

1. Issue Name

Economic Development

2. Contributors

Andrew Harvey, Roberta Bonnin, Wayne Dawson and Grant Bennett

3. Issue Definition and Scope

Economic Development improves the productive capacity and output of human capital, social capital, financial capital and resources (land and infrastructure) in an economy. This is the basis for improved employment, increased per capita income, sustainable economic growth and a vibrant population base. Economic Development is a key facet for economic growth of a region but it is also an important component underpinning the social, cultural and environmental development within the community.

Economic development theory now recognises that constant innovation, the creation of knowledge and the commercial application of knowledge are key drivers of economic development. In the future, economic development will not be as focused on developing 'things' (ie convention centres, industrial estates, etc.) as much as encouraging creativity and innovation in people.

Increasingly the competition for innovation will be coming from places like Singapore and China. Universities will be key drivers. Communities which fail to see their universities as economic development engines will miss a major transformation in the global economy. In this case the Redlands will potentially miss opportunities unless a University campus can be attracted to establish in the Shire or some form of collaboration is established with a University outside the Shire to participate in economic development initiatives in the Shire.

Economic development is increasingly a matter of managing complex learning through a civic process of public participation and leadership direction. In a knowledge economy, the communities and regions that can engage in complex learning will thrive. They will learn faster. They will identify opportunities faster and they will act faster.

International studies have highlighted however that innovation without entrepreneurship generally yields minimal local economic impact (The Innovation-Entrepreneurship NEXUS, Advanced Research Technologies, 2004). Developing strategies, policies and programs for leveraging the nexus between innovation and entrepreneurship therefore appears to be of vital importance to the competitiveness and vitality of regions.

This paper focuses on how the Redlands can integrate this changing thinking into the range of economic development initiatives it undertakes, and through the linkages it has with related Council and external initiatives.

4. Executive Summary

Council has developed a distinctive strategy which strengthens Redland Shire's current and future economic prospects. This strategy is driven by some key issues or values which aim to guide economic growth in the Redlands.

These important values include the following:

- Quality of life is regarded as a priority by the broader community and by members of the business community in Redland Shire.
- In keeping with the quality of life priority, there is strong support for retaining the Redland Shire's heritage of green spaces, agricultural land and a relaxed lifestyle. This gives the Shire a distinctive visual brand and signifies a more rural lifestyle.
- The community and businesses have emphasised the need to balance business development and lifestyle priorities.
- Redland Shire's unique location on Moreton Bay presents opportunities for the community and for economic growth.
- People in the broader community and in business value a sense of community in Redland Shire.
- Ensure that all members of the community are offered opportunities to participate in the economic development of the Shire.
- Reducing the impact of this traffic, through growth in employment in Redland Shire, will provide improved quality of life for many in Redland Shire.

Key recommendations that have previously been adopted following the preparation of the economic growth strategy include:

- 1 Establish Redland Shire as a recognised regional centre for knowledge economy businesses and professional services.
- 2 Strengthen tertiary skills and knowledge and life long learning as enablers of economic growth to tie education with future business objectives.
- 3 Strengthen entrepreneurship, creativity, competitiveness and innovation in key industry sectors and businesses.
- 4 Establish the Shire as a leading lifestyle and creative tourism destination in south east Queensland by building on the Shire's reputation as a vital bayside community with the diversity of island, coastal urban, rural and creative lifestyle options and visitor experiences.
- 5 Encourage the formation of partnerships between community organisations and business for the implementation of economic development related projects.
- 6 Ensure that "state of the art" infrastructure, particularly telecommunications, is available to support business development.
- 7 Address long term labour market issues, particularly the maturing of the workforce, and the ability for employers to attract suitably trained and qualified staff.
- 8 Focus on increasing employment participation across the entire community.

5. Regional Cooperation

Economic Development is a key regional activity. Businesses work across Council boundaries.

The Council plays an active role in regional development issues acknowledging the importance that regions now play. Regional collaboration is now a critical component in economic development thinking internationally.

