



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

OPERATION OF NATURE'S POWERHOUSE

CONTRACT NO: E08025

Request for Expressions of Interest

PART 1 – PREAMBLE				
Cook Shire Council invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from suitably qualified individuals, businesses, community organisations, or consortiums interested in managing and operating all or part of the facilities located at Nature's Powerhouse within the Cooktown Botanic Gardens, as further detailed in Part 4 – Scope.				
PART 2 – GENERAL INFORMATION				
1. Contract details:	E08025 – OPERATION OF NATURE'S POWERHOUSE			
2. Communications by Respondents:	Communications regarding the Procurement Process must be submitted to www.vendorpanel.com.au or tenders@cook.qld.gov.au no later than five (5) calendar days prior to the closing date and time as stated in Item 4 (as extended, if at all, pursuant to the Procurement Process Conditions).			
3. Site inspection:	Details	Maximum attendees	Mandatory	RSVP
	Thursday 9 July @ 3pm	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	RSVP to mail@cook.qld.gov.au
4. Submission of Expression of Interest	Expressions of Interest must be submitted at www.vendorpanel.com.au or tenders@cook.qld.gov.au by no later than 2pm on Wednesday 5 August 2026 . <i>Note// Adequate time must be allowed for the Expression of Interest and all supporting documents to be uploaded or received by this time.</i>			
5. Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria			Weighting (%)
	Demonstrated capability and experience			30
	Financial and operational viability			30
	Contribution to tourism, community outcomes, visitor experience			40
6. Expressions of Interest should not be longer than:	Not applicable			
7. Complaints:	Complaints regarding Procurement Process to be directed to: mail@cook.qld.gov.au			
PART 3 – PROCUREMENT PROCESS CONDITIONS				
The Procurement Process is governed by, and this Request for Expressions of Interest is to be read in conjunction with, the Procurement Process Conditions available for viewing or download from https://www.cook.qld.gov.au/council/tenders-and-contracts/				
PART 4 – SCOPE				
Nature's Powerhouse is located in the heritage-listed Cooktown Botanic Gardens (one of the oldest botanic gardens in Queensland). The facility is a key visitor destination and community asset comprising of the following and as detailed on the attached Floor Plan:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full- service café • Gift shop • Visitor Information Centre • The Vera Scarth-Johnson Art Gallery, and • Flexible exhibition, art gallery and events space 				
The iconic, architecturally designed building was open in December 2000 and has become an important regional community and cultural facility that currently trades seven days a week.				
The Vera Scarth-Johnson (VSJ) Gallery houses a collection of works of Vera's original botanical illustrations of Endeavour River flora, with the collection recognised for its national significance. The VSJ Gallery is managed by the Gallery Association and is a popular destination for visitors. The VSJ Gallery Association has membership of Nature's Powerhouse Alliance and makes a valuable contribution to the operation of the facility.				
The Visitor Information Centre is well-utilised by visitors to the regional, with over 7,000 visitors accessing the service in 2025.				

Council is seeking to gauge market interest and identify innovative proposals that will enhance visitor experiences, support tourism, contribute to the local economy, and ensure the ongoing sustainability of the facility.

Respondents may submit proposals for:

1. The management and operation of the entire facility; or
2. The management and operation of one or more individual components, including:
 - o Café operations
 - o Retail/gift shop operations
 - o Visitor information services
 - o Exhibition, art gallery and event space management; and
3. Preferred contractual arrangement including term, cost inclusions and exclusions

Council welcomes proposals from commercial operators, not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises, Indigenous organisations, and collaborative partnerships.

This EOI process is intended to assess market interest only and does not commit Council to entering into any agreement or proceeding to a formal tender process.

PART 5 – RESPONSE SCHEDULES

The Expression of Interest should include:

- Business concept - proposed operational model, vision for enhancing the visitor experience and components of the facility proposed to be managed.
- Organisation or business profile, including relevant experience and qualifications, including references from similar operations (if applicable).
- Staffing and management arrangements, including hours of operation, proposed financial obligations

The proposal is limited to four (4) A4 pages which headings addressing the above requirements.