to assist in reaching out to their business member base.

In preparing this Report, the following external parties were consulted:

- Regional Manager, Greater Darwin, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.
- Action Research

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this Report.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The business survey is being funded from within existing budget.

RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

It is important that this survey is takes into consideration the

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

3. Economic Development
Failure to articulate, provide and promote the value proposition for Palmerston as an economic centre to attract investment.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this Report.

COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. nt-business-confidence-survey-june-23 [8.2.2.1 - 8 pages]

Territory Business Confidence Survey

June quarter 2023

Key points

- Territory-wide business confidence was +43% in the June quarter 2023, down from +68% in the March quarter 2023, and down from +72% in the June quarter 2022.
- The fall in the quarter was driven by weaker confidence in Darwin, which coincides with growing concerns about community safety and anti-social behaviour.
- The most commonly cited reasons for confidence this quarter were 'strong customer relations', 'business opportunity' and 'strong market position'.
- 'Lack of suitably skilled workers' remained the most common reason for concern, though fewer businesses reported this as an issue compared with recent quarters.

Territory businesses confidence declines

Territory-wide business confidence was +43% for the June quarter 2023 in response to the question 'How confident are you about your business prospects over the next 12 months?' This is a 25 percentage point (ppt) decrease in the quarter and a 29 ppt decrease annually (Table 1).

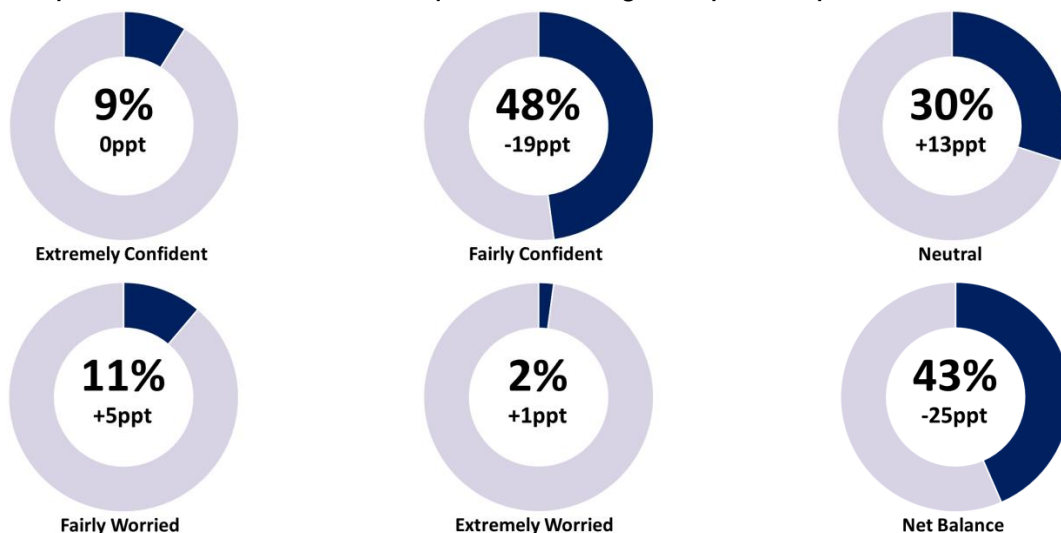
Concerns about anti-social behaviour contributed to the quarterly decline, while inflation risks and the higher cash rate are also factors (the average cash rate was 0.39% in the June quarter 2022, and 3.83% in the June quarter 2023). More businesses reported increased business costs and weaker sales in the quarter, reflecting the high inflation environment, and the impact of the higher cash rate on investment and consumer spending.

Table 1: Business confidence index

	Jun qtr 2023	Quarterly change	Annual change*
Confident	57%	-19ppt	-22ppt
Worried	13%	+6ppt	+7ppt
Net Balance	43%	-25ppt	-29ppt

*Current quarter compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 1: Responses to the business confidence question and change from previous quarter



Note: Individual categories may not add to the net balance figure due to rounding.

Average annual business confidence remains high

The proportion of 'extremely confident' businesses was unchanged in the quarter at 9%, with a sharp decline in 'fairly confident' businesses (down by 19 ppt to 48%) driving the drop, with most transferring to a 'neutral' rating and some to the 'fairly worried' rating (Chart 1). Average business confidence across 2022-23 was +66%, slightly above 2021-22 and the highest in the series (Chart 2).