Regional economic related activities the Council has been involved in SouthROC economic development forum, SEQROC economic development working group , Moreton Bay Taskforce,

Greater Brisbane (formerly BTRAC), Greater Brisbane Area Consultative Committee, Southside Export Network and Film City Inc.

Council officers played a key role in framing the new economic vision for the SouthROC region with the aim:

“To develop as a competitive, diverse, urban and rural region that encourages economic diversity while maintaining quality of life for its residents. Establish the SouthROC region as a national leader in sustainable economic development and lifestyle by 2021”.

This vision is a key mechanism for Council’s involvement at a regional level.

6. Background/ Discussion

The following documents have been used in the preparation of this issues paper:

- Future Directions for Redland Shire, Redland Shire Economic Growth Strategy, (January 2004)
- Redlands Economic and Tourism Development Marketing Plan, 2004-2007 (May 2004)
- Economic Profile component of the Redland Shire Integrated Employment Area Investigation study (SGS - May 2005)

Key features of the Redland’s economy

Redland’s Labour Force Characteristics

In 2001, two-thirds (66%) of Redland Shire’s population was of working age (15-65), compared to 67% for the SouthROC region and 67% for SEQ. Table 1 shows key labour market indicators for Redland Shire and the wider region.

The table shows that the labour force participation rate for Redland is greater than that of the SouthROC, SEQ and Queensland. The proportions of full-time and part-time employment of Redland Shire’s employed residents closely resemble the proportions for the SouthROC, SEQ and Queensland.

The proportion of males to females is also more evenly spread in Redland as opposed to SEQ and Queensland, with 53% males and 47% females.

The unemployment rate is lower in Redland Shire when compared with the SouthROC area and Queensland figures. While 2001 unemployment levels declined across all areas of the State compared, the fall in unemployment was been less pronounced in the Redlands.

Table 1: Key Labour Market Indicators

| Indicator | Redland Shire | SouthROC | South East Queensland | Qld |
|---|---------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Total Population | 113,811 | 830,467 | 2,372,104 | 3,655,139 |
| Population % Change 1996 – 2001 | 14.39% | 13.33% | 11.17% | 8.50% |
| Total Labour Force, 2001 | 55,715 | 386,268 | 1,127,574 | 1,709,612 |
| Labour Force Participation rate, 2001 | 65% | 62% | 63% | 63% |
| No. of residents employed in Industry, 2001 | 51,807 | 349,837 | 1,010,242 | 1,533,485 |
| % Full-time employment, 2001 | 65% | 64% | 65% | 66% |
| % Part-time employment, 2001 | 35% | 36% | 35% | 34% |
| % Male Employment, 2001 | 54% | 54% | 54% | 55% |
| % Female Employment, 2001 | 46% | 46% | 46% | 45% |
| Unemployment Rate, 2001 | 7.01% | 9.43% | 8.37% | 8.23% |
| Unemployment Rate, 1996 | 8.03% | 11.58% | 9.91% | 9.65% |
| Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24 years), 2001 | 14.29% | 16.57% | 15.62% | 15.34% |
| Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24 years), 1996 | 14.82% | 18.73% | 16.72% | 16.42% |

Source: ABS Census, 2001 and 1996

Self-containment of Employment

Table 2 below provides a comparison of the employment of Redland Shire's resident population and the jobs actually located in the Shire (using ABS Journey to Work data) by industry.

Redland Shire has a relatively low level of employment self-containment, that is, the number of Redland Shire residents who are employed in the workforce relative to the number of jobs actually located in Redland Shire. According to the 2001 ABS Journey to Work data, 60% of Redland's resident workforce travels to locations outside the Shire to work each day. Allowing for journey to work movements to and from the Shire, Redland's rate of employment self-containment is 50%.

Redland's level of employment self-containment is much less than that of the SouthROC region, which has a level of self-containment of 71%. In the Gold Coast, for example, self-containment is much higher at 80%.

