

ATTACHMENT

6.

Media Releases

'DOOR STOP' MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

WHEN: 11.00am Wednesday 13 February

WHERE: Lismore City Council Chamber, Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah

WHAT: Businesses vote on funding level of future CBD promotions

Lismore businesses asked to support extended promotional funding

A random sampling of members of the Lismore business community are attending a workshop at the Lismore Council chamber this morning, in a process that is hoped will produce a clear indication of support (or otherwise) for a proposed 5 year extension of an existing additional business rate that helps fund the Lismore Business Promotion Program.

In 2010 a similar business workshop demonstrated overwhelming support for Council to apply to the NSW Government to establish this new 'Additional Special Business Rate Variation Levy (SBRVL) of \$100,000 per annum for a period of three years to boost overall advertising expenditure, plus other specific marketing and promotional projects.

The current Additional SBRVL ends on June 30 this year and the Lismore Business Promotion Panel which governs the 'Come to the heart' promotion program and Lismore city centre revitalisation process has recommended to Council that it be extended for another five years, subject to extensive consultation with the business community. Due to rate pegging, the extra funding sought is now \$106,500.

Depending on the outcome of today's workshop, Council will consider making an application to the NSW Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the extended rate funding after discussing the business consultation process at its March 12 meeting.

The workshop attendees are a representative cross section of business property owners, business owners and managers from throughout the Lismore Urban Area. They cover all local business sectors, including retail, banking, trades, hospitality, real estate and professional services.

At the workshop, the business representatives will learn about the outcomes from the Lismore Business Promotion Program to date and what the additional funding could be spent on, if it is approved.

They will also hear from Dr Peter Vitartas from Southern Cross University Business School, who is the author of a Review of the Lismore Business Promotion Program commissioned by the Panel and made public at the start of the week.

For more information contact Stephen Nelson 0427 065 330 **AFTER 10am PLEASE** (I will be presenting/assisting at the workshop before this time)

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:

Brent McAllister Chair of the Lismore Business Promotion Panel
Dr Peter Vitartas SCU Business School

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An investment in the future of Lismore business

Lismore business owners will be asked this week to decide whether or not to continue paying an increased Additional Special Business Rate Variation Levy (SBRVL) which is designed to revitalise the city centre and ensure it remains a vibrant business district.

Business property owners in Lismore have paid a SBRVL for the last 14 years. In 2010, property owners and business operators overwhelmingly supported an application to the NSW Government to approve an additional SBRVL of \$100,000 per annum for a period of three years. This funding has helped increase promotion of the city under the successful 'Lismore – Come to the heart' brand, but it ends on June 30 this year.

Over 1000 business property owners and the owners/managers of more than 2700 businesses in the Lismore Urban Area will receive an information Bulletin this week as part of a comprehensive consultation to determine business support for continuation of the additional SBRVL.

At its December meeting Council requested that comprehensive consultation with the Lismore Urban Area business community be undertaken, with businesses to be asked if they are in favour of additional rates of \$106,500 per annum for five years to be spent on business promotion activities.

The results of the consultation need to be reported back to Council in March 2013 to determine if a Special Rate Variation application is to be submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). If the consultation is favourable and IPART is satisfied with the application business owners will continue paying the rate they have paid for the last three years.

The preliminary results of an assessment of the 'Lismore – Come to the heart' business promotion program by Southern Cross University's School of Business has shown that from 89 business surveys processed so far, the majority of businesses were in favour of continuing the additional SBRVL.

IPART requires Council to consult with the business community and obtain a clear indication of support (or otherwise) for the proposed extension of the additional SBRVL. Individuals who receive the information Bulletin will be informed that they may be randomly selected and invited to take part in a workshop in mid-February to consider the proposal and reach a consensus, or produce a majority decision on the proposed extension. This random selection process will be conducted by specialist Sydney company IRIS, not Council, to ensure impartiality.

Any business owner or manager from the CBD or Lismore Urban area who did not receive the Bulletin can obtain a copy by contacting Sandra Vincent at Lismore City Council on 6625 0436 or via sandra.vincent@lismore.nsw.gov.au.

ENDS

For further information on any aspect of the Additional SBRVL or the consultation process, please contact Stephen Nelson 0427 065 330 66 274 117 stephen.nelson@lismore.nsw.gov.au