Chart 1
Business confidence by quarter (%)

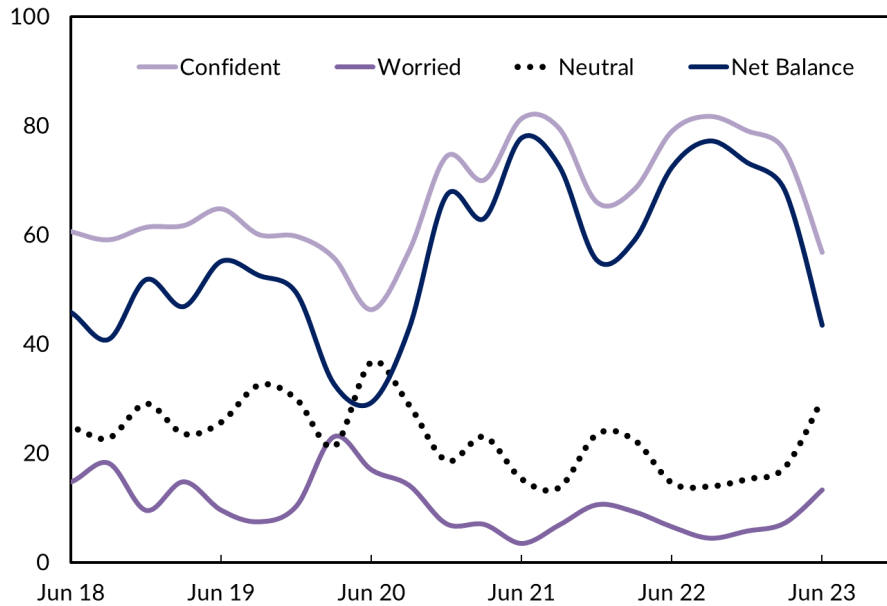
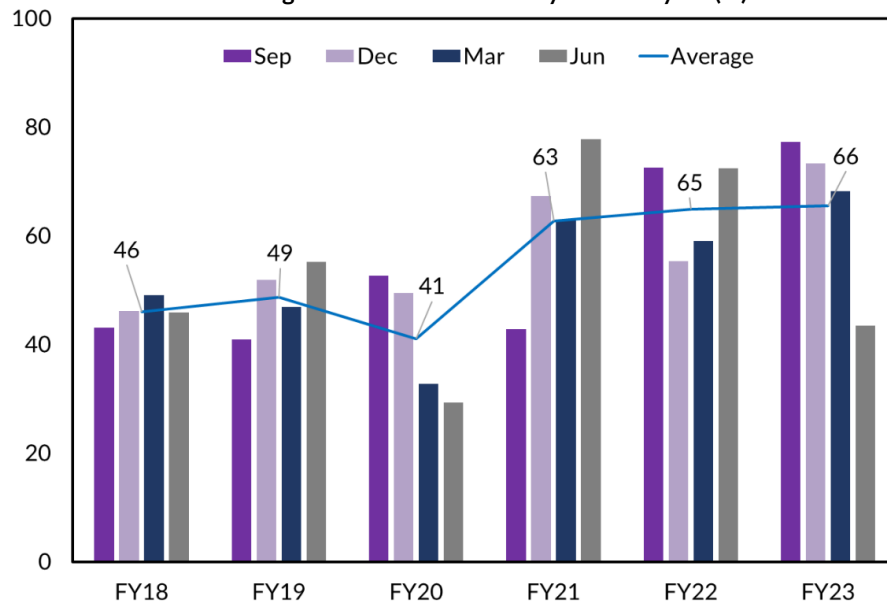


Chart 2
Average business confidence by financial year (%)