Table 2: Self-Containment of Employment by Industry in Redland Shire, 2001

| Industry of Employment | Resident Workforce ¹ | Local Job Stock ² | Net Shortfall of Local Jobs ³ |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 810 | 710 | 100 |
| Mining | 365 | 223 | 142 |
| Manufacturing | 6,784 | 2,607 | 4,177 |
| Electricity, Gas & Water Supply | 348 | 88 | 260 |
| Construction | 4,610 | 1,920 | 2,690 |
| Wholesale Trade | 3,557 | 1,387 | 2,170 |
| Retail Trade | 8,587 | 5,690 | 2,897 |
| Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants | 1,917 | 1,297 | 620 |
| Transport and Storage | 2,912 | 789 | 2,123 |
| Communication Services | 1,006 | 238 | 768 |
| Finance and Insurance | 1,748 | 514 | 1,234 |
| Property & Business Services | 5,348 | 2,515 | 2,833 |
| Govt. Administration & Defence | 1,979 | 866 | 1,113 |
| Education | 3,342 | 2,669 | 673 |
| Health & Community Services | 4,841 | 2,839 | 2,002 |
| Cultural & Recreational Services | 969 | 489 | 480 |
| Personal & Other Services | 2,186 | 1,130 | 1,056 |
| Non-Classifiable Economic Units | 278 | 109 | 169 |
| Not Stated | 816 | 121 | 695 |
| Total ⁴ | 52,403 | 26,201 | 26,202 |
| Jobs to Workforce | | 50.00% | |
| Escape to Workforce | | 50.00% | |

Employment Structure

In proportional terms, employment in Redland Shire (that is, jobs actually located in the Shire) is dominated by retailing and the services sectors, notably Health & Community Services, Property & Business Services and Education. The Manufacturing sector is also significant in Redland Shire.

Industrial Diversity

A measure of a region's robustness is its Herfindahl (diversity) Index. A high index suggests a high level of diversity in the economy. When Redland Shire is compared to other Local Government Areas using this index we see that it has a relatively high level of industrial diversity.

A high level of self-containment (except where the region contains a major, dominant industry or sector) indicates that there is a wide range of economic activities present and therefore, a diverse industrial base. Redland Shire has a Herfindahl Index value of 4.2. Other municipalities are shown in the following table. At this stage of its economic development, Redland Shire has a perhaps surprisingly high level of diversity. As the economy grows and develops, the level of diversity should increase and more self-containment in employment is possible.

Table 3: Diversity Indices (Herfindahl) for Redland Shire and other SEQ LGAs

| Local Government Area | Herfindahl/ Diversity Index | LGA Rank (in SEQ) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Brisbane | 7.0 | 1 |
| Gold Coast | 4.6 | 2 |
| Maroochy | 4.4 | 3 |
| Redland | 4.2 | 4 |
| Caloundra | 3.3 | 5 |
| Pine Rivers | 3.2 | 6 |
| Caboolture | 3.2 | 7 |
| Noosa | 3.1 | 8 |
| Beaudesert | 2.8 | 9 |
| Redcliffe | 2.8 | 10 |
| Ipswich | 2.8 | 11 |
| Logan | 2.8 | 12 |
| Esk | 1.9 | 13 |
| Laidley | 1.8 | 14 |
| Gatton | 1.7 | 15 |
| Kilcoy | 1.7 | 16 |
| Boonah | 1.6 | 17 |

Source: ABS Journey to Work data with interpretations by SGS Economics and Planning

Key drivers of change for the Redland's economy

Agricultural Sector Transition

Declining commodity prices, a reduction in trade barriers and falling terms of trade for Australia's agricultural produce have weakened the viability of many agricultural enterprises. In order to survive and prosper, the agricultural sector has had to rationalise with a number of much larger agricultural conglomerates expanding at the expense of small once viable farm holdings and enterprises which have all but disappeared in some parts of Australia.

