

Budget boost for Economic Development

Economic Development is a key focus for Council in 2016/17 with an additional commitment of \$1 million to ensure that the Regional Development unit is well placed to drive new investment.

The unit will benefit from new appointments to build Economic Development capacity in agriculture, branding and marketing, small business development and urban rejuvenation.

Rockhampton Region Mayor Margaret Strelow said this will allow the Regional Development Department to build solid business cases.

“We can’t change the mining downturn, but what we can do is invest in attracting industries identified as the strongest growth areas for the future,” Mayor Strelow said.

“We have a lot of ground work to do and if we are diligent in our pursuit for new investment, we will build a robust economy that will sustain Rockhampton into the future.”

Support for small business development during this tough economic climate is also a key action item on Mayor Strelow’s agenda.

“Council’s Smart Way Forward Strategy will continue to ramp up with low cost office space made available in the Quay Street Smart Hub for innovators to collaborate and incubate,” She said.

“Council will also continue to provide business incentives for CBD stakeholders who want to change the existing use of their property to encourage residential living in vacant spaces as well as incentives for retail, business and industrial development across the Region.

There’s a major study underway focused on the CBD that will identify priorities in these areas:

- physical improvements in the public and private realms - building repurposing, infill development, façade improvements, heritage and character building conservation
- placemaking - streetscaping, open space connections, public art, laneway use, event and festival development
- functionality improvements - signage, lighting, parking, gateways, pedestrian legibility, etc.
- catalyst projects

\$600,000 over three years is also budgeted for the Regional Promotions unit to implement a whole of region tourism signage project to improve Rockhampton’s appeal as a destination to live and visit that will be bolstered by a number of strategic marketing campaigns.