Business performance decreased this quarter

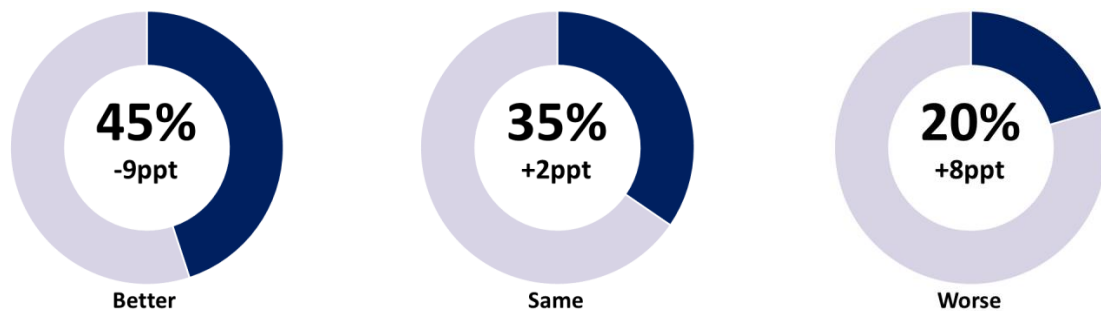
When asked ‘How’s your business performing this year compared to last year?’, 45% of businesses responded with ‘better’, representing a 9 ppt decrease from March quarter 2023 and a 16 ppt decrease from June quarter 2022 (Table 2).

Table 2: Business performance compared to last year

	Jun qtr 2023	Quarterly change	Annual change*
Better	45%	-9ppt	-16ppt
Same	35%	+2ppt	+7ppt
Worse	20%	+8ppt	+9ppt

*Current quarter compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

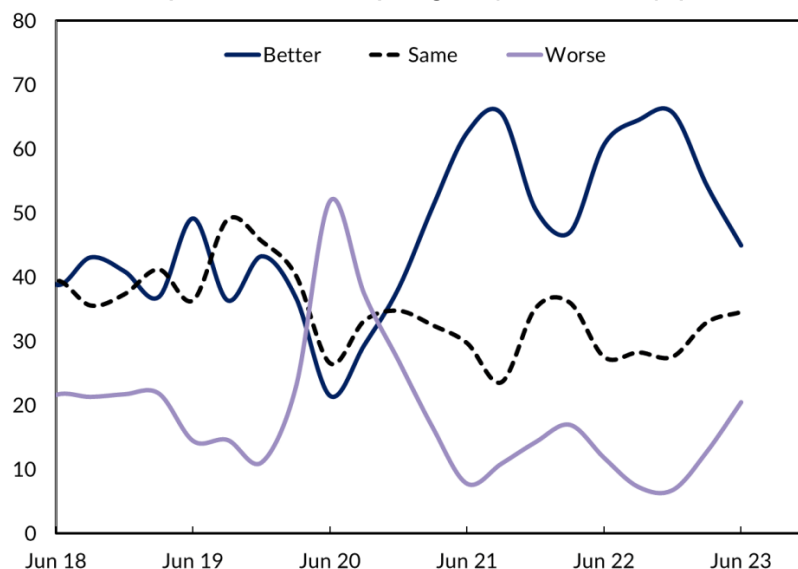
Figure 2: Responses to the business performance question and quarterly change



Note: Individual categories may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Businesses stating performance this year is worse than last year increased by 8 ppt to 20% in the June quarter, the highest level since 2020 (Chart 3). This follows a 6 ppt increase the previous quarter (March 2023) coming off the low point in the series (7% in the December quarter 2022).

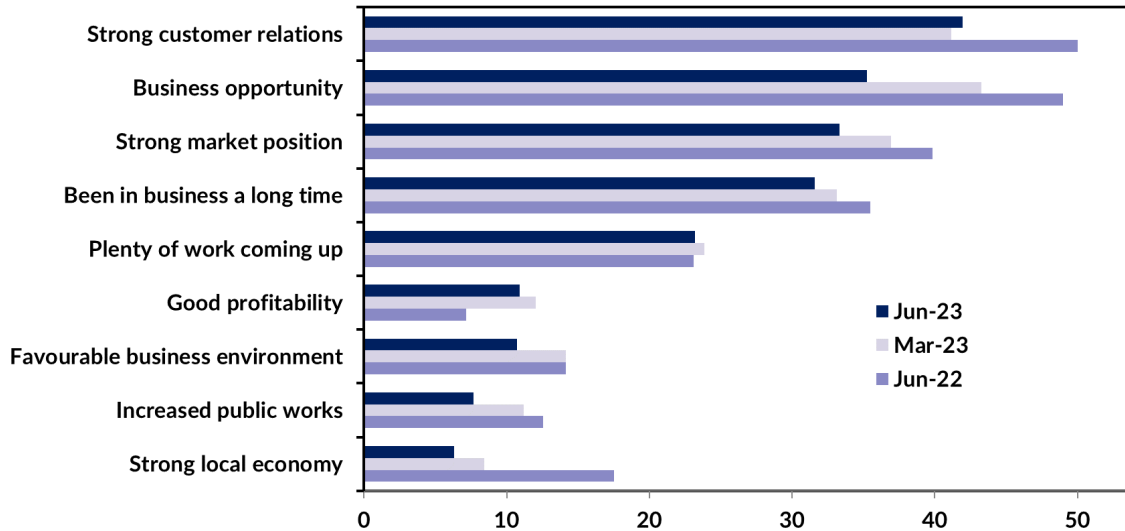
Chart 3
Business performance – comparing this year to last – by quarter (%)



