maitland business chamber

Where **BUSINESS** meets **IMPACT**

Insights from the Panel

We hope you enjoyed the "Where Business Meets Impact" panel event, and we thank you for being part of the conversation. Facilitated by Coralie Nichols from the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation, the panel explored how partnerships strengthen the very fabric of our society, shaping the structure and resilience of our communities. When businesses and charities work together, they don't just deliver services, they enhance overall! Here are some of the key takeaways:

Guardrails for Business-Charity Partnerships

1. Partnerships, Not Transactions

Sponsorship should never be about protecting the bottom line; it's about creating shared value.

Partnerships must be ethical, and values driven. If you can't find alignment, you're not looking hard enough.

2. Beyond Financial Support

Contributions don't have to be monetary. In-kind support, volunteering, and skills-sharing can be just as powerful.

Ask: Who can you connect with to create a full circle Connection Economy? One connection should lead to another, amplifying impact.

3. Charities Should Operate Like Businesses

Strong governance matters: boards, compliance, and integrity are essential because it's the community's money. Transparency is key!

Established charities typically allocate 30–50% to back-of-house costs, this ensures investment in risk management and sustainability.

A commercial mindset is critical for long-term impact.

4. Look for Genuine Connection

Seek multi-year agreements, not one-off donations.

Build relationships first.

Passion, authenticity, and shared purpose drive the most powerful outcomes.

5. What Creates the Greatest Impact?

Option 1: Achieving the impossible together.

Option 2: In-kind work that gets the job done.

Option 3: Human impact - giving people a place and a purpose.

Not-for-profits should not be used to repair the reputation of a business, and charities should not view businesses to rescue a charity's bottom line. True collaboration is about shared values and mutual impact—not optics or financial dependency.

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Thankyou to our panel!

Coralie Nichols — I&SN Foundation

ClaudiaTolhurst — Hunter Melanoma Foundation

John Cleary — Mai-Wel

Richard Jones — Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service