In Redland Shire, poultry farming is no longer an agricultural mainstay, as the industry rationalises and centralises its growing and processing activities on a national scale. While Redland's horticultural industry remains strong, it is under increasing pressure from competing land uses and increasing land prices. As acknowledged in the Redland Shire Economic Growth Strategy, rising land prices and limited room for expansion are likely to limit growth of both horticulture and poultry in Redland Shire.

Technology and Greater Global Connectivity

Technological advances continue to transform the way goods and services are produced and how they are distributed throughout Australia and overseas. Rapid air travel, enhanced means of moving goods by land and sea and new forms of communications and information technology (CIT) permits a more rapid movement of people, commodities and information. Information on existing or potential markets is also more readily available and for places like South East Queensland, these markets can be serviced (at lower cost than before) if the necessary infrastructure is in place and if industrial and commercial nodes are appropriately located.

For Redland Shire, looking to attract and nurture industries that are consistent with its vision for balanced economic growth, the accessibility by road and rail to the Brisbane CBD, the Port of Brisbane and to Brisbane Airport are key considerations in the current and future location decisions of industry. So too is the capacity of local telecommunications infrastructure, which is essential for globally connected enterprises.

The Growth in Elaborately Transformed Manufactures (ETMs)

In Australia, there has been a relative growth in the production and sale of higher value manufactured products or 'ETMs' relative to basic or 'simply transformed' manufactured goods. ETMs are high in value and can be differentiated from more simply transformed products (like metals and petroleum for example) for their high knowledge content. ETMs include for example, industrial machinery and equipment such as electronic and photographic equipment, vehicle product and aviation manufacturing, pharmaceutical and other scientific manufacturing.

In the ten years to 1998, Australia's ETM exports increased in value by 16% per annum. By comparison, exports of basic manufactured products increased by 6% per annum over the same period. As the focus of Australian manufacturing on ETMs continues to grow, industrial areas will be required to accommodate their particular site characteristics and locational profiles.

A Rise in Service Sector Activity

Both domestic and international trade in services is growing rapidly. This includes financial and business services, and community and personal services including education, recreation, leisure and entertainment (RLE) and tourism. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia's external trade in services (exports and imports) has increased substantially as a proportion of total trade in goods and services. The greatest increase in Australia's service exports has been in travel services. Transportation services also account for a significant proportion of the growth in internationally traded services.

This helps to highlight the growing opportunities for tourism. Redland Shire is located in the heart of Moreton Bay's evolving tourism industry, and its principal centre of Cleveland is the gateway to North Stradbroke Island. The Redland Shire Economic Growth Strategy recognises tourism as one of the Shire's strategic growth sectors, and the Redland Economic and Tourism Development Marketing Plan, 2004-2007, proposes a range of strategies for the Shire's branding / marketing and product development.

The Rise of 'Knowledge' and 'Creativity' as Drivers of Economic Prosperity

In an increasingly competitive global economy, access to knowledge and creativity are central to the abilities of businesses to deliver new cost savings or to add value through product differentiation. 'Knowledge workers' (including people in science and other knowledge-intensive industries like software development, engineering, academia, the legal and health care professions) have become the new drivers of economic prosperity. Knowledge workers bring value to the local economy because they have high economic wealth, adaptable, flexible and transferable skills, relative job security and good career prospects. Attracting and retaining these 'knowledge workers' is therefore a critical component of any investment attraction and facilitation strategy.

Many of these people require relatively small 'work spaces', often out of the home, but they must be well connected with the latest communications and information technology and be supported by the governance of the local area – including industry, institutional and government support.

If Redlands can boost its 'knowledge industry' profile, then all other things being equal, industrial floorspace requirements could fall. Importantly, these knowledge industries are more appropriately suited to locations in mixed land use settings, where workers have access to a range of retail, recreational and community services. Proximity to Universities and other learning and research

facilities is important, and in many cases, strong links between industry, education and government form the foundations of powerful economic clusters.