Customer relations and business opportunities drive confidence

Consistent with recent quarters, the key reasons cited for business confidence in the June quarter 2023 were 'strong customer relations', 'business opportunity' and 'strong market position' (Chart 4). Around 35% of businesses cited 'business opportunity' as a reason for confidence this quarter, in line with the historical average, but down from the high point in the series one year ago (49%). This is consistent with Territory final demand growth – still positive but moderating in 2023 after strong growth in 2022 (Chart 5).

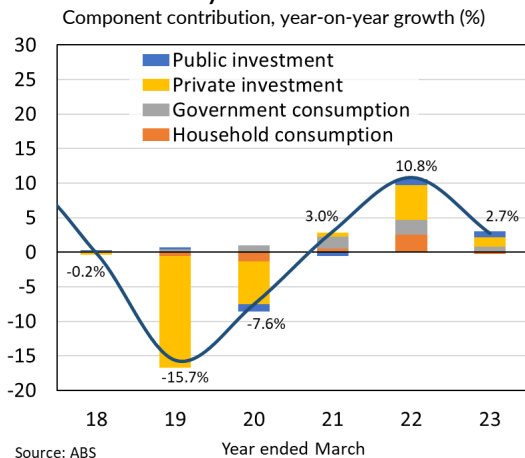
Chart 4
Reasons for confidence cited, share of businesses (%)



Note: a business can submit more than one response

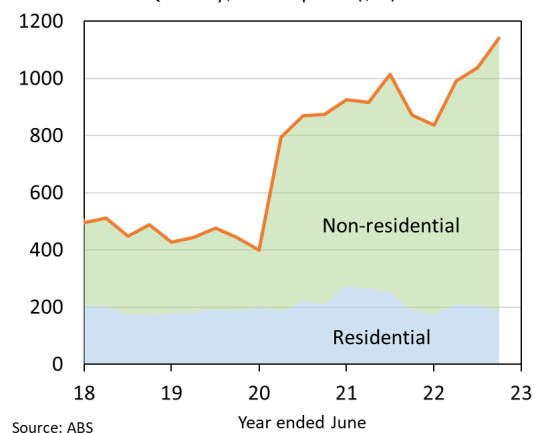
In the June quarter 2023, 23% of businesses reported 'plenty of work coming up' as a reason to be confident, which is consistent with the Territory's final demand results in the year to March, including increases in private investment (7.9%) and public investment (14.3%). Further, building work yet to be done – a forward indicator of construction activity – has been trending up since 2020 and was valued at \$1.14 billion in the March quarter, strongly supported by non-residential works (Chart 6).

