

Council Connections

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TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COUNCIL QUARTERLY NEWSLET

SUMMER 2009

SERVICE CENTRES: • CLIFTON • CROWS NEST • HIGHFIELDS • GOOMBUNGEE • GREENMOUNT • MILLMERRAN • OAKY • PITTSWORTH • TOOWOOMBA

Community groups urged to 'sign up'

Community groups and not-for-profit organisations across the region are urged to register their details on council's new online Community Information Directory (CID).

The new directory at www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/cid, allows the general public to search the website by organisation category or location.

The listed information is guaranteed to remain up-to-date. Registered organisations are sent automated emails on a regular basis to remind them to update their details or be deleted from the directory.

However, in order to have a listing, the organisation must have an email address. Any new content or listing is checked by council officers before it is published to ensure accuracy and appropriateness.

Furthermore, residents wanting to join or volunteer for a community group can search by defining their age, gender or profession.

The directory also offers flexibility - an organisation can modify their listing on a regular basis.

Website users can get directions on how to find the listed organisations through the Google maps facility.



Sister Cities unite at Carnival

Toowoomba's sister city relationships flourished and history was made at the 60th Carnival of Flowers.

The simultaneous attendance of representatives from all three of our sister cities represented an historic milestone in our sister city relations.

Moreover, representatives from both Paju in Korea and Takatsuki in Japan played active roles in the Carnival.

The 14-member Paju Performance Group entertained crowds at the Ergon Energy Flower, Food and Wine Festival with three separate performances. They also performed for visitors to the Mayoral Garden Party and participated in the Grand Central Floral Parade where they took out second placing in the visiting floats/groups category.

Seven Takatsuki women displayed why the Japanese are renowned for their deft ikebana (flower arranging) skills with their feature display at the festival. The Takatsuki women also donned traditional costumes to participate in the parade, winning third place in the visiting floats/groups category.

Two councillors from our New Zealand city sister, Wanganui, Crs Rana Waitai and Allan Anderson, were in Toowoomba for Carnival festivities.

The sister city representatives also attended a Mayoral reception, council dinner and the Mayoral Garden Party, as well as visiting many of the city's parks and gardens.

Christmas operating hours

The administration offices of all council service centres will be closed from close of business Thursday Christmas Eve and reopening Monday, 4 January 2010.

City Hall will be closed from Christmas Eve until Monday, January 11, 2010. Any emergency calls should be directed to **1800 626 198**.

For the full list of Christmas operating hours of council facilities across the region, please refer to the TRC website, www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au



Members of the Paju Performance Group entertain at the Mayoral Garden Party.

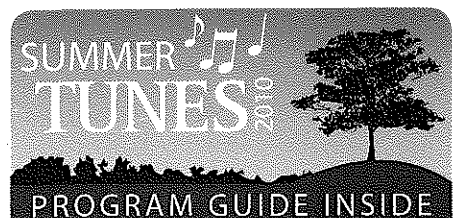
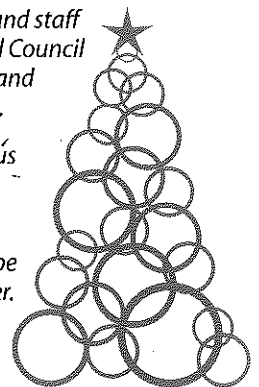
Christmas greetings

The Mayor, Councillors and staff of Toowoomba Regional Council warmly wish you a safe and enjoyable festive season.

We wish you a prosperous and healthy 2010.

May the time you spend with friends and family be full of joy and good cheer.

Please drive carefully and return safely.



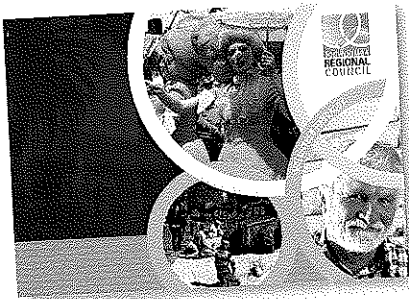
Council releases volunteer manual

Volunteers are undoubtedly central to the success of many council events and initiatives.

