



News from your Local Councillor

Division 2

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Dear residents of Division 2,

April 2011

As this is the first newsletter since the flood and rain came, I hope you and your loved ones have emerged unscathed.

Floods, rain and parks

The weather events of the last few months have indeed been quite dramatic. We should all be proud of our efforts during that time. Council, of course, provided financial and physical assistance to the worst hit areas in Brisbane in the aftermath of the floods.

On the local front, the impacts were not so great but there is no question that Council services to our

local community suffered because of the rain and the need to commit resources elsewhere. I would like to thank you all for the great understanding you showed through this time. The grass cutting and parks crews have worked long stretches without time off to return the local area to its beautiful normal self. My thanks also goes out to them.

Water

You may have seen some commentary in the media on the impact of increases in water prices. This has been a bigger issue in areas like the Gold Coast where prices went up 20 per cent and look likely to go up by a similar amount again next year. In our local area the price went up by only 2.9 per cent however there will be significant price increases in years to come because the price at which the state government sells bulk water to Allconnex will go up dramatically to reflect the cost of drought proofing south-east Queensland. Those of you who have followed this issue will know that I have consistently protested the take-over of our water

assets and to this day still believe that networking the various discrete water utilities into an open market trading network would have been a far more efficient and effective way of drought proofing south-east Queensland. Nevertheless, the die is now cast. Any attempt to return the situation to the old system will be very expensive and should only be done at the State Government's expense!

On the Gold Coast, the council has been under pressure to pass on the returns they receive from Allconnex to the community via a rebate. These dividends are owned by the community indirectly and so this is a valid option for the council.

But it is worth mentioning that any attempt to rebate these returns will simply result in a cut in Council services or an increase in rates. It is also worth mentioning that any pricing should ensure that the pipes in the ground continue to work and that the company runs leanly and takes advantages of business opportunities.

Some councils are expecting an increase in their profits compared to their pre-takeover profits. This Council is expecting to make \$10 million dollars less. It is already impacting on service levels. Any rebate would be another turn of the screws on an already tight budget.

Councillor remuneration

Council has voted once again to not have a pay rise. This means that if you compare the whole package of Councillors now to the financial year prior to this Council being elected (including cars and allowances) the increase has been less than \$500 a year. The table that outlines this is on Council's website under Minutes and Agendas – February, General Meeting. This issue is often erroneously reported.

You will pay for growth

Infrastructure charges (IC) are levied on developers; they are contributions to the cost of providing water, sewerage, stormwater, transport and community land including parkland. It is a way of making sure developers and homebuyers pay for the infrastructure that Council provides to make their home liveable. The state government is proposing capping IC. In many cases, the level of cost recovery from IC is only in the order of 50 per cent - meaning the rate paying community is already contributing significantly to infrastructure to fund new development. The development industry is lobbying for IC to be capped at \$20,000, a new residential lot or the equivalent, but according to the Queensland Treasury Commission this would equate to a \$200 increase in rates. Council is strongly opposed to the capping of infrastructure charges.

Fact

Expenditure on the koala education program is .08 per cent of Council's yearly budget.



Immunisations

Some residents may not be aware that Council provides free vaccinations for babies, children, students and seniors. The local clinic is run at the Redlands Performing Arts Centre. To find out the date of the next clinic please call 3829 8569.



Microchipping your pet

A pet microchip is a tiny chip injected beneath your pet's skin. Cats and dogs born before 1 July 2009 do not need to be microchipped, only those born or transferred after 1 July 2009.

Microchipping is mandatory for all:

- cats and dogs before they reach 12 weeks of age
- cats and dogs that have changed ownership (i.e. have been either sold or given away)
- declared regulated dogs (i.e. declared dangerous dogs and declared manacing dogs).

Council recently ran a microchipping day to provide a discounted service to pet owners. There will be another one, so keep your eye out for details.

Thank you to all the residents who have contacted me over the last few months with regard to 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 City Council