

CBD.

9 November 2011

XXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

## The 'Vision' for the Future Growth of our City Centre

Council writes to you to invite your feedback on the future growth of our City Centre.

The enclosed 'Information Sheet' outlines proposals for the City Centre that have been put forward by your community representatives and Council.

The 'Vision' for the future growth and continued revitalisation of the City Centre has been presented and a program of potential projects to support these ideas is now being put forward to you for comment.

Unfortunately Council cannot fund all of the proposed projects with its existing level of revenue. To meet the funding shortfall, consideration is being given to continuing the CBD Special Rate and possibly introducing a new Special Rate for other business properties outside the CBD.

These proposals are also detailed in the information sheet.

### Our Invitation to You

Whether the proposals - including the possible continuation of a special rate - become reality **depends entirely on your support** as a CBD business property owner.

Please take the time to consider the proposals and give us your feedback by e-mail to:

**business\_rate\_proposal@chcc.nsw.gov.au**

Or in writing to:  
Business Rate Proposal  
Coffs Harbour City Council  
Locked Bag 155  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Please forward your comments to us by **Friday 2 December 2011**

This is an exciting business community initiative. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



Steve McGrath  
General Manager

Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision making processes. The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) requires Council to provide public access to information held unless there are overriding public interest considerations against disclosure. Any submissions received will be made publicly available unless the writer can demonstrate that the release of part or all of the information would not be in the public interest. However, Council is obliged to release any document by court order or other specific law.

# Information Sheet

## The Vision for the Future Growth of our City Centre



Since July 2000, a 'Business City Centre Special Rate' has been applied to CBD business properties to fund CBD improvements. The Special Rate is set to expire on 30 June 2012.

Due to the success of this initiative, it is now proposed to introduce a Special Rate for a further ten-year period to fund more projects, not only for the CBD but the entire City Centre.

Council is now inviting you to make comment on this proposal.

### Achievements from current Special Rate

The current Special Rate has provided funding for a number of projects which have contributed to the revitalisation and ongoing growth of our CBD.

The projects included, but were not limited to:

- Road construction works for Harbour Drive Mall.
- Mall conversion improvements and fixtures.
- The relocation of the Mall kiosks.
- Car parking upgrades.
- Various streetscape improvement works.

The success of these projects is clear from factors such as:

- A reduction in shop vacancy rates from 20% (now approximately 5%).
- A reduction in unemployment rates from 17% (now approximately 7%).
- An increase in City Centre property values (land values have increased on average 179% since 2002).

These projects have also provided a social benefit to people shopping and working within the City Centre, including:

- A reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- A place where people feel secure and participate in social interaction.
- A feeling of increased civic pride.

### The 'Vision' for the City Centre

For the past six months, Council has been working with a community committee formed with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, 2050 Think Tank, Tourism

Association and business operators. The committee has identified a vision for the future growth of our entire City Centre to create:

- A place where people have a reason to come.
- An exciting, enjoyable place for people to shop and spend their leisure time.
- An area for culture and learning.
- A place where people feel secure, a sense of belonging and social interaction.
- An area that has good quality street works, various land uses and adequate parking.
- A commercial centre guiding public and private investment.
- A place of economic activity and employment to broaden the City's economic base and foster long term prosperity.
- A foundation upon which to attract sophisticated service industries and professionals.

These goals reinforce the strategies set by the people of Coffs Harbour in the 2030 Community Strategic Plan to create a lively and diverse City Centre.

### Proposals to Achieve the 'Vision'

The community committee has put forward a number of proposals for projects (and the necessary funding) that will help realise this City Centre vision.

The projects could include:

- The construction of a multi-deck car park in Moonee Street.
- Improvements to existing car parks (including shade sails, improved security and traffic flow measures at the Castle Street and Park Avenue multi-deck car parks).
- Completion of beautification works at Brelsford Park.
- Harbour Drive corridor enhancements.
- Jetty Foreshore enhancements.
- Improvements to City Centre traffic flow and public transport.
- Improvements to City Centre footpaths and street lighting.
- Improvements to existing car parks outside the CBD precinct.

Costings have not been finalised for these projects but it is estimated they could require up to \$22 million to complete.



## How could these Projects be funded?

The reality is that Council cannot fund all of the proposed works using its existing level of revenue.

Consequently the community committee has developed two funding proposals:

- ⇒ **(Proposal 1)** - The continuation of a Special Rate for CBD business properties only.
- ⇒ **(Proposal 2)** - The introduction of a Special Rate that also includes other business properties (outside the CBD) that would benefit from these proposed works.

The introduction of a Special Rate for both CBD and other business properties (Proposal 2) would raise approximately \$10.7 million over a ten-year period and could be used to fund loan borrowings which would enable projects to be completed sooner.

The Special Rate funding would need to be supported by other funding.

Possible sources include:

- The sale of Council's car park in West High Street.
- Council funds already held for car park improvements.
- Council funds already held for Brelsford Park works.
- Council's current annual contribution to City Centre improvements.
- Additional funds through long term leasing or sale of specific car parks to businesses within the CBD precinct.

## The Impacts to your Rate Account

Business properties in the CBD have been paying an additional Special Rate for CBD improvements for the past twelve years.

The amount of the Special Rate for individual properties varies, as it is dependent on land valuations.

The table at the bottom of this page shows what the 'average' and 'median' CBD business property pays in ordinary rates for the current financial year - this includes the current Special Rate. It also shows what might be paid 'with' and 'without' a possible Special Rate for 2012/2013.

Put simply, a continuation of a Special Rate in 2012/2013 represents an increase of approximately \$267 (or 3.8%) to the average and approximately \$192 (or 3.8%) to the median CBD business ordinary rate, when compared to the current year rate.

If the Special Rate is discontinued in 2012/2013, the average CBD business ordinary rate will decrease by approximately \$1,801 (or 25.7%) while the median will decrease by approximately \$1,302 (or 25.7%), when compared to the current year rate.

## Our Invitation to You

Whether these proposals - including a possible Special Rate for 2012/2013 - become reality **depends greatly on the support from business property owners such as yourself.**

If adequate support for these proposals is not received, the scope of this program of City Centre works could be dramatically reduced.

Any proposed Special Rate for 2012/2013 must also be referred by Council to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for approval.

Part of the approval process involves Council having tangible evidence that a Special Rate has majority support - *in the eyes of IPART, a lack of response from you is not considered favourable support.*

If you would like more information on these proposals or the possible impacts on your rate account please call Mr Dale Allen on (02) 6648 4240.

Estimated Impacts on Rate Accounts for CBD Business Properties	Current Year (including existing Special Rate)	2012/2013 WITH a Special Rate Continuation	2012/2013 WITHOUT a Special Rate Continuation
Average - CBD Business Ordinary Rate	\$7,004	\$7,271	\$5,203
Median - CBD Business Ordinary Rate	\$5,056	\$5,248	\$3,754

*Please Note: The above table does not include annual charges for water, sewerage, waste, stormwater and environmental levy. Rate estimations for 2012/2013 are made using an anticipated rate pegging allowance of 3.8% for 2012/2013.*