Council recognises and values the contribution volunteers make to the regional community. To make the task of volunteering a little easier, a handbook of essential information and forms is now available.

The 28 page booklet outlines the structure of TRC, important contact details, the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and necessary forms to be completed when volunteering for the first time.

To acquire your free copy of the volunteer handbook, please contact council's Community Development and Facilities Branch on **4688 6971**.



Wave the flag on Australia Day

The nominations are in and the voting process is in full swing – narrowing down just who will be honoured as local heroes in the coming Australia Day awards.

Residents were asked to nominate those special members of their community who had done the region proud.

Nominations were called for in a range of Australia Day awards for the following categories:

- Local Awards: Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Cultural Award, Sports Award, Community Group / Event of the Year.
- Regional Awards: Regional Citizen of the Year, Regional Young Citizen of the Year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - Leadership Award.

The Australia Day awards recognise and acknowledge the work of those who make significant contributions to their communities and will be at the centre of Australia Day festivities right across the region.

To find out what celebrations are being held in your area, contact your local TRC service centre.

Economic brief records above average growth

Council's 2009 Economic Brief shows our region is outperforming most of the State in several key economic indicators.

The Brief, released at the October meeting of the Toowoomba Regional Economic Development Board, is the only comprehensive analysis of economic and business conditions for the region.

One of the highlights has been an increase in Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2007/2008 of 9.3% which is higher than the average growth for Queensland of 8.9%. There was also an increase in total industry productivity of 6.6% in 2007/2008 exceeding the State average of 4.8%. We also recorded an unemployment rate of 2.3% which is significantly lower than the averages for both Queensland with 3.7% and Australia with 4.2%.

Copies of the 2009 Economic Brief are available from council's customer service areas or as downloadable files from the TRC website.



Members of the Economic Development Board, from left, Cr Noel Strohfeld, USQ Chancellor Bobbie Brazil, Mayor Peter Taylor, Chamber of Commerce president Shane Charles and Board chair Bob McCarthy, check out the 2009 TRC Economic Brief.

Hard work now begins to implement City Centre Master Plan

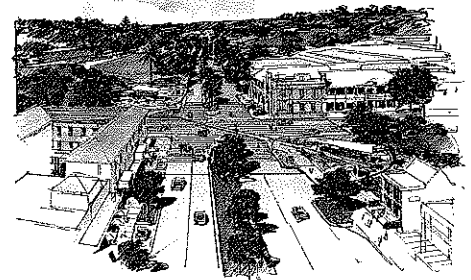
The fun is over and the hard work now begins.

The Toowoomba City Centre Master Planning project is now in its sixth stage – the implementation plan – when work focuses on converting the vision into reality.

The implementation plan will include planning scheme recommendations, action plans, confirmation of priority key projects, costing of projects and infrastructure and funding recommendations.

Begun in February, the master planning project sought to achieve a coherent and sustainable vision for the future of the city centre. The draft master plan was developed after extensive consultation with community, business and government stakeholders.

About 100 community members attended public viewing sessions of draft concepts in



City Hall in late August. Their comments were taken into account by project consultants and council when preparing the implementation plan.

For information on the Master Plan, please go to council's website at www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/citymasterplan. Please direct any questions to project manager Deanne Frankel on 4688 6416.

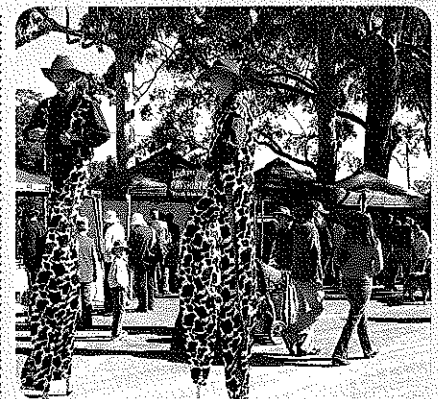
\$75,000 Chapman Park upgrade completed

Home of the Hampton Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and venue for the annual Hampton High Country Food and Arts Festival – Chapman Park – has been given a \$75,000 facelift.

