

28 June 2011

Budget 2011-12:

Broad investment into Redlands economy

Redland City Council will continue to provide support for the Redlands' business community, with a budget commitment including \$1.4m for ongoing programs in 2011-12, and a broad range of other economic initiatives.

Redland City Mayor Melva Hobson said Council's economic support was provided through programs, economic stimulus activities and direct spending with local businesses.

Mayor Hobson said Council was sympathetic to businesses and understood the impacts the Global Financial Crisis has had on the local economy.

"There was a talk in the media last month about commercial rates increasing by 17.5%, but we never believed this was acceptable and have worked hard to reduce the increase to 11.5%," the Mayor said.

"In developing this budget, we met with the Redland City Chamber of Commerce executive to discuss a number of issues, including ways in which we can support local businesses.

"One of the ways we provide support is through the programs we provide to our business sector."

In 2011-12, Council's economic development budget features \$1.4m for ongoing programs, including:

- \$525,000 for tourism development initiatives
- \$136,000 for the popular Business Grow mentoring program, which, in the first nine months of 2010-11 held more than 580 meetings with local businesses
- \$65,000 for Redlands' Trade and Investment Officer in China, who in the last year alone has generated around \$5m in export deals for Redland businesses, and currently provides support to 30 local businesses
- \$51,000 for marketing activities to promote economic development in the Redlands.

Mayor Hobson said Council also provided economic development stimulus in the city.

"This year, we will actively promote the master-planned business centres of Cleveland and Capalaba, and plan for the economic futures of North Stradbroke Island and the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. We are also working on a new economic development strategy for 2012-16.

"We encourage our community to support the ongoing Buy Local campaign, and look forward continuing to work in partnership with the Redland Chamber of Commerce and Bayside Bulletin to strengthen our economic sector."

In addition, in the past year, Council has sped up its development application process by 47 per cent, through initiatives including T5 (which involves five-day approvals for low-risk development applications), and our Smart eDA process.

“We now process 92 per cent of applications within statutory timeframes, and 50 per cent of all applications are processed within 20 days.

“We have also continued with our regular developer forums, to provide an opportunity for open discussion between Council and the development industry.”

The Mayor said Council also directly invested in the Redlands economy by buying locally where possible.

“Council currently spends 50 per cent of its goods and services budget in the Redlands. Up until late May, Council had spent around \$101 million in 2010-11 locally, on operational and capital goods and services. We certainly aim to further increase this as opportunities arise.”

Mayor Hobson said Council also supported a range of other projects that contributed directly to the Redlands’ economic vibrancy, including the new \$1.2 million contract over three years with Surf Life Saving Queensland, to provide professional life guards on North Stradbroke Island.

“This initiative helps visitors feel safe and boosts our tourism sector,” she said.

“And every dollar spent on paths, trails and cycleways is also an investment in our economy, attracting visitors and providing new opportunities for locals to experience their city.