



News from your Local Councillor

Division 2

Cleveland/
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Dear island 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.

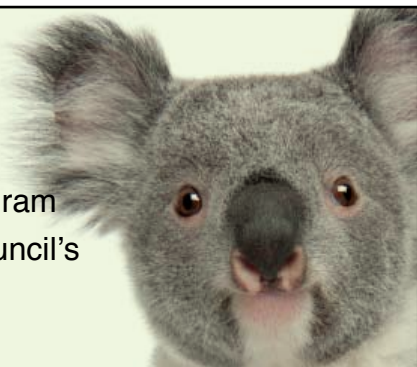
Some councils are expecting an increase in their profits compared to their pre-takeover profits. This Council is expecting to make \$10 million dollars less. It is already impacting on service levels. Any rebate would be another turn of the screws on an already tight budget.

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.

Fact

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



Amity sea wall

There was a major subsidence in the Amity seawall over the Christmas period. Council had rock in the water four hours after being alerted and I want to publicly thank the local crews for the work they did during that time. Council is now working with the state government to bring a final resolution and understanding of the situation that seawall property owners find themselves in. This will involve some analysis of the erosion dynamics and whether engineering solutions exist.

Amity ramp

After many rounds of drawings and several rounds of consultation with the Amity Point Progress Association, an informal approach will be taken to the Amity ramp car parking area.

For the time being, Council officers will continue to work with the state government and interest groups to deliver a final product in the future.

Mal Meninga

Over the Christmas period I had the pleasure of showing Mal Meninga around the island. There is a possibility the Maroons might base themselves on the island for their 2012 State of Origin preparations.



Tourism strategy

Council is set to adopt a four-year tourism strategy for the Redlands, aimed at positioning the Redlands within the Moreton Bay and Islands brand and to invest in economic growth through tourism. Twelve main projects will guide the direction of tourism for the next four years and these include developing an annual marketing prospectus with operator buy-in; generating support for an industry-led economic development and tourism board; building competitive advantage through education; embracing the waterfront for future tourism and recreation spaces; and encouraging nature-based and cultural tourism product investment.

Some would be aware that I believe many of these functions should be handled by an external tourism authority and I continue to push this view.

Point Lookout Community Hall refurbishment and landscape plan

The hall construction works are now well under way with completion expected towards the end of June. Business planning is also under way to ensure the hall is a lively and active community facility when it reopens.

Members of the Island Reference Group have been working with Council in developing the landscape plan for the hall site. You will be able to view and comment on the landscape plan when it goes live on Council's website sometime in April.

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 the island as a great place to live. Take care until next time.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Ogilvie

Councillor for Division 2
Redland City Council