The improved appearance and reduction in wrinkles are obvious. The tall gum studded park at Hampton 32km north of Toowoomba on the New England Highway is looking more picturesque than ever.

The money was allocated from the \$1.819million received by council as part of the federally funded Rural and Local Community Infrastructure grants.

It was spent on carpark sealing, the installation of uniform post and rail bollards, the repair and painting of picnic tables, an assessment of trees in the park with



subsequent removal and pruning of some, the levelling and turfing of a significant area, additional pathways, landscaping and the purchase of litter bins, seating and playground equipment.

Disaster website and education program commence

Media coverage of severe weather events across the world is becoming almost a daily occurrence, with bushfires and severe storms particularly prevalent.

Council is being proactive in assisting its regional community to prepare for such extreme weather events. Two major recent initiatives are the introduction of a TRC disaster website (www.disaster.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au) and an education program with schools and community organisations.

Council ensures the public is given every opportunity to understand what might be required in prevention, preparedness, response

and recovery in time of a disaster event.

The disaster website covers news, plans, preparedness, education and the SES. It has web links to emergency organisations and agencies giving immediate access to accurate and current data about disaster events.

TRC in liaison with Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) is providing presentations tailored to the requirements of the schools or community groups and age groups involved. The website explains how these sessions can be booked. For further information, weather forecasts and warnings, go to council's disaster website.

Women are engineering their way to the top

Council's Women in Engineering and Science group is proving there are some nifty neurones under their hard hats.

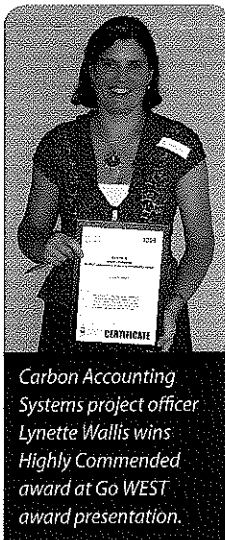
After forming less than 12 months ago, the group has already earned two honours and a reputation for getting things done.

The group recently took out two Best of the WEST awards announced by the Go WEST (Go Women in Engineering, Science and Technology) project team and sponsored by the University of Southern Queensland (USQ).

USQ Chancellor Bobbie Brazil presented the group with awards for Innovation in Engineering for educators, trainers, professional and/or business women and, more importantly, the Vice Chancellor's Sustainability Award (judged across all categories). Group member Lynette Wallis also picked up a highly commended award for her project to set up a carbon accounting system for council.

The group consists of Nicola Mead (Graduate Engineer Project Services), Nadia Ives (Principal Engineer – Construction and Maintenance), Avril Campbell, Pippa Sullivan and Sue

Hendren (Engineers Integrated Regional Planning), Avril Bennett (Senior Engineer Design), Rupa Rupasingha (Civil Engineer Water Infrastructure Asset Management), Danielle Danielsson (Student Engineering Technical Officer), Lynette Wallis (Carbon Accounting Systems Project Officer), Nadine Pufelski (scholarship recipient), Allison Davis (Civil Designer) and Debbie Dibley (Technical Officer).



Carbon Accounting Systems project officer Lynette Wallis wins Highly Commended award at Go WEST award presentation.

The Go WEST team coordinates the awards to recognise and celebrate the achievement of outstanding women who display leadership in the fields of engineering, science, mathematics and technology, where females are traditionally under-represented.

Community plans to come to fruition in 2010

As the saying goes, to fail to plan is to plan for failure.

That is why council's Integrated Regional Planning branch is developing the ACTION 2050 long-term community plan.

With the theme 'Vision into Action', the community vision and plan of action will come to fruition by the end of next year, following a series of community engagement activities.