The potential for the development of “knowledge” activity centres will provide greater accessibility to support services and encourage business clustering.

The Emergence of the ‘Lifestyle’ Region

In recent years, lifestyle and liveability have emerged as a primary element of investment location decision making criteria. This is particularly relevant to the so called ‘knowledge workers’ discussed in the previous section. There has been enough research (e.g. by Richard Florida, Robert Reich and others), and anecdotal evidence to suggest that knowledge workers place a premium on an area’s lifestyle attributes, including its recreation, leisure and entertainment, community and cultural infrastructure. However, this notion also applies to the population at large.

This is evident in the emphasis that Councils, State Governments and developers place on urban quality as an investment attractor. Land use planning, which encourages a well planned and appropriately sequenced scale and timing of commercial and industrial development is just one critical factor of urban amenity that is important for attracting people to want to live and work in an area.

Regions and locales like Redland Shire, must present a good ‘people climate’ as well as a good business climate if they are to successfully compete for investment. This includes a strong cultural economy, urban quality and social cohesion. The development of additional education facilities and encouragement of “lifelong” learning will play a key role in reinforcing the “lifestyle” region status.

These elements are particularly important for a place like Redland Shire, with its vision of economic growth where the natural environment and lifestyle attributes are protected and maintained

Growth of Home-Based Business Activity

There has been a recent growth and continuing trend for home-based businesses in Australia. Corporate downsizing, the greater premium placed on skills and knowledge, the ability of businesses to readily source inputs from remote suppliers and enhanced communications and information technology have provided opportunities for new and more flexible modes of working, and have given rise to a more independent ‘enterprise household’.

This trend is also driven by societal changes including greater female participation in the workforce, balancing family life with careers, a re-emergence of thought in society about the importance of work-life balance, flexible working practices and employers’ willingness to allow staff to work from home. More opportunities exist for sole operators to work from home on a contract basis, or for workers still attached to firms to ‘hot-desk’ or ‘telecommute’ with part of the time spent at an office in the central workplace location and part of the time at home or in another remote location.

As home-based business activity continues to grow, there will be implications for commercial and industrial land requirements that will require creative responses from local Councils. Redland Shire is no exception.

Changing Retail Trends and Land Uses

Powerful social and economic trends are affecting the way people use their local retail and commercial centres and the sorts of services and facilities they seek. These trends include the growth in convenience retailing, the re-emergence of the traditional strip retail centre and the continued growth of the ‘café society’.

Another important form of retailing impacting on commercial / industrial land use requirements, and which has gained a significant share of the market in recent years, is the bulky goods stores. These outlets are typically located in low cost buildings in low rent areas.

Thus they seek locations away from the main centres in high accessibility, high profile locations such as on major arterials. The major element in this sector are the 'category killers', that is, stores selling many brands of a particular product type at highly competitive prices, warehouse or factory outlets and the general bulky goods stores (e.g. furniture and white goods).

This sort of activity commands a very large catchment, and in order to achieve economies of scale requires substantial parcels of land usually in greenfield areas. As the population of Redland Shire grows, so too will the market for this form of retailing.

It is worth noting that anecdotal evidence would suggest that the retail supermarkets are returning to neighbourhood centres rather than depending on the larger gatekeeper centres as was the direction of the late 90's. This may lead to growing demand for retail shopping areas with a large anchor tenant (ie Coles or Woolworths) and a small number of specialty shops.

The impact of State and Commonwealth Government economic development strategies

There are a number of specific initiatives and programs which operate at state and federal level to support economic development.

There is an opportunity for Redland Shire to link to these strategies and initiatives to strengthen and support economic growth in Redland Shire.

An important strategy for the Shire will be to further strengthen relationships between Redland Shire and these initiatives to ensure that Redland Shire businesses participate in and benefit from these strategies.

Examples of these key strategies include:

- World Class Manufacturing Queensland - the State manufacturing strategy
- The establishment of the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture and the location of the Queensland Lifestyle Horticulture Council and other key industry bodies at DPIF Redlands.
- State and south east Queensland tourism strategies.
- Participation in training and education initiatives covering schools, vocational education and training and tertiary education initiatives and programs.

