

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GENERAL POLICY

Intent

This policy defines Council's role in economic development and promotion.

Scope

This policy addresses economic development and promotion in the Douglas Shire

Provisions

Douglas Shire Council plays a lead role in economic development and promotion of the Shire.

This role includes:

- Assisting existing businesses and new enterprises as required, through the provision of information and assistance, referral and support where appropriate;
- Acting as a catalyst (or advocate) for new business development;
- Ensuring appropriate infrastructure is available to facilitate the development of business and industry;
- Establishing coordinating forums or business networks with the direct goal of improving communication links, sharing ideas and the long-term goal of wealth creation, export growth and employment creation;
- Working in partnership with government and non-government organisations to progress economic development opportunities or to respond to threats to or negative impacts on the local economy;
- Providing exemplary levels of customer service to assist business expansion (and attract business investment); and

Undertaking the above with a view to improving the overall sustainability of the local government area; pursuing economic advancement, while preserving or improving social, cultural and environmental elements of our region.

The *Local Government Act 2009* provides direction in this regard:

"Matters relevant to good rule and government"

494. (1) A matter that, in a local government's opinion, is directed to benefiting, and can reasonably be expected to benefit, its area, or a part of its area, is taken to be conducive to the good rule and government of its territorial unit.

(2) The matters that may be of benefit to a local government area include, for example –

- (a) Promoting or contributing to economic development of a part of the area; and*
- (b) Promoting or attracting commerce, industry or tourism in or to a part of the area; and*
- (c) Promoting or providing opportunities for employment in a part of the area; and*
- (d) Promoting or helping the supply of services to a part of the area; and*
- (e) Helping the finances of the area's local government; and*
- (f) Helping the exercise of the jurisdiction of local government in the area."*

Council will apply its corporate planning process to the identification of specific long-term economic development outcomes and strategies to be pursued by Council in carrying out its role in this area.

Support for Tourism Marketing and Information Services

Douglas Shire Council is a strong supporter of the local and regional tourism industry given tourism's significance to the local economy. This support is reflected primarily through Council's support for local tourism marketing and information organisations, with funding levels determined by Council.

Council also recognises the valued contributions of other community specific tourism marketing and information organisations and is supportive of their ongoing work.

Chambers of Commerce

Council is supportive of the role of Chambers and other more locally focused organisations promoting economic activity within the local government area.

Support is expressed through membership of various organisations and through consideration of specific partnership proposals put forward to foster economic development of local communities.

Support for Economic Development initiatives

Council recognises that there is value in Council supporting specific initiatives or projects that will have significant economic benefits for all or parts of the local government area. Where support for these initiatives or projects has been requested by entities outside of Council, the assistance may take the form of cash grant, in-kind assistance.

Support will only be provided where analysis of any proposal is able to demonstrate significant economic benefit accruing to the community. Council may also choose to attach specific conditions to the granting of such assistance.

Council's Rates and Charges

In making, recovering and granting concessions for rates and charges, Council has regard for a number of principles including "flexibility to take account of changes to the local economy". Refer to Council's Revenue Policy for details.

Council's Planning Scheme

The Planning Scheme contains a list of DEOs to respond to the economic development strand of ecological sustainability.

- DEO 5 – A prosperous community with a strong rural sector, a dynamic tourism industry and commercial and industrial activities offering a diverse range of employment opportunities, is supported by the sustainable use and management of the natural resources of the Shire.
- DEO 6 – The natural resources of the Shire, such as GQAL, extractive resources, water and forestry resources, are protected and managed in a manner that ensures their ecological and economic values are assured for present and future generations.
- DEO 7 – The values of the Shire are protected by a preferred pattern of development through identifying GQAL which sustains productive primary industries, particularly the sugar, horticultural and cattle grazing industries, and consolidates growth and employment opportunities, primarily in the identified locations of Mossman and Port Douglas.
- DEO 8 – The economic development of the Shire is facilitated by the provision of physical infrastructure which complements the conservation economy of the Shire with 82% of its lands within the WTWHA in an efficient, equitable and environmentally safe manner, as well as

circulation networks which provide for the efficient movement of people and goods, without compromising the Captain Cook Highway as the scenic entry corridor to the Shire.

Council as a provider of critical urban and rural infrastructure

Council recognises the critical importance, from an economic development perspective, of its role as a provider of essential urban and rural infrastructure. Efficient and effective water, wastewater, refuse, road network, regulated parking and drainage infrastructure is critical to the success of the region's economic activity.

Council as an employer

Council recognises the influence that it has over the local economy as one of the largest employers operating in the local government area. Council endeavours where possible to leverage this position in support of State and Federal Government employment generating programs.

Council as a procurer of goods and services

Council recognises the influence that it has over the local economy through the level of spending that it undertakes annually. The *Local Government Act 1993 (s.481)* actually states that, in entering into contracts for the carrying out of work, or the supply of goods and services, a local government must have regard to a range of principles including enhancement of the capabilities of local business and industry. Application of this principle is addressed by way of Council's Procurement Policy.

Role of Elected Members

The Mayor fulfils a lead role for Council in relation to region wide economic development activities undertaken by or supported by Council. This lead role extends to leading and hosting delegations, and participating in Regional Development Australia. Councillors play a key role in relation to activities occurring within the Shire.

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

Manager Responsible for Review:

Executive Officer

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 16/06/2015

CURRENT ADOPTION:

DUE FOR REVISION: 16/06/2019