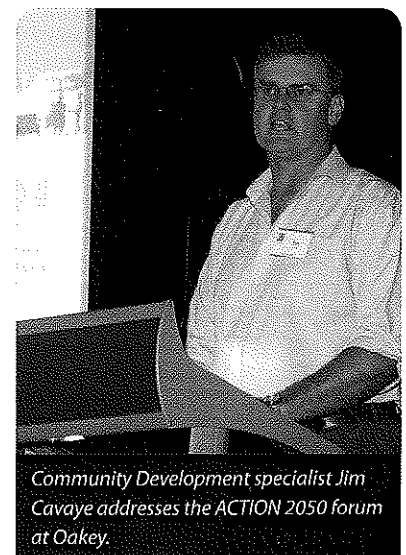
The ACTION 2050 project is about working together as one community to create a vision for the preferred long-term future of our region. It allows council to develop a plan to help make that vision a reality through priority actions to improve the region.

Outcomes from the Oakey community summit are being collated along with community questionnaire responses to ensure the main issues and concerns of residents are addressed in the 2050 community plan.

The community will be invited to comment on a draft of the vision and action plan in the new year. A series of district workshops aimed at getting more specific and relevant information from grassroots community members, will also be held.

The community plan will integrate previous work undertaken as part of the "our TOOWOOMBA towards 2050" community planning project and the Clifton Futures project.

The ACTION 2050 community plan is running in tandem with development of a new planning scheme for the region. Community views expressed through the community plan will be reflected in planning scheme considerations.



Community Development specialist Jim Cavaye addresses the ACTION 2050 forum at Oakey.

New Regional Planning Scheme goes online

Council is preparing a single planning scheme for the region. The Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme, replacing the eight planning schemes currently administered by council, will provide a consistent approach to management of land use and development in the region.

You can help shape the future of our region. The community's input into preparation of the scheme will ensure it reflects the community's vision and will help to retain and enhance the characteristics and special qualities of the Toowoomba region.

Visit the Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme project website www.futurebydesign.com.au and subscribe for regular updates about the project. Alternatively, click on the 'Have Your Say' link.

You can identify issues about land use and development that you believe need to be addressed in the new planning scheme. You will receive a response from Council on your contribution. A list of issues raised and council's responses are kept on the website, but the names of people who raised them are kept confidential. The website will also provide updates on questions frequently asked by the community.

Other community engagement activities and events are being planned for 2010 and 2011 in local communities. You can contribute to the future of the Toowoomba region through the new planning scheme project by visiting www.futurebydesign.com.au, emailing planningscheme@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au or phoning 4688 6416 as well as looking out for news and events through local media.

Safe food tips to ensure happy holiday feasts

Safe food handling is essential for a healthy Christmas/New Year season.

Proper food preparation and storage will ensure you prevent friends and family falling ill from food poisoning at summer parties, functions and meals.

During the holiday and festive season, normal kitchen hygiene should be extended to barbecues, outdoor entertaining and picnics.



Council will conduct food safety courses starting on February 11.

Try these handy tips from council's Environmental Health team.

- Hot food must be kept above 60°C.
- Cold food needs to be kept below 5°C.
- Leftovers have to be refrigerated within two hours. If you leave food at room temperature for more than four hours, it should be thrown away.
- All meat should be cooked thoroughly to reduce the chance of live bacteria remaining in under-cooked portions, particularly in seafood, pork and chicken.

- Separate raw meat from fruit and vegetables – make sure not to cross-contaminate different food. Store raw meat at the bottom of the fridge.
- Thaw meat on the bottom shelf in the fridge, don't thaw on the bench.
- Clean as you go, chill as quickly as you can and separate foods.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before preparing food. Try not to use tea towels to dry hands. Use paper towels.
- Ensure knives and chopping boards are clean.

COOKING

- Defrost meat completely before cooking to ensure it cooks right through.
- Reheat leftovers for at least two minutes on steaming hot. Reheat once.
- Never put cooked meat on the same plate you had the raw meat, unless the plate has been cleaned. (Watch this when barbecuing).

