



MEDIA RELEASE

New Era for Economic Development across Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday

The new financial year will bring a renewed focus on economic development opportunities for the Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday region.

REDC Chair Jeff Stewart-Harris said the region had undergone a significant change in the economy over the past 18 months, which had forced industry, government and business to identify priorities and opportunities for a sustainable future.

Mr Stewart-Harris said a new model of economic development would drive the region's economy and include greater opportunities for industry, government and small-medium business to work together.

The new model for economic sustainability will include:

- The winding down of the operational arm of Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDC)
- Enhancement of stand-alone economic development agencies within each of the three local councils
- The development of an overarching Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Stronger collaboration between the regional economic development network and locally based industry groups such as MAIN, Chamber of Commerce, Department of State Development Industry and Planning; and
- Focus on new opportunities, which have emerged from the Diversify Mackay Forum.

“Economic success requires strong collaboration and vision which is why the REDC Board has agreed Local Councils should drive new opportunities combined, with significant input from industry and business.

He said REDC had achieved many outcomes for the region in the past, however the organisation was not viable in the current economy.

“REDC has ridden the peaks and troughs of rapidly changing global economy. However, the reduction in State Government funding allocations combined with a dwindling pool of money for project work, has rendered REDC unsustainable in the current climate.”

Mr Stewart-Harris said despite the economic challenges, there were significant opportunities for the region moving forward.

“The region will work together to support the focus on new industries.”

Mr Stewart-Harris said the previous role of REDC would be undertaken by a number of local organisations and the region would still have a voice through the Whitsunday Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) and the various member-based industry organisations operating locally.

“On behalf of the REDC Board and staff we would like to thank members of the business community, local and state government and the media for their contribution and support of REDC over the past years.”

Media contact: Jeff Stewart-Harris Ph 0423 298 180/07 4969 0721