The implementation of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future is a major initiative to increase vocational education and training in schools. Redland Shire needs to be proactive in support this strategy.

Working closely with Department of State Development and Innovation and Australian Government agencies which provide funding and support for business development and regional development initiatives is a priority. Strong and effective working relationships with these organisations and education sector organisations will help to facilitate economic development and future growth.

The Department of State Development and Innovation is developing "Regional Economic Development Blueprints" which will outline a shared vision for a region's economic development. The Blueprints will be developed in partnership with key regional stakeholders and will outline a framework for cooperation based on several high level goals and strategies.

Opportunities and Barriers

A number of issues, opportunities and barriers to future economic growth have been identified in the range of economic developments studies that have been prepared for Council. An outline of these follows.

A. The current structure of the economy in Redland Shire

The current structure of the economy in Redland Shire has a focus on:

- Responding to the needs of a growing population in the Shire. This has resulted in retail growth and growth in services to households and to individuals.
- An existing poultry industry.
- An existing lifestyle horticulture industry.
- An existing tourism industry.
- A mix of manufacturing sectors.

While economic growth in response to population growth is an essential feature of any economy, an over reliance on these population driven businesses can create weaknesses in an economy. If the size of the population changes or the demographic structure changes, this can place pressure on businesses and an economy that relies on population demand.

Providing additional balance within the economy provides stronger opportunities and more depth to the economy - minimising the impacts of downturns in consumer confidence and the impact from demographic changes.

B. The business growth environment in Redland Shire

Consultation with businesses and business sectors have identified the need to create a more welcoming business growth environment in the Redland Shire.

The lack of a welcoming business growth environment is a barrier to growth – business, economic and employment growth.

Redland Shire is an attractive destination for business owners and operators given its mix of lifestyle benefits.

Some of the existing factors which contribute to an environment which is not very welcoming include the following:

- A lack of certainty regarding whether specific economic activities are targeted or welcomed by the Shire.
- Lead times involved in Council decision making and approval processes.
- The lack of effective and easy communications channels to Council for businesses.
- A lack of supportive strategies for fostering home business and small business development - the areas from which future employment and economic growth will arise.
- Limitations to the industrial land and commercial space available for new businesses moving to the Shire and for those wishing to expand in the Shire.

All of these issues need to be addressed in developing a welcoming business environment in the Redland Shire.

C. Redland Shire's relationship to surrounding areas

Redland Shire's traditional relationship with surrounding areas has been as a provider of labour and skills for economic activity in areas adjacent to Redland Shire.

Rather than being regarded as an independent and attractive destination for business investment and economic growth, Redland Shire is regarded as a dormitory area.

The positioning of the Shire has recently been changed to encourage economic growth. The "More To" theme is an important one encapsulating lifestyle, tourism and business development.

Without this separate identity, current perceptions of Redland Shire as a dormitory area and as a population based economy will act as a barrier to future economic growth.

D. Potential barriers to future growth

In the future, the main barriers to growth and economic development for Redland Shire will be determined by the direction taken by the Shire.

If the Shire does not capitalise on opportunities and establish a distinctive position in south east Queensland, it is likely to loose out on potential growth opportunities.

Rather than being in a position of failing to attract businesses to the area, Redland Shire is an attractive destination for business owners wanting to live in the Shire and work in the Shire.

Providing a welcoming environment for growth and clear signals regarding growth and future directions will help to eliminate or minimise barriers to economic and employment growth in the Shire.

Future themes and issues

The existing Corporate Plan has provided a focus on building economic development as a key Council activity. It has driven the preparation of a new strategic direction for economic and tourism development, and provided the rationale for increased investment.

It is timely however to ensure the future direction for the Corporate Plan continues to support the strategic priorities to position the Redlands as a competitive and contemporary location for business activities and employment creation.

