

NEWS from your • Local Councillor

Redland Shire Council



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Dear Residents

Well it has been cold but Council has been running hot. Amalgamations, institutional water arrangements, local growth management strategy and budgets! There is an old Chinese saying, 'May you live in interesting times'. Well of late, it has been interesting.

Budget

This year's budget is a mixture of good and bad news. Council has culled a range of water and wastewater capital works projects in response to the State Government's takeover. Council's view is that it would be inadvisable to embark on projects like the Point Lookout wastewater treatment plant (\$11M) when it is not clear whether or not we will receive fair compensation. This enables Council to retire about \$4M in debt, this makes a change as Council has been increasing debt over the last four years. Council's 'ability to repay debt' ratio is now at 16.4%, which is inside our self-imposed upper limit of 17%. Our forward projections show this debt repayment capacity improving to 14.5% in 2008/9, 11.8% in 2009/10 and 9.3% in 2010/11 on the back of reducing capital works spending, following the spike of the last few years. Council has planned to reduce capital works spending by about \$10M next year, otherwise it will have to increase rates or borrowings. This will depend on the debt position at the time, which will be effected by whether or not State Government agrees to pay fair compensation.

Point Lookout Wastewater Treatment Plant

This project was scoped well before I was appointed to Council and has been a continuing frustration. Residents will be aware that in my second last newsletter I advised that all major obstacles had been cleared and Council was preparing to proceed to tender. Subsequently, the State Government announced a shake up of institutional water and wastewater arrangements, which left Council in a difficult situation. Council has now decided that it does not make sense to let a \$7 million dollar contract when there is no guarantee that it will be compensated and no guarantee that it will be responsible for completing the project. Obviously this is incredibly frustrating and disappointing and means that sewerage the balance of the town will be a while away yet.





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Pensioners and the budget

Rebates for those on a full pension will increase by \$30 to \$280 a year. In the past five years there has been a 55.5% increase – a good thing!

Water

The SEQ Water Pipeline Company has commenced investigations for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an Eastern Pipeline Inter Connector. A very passionate community meeting was held at Point Lookout Hall as part of the community consultation which is taking place in the preparation of this EIS. Some very good points were raised and State Government representatives were told that the community expects a robust scientific representation and that no work should commence until it is proved that the increased water take is sustainable. On top of that, the strong feeling was that State Government needed to be more mindful of Native Title claimants and their legal rights.

Dunwich and Amity Land Management Plans

These have now been adopted by Council and the Cricket and Community Club in Amity and the Sharks in Dunwich will now be able to get on with their redevelopment plans.

Running out of room in this newsletter so:

Local Growth Management Strategy – opposed it because we will be taking on more people than necessary.

Amalgamations – like 80% of Redlanders, I oppose any amalgamation. So many reasons why, but ultimately I believe that it's important to keep local government LOCAL.

Institutional water arrangements – financially unclear for the Redlands and an opportunity lost to set the State up properly with smart micro-economic reform of bulk water supply arrangements.

BBQs and park benches

Thank you to all who provided feedback as to where residents would like to see the replacement of BBQs and the installation of park benches on the Island that I requested in my last newsletter. I certainly appreciate the time taken to contact me with their ideas and suggestions and I look forward to implementing these facilities where needed.

Thank you to all the residents who have contacted me over the past few months about local issues in the area. Your ideas and suggestions are much appreciated and help greatly in keeping this a great place to live. Take care until next time.

Yours sincerely



Craig Ogilvie
Councillor for Division 2
Redland Shire Council