Chart 5
Territory state final demand



Source: ABS

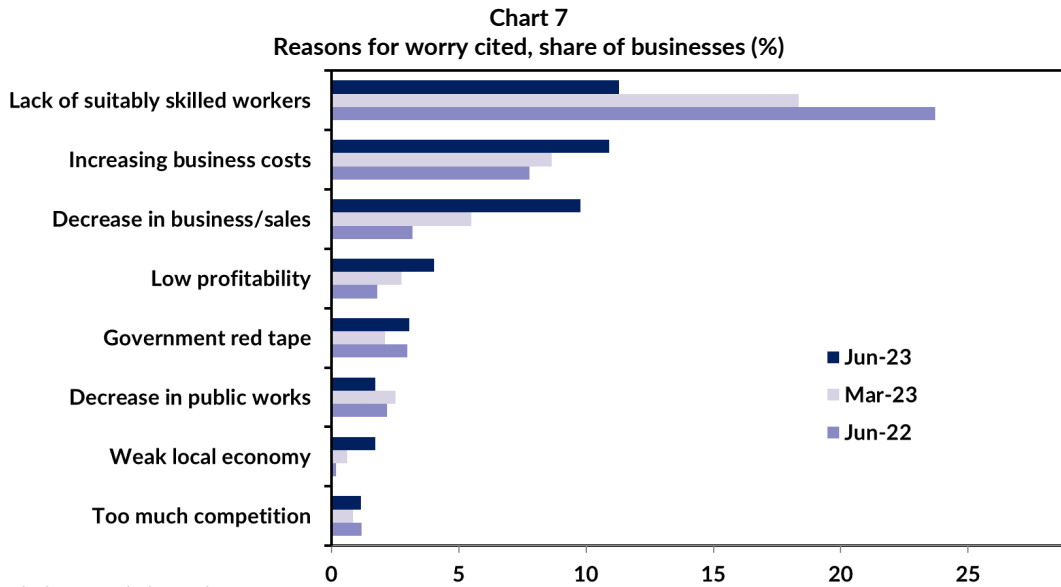
Chart 6
Value of building work yet to be done



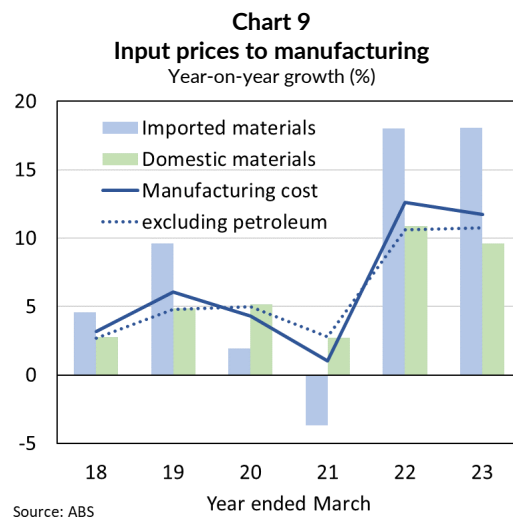
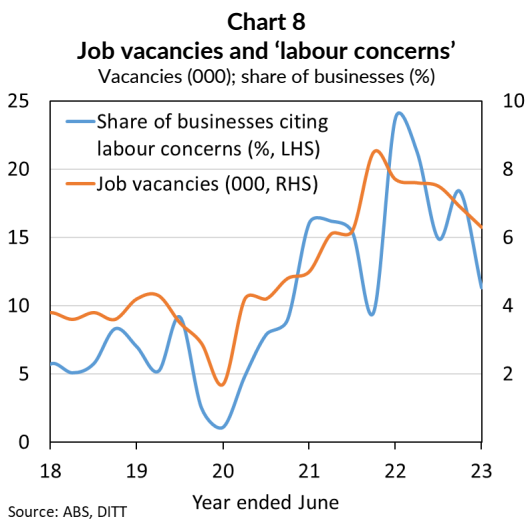
Source: ABS

Labour shortages and rising costs are concerns

A 'lack of suitably skilled workers' remains the most commonly cited reason for concern in the June quarter 2023, though this has eased significantly from the previous quarter and the year prior (Chart 7). These response levels are consistent with ABS reported job vacancies, which have fallen from the peak in early 2022, but are still well above the historical average (Chart 8).



Almost 11% of businesses cited 'increasing business costs' as a reason for being worried, an increase in both quarterly and through the year terms, and the highest level observed in the series. Supply chain disruption and higher fuel prices resulting from the return of global demand have contributed to the increased cost of raw materials. Industries in Australia such as manufacturing have faced heightened costs for inputs to production, notably for imported materials (Chart 9), that have been passed on to consumers and businesses. However, following two years of significant growth, the World Bank expects commodity prices overall to decrease by 21% in 2023 before stabilising in 2024.



COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 8.2.2.1

Territory Business Confidence Survey

Business confidence and performance vary among the regions

Business confidence and performance varies by region (Table 3). Business confidence was highest in the Barkly region in the June quarter with a net balance of +75%. Daly-Tiwi-East Arnhem region recorded a 7 ppt increase in business confidence to +68%, supported by 61% of businesses in the region reporting better performance on a year ago, an increase of 25 ppt from the previous quarter.