The existing Corporate Plan focuses on:

- Business retention and expansion.
- Business attraction.
- Tourism development.

Key issues and drivers for the future development of the Redland's economy include:

Entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation – technology, global markets and innovation are driving structural transformations in economies. Regions need to align development strategies with these new drivers. New ideas need to be developed, they need to be commercialized and they need to be relevant to rapidly changing markets. Entrepreneurship and creativity will be the main drivers of regional competitiveness in future. They will drive business development and innovation.

Learning communities - economic development in the new knowledge economy means more than narrow economic considerations. Learning involves a whole-of-community approach. What is common to learning communities is the pivotal role of learning — in both its formal educational settings and in less structured forms — to creating and sustaining viable economic activity and social cohesion. It focuses on skills, collaboration and business development. It will be a critical component in achieving a high skilled workforce that is able to adapt to changing economic circumstances. The “lifelong” learning approach needs considerable focus in the corporate plan across multiple priority areas (community, economic and knowledge management).

Community:business partnerships – these are a collaboration between a business and a community organisation working together to achieve outcomes for the community in which they both operate. In addition to providing a solution to a need in the community, a good community business partnership can also benefit the partners by boosting staff morale, customer loyalty and

community goodwill. Partnerships with communities represent a new way of working for businesses.

Economic diversity – as outlined earlier in the report the level of diversity in an economy is a measure of its robustness (Herfindahl Index). It is important that the Shire retains and expands its diversity as a measure of its sustainability.

“Smart” infrastructure investment – “Broadband internet” is as important today as roads, water mains and railway lines were in an earlier era. To maintain and expand its economic competitiveness it is essential that 24/7 broadband wired and wireless communications are in place connecting every home, school, office and business in the Shire.

The new Corporate Plan will need to encourage greater integration across priority areas. An example of this relate to the “Learning Communities” theme that relies on a range of access points being available for learning. Libraries can play a pivotal role.

Incorporating the new themes

This issues paper outlines future strategic priorities and programs, and approaches to economic development.

It focuses on encouraging greater levels of prosperity across the community and a more diversified economy that encourages creativity and innovation. While a growing economy is important the need for a sustainable economic platform should be a focus with the benefits of growth should be spread through the community. There is also a need to encourage life long learning as a key contributor to on-going community prosperity.

“Standard of living” and “employment participation” are important indicators from a strategic priority.

Standard of living refers to the quality and quantity of goods and services available to people. It is generally measured by real (i.e. [inflation](#) adjusted) income per person, although sometimes other measures may be used; examples are access to certain goods (such as number of refrigerators per 1000 people), or measures of health such as life expectancy.

Employment participation refers to the overall level of participation in paid work. Increasing employment and participation in paid work will lead to greater security and improved quality of life for many particularly for those who are on low incomes or receiving government assistance. For businesses, the benefits of growth are also coupled with concern regarding skill shortages in specific industry areas and regions.

Theme One: Economic Diversity

The aim would be to broaden the Shire’s economic base through developing the Shire as a competitive investment location for businesses investment, and encouraging business and employment opportunities.

This would result in an increase in the range of business sector activity, the range and number of employment and training opportunities, promote the development of appropriate infrastructure and facilitate a positive environment for business investment.

Theme Two: Business Entrepreneurship and Development

The aim would be to assist local businesses to expand, create more jobs and to expand local economic activity through encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives.

This would provide a range of opportunities to improve local business sustainability, promote creativity and innovation, expand employment opportunities and increase the number and range of partnerships between the community and businesses.

Theme Three: Destination Development

The aim would be to ensure that tourism development compliments local communities through promoting the development of appropriate infrastructure & facilities and marketing the Shire as a competitive and distinctive visitor destination.

This would promote the development of sustainable tourism destinations within the Shire, encourage the development of existing and new tourism product, spread the benefits of tourism throughout the Shire and increase the tourism sectors contribution to the Shire's economy.