CHILLING

- Bacteria on food multiply quickly between 5°C and 60°C.
- Keep the fridge below 5°C by opening as little as possible.
- Drinks can be stored in an esky with ice. If the fridge is too crowded, the cold air can't circulate properly. Don't overstock the fridge.

Council conducts regular free food hygiene courses around the region. Course dates for 2010 include February 11, March 4 and April 1. To book, phone Environmental Health Services on **4688 6824**.

Prevent mosquitoes breeding around the home

Simple preventative measures around the home can stop the summer mosquito nuisance.

Mosquitoes not only inflict a sting, but some carry serious diseases including Dengue Fever, Ross River Virus and Murray River Encephalitis. Mosquitoes can also cause heartworm in dogs.

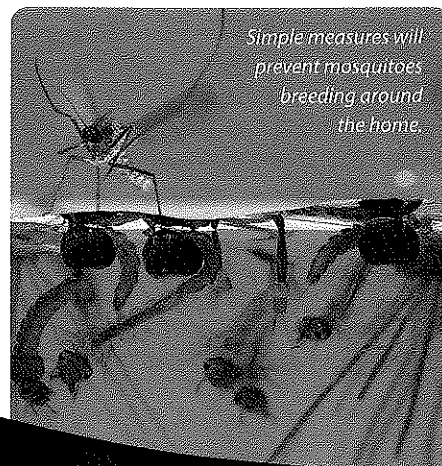
Still water is an ideal breeding ground for mossies. Long grass and shady vegetation offer resting places in the heat of the day.

Cleaning up around the home and yard stops mossies breeding. Follow these tips:

- Clean up or throw away unwanted containers.
- Remove unwanted items that can hold water from your yard.
- Regularly empty and clean pet bowls to remove mosquito eggs before hatching.
- Prevent water accumulating in pot plants, disused water features, tyres, containers, blocked drains and children's toys and equipment.

- Stock fishponds with native fish; or install a pump and fountain to keep the water moving and the surface of the water disturbed.
- Clear and cut back any overgrown grass and vegetation to minimise resting places for adult mosquitoes.

Use insect repellent outside and wear long, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing. Try to stay inside during early morning and early evening – when mossies are most active. Fix any holes in security screens. For more information, visit council's website.



Simple measures will prevent mosquitoes breeding around the home.

Pets a cute present and a long-term commitment

Before surprising friends and relatives with pets for Christmas, it pays to think about the long-term commitment and responsibilities of owning an animal.

In most cases, owning a pet is at least a 15-year commitment.

It is best to ask people if they would like a pet. Each year the RSPCA is flooded with unwanted animals after the festive period and hundreds more become strays.

Registration and microchipping

Under the new Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2009, registration is compulsory for all cats and dogs across Queensland. It is compulsory to microchip cats and dogs at the point of sale or if a pet is transferred to a new owner (sold or given away).

Dogs and cats must be registered and microchipped. To register pets, please call your nearest service centre and an application form will be sent to you.

A lot of money is invested in the joy of owning a pet. Registering and microchipping animals can help authorities notify owners if the animal ever strays. Don't forget to update relevant information if you move to a new address.

Dogs and cats younger than three months must be registered by three months. New owners of animals older than three months have two weeks to register their pet. Discounted registration is offered for animals that are desexed, upon presentation of proof of desexing.

Other discounted registration is offered for puppies and kittens, cats or dogs owned by pensioners, obedience-trained dogs and qualified guide dogs. People who own a council-registered kennel or cattery also qualify for a discount fee.

Safe pets are happy pets

If you are going away, pets should be left in the care of a responsible keeper. Animals can become agitated and scared during storms and parties. Make sure your pet has a safe, secure and quiet place to be housed if there is the likelihood of loud noises like fireworks, music or thunder.

Immunisation clinic hours

Council's immunisation clinic at 12 Little Street, Toowoomba is open on Wednesdays 9am to 1.30pm and 6.30pm to 7.30pm on the first Thursday of each month. Other times are by appointment. Closed December 30. Enquiries to **4688 6835**.