Business confidence in Greater Darwin declined by 29 ppt in the quarter to a net balance of +39%, the weakest level observed since the onset of the pandemic. 43% of Darwin businesses reported better performance compared to last year, a decrease of 11 ppt in the quarter and 18 ppt annually. Macroeconomic conditions have affected consumer sentiment and business confidence broadly across the Territory, while local factors have also had an immediate and significant impact in Darwin. The Territory Government is investigating options to address these local issues so it is unclear if the sudden decrease in confidence in the June quarter 2023 will be enduring.

Business confidence in Alice Springs declined by 6 ppt this quarter to a net balance of +66%, though this is still coming off the record high of +94% observed in the December quarter 2022.

Table 3: Business confidence and performance by region

Business Confidence				Business Performance			
	Jun qtr 2023	Quarterly change	Annual change		Jun qtr 2023	Quarterly change	Annual change
Territory-wide (n=522)				Territory-wide (n=522)			
Confident	57%	-19ppt	-22ppt	Better	45%	-9ppt	-16ppt
Worried	13%	+6ppt	+7ppt	Same	35%	+2ppt	+7ppt
Net Balance	43%	-25ppt	-29ppt	Worse	20%	+8ppt	+9ppt
Greater Darwin (n=224)				Greater Darwin (n=224)			
Confident	53%	-22ppt	-21ppt	Better	43%	-11ppt	-18ppt
Worried	14%	+8ppt	+7ppt	Same	35%	+3ppt	+9ppt
Net Balance	39%	-29ppt	-28ppt	Worse	21%	+8ppt	+9ppt
Daly-Tiwi-West Arnhem (n=41)				Daly-Tiwi-West Arnhem (n=41)			
Confident	71%	-3ppt	-14ppt	Better	61%	+25ppt	+17ppt
Worried	2%	-10ppt	-12ppt	Same	24%	-24ppt	-16ppt
Net Balance	68%	+7ppt	-2ppt	Worse	15%	-1ppt	0ppt
East Arnhem (n=37)				East Arnhem (n=37)			
Confident	62%	+2ppt	-20ppt	Better	33%	-27ppt	+4ppt
Worried	14%	0ppt	+4ppt	Same	44%	+18ppt	+15ppt
Net Balance	49%	+2ppt	-24ppt	Worse	22%	+9ppt	-19ppt
Katherine (n=16)				Katherine (n=16)			
Confident	56%	-17ppt	-24ppt	Better	56%	-12ppt	+32ppt
Worried	25%	+15ppt	+21ppt	Same	6%	-8ppt	-58ppt
Net Balance	31%	-32ppt	-45ppt	Worse	38%	+20ppt	+26ppt
Barkly (n=44)				Barkly (n=44)			
Confident	80%	-20ppt	-9ppt	Better	52%	+19ppt	-2ppt
Worried	5%	+5ppt	+5ppt	Same	30%	-37ppt	+2ppt
Net Balance	75%	-25ppt	-14ppt	Worse	18%	+18ppt	0ppt
Alice Springs (n=160)				Alice Springs (n=160)			
Confident	71%	-8ppt	-12ppt	Better	46%	-6ppt	-11ppt
Worried	5%	-2ppt	-1ppt	Same	44%	+8ppt	+14ppt
Net Balance	66%	-6ppt	-11ppt	Worse	10%	-2ppt	-3ppt

Note: Caution should be taken when interpreting these results as the sample size in some regions may be relatively small.

Business confidence varies across industries

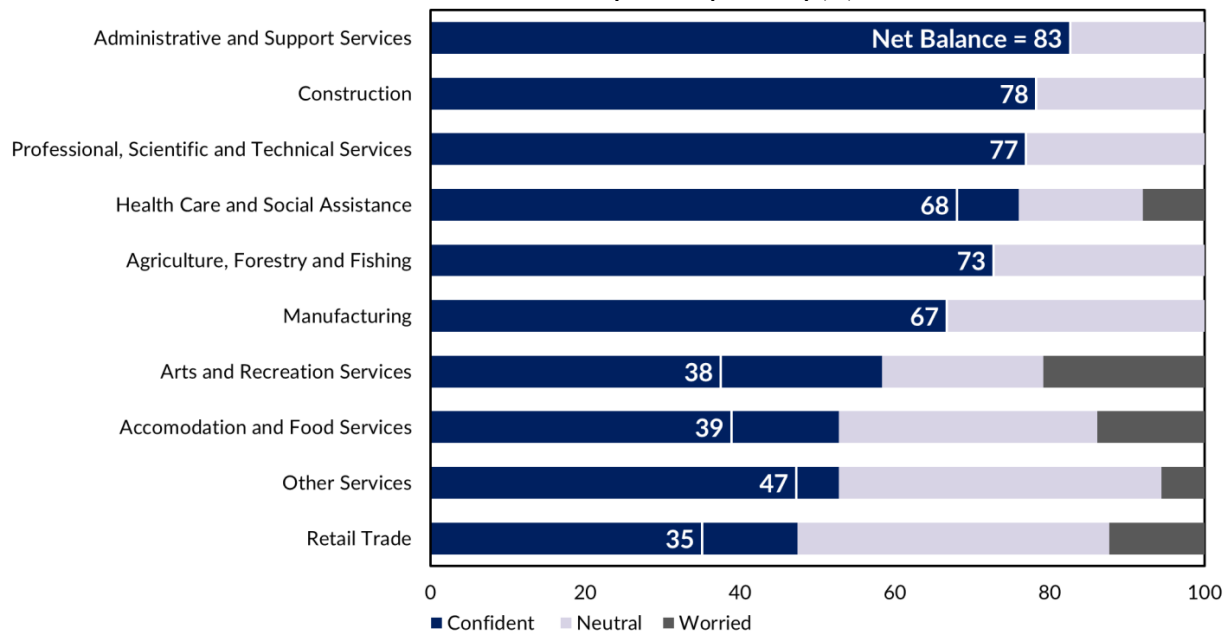
Out of the 10 industries with the largest number of respondents, confidence varied from Administrative and Support Services reporting a net balance of +83%, an increase of 43 ppt on last quarter, to Retail Trade at +35% (Chart 10).

Business confidence edged down across many industries in the June quarter 2023, most notably in the customer-facing sectors including Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services and Other Services. The combined impact of persisting inflation, interest rate hikes and concerns around anti-social behaviour likely contributed to a decrease in the number of tourist visitations. Tourism NT reports the Territory's hotel occupancy rate was 60% in May 2023, down by 14 ppt compared with May 2022.

The Territory's construction industry recorded a solid net balance of +78% this quarter, with no businesses reporting as 'worried' (down from 6% last quarter), supported by the significant pipeline of work.

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry reported a net balance of +73% this quarter, also with no businesses reporting as 'worried', a significant turnaround of 44 ppt from the March quarter. The boost in confidence coincided with the release of the Territory Government's Agribusiness 2030 Strategy, a focussed commitment to transform it into a \$2 billion industry by 2030.

Chart 10
Business confidence responses by industry (%)



Note: Chart contains the 10 most surveyed industries. Caution is advised when using this data as the sample size in some industries may be relatively small.

Appendix

Methodology

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade conducts a survey of businesses operating in the Territory on a quarterly basis. The results have been used to construct a business confidence index.

The business confidence index is calculated as the difference between the proportion of businesses that are 'confident about their business prospects for the next 12 months' and the proportion of businesses that are 'worried about their business prospects for the next 12 months' (net balance approach).

The Territory-wide confidence index is weighted to account for the number of businesses in each region. The weighted result provides a more balanced reflection of overall business confidence. Business confidence results are also presented by region and industry.

522 businesses were surveyed this quarter out of 15,777 operating businesses in the Territory (Table 4). For the sample survey to achieve a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 5%, 376 survey responses are required.

Table 4: Survey Numbers

Region	Total number of businesses	Businesses surveyed	Proportion of total
Greater Darwin	11,577	224	1.9%
Daly-Tiwi-West Arnhem	378	41	10.8%
East Arnhem	241	37	15.4%
Katherine	960	16	1.7%
Barkly	193	44	22.8%
Alice Springs	2,034	160	7.9%
Total	15,777	522	3.3%

A Place for People

9 INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Information

9.2 Correspondence

10 GENERAL BUSINESS

11 NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

THAT the next Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee Meeting of Council be held on Monday, 27 November 2023 at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston.

12 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC

THAT pursuant to *section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential items of the Agenda.



city of
PALMERSTON
'A Place for People'

MINUTES

Committee Meeting

Monday 26 June 2023

The Advisory Committee Meeting of the City of Palmerston held in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, NT 0830

UNCONFIDENTIAL

'A Place for People'



A Place for People

COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 13.1.1 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee Meeting
held in Council Chambers
Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston
on Monday 26 June 2023 at 5:30pm.

PRESENT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Councillor Benjamin Giesecke (Chair) Mayor Athina Pascoe-Bell (Alternate Member) Brandon Evans, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet Representative Ruth Palmer, Property Representative Carmine Rauseo, Local Business Owner Representative
STAFF	Chief Executive Officer, Luccio Cercarelli Director of Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta Minute Secretary, Bertsie Taru Executive Assistant to General Manager Community and Culture, Tree Gillam
GALLERY	Nil

Initials:



A Place for People

COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 13.1.1 COMMITTEE MINUTES

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

City of Palmerston acknowledges the Larrakia people as the Traditional Custodians of the Palmerston region. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future leaders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting open at 5.36pm.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Brandon Evans

1. THAT the apology received from Mohan Kandasamy for 26 June 2023 be received and noted.
2. THAT the apology received from Sue Shearer for 26 June 2023 be received and noted.

CARRIED VEAC10/15 - 26/06/2023

3.2 Leave of Absence Previously Granted

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Ruth Palmer

THAT it be noted Councillor Fraser will be on leave of absence as previously granted on 20 June 2023, for the period of 24 June to 2 July 2023 inclusive.

CARRIED VEAC10/16 - 26/06/2023

3.3 Leave of Absence Request

Nil

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 Elected Members

Nil

4.2 Staff

Nil

Initials: _____



A Place for People

COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 13.1.1 COMMITTEE MINUTES

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Ruth Palmer

THAT the Minutes of the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee Meeting held on 27 March 2023 pages 34 to 39 be confirmed.

CARRIED VEAC10/17 – 26/06/2023

5.2 Business Arising from Previous Meeting

Nil

6 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Moved: Brandon Evans
Seconded: Carmine Rauseo

THAT the presentation by Ruth Palmer from the Property Council of Australia regarding Property Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: its impacts on life in the Northern Territory and specifically in Palmerston be received and noted.

CARRIED VEAC10/18 – 26/06/2023

7 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

7.1 Moving Confidential Items into Open

Nil

7.2 Moving Open Items into Confidential

Nil

7.3 Confidential Items

Nil

8 OFFICER REPORTS

8.1 Action Reports

Nil

Initials: _____



A Place for People

COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 13.1.1 COMMITTEE MINUTES

8.2 Receive and Note Reports

8.2.1 Update on Palmerston Local Economic Plan Priority Actions

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Ruth Palmer

THAT Report entitled Update on Palmerston Local Economic Plan Priority Actions be received and noted.

CARRIED VEAC10/19 - 26/06/2023

8.2.2 Economic Development Activities

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Carmine Rauseo

THAT Report entitled Economic Development Activities be received and noted.

CARRIED VEAC10/20 - 26/06/2023

8.2.3 Council's Investment into the City of Palmerston

Moved: Ruth Palmer
Seconded: Brandon Evans

THAT Report entitled Council's Investment into the City of Palmerston be received and noted.

CARRIED VEAC10/21 - 26/06/2023

9 INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Information

Nil

9.2 Correspondence

Nil

10 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

11 NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Brandon Evans

Initials: _____



A Place for People

COMMITTEE AGENDA Attachment 13.1.1 COMMITTEE MINUTES

THAT the next Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee Meeting of Council be held on Monday, 25 September 2023 at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston.

CARRIED VEAC10/22 – 26/06/2023

12 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC

Moved: Mayor Pascoe-Bell
Seconded: Ruth Palmer

THAT the meeting of the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee held in Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, Palmerston on 26 June 2023 closed at 6:40pm.

CARRIED VEAC10/23 – 26/06/2023

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.40pm.

UNCONFIRMED

Initials: _____